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INTRODUCTION

THINKING THE GLOBAL *WITH* FEMINIST PRAGMATISM: A VISION IN THE MAKING

Amrita Banerjee and Kristína Bosáková

In her path-breaking work, *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric*, published in 1996, Charlene Haddock Seigfried provides concrete directions for articulating a distinctively feminist version of pragmatism. Generations of scholars since then have been engaged in reviving the work of women pragmatists to reimagine the pragmatist canon, expanding the imagination of pragmatism through a feminist lens, bringing the perspective of pragmatism to bear on feminist issues, and developing feminist pragmatism in dialogue with other critical traditions. It is, however, timely to dedicate a volume, which explores the distinct possibilities and challenges of *thinking the global with feminist pragmatism*.

On our part, we have made the choice not to orient the project as being one of articulating a "global feminist pragmatism." There are many reasons for this choice. Any formulation of a particular philosophical tradition as a global tradition carries the potential danger of degenerating into a form of cultural imperialism even if the tradition may not intend this. Too often, "global" is prone to being misinterpreted as "universal," and in this iteration, global may come to signify that which has achieved or is capable of achieving a near universal reach. Second, the suspicion of pragmatist philosophers against universalism and foundationalism, coupled with the emphasis of feminist pragmatists themselves on particularity, context-specificity, and neighborhood democracy even as they engage with questions of broader significance, demonstrates foresight in this regard. The foresight should act as a caution against any impetus to define the global without paying attention to the local. Therefore, in keeping with the commitments of feminist pragmatism, the aim is to think the global *with* feminist pragmatism rather than to evolve a global feminist pragmatism. We invite the reader, therefore, to consider the "with" as signifying a dialogical mode of discourse rather than an assimilative orientation. A project of this order demands epistemic humility and must demonstrate a communicative intent.

The project of thinking the global *with* feminist pragmatism, on its part, entails many possibilities but also poses several challenges. First and foremost, it entails imagining the feminist pragmatist canon beyond the narrow boundaries of the North American philosophical tradition and with a more global orientation. On the positive side, this creates the opportunity for engaging with feminist pragmatism from the perspective of other philosophies as well as a wide-variety of socio-cultural contexts of the world. Such inquiry raises questions such as: What sorts of lineages and points of connection can be established with philosophical traditions from diverse locations which, in turn, can contribute to a more global understanding of feminist pragmatism? What are the possibilities and challenges of cross-cultural philosophical exchanges for the feminist pragmatist canon?

Second, the theme is a call to explore ways in which feminist pragmatist commitments to pluralism, fallibilism, democracy, ideals of community and social transformation, among others, can contribute to issues of global significance. The question, however, remains: what is the global? On the one hand, the global as a space functions as a material circuit for capital, people, power, and difference; on the other, it is also a symbolic domain of perceptions, meanings and intentions. Whichever the case may be, as feminist pragmatists theorize the global, there needs to be a recognition of the structural inequalities, power imbalances, and various other stratifications, which are built into the global sphere. While conceptual resources within feminist pragmatism might provide concrete directions for evolving a plural and democratic understanding of the global, the tradition must be self-reflexive about its traditional roots as a First World

philosophical tradition, emanating from a specific context and in light of specific challenges and possibilities. An important implication of the exchange is that, even as we use feminist pragmatism as a hermeneutic to read the global, the fundamental tenets of pragmatism such as pluralism, meliorism and even democracy may end up generating diverse meanings and new conceptual possibilities as pragmatism moves beyond its historical context in North America.

Finally, the project of thinking the global with feminist pragmatism, creates an opportunity for feminist pragmatism to engage in intra-tradition critical reflection. It can reflect on how it may enrich itself through cross-cultural philosophical exchanges. Not only can this serve as a crucial opportunity to expand the feminist pragmatist canon from a global perspective, but also to stipulate alternative genealogies into feminist pragmatism, which may not have been anticipated by the tradition. Through mutual interactions, feminist pragmatism may be able to build a more dialogical perspective within pragmatism as a whole in relation to other traditions. At the end of the day, feminist pragmatist commitments may take on different and/or revised orientations in both their meanings and intent as a result of feminist pragmatism's global engagement.

The papers in the present issue boldly take on many of the challenges involved in thinking the global *with* feminist pragmatism. They try to speak to various issues of relevance in this regard such as global conflict, challenges faced in the context of differences and stratification, polarization affecting societies around the world, and vulnerabilities confronting women and marginalized groups. Not only do the papers contribute toward understanding these problems, but they offer positive directions for envisioning solutions from a feminist pragmatist perspective. These include developing approaches for fashioning peace in a sustainable manner, resolving intergenerational conflicts, overcoming polarization, fostering ethical regard for different others, designing spaces that are more egalitarian and democratic, fostering recognition across differences, decolonizing feminist understandings of the self and the other, and offering ways of conceiving of life-affirming values.

Judith M. Green's paper titled, **"Advancing Feminist Pragmatism's Global Web-Weaving Process of Creating Positive Peace,"** provides a response to global conflict through a conception of "positive peace." Green critiques the "negative conception of peace" that guides just war theories as an incomplete idea of peace and one which, according to her, fails to offer adequate direction for pre and post-war contexts. The negative conception fails to intervene at the level of the underlying historical and material conditions that give rise to war. In contrast, Green develops a positive conception of peace, which views conditions of peace as a "webwork" at familial, local, national and global levels. By drawing on cross-difference collaborative insights of two of the original pragmatist feminists (Jane Addams and Anna Julia Cooper), two contemporary feminist philosophers (Sally Haslanger and Maria Lugones), a holistic Indigenous botanist (Robin Wall Kimmerer), and two theorists of positive peace (Grant E. Rissler and Patricia M. Shields), Green suggests ways to work towards building context-specific, democratic and inclusive communities. The feminist pragmatist approach to positive peace reminds us of the need to develop a long-term and sustainable perspective on peace to mitigate violence and the threat of war.

In **"Overcoming Moral Dispossession through an Ideal Space to Be: Spatializing Moral Imagination through an Anti-imperialist Feminist Pragmatism," Amrita Banerjee** develops the concept of "moral dispossession," which she argues, often happens due to the spatialized dimensions underlying our embodiment and is an outcome of moral mis-recognition. Banerjee points to the universal necessity of recognition of every single person, which is required to visibilize them as moral subjects; and is something which is often denied to women and other marginalized groups. Mainstream

philosophical theories on moral worth, entitlement, and agency, however, do not approach these through the idea of moral mis-recognition. In response, Banerjee develops a uniquely "emplaced" conception of the moral self for moral theory. Coming to a moral self is linked to overcoming dispossession and finding an "ideal space to be." Banerjee interprets Hull House in the work of the North American feminist pragmatist Jane Adams and the fictional Tarini Bhavan in the work of South Asian feminist thinker Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain to conceptualize emancipatory spaces where the dispossessed can find a home and cultivate a robust moral imagination. This global and anti-imperialist feminist pragmatist approach to moral imagination and to moral epistemology contributes to a spatial understanding of ethics. Banerjee's analysis identifies such a significant amount of intersection between North American feminist pragmatism and South Asian feminist thought from the colonial era that it leaves no doubt about the universality of the struggle for recognition of women as equal moral subjects to men.

Barbara J. Lowe´s paper titled, **"Placing "Philosophy in the Parks": A Neighborhood Praxis Towards a "Glocal" Orientation,"** investigates the opportunities of collective common spaces as spaces where global and local can be interwoven, that is, where one can pass from one to another without leaving behind the place. "Glocal" orientation, according to Lowe, aligns with feminist pragmatist commitments. The "glocal" orientation, in turn, teaches students how to engage with their closer and wider environments in order to become engaged citizens not only of their local towns, cities or states, but also engaged citizens of the cosmopolis represented throughout our whole planet. Lowe analyzes tools and assignments of the course, "Philosophy in the Parks" to show how the global engagement originates from the effective engagement on the local level and how empathy towards our immediate neighbors impacts an interest in the global issues. Lowe's analysis weaves in both practical and affective dimensions of developing a "glocal" orientation, and shows a path forward to overcoming conflict and "affective polarization" within our societies.

Tess Varner in, "**The Open Spaces of Democracy: Public Lands, Pragmatist Placemaking, and Peacebuilding,"** also focuses on the importance of the concept of space and territory making in pragmatist philosophy in general and feminist pragmatism in particular. Based on the best practices in Norway that Varner has had an opportunity to investigate, she suggests their wider application at the more global level, especially in societies with prevailing polarization and distrust between their communities. Open space as a safe territory, accessible to citizens from different social backgrounds, represents one of the most effective remedies against pervasive social polarization and exclusion. As Varner argues, redesigning the public spaces would significantly contribute to the stabilization of our fragile social and physical landscapes. Through her analysis, Varner also articulates points of connection between the Norwegian philosophical tradition's strong emphases on peace and deep connection to the natural world and the pragmatist tradition in order to develop the idea of peacebuilding through the open spaces of democracy.

Eleonor Pinto's paper titled, "**Reclaiming the Table through a Postcolonial Feminist Pragmatist Approach,"** brings an interesting insight into the decolonization of feminist philosophy. Taking the philosophy of food and cultural studies as sites of analysis, Pinto resists appropriation of feminist philosophy of food from an exclusively western framework. She brings feminist pragmatism in dialogue with the postcolonial approach to decenter the consuming Self, which has often been at the center of discourse. Pinto, on her part, argues for centering the hungry body, and especially the body of the "Othered other" in philosophical analysis of food. Using India as an example of intra-colonial dynamics, she demonstrates how food practices function as strategies of survival and identity negotiation, especially in cases of those who are perceived as Other. By attending to the relational di-

mensions of hunger and food practices, Pinto calls for a philosophy of food which is attentive to vulnerability and multiple socio-cultural inequalities. As women and children continue to constitute a disproportionately large number of people in the world who are most vulnerable and threatened by hunger, Pinto's analysis contributes to feminist philosophical perspectives on food inequality, vulnerability and necessity.

In **"Disclosing Global Feminist Pragmatic Values: Solving the Global Scourge of Women's Oppression and Criminalization," Rebecca L. Farinas** analyzes the problem of women's exclusion and criminalization in societies, where altruism is replaced by obedience to the power structures. In her study, Farinas compares Jane Adams´s and Max Scheler´s approach to empathy and altruism, to explore their potential for the feminist pragmatist approach to sympathy and compassion. Critical of Adams´s value theory, she finds Scheler´s axiology more appropriate based on the rule of love as the highest value and the highest goal of the individual and social practice. In the places where Adams and Scheler failed enough in addressing women's equal rights, the feminist thinker M. Joan McDermott can, according to Farinas, help in discerning solutions to the criminalization of women through the feminist approaches to life- affirming values, rather than man-made laws.

In **"How to Care better for Intergenerational Relations in the Time of Fragmentation," Adriana Jesenková** addresses the problem of inter-generational conflict in deeply polarized societies. Jesenková develops her analysis through an engagement with the traditions of care ethics and feminist pragmatism. Situating her analysis within contemporary Slovak society, Jesenková attends to the broader philosophical implications of the idea of intergenerational gap and the quandaries posed by it for caring. Embodied care, caring practices and spaces of care are emphasized to outline ways of not only envisioning care and communication across generations but, to also at the same time, find a way to preserve the one-caring in the process. The collective spaces of teaching and learning philosophy are emphasized as holding an emancipatory potential in this regard. Jesenková's analysis emphasizes the need to find alternative caring spaces where healing of the self can happen even within larger contexts of polarization and fragmentation.

The Varia section showcases an array of contributions that reflect global scholarship on pragmatism. In "**Kant's Idea of Perpetual Peace: Still Relevant Today?" Sandra Zákutná** engages with Immanuel Kant's cosmopolitanism, especially in his work, *Perpetual Peace*. She argues for the significance of Kant's ideas for addressing ethical and political challenges globally. Zákutná points toward the importance of education within Kantian political philosophy in this respect, which aligns with the pragmatist insight that achieving cosmopolitan ideals requires human beings to learn and adapt to new socio-political situations. **Pham Thi Kien and Bui Xuan Dung** in their paper titled, **"William James's Pragmatism in Educational Theory: A Comprehensive Theoretical and Practical Analysis in Contemporary Educational Contexts,"** demonstrate the relevance of William James' philosophy of education in the era of globalization. They argue that James' focus on the principles of practicality, experiential learning, and personalization in teaching can be useful for diverse educational practices such as STEM education and online education. The essay also provides recommendations for Vietnam's educational policy from a pragmatist lens. **Ulf Schulenberg** in **"Sentimental Education, Anti-Authoritarianism, and Form: Richard Rorty's Literary Criticism,"** analyzes Rorty's pragmatism with particular reference to literature's role in it. Against this backdrop, he reflects on whether Rorty's understanding of the novel can prepare the ground for the development of a pragmatist literary criticism along with the implications of this perspective within a broader anti-authoritarian framework.

The present issue concludes with three insightful book reviews. The first book review is by **Juliana Acosta López de Mesa** of ***Women in Pragmatism: Past, Present***

and Future, edited by Núria Sara Miras Boronat and Michela Bella (Springer, 2022). This is followed by **Klaudia Kováčová's** review of Andrej Démuth's book, ***Anger as a/moral emotion*** (Peter Lang, 2024). Finally, we feature **Anna Keszeg's** review of ***Foucault's Aesthetics of Existence and Shusterman's Somaesthetics: Ethics, Politics and the Art of Living***, edited by Valentina Antoniol and Stefano Marino (Bloomsbury Academic, 2024).

In conclusion, and in light of the challenges and possibilities that we've highlighted in our brief reflection on the vision for the issue, we must emphasize that thinking the global *with* feminist pragmatism is a long-term vision. Sustained global engagement on the pragmatist tradition and its articulation through multiple and diverse perspectives are required to realize the full potential of this vision. While the present issue serves as a platform to take on many of the themes discussed above, our attempt is to initiate a broader conversation rather than to provide any final or exhaustive resolution. "Thinking the Global *with* Feminist Pragmatism" is, therefore, very much a work in progress. It is, in other words, "A Vision in the Making."

Chapters

ADVANCING FEMINIST PRAGMATISM'S GLOBAL WEB-WEAVING PROCESS OF CREATING POSITIVE PEACE

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ABSTRACT: In these troubled twenty-first century times, diverse interdisciplinary thinkers and visionary activists are turning their collaborative efforts to interlinked processes of continuously making a just, participatory, context-specific, problem-resolving, positive peace at domestic, local, national, and global levels. Having recognized that the kind of just and sustainable peace for which wise thinkers in diverse cultures have been longing and working since ancient times requires more than an end to violence at all levels, these contemporary peacemakers recognize that currently powerful paradigms of political economy, now-normal ways of thinking, culture-infused individual habits, hierarchical social institutions, and history-rooted relational practices among the world's peoples must change in deep, on-going ways. Many of these thinkers and activists acknowledge Jane Addams and other originary feminist pragmatists as showing why and how we must approach this daunting, on-going process of "reweaving the social fabric" to which Charlene Haddock Seigfried re-called feminist philosophers in 1991. Subsequent efforts world-wide to learn wise lessons from these original feminist pragmatists have shown that resolving our particular issues of social justice requires this kind of social-cultural reweaving, that this requires working for the conditions that Addams called "positive peace," and that this cannot be a local or national process alone—it must be both context-specific and global. In this essay, I will draw on cross-difference insights of two of the original pragmatist feminists (Jane Addams and Anna Julia Cooper), two contemporary feminist philosophers (Sally Haslanger and Maria Lugones), a holistic Indigenous botanist (Robin Wall Kimmerer) who envisions reciprocal and sustainable human relations with nature, and two contemporary theorists of positive peace (Grant E. Rissler and Patricia M. Shields). These thinkers suggest how transformative theorists in diverse disciplines, activists in many good causes, responsive institutional leaders at all levels, and those who care daily for humanity and the Earth can continuously advance this context-specific, democratically participatory web-weaving process in ways that are justice-actualizing, hope-reviving, and continuously transformative.

Keywords: feminism, pragmatism, web-weaving, positive peace, matrix of meanings, 'world'-travelling, reciprocal caring

We live in a time of terrible wars and increasing violence in homes and communities that leads many to support ruthless, autocratic leaders they believe can protect them from foreign and domestic enemies through terrifying displays of dominance. These displays lead a few to seek "glory" or at least social visibility through imitative, death-dealing behavior, encouraged by websites that treat this as a divine imperative or as required for liberty, for masculinity, or for the emergence of a social movement that can restore their culture's lost integrity and global control. Thus, in response to autocrat-led, ultra-violent, world-endangering wars of aggression in Ukraine and Palestine, and to terrifying events of mass murder in schools, places of worship, shopping centers, and night clubs, many others rally and march in protest, demanding that institutional and national leaders *do something* to make the violence end – but what course of action and what guiding goals would achieve this?

Some thinkers argue for limiting wars of aggression through wider teaching of and adherence to the standards of *just war theory*, which has been developing since Aristotle's time and continues to emerge through the United Nations. However, the *negative conception of peace* that guides just war theory—making wars less frequent, less violent, and less prolonged through limits on when a war may be initiated and how it may be conducted—seems at best to be an incomplete conception of peace that fails to offer adequate guidance in pre-war and post-war contexts. Moreover, just war theory seems like "too little, too late," irrelevant to sufficiently powerful autocrats and non-state actors, and lacking the depth to transform the underlying historical, cultural, and structural problems that cause wars and dreadful events of imitative violence at other social levels.

This is why many interdisciplinary thinkers and visionary activists are turning their efforts toward the complex processes of continuously weaving a just, problem-resolving, structurally sustaining global webwork of *conditions for positive peace* at familial, local, national, and global levels through context-specific, problem-resolving changes in institutions and underlying cultures that are guided by participation of all those affected in continu-

ing transformation processes, supported by specialists, planners, and public administrators. They recognize that the kind of peace for which wise thinkers in diverse cultures have been longing and working since ancient times requires more than ending particular episodes of violence. It requires transforming the underlying causes of violence, including now-powerful paradigms of political economy and now-normal ways of thinking, as well as culture-infused individual habits, hierarchical social institutions, and history-rooted unjust relations among the world's peoples.

Some of these thinkers and activists regard the Norwegian political scientist Johan Galtung as the originator of the concept of "positive peace," as well as the founder of the discipline of Peace and Conflict Studies, and his work clearly offers invaluable guidance in thinking about and advancing the complex processes of creating positive peace.[1] Others recognize that Martin Luther King, Jr., used this concept earlier and outlined a nonviolent transformative method for creating the conditions for positive peace, both in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963) and in his visionary final monograph, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos of Community?* (1967).[2] However, some contemporary theorists and practitioners of positive peace, including Patricia M. Shields, reccognize that Jane Addams and other feminist pragmatists of the Progressive Era that followed America's Civil War had developed and deployed the concept of "positive peace" even earlier, and they regard the insights of these originary feminist pragmatists as having continuing value in the process of "reweaving the social fabric" to which Charlene Haddock Seigfried has re-called contemporary feminist philosophers.[3] In this essay, I draw on cross-difference insights of two of the original feminist pragmatists (Jane Addams and Anna Julia Cooper), two contemporary feminist philosophers (Sally Haslanger and Maria Lugones), a holistic Indigenous thinker and botanical scientist (Robin Wall Kimmerer), and two public administration theorists (Grant E. Rissler and Patricia M. Shields) to suggest how thinkers in many disciplines, activists in many good causes, and institutional and cultural leaders at all levels can collaboratively advance positive peace through a pluralistic, democratically participatory, context-specific and global web-weaving process that is continuously transformative, justice-actualizing, and hope-reviving.

As Seigfried has persuasively demonstrated,[4] it was not John Dewey and his friend George Herbert Mead, nor the Harvard men who taught them, but the diverse, widely dispersed, first generation of college-educated American feminist pragmatist women—Jane Addams, Anna Julia Cooper, and many others—who originally developed pragmatism's decentralized, public-inclusive process of collaboratively weaving a transformation-guiding webwork of old-and-new meta-philosophical, theoretical, and practical ideas from diverse geographic and social locations.[5] The intersecting, problem-focused networks they

[1] See Johan Galtung's *Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (Sage, 1996). For the claim that Galtung coined the term "positive peace" and helpful insights about this work, see Baljit Singh Grewal's "Johan Galtung: Positive and Negative Peace" https://www.transcend.org/tms/2024/07/johan-galtung-positive-and-negative-peace/.

[2] See King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and most of the chapters of his *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* in James M. Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Marting Luther King., Jr.* (HarperCollins, 1986).

[3] See Charlene Haddock Seigfried, 1991. "Where Are All the Pragmatist Feminists?" *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* (6:2), 1-20. I was drawn to pragmatist feminism by Charlene's invitation to participate in this transformative philosophical project from the floor of a meeting of the Society for Women in Philosophy in conjunction with the Eastern Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association.

[4] See Seigfried, "Democracy as a Way of Life: Addams' Pragmatist Influence on Dewey" (2011), in which she persuasively shows that Jane Addams's *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), which Dewey began teaching and wrestling with at soon as it was published, was responsible more than any other factor for his transformation into the kind of deep democrat who discovered useful philosophical leadings by collaborating with "publics" of real people to transform the problems that were impinging on their lives.

[5] I have argued in other places that both Dewey and Mead, who worked as volunteer lecturers and observers at Hull House during their years at the nearby University of Chicago, were so deeply influenced by Addams's ideas and her ways of working respectfully and as equals with her poor immigrant neighbors that each of them rethought his earlier model of democratic change processes to include key insights from her about how new, more developed interests of individual selves can emerge though educative-and-contributive interactions across social

built empowered these highly gifted feminist pragmatist thinkers and change-influencers to use their specific gifts and their differing standpoints to highlight important issues, to transform existing scholarly disciplines and initiate new ones, to found new institutions and transform old ones, and to model more deeply democratic ways of living in a fast-changing world.[6] Each of these feminist pragmatist women built on the best of her inherited cultural traditions while critically rejecting the "old ways" that still continue to exclude and oppress many within America's intersecting hierarchies of race, gender, class, and caste.[7] Each of them guided experimental reconstruction of local institutions and influenced wider social systems to include and to empower vulnerable neighbors in ways that simultaneously gave meaning and purpose to their own lives. Each of them encouraged and critiqued others' ideas and institutional change strategies, while actively cooperating in transformative projects and practices across the lines that still separate races, classes, regions, and nations. The first thing we must notice about *the decentralized, pluralistic, public-inclusive web-weaving process* that these originary pragmatist feminist women developed is that it grew out of their deeply felt, democratic ideal-guided, distinctively individual psycho-social interests in fixing "something wrong" within America's underlying cultural habits, developed institutions, legal framework, and systems of education, economy, and meeting citizens' basic needs.[8] Across their differences, these women felt great respect for each other and for the communities they aimed to serve by humbly contributing their social perspectives, their highly developed gifts, and their experience-based insights to local and larger projects of advancing urgently needed, pluralistic, democracy-deepening intellectual and practical transformations in the profoundly troubled world they entered. With neighbors who were even more acutely suffering from the complex, intertwined eco-social problems in living they aimed to resolve, these women worked collaboratively to build up effective new institutions and to reconstruct existing ones with more inclusive rules of operation and more responsive public policies. At the same time, they assisted and encouraged one another to become their best selves

differences, and how these growing interactive selves can influence the trajectories of each of the communities that intersect within them. See my essay, "Mead's Pragmatist Proposals for a Cosmopolitan Democratic Political Economy," in *George Herbert Mead in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. F. Thomas Burke and Krzysztof Skowronski (Lexington Books, 2013) and my forthcoming book, *Pragmatist Political Economy*.

[6] Patricia Hill Collins and many other contemporary Black feminist thinkers acknowledge Anna Julia Cooper (and sometimes Sojourner Truth) as the originator of the concept of "intersectionality" that plays an important role in their work. See, for example, Collins, "Piecing Together a Genealogical Puzzle: Intersectionality and American Pragmatism," *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* (III:2), 2011. For the place of standpoint theory in Cooper's life and philosophical contribution, see Vivian M. May, *Anna Julia Cooper: Visionary Black Feminist: A Critical Introduction* (Routledge, 2012). See also Kimberly Martinez Phillips, "We Come Not Here to Talk—Revisiting the Work of Anna Julia Cooper: An Analysis of Standpoint Theory and Her Placement in the Academic Canon," *Symbolic Interaction* (46:3), 2023.

[7] There is already an extensive interdisciplinary literature on the live and works of this first generation of feminist pragmatist thinkers and doers that analyzes and traces the genealogies of many more of their insights than I can discuss here. See, for example, Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social* Fabric (University of Chicago Press, 1996); Marilyn Fischer, "Addams on Cultural Pluralism, European Immigrants, and African Americans," *The Pluralist* (9:3), 2014; Marilyn Fischer, Carol Nackenoff, Wendy Chmielewski, ed., *Jane Addams and the Practice of Democracy* (University of Illinois Press, 2009); Maurice Hamington, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams* (Penn State University Press, 2010); Maurice Hamington, "Feminist Prophetic Pragmatism," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (23:2). 2009; Nuria Sara Miras Boronat, "Epistemologies of the Oppressed: Pragmatist and Feminist Approaches to Class, Gender, and Race," *Pragmatism Today* (12:1), 2021; Patricia M. Shields, "Classical Pragmatism: Roots and Promise for a PA Feminist Theory, *Administrative Theory & Praxis* (27:2), 2005, and "Democracy and the Social Feminist Ethics of Jane Addams: A Vision for Public Administration," *Administrative Theory & Praxis* (28: 3) 2006; Vivian M. May, *Anna Julia Cooper, Visionary Black Feminist: A Critical Introduction* (Taylor & Francis, 2007) and "Writing the Self into Being: Anna Julia Cooper's Textual Politics," *African American Review* (43: 1), 2009; Patricia Hill Collins, "Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (568), 2000; Judy Whipps and Danielle Lake, "Feminist Pragmatism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (revised 2025); and Leslie Butler, *Consistent Democracy: The "Woman Question" and Self-Government in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford University Press, 2023). In my forthcoming book, *Pragmatist Political Economy,* I interconnect some of the insights and achievements of four of the originary feminist pragmatist women (Jane Addams, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Mary Parker Follett) with those of seven originary pragmatist men (Charles S. Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Alain L. Locke).

[8] For a detailed discussion of actively motivating psycho-social "interests" in the sense I intend here, see Dewey's *Ethics, Revised Edition* (1932), Chapter 15, "The Moral Self," p. 290.

within their particular, interest-linked local, national, and international communities.

To understand how the combined meta-philosophical, theoretical, and practical insights of the originary pragmatist women grew out of their web-weaving methods, it is helpful to begin with the closely related projects of Jane Addams and Anna Julia Cooper, who emerged at the same time from polar-opposite social positions within America's intersecting hierarchies of race, class, and gender. Jane Addams (1860-1935) was born into wealth, social influence, and white privilege in the northern state of Illinois. In contrast, Anna Julia Heywood Cooper (1858-1964) was born into race-based chattel slavery and the segregated poverty that followed its abolition in the southern state of North Carolina. In interlinked yet perspectivally differing ways, both Addams and Cooper advanced methods, insights, and models for deepening democracy and advancing positive peace in local and global ways by working within overlapping, diverse, public-inclusive communities of inquiry.

Addams's family-financed college education at the Rockford Female Seminary provided her with the leisure to study and to reflect on a broad liberal arts curriculum—and on the problem of what to do with her life after college. Rockford's curriculum and social norms aimed to create a formative experience that would prepare its graduates to fulfill elite protestant white women's traditional role in American society, combining gender subordination, patriarchal marriage, and privilege-based "charitable efforts." However, Addams and her closest friends, especially Ellen Gates Starr, rejected this life plan as wasting their educations, limiting the growth of their interests, and obstructing their moral path toward transformative social leadership and service guided by Gospel ideals. They felt called to use their educated capabilities to collaboratively develop better ways of caring for poor and marginalized people, while transforming the unjust and undemocratic American economic, legal, and social systems that were causing so much misery for so many.

Addams, Starr, and their other Rockford friends struggled for more than five years after their college graduation in 1881 to develop a clear vision of how they, as highly educated, socially and economically privileged white women, could achieve their double objective of finding personal meaning in living and doing a new kind of ameliorative and transformative work with those they aimed to lift out of poverty and social exclusion. Addams's imagination finally caught fire in 1897, when she read a magazine article about Toynbee Hall, a "settlement house" in a poor area of London that was staffed by college-educated men as volunteers-in-residence who were working with their neighbors. During a European trip they took together, Addams convinced Starr to visit Toynbee Hall with her. Two years later, on the basis of that transformative experience and their additional research, as well as Addams's inherited wealth and social influence, Addams and Starr founded Chicago's Hull House.[9] There they and a small group of other college-educated women lived together as its resident staff, creating a place of welcome and social community for and with their poor immigrant neighbors. At its peak, Hull House included thirteen buildings supporting a wide range of women-inclusive educational courses, debates, dramas, sports, and arts events, while serving as a center for urban research and community-inclusive collaboration to devise effective strategies for resolving the particular eco-social problems its neighborhood members were experiencing in their everyday lives.

During her many years of leadership at Hull House (1889-1935), Addams used her gifts as a speaker and a writer to gain wide support for the practical transformation strategies and the institutional developments the Hull House community devised. In speeches, essays, and books, Addams shared the metaphilosophical, theoretical, and practical insights she was gaining from these

[9] Hull House's claim as the first settlement house in the United States in challenged by supporters of the University Settlement, which was founded as the Neighborhood Guild on New York's Lower East Side in 1886, and moved to its present location in 1898.

horizontal processes of meeting, listening, learning, and working together as equals across differences in class and culture, ultimately giving rise to her fresh philosophical conception of "social democracy." As Addams discovered, Hull House's problem-focused transformative collaborations were valuable not only to their neighbors, but also to countless other young college graduates who were longing for meaningful lives of working toward something better than the limited goals toward which then-prevailing social norms were directing their ambitions.

Addams's first influential book, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), was highly praised by William James, and quoted by John Dewey in his chapters of the revised *Ethics* (1932), because it exemplifies the key meta-ethical insights he had learned from her: the greatest ethical problems of modern life are social, not individual; and these cannot be resolved top-down and by universal formulas, but only through context-specific, experimental collaborative inquiries.[10] In contrast with mainstream philosophy's argumentative method, the *narrative philosophical method* that Addams successfully deploys in this and other influential works follows the oral presentation style of the engaging speeches from which it grew. That is, Addams generally implies and exemplifies her thesis, rather than making it explicit, allowing her stories to "work" at a deeper level of readers' psycho-social being than their more readily accessible beliefs, thus avoiding immediate rejection while implicitly challenging those beliefs and provoking their critical and imaginative rethinking.[11]

Through the stories she tells in *Democracy and Social Ethics* and the way she frames them, Addams suggests that the process through which highly educated, privileged people can learn how to work across class divisions to help resolve the real social problems that the poor experience in their daily lives must begin with the kind of *intellectual and psycho-social humility* that allows these neighbors to trust them enough to teach them how justice and mercy can intertwine as sustaining threads within lives that are very different than their own, thereby challenging their previous assumptions about how to live morally good lives. Only then can such privileged outsiders begin to earn a deeper trust by *working with,* rather than *for* their neighbors in collaborative inquiries and transformative efforts of all kinds. [12]

Within such collaborative inquires, disadvantaged participants will acknowledge the "horizontal leadership" of privileged participants only if they earn it and are prepared to use their social position, skills, influence, and hard work to introduce the specific changes they devise together into their cities and their nation's institutions, laws, systems, and ways of life. For example, when her "horizontal leadership" role at Hull House required Addams to agree to lead the new program of city-wide trash collection in Chicago she proposed to the City Council on behalf of the collaborating Hull House community, she did so willingly, while continuously learning from the suggestions of her neighbors about how to make the program better. At the same time, her visionary leadership, communication skills, and administrative effectiveness earned the trust of Chicago's power brokers, who also were necessary partners in initiating such immediate, practical, and eventually transformative changes *together.*

In "Charitable Effort," a memorable chapter of *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Addams's narrative method conveys the following web of meta-metaphysical, meta-epistemological, and meta-ethical ideas[13] to the read-

[10] Immediately after its publication, James wrote a letter of appreciation to Addams praising her *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902) as "one of the great books of our time," and commenting that he "learned a lot" from it. Dewey cites and quotes Addams in Ethics (1932), Chapter 16, "Morals and Social Problems."

[11] See Jane Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements" (1892) and "The Objective Value of a Social Settlement" (1892), *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910), *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907), and *The Long Road of Women's Memory* (1916), as well as many other essays, letters, and speeches.

[12] On the importance of working *with* rather than *for* oppressed members of one's community to resolve practical problems and to advance social democracy, see Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric* (1996).

[13] The prefix "meta" as applied to each of these domains implies stepping back to another philosophical level that focuses on the larger purpose, process, and logic that guides their relationships

er: All human persons can contribute experience-based insights and valuable efforts toward advancing humanity's moral evolution toward a future stage in which we will have moved beyond hierarchical privileges and privations. Even now, all of us need and can experience the moral mutuality of living as equal, sympathetic neighbors within existing communities that are working together to influence their cities, their nations, and the larger world toward a deeper, social democracy. Addams subtly leads readers of "Charitable Effort" to understand and to accept this meta-philosophical webwork through five steps of thinking supported by a series of anecdotes, which she unobtrusively frames in terms of five scientifically well-supported philosophical claims:

1 We humans evolve morally through a historical process that is always personal, which requires adjusting our moral concepts, ideals, values, principles, and rules to make them more effective hypothetical guides for our conduct in our actual social circumstances.
2 In our modern era, the basic sympathetic impulse of many democracy-minded, idealistic young people to dedicate themselves to "charitable efforts" that aim to offer practical assistance to other members of their society who are in trouble often is misunderstood by those whose experience in living is very different from their own because of class inequalities, which are expressed in relational patterns of privilege and privation.
3 Even though the these privileged young people mean well, their *unscientific* way of approaching "charity" is ultimately responsible for their confusion, frustration, rejection, and ineffectiveness, and even for creating perverse social habits among those they aim to assist; by learning from *new, more scientific* approaches to education and to parenting, they must develop a similarly scientific approach to social service, which can and should lead to great changes in how those in need and their larger society actually live.
4 Transforming charitable social relations toward the moral mutuality of "a larger and more satisfying democracy" is a difficult and personally unsettling process, but all parties to such efforts can contribute valuable insights and memorable examples that can help us to move beyond the currently dominant, hierarchal framework of industrial values that leads to radically unequal rewards for work, opportunities to learn, and quality of life overall.
5 Those who would work with others as horizontal leaders in this democracy-deepening process must exemplify intellectual and moral virtues of *mercy*, *justice*, and *humility*, which will allow them to learn about the meaning of life and how to make life good for all by collaborating with the *economically, but not morally poor people* they aim to assist.

Addams's guiding insight in "Charitable Effort" is that fulfilling our moral responsibilities as human persons requires a more deeply democratic kind of social living that America had not then and has not yet achieved. Our Statue of Liberty's implied pledge that our nation will be a democratic refuge for the world's oppressed peoples is profoundly incompatible with their actual experience on arrival in a hierarchical society that extracts their industrial labor while failing to offer them a safe home as free and equal citizens. Achieving such a deep intellectual-and-practical democracy, Addams suggests, requires working for changes in our mainstream culture, in our eco-social systems, in our existing institutions, and in our current public policies. Gaining the knowledge of what kinds of changes we must make, as well as the power to make them, requires learning humbly with diverse neighbors about how we can think and act well together in on-going experimental processes of strategic thinking, communicating our proposals effectively, actively implementing these with help from powerful others, evaluat-

and the contents of each of them.

ing our results, and taking these problem-focused efforts to the next stage of social transformation at all levels required.

In this way, Addams's approach to progressively actualizing democratic ideal goals involves *a community-inclusive approach to generating shared social knowledge* as a basis for actions that will meet immediate needs, while transforming public policies, institutions, systems, and underlying cultures over time. As James, Dewey, and Mead testified, her writings, speeches, community service, and collaborative, public-inclusive approach to building new institutions and initiating necessary social services played a key role in developing *pragmatism's non-ideal, context-specific, problem-oriented approach to theorizing in the social sciences*, growing of collaborative interventions in community life that are effective in four ways:

1. They immediately meet urgent human needs in ways that their "beneficiaries" value and help to design.
2. They change the ways in which the participants think about many things—including unacknowledged biases related to class, gender, race, and culture, as well as incorrect beliefs about "how the world works"—by teaching all of them to think-and-act well together concerning shared problems, based on gaining mutual trust through frank exchanges of life stories, opinions, and various other kinds of information, to which people "listen with their hearts."
3. They lead to the creation of new public policies and institutions, or reconstructed versions of existing ones, that can meet such urgent needs on an on-going basis.
4. They serve as examples for further social scientific study, criticism, comparison with related examples, and development of "low-rise" metaphysical generalizations that may be helpful in the future for re-solving the same complex eco-social problems if these recur, and for guiding efforts to transform the institutions and larger systems that give rise to these, as well as cultural norms and social habits that support them.

All of these strands of Jane Addams' transformative practice-based, meta-philosophical, theoretical, and institutional thinking developed simultaneously, stimulated by and stimulating the Hull House community's efforts, as well as those of diverse philosopher-activists within the emerging pragmatist movement's de-centralized national and international processes of weaving a new intellectual-and-practical webwork of ideas.

Building on the lessons and achievements of the poverty-focused transformative efforts of the Hull House community, Addams took up a collaborative leadership role within struggles for racial and gender justice in America,[14] as well as for international peace. Following a series of lectures on peace as positively understood,[15] Addams wrote a series of fallibilistic, experience-based, self-correcting books and essays, including *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907), *Women at the Hague: The International Congress of Women and Its Result*s, co-authored with Emily G. Balch and Alice Hamilton (1915), *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922), and "Later Reflections on Peace" (1932).[16] In *Newer Ideals of Peace*, Addams anticipates the eventual substitutions of the progressive change-making ways of peace for the horrifying ways of war as emerging from an evolutionary process she believed was well underway

[14] For example, Addams was a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a public supporter of Ida B. Wells-Barnett's anti-lynching crusade, and a well-known advocate for women's right to vote.
[15] See, for example, an article in *Chataqua Assembly Herald* (July 9, 1902), on her second lecture on "The Newer Ideals of Peace" at *Jane Addams Digital Edition*, http://mail.digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/1167.
[16] I discuss Addams's writings on positive peace—the "newer ideal" in which she framed the first of these books—in my essay, "Social Democracy, Cosmopolitan Hospitality, and Intercivilizational Peace: Lessons from Jane Addams," Chapter 9 in Maurice Hamington, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams* (Penn State University Press, 2008). For rich insights on Addam's views on social democracy and peace, see Marilyn Fischer et al., *Jane Addams and the Practice of Democracy* (University of Illinois Press, 2009), and Marilyn Fischer and Judy Whipps, *Jane Addams's Writings on Peace* (Thoemmes Press, 2003).

and would soon lead to cosmopolitan hospitality across lines of national and civilization differences.[17]

When the horrors of World War I began, Addams revised this hypothesis from evolutionary inevitability to *the higher evolutionary possibility of peace*, building on her Hull House fame and its methods of collaborative inquiry to co-found the Women's Peace Party—which also demanded women's suffrage—in 1915. Shortly thereafter, Addams represented this new organization at a conference of international women leaders at the Hague that focused on women's role in peace making, about which she, Emily G. Balch, and Alice Hamilton wrote in *Women at the Hague: The International Congress of Women and Its Result*s (1915). On this basis, Addams launched the still-existing International Women's League for Peace and Freedom (1919), for which she shared the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize, as an active collaboration to gather objective information about the realities of war, to inquire into its causes, to strategize about how to transform these, to meet the needs of the suffering, and to bring together warring peoples and their leaders in social and educational relationships that would critically challenge their previous beliefs, build a shared, motivating "sense of humanity," and guide the design of cooperative actions and new institutions of social democracy.

In *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922), Addams reflects on the IWLPF's efforts during World War I and the lessons she and other participants learned from them. In contrast with Woodrow Wilson, who imagined democracy as a universal, primarily political system of rights and duties based on the American model, Addams foresaw diverse experiments in democracy as deeply social, context-specific, and emerging out of each nations' experiences of pain and hope, improving over time as nations and civilizations learn from their own efforts and the examples of others. Within this process, Addams looked toward individuals who would be willing and able to think and act in ways that would advance the moral quality of their cultures, in spite of the costs of dissent in times of danger. She hoped that institutionalizing peace-building through the new League of Nations would contribute to this evolutionary process.

However, in "Later Reflections on Peace" (1932), Addams was still arguing against the belief of many international analysts that military forces is necessary for peace, while calling instead for a "gradual moralization of international relations" that substitutes law for violence.[18] Addams suggested that this was already happening through a three-stage process: (1) the creation of mechanisms for arbitration and adjudication through the League of Nations, (2) a sense of security arising from their use, and (3) gradual disarmament. She insightfully criticized the armaments industry as blocking this process and called for its nationalization. Of course, even as she was writing and speaking these words, autocrats were preparing for World War II.

Addams's greatest mistake in "Newer Ideals of Peace" and these later works on positive peace may have been failing to take adequate account of "the new nationalisms" that gave rise to both World Wars and continue to guide violent conflicts in our own times. However, her insight that new habits of peace-building can arise from equally deep human impulses as the impulse to violence is still important. Moreover, her meta-metaphysical insight about which evolutionary possibility will be actualized is equally important: *history's process is moved by those who move it*. Therefore, we must *think and act well together* toward the ideal goals of justice, social democracy, and positive peace throughout the courses of our lives, if these are to become *actual features* of the world's eco-social systems someday, instead of remaining only possible, but never actualized lines of history's evolutionary development at local, national, and global levels.

[17] See my "Social Democracy, Cosmopolitan Hospitality, and Inter-Civilizational Peace: Lessons from Jane Addams," op. cit.

[18] See Addams, "Later Reflections on Peace" (1932), in Christopher Lasch's edited collection of her essays, *The Social Thought of Jane Addams* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 253.

Jane Addams's triply privileged life was intertwined at many levels with the less well-known, triply disadvantaged, yet equally contributive life of another originary feminist pragmatist, Anna Julia Heywood Cooper, who overcame triple obstacles of race, slavery-based poverty, and gender to make complementary theoretical, institution-building, and practical contributions to domestic, local, and global struggles for justice and positive peace, including her invaluable insights about how to sustain one's commitment to these struggles over the long-term.[19] Despite the great disadvantages into which she was born, Cooper became even more highly educated than Addams, because she, her mother, and her recently-enslaved Black community were determined that poverty and racial bias would not hold this gifted young woman back, and they all saw education as the high road to liberation for her and for the countless others she would lead. She studied first at St. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute for gifted Black boys and girls in the Southern city of Raleigh, North Carolina, where she served as a peer teacher, earned her diploma, and then married Rev. A. C. Cooper, a classical Greek scholar and Black theologian from the West Indies. After his death six months later, Cooper enrolled with a full-tuition scholarship in the more demanding "Gentleman's Course" at Oberlin College, in the Northern city of Oberlin, Ohio, which was among the first American colleges to admit women and African Americans into its integrated classrooms. Even while struggling to pay her living expenses, Cooper became broadly educated in the sciences and humanities at Oberlin, earning both a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in mathematics.[20]

Many years later, at the age of 66, Cooper became the fourth African American woman to earn a Ph.D., as well as the first to earn a doctorate at the Sorbonne in Paris (1924). Although Cooper had begun her doctoral studies in 1911 at Columbia University in New York, with an emphasis on Medieval French Literature, she withdrew when she will unable (or unwilling) to meet Columbia's residency requirement after adopting her late brother and sister-in-law's five children in 1915 and moving them to Washington, D.C., where she was simultaneously pursuing a demanding professional career in teaching and educational administration, and an equally demanding career in intellectual and practical activism. This is why Cooper shifted her doctoral studies to French history at the Sorbonne, where she wrote and successfully defended a highly original doctoral dissertation, *L'attitude de la France à l'égard l'esclavage pendant la revolution*, a powerful critique of French liberal political thinkers in the years after the French Revolution who, in spite of their avowed values of *liberté*, *égalité*, and *fraternité*, could not agree to end chattel slavery in Saint Domingue (Haiti), or to treat Black plantation owners as their social equals.[21] In *L'attitude*, Cooper analyzes the causes of these French political leaders' failure to live out their own democratic values as springing from two interlinked causes: (1) anti-Black racism, and (2) the French national economy's reliance on revenues from the slavery-based international sugar trade.

Cooper deeply understood both of these toxic social diseases because of her experience of struggle with these same obstacles in America, which guided her research, her teaching, her community service, and her years of national and international advocacy for racial, economic, and gender justice. After she finally retired from teaching and administrative leadership at Washington's Dunbar School in 1930, Dr. Cooper began a new phase of her life-

[19] For additional valuable insights on Anna Julia Cooper's life and work see Charles Lemert & Esme Bahn's helpfully annotated collection of her writings, *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), Vivian M. May's brilliant literary biography, *Anna Julia Cooper: Visionary Black Feminist* (Routledge, 2007), and V. Denise James's prize-winning essay, "Reading Anna J. Cooper with William James: Black Feminist Visionary Pragmatism, Philosophy's Culture of Justification, and Belief," *The Pluralist* 8: 3 (Fall 2013), 32-45.

[20] During those same years, George Herbert Mead also studied at Oberlin College, where his father was Professor of Homiletics and his mother served on the Women's Board of Managers.

[21] Frances Richardson Keller later translated Anna Julia Cooper's doctoral dissertation into English, expressing its title as *Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionists* (1988).

long commitment to education as President and Professor at Frelinghuysen University, which served Black adult learners.

Earlier, during those same years when Jane Addams and her privileged white friends were struggling toward founding Hull House and learning through its social transformation process, Anna Julia Cooper was writing about her race-linked experiences as "a Black woman of the South," and showing that her contributions and those of other college-educated women were needed in order to undo distortions in all of the scholarly disciplines and to assure that the education of new generations of girls and boys, women and men would be responsive to the real needs of the day. Cooper's widely read, path-breaking book, *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South* (1892), includes chapters on how to advance on-going transformative struggles against problems of gender and race. In "The Higher Education of Women," Cooper argues that college-educated women can bring both their knowledge and their caring perspective to challenge and balance out the distorting lens that educated, economically privileged, predominantly white men have brought thus far to all the intellectual fields, thereby creating the basis for much-needed critical reconstruction in all the disciplines that can replace the kind of "old thinking" that has created countless world problems with a more realistic, more inclusive, more caring, and more effective kind of "new thinking." Cooper's meta-epistemological claim about what educated women can bring to such critical and creative collaborations with educated men is not an "essentialist" claim based on biological sex alone, although she clearly believes that women's embodiment plays a role in shaping shared aspects of their experience. Rather, hers is a general historical and sociological claim about the kind of *widely shared perspective* that emerges among college-educated women when they gain opportunities to combine what they have learned within women's "normal" social sphere with what higher education teaches them about the arts, the sciences, and the humanities.

Cooper suggests in "The Higher Education of Women" that college-educated women are aware that they represent countless other women who have been excluded for centuries from higher education and from leadership roles in intellectual and practical life. They recognize that it is their responsibility and their opportunity to *contribute educated women's perspectives* to *collaborative processes of shaping new ways of thinking-and-acting* that can satisfy their own, experience-based, previously unstudied intellectual and moral standards, while at the same time actively helping to meet humanity's practical and aesthetic needs.[22] Thus, in this essay, Cooper introduces some key meta-epistemological and meta-ethical ideas that have become transformative tools for contemporary feminist theory across the disciples:

1. The importance for the growth of knowledge of including group-linked "perspectives" from differing social locations
2. The importance of including the "caring" perspective that historically has been more common among women, and
3. The continuing value of extra-scientific sources of wisdom in living.

This and other essays in Cooper's *A Voice from the South* are full of memorable bits of wisdom from which contemporary theorists and activists can learn valuable lessons about how to think well enough, individually and together, in times of crisis and over the long struggle for justice and positive peace. They suggest ways of feeling-and-thinking that grow out of and continuously support a way of effective, joyful, morally principled living.[23]

[22] Patricia Hill Collins and other contemporary feminist theorists of "intersectionality" credit Cooper with initiating this emphasis on differences in perspective that arise from gendered experience as this is infused with other, context-specific, often hierarchically structured aspects of an individual's or group's experience, including differences in race, class, culture, nation, and religion.

[23] The citations from Cooper in this list and the following paragraph are from Lemert and Bahn's annotated collection, *Coo-*

- "Building up manhood without considering women's hopes is like trying to grow trees from leaves." (78)
- "Get your heart power." (131)
- "Universal reciprocity" (165)
- "Be true to the aspirations of your soul." (226)
- "Let nothing in you starve." (257)
- "Live into the world—don't brood over it." (285)

These bits of Cooper's wisdom also help to illuminate *Voice's* seemingly paradoxical chapter on race relations, "Has America a Race Problem? If So, How Can It Be Solved?" She answers the first question in the affirmative, and the second question with the proposal to "Let it alone and mind my own business" (171). In explaining what she means by this, Cooper writes that America's race problem is so long-term, deep-rooted, and systemic that fully understanding it is beyond human powers. Thus, comprehensively mapping in advance a complete, fully adequate process of transformative action is impossible. Nonetheless, Cooper argues, each American has a moral responsibility to make helpful, consistent efforts to defeat this great evil an important part of their life plan and way of living, so as to be ready, willing, and able to work with others as promising possibilities emerge to advance this great struggle, including by advancing the growth of knowledge and by instituting reformative socio-systemic changes that eventually will bring about democratic equality. Thus, "minding [her] own business" meant using her gifts and following her own calling within this larger change process by focusing her continuing efforts on educating Black students, on institution-building to provide for Black people, and on intellectual leadership through speaking, writing, and participating in national and international conferences at which Black thinkers worked together to understand and to strategize how to overcome America's and the world's "race problem."

per's Voice. Vivian M. May, op. cit., quotes many of these same bits of wisdom.

As these essays suggest, Cooper's primary interests focused on education, including efforts to transform scholarship across the disciplines and to create academic institutions to support the education of Black young people and adults, who lacked both life-sustaining resources and liberatory developmental opportunities within oppressive existing hierarchies of gender, race, class, region, and nation. Based on her educational attainments at Oberlin College, her teaching experiences at St. Augustine's and at Wilberforce University, and her long-term record of community service, Cooper had been recruited to teach mathematics and science, and later to serve as Principal, at the only high school for African Americans in Washington, D.C. (later known as The Dunbar School), which offered "a rigorous education in a politically engaged environment."[24] In this respected role, Cooper became a well-known African American scholar, organizational leader, and public speaker at national and international conferences. She worked closely with other college-educated African American women through the Negro Women's Club Movement, becoming a valued leader and collaborator in many effective transformative efforts that focused on empowering all African Americans, "Lifting as We Climb" in the memorable words of Mary Church Terrell, president of the National Association of Colored Women.[25]

Joining the growing Settlement House Movement that was learning from the efforts of Jane Addams and other college-educated white woman at Hull House, Anna Julia Cooper co-founded and co-led The Colored Social Settlement in Washington, D. C. (1906), "the first community house built expressly for the social improvement of colored people, in the United States and probably the world."[26] Like Addams, Cooper also served on city-wide commissions on basic urban problems. Ac-

[24] See Vivian May, op. cit., 18.
[25] See Angela Davis's critical analysis of the Negro Women's Club Movement in *Women, Race and* Class (1981).
[26] See "The Colored Social Settlement: What It Is and What It Does" (2017), which lists Mrs. Anna J. Cooper as Supervisor, at https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_css/1.

knowledging the importance of here work, Cooper was invited to address a predominantly white audience at the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exhibition, where she presented "Women's Cause Is One and Universal." However, the small number (six) of African American women on the program led an equally famous African American feminist pragmatist, Ida B. Wells, to boycott that event, even though she worked with both Addams and Cooper on other projects, including the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the national anti-lynching campaign she led. Such interracial collaborations within the growing network of college-educated feminist pragmatist women were always fraught with tensions, because the needs for change were so urgent and varied, because the opposition was so great, and because mutual understanding and trust were limited.

W. E. B. Du Bois, the founding leader of the NAACP, was deeply influenced by Cooper, having read her *Voice* shortly after its publication.[27] Both served as members of the American delegation to the 1900 Pan-African Conference in London, which Cooper helped to organize, and where she presented her essay, "The Negro Problem in America," and Du Bois drafted the Conference's concluding Manifesto, "Address to the Nations of the World." His key claim in this Manifesto—"The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the colour-line"—became the framing concept for Du Bois's influential 1903 philosophical and sociological analysis of the race problem in America, *The Souls of Black Folk*,[28] including his visionary prescription for overcoming this problem through continuing, conjoined struggles for work, culture, and liberty.

However, in spite of the fact that Du Bois knew Cooper well as a global leader in the struggle for racial justice, his later book, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (1920), echoes her book title without acknowledgement, and it includes a chapter, "On the Damnation of Women," in which he quotes her without naming her, thus making her doubly invisible behind the "veil" he first theorized in *Souls*.[29] In "Damnation," Du Bois analyzes America's racialized, class-structured gender system, which leaves poor women vulnerable to sexual exploitation and disrespect by white men and boys, while forcing all women to choose between "normal" motherhood in submission to husbands, and well-paid, meaningful work: "Only at the sacrifice of intelligence and the chance to do their best work can the majority of modern women bear children. This is *the damnation of women*" (1920: 62). Du Bois further analyzes the causes of frequent break-ups of Black families, as well as the problem that urban Black women face in finding suitable marriage partners, as primarily economic in origin. Black male "breadwinners" in small towns and rural areas are paid substandard wages and have limited opportunities to get better jobs, Du Bois writes, but Black women can get domestic work and industrial jobs at standard women's wages in cities. However, Black women outnumber Black men in cities, which disadvantages them in choosing marriage partners.

Nonetheless, Du Bois argues, for the sake of "the race" and to fulfill their own gifts, Black women must become educated, as well as economically indepen-

[27] Derrick P. Alridge claims that Cooper eventually became the American Negro Academy's first female member; see his essay, "Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism: The Educational Ideas of Anna Julia Cooper and W.E.B. Du Bois, 1892–1940," *History of Education* Quarterly 47:4 (2007). The website of the Episcopal Church USA concurs. However, I could find no other evidence that the ANA every included women among its members.

[28] *The New York Times* ranked Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* as #2 on its list of the 100 most influential books of the twentieth century, close on the heels of James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), which greatly interested Ludwig Wittgenstein, among other influential twentieth century philosopher. Martin Luther King, Jr., read the works of both James and Du Bois in the course of his on-going development as a philosopher, theologian, and leader for social justice and positive peace.

[29] See Joy James, "Profeminism and Gender Elites: W. E. B. Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett," *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W. E. B. Du* Bois, ed. Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum (2007); and Shirley Moody-Turner, "'Dear Dr. Du Bois': Anna Julia Cooper, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Gender Politics of Black Publishing," *MELUS: The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 40:3 (2015). See also LaRese Hubbard's evidence that Alexander Crummell served as a mentor to Cooper (as well as to Du Bois), in her "Anna Julia Cooper and Africana Womanism: Some Early Conceptual Contributions," *Black Women, Gender and Families* 4:2 (2010). See also V. Denise James, op. cit.

dent, free to pursue their own work, and free to choose whether to have children. Such college-educated Black women are already emerging, Du Bois continues, lifting up all Black people by their work and by the way they live their lives.

> To no modern race does its women mean so much as to the Negro nor come so near to the fulfillment of its meaning. *As one of our women writes*: "Only the black woman can say 'when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me" (Du Bois 1920: 65).

Please note that, even though he does not cite her as its author, this passage Du Bois quotes comes in its entirety from Cooper's *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*.

Given that he knew Cooper well as a leading Black intellectual, educator, and institution-builder, it seems odd that Du Bois sweeps her into the mass of Black women about whom he writes, instead of acknowledging that hers is a leading voice that has helped to shape his own. It is hard to know why Du Bois failed to credit Cooper in *Darkwater*, whether it was because he believed that he could give her ideas greater social impact in those woman-silencing times by affirming them in his own male voice, or because his attention was on advancing his own position within the on-going struggle for paramount patriarchal leadership within African American transformative change efforts.

Many years later, Martin Luther King, Jr., continued to practice this same kind of patriarchal appropriation of women's voices as the paramount African American male leader within the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's, and as a prophetic leader within the global struggle for positive peace.[30] Positive peacemakers since King have acknowledged and built on his contributions to the theory and practice of this local-and-global process, as well as those of Du Bois. and Addams. Cooper has not yet received her due for her theoretical work, her institution-building leadership, and her practical insights about why perspectival diversity matters and how to sustain ourselves in our on-going struggle.

Contemporary pragmatist feminist leaders like Sally Haslanger must add these still-valuable web-weaving lessons from Addams and Cooper to those they have inherited from King in order to stock their memories and imaginations with resources that will help them to expand their already valuable contributions to struggles for justice into peacemaking theory and practice. In Haslanger's Presidential Address to the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, "Social Meaning and Philosophical Method" (2013),[31] she argues against the limits of contemporary individualism as a moral and political framework by stressing the importance of a shared matrix or social web of meanings, which requires cultural, linguistic, and structural change if it is to allow individuals and groups to make an interactive shift toward pursuing social justice. Like the originary feminist pragmatists, Haslanger argues in this essay that individuals are always members of culture-specific social groups, and their actions alone can neither make their society just nor make it unjust, because how their societies are organized always matters. Even the actions of educated and otherwise responsible individuals can contribute to unjust outcomes, if their societies are organized in ways that unjustly oppress those who are exploited or culturally marginalized through the social roles that are assigned to them and the limited options these create. Likewise, good social structures "provide roles for people to do good; structures can facilitate, by the roles they make available, vision, creativity, generosity, leadership, and other good things" (18). "We are embedded in *social meanings*," Haslanger writes, which are structured

[30] See King's final monograph, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos of Community?* (1967), as well as my discussion of his life and work in my *Pragmatist Political Economy* (forthcoming).

[31] See Haslanger's "Social Meaning and Philosophical Method" in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 88 (January 2014), 16-37.

by *social practices*. These can change, she notes, but *"the change must be social change, collective change, cultural change"* (20).

This is why collective responsibility, collective action, and "socially embedded agency" matter so much as aspects of social justice that an individualist "political liberalism" inevitably overlooks or downplays. As Haslanger argues,

> The terms of our action and interaction are not up to us as individuals. What is valuable, what is acceptable, even what we do, and want, and think, depend on *cultural frameworks of meaning*…Given that all action—by individuals or the state—occurs within *a cultural context* that gives it meaning, one might argue that individual and institutional injustice are just the tip of the iceberg. These injustices are the manifestation of *deeper and less tractable sources of inequality in culture, or social meaning*. (20, emphases added)

The culture-linked social structures Haslanger has in mind are "networks of social relations," e.g., family and kinship relations, relations to property, civic relations, and relations within work, all of which take differing forms in differing cultural and familial contexts that may not be transparent to outsiders.

These *social relations* are constituted through *social practices*, Haslanger argues, which may *fall on a continuum between "thin" and "thick."* At the *"thin"* extreme, such practices may be nothing more than "simple patterns of interaction, regularities in our behavior" (21). In contrast, *"thick"* practices partly constitute social structures through actions that may be intentional, norm-guided, aiming to fulfill our responsibilities, and based on shared expectations. Because we may be confused, misled, or unaware of the social structures that guide and are influenced by our actions, Haslanger aims for a general account of social practices that falls "somewhere between the thickest and the thinnest" (22).

Social practices so understood function as organized ways of achieving a goal or resolving a coordination or access problem. They evolve over time through trial and error in self-sustaining ways that may lead later practitioners to lose track of their original purpose, and they may not be rational or mutually advantageous (23) when they are "materially realized" (24). As contemporary anthropologists and other social scientists use this concept, practices "consist of interdependent *schemas* and *resources* [that] mutually imply and sustain each other over time." Schemas are variable and evolving, but also sticky and change-resistant "clusters of culturally shared concepts, beliefs, and other attitudes that enable us to interpret and organize information and coordinate action, thought, and affect." Resources are "things of all sorts—human, nonhuman, animate, or not—that are taken to have [positive or negative] value," whether this value is practical, moral, aesthetic, religious, or of some other kind (24). Within this relational framework, *"A social group*—e.g., a gender, a race, but also farmers, nurses, the unemployed—is *a set of people who function at a node (or set of nodes) in a structure*… Schemas are the basis of social meaning" (25).

Thus, to say that an action or a thing has *social meaning* is to point to a significance that grows out of a widely shared, culture-linked understanding that both exceeds and contextualizes whatever *personal meaning* it may have. Thus, Haslanger argues, "Insofar as social meanings partly constitute our social practices, and internalized meanings guide our interactions, *social justice requires attention to—and changes to—social meanings*," for example, when these involve social stigma or harmful social ideals (26). Changing these social meanings may require changing how we interpret *our key social concepts* or deploying alternative ones.

Broadly, Haslanger claims, "The act of *'defining,'* of assigning a stereotype or schema to an expression, of *deciding* which words to include (or not) in our vocabulary are *political acts*" (30). Moreover, "*How we revise schemas*—whether we discard or modifiy the concepts, core beliefs, evaluations, emotive scripts—*must be justified holistically and in terms of the impact on social practices*." (31). Finally, "Because many of the social practices/structures within which action is meaningful are unjust,

we should subject the schemas to a form of critique that depends on rich empirical investigations. Note, however, that *our theorizing itself [is] a social practice, so should also be subjected to critique*" (32). Unless we do this, "An *uncritical acceptance* of truths and the concepts they depend on may actually cause systematic harms" (33). Positively expressed, "*Philosophy has the power to create culture*; we are not just bystanders but producers" (33).

The phenomenological insights of contemporary feminist theorist Maria Lugones complement Haslanger's insights by suggesting how we, as cross-culturally interacting individuals, groups, and social movements, can begin to shift the social matrix or web of meanings toward deep, positively peaceful changes that are personal, cultural, and institutional. In her frequently reprinted and widely read, essay "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception,"[32] Lugones suggests that "loving," rather than arrogant perception of other cultures, their members, and their lifeways, opens us up to learning from them while recognizing the limits of our own culture's web of meanings, its history, and its achievement of justice. Building our knowledge of another culture we hope to understand and learn from prepares us for "world"-travelling, i.e., experiencing that cultural world "from the inside," as its members experience it, through active, "playful" relationships with some of its individual members that are different in purpose and quality from scholarly, "objective" efforts to study a people. In the back-and-forth of playful relationships, we can try to speak, interact, and see the world as our friends who live within it do, allowing ourselves to laugh, to be laughed at and corrected, to share food and ideas, and to enjoy living, questioning, and making up new meanings together. We are changed by these travels, so that we bring back new possibilities for our own culture's shared matrix or web of meanings, as well as its social-institutional structures, public policies, and the ideal goals that guide these.

Contemporary indigenous botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer expands Addams's and Cooper's ideal relations of mutual learning, mutual trust, and mutual caring within reciprocal relationships to include the living world, echoing Haslanger that actualizing these norms requires changing capitalist frameworks and underlying cultures, while practicing Lugones's "world"-travelling.[33]

She empowers this process by "braiding" together indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge of botany and related fields, and the teaching of plants, treating each of them with a "loving" rather than an arrogant perspective, and using narrative rather than argumentation to persuade. In one of her beautiful essays, "An Epiphany in the Beans," Kimmerer tells the story of working in her garden on a hot summer day, cultivating the beans with which she aims to feed her daughters and herself, when she realizes that the Earth and its plants already love her and other humans, asking only that their care for us be reciprocated. In another essay, "The Pledge of Gratitude," she tells about the overarching educational ideal at an elementary school on the nearby lands of another indigenous people, the Onandaga nation (a member nation of Haudenosaunee, often referred to as the Iroquois Confederacy), where each week begins with students at each level leading parts of the "Thanksgiving Address" that thanks each kind of being in the larger world that cares for them, with each part concluding, "Now our minds are one." In a recent interview with David Marchese, Kimmer

[33] See Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 2: 2 (Summer 1987), 3-19. See also her earlier essay with Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory For You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for the Woman's Voice," *Women's Studies International Forum* 6: 6 (1983), 573-581, and her later essay, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," *Hypatia* 25: 4 (Fall 2010), 742-759.

[33] See Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Milkweed Editions, 2015), and *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* (Scribner, 2024). See also Kimmerer's interview with David Marchese in *The New York Times Magazine* (February 5, 2023). Kimmerer is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and a scientifically trained botanist who leads the Center for Native Peoples and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

explained that she "does not understand the 'taker' attitude. People with that perspective were not raised with the world 'humility' as a good thing."

The important work of collaborative work of theorists and practitioners of positive peace, including Grant E. Rissler and Patricia M. Shields, can be helpfully informed by Cooper's originary Black feminist pragmatism as well as the diverse methods and insights of Haslanger, Lugones, Kimmerer, and other contemporary feminist and indigenous theorists, as it already is by the work of Addams and King. In their collaborative essay, "Positive Peace—A Necessary Touchstone for Public Administration,"[34] Rissler and Shields trace the history of important efforts to advance justice, democratic participation, institutional reconstruction, and positive peace within their profession back to Addams, while arguing that the ontologically social, institutionally reconstructive, and pluralistically normative strands of positive peace theory and praxis should replace their discipline's now-dominant strands of ontological individualism, top-down leadership, and a "negative" conception of peace as guides for developing their discipline's theory and professional practice. Advancing positive peace as a normative goal, process, and practical framework offers four key advantages for guiding the systemic changes we need, in their view:

1. Positive peace is multidimensional in sectors and levels, always seeking to understand and to resolve the root causes of problems, which requires collaborative, cross-sector governance (68).
2. Positive peace involves a tension between justice and order in institutional structures, public policies, and habits of living that must be resolved in particular contexts through negotiation or mediation among affected parties, while "holding space" for those who are nervous or not ready to speak (63, 68).
3. Positive peace recognizes that human beings are inherently relational and interdependent (68).
4. Positive peace is pluralistic, recognizing that this concept has many meanings that arise from its long history of development and deployment within differing cultures, which gives each conception on-going standing, value, and potential usefulness in specific contexts, while requiring competent interpreters of its diverse conceptions of peace and the standpoints within which they matter (68).

Rissling and Shields demonstrate the fourth of these advantages—cultural pluralism that allows collaborating participants and theorists to learn from and "travel" with others—by showing how eight different, yet potentially mutually informative, culture-specific conceptions of positive peace can be, all of them including justice in its conditions. These include:

- shalom (Hebrew): "right relationships or unity and prosperity in alignment with the will of Jehovah" (62-64)
- ubuntu (Zulu): "humanity toward others" (62-64)
- ahimsa (Indian): "to kill no living creature" (63-64)
- shanti (Indian): "to maintain a tranquil mindset even in suffering or conflict" (63)
- heiwa (Japanese): "aligning oneself to the common good/social order" (63)
- al-Islam (Arabic): "to be at peace in alignment with the will of Allah" (63-64)
- eirene (Greek): "prosperity and order" (63-64)
- justapaz (Spanish): "peace requires justice in order to be sustainable" (64)

Each of these cultural conceptions of positive peace has already played an important role in context-specific peacemaking processes from which others can learn, without trying to simply replicate them in contexts that differ in important ways. For example, Archbishop Des-

[34] See Grant E. Rissler and Patricia M. Shields, "Positive Peace—A Necessary Touchstone for Public Administration," *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 41: 60-78 (2019).

mond Tutu drew on both *shalom* and *ubuntu* in framing, guiding, and explaining South Africa's post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the multi-year hearings it led in order to build an enduring peace between factions that had been divided by systematic violence. It worked through truth-telling by those who had done great harms and open-hearted listening by those who had endured them. We can imagine how bringing together several of these and other culturally diverse conceptions of peace, justice, and mutual caring might help to resolve the long-term violent struggle in Palestine, as well as American struggles over gun violence in homes and public places, and global struggles over how to make a positive peace over climate change.

Rissler and Shields make another important contribution in this essay in their analysis of the skill sets or competences that public administrators (and others) need to develop in order to be effective horizontal leaders within context-specific positive peacemaking processes like these.

The cultivated skills or competences they list include active listening, problem-solving, dialogue, negotiation, and mediation, as well as trauma awareness, appreciative inquiry skills, self-reflection, and cultural competency "to understand their own biases and culture frames and account for these as they work with others" (65, 71,75). An educational curriculum for positive peacemakers at all levels will help future public administrators to develop these professional skills, competences, and attitudes (69, 73). Rissler and Shields suggest that a pluralistically imagined conception of positive peace must become "a global touchstone" to guide morally desirable and practically effective processes of personal, cultural, institutional, and political change at all levels that respond to now-widespread, reasonable suspicions of individualist conceptions of "democracy," "good governance," and the "taker" systems they now guide (74).

In concluding this essay, may I suggest that the efforts of these and other contemporary theorists to advance ancient ideals of positive peace with justice that so many of the world's peoples' have cherished, demanded, and worked for can become even more insightful and effective by drawing on the interlinked lives, theories, institution-building practices, educational models, and deeply democratic practices of the originary pragmatist feminists, including Jane Addams and Anna Julia Cooper, about how to build a transformative web of relationships that is both context-specific and global in scope. Insights from diverse contemporary feminist theorists, leaders, and practitioners, including Sally Haslanger, Maria Lugones, and Robin Wall Kimmerer, will help all of us to realize that each culture's now-dominant social matrix of meanings and the institutional structures it guides must change, that we can advance these change processes by "travelling" to other people's worlds within and outside our own culture, and that the reciprocal caring that we must theorize, teach, and practice must include all humans as well as other living beings. A final piece of wisdom that these thinkers offer when taken together is this: we do not need, nor can we develop a comprehensive vision of positive peace in advance; but we can find our own places within this great struggle through reflection and active participation, and we can sustain these commitments as sources of long-term hope by doing, rather than brooding about it.

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OVERCOMING MORAL DISPOSSESSION THROUGH AN IDEAL SPACE TO BE: SPATIALIZING MORAL IMAGINATION THROUGH AN ANTI-IMPERIALIST FEMINIST PRAGMATISM

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ABSTRACT: Space-based injustices have disproportionately affected marginalized moral subjects; however, space has not figured as a primary concept in moral theory. *Moral mis-recognitio*n often happens due to the peculiarity of one's embodiment and the spatialized dimensions underlying this. As these aspects are overlooked in philosophical theories on moral worth, entitlement, and agency, we are left with the category of the *dispossessed moral subject*. The paper centers the question of moral dispossession and also develops the link between spatial dispossession and moral dispossession. Subsequently, I develop the notion of an *emplaced moral self*. I argue that coming to a moral self is intimately tied to overcoming dispossession on the one hand, and finding an *ideal space to be* on the other. I conceptualize ideal spaces as emancipatory spaces in which the dispossessed are able to find a home and cultivate a robust moral imagination. Spaces such as Hull House (in Jane Addams' work) or the fictional Tarini Bhavan (in Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's work) can become blueprints for conceptualizing such spaces. These spaces become integral to the development of a relational and imaginative sense of moral self. In the context of my analysis, I interpret and develop resources from the works of two feminist thinkers from different parts of the world, both writing in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, namely, the North American feminist pragmatist philosopher Jane Addams and the South Asian feminist thinker Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. Based on the dialogue between the two traditions, I generate a more global and anti-imperialist feminist approach to the concept of *moral imagination* for moral epistemology. The concept of moral imagination is spatialized for both pragmatist and feminist ethics through this anti-imperialist feminist pragmatist approach, thus contributing to discussions on moral aesthetics in these traditions at the same time. My analysis contributes altogether new conceptual resources such as moral dispossession and an emplaced (not merely embodied) notion of the moral self to moral theory. It also links the fundamental question of claiming moral subjecthood to that of regaining a sense of space.

Keywords: Jane Addams, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, feminist ethics, pragmatist ethics, South Asian feminist thought, moral imagination, dispossession, moral epistemology, moral aesthetics, embodied ethics, dialogic ethics, reciprocity, spatial ethics

Classical moral theories have been strangely silent about the embodied nature of the moral agent. The moral point of view, as Seyla Benhabib puts it, has been defined through the "generalized" other," (2008, 485)[1] where universality and reversibility between the epistemic perspectives of moral agents is assumed. Consequently, the individuality and concreteness of the other are neglected according to her. Furthermore, aspects such as detachment and impartiality become the hallmark of the moral point of view in theories such as Deontology and Contractarianism. We must note that detachment also entails detaching from one's spatial bearings and assuming that one's moral entitlement is space-neutral. I believe that while hegemonic moral subjects can take transition between spaces for granted, space-related discrimination has often been used to override claims to moral subjecthood of the marginalized. *Moral mis-recognition*[2] often happens due to the peculiarity of one's embodiment and the spatialized dimensions underlying this. As these aspects are overlooked in philosophical theories of moral

[1] Benhabib (2008) makes a distinction between the "generalized other" and the "concrete other." She argues that dominant versions of Western moral theory have operated with a version of the other, which is devoid of particularity, thus appearing as similar to the self. On the other hand, feminist ethics highlights the importance of responding to the needs of the concrete other. According to Benhabib, this difference in approach to morality is encapsulated in the debate between Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan.

[2] The philosophical idea of recognition is typically considered to have its roots in Hegelian phenomenology and has gained significant attention in the domain of political philosophy with the works of philosophers such as Axel Honneth and Charles Taylor. Kristína Bosáková (2023), however, argues that while modern theorists of intersubjectivity and recognition as Husserl, Levinas, Honneth and Taylor typically assign the roots of this theory to Hegel, there is actually another direct precursor in the works of Ludwig Feuerbach (103). Bosáková's work provides rich insight into the emergence of intersubjectivity and recognition theory in the Western intellectual tradition, and especially highlights its affective dimensions through Feuerbach's work. The concept of moral dispossession, as outlined in this paper has the potential in future to add on to the broader debate on recognition theory by outlining an altogether different register of recognition (and mis-recognition), that is, (mis)recognition as moral subjects. The misrecognized moral subject is one whose claim to moral goods goes unrecognized. The framework of moral dispossession in turn, as we will see in the course of analysis, brings a unique perspective to moral theory. The emphasis on moral dispossession challenges the idea that concerns about moral recognition can simply be added to ideas of moral obligation and moral entitlement as an afterthought.

worth, entitlement, and agency, we are left with the category of the *dispossessed moral subject*.[3]

Moral dispossession, as I define it, is not a matter of feeling dispossessed. It is a condition, which is both material and symbolic. Dispossessed moral subjects are those that are denied moral subjecthood on the basis of both structural inequalities and mis-recognition. A discriminatory spatial politics, I believe, plays a crucial role in such moral marginalization. Therefore, the standpoint of the dispossessed subject provides a unique opportunity for moral theory to define new trajectories for itself, especially when it comes to developing a spatial understanding of ethics. The paper centers the question of moral dispossession and also develops the link between spatial dispossession and moral dispossession. Subsequently, I develop the notion of an *emplaced moral self*. The concept of the emplaced self contributes to a positive reconstruction of moral theory since it offers us a way to think about our spatial bearings or, in other words, the entrenchment in space of a moral subject. This aspect cannot be overcome, and neither should it be neglected in considerations of moral entitlement and agency. The category of the emplaced moral self, I believe, provides moral theory with a much-needed vocabulary to name how spatial dimensions of one's embodiment deeply impact access to moral entitlement, and consequently, both moral possession and dispossession. Such framings are critical for envisioning moral theory in an inclusive mode, and especially one that begins from the point of view of marginalized moral subjects. In light of this, I argue that coming to a moral self is intimately tied to overcoming dispossession on the one hand, and finding an ideal space to be on the other. I conceptualize ideal spaces as emancipatory spaces in which the dispossessed are able to find a home and cultivate a robust moral imagination.

In the context of my analysis, I interpret and develop resources from the works of two feminist thinkers from different parts of the world, but both writing in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. The first is Jane Addams, a feminist pragmatist philosopher from North America whose work I take up in section one, while the second section features the work of South Asian feminist thinker Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. Addams and Rokeya are not only continents but also life-worlds apart; yet a hermeneutical alliance between them can help in our project of thinking ethics from the standpoint of the morally dispossessed subject. Both belong to the early generation of women thinkers whose world views and writings emerge in the context of deep involvement with various social reform movements and, in Rokeya's case, in the context of British colonial rule in India. There are, however, several challenges in engaging with their works. Although Addams' work has gained philosophical attention over the past decades, it has not been read through the lens of moral dispossession. Moreover, potential contributions from an Addamsian lens for developing a uniquely spatial framework for ethics is only beginning to get attention (see, for instance, Banerjee 2023). By centralizing these themes, my interpretation thus provides a new entry-point into scholarship on Addams. On the other hand, Rokeya's work has not received attention from academic philosophers, nor has it been interpreted through the disciplinary tools of philosophy. Engagement has primarily been from the disciplinary perspectives of literary studies, women's and gender studies, and social history.[4] On my part, not only do I develop a new framework to interpret Rokeya's work, that is, through the lens

[3] I would like to clarify that the nexus between body and space is theorized in this paper only with respect to their implications for moral theory, especially with regard to what they entail for moral entitlement and moral agency. My attempt is to develop a framework of moral entitlement, which is based on a spatialized notion of the moral subject and, in doing so, to spatialize the concept of moral imagination. The emplaced moral self stipulates a radically new entry-point into moral theory, namely, from the lens of dispossession, which is not anticipated in the dominant White and male-stream traditions of Western moral theory.

[4] The volume, *A Feminist Foremother: Critical Essays on Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain* (2017), edited by Mohammad A. Quayum and Md. Mahmudul Hasan, for instance, brings together a rich collection of essays from scholars working within some of the disciplinary perspectives mentioned.

of moral philosophy, but my analysis of her work also establishes points of conceptual alliance with the feminist pragmatist tradition. Based on the dialogue between these two intellectual traditions, I generate a more global and anti-imperialist feminist approach to the concept of *moral imagination* for moral epistemology. The concept of moral imagination is spatialized for both pragmatist and feminist moral theory through this anti-imperialist feminist pragmatist approach, thus contributing to discussions on moral aesthetics in these traditions at the same time. Spaces such as Hull House in Addams' work or the fictional Tarini Bhavan in Rokeya's work can become blueprints for conceptualizing such spaces. These spaces become integral to the development of a relational and imaginative sense of moral self. My analysis contributes altogether new conceptual resources such as moral dispossession and an emplaced (not merely embodied) notion of the moral self to moral theory. It also links the fundamental question of claiming moral subjecthood to that of regaining a sense of space.

1. Moral imagination, Memory and Space: Interpreting Jane Addams's Work through the Lens of an *Emplaced Moral Self*

When experience, including moral experience is understood in a transactive mode of doing in situation, and not simply as knowing in the mode of the spectator, then moral engagement, as Dewey puts it, demands both intelligence and imagination.[5] Addams, while agreeing to many of these commitments, on her part, directly connects the enhancement of moral experience and the issue of moral maturity with living a life, engaging with others, and thereby facilitating reconstruction in one's values. In texts such as *Democracy and Social Ethics,* originally published in 1902, Addams also links the generation of the moral motive directly with the formation of a social motive. She argues that moral experience is a catalyst for social change. Embodied care (Hamington, 2004), sympathetic understanding and collective action (Lake, 2014) are integral aspects of an Addamsian conception of moral imagination.[6] In Banerjee (2023), Addams is read as "… not only centralizing embodiment, but also lived dialogue between agents in their difference as a site of moral imagination and moral agency." (352) Moral imagination, in short, is framed as being essentially dialogic. A new model of reciprocity is proposed in Banerjee (2023), namely, "dialogic reciprocity," which "… emphasizes a certain responsive interplay between people across difference and calls for a framing of moral agency as interactive rather than individualistic." (345) Associated with dialogic reciprocity, the concept of "liminal spatiality" is developed, which moves forward from Addams' work and "… highlights the importance of blurred or in-between spaces within the framework of dialogic ethics" and, in turn, "… contributes to the formulation of a spatial ethics across difference" (Banerjee, 2023, 345). The fundamental premise of this framework is that the nature of the meeting place must be an essential consideration of dialogic ethics; that is, "The space also determines whether moral authority can be dispersed in a more egalitarian manner" (Banerjee, 2023, 359). In this paper, I offer an interpretation of Addams's work, *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, originally published in 1916, to further build on this spatial understanding of ethics. I develop the link between moral imagination and space as well as moral subjecthood and space. Additionally, I argue for the axis of memory as an important constituent of moral experience, that is, as an interpretive resource for present experience and as contributing to the development of our voice as moral agents. It must be noted that this work by Addams is not usually interpreted as a text in moral philosophy or pragmatist ethics, but rather as a

[5] John Dewey develops his idea of imagination for moral theory in his work, *Human Nature and Conduct*, originally published in 1922. This paper, however, focuses on Addams' idea of moral imagination.

[6] For more on how Addams departs from and further develops the idea of moral imagination compared to Dewey, see Amrita Banerjee (2023) and Maurice Hamington (2004).

work that speaks to the epistemological dimensions of Addams' thought. Through my analysis, on the contrary, I argue that the text provides rich insight into developing the link between memory and moral imagination on the one hand, and moral imagination and space on the other. By doing so, it can contribute to the development of the notion of an emplaced moral self and an ethics of emancipatory space-making, which are points of focus in the paper.

1.1. Moral Imagination and Projections of the Self through Memory: Interpreting *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* through the Lens of *Moral Dispossession*

The Long Road of Woman's Memory revolves around the story of a Devil Baby, with miniature horns and a forked tail, which was said to have appeared in retribution for a husband's vices, and was rumored to be sheltered in Hull House. There were different versions of the story as Addams comes to realize such as the Italian and Jewish versions. But in all versions, the Devil Baby is born as an effect of the Father's anger and his vices. Upon wide circulation of the story, a huge number of women, especially poor, working-class, and elderly women came to Hull House over the course of weeks to meet this alleged Devil Baby. Addams relates that one woman even came to visit from the poorhouse, having heard the story of the Devil Baby (2002, 12). During their visits, the elderly women reminisce into their past, reflect on the pain and hardships they have suffered, and share these memories with residents of Hull House including Addams. Addams recognizes the constituting power of experience, and her uniqueness lies in the fact that, rather than dismissing the story as a mark of superstition, she gives it an "epistemologically relevant status" (Haddock Seigfried, 2002, xxiv-xxv). On my part, I interpret this as an attempt to frame the discussion of epistemology and memory from the point of view of the dispossessed subject, although Addams herself does not offer such a concept. My interest, however, is to develop the discussion of Addams's work for the purpose of outlining a moral epistemology from the margins.

The point I would like to highlight is that in the various stories of the women that Addams documents, memory seems to call out moral harm and, through an imaginative process, provides an insight into one's own specific suffering as well as suffering in general. The story of the Devil Baby appears to give voice to the wrongs of domestic violence, the death of virtue, etc. without explicitly being framed as lessons in morality. In turn, the story becomes a conduit for these women to delve deep into their own experiences of suffering and calls forth many affective responses, which propel imagination further. The story makes visible various moral injuries on their selves that the women have endured in isolation, and which they could not or did not previously communicate to the world. I think the relevance of such stories takes on immense significance when we attempt a moral epistemology from the standpoint of the dispossessed subject since, as Addams rightly points out, "They remind us that for thousands of years women had nothing to oppose against unthinkable brutality save "the charm of words," no other implement with which to subdue the fiercenesses of the world about them. Only through words could they hope to arouse the generosity of strength, to secure a measure of pity for themselves and their children, to so protect the life they had produced…." (2002, 18-19) Marilyn Fischer notes how the Devil Baby tales are interpreted by Addams "… as a form of moral instruction that had evolved and been refined through a long historical development." (2010, 83)

One way to interpret the story of the Devil Baby, I believe, is to view it as encapsulating a kind of practical moral wisdom of the dispossessed collective, which has been accumulated over centuries of suffering and marks itself as an outcome of moral imagination. The story is a performance of moral outrage and of precarity, and it ultimately calls out injustices from a standpoint of dispossession. In

imagining their selves in relation to the story and recalling their lives through the selective power of memory, unseen practical wisdom, which is encapsulated in these memories, along with moral insights gained in the course of living a life, become visible to those that bear witness to these acts. Through individual responses to the story of the Devil Baby that appear purely affect-driven, therefore, a larger social epistemology of moral imagination can potentially take root. In so far as one imagines oneself in and through the story, the imagining subject gains a sense of moral community with other dispossessed subjects, while also playing a positive role in growing the accumulated repository of moral intelligence. Doing so, provides a way to overcome dispossession and exert a claim to moral subjecthood in relational terms.

Through the stories that the women tell, memory seems to call out moral harm. It does so through performing two functions. Memory plays a role in "interpreting and appeasing life for the individual," and acts "as a selective agency in social reorganization" (Addams, 2002, 5). Upon listening to the women, one understands how their moral subjecthood was routinely denied. A key aspect of the idea of moral dispossession, which I emphasize is the way in which it curtails one's moral self. The dispossessed subject is the morally injured subject and, being so, may become an incomplete and inhibited subject. Moreover, curtailment of subjecthood is a marker of moral dispossession and moral dispossession, in turn, further perpetuates and normalizes such curtailment. The story of the Devil Baby provides hope for a moral restoration of the self from this state of dispossession. It does so, "because for once a man responsible for an ill-begotten child had been "met up with" and had received his deserts." (Addams 2002, 21).

As the women come to terms with their own dispossession and the ability to make this visible to others in relation to the story of the Devil Baby, memory also plays a role in imagining the self and the self's ethical relation to others differently. Addams notes how time and memory play a role in burning out resentments and hatreds, and even cherished sorrows (2002, 11). When the most "hideous sorrows … had apparently subsided into the paler emotion of ineffectual regret," she writes, "Memory had long done her work upon them; the old people seemed, in some unaccountable way, to lose all bitterness and resentment against life, or rather to be so completely without it that they must have lost it long since." (Addams, 2002, 11) Moreover, remembering as an act of moral imagination allows the women to imagine their relations to others differently — anger makes way to forgiveness and bitterness gives way to hope. Such powers of memory, especially the "sifting and reconciling power inherent in Memory itself," (2002, 16) should be understood as key aspects of moral intelligence. Although moral imagination is a key aspect of moral epistemology for pragmatists, I suggest that moral imagination plays an even greater role when we begin to think of moral epistemology from the standpoint of the dispossessed subject. Dispossessed subjects are neither treated as objects of moral entitlement, nor are they able to engage as equals in the distribution of moral goods. For them, moral imagination promises a limited, yet powerful, phenomenology of hope although this is not a substitute for material change. Memory allows one to see the moral wrongs one has suffered in relation to larger social injustices. Addams recounts the reminiscences of a woman who was left by herself to raise her son after her husband was found dead in a "disreputable quarter of Paris" (Addams, 2002, 30), and she resolves to raise him in a righteous environment. However, once the son goes to college, he gets a girl pregnant and dies by suicide. The woman raises her grandson while the mother of the newborn ends up living a disreputable life. As she remembers the past, the woman is awakened to a striking realization that the social ostracism of the so-called "un-chaste women" (Addams, 2002, 33) is often an effect of repressive social conventions. She realizes that "such hardness of heart on the part of "respectable" women towards the so-called

fallen ones," is a matter of injustice and often the result of satiating a "spiritual pride" in their own superiority (Addams, 2002, 33). In this way, memory exposes larger social injustices that frame discourses around moral villainy and transgressions to which dispossessed subjects may be subjected to, and it also plays a positive role in envisioning new norms to challenge the old ones.

1.2 Gaining Space, Gaining Self: Conceptualizing Space as an Ordering Relation for Dialogic Ethics

Moral injuries are disclosed not through the giving and taking of reasons in the public sphere, nor in the language of denial of rights, but in a language that is saturated with affect. As discussed above, the agent here is subjectively guided by memory and objectively by the story of the Devil Baby. The language of suffering and endurance takes on an ethical tone through the witnessing of this remembering by another in the context of a dialogic act within the intimate space of Hull House. A peculiar form of "aesthetic sociability," to use Addams' terms (2002, 9) is in play, and I add that specific kinds of spaces become conditions for the possibility of the emergence of such sociability. I believe that the self, the other, and the space of intimacy and trust that connects the self to the other in this unique relation of telling and witnessing must be construed as a triad. Within the triad, exerting a moral claim in the sense of visibilizing harms and injuries to the self becomes possible for dispossessed subjects. I would like to highlight that the peculiarity of emplacement appears to have a bearing on what the women can imagine, what possibilities are available to them for recognizing themselves as imaginative agents, and how far their imagination can be propelled into gaining both a self-understanding and an understanding of the world when they find themselves placed in a space of trust such as Hull House.

Epistemic and moral self-assuredness is conferred as the women's memories are recognized as conveying moral insight, and not dismissed as a passive record of a bygone life. To understand the role of the spatial configuration, we must note that the same voice was being heard differently or not being heard at all in the women's own domestic spaces. The difference in response they receive within Hull House makes a difference to the projective powers of imagination and their ability to claim themselves as moral subjects. Powers of memory are accentuated many-fold when exercised by dispossessed subjects, but only when these subjects find a voice within the right kinds of spaces. The issue concerning the voice of the marginalized has received considerable attention in postcolonial theory in the context of discussions of representing these voices in historical and political analysis. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) for instance, highlights a grave problem in the self-presentation of subaltern voices due to their insertion into public discourse, which is mediated by dominant colonial structures. When uptake is constrained by dominant narrative possibilities, then even though the 'subaltern woman' may literally speak, the possibility of hearing her voice is severely restricted by these structural obstacles. Consequently, the linguistic exchange cannot translate into a dialogic utterance. While recognizing these difficulties in the process of representation in the context of socio-political discourse, my analysis moves on to the terrain of moral theory, where dominant frameworks neither offer a notion of dispossession, nor any conception of moral subjecthood that recognizes its dependence on a prior claim and, therefore, raises the question of moral recognition. On my part, I develop the nexus between body, space and moral imagination to foreground how spatial dispossession may be a primary factor in obstructing one's claim to moral subjecthood. In this sense, the notion of an emplaced moral self, which is developed in the paper signals toward both constraint and possibility due to spatialization of the moral subject, and foregrounds the implications of space for the expression of a moral voice. I want to highlight that space confers socio-political power and, if the lack of such power is a constituent factor in moral dispos-

session, then the inequality of positioning of agents can translate into an unequal access to exercise one's moral powers. Part of building a model for a dialogic ethics of reciprocity across differences, therefore, would rely on attending seriously to the ethics of space-making or, in other words, developing a spatial ethics. When a space is fashioned in a dialogic mode, it allows one to become visible on one's own terms as a moral subject to others who, in turn, must recognize them as such, whether it is as sufferers of moral injury or as epistemic agents with unique moral standpoints. My argument that a dialogic ethics of reciprocity across differences must attend seriously to the ethics of space-making can contribute to existing discussions on representation in this respect.

Memory's social role is best visible in conversation with the other. The intimate but yet public nature of the space of Hull House allows the women who tell and those who listen to understand how diverse experiences often connect and find a shared human basis in suffering, loss, violation, and precarity. The space reflects how collective wisdom to guide conduct may sediment through the recalling, and affective responses from the empathetic other. Addams herself admits this, as she listens and writes, "… I found myself almost agreeing with her whole-hearted acceptance of the past as of much more importance than the mere present…." (2002, 13) It is interesting when Addams notes how some men visiting Hull House answer in response to her query about whether they believed that Hull House would exhibit a poor little deformed baby. "… they replied: "Sure, why not?" and "it teaches a good lesson, too" …." (2002, 18). Addams interprets the men's comments as acknowledgement of "the strange moral standards of a place like Hull-House" (2002, 18). The point to note here is that, without stating as much, a certain kind of moral orientation appears to be attributed to the space of Hull House that is neither reducible to the moral orientation of its inhabitants nor its visitors. The space seems to act as an interpretive horizon for the men to articulate their moral position with respect to the Devil Baby, and for Addams to interpret the men's responses. In this respect, space constitutes a key third element of the triad in the sense of functioning as a sign against which moral responses between the self and the other are envisioned and interpreted.

2. A Philosophical Interpretation of the Moral Universe of Rokeya's *Padmarag:* The Centering of the Space-deprived Moral Subject

In this section, I interpret Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's work of utopian fiction titled, *Padmarag* from the lens of moral philosophy, with a focus on its implications for moral epistemology and moral aesthetics. This work was originally written in Bengali in 1924, and the translation by Barnita Bagchi was published in 2005.[7] *Padmarag* is a work of utopian fiction, but has autobiographical undertones. Bagchi notes in her "Introduction," "… *Padmarag*, is no dream vision …. It belongs to Rokeya's own time and place, and the problems it lays bare are clearly contemporary." (2005, xviii) The world of the text gives voice to many spaces created and inhabited by Rokeya herself in colonial Bengal such as the school she ran for Muslim girls, the slums where she did much of her work, and the women's organizations she founded. My aim is to draw out the work's potential for contributing to a feminist pragmatist approach to moral theory. I further develop the connection among memory, narration, and moral imagination on the one hand, and between narration and truth on the other. In light of these, I outline a definition of dialogic spaces as relational loops and as polyphonic. I rely on the insight from feminist moral theory that the boundary between the moral and the social is not as neatly drawn as classical moral theory takes it

[7] Rokeya, like some other contemporaries of her time such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, uses fiction (including in the form of utopia) as a way to subvert gender norms and call out various social and political injustices of her time. Her writings range from fiction to essays to letters. Some of these are in Bengali and a few are in English. *Padmarag,* which is a work of utopian fiction, has autobiographical undertones, but Rokeya here takes recourse to fiction unlike Addams' direct autobiographical narration.

to be. I am also guided by the pragmatist insight that ethics is social, both in the sense that moral values have a social basis, and that moral reconstruction and social reconstruction are intertwined. I try to situate and read Rokeya's text within these hermeneutical possibilities in order to evolve specific insights for a moral epistemology from the standpoint of the dispossessed subject. Again, the point to note is that the text has neither been interpreted as a text in moral theory, nor as a work in epistemology. I believe, however, that my analysis of the text contributes to the development of an anti-imperialist feminist pragmatist conception of moral imagination as a part of a dialogic feminist ethics. It also contributes to the notion of ideal spaces where one can stake a claim to moral subjecthood from a position of dispossession.

2.1 Dispossession as Displacement and Misplacement: Reclaiming the Epistemic and Moral Self

At the center of *Padmarag* is Tarini Bhavan, a space which is inhabited by many women who are displaced or misplaced, and come from various walks of life. "Bhavan" means residence or house, so this can be translated as Tarini House. It is set up by a Brahmo[8] widow named Dina-Tarini as a home for widows (2005, 27). At the time, the plight of the widow was one the worst; she was a figure who was often relegated to the margins of the household and to society. Dina-Tarini eventually adds a school for girls, forms a Society for the Upliftment of Downtrodden Women, and a Home for the Ailing and the Needy. The Tarini Workshop teaches women skills for earning an income (Rokeya, 2005, 28). As Ben Baer and Smaran Dayal put it, "*Padmarag* both solicits and subverts the arc of the so-called "marriage plot" and fictively documents the work of an all-female group's maintenance of a multi-faceted institution (school, sanctuary, workshop)." (2024, xxviii) The characters inhabiting the space range from people who are dispossessed in their own homes, to ones that have lost their home, to ones that face social ostracism. One finds Charubala Datta, a Hindu spinster, Saudamini, a Hindu married woman who had to leave her husbands' home, Helen Horace, a Christian Englishwoman who is unable to get a divorce from her abusive husband who was later put in a lunatic asylum due to dictates of English law (Rokeya, 2005, 32), Koresha-bi, a Muslim woman who has left her husband's home, Siddika (who is named Padmarag by Dina-Tarini) and who is left in the care of Tarini Bhavan, and many others. In the terms being developed so far, we see a picture of dispossession emerging as an effect of displacement of the subject in the sense of being uprooted from spaces, or misplacement in the sense of the subject not fitting into a space. Dispossession manifests through spatial confinement, being space-choked and space-discriminated. This kind of material in the text provides the ground for eventually interpreting Tarini Bhavan as a material and symbolic site for resisting both moral and epistemic dispossession.

I think that Rokeya's work reflects a nuanced discussion concerning the multiplicity in social positioning and a complex interweaving between oppression and privilege, which is way ahead of the contemporary feminist discussions on intersectionality. The predicament of women as forces of patriarchy, religion, colonialism, and nationalism collide, and the oppositional agency displayed by them are highlighted. Dina-Tarini herself is a Brahmo widow and one who is privileged in terms of class and education, but she is ostracized by her relatives who believe she works with "disreputable" people.[9] Saudamini is marginalized as a second wife and step-mother. Many of the women who find a home in Tarini Bhavan are utterly destitute. The text, therefore, provides a textured understanding of social dispossession. If social dispossession is understood as graded,

8 Brahmoism was a socio-religious reform movement, which emerged in Bengal in the nineteenth century and was pioneered by Raja Rammohan Roy.

9 Dina-Tarini is a widow, who spends the inheritance from her husband to build Tarini Bhavan, and faces disapproval from her kin and family. Dina-Tarini's life's trajectory reflects that of Rokeya's own and may be read as a testimony to Rokeya's world.

then moral dispossession too must be taken to manifest in varied and graded modalities.

The residents of Tarini Bhavan discuss virtues, vices, agency, and responsibility, thus generating an entire moral universe. Many concepts with heavy moral connotations emerge in the text such as responsibility, generosity, service, empathy as ways of framing both purposes and people. Various negotiations happen as the women live together, share stories, and work together to realize the moral and social purposes of Tarini Bhavan. When one reads carefully and tries to excavate the layered ethical contours of the text, we are able to see how the moral self is reclaimed anew in and through establishing a relationship with others on the one hand, and imagining a relation with a space where one is at home on the other. Moreover, this relation is not imagined in the dry rationalistic language of rights, but rather in terms of a reason-feeling complex, which is encapsulated in terms such as responsibility, generosity, and service. Dina-Tarini herself overcomes the curtailment of her social self (a mark of dispossession as discussed above) through the imagination of a new moral self that is imbued with a sense of generosity, empathy, and a deep sense of responsibility toward others. The moral self is not solipsistic, but extends into the world, and it is able to take shape through Tarini Bhavan where this moral goal and social change can be achieved in unison. Rokeya writes, "Tarini's relatives would remark, 'Where will Tarini find people? Will any wife or daughter from a respectable family go anywhere near her? Every prostitute, every leper and every worthless orphan is now a member of Tarini's extended family!' " (2005, 28). To this, Tarini "… would retort, 'Is everyone given the honour of serving others?' " (Rokeya, 2005, 28) Dina-Tarini appears to find her moral agency precisely at the site where it is dismissed — she refashions her idea of the family to extend it to whom she owes responsibility in Tarini Bhavan, and through this space, into the world. Rokeya's choice of the name is interesting. While "Dina-Tarini," refers to someone who saves others in distress, Bagchi notes how the name "means one who, like a boatman, rows the distressed and deprived away from their suffering." (2005, 195) I believe the name can yield a vision for feminist moral epistemology, which is predicated on the imagination of a self that is attuned to the suffering of others, and is both relational and affective. In this sense, the figure of Dina-Tarini may become a model for conceiving of an ethical self, which is dialogic and is engaged in acts of care.[10]

The residents get a foothold in the world through the work they do, which stipulates new ethical modes of relating to others, whether as teachers to young girls, nurses to the needy, or working in the slums with the poor. Sakina Khanum becomes a civil surgeon, Rafiya Begum a typist, and Siddika eventually becomes good at nursing. (Rokeya, 2005, 111-112). From an individualistic understanding of moral responsibility, they are able to transition into a larger moral and social vision of healing the world and combating its injustices, thereby tying the project of moral reconstruction directly with social reconstruction. Relationality is not just imagined, but it is lived. Siddika ends up fashioning solidarity with Saudamini, as they work together. An epistemology of trust, fashioned on both the affective and the unsaid is established, which eventually pushes Saudamini to reveal her sufferings to Siddika. In fact, in reply to Saudamini's question to Siddika about whether Siddika is really keen to know about Saudamini's story and what she will offer in return, Siddika says, " 'A few tears' ", to which Saudamini immediately responds, " 'That is precisely what I want. Alas! The cruel world … has not deigned to shed a single tear for me. How miserly has the world been towards me!' " (Rokeya, 2005, 71) Moral recognition here works on the basis of the perception of a relation, and it assumes an underlying epistemology of

[10] An interpretation of Jane Addams in relation to care ethics care can be found in Banerjee (2023) and Hamington (2004). My reading of Dina-Tarini as embodying aspects of an ethic of care can further help in conceptually relating the ideal of the ethical self in the works of Addams and Rokeya.

trust without saying much or assuming any sharedness of beliefs.

Saudamini's story highlights how social dispossession within one's home space may result in moral dispossession. She was married to a widower with two children. Right from the time she entered her marital home, her identity was framed through the lens of a stepmother. As Saudamini tries to care for her step-children, she is constantly set up by Shyama (the maternal aunt of the children). Shyama would cause harm to the children and frame Saudamini as the moral villain, that is, as a vicious person who wasn't capable of maternal affection and care for the children. Social and spatial dispossession directly result in mis-recognition.[11] The attribution of moral villainy here is a mark of moral dispossession rather than being a ground of being dispossessed. There are of course, epistemic underpinnings of moral dispossession, which an understanding of epistemic injustice may capture. For instance, if social experience is central to both self and social understanding, and these are also domains of epistemic practice, then, when this sphere is prejudiced by unequal relations of power, the result is a distinctive kind of epistemic injustice, according to Miranda Fricker (2006, 2008). Fricker designates this as "hermeneutical injustice" (2006, 96) and defines it as "the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalization." (2006, 102) This occurs when one lacks the interpretive resources to make sense of their experience and this gap is generally due to the systemic marginalization of the group to which the individual belongs. Hermeneutical injustice manifests in a "cognitive disadvantage" (Fricker, 2006, 103) and issues forth in many epistemic wrongs, for instance, a kind of "situated hermeneutical inequality" (2006, 103), loss of epistemic confidence (2006, 104), and preventing epistemic agents from developing intellectual virtues (2006, 104). Bringing this lens to bear on the current analysis, we may see that Saudamini's epistemic possibilities are pre-determined as she is perceived to be a *step*-mother even before she steps into the role. While Fricker's work brings focus to harms that we may suffer as epistemic agents, my analysis seeks to uncover the specific harms and injustices that we may suffer as moral agents.

I emphasize how moral dispossession harms Saudamini in the sense that she begins to perceive herself as operating with a diminished moral self. She says, " 'I admit that some lack in me must have been responsible for my failure.' " (Rokeya, 2005, 75) This is a poignant instance of how moral injury may curtail moral subjecthood such that one doubts and shames oneself to the point where one eventually isolates oneself from others and the world. As the self-assuredness of the moral self collapses, and dialogue with others (including her husband) breaks down, the possibility of imagining herself as a moral agent also diminishes for Saudamini. The traditional domestic space, from the standpoint of the morally dispossessed subject, comes to symbolize an "abode of demons," a "prison" in Saudamini's words, which seems to designate a space where, as she puts it, "there is no soothing shade, no sympathy for others' pain…" (Rokeya, 2005, 78). The process of remembering in the presence of Siddika allows Saudamini to give voice to the moral hurt she has suffered. In the presence of the empathetic other, bound together in the space of trust that is Tarini Bhavan, Saudamini is able to give voice to how the moral injury she has suffered is a manifestation of a larger moral dispossession that stepmothers face. The dispossession threatens to stiffen one's moral possibilities even before one can realize these. Saudamini also learns to recognize that the curtailment to herself is an outcome

[11] Mis-recognition appears to issue forth in many forms. First, it is in the form of psychological violence from the other. It eventually manifests in the "silent gaze" from Saudamini's husband (Rokeya 2005, 76), and finally indifference from him. In the face of mis-recognition, Saudamini even stops saying that she is not morally blameworthy, and begins curtailing herself to the point that she stops objecting to being the vicious mother for which she was being held morally responsible. This instance is poignant in establishing the conceptual link between mis-recognition and moral dispossession.

of moral wrongs inflicted on her rather than the manifestation of personal vice on her part. Only in Tarini Bhavan, which creates an impromptu community, and where she sees herself in the presence of fellow sufferers who are willing to shed a tear for her, does Saudamini hope for recognition and restoration of her moral self.

Listening to Saudamini's story, Siddika responds, " 'I do not think it was your fault, since Koresha-bi has endured similar suffering.' " (Rokeya, 2005, 80) The relation to Koresha-bi in Tarini Bhavan makes materially concrete the imagined reciprocity with others who have suffered similar violations. Saudamini's narration, her speaking the truth, not only enables her to gain clarity about her own dispossession, but helps her to imagine a social basis of the moral dispossession that she, Koresha-bi and others like them suffer. Intrinsic to the dialogic process, and indeed to its success, is the condition of being free from the threat of violence (including space-related violence), which manifests in curtailment to the moral self. The self is able to envision itself as the truthful self in the course of the narrative process. While Addams exposes the selective power of memory, here we see distinct connections emerging among memory, narration, imagination and truth. As the self remembers in the presence of empathetic others, and in overcoming the threat of mis-recognition, the self comes to see itself as morally empowered to speak the truth. As one dares to speak the truth, the self gets further connected with others and thus overcomes its moral isolation. The ability to be able to tell the truth about one's dispossession without fear is critical to releasing the full powers of moral imagination for dispossessed subjects. Helen too insists " 'I am narrating the truth - not fiction….' " (Rokeya, 2005, 93) as she tells her story in the presence of others. Telling the truth in the presence of empathetic others, that is those who agree to bear testimony, enables the self to see how the coming out of the truth about one's dispossession and the ability to be able to tell it without fear are necessary for overcoming dispossession and releasing the full powers of one's moral imagination for the future. In the context of truthful narration within the dialogic network that is Tarini Bhavan, both Helen and Sakina who are divided on the basis of religion, nationality, and political status within the British colonial government, are collectively able to name the dispossession that patriarchy and nation may inflict on women.[12] The dual focus on the emplaced moral self and a spatialized understanding of moral imagination can contribute to the development of a larger social epistemology of dispossession. In this way, my analysis highlights that we must recognize there are significant epistemic implications of the idea of moral dispossession just as Fricker's work shows there are ethical implications of epistemic injustice.

In pragmatist ethics, the failure of moral imagination is considered to be a mark of moral failure. However, the analysis in the paper introduces further qualitative distinctions within this perspective. I urge that if limitations to moral imagination are self-imposed, then it ought to be considered as a moral failure. However, if limitations are imposed due to the peculiarity of the agent's emplacement, as we see in Saudamini's case, then this ought to be taken as an indicator of moral dispossession rather than as an instance of moral failure. Saudamini's inhibited moral selfhood is not a manifestation of personal vice; it actually marks moral dispossession. Characterizing the situation thus, allows us to name the failure of moral imagination in such cases as an instance of moral harm, which is endured by dispossessed subjects. It is critical for a feminist pragmatist dialogic ethics to interrogate whether the conditions for moral imagination to exercise itself exists for a moral agent, just as much as it is important to emphasize the role of moral imagina-

[12] As Helen realizes how she is dispossessed by the laws of her land, England that binds her to her abusive husband who is now in a lunatic asylum for life, she connects with Sakina's true telling of the story of her life, where the latter suffers similar dispossession on another continent. Helen understands Sakina's hurt upon listening to her story and remarks, " 'Why does this hurt you so, Sakina? You too, were sacrificed in the interest of your country's laws and customs!' " (Rokeya, 2005, 96)

tion for moral epistemology. Only when we do so, can we hope to evolve an anti-imperialist conception of moral imagination, that is, one which allows us to analytically capture and normatively question moral dispossession.

2.2 *Relational Loops* and the Emergence of a *Polyphonic* Model of Space for Dialogic Ethics

The displaced, misplaced, or disoriented subject, in the sense of being spatially confined, spatially surveilled, space-choked, and space-discriminated, finds a home in Tarini Bhavan. We see moral subjects evolving, that is, coming to be in new ways as they begin to imagine themselves as morally empowered and develop larger visions of social critique and reform within the space of Tarini Bhavan. Tarini Bhavan in this sense can be interpreted as a third space, which is more extended than home but is fashioned through bonds of intimacy, care, and generosity. The space is imbued with a moral and social purpose to mitigate suffering. Writes Rokeya, "… training was imparted to those who would become teachers … and to nurses … They would … distribute rice, clothes and medicine and provide nursing care to people suffering the aftermath of famine, floods, and epidemics." (2005, 31-32) The dispossessed self eventually learns to project itself into the world with a new hope and a heart full of compassion, and is supported by her sisters in the right kind of space. As Saudamini arrives at an enlarged and emboldened sense of self, for instance, this spirit is transmitted to Siddika through her connection to Saudamini. Again, the moral self and the space are both imbued with a sense of purpose in relation to each other, which then constitutes a relational loop where each feeds into the other. Tarini Bhavan, therefore, can be conceptualized as a dynamic and multi-layered network of relations. The ideal space as an emancipatory space makes it possible to envision oneself in the dual mode of both receiving and feeling-with others while respecting the other's difference from the self rather than projecting oneself onto the other.

On the one hand, Tarini Bhavan functions as a home where dispossessed selves can come to be, that is, it functions as a space for overcoming moral dispossession, which is the outcome of various orders of socio-political dispossessions. It does so by acting as a counter-space to the domestic home space of violence and dispossession. On the other hand, Tarini Bhavan also functions as a counter-space, where one could hope to gain respite from the regressive force of colonial dominance as well as masculinist nationalism. For instance, the school did not run with funding from the British colonial government, and so it was under no obligation to follow the "government-approved syllabus" (Rokeya, 2005, 30), neither did it accept donations from the ruling aristocracy of native Indian states that had declared their allegiance to the British Empire. Therefore, in Rokeya's words, "The students were not forced to memorize misleading versions of history and end up despising themselves and their fellow Indians. Greater emphasis was laid on ethics, religious studies and the inclusion of sound moral values." (2005, 30-31) They were taught science, literature, mathematics, geography, history and astronomy (2005, 30)." Moreover, Tarini Bhavan appears to function as an interpretive horizon through which the women come to define themselves and their purposes and, in fact, come to see themselves as contributors to nation-building. Towards the end of the text, Dina-Tarini remarks, " 'Of course, God is neither blind nor deaf — the kind of life Sakina has lived or the way Siddika is sacrificing hers will never be in vain. Mother India! Who says that you are a poor beggar? When you have such gems for daughters, in what way are you impoverished?' " (Rokeya, 2005, 177) The women find a way to relate to the nation through care and nurturance rather than through violence or domination.

Coming from many different ends of the social spectrum, the women give voice to a unique kind of anti-imperialist feminism, which learns to see patterns among social injustices without resorting to the second-wave

Western liberal feminist framework of common oppression. In fact, Tarini Bhavan's purpose is not defined through an assumed common and/or pre-given conception of the feminine condition, but it is made subservient to a larger purpose; and Dina-Tarini's figure, as Bagchi notes, "… is an ideal, imaged in religious-spiritual terms." (2005, xviii) Saudamini declares, " 'Come, all you abandoned, destitute, neglected, helpless, oppressed women — come together. … Tarini Bhavan will serve as our fortress.' " Rafiya adds, "We must smash the core of this custom of seclusion. … No more putting up with abuse to preserve the dignity of seclusion!' ", to which Helen who has suffered at the hands of regressive divorce laws in England adds, " 'I, too, shall move heaven and earth to ensure that these despicable English laws are abolished.' " (Rokeya, 2005, 104-105) In all this, very distinct and context-specific, yet common purposes for improving women's condition emerge. Equality is not understood in terms of a common essence, but rather through a care-based language, when Rokeya writes, "Muslims, Christians, Brahmos and Hindus — all working in harmony, as though born from the same womb." (2005, 30) In Tarini Bhavan, doing, both in terms of the moral vision of service and effecting social change, becomes key to constituting the moral self.

I believe that an ideal space from the point of view of dialogic ethics must be polyphonic, so that difference is not reduced to sameness. Women in Tarini Bhavan belonged to different religions, classes, regions, castes, and linguistic communities and, in this sense, the text can be read, as Baer and Dayal put it from a literary studies perspective, "a dramatization of an unconditional ethics of hospitality" (2024, xxviii). While in principle agreeing to this, I would like to introduce complications from the lens of moral epistemology, especially in terms of how embodied transactions between the self and the other also create incommensurability. To illustrate, consider one of several interesting exchanges in the text. Koresha-bi, who is not a native speaker of Bengali, mispronounces Padmarag's name as Padma-raj. (Rokeya, 2005, 35) Most of the other characters (Hindus and Muslims) are Bengali-speaking. Bibha responds, " 'Koresha-bi! You really degrade our Bengali names. … that's very unfair of you.' " In response to this, Usharani Chatterjee, another Hindu woman calls out Bibha, " 'You should hardly lament over this! Don't you remember how initially, you would distort the pronunciation of Muslim names? You'd call Rasekha 'Rasika', Saukat Ara 'Suktara'?' " (Rokeya, 2005, 35) Bibha admits, " 'I also remember that I nearly came to blows with Jafri Khanum on that subject. Well, our Koresha-bi speaks Bengali quite fluently' " to which Usha then makes a funny comment, " 'She certainly does! She just invited me for tea with the words, "The tea will drink you"!' " Koresha turns towards Tarini and asks, " 'Isn't that correct Bengali?' " and Tarini reassures her, " 'That's quite all right; don't let these Bengali women bother you.' " (Rokeya, 2005, 36)

From the perspective of a feminist moral epistemology, I consider this exchange to have several striking implications. In all these interactions, epistemic ignorance is accepted, called out, and negotiated. However, this is not done in the language of shame or lack, but with sensitivity that both knowledge and ignorance emanate from a perspective. There is an awareness that separate linguistic worlds may entail distinct epistemic worlds, ultimately paving the way for a multi-layered understanding of moral worlds. Therefore, managing ignorance demands specific ethical orientations, first of which is the ability to register what is not being heard, or rather what may not be heard. Second, as the linguistic exchanges reveal points of incommensurability and potential conflict, the affective nature of the space and the ethical orientation of the agents involved transform potentially negative nodes into positive meanings. When the space is one of trust, Bibha does not fear coming to terms with her own ignorance and acknowledges Koresha-bi's efforts, while Koresha-bi finds understanding in Tarini. When Usharani calls out Bibha, she not only stands with but assumes the

ethical modality of, what I term, as *standing in* for Koresha-bi. Standing in happens when one bears testimony, and without claiming to absolutely understand the other's suffering, nevertheless assumes moral responsibility to respond to it. Through these multiple loops of relationality, agents and communities expand their powers of moral imagination, understand their own limitations, and come to a coherent sense of linguistic, epistemic and moral community, which is plural, inclusive and ethically keeps itself open to ever-expanding frames of meaning and knowing. The powers of moral imagination are activated manifold by emplacing agents within emancipatory spaces. Therefore, epistemic and moral limitations are overcome, not by moral agents detaching themselves from the place or de-emphasizing their spatial bearing, but by finding themselves in the right kinds of spaces to be. In this sense, moral imagination becomes a form of, what I term, *moral gathering*, where one's moral point of view can be said to be an outcome of multiple negotiations involving various relational loops of dialogue. The framework of moral gathering emphasizes that my relation to others is already sedimented into my point of view even though I may not be conscious of this. An anti-imperialist understanding of moral imagination can be evolved when one comes to terms with these points of connection. Moral gathering demands both ethical solidarities and the proper kinds of dialogic spaces, which can uphold such bonds of solidarity. The phenomenon of moral gathering also highlights our responsibilities as moral subjects to both stand with and stand in for the other whenever required. Such orientation is possible when one envisions oneself as a part of a network of moral relations that recognizes our entrenchment in space, and actively works to build dialogic spaces which can propel moral imagination in creative and unanticipated ways. The raw-material for a polyphonal, but non-cacophonous version of dialogic ethics relies on moral theory recognizing its spatial basis and the importance of ethical forms of space-making.

Epilogue

I have argued that the embodied moral agent of feminist and pragmatist moral theory should be conceptualized as being emplaced at the same time, with the emphasis being on the spatialized dimensions of the moral self. The nexus between the moral self and space, that is, the moral self as a self that is situated in space, along with the nature of this positioning are important to theorize, if we aim to restore moral agency to the dispossessed subjects of moral philosophy. The myth of the self-assured, detached, and universal moral agent can be dispelled when we are able to see that moral agency (both the experience of moral agency as well as a perception of such agency from a third person point of view) is predicated upon a prior claim to moral subjecthood, which has to be acknowledged by others. Implicit within the claim to moral subjecthood, I have argued, is a claim to space. While hegemonic moral agents could take their subjecthood for granted such that their moral agency is never in question, gaining recognition for their claim to subjecthood, especially in the form of a claim to space (or particular spaces) has typically been the ontological burden of those on the margins of moral subjectivity. For peoples whose moral subjecthood itself is in question, the denial of status as a moral agent is often entangled with denial of spatial access or, at best, only partial or mediated access to certain spaces.

The concept of the emplaced moral self, in turn, conceives of the moral subject not in self-referential terms, but as a being who needs to be recognized by others and also has an assurance to space/s. A lens which is developed from the perspective of the dispossessed subject, therefore, can offer a more inclusive frame for understanding moral subjecthood and agency. This is because we can now conceptualize the nature of the privileged subjects of moral philosophy, not in terms of self-referential capacities such as reason, but in relational and dialogic terms, that is, as beings who have both recognition

from others as well as an assurance to space/s. I have argued that liminal spaces such as Hull House (in Addams' work) or Tarini Bhavan (in Rokeya's work) can become blueprints for conceptualizing ideal spaces. These spaces highlight the importance of the space-world for the development of a relational and imaginative sense of moral subjectivity. Assurance in one's emplacement, and finally, the nature of the space, therefore, become critical factors for the expression of moral agency as well as developing confidence in oneself as a moral agent.[13]

Discriminatory and regulatory spaces can play an active role in moral mis-recognition, thus fueling moral dispossession of some at the expense of others. On the other hand, spaces fashioned to mitigate such differences are capable of playing the opposite role of furnishing a moral community, which allows one to overcome dispossession and establish a claim to moral subjecthood. Remembering in the presence of others in a dialogic mode as defined above, creates an inter-subjective basis for moral imagination. On the other hand, the space where such experience is made possible may be characterized as constituting an objective-in-between. Various subjective experiences may come to see themselves as a part of a larger collective wisdom within ideal spaces, where different and often incommensurable experiences may come to find shared moral ground in terms of suffering, loss, and violation. A collective understanding of practical wisdom as an aspect of moral imagination can find an anchor in such spaces. A critical step in overcoming dispossession is imagining oneself as a part of a moral community who, although wronged, is nevertheless morally worthy. Space gives a material body to this collective memory, and the right kinds of spaces institute relational loops to form resilient moral communities. In other words, dialogic spaces are the unspoken background conditions for founding or materializing moral and epistemological communities of belonging, hope and resistance. Overcoming moral dispossession, therefore, must be considered to be space-dependent, with ideal spaces playing a direct role as much as the presence of empathetic others in the healing process and restoration of subjecthood to the curtailed moral self. The concept of the dispossessed subject, in turn, functions as a counter-category to mark the ideological limits of a coherent, self-sufficient and self-assured notion of the self in moral theory.

[13] The importance of conscious-raising activities, especially in the context of abuse and sexual violence has been an important theme in much of feminist activism and theory from the mid to late twentieth century. In this sense, our feminist foremothers such as Rokeya and Addams may be said to pre-empt the impetus behind coming together to establish bonds of intimacy and trust for the marginalized. On my part, I emphasize how dialogic spaces can help in anchoring a claim to moral entitlement, gaining moral recognition and developing moral assuredness. Such spaces would allow moral imagination to flourish at both the individual and collective levels, thus propelling the growth of moral intelligence in new directions.

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PLACING "PHILOSOPHY IN THE PARKS": A NEIGHBORHOOD PRAXIS TOWARDS A "GLOCAL" ORIENTATION[1]

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ABSTRACT: This paper provides a feminist pragmatist rationale for a course called "Philosophy in the Parks." As a course that supports the development of a "glocal" orientation, it offers a practical and effective option to prepare students to be engaged citizens on a local and global level. The first section of this essay introduces the concept of a "glocal" orientation and why it is needed. The following section outlines the commitments of a feminist pragmatist orientation and argues that because they support the objectives of preparing students to be global citizens, they should also be the commitments embraced by a "glocal" orientation. In other words, a "glocal" orientation is a feminist pragmatist orientation. Finally, the third section of the paper describes the course – "Philosophy in the Parks" – and demonstrates how the tools and assignments of this course inform and reinforce a feminist pragmatist "glocal" orientation, underlining the practicality and effectiveness of this approach.

Keywords: "glocal" orientation, feminist pragmatist orientation, nature-based education, place-based education, global citizenship, recognitional justice, "communitiveness"

Why a "Glocal" Orientation?

A "glocal" orientation in education is deeply rooted in local contexts and engagements, fostering the skills and attitudes necessary for global citizenship.[2] When rooted in a local context but with intentional connections to global issues, this orientation can enhance and inform citizenship broadly conceived, habituating this broader way of seeing and engaging with the world. A "glocal" education interweaves "the global with the local to design, plan, and deliver higher education programs based on the principles: Think globally, act locally; and think locally, act globally" (Francois 2015, 87). This orientation underscores the significance of proximity and embeddedness in fostering effective and ameliorative engagement. Achieving a "glocal" orientation goes beyond the mere inclusion and recognition of diverse individuals, cultures, and perspectives. It necessitates a nuanced quality of being and a responsive engagement with others. Amrita Banerjee refers to this as "poise." As Banerjee highlights, "poise involves developing ethical ways of responding to difference, which must entail a dynamic interaction between distinct worlds, allowing each person's worldview to evolve in unique ways" (2018, 254). With "poise," individuals possess the "ability/capacity to convert 'visible' differences into 'presence'" (Banerjee, 244), engaging in an iterative, back-and-forth process that is co-constructive and mutually relational. Such a framework enriches individual perspectives and fosters an environment conducive to collective growth and understanding.

While experiences beyond one's community are uniquely and undeniably perspective-expanding for those fortunate enough to receive them, experiences within one's local community may also be, if structured effectively, perspective-expanding and may be both practically and pragmatically preferable in some situations. This is especially the case as an initial step toward cultivating an expanded and more culturally inclusive conception of the world.

For many students, the idea of a global education that includes traveling to other countries may be economically and culturally inaccessible. Additionally, it may be more practical to cultivate a broader worldview, along with the associated confidence, through gradual steps—starting locally and gradually extending beyond the local community over time. Judy Whipps advocates this balance in her essay, "Local Community: Place-based Pragmatist and Feminist Education." While she did not use the term "glocal," Whipps too argues for a balance between

[1] A version of this paper was presented at the *Central European Pragmatist Forum*, June 10-14, 2024. I am indebted to comments offered by attendees at the *Forum* and to the reviewers and the editors of this issue of the journal. Early versions of this essay benefited from the careful reading and feedback from my feminist pragmatist writing group, which includes Marilyn Fischer, Judy Whipps, Tess Varner, Danielle Lake, and Ryan Musgrave.
[2] The term "glocal" is borrowed from Emmanuel Jean Francois and his book *Building Global Education with a Local Perspective* (2015).

"the global and the local, and between the abstract and the practical" (2014, 33). An education that achieves this balance deeply engages students and promotes learning that necessitates "being attentive and reflective to both the creative growth of the individual, and the growth and maintenance of the social and political state" (34).

Preparing our students to engage with a "glocal" orientation is essential in our world today for at least four reasons: First, our interconnected and interdependent world requires that individuals see themselves as both local and global citizens. Second, the "poise" required by this orientation—characterized by a receptive presence and awareness[3]—is essential for gaining a deeper understanding. It allows for sustained growth and improvement by collaborating with others, rather than acting for them or over them, often from a position of paternalism and or unequal power. Third, the polarization of our local and national communities threatens the ability of our communities and nations to function and thrive. A "glocal" education can help to address this polarization. Finally, a "glocal" orientation informed by feminist pragmatist commitments has the added benefit of helping address what the World Health Organization (WHO) describes as a widespread problem of isolation and loneliness[4] and what the U.S. Surgeon General similarly calls a contemporary "epidemic of loneliness and isolation."

Addressing the opportunity and challenge of globalization, most would agree that – regardless of the kilometers, miles, or oceans between nations and due to global climate change and technological advancements in communication and transportation – the fate of all nations is inextricably linked.[5] We must equip students with the skills and dispositions necessary to be citizens of their local communities and the world. It is vital that our students "recognize themselves [as beings] *of* the world" and also responsible "*for* the world" (Bennett et al. 2012, 37). Other theorists agree, supporting the efficacy of local, place-based work for cultivating the qualities needed for global citizenship.

For example, the geologist and professor D.J. Marshall argues that a "locally oriented" approach helps students cultivate a "sense of place" and "serves as a means of relating the self to the surrounding social and environmental world" (214). This further results in a "sense of self" that is "deeply intertwin[ed] with a sense of place" (214) and, with this, an enhanced appreciation of coming to understand "place" in relation to other people and problems, regardless of who or where they are located.

Similarly, in his essay, "Re-Thinking Global Citizenship in Higher Education," Viv Caruana argues that institutions should re-conceptualize global citizenship to embrace diversity, belonging, community and solidarity and support the development of pedagogies whose key components are place-based and community-engaged. Caruana argues that though it is the case that global citizenship "requires the ability to work, play, and live somewhere other than [one's] land of birth," learning and embodying the skills that this requires is "not simply a matter of accumulating multiple addresses through international outward mobility" (2014, 90). Students need a "readiness to cope with encounters with cultural diversity," and this derives from "the skills of listening, looking, intuiting and reflecting on experiences" (90). Cultivating this is advanced by pointedly local work, or "rooted" work, where the individual develops a "sense of being at home in more than one place, which stems from a process of putting

[3] Banerjee (2018) develops her idea of "poise" in her article "'Diversity' as 'Poise': Toward a Renewed 'Ethics of Diversity'." I develop a similar concept in "Receptive Perception, Particularlized Justice, and Moral Agency" (2007) and in "Beyond Recognition: A Feminist-Pragmatist Account of Esthetic Moral Agency" (2005), arguing in both that to be an effective moral agent, one must employ affective attunement and receptive perception.

[4] The World Health Organization (WHO) describes isolation and loneliness as a widespread and increasingly world problem. WHO notes that feeling connected to other humans is essential to mental and physical well-being and having a sense of connection is associated with longevity. For further information, see "Social Isolation and Loneliness," The World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/demographic-change-and-healthy-ageing/social-isolation-and-loneliness.

[5] Among others, Emmanuel J. Francois (2015) also makes this point in *Building Global Education with a Local Perspective: An Introduction to Global Higher Education.*

down roots rather than being "forever rooted" (98). Going a step further, and building from the rootedness that Caruana advocates, it is valuable and important to add the quality of "poise," offering a concrete way forward in deepening the "glocal" orientation and allows for what Banerjee describes as a response-focused dimension of diversity, or in the case of this paper, "glocal" orientation. With rootedness and "poise," difference gains a level of presence within the experience rather than a relatively removed and sterile position.

A "glocal" orientation is also needed to mitigate against our increasingly polarized society. Research is unclear, but some studies suggest that this challenge may be particularly unique to the United States. In her article "Polarization, Democracy, and Political Violence in the United States: What Research Says," Rachel Kleinfeld shared that polarization in the U.S. has and is occurring at "extraordinary rates compared to other countries" and that "no other wealthy, consolidated democracy has been as perniciously polarized for as long as the United States" (Kleinfeld 2023, 30). Other studies suggest that this is not the case, that "A number of peer democracies with multiparty systems had higher levels of affective polarization but were showing much less democratic strain [than the U.S.]" (30). Regardless, given that we live in a world where what happens in one nation affects other nations, we all have reason to be concerned and, therefore, we all have an interest in addressing the polarization wherever it may occur.

Technology makes it easier and faster to connect with others across differences (e.g., race, economic class, gender, political affiliation, nationality, etc.). Despite this, polarization is on the rise across the United States as well as in other multi-party democracies around the globe (Kleinfeld 2023, 30). This is especially the case when considering "affective polarization."

While some research suggests that citizens are more in sync than we tend to believe we are, i.e., there is less polarization of ideas and values than is perceived (Kleinfeld 2023, 1-3). This perceived polarization is termed "affective polarization" and involves polarization on an emotional level, even when one's views and values may be more aligned with the other than one thinks them to be. This type of polarization manifests in our attributing positive feelings toward others with shared political affiliations and negative feelings toward those with a different affiliation (Kleinfeld 2023, 3). This can result in a narrowing of experiences (e.g., what media we consume, what groups we socialize with, what neighborhoods we live in, etc.) to those that align with the political views we already have (Druckman and Levy 2021).[6] Borrowing a concept from George H. Mead's theory of symbolic interaction, this means that the "generalized others" to which we belong become narrow in scope and number and homogenous in kind and in the values they represent. As a result, and consistent with Mead's theory, today we are less likely to have experiences and meet people who could introduce novel ideas to us and us to them (Mead 1934, 176-177 & 197-198), limiting our growth as individuals and as a community.

Affective polarization is also of concern because it can erode the ability to imagine and then enact laws and policies necessary to address pressing issues. It compromises citizens' confidence in the institutions that permit society to function (e.g., legal, medical and governmental institutions) and can lead to social fissures in our personal and work lives (Druckman and Levy 2021). The pragmatist conception of ameliorative actions and growth supports a need to be concerned about this rise in polarization.

[6] For a fuller treatment of "affective polarization" and the United States see James Druckman and Jeremy Levy's "Affective Polarization in the American Public" (2021) and Nicholas Dias and Yphtach Lelkes's "The Nature of Affective Polarization: Disentangling Policy Disagreement from Partisan Identity"(2022). For the purposes of this essay, it is enough to know that polarization is on the rise and, because a rise in polarization diminishes our ability to effectively address issues in our communities through legislation or public policy and erodes the confidence in the practices that support democracy and community cohesiveness, it is an issue that should concern us all.

To address these issues, we must extend the diversity of our circles of affiliations, but we must be careful not to prioritize extending them without also deepening them. As Jane Addams implores in *Democracy and Social Ethics,* when we "consciously limit our intercourse to certain kinds of people [with] whom we have previously decided to respect," i.e., with whom we share political affiliation, "we not only tremendously circumscribe our range of life, but limit the scope of our ethics" (1902/2002, 8). It is worth noting that one could be very widely traveled but still limited in the depth and the diversity of affiliations. Further, a person may never travel but achieve rich experiences with diverse, differently positioned others within one's own community. This is the insight that both Addams and Mead embraced and require, as I will discuss below, an embedded or rooted kind of engagement necessitating what Addams called sympathetic understanding, what Mead called reflexivity, and what we today are more likely to call empathetic understanding. Thus, we have a "moral obligation" to choose our experiences wisely because "the results of those experiences must ultimately determine our understanding of life" (Addams 1902/2002, 8).

To fulfill this moral obligation, we must push against polarization and deepen, expand and diversify those with whom we interact. This requires embracing multiple and diverse perspectives while also positioning ourselves so that we learn the particulars of specific situations from different positions. In other words, we need a "glocal" orientation that can engage in deeply local ways, doing, as already discussed above, "rooted" work. Before explicating the necessary commitments below, I will highlight one additional reason why fostering a "glocal" orientation is efficacious in today's world. This last reason addresses the above-mentioned and widely recognized contemporary health issue of isolation and loneliness.

In May of 2023, Dr. Murthy, the U.S. Surgeon General at that time, declared that the United States is experiencing an epidemic of loneliness and isolation, arguing that this issue "has been an underappreciated public health crisis that has harmed individuals and societal health." He asserted, "Given the significant health consequences of loneliness and isolation, we must prioritize building social connection the same way we have prioritized other critical public health issues." This is reinforced by the World Health Organization (WHO), which also highlighted isolation and loneliness as significant health issues, noting that 1 in 4 older adults in the world today experience isolation, and between 5 and 15 adolescents identify with experiencing loneliness on a regular basis (WHO). To address this issue, Murthy advocates strengthening social infrastructure and specifically mentions the "physical elements of the community" (Murthy 2023). Both Murthy and the World Health Organization point to spending time outside as one of the tools that are valuable in addressing this issue. Dr. Murthy's prescription for this epidemic acknowledges the link between human flourishing and the quality of connection to one's environment, where "environment" includes other humans and nonhuman beings as well as our natural surroundings. The course I propose below leans into this need for connection, and fostering a "glocal" orientation is central to this.[7]

In the next section, I will argue that, given the above-outlined arguments in support of a "glocal" orientation and given that these align with feminist pragmatist commitments, educators should embrace these commitments as commitments of a "glocal" orientation. Further, by reinforcing feminist pragmatist commitments, this course supports cultivating a "glocal" orientation.

[7] This proposal – a course I call "Philosophy in the Parks" – is but one option to address this issue. Offering this course has limited in scope since the availability of parks and park-like places is not a benefit afforded to all. For example, those individuals living in affluent communities and nations are disproportionately likely to have access to green spaces and their benefits compared to individuals who do not. Because of the benefits that can be afforded by access to green spaces, e.g., parks and park-like places, there is reason to support efforts to expand the availability of such spaces. Further, the limits on the availability of green spaces also suggest that efforts like the course described herein must not be the limit of interventions offered. Fully addressing this issue requires not just one effort but many that are diverse in nature (specific to the issues, context, and history of the particular location) and should be systemically implemented.

Feminist Pragmatist Commitments[8] and a "Glocal" Orientation

As discussed above, a "glocal" orientation is deeply local in content and engagement while supporting the development of skills and dispositions necessary for globally engaged citizenship. The "local" focus of the "glocal" orientation is necessary because it is only through an embedded understanding and "on the ground" place-specific connections with others that students develop the skills needed to understand and engage effectively with diverse individuals and communities. This requires developing what Mead calls "reflexivity," what Addams called "sympathetic understanding," and what I will refer to as empathetic understanding.[9] Without these qualities, efforts to effect positive change will be limited. Thus, feminist pragmatist commitments are needed to realize the qualities necessary to be a "global" agent of change, and are also the qualities and commitments of a person embodying a "glocal" orientation. These commitments include a relational conception of existence, a "neighborhood point of view," empathetic understanding, a conception of growth as lateral progress, and a commitment to the democratic ideal. Below, each of these, in turn, is explained and shows how these commitments support a "glocal" orientation.

To say that we are relational beings is to say that we are necessarily interconnected and interdependent beings, embodied and living in physical, natural and biological environments. As Mead explains, "All living organisms are bound up in a general social environment or situation, in a complex of social interrelations and interactions upon which their continued existence depends" (Mead 1934, 228). As such, we are, as Jane Addams said, all "mired in the same soil, bound together for better or worse, in our ongoing growth and development" (Addams 1902/2002, 112). For many pragmatists, those with whom we are "mired" include animals, plants, the land, and other humans.[10] As Scott Pratt highlights in *Native Pragmatism,* a human self is a "matter of interaction"; namely, it is what it is in an ongoing, co-constitutive way with its environment and all that is in it (2002, 24). This realization, "demands recognition and continuity" and, with this, the realization that "organisms such as trees and people are not independent things that occasionally act on others, they are rather constituted by their interactions and so are at once continuous with their environment" (24).[11]

Also relevant here is Pratt's concept of the "indigenous attitude" in contrast with the "colonial attitude." It is the latter that characterizes contemporary society, with a desire to secure all that is within our reach as our property, and, in contrast, it is the former, the "indigenous attitude," that is helpful in further defining the pragmatist conception of flourishing and growth. Pratt explains that whereas the colonial attitude is most associated with "exclusion, intolerance, and attempts to eliminate difference," the "indigenous attitude" requires "commitments to interaction, community, and growth" (Pratt 2002, XIV-XV). This is similar to Addams's distinction between "older ideals of peace" and the "newer ideals of peace" as articulated in her work *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907).

[8] For an additional account of the feminist pragmatist orientation, see J. Whipps and D. Lake, "Pragmatist Feminism (2025), C. Fischer, "Feminist-Pragmatism," and B. Lowe and J. Fenton, "Jane Addams, the Settlement Women of Hull House, and the Feminist Pragmatist Orientation" (2023). See also Philipp Dorstewitz, "Imagining Social Transformations: Territory Making and the Project of Radical Pragmatism." Though not termed as feminist pragmatist commitment, Dorstewitz outlines "four practical commitments" that are consistent with feminist pragmatist commitment including: connecting concepts to lived experience, attending to fringes of social systems, fostering solidarity through sympathetic and imaginative interaction, and strengthening education, communication and participation to facilitate bottom-up emancipation (363).

[9] For a fuller account of Addams's concept of sympathic understanding and why some argue that a better term that captures Addams's intended meaning is empathetic understanding today, see Whipps 2019, page 319 and Lowe and Fenton, 2023.

[10] For example, see Scott Pratt's *Native Pragmatism: Rethinking the Roots of American Philosophy* (2002) and Erin McKenna's *Living with Livestock: Food, Fiber, and Friends* (2018).

[11] For additional works that take a feminist pragmatist approach to exploring the intertwined and co-constitutive nature of humans, other beings, and the land, see Erin McKenna and Tess Varner. "Backcountry and Backyard Ethics: Pragmatist Prospects for Rethinking Relationships with Wildlife" (2024), Erin McKenna's *Living with Animals: Rights, Responsibilities, and Respect* (2021), as well as Tess Varner's "Recovering Wildness: 'Earthy' Education and Field Philosophy" (2021).

Whereas the "older ideals of peace" are militaristic and rooted in competition, seeing war as a means to achieve peace, "newer ideals of peace" strive for peace through cooperative social action, insisting that progress requires cooperative and holistically beneficial social reform.

Because of our relational natures, effective social activism requires – borrowing from Addams – a "neighborhood point of view." With this, we must look to the interconnected relationships and issues entangled in specific social situations to determine what the issues for that community are and how best to address them. We should avoid imposing our visions for community improvement and instead work "with initiatives already adopted by the neighbors or ones the neighbors would like to undertake" (Fischer 2019, 46). As Addams explains,

> We are learning that the standard of social ethics is not attained by travelling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where we all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of one another's burdens (Addams 1902/2002, 7).

To do this well, to be what we might today call a "change agent," an "engaged citizen," or, fitting for this paper, a global citizen with a "glocal" orientation, we must strive for what George H. Mead called "reflexivity" and what Addams called "sympathetic understanding," or what we would call today empathetic understanding. Though it is too bold to say that these terms mean exactly the same thing, understanding the insights of each offers a compelling picture of one quality needed to be in a position to effect positive change.

Focusing first on reflexivity, Mead argues that this quality is the ability to "put [oneself] in the place of the other" or, in other words, "to take on the attitude of others toward oneself" (Mead 1934, 134). "Reflexivity" enables one to imagine, even feel, what it is like to be the other and to imaginatively inhabit the conditions of existence of the other within our shared community. Though our roles and positions in that community – including our relative struggles, privileges, and points of view – are different, reflexivity allows one to understand our shared challenges better, imagine and propose better solutions, test these solutions, and revise them as needed. This allows the expanded and deepened understanding required of a "glocal" orientation. Addams echoes this insight as well, highlighting the importance of "sympathetic understanding." Like Mead, Addams believed this understanding of the other was essential to achieving the orientation needed to make growth and social change possible.

Though necessarily relational, we begin our lives with relatively narrow connections to others. Like a "glocal" orientation, a feminist pragmatist conception of growth and flourishing requires progressively expanding these connections. Social institutions, such as education, should be organized to support this type of flourishing, offering opportunities to deepen, extend and expand our interactions to mitigate the challenge of polarization. With this, we can see that these feminist pragmatist commitments can helpfully inform the "glocal" orientation. This understanding of growth is what Addams calls "lateral progress" (Addams 1902/2002, 69) and involves what Pratt describes as a redistribution of the "direction of progress" from vertical growth to lateral by "widening and deepening connections among members" (Pratt 2002, 37).[12] Lateral progress moves us closer to the democratic ideal, the final commitment of feminist pragmatism that we will discuss in this essay.

The democratic ideal includes but is more than a commitment to democracy understood as a political system. It is, as Addams says, a "way of life" requiring that we take "the betterment of humanity for [our] aim and end" and with this necessarily "also take the daily experiences of humanity for the constant correction of [our] process. [We should] not only test and guide [our] achievement by human experience, but [we] must suc-

[12] Marilyn Fischer's account of Jane Addams's evolutionary conception of growth in *Jane Addams's Evolutionary Theorizing: Constructing "Democracy and Social Ethics"* (2019) offers a helpful and detailed account of the pragmatist roots, especially Addams's intellectual roots of growth as "evolutionary," advancing through progressive social reforms.

ceed or fail in proportion as [we have] incorporated that experience with [our] own" (Addams 1902/2002, 78-79). Extending this further, Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) asks us to consider what it might mean to embrace a "democracy of species," recognizing not only our "*inter*dependence" with other humans but also to recognize this with the natural world as well. From this would follow gratitude and reciprocity to nature, which provides us with all that we need to survive and thrive.[13]

We achieve this not by imposing a particular ideology, but instead by providing "channels" through which individuals and groups can expand their circles of affiliation.[14] Expanded circles of affiliation ultimately allow us to understand others better and, thus, better imagine possible solutions for our shared problems.[15] Offering channels through which we can come together or "mix" echoes what Dr. Vivek Murthy, the 19th and 21st Surgeon General of the United States, termed an epidemic in loneliness and isolation.[16] Addressing this epidemic requires that we increase and strengthen social connections through "a whole-of-society approach" (Murthy 2023, 6). In feminist pragmatist terminology, one might say that what Murthy advocates is a "democracy as a way of life."

In summary, a feminist pragmatist orientation embraces a relational conception of existence, a "neighborhood point of view," empathetic understanding, growth as lateral progress, and a commitment to the democratic ideal. Each commitment is consistent with a "glocal" orientation, and together, they define what this orientation requires.

The final section of this essay offers one approach to helping students cultivate a "glocal" orientation; namely, the previously mentioned place-based course called "Philosophy in the Parks." This course is just one possible tool and is limited, as will be noted below. However, directly addressing this limitation as part of the course design can enhance and reinforce place-based consideration within a global context, further enhancing the "glocal" orientation. Feminist pragmatist commitments inform course assignments and activities and, therefore, offer a model educators might use and adapt to their own course subjects. For example, the assignment could be adapted to any course where place-based issues could be explored through the feminist pragmatist lens outlined above and embedded in the teaching tool described below. This assignment is designed to provide students with an opportunity to consider the world through a "glocal" orientation, positioning students to be effective citizens in our local and global communities.

Placing "Philosophy in the Parks"

In his report proposing the design of Central Park in New York City, Frederick Law Olmsted – the designer of thousands of local and national parks in the United States, including the park system in my hometown of Rochester, New York – declared that in parks, you would find "all classes largely represented with a common purpose… each individual adding by his mere presence to the purpose of all others, all helping towards a greater happiness of each" (Olmsted 1858). Olmsted suggested that public parks could promote democracy and socialization where people gather with "a common purpose… competitive with none, disposing to jealousy and spiritual or intellectual pride to none, each individual adding by his

[13] See Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants,* especially the chapter "Allegiance to Gratitude."
[14] Addams uses the term "channels" in various contexts and texts. For example, in *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), she states, quoting someone else she does not cite, that we must "discover what people really want, and then 'provide the channels in which the growing moral force of their lives shall flow'" (1902/2002, 69). Similarly, in *Twenty Years at Hull House,* Addams offers, "[i]n the unceasing ebb and flow of justice and oppression we must all dig channels as best we may, that at the propitious moment somewhat of the swelling tide may be conducted to the barren places of life" (1910, 40).
[15] For fuller development of these ideas see Lowe 2022, 138-142.
[16] Murthy's concern with widespread issues of isolation and loneliness is predated by the highlighting of these same issues by the World Health Organization starting in 2021. While also highlighting this issue for all ages, the World Health Organization focuses especially how isolation and loneliness effects older adults. For additional information on this see the WHO's "Advocacy Brief: Social Isolation and Loneliness Among Older People" (2021).

mere presence to the pleasure of all" (Olmsted 1871, 18). With these statements, Olmsted was not merely sharing an observation but making a normative claim. Namely, since parks offer opportunities to create community, and since community and connection are needed for both humans and societies to flourish, it follows that we ought to create parks, and humans ought to gather in these parks so that the shared experiences that parks can provide may occur. Research supports Olmsted's prediction. Studies have found that, in addition to mental and physical health benefits, there is a positive link between the mere existence of "nearby nature [e.g., public parks and green spaces] and social cohesion," resulting in augmented "norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness" within the communities where we find public green spaces and parks (Eisenmann 2013, 290-291).

"Philosophy in the Parks" is a course that works toward Olmsted's vision and taps into the benefits that may result. Informed by a feminist pragmatist orientation, this pedagogy is deeply local and nature-based in content, designed to provide students with opportunities to practice the skills and dispositions necessary for engaged citizenship. These skills and dispositions are embodied in the feminist pragmatist commitments outlined above and, therefore, also align with a "glocal" orientation.

The primary "texts" for this course are public parks and green spaces. With these as the text, the course encourages what Olmsted called "communitiveness" (Beveridge 2022) and what Jane Addams called a "neighborhood point of view" (Addams 1896, 149). Olmsted coined the term "communitiveness" and considered it the "most important quality" that members of society could and should possess and involves "a combination of qualities that [enable] people 'to serve others and to be served by others in the most intimate, complete and extended degree imaginable'" (Beveridge 2022). According to the Frederick Law Olmsted scholar Charles E. Beveridge, an essential purpose of the park for Olmsted was to "restore the energy that people expended" in the "exercise of their [day-to-day] duties" so that they could engage in and embody the quality of communitiveness. To "read" a park or public green space as a text requires students to "place" themselves and the philosophical ideas in the parks, connecting with the particular space and emerging issues.[17]

The course has three sections. The first section (~6 weeks) takes place in a typical academic classroom with nature-based connections blended throughout, including outside activities such as walk-and-talks, small group mini-discussions, and reflective journal writing. The "texts" in this part of the course are more traditional – books, articles, and videos – and these provide a lens through which students will, in the second part of the course, come to understand and engage with the non-canonical "text" - the parks or park-like locations.

The second part of the course, weeks 7 - 12, takes place in the park and in "park-like" places such as playgrounds, cemeteries, parkways, and nature trails, making the heart of the course place-based and park-focused. In small groups, students facilitate dialogue and guide the class in activities specific to their group's assigned park or park-like location. Common to each facilitation is a "one-sheet."[18]

The "one-sheet" is a tool the groups use to plan and facilitate engagement and dialogue with their peers. Working from the template provided, students design their "one-sheet" specific to their park or park-like location. A standard template (link available here) prompts students to describe their assigned park or park-like location and its history, offer place-based connections, share

[17] A fuller development of this course and treating parks and public green spaces as a text to analyze and to learn from was offered as part of a panel on *Feminist Pragmatist Readings of Non-Canonical Texts* at the 51st Annual Meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy in Boston, March 28-30, 2024. The title of this author's contribution to this panel was "How to Read a Park."

[18] The one-sheet format is adapted from the Society of Philosophers in America's (SOPHIA's) version of the same. For more information on this tool as conceived of by SOPHIA see "SOPHIA One-Sheets" available here: SOPHIA Meeting Resources | The Society of Philosophers in America (SOPHIA).

and define key concepts or principles important to the facilitation, highlight pressing problems or place-specific issues, point toward local, community and global connections, and offer questions and prompts to frame a dialogue.

Together, the required components of the one-sheet help to cultivate what is, as described above, a "glocal" orientation. In this way, the one-sheet situates students locally while reinforcing a relational conception of existence. This prompts students to consider implications beyond a narrow, primarily local, and individualistically centered position. Similarly, the one-sheet prompts students to make connections beyond the assigned park or park-like location to other places and situations where similar issues are of concern, including situating their analysis locally, nationally and globally. This approach broadens students' perspectives by encouraging them to consider diverse beings, communities and political contexts beyond a solely human framework, while extending their understanding beyond the boundaries of the United States. In these ways, the course puts into practice a pragmatist and "glocal" understanding of individual and community development, viewing growth as occurring by deepening, extending and widening one's circles of understanding and affiliation.

One critical aspect that warrants further exploration is the privileged and localized character of employing parks and park-like spaces as "texts" within an academic curriculum. While this topic has been mentioned, it deserves a more thorough examination to understand its implications fully. One consideration is that not all communities have parks, park-like locations, or even greenery from which community members can benefit.[19] In addition, examining the political and power dynamics associated with land is important. For example, Saskia Sassen, author of *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in Global Economy* (2014), exposes what she calls the "new logics of expulsion," revealing how, in the last three decades, the world has seen "a sharp growth in the number of people, enterprises, and places expelled from the core social and economic orders of our time" (1). While Sassen does not explicitly discuss parks in this work, her exploration of the "logic of expulsions" related to land and land use certainly applies.

For example, in the creation of New York City Central Park, whole communities of people and the economies previously rooted in what is now Central Park were displaced to clear the land so that the park could be formed. The area chosen for the park, from 59th to 110th Streets between Fifth and Eighth Avenues, was home to several communities, including a predominantly African American settlement that included Irish and German immigrants (Pasquier 2021). This community was established in 1825 and was thriving with churches, schools and homes. However, in the mid-1850s, the New York City government used eminent domain to acquire the land for the park, forcing residents to leave. This displacement disrupted the lives of many families and erased a significant part of African American history in New York City (Pasquier 2021). Further, the construction of Central Park also displaced other smaller communities and individual landowners. The process was part of a broader trend during the 19th century where urban development often came at the expense of marginalized communities (Legg 2021). Here, we see that the tendency to value

[19] For support for this claim see Klompmaker et al., "Racial, Ethnic, and Socioeconomic Disparities in Multiple Measures of Blue and Green Spaces in the United States." This article demonstrates inequality in the availability of different types of green spaces and highlights research finding an inequitable distribution of natural environments and that these differences can partially explain the health disparities between socioeconomic class and race/ethnicity groups in the United States. Researchers Lorien Nesbitt and Jessica Quinton support this claim, extending and complicating these findings on a global level. See Nesbitt and Quinton's article, "Invited Perspective: Nature Is Unfairly Distributed in the United States – But That's Only Part of the Global Green Equity Story." Nesbitt and Quinton's article is an overview article, offering helpful references to other studies that address issues of "green equity" on a global level. They draw implications – discussed further below – related to "recognitional justice," assumption that "green is always good," and a need for place-based research that examines these issues related to climate change and "green gentrification."

the creation of green spaces and public parks over the value of communities and economies already in place has roots in the very beginnings of the public park movement in the United States.

The same is true for Indigenous peoples native to the United States. Many of the lands on which local and national parks are now located throughout the United States are previous Indigenous peoples' lands, an injustice that endures today and one that has economic and political implications that stretch from the early days of community (and park) formations to today. Further, as featured by one of my student group's offering a facilitated engagement with a local park, some park lands exist on top of not only indigenous peoples' land but also on top of unmarked graves of individuals who, prior to their death and prior to the formation of the particular park, were residents of a local mental institution.

To address these issues, Sassen advocates for what she refers to as "de-theorizing" and the "before method." Philipp Dorstewitz notes what this requires in his essay "Imagining Social Transformation: Territory Making and the Project of Radical Pragmatism" (2016). Dorstewitz explains that, for Sassen, "de-theorizing" involves a "turning away from aggregated theoretical concepts and toward ground-level human experiences, micro-processes, and actual geographic locations" (367). This practice of "de-theorizing" is accompanied by the "standing before method," which represents a "standpoint of critical incredulity that examines what theory obscures in the penumbra surrounding its focus" (368). This call to "de-theorize" and "stand before" is consistent with what Martin et al. call for in "Justice and Conservation: The Need to Incorporate Recognition." Martin et al. advocate for "recognitional justice," which requires, among other things, a recognition of different types of knowing, being, perceiving and valuing of nature; a recognition of the political and legal power inequalities inherent in economic systems; and a recognition of the responsibility to address issues and revealed inequalities and discrepancies in who benefits and who pays for efforts to add or improve green spaces in communities (Martin et al, 254-255, 260). Sassen, Dorstewitz and Martin emphasize the importance of acknowledging past and present injustices that may arise from assuming that the "greening" of a community is inherently positive. As discussed in this essay, they caution against the uncritical application of celebrated design theories and principles. Recognizing that these principles may not benefit everyone equally is crucial, and prioritizing them may not always be ethically justifiable. The values and principles used to support their application should not overshadow other important considerations.

Applying this to the course "Philosophy in Parks," there is a need to discuss theories of design while also interrogating the historical expulsions, displacements and gentrification that have or might have occurred in the creation and the design of the park or park-like location under consideration. Neglecting to "de-theorize" and failing to adopt a "before" perspective leads to the erasure of phenomena such as gentrification and the associated displacement of individuals and groups, both historically and in the present, as part of neighborhood revitalization efforts.

These insights underscore a crucial consideration for any project fostering a "glocal" orientation. This orientation must encompass de-theorizing and the "before method" as part of a "glocal" orientation. Though potentially overlooked, this is inherent to the "place-based" emphasis and empathetic understanding central to the "glocal" orientation. What successful efforts look like will vary based on context and place-based consideration of the project being implemented. In the context of the course "Philosophy in the Parks," place-related work that incorporates de-theorizing must highlight issues related to the expulsion of local indigenous populations and address historical and contemporary gentrification, which often aims to clear space for pristine parks and affluent neighborhoods, effectively pricing out lower-income communities.

An additional consideration is park management, which often prohibits certain behaviors, such as camping, unhoused living, sleeping, alcohol consumption, and the use and sale of illicit drugs, leading to the expulsion of specific groups to benefit others, typically individuals of higher socio-economic status. While management of parks is essential for the vitality of the park and for the benefits that parks offer to be fully realized, it is important, as the feminist pragmatist perspective insists, that the creation of parks as well as their management occur from a ground-up location, emphasizing a neighborhood point of view and recognitional justice in the creation and the management. Doing so is essential to mitigate against the colonizing attitude that Pratt discusses and the problematic nature of expulsions that Sassen and Dorstewitz highlight.

Any course that centers on parks and similar areas as educational tools must critically address the privilege inherent in these spaces and delve deeper into the political complexities and power dynamics related to land use in general. The provided template for the student-created one-sheets used as the guiding teaching tool for the primary assignment in this course offers students opportunities to explore these issues. These opportunities, however, will only be effective if the material preparing students for this assignment is rich and nuanced in content. For this reason, part of this course's early, more traditional part includes critical consideration of the privileged nature of parks and the insights the research and writings of theorists such as Sassen, Dorstewitz and Martins et. al offer. This theoretical work prepares students to incrementally widen their understanding and critically analyze these issues, informing the "glocal" orientation they develop.

Conclusion

In his introduction to Nan Shepherd's *The Living Mountain,* nature writer Robert Macfarlane writes,

> More and more of us live more and more separately from contact with nature. We have come increasingly to forget that our minds are shaped by the bodily experience of being in the world – its spaces, textures, sounds, smells and habits— as well as by genetic traits we inherit and ideologies we absorb. We are literally losing touch, becoming disembodied, more than in any previous historical period (Macfarlane 2011, xxix).

This reflects a concern that we are not presently living in ways that honor our interdependent relationship with nature and all around us. We need to deepen, extend and expand our connections and do so with empathetic understanding. This will move us in the direction needed to address and ameliorate our shared challenges, increasing polarization, and the feelings of loneliness and isolation experienced by many in our communities. As Robin Wall Kimmerer – a Potawatomi Indigenous Nation citizen, botanist, educator and author of *Braiding Sweetgrass* – reflects,

> The circle of care grows larger, and caregiving for my little pond [or garden, etc.] spills over to caregiving for other waters [or parts of nature]. The outlet from my pond [or my greenspace] runs downhill to my good neighbor's pond. What I do here matters. Everybody lives downstream…. [Caring for my pond (or greenspace)] has shown me that being a good mother doesn't end with creating a home where just my children can flourish. A good mother grows into a richly eutrophic old woman, knowing that her work doesn't end until she creates a home where all of life's beings can flourish (Kimmerer 2013, 97).

These closing insights borrowed from MacFarlane and Kimmerer – two of the texts featured in "Philosophy in the Parks" – offer another way to articulate the need for a "glocal" orientation in our societies today. We can begin by getting in touch with our parks and, through the parks, in touch with place-specific and community-specific issues while also connecting with nature and each other. This requires and fosters a "glocal" orientation informed and defined by feminist pragmatist commitments. "Philosophy in the Parks" offers an opportunity for students to cultivate this orientation, experience connection, and gain the skills to be effective and engaged "glocal" citizens.

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THE OPEN SPACES OF DEMOCRACY: PUBLIC LANDS, PRAGMATIST PLACEMAKING, AND PEACEBUILDING

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ABSTRACT: Land-use issues regularly arise in the context of social and political problems, but the debates that dominate tend to revolve around security of geographic borders and boundaries, natural resource scarcity, declining biodiversity, and the like. These are crucial to address. But they are not the only land-use matters that contribute to the instability of our overall social and democratic landscape, in the US and around the world. In this paper, I develop a feminist-pragmatist consideration of public lands, situating them as "open spaces of democracy"—spaces for public deliberation and for reshaping a collective identity in light of the urgent needs for justice and amelioration. I suggest that public lands are uniquely suited for meeting community needs and for addressing social ills. Like the settlement houses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they can serve a public function; they can be created, redesigned, and better used in the service of stabilizing and enriching our fragile social and physical landscapes. In this paper, I draw from the Norwegian philosophical tradition's strong emphases on peace and deep connection to the natural world and highlight important connections between this tradition and the pragmatist tradition as I expand upon the potential for placemaking and peacebuilding through the open spaces of democracy.

Keywords: Feminist-Pragmatism, Peace, John Dewey, Arne Naess, Norway, Public Lands, Place-Based Design

> "We are standing on the edge of a political chasm that is beginning to crumble. We all stand to lose ground. Democracy is an insecure landscape."
> – Terry Tempest Williams[1]

> "The golden produce of the earth has been trampled under iron feet, the land lies in ruins everywhere, and the foundations of its communities are crumbling."
> – Fridtjof Nansen[2]

Introduction

It is hard not to resonate with Williams's claim that "we are standing on the edge of a political chasm that is beginning to crumble" (Williams 2004, 24). Perhaps the only way to disagree with it would be to take issue with the use of *beginning.* The image she evokes is familiar. We are as aware of the fragility of our social landscape as we are the fragility of our eroding physical landscapes in a changing climate, although we may not always recognize how closely the two are connected. The causes of the fragile social, political, and physical landscapes are multiple and complex—some particular to this distinct moment in time, others perennial global problems—and they are, unsurprisingly, sources of intense debate. As throughout history, public intellectuals, politicians, and philosophers—even masses of community activists and college students—contribute to these debates with resources and with nuance, offering a wide range of theoretical and practical suggestions to help grasp the severity of the situations we are encountering and to try to shape public response. This paper aims to contribute to that discourse by developing a feminist-pragmatist vision for placemaking as an opportunity for positive peacebuilding. In what follows, I suggest that public lands, in many different contexts, are uniquely suited for meeting community needs and for addressing social ills. They can be created, redesigned, and better used in the service of stabilizing and enriching our fragile landscapes, social and physical. In developing a pragmatist vision for public lands, I situate public lands as "open spaces of democracy," considering how they might serve a public function like settlement houses served in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I then draw from Norwegian philosophical resources to expand upon the concept of the open spaces of democracy in the contexts of positive peacebuilding and pragmatist placemaking potential.

Feminist-Pragmatism and "Place Capital"

Across multiple national and international measures, the social and political landscape is grim. The year 2023 was the hottest on record. Wars rage on in Ukraine, Gaza, and

[1] Terry Tempest Williams, *The Open Space of Democracy* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 24.
[2] Fridtjof Nansen, "Nansen Lecture," Nobel Prize, 1922, accessed April 15, 2024, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1922/nansen/lecture/

many other parts of the world. Nuclear threats are intensifying; Vladimir Putin, for example, recently declared "suspension" of Russia's participation in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. As Russia and China compete to expand their nuclear capabilities, the United States prepares to respond in kind. Far-right authoritarianism and nationalistic ideology are increasingly normalized and gaining in the polls in the US and more than a dozen European countries. Across the globe, people continue to endure ramifications of Covid-19 while trying to anticipate and prepare for the pathogen that will trigger the next global pandemic. Isolation and loneliness are at all-time highs in young people, and the implications of AI and other disruptive technologies leave people feeling uncertain about the future and experiencing high levels of social distrust.[3]

In the context of social and political problems, land-use issues also regularly arise. But the issues that dominate land-use debate tend to revolve around security of geographic borders and boundaries, natural resource scarcity, declining biodiversity, and the like. And these are certainly crucial to address. They are not, however, the only land-use matters that contribute to the instability of our overall social and democratic landscape. Among other reasons for social distrust, the late urban sociologist Ray Oldenberg identified the critical lack of opportunities for people to interact with one another across their differences as a result of urbanization. In the late 1990s, reflecting on US culture in particular, he explained that "virtually all means of meeting and getting to know one's neighbors have been eliminated" (Oldenburg 1997, 6). There are countless reasons for this decline, from minor technological developments geared toward efficiency, such as automatic garage door openers that allow cars to pull straight into garages without interacting with neighbors, to more significant matters of public safety and the dramatic increase in use of social media, which dramatically limit face-to-face interactions, not just among young people but across demographics.

Oldenberg's thesis is that declining availability of shared physical locations contributes to our instable social landscape, and, importantly, he points to this decline as opportunity to create spaces where people can interact with their neighbors. He coined the term "third places" to indicate these informal locations where citizens gather outside of work and home. Third places—which still do and have always existed in various forms, such as pubs, cafés, community gardens, town squares—are becoming more and more rare. But designed well, they can serve numerous functions: they unify neighborhoods, they serve as "ports of entry for visitors and newcomers", they bridge intergenerational gaps, they become places for coordinating care for community members and the community as a whole, and they foster political debate, among many other benefits (Oldenburg 1997, 70). Third places provide opportunities for social interaction that are crucial for functioning democracy. Our current culture prioritizes consumerism rather than citizenship, Iaian Bernhoft and Bruno V. Manno explain, and third places can help redress some of the consequences of that shift: "Third places are neutral places we visit voluntarily, where conversation is one of the main activities. Because they lack membership requirements, social differences are often leveled and left outside the establishment" (Bernhoft and Manno 2022).

Pragmatist philosophers like John Dewey recognized this impoverished community experience long before Oldenberg. Dewey stressed that "democracy begins at home" and that democracy's home "is the neighborly community." He saw neighborly communities as imperative to a vision of participatory democracy—one which draws on "the unique contributions of all citizens into tremendous, society-wide collective projects" (Shutz 2001, 287). Dewey had great faith that the "democratic way of life" enacted in our neighborhoods is the source of immense social intelligence and creativity that can be

[3] *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, "Doomsday Clock," accessed April 15, 2024, https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock.

harnessed to find creative solutions to our most daunting social and ecological problems.

What Dewey was describing then is what some social science experts now call "place capital," "the shared wealth (built and natural) of the public realm" (Kent 2011). As architects, urban planners, public health leaders, and others are trying to figure out how to harness and bolster "place capital" to address the social ills we face today, pragmatism can contribute meaningfully to the conversation, offering theoretical support as well as rich historical examples that aid efforts to create spaces for people to come together in ways that are democracy-building and peacebuilding.

One such example is the Settlement House Movement. In response to the social ills and turmoil in her own community—a crowded, industrial neighborhood in Chicago without adequate social services, flooded with immigrant families struggling to build new lives—Jane Addams established Hull House in 1889. It became not just a place for families in need to receive support, education, and opportunities for fellowship, but the locus of a powerful reform movement in the United States, leading to a remarkable amount of legislation that improved the living situations of women, immigrants, the working poor, and more. Hull House stands as an exemplar of participatory design that recognized, made use of, and expanded upon "place capital." In Hull House, Addams envisioned a place designed to meet community needs particular to its context. In an old Victorian house on Halsted Street that had once been a factory, a secondhand furniture store, and a home for the aged, she saw potential far beyond the face value of the building. Hers was a pragmatist vision of place, and one that can continue to inform our efforts today.

Public Lands and the Open Spaces of Democracy

Naturalist and "citizen writer of the West" Terry Tempest Williams describes public lands as "open spaces of democracy"—spaces for public deliberation and for reshaping a collective identity in light of the urgent need for justice and amelioration. Her own context involves experiences collaborating with others in the deeply divided and contentious American West, particularly where she resides in Southeastern Utah, near the hotly contested Bears Ears National Monument. Public lands deserve protection and respect, not just for their conservation or their natural resources or their beauty, but for their democratic and peacebuilding potential. A pragmatist vision of place for public lands is one that works to draw out that potential.

In the United States, there exist somewhere around 840 million acres of public lands—more than 1/3 of the country—that all citizens hold in common and to which all ostensibly have a claim for resources, recreation and more. Williams has called these America's "national inheritance," describing them as "that which makes each of us land-rich" (Williams 2016, 37). For a country that is so highly individualist, where private property ownership is foundational to its history, even the fact that such vast amounts of terrain are held collectively is somewhat paradoxical. Public lands in the US also, of course, are highly controversial, given the unconstitutional and violent nature of the acquisition of many of these lands and their troubled colonial history, a matter which will be addressed later. Nevertheless, these multiple-use lands that are shared in common include forests, wild and scenic rivers, national and state parks, preserves, and monuments, wilderness and conservation areas, and more. These are lands that Wallace Stegner heralded as "America's best idea," boldly asserting that public lands are "Absolutely American, absolutely democratic"— "they reflect us at our best, rather than our worst" (Stegner 1998, 135).

But of course, public lands are not unique to the United States, although the context, language, and understanding of commonly held land vary greatly from country to country. Not all of these lands could be said to be "democratic," of course, but all developed countries have public lands of some sort, and more than one hundred countries

can boast having national parks and other conservation areas. Over a million hectares are commonly owned in Britain, 89% of Canadian land is designated "crown lands," India's public lands are thought to be one of its most valuable tangible assets, nearly half of Bhutan and Luxembourg are protected areas, just to name a few examples. In myriad ways and for varying purposes across nations and cultures, certain lands are shared among the people.

In a 2004 monograph called *The Open Space of Democracy*, Williams articulates an ethics and politics of place that harnesses the democratic potential of public lands. Like Dewey, her understanding of democracy is both aspirational and *actionable.* She calls for citizen engagement through contestation in what she calls "the open space of democracy," sites of deliberation in which there is invitation to dissent. The open space makes room for uncovering multiple angles of vision and discovering overlapping values, holds space for difference and for righteous indignation—they are places of deep listening to and engagement with disparate voices from which creativity can emerge in response to the tension. Bears Ears National Monument is one example of place as a site of deliberation, dissent, and discovery of overlapping values. This sweeping swath of land—more than 1.35 million acres—is a sacred space to many and "a cradle of Native American history," the ancestral home of more than a dozen tribes and a rich repository of petroglyphs, rock art, and ancient dwellings. And this area, importantly, has been the site of endless dispute over ownership, resource rights, and management. The last decade has intensified these disputes. These tensions arise from multiple angles and involve multiple stakeholders, including indigenous people and tribal leadership, industry, state and federal governments, the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, and environmentalists. At the forefront of the efforts to preserve Bears Ears National Monument is the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition. This coalition was established in 2015 by leaders of the Hopi, Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, Navajo, and Zuni tribes after a long history of shared but disparate efforts to preserve the land. The Inter-Tribal Coalition now has support of over 30 tribes as well as tremendous support from other stakeholders. It has become, according to some, a "blueprint for how to involve tribes in the stewardship of lands that were originally stolen from them but are also important to the country as a whole" (Douglas and Brewer 2001). The collective effort to protect the land is challenging, requiring skills and commitments of deep democratic deliberation, sympathetic understanding, and cooperative intelligence, among others—skills and commitments closely aligned with feminist-pragmatism.

When we employ these open spaces to connect and work toward shared goals, like in the example of Bears Ears, Williams says "we can come closer to understanding why each of us is committed to our own points of view and perhaps even adjust our perspectives along the way to find creative alternatives that we cannot only both live with, but feel comfortable in proposing together" (Williams 2004, 20). The open space of democracy embodies "a dynamic citizenry, unafraid to exercise our shared knowledge and power" (Williams 2004, 86).

A more transnational example of the peacebuilding potential of open spaces is seen in peace parks—conservation zones that cross borders and involve various political jurisdictions. The term "peace park" was coined in 1932 in the development of the Waterton Lakes Glacier International Peace Park, shared between the United States and Canada. Although the establishment of this peace park was largely symbolic, since the US and Canada weren't in conflict, it nevertheless represents well the goal of using shared space to build and maintain peace through joint conservation efforts (Ali and Maron-LaFevre 2). The number of peace parks has steadily risen since Waterton-Glacier was established; hundreds exist now in more than sixty countries that cross state borders and involve shared governance, and dozens that straddle

transnational borders, including the Balkans Peace Park, Korea's "demilitarized zone," Sweden and Norway's "Morokulian," and the Limpopo Transfrontier Park of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, to name a few.

Peace parks embody the potential in and on and through the land itself for the emergence of creative and collaborative problem-solving. In examples from Bears Ears to peace parks and more, open space is both literal and figurative; the land itself—its own openness, its capaciousness—is meaningful. What Williams envisions and embodies in her work is an idea of public lands as a starting point for dialogue. The *place* itself serves as a locus of embodied, experiential, and experimental knowledge, a *place* of deep, democratic engagement. The place is not merely a setting for people to gather but an on-the-ground opportunity to grow together *into* a public, prepared to face the challenges of democratic life together. Williams understands that such work will be experimental, fallible, and ever in need of adjustment. But the place itself is a critical element of the process, like Hull House "providing the mechanism for people of all classes, races, and sexes to 'speak together,'" and to employ empirical evidence and scientific research to find ways to move forward together (Skorburg 2018, 929.) Williams explicitly draws on Dewey's understanding of democracy, sharing from his 1937 speech to the National Endowment for the Arts: "Unless democratic habits of thought and action are part of the fiber of a people, political democracy is insecure. It cannot stand in isolation. It must be buttressed by the presence of democratic methods in all social relationships" (Dewey qtd in Williams 2004, 87). My concern here is how open spaces, particularly in the form of public lands, can facilitate those democratic methods that are critical to improving and sustaining our social relationships.

Public Lands, Positive Peace, and Placemaking—Feminist Pragmatism and the Nordic Tradition

In an attempt to draw out the potential for placemaking and peacebuilding through public lands, I find fruitful resources in Norway's tradition of peace and conflict transformation strategies that involve the natural world. The rich intersections of Norwegian philosophy and pragmatism are rarely adequately recognized.[4] I suggest that Norwegian philosophical resources can deepen and enhance a feminist-pragmatist vision for public lands.

Positive Peace and Peacebuilding

Norway has long held a reputation for being a peace nation, from its decades committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to the vigorous program to combat radicalism and violent extremism at present. Peace and facilitation of conflict negotiation has been a fundamental feature of Norwegian foreign policy, and as early as the late 1800s, Norway was known for "its emphasis on neutrality, free-trade, arbitration and international cooperation and a general liberal (meliorist) belief in gradual progress, the peacefulness of peoples as opposed to states, and the benefits of closer interaction among the peoples of the world" (Leira 2013, 341). Norway is home to the Nobel Peace Prize and to a large network of peace, dialogue, and human rights organizations. And importantly, Norway boasts being the home of the polar explorer and humanitarian Fridtjof Nansen, whose tremendous legacy includes his work as the High Commissioner for Refugees in The League of Nations, the establishment of the Nansen passport after the first world war, extraordinary efforts for famine relief in Russia and Ukraine, and much more. "No realpolitik in a civilized society is conceivable without a basis in compassion, reciprocity, helpfulness, trust," Nansen wrote in 1922.[5] Nansen's influence can be seen throughout Norway in its peace practices, from international negotiations to its curriculum of dialogue practice throughout the educational system.

[4] Notable exceptions are found in the work of Sami Pihlstrom and others in the Nordic Pragmatist Association.
[5] "Compassion in Action," *Nobel Peace Center,* accessed April 15, 2024, https://www.nobelpeacecenter.org/en/exhibitions/compassion-in-action

In these ways and many others, peace is a central feature of Norwegian culture and identity, although several studies indicate that that identity is shifting, and that younger people feel it as less salient and are more critical of the limits of Norway's inclusivity. Despite its waning influence as a peace nation, Norway has produced a small but significant philosophical tradition in which the concept of peace and peace research is a central component.

The late Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung, often called "the father of peace studies," established the Peace Research Institute Oslo in 1959—the first institute of its kind—and, in 1964, founded the *Journal of Peace Research.* Informed by his own childhood experiences of World War II, Galtung made a critical distinction between positive and negative peace. Whereas many think of peace as the absence of war, Galtung insisted upon a more robust direction for peace efforts—one that did not stop at the absence of war or absence of violence but worked to establish the *presence* of social justice and integrated structural support within societies. Galtung explains: "Negative peace studies are about the non-use of violence and its delegitimation, and positive peace studies are about the use of harmony and its legitimation"(Galtung and Fischer 2013, 39). Amanda Feller and Kelly Ryan put it simply: "the minimum aim [of peace] is the later (not to kill each other) and the eternal goal is the former (harmonious integrated communities" (Feller and Ryan 2012, 356). It is the task of building positive peace that many feminist-pragmatists have taken up and that I am primarily concerned with here, but of course, positive peace incorporates negative peace, as well. Patricia Shields and Joseph Soeters elaborate on the complexity of the distinction:

> In a society at war, the first stage of peace begins as the end of personal violence and absence of war (negative peace). In the next stage, a stronger society would emerge with communities that sustain freedom, social equity, social justice, cooperation, and so on (e.g., positive peace). Furthermore, a state of peace cannot be placed in a neat rational continuum beginning with negative peace and ending with positive peace. War and violent conflict are messy; the two types of peace overlap and are seldom clearly separated. *Positive* peace is itself complicated and demarcated as a continuum because a community may not be at war, yet filled with structural violence and militarism (Shields and Soeters 2017, 324).

Shields and Soeters highlight how, at Hull House and elsewhere, Addams embodied the positive peace which Galtung advocated. Addams understood how peacebuilding needed to be understood as an ongoing, integrated, and participatory process. Maintaining peace could not be a task merely delegated to military personnel or governmental officials, but instead, is a task that belongs to all who have a stake in the wellbeing of individuals, of the community, and of the wider world—which is to say, it is our collective task to pursue positive peace and work to foster attitudes and habits that contribute to it. Addams's conception of peace was relational and nondogmatic; it valued lateral progress, given the complexity of conflicting values, needs, perspectives, and life experiences. Her peace efforts were place-based, requiring sympathetic knowledge, and drawing upon the wealth of wisdom in a community of inquiry. In these ways, the concept of *placemaking* closely aligns with positive peacebuilding. Placemaking is part of peacebuilding.

Placemaking

The term *placemaking* is more commonly used in design-focused disciplines like architecture and urban studies than in philosophical literature, but feminist-pragmatists like Addams, Grace Lee Boggs, and others have long been emphasizing *placemaking* in their projects and writing (Heenen, Lake, and Whipps 2024). The term, which began to circulate in the 1970s, is at once a philosophical concept, an approach to creating shared spaces, and an international movement. According to The Project for Public Spaces, "placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to

maximize shared value."[6] Placemaking efforts are those which inspire people to "collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community..... [P]lacemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution."[7] Drawing on urban design principles, placemaking creates public spaces that center the perspectives of people who stand to benefit from them. Among those principles are that the community is seen as the expert, that form supports function, and that the process is always ongoing—commitments shared with feminist pragmatists (Madden 2021).

Peace, Dialogue, and Open Spaces – Nordic Connections

Like American philosophy,[8] the Norwegian philosophical tradition is largely understood to be inextricable from its history and its physical setting. Norway's rugged, isolated, mountainous landscape and culture of outdoor recreation and activity is as evident in much of the philosophical canon as is the history of Nazi occupation and resistance are. The intersections of the peacebuilding tradition and the natural world are some of the most interesting places for philosophical reflection, and they are a place from which insights can be drawn for capitalizing on place and the open spaces of democracy.

Fridtjof Nansen and "The Land of Beyond"

The aforementioned Nansen is an iconic Norwegian hero—a polar explorer and scientist turned humanitarian who raised Norway's profile on the world stage and later received a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts with refugees and the League of Nations. He is known for his audacity and his ambitious meliorism, undertaking tasks others thought were impossible or crazy, and accomplishing them—from crossing all of Greenland on skis, something no one had previously done, to issuing the Nansen passport to hundreds of thousands of stateless people after the war. He is also known for popularizing the concept of *friluftsliv* in Norway. *Friluftsliv* translates roughly to "open-air life" or "free air life." It is sometimes used colloquially today synonymously with outdoor recreation, but it is much more complex. According to Hans Getler, *friluftsliv* refers to the "philosophical lifestyle based on experiences of the freedom in nature and the spiritual connectedness with the landscape" (Gelter 2000, 78).

Nansen regularly talked about *friluftsliv* as one of Norway's distinctive features, referring to it as a philosophy—one to be encouraged as an alternative to overreliance on commerce and tourism, helping young people be more connected to the natural world, to one another, and to themselves. Importantly, and unlike other kinds of outdoor recreation approaches, *friluftsliv* does not require elaborate equipment or particular athletic prowess. It includes the sorts of activities that are accessible to everyday, ordinary people—a stroll in the hills, a swim, mushroom foraging, etc. It awakens one's curiosities about the natural world and encourages them to look more carefully. Gelter explains:

> Friluftsliv involves the unconditional encounter with nature in the same way as getting to know a person needs an unconditional meeting, and not just a quick look at each other. It requires connectedness and participation. By not participating one becomes a spectator and a consumer. Not participating and connecting with nature makes nature into a museum to observe, to learn from but not to interact with (Gelter 2000, 81).

For Nansen, *friluftsliv* was not entirely separate from peace matters. He believed that the anxiety and suspicion that many people experience with respect to the natural world was something that could be overcome with practice and exposure, reaping myriad benefits. But

[6] "What is Placemaking," *Project for Public Spaces,* accessed April 15, 2024, https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking.
[7] "What is Placemaking," *Project for Public Spaces,* accessed April 15, 2024, https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking.
[8] See, for example, Pratt and McKenna, *American Philosophy: From Wounded Knee to the Present* and Spencer, *American Pragmatism: An Introduction.*

he saw similar sorts of attitudes of distrust toward other people, particularly those others one is socialized to assume they have little in common with—the foreigner, the refugee, the enemy. These attitudes, too, pointed to the need for more practice connecting with others and more exposure to difference. He wrote: "If nations could overcome the mutual fear and distrust whose sombre shadow is now thrown over the world, and could meet with confidence and good will to settle their possible differences, they would easily be able to establish a lasting peace" (Leach 1961, 367).

Connecting with the natural world and connecting with others, for Nansen, was part of the adventure of life. He encouraged people to get outside—both literally and figuratively—to explore "what was unseen." Gunnar Repp explains: "As an educator Nansen urged his audience to develop their abilities 'to see the hidden things,' to be open to 'the call of the unknown,' and indulge themselves in 'the longing for the Land of Beyond'" (Repp 2010, 218).

The *Land of Beyond* includes the natural world and outdoor activities, but for Nansen, it is not merely that. It is also the vision just over the horizon, that toward which we strive, even when others think that our goals are too audacious and too outlandish. *Friluftsliv,* closely tied to peacebuilding, is, in Nansen's words, "that which could revive us and lead us back to a more human existence" (Reed and Rothenberg 1992, 162). He encouraged people to "take up a simple life in nature; in the forest, plains or mountains, on the high plateaus, in the great, lonely emptiness, where new and greater thoughts stream into us and leave a mark that cannot be easily erased" (Reed and Rothenberg 1992, 162). Nansen's trust that the land of beyond can help to foster "new and greater thoughts" that could lead us back to a "more human existence" is an attitude we can adopt as we envision the potential uses of the open spaces of democracy.

Arne Naess and "Life Seen as Open Landscape"

Arne Naess was Norway's most famous philosopher, as well as a notable mountaineer and naturalist. In the US, Naess is known primarily for his being the co-founder, along with George Sessions, of the Deep Ecology Movement, a school of thought that emerged in the 1970s and which has had a considerable influence on the field of environmental philosophy. Although it includes much more, deep ecology is often reduced to representation by an eight point platform that Naess and Sessions published as a "set of principles…tentatively proposed" for establishing a long range ecological movement in response to the ecological crisis (Naess 2021,1). While the platform is philosophically provocative, it has often been dismissed as too idealistic, too complicated, too far-fetched, and too radical (Clark 2010, 22).[9] The basic tenets of deep ecology are demanding and sometimes ambiguous and vague, asking a great deal of its adherents. I would argue that the audacity and ambitiousness of the eight point platform is, in fact, in the spirit of Nansen, and that being a little too far-fetched might actually be appropriate when responding to the suffering of the world and its inhabitants. Naess, in fact, went to great lengths in interviews and subsequently published work to clarify that the platform was a *working* platform—something meant to be revised, expected to be adopted inconsistently—calling it a "set of fairly general rules," and acknowledging that "it is a high ideal to be consistent" (Jickling and Naess 2000, 58). Lamentable as it may be that his reputation is so closely tied to the platform absent its larger context, Naess offers a great deal more which merits our further consideration, particularly his peace activism and Gandhian peace philosophy, as well as other features of his philosophical orientation that align with pragmatist commitments.

[9] Murray Bookchin famously called it a "ideological toxic dump." John P Clark, "A Dialogue with Arne Naess on Social Ecology and Deep Ecology," *Trumpeter* 26, no. 2, (2010): 22.

In Naess's work there is considerable engagement with pragmatism, particularly James, Dewey, and Whitehead. The influences most often recognized are from Spinoza and Gandhi, but Naess wrote about his attraction to the pragmatists, especially in the years in which he was engaged with the Vienna Circle as a young man. Naess's philosophical writings about peace precede his writing about deep ecology, although they overlap significantly, and several features of Naess's thinking are useful in the service of peacebuilding efforts through public spaces from a pragmatist perspective.

Critical to his peace philosophy and deep ecology are the roles of self-reflection and self-discovery. Naess's desire is for people to examine their *selves* deeply enough to recognize their essential unity, to grasp their relationship to the whole: "Self-realization…means expansion of the self, from the ego towards an inclusion and identification with wider circles of being" (Breivik 2021, 420). Self-realization, then, is a primary goal of philosophy, but it isn't *self*-centered in an indulgent, self-concerned way. Rather, according to Naess, by examining and becoming more intimately familiar with oneself, the individual self or the ego ultimately dissolves into the larger *Self.*

The individual, autonomous, atomic self is a myth—a denial of our connections to others. And it is partly responsible for our deep feelings of isolation and inadequacy that are increasingly and dangerously characteristic of our current culture, where one out of two Americans report experiencing measurable levels of loneliness and social isolation—experiences that have seriously adverse health impacts and which increase the risk of premature death by more than 20%. We need more, not less, self-reflection, and more, not less, emphasis on self-realization—but the realization needs to resist the Western tendency toward individualism and self-centeredness and lean more toward identification with the rest of the world, human and nonhuman. The pursuit of self-realization, for Naess, is simply a goal or direction. We may never fully see ourselves as ultimately tied up in the rest of creation, but we can sometimes momentarily grasp it, and we can continue to seek that awareness.[10] Naess wrote and spoke regularly about his close, personal identification with the mountain on which he grew up, a mountain which he called his father, and the mountain on which he lived as an adult in a tiny hut, Tvergastein, after which he named his personal philosophy, "Ecosophy T".

This fallible, iterative, ongoing process of self-realization readily connects both to identification with the wider natural world and to the wider human world. Those who understand their own *self* is tied up with other *selves* are better prepared to respond to the suffering of others. Following Gandhi, Naess advocated nonviolence, convinced that incremental, slow, nonviolent revolutions were long-term revolutions with lasting impact (Naess and Jickling 2000, 59.)[11] Like his ecosophy, his philosophy of peace activism was non-dualistic, pluralistic, fallible, and nonideal. He encouraged open, constructive dialogue, especially among those in ardent disagreement, and insisted that knowledge is provisional, inconclusive, and partial.

An avowed pluralist, Naess also identified himself as a "possibilist." According to Naess, possibilism is "the assumption that the future is in principle completely open, offering unimaginable surprises" (Naess 2002, 4). This possibilist perspective he characterizes elsewhere in the phrase "*life seen as an open landscape*" (Naess 2002, 1).

Possibilism accounts for his hopefulness, as he calls himself a "futurological optimist," and his "hope for the 22nd century"—although he admits little hope for the 21st (Witoszek 1997, 61). The vision Naess offers is one that embodies Erin McKenna's call for feminist-pragmatist utopian thinking; what we need—and what Naess of-

[10] Naess wrote and spoke regularly about his close, personal identification with the mountain on which he grew up, a mountain which he called his father, and the mountain on which he lived as an adult in a tiny hut, Tvergastein, after which he named his personal philosophy, "Ecosophy T".

[11] One of Naess's philosophical projects included carefully working out the philosophical system of Gandhi, arguing that "Gandhi needs help to enter the history of philosophy" (Naess and Jickling 2010, 59).

fers—are visions that "express a desire for a better way of being" and that allows "horizons of experience" to begin to expand (McKenna 2001, 9). He envisions a future where, in harmony with the natural world, people of all kinds coexist. McKenna likewise advocates for a process model of utopia—a model which incorporates change and transformation as central to the vision all along the way, flexible enough to evolve as plans become frustrated and when things go wrong, affording people the opportunity to be the sorts of people that they are, in all their plurality and difference, while still striving for—and educating for—a world in which we actually want to live. What these kinds of visions do is "keep the possibility of change alive," she writes (McKenna 2001, 9). In his peace philosophy and activism and in his deep ecological worldview, this is what Naess offers. The vision is audacious and demanding, but it emerges as *possible* when life is seen as an open landscape.

Steinar Bryn and "Unconditional Spaces"

A final Norwegian figure to mention here is Steinar Bryn, a public intellectual and peace leader with connections to both Naess and Nansen. In 1995, Bryn developed a dialogue program for the Nansenskollen (Nansen Academy) in Lillehammer, Norway. The Nansen Dialogue Seminars is a seminar series, training program, and network of resources "aimed at creating conditions and offering spaces for productive dialogue between conflicting parties" (Varner 2021, 46). The program began when Lillehammer hosted the winter Olympics in 1994. The city that had previously hosted was Sarejevo, which, at the time, was involved in a devastating war and had been under siege for more two years. Bryn wanted to know what Lillehammer could do to support its "Olympic friend" city Sarajevo. What followed was that the Nansen Academy, where Bryn was based, opened sixteen beds in their dormitory for people from all three groups involved in the Bosnian conflict to come to Lillehammer and engage in a three month dialogue process. This was the beginning of the Nansen Dialogues, from which emerged a Nansen Dialogue Network, and which led to the establishment of ten Nansen Dialogue Centers across the Balkans. The Nansen Dialogue process is one which "gathers politicians, journalists, teachers, parents, and pupils for dialogue about their own conflict, exploring potential solutions and opening possibilities for institutional change, where the situation is no longer seen through ethnic or mono-cultural lenses, but with a view to joint understanding that benefits all."[12] The dialogues now take place all over the world, supported by the Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue, a center internationally known as a hub "for dialogue work focused on interethnic dialogue, conflict transformation, reconciliation, inclusive communities and democracy."[13] Recently retired from the Nansen Academy, Bryn lectures around Europe and the United States about his dialogue expertise and experiences and continues to facilitate dialogue in communities with deep conflict, such as the Greek and Turkish conflicts on the island of Cyprus. For this work, he and the Nansen Dialogue Network have received multiple Nobel Peace Prize nominations.

In facilitating Nansen dialogues, one of Bryn's goals is to "create the arena where people can meet and talk"[14] (Bryn 2015, 53). Peacebuilding, in this way, is thoroughly relational. For dialogue to take place, people must be able to see and be seen by one another. This requires epistemic humility and an openness to challenge one's own assumptions and perceptions of the truth. But getting to that point where that can happen is difficult. Dialogue is a slow, incremental, and iterative process. Bryn stresses the importance of "unconditional spaces,"— spaces where people "forge shared realities and

[12] "Home," *Nansen Dialogue Network,* accessed April 1, 2024, https://www.nansen-dialogue.net/.
[13] "Dialogue is the Key," *Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue,* accessed April 1, 2024, https://nansen.peace.no/dialogue-is-the-key/.
[14] Steinar Bryn, *Twenty Years in the Eye of the Storm,* (Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue, 2015), 53.

create 'meeting points'"—places where people connect and find ways forward (Varner 2021, 46). When dialogues take place in Lillehammer, "unconditional spaces" might be anything from the local outdoor cultural museum, the Maihaugen, to the recycling center, to the Olympic ski jump. These are "ostensibly neutral spaces, places, or experiences that allow the barriers between people to come down and create "meeting points" that people wouldn't otherwise consider" (Varner 2021, 47). In this context, the place itself doesn't have a direct connection to the conflict at hand, and this affords the opportunity for people to connect in low stakes activities. Doing so humanizes the other and makes them visible to one another. In "unconditional spaces," a person may still be someone with whom you are at war, but may be also someone who is seen as a fine athlete, a good musician, a fellow parent, a student. Unconditional spaces create these meeting points, establishing connections that set the stage for dialogue to take place. For some, this long process seems too informal, unrelated to the issues at hand. But if it is so, it is so by design. Bryn's method is "deliberately set up to have an informal appearance," (Feller and Ryan 2012, 367) giving participants the opportunity to become more at ease in the physical location, in their bodies, and among each other. It involves what feminist-pragmatists identify as relational embodiment, and relational embodiment is essential for transforming conflict into creative potential:

> As social and physical creatures, we are situated in and constituted by our relationships, social structures, and the particularities of place. We are made by our interactions with others in and around us and by the physicality of our environment, including workplace and living conditions, health care, and food. The self is not separated from society or its environment; as pragmatists like Mary Parker Follett pointed out: "there is only self-in-and- through-others." (Heenen, Lake, and Whipps 2024, 292)

The approach to peacebuilding Bryn established and practices with the Nansen Dialogues is "understood and implemented as a mental, physical, and multilevel movement" (Feller and Ryan 2012, 368). This holistic approach echoes Naess as well as Nansen. Bryn served as an assistant for Naess for a period after graduate school, working closely with him as he undertook the work that ultimately was published as *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle*. Naess himself references Bryn here, insisting upon the rich potential of ordinary people to bring about necessary social change. The *system* needs to change, and many of our challenges will require structural, legal, and political leadership at the top levels. But, as Galtung insisted and Addams showed, positive peace involves everyone, and we are remiss to underestimate that power. We must not "disregard the people themselves as the creative driving force in history," Bryn insists; "Individuals and groups of individuals are capable of leading a struggle to change themselves, their lifestyle, and their living conditions" (Bryn qtd. in Naess 1989, 90). Bryn's dialogue efforts are aimed at creating opportunities for people to figure out how to live together in spite of their differences, and engage together in that struggle to change social conditions. Dialogue, in Bryn's practice, makes use of "unconditional spaces" to bring together even people engaged in deep conflict.

Conclusion

Although their approaches differ considerably, thinkers like Addams, Naess, Nansen, and Bryn align in their efforts to build positive peace in the service of pursuing challenging and audacious democratic aims. These figures recognize that our democratic foundations are crumbling, but also see potential in land to hold them steady. In various ways, each has faith in the richness of their own communities and the physical spaces in and around those communities—they recognize and harness "place capital." Williams's concept of the "open space of democracy" can serve as practical and theoretical framework for promoting a feminist-pragmatist vision of place that encapsulates the democratic and peacebuild-

ing potential of common spaces and public lands. As we endeavor to ameliorate social ills and address pressing community needs in local and global contexts, we should harness the "place capital" of public lands, seeing them as natural resources—not just for timber or oil or recreation, but for navigating conflicts, for creating participatory democratic habits and practicing democratic methods, and for connecting meaningfully with others, co-creating a future rather than remaining 'prisoners of the past'" (Bryn 2015, 214).

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RECLAIMING THE TABLE THROUGH A POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST PRAGMATIST APPROACH

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ABSTRACT: This paper develops a postcolonial feminist pragmatist approach to the philosophy of food by centering the figure of the hungry, "Othered Other Body". It critiques dominant Western philosophical traditions that privilege the consuming Self and often neglect the socio-political conditions shaping food- related practices. Drawing on feminist pragmatism and postcolonial theory, the paper repositions hunger as an embodied, relational condition shaped by colonial histories, caste, and gender inequalities. Using India as a key site, particularly East Indian, Anglo-Indian, Goan, and Pondicherrian communities, it explores intra-colonial dynamics through cookbooks and food literature to demonstrate how food practices function as strategies of survival and identity negotiation. The paper proposes "culinary hybridization" as a conceptual alternative to models of cultural appropriation, emphasizing relationality, endurance, and care. It concludes by calling for a philosophy of food rooted in lived experience and vulnerability, attentive to the realities of those for whom eating is a necessity shaped by history and inequality.

Keywords: Postcolonial feminist pragmatism, hungry body, Othered Other, culinary hybridization, colonial foodways in India

Introduction

In recent years, philosophical engagement with food has expanded, and engaged with questions of ethics, identity, and cultural exchange. Yet much of this work remains shaped by dominant Western philosophical frameworks that inadvertently privilege the ethical development of the consuming Self and frame food primarily as a site of individual moral choice or cultural appropriation. This leads to the potentially dangerous neglect of the social, historical, and material conditions under which people eat, especially in marginalized contexts. This paper challenges such paradigms by developing a postcolonial feminist pragmatist approach to the philosophy of food, one that is rooted in the lived realities of the hungry, Othered body.

At the center of this inquiry is the *hungry body*; not as a passive figure of need, but as a relational and generative subject shaped by histories of colonialism, caste, and gender inequality. Hunger as an ontological condition may be universal, but how it is experienced and responded to is mediated by socio-political structures and processes that produce asymmetrical vulnerabilities. Centering the hungry body shifts food philosophy away from individualistic models of ethical consumption and toward the social, affective, and historical dimensions of eating. Food practices, from this perspective, are not merely aesthetic or ethical expressions, but are transformed into modes of survival, care, and connection forged under constraining conditions.

The project primarily aims to rethink philosophical approaches to food by beginning with the hungry body of the Other. It develops a postcolonial feminist pragmatist framework through four interrelated goals. The first goal is to conceptualize the hungry body as a figure of vulnerability, interdependence, and meaning-making. The second is to reframe the role of the colonial Other through a feminist pragmatist lens, and to critically engage with the ethics offered by Lisa Heldke (Heldke 2003). This analysis is followed by an exploration of intra-colonial differences and layered identities within postcolonial contexts, particularly India, as a way of moving beyond any reductive form of the Self–Other model to think about the philosophy of food in the postcolonial context. And finally, I aim to propose *culinary hybridization* as a conceptual alternative that centers the lived, adaptive food practices of marginalized communities. In this paper, India serves as the key site for this investigation. It provides an ideal ground for such theorization due to its complex foodways that have been shaped by multiple food colonialities (British, Portuguese and French, to name a few), as well as huge diversity in religion, language, and cultural practices, along with structural processes such

as caste. Focusing on East Indian[1], Anglo-Indian[2], Goan[3], and Pondicherrian[4] communities,[5] this paper examines how food becomes a site for negotiating identity among colonized Others themselves, not merely in relation to a dominant colonizing Self.

The first section titled "The Hungry Body and the Colonial Other" lays the philosophical foundation. Drawing from feminist pragmatism and phenomenology, it develops the hungry body as a site of ethical insight. The section then critiques Heldke's notion of the "colonial Other" within her analysis of food adventuring. I engage with Amrita Banerjee, and state that we need to reframe solidarity in more nuanced, situated terms, rooted in vulnerability. Considering this, I then take the discussion forward to explore the decolonization of the philosophy of food in the next section titled "When Others Eat with Each Other," which moves beyond the colonizer/colonized binaries to explore the multiplicity of colonial experiences in postcolonial India. I offer the concept of the *Othered Other* and argue for the necessity to begin from this framework. Through an analysis of cookbooks and food literature from Goan, East Indian, and other communities, the section aims to demonstrate how foodways[6] reflect neither pure resistance nor passive assimilation, but complex strategies of endurance that navigate overlapping colonial and postcolonial structures. The section concludes by offering culinary hybridization as a conceptual alternative to Heldke's models of anti-colonial food-related practices, and attempts to shift focus to the grounded, affective, and survival-oriented food practices of marginalized groups.

In sum, this paper contributes to feminist philosophy, pragmatism, food studies, and postcolonial theory by proposing a shift in both conceptual and ethical orientation. By beginning with the hungry, Othered body, through a postcolonial feminist pragmatist lens, it repositions food not as an abstract site of moral choice but as a lived, material practice shaped by vulnerability, history, and relation. In doing so, it calls for a philosophy of food, and philosophy in general, that is more attuned to the embodied experiences of those whose hunger is not chosen but endured, and whose eating practices are acts of survival and care, rooted in relationality. In this sense, a postcolonial feminist pragmatist approach opens space to reclaim the table from the position of the Othered Other.

1. The Hungry Body and the Colonial Other: Rethinking Food Practices through Feminist Pragmatism

This section advances a feminist pragmatist approach to a philosophy of food by locating and analyzing the potential of the hungry body. To do so, it begins by bringing together phenomenological, and pragmatist frameworks to foreground the inherent vulnerability and relationality of the body through its hunger. I then move on to articulate that shifting the focus from the body in general to the hungry body reinvents the body as a generative site for rethinking intersubjectivity, vulnerability, and sociality, thereby moving beyond eating as an act that is solely private and biological. I argue that the hungry body, along with the practices associated with it, plays a cru-

[1] East Indians are an ethno-religious group of Mumbai natives, originally from local farming, fishing, and salt-making communities who were converted to Roman Catholicism by Portuguese missionaries in the 15th and 16th centuries. For further reading, see *Hindustan Times* (2019).
[2] According to the *Constitution of India*: "An Anglo-Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only." For further reading, see Government of India (1950).
[3] I use the term "Goan" to broadly refer to the cultural identity of individuals associated with the Indian state of Goa, which was a Portuguese colony until 1961. For more information, see Young (2006).
[4] I use the term "Pondicherrian" to broadly refer to the cultural identity of individuals associated with the Indian Union Territory of Puducherry, which was a French colony until 1945. For more information, see Amesur (2021).
[5] These are particular identity categories among others which emerge in the context of colonial exchanges.
[6] In the third edition of *Food and Culture: A Reader*, edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, the term foodways is defined as "the cultural, social, and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of food." See Counihan and Van Esterik (2013, 1).

cial role in social and individual meaning-making, ethical responsibility, and collective experience. This forms the foundation of my critical analysis of Heldke's framework which is based on feminist pragmatist commitments and her discussion on the colonial entanglements within which food practices are embedded. By starting from an analysis of the potential of Heldke's focus on the colonial Other in the context of food practices, I go on to critically evaluate the limitations of her strategies of anti-colonial resistance that she urges the colonial Other to engage in to resist the food adventuring practices of the colonial Self. On my part, I argue that the understanding of solidarity of food-related practices in the colonial context needs to be more attuned to vulnerabilities.

1.1 Hunger as Praxis: Embodied Relationality and Feminist Pragmatism

To approach the question of the *hungry body* (a term used by Heldke and Boisvert in *Philosophers at the Table* (2016)), from a pragmatist lens, I begin by briefly tracing the situating of the body as a site of meaning-making within the larger philosophical discussions. The philosophical significance of the body has been largely overlooked in dominant Western philosophical traditions. However, it has been re-centered as the locus of action, perception, and meaning in phenomenological as well as pragmatist accounts. In *Phenomenology of Perception* ([1945] 2012), Maurice Merleau-Ponty introduces the concept of embodied *intersubjectivity*, wherein intersubjectivity arises through our bodily presence and perception of others as lived bodies, rather than objects or abstract minds. As he writes, "The other's body is not a chunk of the world, but a way of accessing the world," revealing that our shared bodily existence forms the basis for understanding others and situating the body as a central site of intersubjective relation (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 354). Intersubjectivity highlights the *pre-reflective* nature of bodily experience. For Merleau-Ponty, the pre-reflective body is the mode through which we engage the world prior to conscious awareness. It is the body as a *being-in-the-world*, as he writes, "Before reflection, the body is already a 'being in the world,'" affirming the body's role as a direct and unmediated participant in experience (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 90). In his phenomenology, the body is not merely a passive object but a medium through which the embodied subject encounters and relates to others and the world. This body, which he terms as *the lived body*[7] is simultaneously expressive and relational. Kristina Bosáková[8] and Jan Patočka[9], through their phenomenology emphasize the pre-reflective, lived body at the core of intersubjectivity, and in their focus on the role of the body in perception and reflection. Patočka underlines the role of the body in shaping our experience when he writes, "The body is not merely a biological organism; it is the medium through which we experience the world and engage with others" (Patočka 1998, 58). Following this, Bosáková notes that Jan Patočka and Ludwig Feuerbach place corporeality at the center of their philosophical inquires[10], and that "Patočka's concept of corporeity emphasizes the body as the fundamental site of human existence, where subjectivity and intersubjectivity are intertwined" (Bosáková 2021, 315). However, by emphasizing the ethical, historical, and relational dimensions of embodiment, Bosáková and Patočka depart from Merleau-Ponty. Bosáková observes that Patočka builds on phenomenological understandings of the body by incorporating historical and ethical aspects, emphasizing that bodily experience is shaped by the historical

[7] In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty defines the lived body as "not an object, but a means of communication with the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 190). He emphasizes that perception arises through embodied existence. The lived body is therefore "the body as I live it," and is a pre-reflective, intentional subjectivity that grounds our being-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 84).
[8] Bosáková, Kristina. 2021. "Against the Self-Sufficiency of Reason: Concept of Corporeality in Feuerbach and Patočka." *Studies in East European Thought* 73, no. 3: 309–26.
[9] Patočka, Jan. 1998. *Body, Community, Language, World.* Translated by Erazim Kohák. Chicago: Open Court.
[10] Bosáková adds that in doing so they challenge the traditional notion of reason as detached and disembodied. She contends that the emphasis on the body is not merely a marginal concern but is plays a significant role in their critiques of abstract rationalism (Bosáková 2021, 327).

context in which it is situated (Bosáková 2021, 317). They introduce an account of embodiment that is more historically and socially situated, while substantially expanding his framework. Still, they remain within the framework of phenomenology by preserving its methodological commitments, including the focus on lived experience, while engaging with the ethical dimensions of embodied existence. As Bosáková points out, "While Patočka incorporates historical and ethical dimensions into his analysis, he remains committed to the phenomenological method, focusing on the lived experience of the body as the starting point for understanding human existence" (Bosáková 2021, 319).

John Dewey's pragmatist account of embodiment offers a relational, transactive, and socially embedded model, in which the body, beyond being a site for experience, is enmeshed in and shaped by social and institutional structures. Dewey advances beyond both Merleau-Ponty and thinkers like Bosáková and Patočka through his explicit integration of the ethical, social, and political dimensions of embodiment into a practice-oriented theory that aims at both collective and individual action. Embodied experience is no longer passive, but is dynamically intersubjective and socially constituted, enabled through practices and habits. The pragmatist framework, while agreeing with these commitments, emphasizes how such experience is enabled through practices and habits. This means that to entangle questions of subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, meaning-making, and inquiry, we must focus on the domain of practices and habits that have individual, as well as social dimensions. Crucially, in *Reconstruction in Philosophy (1920),* Dewey undertakes the project of reconstructing philosophy by asserting that the body, emotion, experience, practice, and food are not subordinate to intellect, reason, knowledge, theory, and thought, but are integral and equally significant dimensions of human experience that shape our understanding of the world. He argues that the gap between intellectual and practical inquiry can be bridged with philosophical reflection rooted in everyday embodied life. Dewey contends that rooting theorizing in the practical allows philosophy to cultivate a more reflective and critical consciousness capable of reshaping both individual habits and broader social institutions. Through this pragmatist lens, he explores how fundamental human needs, such as food, shelter, and work, are intricately connected to practical knowledge, challenging traditional philosophical claims of the necessity to maintain the purity of the mind through separation from the body.[11] Although Dewey does not treat food as a primary subject of his inquiry, he addresses it indirectly within the broader framework of human experience, specifically within his interest in practical human needs and social life. Within Dewey's philosophical system, food and its associated practices can be understood as integral to his emphasis on embodied experience.

Dewey's pragmatism has significant implications for philosophical engagement with food. Lisa Heldke and Raymond Boisvert, in *Philosophers at the Table* (2016), draw from Dewey to situate food as a *thoughtful practice* rather than merely sustenance or a cultural artifact.[12] Their framework effectively integrates epistemological,

[11] While Dewey acknowledges that symbolic or abstract knowledge (such as imagining fire as a dragon) plays a role in human understanding, he insists that it is practical, lived knowledge, such as that developed by the housewife who tending a fire to cook food, that is more directly connected to our engagement with the world. He adds that "we need to recognize that the ordinary consciousness of the ordinary man left to himself is a creature of desires rather than of intellectual study, inquiry or speculation" (Dewey 1920, 5). Against the traditional image of the philosopher as a detached rational thinker, Dewey draws attention to how ordinary consciousness is shaped by desires and embodied needs.

[12] Heldke and Boisvert present their concept of "thoughtful practice" which emerges by tracing Dewey's "efforts to heal the rift," which has enabled a demonstration of "why and how food-making might be a particularly valuable mode of activity" which integrates theory and practice (Heldke and Boisvert 2016, 131). Through it they contend that philosophical engagement must be grounded in concrete, everyday actions that affect and involve individuals and communities. They explain that we are not only of the world, but also in the world through our hunger, thereby placing impetus on what are considered deficiencies by traditional philosophy;

> The stomach, beneficiary of good recipes ingested, cannot be thought of as isolated, self-sufficient. It must be part of a context, of a setting in which possibilities of satiation are present…In the older intellectual landscape, dependency and neediness are inevitably labelled deficiencies. (Heldke and Boisvert 2016, 169)

aesthetic, and ethical dimensions.[13] Dewey's revision of the traditional philosophical framework enables Heldke and Boisvert to critique dichotomies such as theory and practice, self and other, and mind and body through the lens of food philosophy, thereby reorienting philosophical inquiry toward everyday practices like eating.[14] From a Deweyan perspective, they pose the question: "What if we were to begin from an understanding of humans as 'stomach-endowed' beings…'" (Heldke and Boisvert 2016, 23). By framing humans as "stomach-endowed" beings, Heldke and Boisvert invite a reconsideration of autonomy and self-sufficiency. While Heldke does not explicitly situate herself as a feminist pragmatist, I suggest that her work[15] is rooted in feminist pragmatism, as she extends Dewey's pragmatism in a distinctly feminist direction.[16] Although she builds on Dewey's emphasis on embodied practice and reflective inquiry, she explores how food practices are shaped by identity, power, and privilege in ways that Dewey does not fully address. Through the relationship she draws between the concepts of *attitude and action*[17], which correspond to Dewey's concepts of character and conduct, Heldke argues that ethical transformation requires both attitude and action, not belief alone.[18] She further applies her pragmatist framework through a feminist lens, revealing how eating practices are intertwined with colonialism, racism, and gender (Heldke and Boisvert 2016, 131).[19] Therefore, Heldke cannot be read only as a pragmatist. By reclaiming food as a site of sustained philosophical inquiry and centering it within material, ethical, and experiential contexts of gender, race and coloniality, Heldke advances a philosophical project that, I believe, aligns firmly with feminist pragmatism.

Building on Dewey's argument that embodied experience must be understood through socially embedded lived practices, as well as Heldke and Boisvert's insistence that food must be approached from a philosophical perspective, I propose that the hungry body offers a lens through which the ethical as well as political implications of embodiment can be explored. I attempt not only to center hunger as a bodily condition that marks our vulnerability and interdependence, but also to highlight the material, relational, and habitual nature of practices associated with feeding the hungry body. These practices include cooking, feeding, sharing, or even withholding food, all of which structure our experience of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and sociality. By shifting from the generalized and abstract body toward the hungry body, my analysis foregrounds a visceral condition of dependency and basic need. This approach makes visible the precarious and interdependent nature of embodied experience. Along with revealing the pre-reflective immediacy of bodily experience, it also exposes the ethical and political dimensions of access, deprivation, and care. Hunger is not only a biological state; it transforms the hungry body into a relational one.

Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the pre-reflective bodily perception can be deepened through the concept of the hungry body, which situates embodiment within a

[13] Heldke and Boisvert, draw from Dewey in the second chapter "Food as/and Art" of *Philosophers at the Table* to suggest that food-related practices, can embody creativity and cultural significance, just like any other form of art, thereby acknowledging their creative potential. Heldke and Boisvert base their argument that aesthetic excellence can also be found in everyday experiences, such as enjoying a well-prepared meal, on two concepts borrowed from Dewey; the s*pectator theory of knowledge* and *consummatory experiences (*Heldke and Boisvert 2016, 73-98).

[14] Heldke and Boisvert not only ground their philosophy of food in Dewey's consideration of human existence as embodied, through his criticism of the mind body distinction by explaining how the knowledge, like food underlines the vulnerability of the mind, but also how our experiences can be grounded in bodily practices and not just abstract thought (Heldke and Boisvert 2016, 17).

[15] *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (2003).

[16] Dewey's approach remains rooted in a Western, Eurocentric framework and overlooks power dynamics and inequalities tied to race, gender, and colonial history.

[17] Heldke notes, "More than a promissory note for action, an attitude is best under stood as a kind of action" and "actions are shaped and formed by attitudes" (Heldke 2003, 4).

[18] Heldke writes, "My goal is not to achieve purity but to become a better thinker and actor," emphasizing that ethical eating involves sustained engagement rather than simple moral judgment (Heldke 2003, xxi).

[19]The following sub-section approaches Heldke's discussion of colonial and anti-colonial practices of eating in detail.

framework that attends to both asymmetrical vulnerabilities and mutual obligation. This transactional model of the hungry body and its associated practices, grounded in feminist pragmatism, enables a more comprehensive engagement with questions of ethics, solidarity, resistance, and normativity. Identifying the hungry body as a site for interdependence, vulnerability, and ethical responsibility enables us to approach the question of the colonial Other through a more nuanced lens. By framing the hungry body as a conceptual tool for analyzing historical and social oppression, as well as for formulating agential potential for resistance, the next sub-section delves into a critical analysis of the colonial Other in the context of food-related practices. Building on the relational aspect of the hungry body outlined in this section, the following sub-section further locates hunger as critical to confronting unequal material structures and histories in the colonial context, and as a critical foundation for solidarity and resistance in the face of colonial legacies of exploitation.

1.2 Whose Hunger? A Critique of Heldke's Model of Anti-Colonial Food Adventuring

In this section, I extend the feminist pragmatist lens developed in the previous subsection by focusing on the colonial dimensions of food-related practices to engage critically with Heldke's concept of the "colonial Other" as it emerges in her discussion of food adventuring and anti-colonial practices of eating. This critical engagement is essential, as it lays the groundwork for the next section, where I explore the possibilities of oppression and resistance faced by colonial Others, specifically in the Indian context. I devote considerable attention to Heldke's proposed strategies of resistance and reflect on their limitations. Additionally, I aim to enrich my critique by incorporating Banerjee's discussion of how we must decolonize the conception of solidarity and reciprocity. Through this engagement I seek to outline the transformative possibilities of food practices within the postcolonial context.

In *Exotic Appetites*: *Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (2003), Heldke critiques Western "food adventurers" who exploit the Other by commodifying and appropriating cultural difference, while ignoring the contexts that give food-related practices meaning. She identifies two core tendencies of food adventurers: assuming the Other's culture is lacking and claiming universal access to it (Heldke 2003, 48). This mindset, grounded in colonial ideology, renders the Other perpetually available as a resource for the colonizer as a fact (Heldke 2003, 46).[20] As a result, the contexts and customs surrounding their food and its related practices are ignored by food adventurers leading to a harmful cultural appropriation where it is no longer innocent as it "ceases to simply be an act of eating the food of the Other" (Heldke 2003, 46). "Otherness" is constructed by emphasizing *exoticism*[21] and *authenticity*[22], creating a distance that allows the food adventurer to treat the culture as inferior and to appropriate it (Heldke 2003, 49, 56). Heldke urges food adventurers to shift toward an ethical engagement with the Other through food, one that resists reproducing colonial dynamics.

Heldke outlines ways to counter harmful food practices for both food adventurers and the colonized Other. She proposes *anticolonial food adventuring*, which involves *self-questioning, contextualism,* and a critical examination of one's biases and the historical contexts of food.[23] Drawing on bell hooks's *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (1992), Heldke highlights mutual recog-

[20] This enrichment may be economic, cultural, or social in nature.
[21] Heldke defines the "exotic" as that which is perceived, in a constructed rather than in an inherent manner, as "strikingly or excitingly unusual or different" due to its foreignness (Heldke 2003, 18).
[22] Heldke complicates the singular understanding of the term "authenticity," by tracing how it could reflect the food adventurer's desire for novelty rather than a genuine understanding of another culture, or replicability, where dishes are considered authentic only if prepared exactly as they would be in their culture of origin (Heldke 2003, 25-29).
[23] Self-questioning involves food adventurers to examine their own motives, privileges, and biases when engaging with the food of the Other, while contextualism challenges the fixation food adventurers have with "authenticity" and "exoticism," by encouraging them to recognize the broader social and historical contexts of the food they consume (Heldke 2003, 154).

nition as essential to anticolonial food adventuring. She insists that ethical eating must confront colonial histories embedded in culinary encounters, urging food adventurers to place "the colonizing relationship squarely in the center of the dining table," since "only by addressing colonialism directly through our cooking and eating can we possibly transform them into activities that resist exploitation" (Heldke 2003, 182). She also underscores that food adventuring cannot, and should not, always be pleasurable (Heldke 2003, 182).[24]

Heldke proposes strategies for the Other to promote respectful and critical engagement from food adventurers, while encouraging ethical and thoughtful food exploration as a practice. These strategies include *strategic authenticity, creative appropriation,* and *nonsubjecthood.* She suggests that by redefining authenticity as contextualization, rather than as the novelty or exoticism food adventurers seek, ownership can be claimed by insiders over their food cultures and resist food colonization (Heldke 2003, 194).[25] It also requires outsiders to take seriously and support insiders' claims when a cuisine is misappropriated (Heldke 2003, 194). This assertion of the right of the insider to decide, carries anti-colonial potential by enabling insiders to maintain control over their culinary traditions (Heldke 2003, 194).

Heldke also explores the potential of the Other to resist the process of Othering through the strategy of *creative appropriation*. She notes that cuisines are loaded with creative appropriations, that is, when colonized cultures often reimagine foodstuffs imposed by colonizers, preparing them in ways unfamiliar to the colonizer but marked by the colonized through flavor (Heldke 2003, 166). In doing so, they assert agency by redefining and recontextualizing these foods (Heldke 2003, 166).[26] This process can also transform the colonizer's presumed, unchanging identity, as seen in the example of curry, which, she notes, whether acknowledged or not by Indians, permanently influenced British cooking (Heldke 2003, 165). Creative appropriation is thus a dynamic, relational strategy that locates agency with the Other and challenges fixed notions of "good" or "bad" cultural borrowing.

Next, Heldke presents the idea of "nonsubjecthood"[27], a third category of responding to colonization, that breaks more radically from the colonizer's world[28] than "good subjects"[29] or "bad subjects"[30] (Heldke 2003, 184). Nonsubjects refuse to be defined within the colonial Us/Them dichotomy and instead assert their agency through creativity and self-determination, defining their relationship with the colonizer on their own terms (Heldke 2003, 184–185). This framework encourages food adventurers to recognize the Other's autonomy by adopting a self-reflective stance, which involves relinquishing authority, comfort, and centrality (Heldke 2003, 185). Nonsubjecthood calls for a "playful"[31] attitude grounded in humility, genuine curiosity, and an openness to discomfort and ignorance, rather than arrogance or control (Heldke 2003, 185). Here, solidarity replaces appropriation.[32] Heldke argues that food adventurers acting in solidarity with nonsubjects, who are creatively regenerating their histories without erasing them, can open new possibilities, though entrenched power dynamics make

[24] She clarifies that this is because engaging in anticolonial eating requires acknowledging the ways in which domination shapes the relationship between "first-world restaurant goers" and "third-world server Others" (Heldke 2003, 182).
[25] Authenticity becomes a tactical, situational strategy rather than a fixed external standard (Heldke 2003, 194).
[26] The next section analyses how creative appropriation differs from the model of culinary hybridization, which I propose.
[27] She credits Yvonne Dion-Buffalo and John Mohawk for the term, quoted in Frederique Apffel-Marglin, *Development or Decolonization in the Andes?* (1994). She refers to their usage of the word "subjects," to mean "the subjected ones" (Heldke 2003, 184).
[28] Heldke refers to the modern Western world.
[29] The colonized people who accept colonial ideologies without resistance.
[30] The colonized people who continue to revolt yet operate within colonial structures.
[31] Heldke borrows the concept of playfulness from Melissa Burchard who notes that "playfulness is an intrinsically useful way of being in the world…for people accustomed to carrying their white man's burden with deadly seriousness" (Heldke 2003, 188).
[32] Solidarity refers to supporting the Other's right to define and transform their culture on their own terms.

this difficult (Heldke 2003, 188).[33] She cautions against rewriting colonial history in ways that mask coercion as choice, yet urges food adventurers to reflect on whether the colonized are playing a different game altogether and prompts us to think of alternative ways to approach colonizer–colonized relationships (Heldke 2003, 187).[34]

By introducing the concept of nonsubjecthood, Heldke moves beyond the binary of complicity and resistance, allowing the colonized to occupy more autonomous, resistant, and creative positions. Her emphasis on self-reflexivity and epistemic humility is valuable, though ultimately limited. While I acknowledge that Heldke's work makes important contributions, I underline how it does not entirely overcome the problems it seeks to overcome. My critique centers on the lingering subtle presence of an attitude of unintentional colonial narcissism in her analysis. For instance, although she claims that nonsubjects do not respond to the colonizer or colonization[35], she later implicitly suggests that nonsubjects may be responding to colonization on their own terms[36], reflecting a tension in her account. I critically examine four key ways in which colonial narcissism is embedded in Heldke's analysis.

First, despite her intent to center the ethnic Other's autonomy, her argument ultimately remains focused on the food adventurer, their ethical awakening, and the commercialization of food practices through the restaurant landscape. Strategic authenticity and creative appropriation both center the colonial subject by placing the burden of responding to appropriation on the already commodified Other, potentially constraining rather than liberating their cultural expression, while the Self is tasked with being "supportive." Even in her concept of nonsubjecthood, where the Other refuses to play the colonizer's game, the emphasis shifts back to how this transformation to nonsubject benefits the food adventurer by prompting them to adopt humility, discomfort, and relinquishment of control, which is linked to their "White Man's Burden".[37] In this framework, I believe that the colonizer's subjectivity still remains central, while the Other's agency as a nonsubject remains reactive, a counterforce and ethical catalyst that benefits the colonizer. It may assert some control of the encounter with the food adventurer, but it cannot initiate it. Though Heldke aims to move beyond the limiting colonizer–colonized binary, in her discussion on the potential for resistance by the ethnic Other, the food adventurer nevertheless remains the focal point in her approach to anticolonial eating.

Second, while creative appropriation and the creative, self-determined figure of the nonsubject are powerful conceptual tools that invite humility and critical reflection by the Self during dialogical cultural exchange, they risk romanticizing resistance and overlooking the depth of structural power asymmetries. Both presume that rejection of colonization is always possible through empowered creativity, thus ignoring conditions shaped by trauma, displacement, or necessity that prevent the Other from being able to refuse, flag misappropriation, or co-create. Heldke briefly acknowledges that nonsubjecthood may be unviable under coercion; I, however, suggest that she severely downplays this in favor of taking up the "challenge" to explore alternative interpretations

[33] However, Heldke does not explore these societal structures further.

[34] While Heldke briefly addresses the distinction of the colonized potentially acting out of force or choice, she does not address it significantly enough to be a potential critique of the limitations of nonsubjecthood. I take this up later in my critique of nonsubjecthood, along with how ultimately nonsubjecthood requires the participation of the colonial food adventurer Self in the form of "reflection" thereby centering them in her narrative.

[35] Hedke writes, "…on the nonsubject model the colonized culture is transformed on terms of its own making—not those of the colonizer— nor those of the colonized in reaction to colonization" (Heldke 2003, 185).

[36] Heldke implicitly notes the "response" of the nonsubject to colonization when she notes, "Considering the possibility that members of a culture may be responding to colonization as nonsubjects who are deciding for themselves whether and how they will incorporate the strange foods…" (Heldke 2003, 186).

[37] Heldke notes in her discussion on playfulness that "Finally, cultivating playfulness is, in and of itself, a useful thing to try to cultivate, because playfulness is an intrinsically useful way of being in the world, particularly for people accustomed to carrying their white man's burden with deadly seriousness" (Heldke 2003, 188).

of colonial exchange (Heldke 2003, 187). She overlooks that refusal is not an option for many and may come with severe consequences.

Third, I critique the presumption of a homogeneous marginalized group through Heldke's three strategies and, on my part emphasize the possibility of food relations which take the Other as capable of negotiating and co-creating equally. For example, creative appropriation assumes all members of the marginalized group have equal power to identify and agree on the occurrence of misappropriation. Similarly, Heldke's idealization of the nonsubject also overlooks ambivalence and hybridity in postcolonial identities, thereby denying the possible strategic use of colonial structures for resistance and negotiation. Within the framework of strategic authenticity there is an expectation that outsiders "support the claims made by insiders," assuming a stable insider/outsider binary, while ignoring the complex, hybrid identities of diasporic or postcolonial subjects. Although, through tactical authenticity marginalized communities can assert agency, and resist the extractive impulses of food colonization, strategic authenticity may also inadvertently reproduce power dynamics it seeks to resist.

Fourth, Heldke's suggestion that food adventurers act in solidarity with the nonsubject by relinquishing authority and control reflects an individualist model of ethical transformation rooted in self-reflection, discomfort, and humility. Her framework of creative appropriation emphasizes emotional labor and intention by relying too much on individual ethical agency over structural analysis, leaving material inequities unaddressed and setting aside the possibilities of collective political change. Additionally, while she challenges exoticized notions of authenticity, she lacks a sustained and nuanced engagement with how power circulates within and across communities, especially when lines of cultural ownership are blurred or contested. Framing decolonization as dependent on "curiosity" and "playfulness" risks trivializing the violence of colonialism and reduces solidarity to attitudinal improvement.

Heldke's strategies of nonsubjecthood, strategic authenticity, and creative appropriation offer the colonial Other useful ethical tools for addressing colonial dynamics in food and cultural exchange. However, a pragmatist and feminist approach enables us to critique her individualist lens, that centers the food adventurer's moral struggle over the material realities of the Other, thereby limiting their agency. Although she aims to decenter the colonial Self, my analysis notes that she inadvertently ends up recentering it. Resistance once again becomes dependent on the Western food adventurer, which in turn dilutes the Other's subjectivity and may deny their potential for agency. Her approach, I caution, while important, remains incomplete and potentially risky. Thus, we need a philosophical approach that is more robust and structurally grounded.

To enrich and move beyond Heldke's strategic models, I draw on Amrita Banerjee's essay "De-colonizing Solidarity and Reciprocity" (2022), that is grounded in phenomenology, from a postcolonial and transnational perspective. I engage with it through a feminist pragmatist lens toward a philosophy of food that I have been developing so far. While both traditions emphasize relationality, embodiment, and lived experience, a pragmatist reading can add focus on social transformation, practical consequences, and epistemic accountability. Additionally, I propose that such a reading of Banerjee's critique of the liberal notion, and her positive notion of reciprocity, rooted in interdependence, incommensurability, and ambiguity can be useful to overturn Heldke's overemphasis on individual ethical transformation, which may instrumentalize the Other. This allows us to move toward a more relational and embodied ethical paradigm. Though Banerjee does not address food directly, I suggest her intervention can inform a decolonial philosophy of food rooted in feminist pragmatism. This can decolonize Heldke's strategies, be attentive to the complexities of colonial entanglements, and account for them. While Heldke burdens the colonized Other with responding to colonial

dynamics, on the other hand, Banerjee offers a model in which agency and vulnerability are co-constitutive. She writes, "the very conditions that establish us as agents also situate us as vulnerable beings" (Banerjee 2022, 148). Acknowledging the Self's vulnerability shifts the focus beyond empowerment as resistance to a shared condition intersubjective dependence, which affirms, rather than denies historical and material asymmetries. From a pragmatist feminist philosophy of food, the food adventurer can be decentered not only ethically but ontologically, through embodied hunger that underscores their dependency. This unsettles the Subject-Object dynamic that Heldke inadvertently reinscribes because the agency of the colonial Other is reimagined by foregrounding the Self's vulnerability and dependency, embodied in hunger. Heldke's reliance on ethical dialogue, consensus, and mutual understanding risks coercion, along with burdening the Other, while simultaneously erasing difference. Banerjee, drawing on Ofelia Schutte, affirms that difference and incommensurability can be foundations for ethical solidarity and reciprocity, not obstacles. In her concluding remarks, Banerjee adds, "If we attribute sufficient importance to asymmetry and incommensurability as aspects of reciprocity and within an ethics of recognition, then there is significant potential to prevent both abusive power relations and the impulse to colonize the other" (Banerjee 2022, 149). The unpredictable "gap" between Self and Other becomes an ethical space that honors the Other's irreducible agency and affirms their situatedness (Banerjee 2022, 135, 149). Banerjee discusses the function the "blind spot" or "gap" performs in in intersubjective relations as helping "to highlight and maintain a degree of ontological and phenomenological incommensurability between the self and the other, which can reorient an ethics of recognition in fundamentally new ways" (Banerjee 2022, 149). In this frame, we can engage across asymmetries by dwelling in the gap with uncertainty and attentiveness to difference, not by bridging it. An ethics of responsiveness enables us to approach the Other not as a tool for moral development but as a situated subject whose actions lie beyond the Self's approval or comprehension. Unlike Heldke's food adventurer, who relinquishes control as a moral act, the privileged subject within this frame is forced to surrender authority and control as a real, ontological necessity and face the Other's irreducibility.

Where Heldke's model relies on the moral development of the Self, Banerjee proposes solidarity grounded in mutual dependence and difference, rather than shared experience and homogeneity. From the perspective of the hungry body, hunger is not experienced equally, as the Self's vulnerability differs from the Other's due to material and political inequalities. While hunger is a shared ontological condition, it does not translate into a shared and equal experience. Food practices, then, are inherently social and relational, rooted not in moral heroism but in mutually responsive care across unequally situated bodies. Thus, while Heldke advocates for playfulness and emotional intention that risks trivializing histories of colonial violence, Banerjee's framework reframes solidarity as politically attuned, grounded in opacity, tension, refusal, and incommensurability rather than in agreement or assimilation. Within this decolonized approach to reciprocity[38] and solidarity[39], decolonizing food practices would require recognizing asymmetrical vulnerabilities that affirm the Other's subjectivity.

In the first subsection, by shifting from the general body to the hungry body, I reframed embodiment by emphasizing dependence, vulnerability, and shared responsibility. Hunger reveals our bodies as entangled with social and material conditions, transforming food from mere sustenance into a site of care, inclusion, and rela-

[38] Banerjee critiques the liberal understanding of reciprocity, which "takes it to signify a kind of contractual relationship between individuals considered as equals and is marked by mutual sharing, benefit, and exchange" (Banerjee 2022, 132).
[39] Banerjee also critiques the traditional liberal definition of solidarity which takes it "to be a given rather than something which is to be achieved and makes it look much simpler than it is in practice" (Banerjee 2022, 133).

tional ethics. The second subsection offered a pragmatist and feminist approach to the colonial Other through food-related practices, and a critique of Heldke's strategies for anti-colonial food adventuring. The pragmatist emphasis on ethics grounded in historical and material contexts, rather than reduced to internal moral states[40], enabled a critique of Heldke's focus on individual attitude transformation, particularly that of the food adventurer. I challenged the assumption that colonial Others can always resist through creativity, appropriation, rejection, or refusal. Instead, I drew on a pragmatist approach to agency as relational and contingent on material and historical conditions, thereby critiquing any romanticized or universalized notion of resistance. Moreover, pragmatism rejects fixed binaries and essentialist categories, a stance reflected in my critique of how Heldke's strategies risk reifying identity by overlooking and potentially denying the hybridity, ambivalence, and fluidity of postcolonial subjectivities. Finally, by rooting my analysis in lived consequences, a key-tenant of pragmatism, I pointed to the coercion, structural inequalities and violence that expose the gap between ethical ideals and postcolonial realities.

Feminist insights deepened my critique. My criticism of Heldke's tokenizing and idealizing of the Other for the Self's growth aligns with the feminist concerns of the instrumentalization of the marginalized for the service of the Self's self-realization.[41] I addressed the relational nature of ethics by highlighting the feminist concerns regarding the unequal distribution of responsibility and care in framing cross- cultural interactions by underestimating the potential of differences, asymmetries, and incommensurability. I also engaged in a feminist material critique by drawing attention to the insufficiency of emotional intention that fails to account for institutional structures. My argument that decolonization must be materially grounded rather than reduced to attitudinal shifts reflects these concerns. I also emphasized collective responsibility and structural change over individual morality, while affirming the agency of a constrained and embedded Other who is neither romanticized nor reduced to a tool for ethical development. Lastly, I drew on Banerjee through a feminist and pragmatist lens which allowed me to not only extend the critique of Heldke, but also to stipulate what would be involved in decolonizing a philosophy of food. The next section builds on this discussion and I move on to propose an alternative way to approach the Self and Other relation. Beginning from a highly contextualized consideration of food-related practices, the following section suggests that inclusivity is not an "add-on," but a generative starting point with transformative potential not only for marginalized communities, but also for feminist pragmatism itself.

2. When Others Eat with Each Other: Reclaiming the Table through a Postcolonial Feminist Intervention

This section aims to develop a feminist postcolonial pragmatist approach by focusing on the internal fissures and layers in the postcolonial Indian context[42] as a philosophical starting point that challenge binary understandings of cultural exchange. Postcolonial theory, like traditional philosophy has operated largely within the binary of "colonizer–colonized" and "Self–Other." As a result, the complex social dynamics of postcolonial societies and identities are often obscured when examined through

[40] Two examples are humility or discomfort.

[41] My analysis of Heldke's work resonates with feminist concerns, which emphasize the imperative to engage with the "Other" in ways that acknowledge and respect their agency and specificity. Some of these include Chandra Talpade Mohanty's criticism in "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" (1991) where she critiques the homogenizing tendencies of Western feminist scholarship, which often constructs the "Third World woman" as a singular, monolithic subject, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's criticism in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?"(1988) of the tendency of Western intellectuals to position themselves as benevolent voices for the oppressed, thereby reinforcing the very structures of domination they seek to dismantle.

[42] In this work, I employ the term "postcolonial" to denote the distinct historical contexts that emerged following the formal independence of colonized India. This usage does not imply that colonialism is entirely relegated to the past, either temporally or structurally.

frameworks that reduce them to this dichotomy. Such models fail to account for the multiple, intersecting identities embedded in concrete realities shaped by class, caste[43], race, gender, and religion. Scholars like Lisa Heldke in *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (2003) and Uma Narayan in "Eating Cultures" (1997) have contributed to postcolonial discourse by emphasizing the need to move beyond these binaries, particularly in the context of philosophically approaching food and cultural exchange.

Narayan briefly points to the necessity of breaking with the "Western colonizer" and "colonized Third World peoples" binary, which has dominated postcolonial discourses (Narayan 1997, 183). However, although her analysis focuses primarily on immigrant Third World women in Western contexts, she does not extend to the internal differences among colonized groups within the Third World itself. Heldke, as examined earlier, introduces the concept of "nonsubjecthood" as an alternate approach to the binary framework. Yet, her account does not sufficiently consider the plurality of colonial Others or the reality of multiple colonial encounters. Moreover, by positing nonsubjecthood as a solution, Heldke risks instrumentalizing and romanticizing the Other, while concealing the structural power imbalances between Self and Other, as I have argued in the previous section. Her work remains oriented toward the ethical development of the Self in the context of food adventuring, rather than exploring how colonized Others navigate, resist, and relate to one another within postcolonial contexts.

This section seeks to move beyond both, Narayan, and Heldke, by developing a feminist postcolonial pragmatist framework rooted in the specificities of the Indian context. India, as the analysis reveals, offers a rich site for theorizing relationality, conflict, and resistance beyond the colonial Self–colonized Other binary. This approach not only enriches the critique of postcolonial theory which has been charged with being hegemonic and overly Western-centric, but also the exclusion, oversimplification, and marginalization of diverse postcolonial identities. I aim to account for and begin theorizing difference from the perspective of lived intra-colonial difference and multiple colonialisms, in multipolar and entangled positionalities, within and beyond the colonial framework. Rather than solely adding "intersectionality" to an existing Self–Other binary, I argue for a fundamental restructuring of the dyadic conceptual model itself. This would shift how we think about postcolonial food politics; not as a site for the ethical transformation of the privileged Self, but as a space where multiple, relationally embedded subjectivities negotiate agency, power, resistance, and solidarity.

2.1 The Indian Context: An Approach Rooted in Multiple Colonialities

This sub-section explores how the postcolonial Indian context can serve as a site for theorizing that contributes not only to the philosophy of food but also to broader philosophical discourses. Before its full potential can be realized in the following discussions, it is necessary to understand the specificities and complexities of the Indian context; in particular, its multiplicity of colonial encounters and intra-colonial differences. Banerjee affirms the importance of attending to these intra-group complexities in group-based identities, failing which there is a risk of erasure of minority voices and the homogenization of collective identities (Banerjee 2022, 130). She argues that solidarity must grapple with not only with inter-group dynamics but also with internal differences, fragmentations, and the multiplicity of identities within marginalized groups themselves (Banerjee 2022, 130).

Unlike settler colonial contexts that Heldke discusses[44], the colonization of India did not follow a single tra-

[43] The caste system in India is a hierarchical social stratification system with roots in ancient Hindu society, that divided people into groups or "castes," based primarily on birth, which also determined social status and occupation.

[44] Indian colonialism involved multiple European powers employing distinct methods of domination, with varying degrees

jectory and brought with it concerns and challenges for colonized Others to negotiate, including through their food practices. Colonial rule in India was not imposed by a single monolithic European power, as is often assumed. Rather, it involved multiple colonial regimes, such as Portugal, France, and Britain, each occupying different regions, for varying durations, and employing distinct methods of control. These layered colonial histories challenge the homogenizing construction of a singular "Indian" identity, especially one rooted in misplaced nationalist or anti-colonial imaginaries.[45] They also give rise to multiple, complex, diverse, and often invisible identities, such as the Goan, East-Indian, Anglo-Indian, and Pondicherrian, which remain "off the menu," so to say, of the dominant national imaginary. This does not simply imply that they are entirely absent or non-existent; rather, they are neither on the inside, nor on the outside. These marginalized identities enable us to approach colonial relationships not as a dyad, but as a web of relationally embedded subjectivities, by recognizing not only the presence of multiple Others, but also multiple Selves.

These difficult to swallow diverse identities are neither fully inside nor outside the construction of a homogenous Indian identity. For example, the encounter itself with the British itself produced the different categories of East-Indian and Anglo-Indian amongst a variety of others, each embedded in different cultural configurations**,** with intra-group differences within each of these two identities as well. For instance, Anglo-Indians in Kolkata on the eastern coast of India differ significantly from those in Mumbai, on the western coast, despite both tracing their lineage to different colonial encounters with the same colonial power, the British. These differences are often suppressed in favor of simplified easy-to-digest public political categories that emphasize sameness, and are therefore insufficient accounts. In colonial and postcolonial India, food plays a significant role in the suppression of these differences that emerge. It has however also been a site for resistance and the forging of solidarities across plural identities.

In the following subsections, I philosophically approach representations of food-related practices in literary texts and cookbooks authored by individuals from marginalized postcolonial Indian identities to examine how food operates as both a site of oppression and resistance. By foregrounding the presence of multiple Others and beginning from the perspective of the Other, I fragment the Self/Other relationship, and present alternate ways of conceptualizing it. This textual, rather than ethnographic approach, treats cookbooks, memoirs, and literary narratives not only as cultural artifacts but as philosophical texts that mediate colonial and postcolonial relations. These texts illuminate the cultural politics of representation, interpretation, and narration, revealing the epistemic and ethical stakes involved in how food is imagined, narrated, and consumed. Through this method, the forthcoming analysis aims to reconstruct a philosophical framework that can engage with the uneven terrain of postcolonial life. It avoids both instrumentalizing the Other and romanticizing colonial cultural encounters, and instead begins from difference itself and from nested relationalities.

2.2 Other-Others: Locating the Legacies of Multiple Colonialities through Food

The East-Indian, Anglo-Indian, Goan and Pondicherry cuisines represented in literary and cookery books provide a lens to address cultural imperialism within the postcolonial context. In the foreword of *The East Indian Cookery Book* (1998), Thangam E. Philip writes; "the present day East Indian cuisine is the outcome of many influences-Indian (Maharashtrian), Portuguese and British". This is

of violence across regions. The British largely imposed systematic, large-scale violence through wars, famines, and direct rule, whereas the Portuguese pursued cultural imperialism, enforcing their language, customs, education, and legal systems to reshape local societies.

[45] In *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1993), Partha Chatterjee critiques the celebratory view of nationalism as anti-colonial resistance, by arguing that it masks internal contradictions and complexities by promoting a homogenized national identity.

visible from the recipes in the book which features British and Irish stews, puddings and biscuits, Portuguese beefsteak and sarapatel, locally distinctive bottle masala which is made from a combination of Indian spices, and Bombay ducks; a type of fish found in Mumbai.

Similarly, the ranging influence of cuisine is visible even in the recipes in *The Pondicherry Cookbook* (2012), where Tirouvanziam-Louis informs the reader about the origins of Pondicherry dishes. Some of these include the recipe for a Mughal influenced chicken curry, Prawn Kussidu, which her friend notes kussid is term borrowed from Goan cuisine, but Tirouvanziam-Louis asserts is Pondicherrian as the spices differ, and a dessert called Dodol that her Creole friends make and she notes is also made in Goa but has different ingredients and varies in colour, taste, and consistency (Tirouvanziam-Louis 2012, 92, 172). Therefore, Tirouvanziam-Louis contextualises the recipes in her cookbook demonstrate that Pondicherry cuisine is not restricted to the influence of the French cuisine, despite Pondicherry being a French colony. The cuisine reflects multiple layers of influence, including Creole, Goan, Mughal, French, local flavors. and other European, African, and pre-Columbian American influences. Vindail is another dish, which shows the simultaneous convergence and divergence across identity categories as it is known differently as vindail, vin d'ail or vindaloo in regional recipe books, and is prepared differently in the East-Indian, Anglo-Indian, Goan and Pondicherry identities, despite sharing certain ingredients.

An analysis of these recipe books reveals the multiplicity of marginal Indian cuisines, many of which share dish names or culinary influences that span local, regional, and colonial histories, including British, French, and Portuguese. These overlapping yet distinct culinary traditions point to the existence of multiple colonized Others, each shaped by different colonial and cultural forces. The presence of such "Other Others," for instance, East-Indian, Anglo-Indian, Goan, and Pondicherrian communities, complicates any singular or binary understanding of cultural identity. Rather than viewing Indian food merely through the reductive lens of "curry," as critiqued but also maintained by Heldke as a frame of analysis,[46] we can instead explore the nuanced interplay of difference and convergence through dishes like *vindail*, *vin d'ail*, and *vindalu*. This approach rooted in these texts show how the question of identity shifts beyond how the Self defines the Other; to how Others perceive alongside multiple colonial Others, relate to, and differentiate themselves from one another in the process of self-definition. As these culinary intersections and negotiations expose multiple colonial Selves alongside multiple Others, they not only fragment the singular category of the Other who is out of the grasp of the colonial Self, but also destabilize the coherence of the Self. As a result, the Self too is rendered vulnerable in their fragmented state by the fragmented Other who they cannot grasp. The presence of differentiated Others forces the Self to confront its own multiplicity, and realize that it is relationally constituted through Others that are irreducibly plural. Although I do not do away with the Self altogether, but decenter it, the reconceptualized model of multipolar subjectivity breaks down any unified notion of the Self. Therefore, while the vocabulary of Self and Other can be retained for analytical purposes, they are reconfigured not as binary opposites but as participants in a dynamic, historically situated web of relationships.

This approach differs from Heldke's concept of non-subjecthood. It articulates the ethical and political stakes of Other-Other relationships. In this way, food emerges as a philosophical site where identity can be conceptualized as developing within a dynamic, contested web of colonial entanglements, asymmetries, and mutual negotiations. This postcolonial feminist pragmatist approach moves beyond traditional notions of intersubjectivity, which remain tied to a dyadic framework, by

[46] Heldke notes that although origins of curry are contested, it is nonetheless "a dish a dish with genuine, legitimate origins— in colonialism" (Heldke 2003, 39).

foregrounding a more complex model of subjectivity that is layered, dynamic, and relationally constituted. This re-conceptualized model better captures the postcolonial ethical and political realities, especially in postcolonial nations like India, where identities are shaped not by static oppositions but through situated entanglements and negotiations among differentiated Selves and Others. Foregrounding these intra-colonial dynamics allows for a richer analysis of conflict, oppression, and solidarity, thereby transfiguring difference in the postcolonial context as a basis rather than postscript, from which the colonial Self must engage.

2.3 Beginning from the Othered Other

In the previous subsection, I asserted the importance of reconfiguring the Self-Other model by highlighting the presence of multiple Others and Selves, and presenting the Other-Other model as an alternative. In this subsection I develop the Other-Other model by proposing that ethical inquiry must begin not just from the Other, but from what I call the "Othered Other." The Othered Others are figures which are marginalized not only by colonial power but also by dominant Others within their own postcolonial societies. To illustrate the potential of beginning from the Othered Other, I philosophically approach the memoir *Filomena's Journeys* (2013) set in Goa, a state under Portuguese colonial rule from 1510 to 1961. The writer Maria Aurora Couto writes about the relationship her mother Filomena, who was a "bhatkar" or a landowning Goan woman shared with the women "mundkars," the landless laborers who tilled her land (Couto, 17). Though embedded in entrenched caste and class hierarchies, this relationship included some acts of reciprocity such as cooking and feeding: the mundkars labored on the land in return for a portion of the yearly harvest, while Filomena, from her dominant position, prepared meals for them out of kindness. Attempting to frame solidarity based on shared gendered experience and framing them as acts of "kindness" is oppressive, as it obscures the systemic exploitation and the structural dynamics of caste and class that that underscore these interactions. Couto herself critiques how colonial governance actively exacerbated and exploited these divisions to fragment the possibilities of forging solidarity: "Chardo pitted against Brahmin...both pitted against the *mestiço*" (Couto 2013, 130). This insight underscores the importance of interrogating how colonial regimes manipulated existing caste stratifications not only to maintain power but also to prevent coalitional resistance across caste lines.

Understanding Filomena and the mundkars as both colonial Others, vulnerable to hunger, gender inequalities and enmeshed in food labor, does not erase the material asymmetries that structured their relationship. Rather, it highlights the importance of relational positionality: Filomena's acts of "kindness" are inseparable from her caste and landowning privilege, while the mundkars' labor is shaped by coercion and necessity. From the vantage of the Othered Other, such dynamics of relationships are not easily reducible to either oppression or liberation; it is marked by simultaneous, entangled relations of dependency, care, and domination. Beginning from the perspective of the *mundkar*, who is the Othered Other, foregrounds the ambivalence of such relationships, challenging idealized narratives of solidarity that rely on benevolent figures of power or calls to moral action. It calls for a reframing of food ethics, not around acts of ethical consumption by privileged Selves, but around the lived, often painful, negotiations of survival by those multiply marginalized Others within colonial and caste-based hierarchies. Such an approach reorients our understanding of agency, resistance, and care toward the shifting and structurally constrained realities of the Othered Other.

By beginning from the Othered Other we are also forced to acknowledge that food is not always a choice, but is also often a matter of survival. In *Rescuing a River Breeze* (2023), also set in Goa, by Mrinalini Harchandrai,

caste and class dictate food access. Through the characters of Munshu and his lower-caste mother, Harchandrai shows how caste-based notions of pollution and purity dictate who may eat, cook, or access water. Denied access to the bhatkar's well and rice fields, Munshu's mother is relegated to collecting husk and dung, which she later burns for fuel (Harchandrai 2023, 26). Munshu's mother eventually dies after consuming rotten fish or contaminated water (Harchandrai 2023, 75). Her death is not metaphorical, but structurally embedded in material conditions shaped by caste hierarchies. Heldke's framework of food ethics, premised on creativity and choice, is ill-equipped to address such realities where food is not an ethical concern for Self-transformation, but primarily a matter of survival. For Munshu and his mother, in the face of struggling to survive, "eating ethically" is not a choice at all, but a distant concern and an inaccessible ideal.

Further, Harchandrai complicates these dynamics through the intersection of caste, class, and religion. A Catholic priest, despite being a beef and pork eater, is offered food by the upper-caste bhatkar when he visits, unlike Munshu's mother, who is denied even water. However, the bhatkar discards the priest's utensils after the meal, revealing the persistent caste-based restrictions and taboos that override religious affiliations (Harchandrai 2023, 74-75). There is once again an ambivalence at play as the Othered Other is fractured by these hierarchies. Tellingly, Munshu's mother replicates this discriminatory logic and deems the priest impure as well by telling Munshu to get rid of these same discarded utensils that he had picked up, highlighting how oppressed subjects can internalize and reproduce hierarchies established by dominant Others (Harchandrai 2023, 75). Munshu and his mother who are Othered Others in this context, do not act freely on their own terms as autonomous Others; rather, they are constrained to act within structural frameworks constructed by the colonizing Self and caste-based Others. Hence, these hierarchies are viciously self-perpetuating.

In such contexts of entrenched, multiple, and intersecting oppressions, Heldke's model of creative appropriation proves inadequate, as it fails to grapple with the coercive structures that limit the agency of the Othered Other. Heldke's strategy of creative appropriation centres the colonizing Self and its ethical transformation by framing food exchange as a space of resistance. In this space, the colonized Other resists the colonizing Self through creative and intentional acts of adapting the Self's cuisine, transforming it into something new while also making the influence of the colonized visible. While this model gestures toward disruption, it still begins with the Self, thus positioning the Other as being primarily reactive. In contrast, I propose "culinary hybridization" as an alternative framework rooted in a postcolonial feminist pragmatist approach. While it shares Heldke's goal of decentring the Self as the primary ethical subject, my framework departs from hers by focusing instead on the material, affective, and historically grounded experiences of the Other. Culinary hybridization, as I outline it, refers to food-related practices, which include the acts of cooking, eating, adapting, and remembering by marginalized subjects who engage with food not to subvert the Self,[47] but to survive, to connect, and to endure. Unlike Heldke's framework, which emphasizes intentionality and visibility of the Other's influence on the Self's culinary practices, culinary hybridization foregrounds the lived conditions, affective labor, and creative resourcefulness beginning from the Othered Other. It reframes food and its related practices not only as cultural exchange or ethical choice, but as deeply situated practices tied to histories of hunger, care, and constrained possibility.

In *Filomena's Journeys* (2013), for instance, Filomena adapts the Portuguese dessert bebinca by substituting eggs with more affordable sweet potatoes to feed her seven children who she raises alone. Her act is not a creative response to the Self to assert agency, but is a response

[47] Although it may resist the Self in the process, it is not its primary intention.

to scarcity marked by hunger on the body. Its aim is not creativeness, but creative resourcefulness. It is a materially grounded improvisation born of necessity. Similarly, in *Rescuing a River Breeze* (2023), the protagonist's mother modifies her grandmother's recipe in the Goan kitchen, that she learnt in her grandmother's Karachi kitchen, to suit her husband's preferences, as an act of comfort after his long day of work. Her culinary preparation is not merely cultural; it is affective, material, and historical. It is a hybrid act of remembrance, love, and adaptation that emerges from a layered history of displacement, gendered labor, and colonial legacies. These practices would fall outside Heldke's model because they are not intended to engage the Self. Instead, they affirm the agency of the Other in relational, grounded, and embodied ways.

Culinary hybridization, in comparison to creative appropriation, thus emerges as a more inclusive philosophical and ethical model that is grounded in material realities and affective ties, not just resistance. This framework holds space for complexity, contradiction, and contingency by recognizing that food as a site of survival and relational ethics is shaped by caste, colonialism, gender, and class. Through it the Other can act and resist with agency on their own terms, rather than those defined by the Self. By beginning form multiple Others, and particularly Othered Others, the potential of culinary hybridization can be realized, by identifying the subjectivity of the Other and their agency. It allows for a more grounded and relational approach to food ethics that refuses to burden the Other with the task of transforming the Self.[48] It neither centers the Self, nor locates the Other as a mere counterpoint.

Banerjee (2022) further clarifies the stakes of this shift by arguing that solidarity and recognition of agency must not arise from liberal benevolence or from the moral transformation of the privileged Self, but from a deep understanding of interrelational subjectivities and shared vulnerabilities. From this perspective, the Other is not "given" agency as a gift from the Self, but already possesses it, however precariously, within a complex web of social, historical, and structural constraints**.** Culinary hybridization reflects Banerjee's call for ethics rooted in interrelational subjectivities, rather than unilateral recognition. It resists the grasps of the Self and instead affirms agency as emerging within, not despite of oppressive conditions. These are not acts performed with unbounded autonomy but expressions of affective strength, relational negotiation, and survival.

In conclusion, this paper makes a critical shift from feminist pragmatism to postcolonial feminist pragmatism, and emphasizes the relational nature of intersubjectivity within the specificities of the colonial and postcolonial context. By focusing on the hungry body, the analysis moves away from abstract, individualist conceptions of intersubjectivity, instead highlighting how material realities, asymmetries, and histories shape agency and resistance. In doing so, I critique Heldke's strategies for resistance, arguing that her model falls short of addressing the complexity of the colonial Other's embodied experiences, particularly in postcolonial contexts marked by hierarchies and intersections of caste, class, religion, and gender. It did not only offer an intersectional account, but a reconfiguration of the entire Self-Other dyad, challenging traditional notions of identity and relationality by emphasizing the dynamic, contingent, and multifaceted nature of subjectivity.

The move to postcolonial feminist pragmatism centered the idea of the "Othered Other," emphasizing that all Others are not equal, and their experiences of hunger and resistance are shaped by different material conditions. This perspective challenged the binary Self–Other framework by foregrounding the multiplicity of identities and the relational dynamics that emerge within postcolonial societies. It argues that intersubjectivity is not a simple exchange between the Self and the Other, but a dynamic and layered process that recognizes the con-

[48] The question of whether the "burden" of the Other to resist the colonizing Self can ever completely be achieved or approached as a choice by the Other is something we to think about further.

tingency of agency shaped by structural inequalities and historical legacies. By situating the Other not as a mere object of resistance or inclusion, but as a subject with its own agency, this paper called for a more nuanced understanding of intersubjectivity in postcolonial contexts. It proposes that the Other's agency is not a response to the Self's benevolence, but arises from its own material conditions, struggles, and relational entanglements. Furthermore, it asserted that maintaining incommensurability and differences is a necessary condition for affirming the subject status of the Other, while not denying their agency. This approach also insisted on the importance of collective responsibility and structural transformation, rather than individual moral transformation, in fostering ethical practices. Ultimately, this work contributes to a global feminist pragmatism on a philosophy of food by noting that a feminist philosophy of food would be incomplete without considering the lived realities and subjectivities of the Other. By grounding intersubjectivity in the complexities of relationalities that characterize postcolonial contexts, we can develop a more robust, relational framework for ethics that recognizes agency, vulnerability, and the need for structural change.

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DISCLOSING GLOBAL FEMINIST PRAGMATIC VALUES: SOLVING THE GLOBAL SCOURGE OF WOMEN'S OPPRESSION AND CRIMINALIZATION

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ABSTRACT: Cosmopolitan feminism has contributed to critical theory, specifically in terms of identifying the intersection of social problems such as sexism, racism, greed which substitutes competition for creativity, poverty, crime, violence, and war. Jane Addams saw these problems as solvable if we act from our sympathetic understanding. Ongoing interpretations of her writings and activism offers a social ethics entailing doing the right thing according to moral progress and solidarity, brought about through our open social relationships. However, we need to continually re-inquiry about the expected and lasting meanings of our associated relationships, as we reach out to others as individuals, while acknowledging our life affirming values of love. Therefore, I propose three feminist pragmatic values, which correlate with Addams' radical approach to international feminist activism. I contend, such value analysis will continually inspire feminist sympathetic knowledge, which is not dependent on our privileging moral judgements or law-based mandates, that are most often formulated with male authoritative values in mind. I think this is a more productive approach to dissolving women's ongoing oppressions.

To uncover such a value theory, I interpret Addams' thoughts in the context of other axiology of her time. In some respects, Max Scheler's theories about sympathy and a sociology of knowledge correlate with Addams' values as embedded with our sympathetic understanding. There are feminist criticisms of both Addams and Scheler which are important to address, before I assert their writings on sympathy are helpful to a contemporary feminist value theory. As well, to tackle long standing oppression and criminalization of women in terms of pragmatic values, we need to understand the dualistic problems planted in our understanding and practices. Such dualist tendencies, which not only led Addams astray but continue to mis-guide our thinking and actions away from an orientation of love and nurturing, stand in the way of our sympathetic knowledge. Therefore, contemporary feminists, such as M. Joan McDermott, can help us discern solutions to the criminalization of women, as we understand more about feminist approaches to our phenomenal and spiritual experiences. So, we return to persistent, experiential life- affirming values, rather than man made laws, to re-orient ourselves and to eliminate the oppression and criminalization of women and all people around the world.

Keywords: Jane Addams, Max Scheler, John Dewey, post-modern critical theory, axiology, sympathy, criminalization/erasure of women

Introduction

Recently Elon Musk said, "The fundamental weakness of Western civilization is empathy." To briefly add context, he warns against "civilizational suicidal empathy, not caring about other people." (Rogan 2025, Podcast).[1] Taking a contradictory position to his socio/political argument is not the main thrust of my thoughts, however, I will explain how sympathetic knowledge, as embedded in a feminist, pragmatic approach to feminist values makes the world a better place.

The most contemporarily progressive legacy left by Jane Addams, lies with her understanding of "*overcoming, substituting, recreating, adjusting moral values, forming new centers of spiritual energies*" (Addams 1906, p.8).[2] Problematically, an example of unfinished work, if transformed values retain our attention and praxis, is to change the ongoing, world-wide criminalization and murder of women. Today, around the globe, women are incarcerated and murdered by people in painful personal relationships and in the name of state institutions, at an alarming rate. I think reinterpreting Addams writings, in terms of feminist, sympathetic values, helps repair her mistaken confidence in social constructivism of eugenics and denegation of some women, as we continue to act, eradicating the criminalization and oppression of women.

I will not be able in this essay to outline the genesis of sympathy, as such has a vast storied history, i.e. disputes about fact/value dichotomy and value objectification. Also, it is not my project here to decide whether interests or values are most effective when finding solutions to human problems. Although I do think, Addams integrates vital interests and decision making with values and emotions. As well, I am not able to complete a defense of the efficacy of pragmatic value theory over an embattled

[1] During a three-hour interview with the podcaster Joe Rogan released February 28, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSOxPJD-VNo.
[2] Addams 1906, *Newer Ideals of Peace*, The MacMillan Company, p. 8.

Darwinian approach to meliorism, or an increasingly less sustainable relational ethics of care.[3] So, with such disclaimers, we find ourselves in the fields of ontology, phenomenology, and epistemology, as a somewhat theoretical pursuit. However, I will argue that in terms of Addams' pragmatism, value solutions are most beneficial when devising our practices as sympathetic. But possibly the most relevant urgent caveat, to my discussion, is that I will not defend Addams' misinterpretation of 'pure values' as Western values, which has caused disastrous problems, as she unwittingly undermined uplifting women.

To begin, Addams' writings on Hull House have been particularly influential when considering social ethics as a matter of equally empowering, personal, yet broadly contextualized relationships. For example, contemporarily, a citizen's personal choice to have an abortion, because of well-being concerns, brings new associations and understandings of the challenges and strengths of the women in our communities. Her contributions to advocacy practices for social justice, such as elevating personal testimony, participatory assistance, and community organizing, have historically been effective. Particularly helpful to our current discussion, is Addams' development of sympathetic understanding by our active listening. When directing the programming at Hull House in Chicago (founded in 1889) and paving the way for an international ethos of feminist activism, she encouraged open dialogue amongst the immigrant residents about their personal struggles, which in turn was understood as important to community building activities and practices. As pointed out by feminists involved with an ethics of care, such as Maurice Hamington, par Addams' example we listen with our bodies as we are emotionally involved with the hopes and fears of those we care about, and thereby we become value bonded (Hamington 2001, pp. 105-122).[4] Our emotional bonds take on enlarged significance as we continually relate our dialogues to the public's interests. With such sympathetic understanding, we act with solidarity, by realizing our shared aspirations for a better life amidst our reciprocal concerns.

However, what has also been made clear is that legal protections and ethical debates do not convince everyone to respect each other's inalienable rights. We need to continually ask what the expected and lasting meanings of our associated relationships are in terms of ongoing problems, amidst persistence prejudices and oppressions. I find we need to highlight our common aspirations as felt values, embodied with collective meanings. Addams' evocation of the feminist values of nurturing one another, as a globally progressive resource, is especially pertinent in terms of an ongoing process of value analysis.

Throughout her writings, Addams told of people's everyday experiences, highlighting their emotions in action, as proof for our ability for intuitive value analysis. She avoids dividing our personal and social interests, enlarging our emotional experiences globally, emphasizing our feeling and understanding of values. She puts forth a powerful approach to our most complex situations in terms of shared values of nurturing.[5] In her 1906 text *Newer Ideals of Peace,* she offers what I understand as

[3] It is not the purpose of this essay to supplant or solve the problems of an ethics of care. However, because such ethics is based on the value of love and nurturing, it's problems can be transposed to a value theory. For more information, see Nancy J. Crigger, "The trouble with Caring: A Review of Eight Arguments Against an Ethic of Care.", *Journal of Professional Nursing,* Vol. 13, Issue 4, 1997, pp. 217-221.

[4] Maurice Hamington 2001, "Jane Addams and a Politics of Embodied Care", *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy,* 2001, New Series, Vol. 15, No. 2, On Pragmatism and Feminism, p. 105-122.

[5] See: Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace*, Guttenberg Press, eBook #69879, Release date Jan. 2023. Original publication: United State: The Macmillan Company, 1906, p. 9. "It is difficult to formulate the newer dynamic peace, embodying the later humanism, as over against the old dogmatic peace. The word, "non-resistance" is misleading, because it is much too feeble and inadequate. It suggests passivity, the goody-goody attitude of ineffectiveness. The words "overcoming," "substituting," "re-creating," "readjusting moral values," "forming new centres of spiritual energy" carry much more of the meaning implied. For it is not merely the desire for a conscience at rest, for a sense of justice no longer outraged, that would pull us into new paths where there would be no more war nor preparations for war. There are still more strenuous forces at work reaching down to impulses and experiences as primitive and profound as are those of struggle itself. That "ancient kindliness which sat beside the cradle of the race," and which is ever ready to assert itself against ambition and greed and the desire for achievement, is manifesting itself now with unusual force, and for the first time presents international aspects."

her definition of pragmatic sympathetic values (Addams 1906, p. 9),

> Moralists agree that it is not so much by the teaching of moral theorems that virtue is to be promoted as by the direct expression of social sentiments and by the cultivation of practical habits; that in the progress of society sentiments and opinions have come first, then habits of action and lastly moral codes and institutions. Little is gained by creating the latter prematurely, but much may be accomplished to the utilization of human interests and affections."[6]

But it is with her book *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (Addams 1922), as she details the women's pacifist movement, that her value theory becomes clearly integral to feminist cosmopolitanism. For Addams nurturing values are central to securing everyone's health, and well-being, as well as women's empowerment in general. Her thoughts on values can be read in the context of other axiology of her time. Both Addams and Max Scheler had ideas of combining life-affirming emotions with praxis to make universal changes. Scheler's insights about universal values of love and sympathy (as he decides in late writings sympathy is more important than empathy), as presented by our individual emotions, creativity, and sense of purpose, are akin to Addams' insights about women's intuitive knowledge.

Today, a critical approach to cosmopolitan feminism makes it imperative we recognize, that Addams did not fully understand the importance of varied cultural norms, the deep resentment of the male patriarchy, and the disastrous practices and politics arising from eugenics (Kennedy 2008) .[7] Her misconceptions included a limited knowledge of evolution in terms of human personhood, as she employed biological technology as a generic ethical tool, hoping for social, moral progress. As well, Addams was unwittingly complicit with a longstanding trend to criminalize sex workers, as she conflated such work with the era's fears of White Slavery (Blackmore 2017).[8] She fervidly advocated for those social changes, as she fought to liberate women and protect children.

Although she did at times reflect upon some missteps, her contradictions present us with another reason to re-interpret her writings with feminist values in mind. Specifically, in respect to sympathy we can think of nurturing as both vital to our individual lives, and to our purposes in a collective sense of enhancing other people's lives, rather than formal moral duty to others. Upon close reading of Addams and contemporary philosophers interested in pragmatism, we can discern three values which present us with normative practices of sympathy, constituting a cosmopolitan feminist axiology. By pragmatic I assume, persons being forward looking by employing melioristic analysis and practices. By feminist I assume, nurturing and caring as experiential and inspiring means to assuring our creative conjoined futures without prejudice, oppression, abuse, and poverty. By cosmopolitanism I assume political and state institutional institutions which are open to analysis on emotional basis of an enlarged sense of love for everyone.

Three values of pragmatic feminism are: Value I: Nur-

[6] Ibid. "…The Advocates of Peace would find the appeal both to Pity and Prudence totally unnecessary, could they utilize the cosmopolitan interest in human affairs with the resultant social sympathy that now is developing among all the nations of the earth."

[7] See A.C. Kennedy 2008, p. 28. "Eugenics, "Degenerate Girls," and Social Workers During the Progressive Era. *Affilia*, *23*(1), 22-37. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109907310473 **.** "Furthermore, feeblemindedness was understood in distinctly gendered terms. For example, William Snow, the president of the American Social Hygiene Association in 1916, was also concurrently the vice president of the American Eugenics Society, while Jane Addams was an honorary vice president of the American Social Hygiene Association (Haller, 1963; Pivar, 2002). The goals of the association included encouraging education on heredity for youths, minimizing "marriage between the generally sick and the well," preventing "reproduction of defectives," and "safeguarding children" (Haller, 1963, p. 131; Pivar, 2002).". Also See, Thomas C. Leonard 2016, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics and American Economics in the Progressive Era* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[8] See: By: Erin Blakemore 2010, Jane Addams's Crusade Against Victorian "Dancing Girls", October 11, 2017, https://daily.jstor.org/jane-addams-crusade-victorian-dancing-girls/ Accessed March, 2025, CST: 20:00. "The association of "white slavery"—the favorite bugaboo of the age—with dance halls underlines the ways in which freely mixing working-class men and women stoked wealthier Americans' fears of immigration, race, and sex. Prostitution rings did exist at the time, and both prostitutes and procurers could be found at dance halls. But the term elicited fears of innocent white women preyed on by immigrant pimps who forced them into lives of vice." See also: Victoria Bissell Brown, "Sex and the City: Jane Addams Confronts Prostitution", *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams,* edited by Maurice Hamington, The Pennsylvania State University, 2010, p 125-158.

turing the world is our entry into a world of fair, productive, and life affirming values. Value II: Our purposes and meanings as persons are consolidated into values by us playing an active part in the world's progress. Value III: Participatory, worldwide compassion, i.e. sympathy for the poor and children, is central to securing everyone's equity and freedom from oppression.

Section I: Addams as Value Theorist: Emphasis on Sympathetic Knowledge

"Peace and Bread in Times of War" (Addams 1922), is an account of Addams' launch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She makes an ontological, yet socially progressive claim that women's nurturing of children and community offers more spiritual and practical value than male heroism in war; "Bread and milk came earlier in evolution than weapons and war" (Addams 2002, p.1).[9] As a public philosopher, particularly fighting for women's rights for the franchise in democratic countries, she assumes women as originators and frontline activists of a global ethos of nurturing. Sympathy, as an emotional/intellectual approach to life's problems, is her value orientation. She integrated practices born out of necessary interests with broadly meaningful ideas of caring for others. She developed this concept, sympathetic knowledge, throughout her writings.[10]

She begins to work through her understanding of sympathetic knowledge in "A New Consciousness and an Ancient Evil" (Addams 1912), as she attempted to solve social problems of the criminalization of women, with an enlarged understanding of social responsibility.[11] In the early part of the twentieth century, White Slavery, became a moral preoccupation in the United States of America, and Addams found such criminality as intersected with prostitution (Diffee 2005).[12] Addams was caught up with the fervor of those times, calling for the eradication of White Slavery was for her a social justice issue. Even so, that issue was also an inflated advisory for those who were against immigration. Confusingly, we know by her work with Hull House in Chicago, Ill., such fearmongering was converse to Addams' purposes to include immigrants in the social life of the larger community. We will return to her misunderstandings of the value of individual persons' decision making and an autonomy of women's sexuality, latter in this discussion.

I would argue her value orientation of help and nurturing, is more important than her moralizing against the associative or moral "evils" of prostitution. We want here to discern what she meant by sympathetic knowledge, as an epistemology of understanding, and helpful to making present, each other's innate capacity to love and act on life affirming ideas. Such ideas accord with Addams' unique respect for human beings, because of our tendencies to highlight ontological ideas in our everyday lives. Our emotions are embodied in our understandings, as being the "organic preparation for action" and as presentations of transformative human values, in the sense we become ever more expansive with our loving of one another. She wrote, "All of this emotion ought to be made of value, for quite as a state of emotion is invariably the organic preparation for action, so it is certainly true that no profound spiritual transformation can take place without it."(Addams 1902)[13]

[9] Addams 1922, p. 1, *Peace and Bread in Time of War*, University of Illinois Press, 2002, p. 1.

[10] For further reading see, Hamington, "Jane Addams and a Politics of Embodied Care", 2001 and Delysa Burnier, "Embracing Others with 'Sympathetic Understanding' and 'Affectionate Interpretation:' Creating a Relational Care-Centered Public Administration," *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 43 (1): 42–57, 2019. doi:10.1080/10841806.2019.1700460.

[11] Addams 1912, *A New Consciousness and an Ancient Evil,* https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15221/15221-h/15221-h.htm , Chapter 1, "After all, human progress is deeply indebted to a study of imperfections, and the counsels of despair, if not full of seasoned wisdom, are at least fertile in suggestion and a desperate spur to action. Sympathetic knowledge is the only way of approach to any human problem, and the line of least resistance into the jungle of human wretchedness must always be through that region, which is most thoroughly explored, not only by the information of the statistician, but by sympathetic understanding."

[12] See: Christopher Diffee 2005. "Sex and the City: The White Slavery Scare and Social Governance in the Progressive Era." *American Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2005): 411-437. https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/aq.2005.0025. Acessed March 20th, CST: 21:00.

[13] Addams 1902, *A New Consciousness and an Ancient Evil*, The Macmillan Company, 1912. For "organic preparation for action"

I understand sympathetic knowledge here as an emotional presentation of the prime value of love, as an intelligence opened by our ideas in action. Individuals strive to be givers and recipients of love, even amongst their personal and social strife, so we admire and empower them, not pity them. We can think as an example of self-actualization, not in terms of a lesser sense of personhood, of children who although they feel we are helping them with love, want to act on their own. Sympathetic knowledge offers us a realization of a difference between "fellow feelings" and meaningful, purposeful understandings, as we find solidarity through our shared values while making plans together (Addams 1902 Chapter III). [14] In this respect we replace feeling sorry for some else, i.e. that "I share your pain" moment, with being involved in making our lives and the world better (Addams 1906).[15]

Sympathetic knowledge is value knowledge, as we believe in and act on love. Our knowledge finds us thinking not in terms of invariable information, nor moral platitudes. For Addams, sympathetic knowledge has historically been carried forward by women, especially when caring for children, and specifically as a matter of strengthening, listening, and responding *with* them to surmount challenges.[16] Addams stresses women as the forebearers of this radically different approach to problem solving, as we feed, listen, learn, and assist others, rather than the male championed approaches of didactic calculation, aggression, financial competition, war, and privation. She claims an expansion of women's practices is necessary (Addams 1906, p. 11),

> A great world purpose could not be achieved without woman's participation founded upon an intelligent understanding and upon the widest sympathy, at the same time the demand could be met only if it were attached to her domestic routine, its very success depending upon a conscious change and modification of her daily habits.[17]

Clearly, examples of our global nature of nurturing are the world food programs of the United Nations. Contemporarily, there remains a universal value of food and nurturing within the global political and secular culture, with international projects, such as the 'World Central Kitchen' and US Aid. One of the core values listed on the WCK website is empathy, explained as "We meet people where they are with dignity and respect, building connections through openness and awareness. We are intentional and mindful of the impact of our words and actions on others."[18]

Such an interpretation of Addams' suggestions about women's intuitive loving orientation to life is comparable to Scheler's view of love as the most life affirming value, by which we find our purposes entwinned with our spiritual pursuits (such as philosophy, the arts, sciences with are life affirming). I think such a comparison helps alleviate Addams's philosophy of some of the class, cul-

see page 11. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15221/15221-h/15221-h.htm Accessed March 21, CST: 23:00. For quote "All of this emotion…" See Chapter 1: "After all, human progress is deeply indebted to a study of imperfections, and the counsels of despair, if not full of seasoned wisdom, are at least fertile in suggestion and a desperate spur to action. Sympathetic knowledge is the only way of approach to any human problem, and the line of least resistance into the jungle of human wretchedness must always be through that region which is most thoroughly explored, not only by the information of the statistician, but by sympathetic understanding."

[14] Addams 1902, *Democracy and Social Ethics,* Chapter III, See: https://standardebooks.org/ebooks/jane-addams/democracy-and-social-ethics/text/, p. 70, Accessed March 19th, CST: 22:00. "The scene is a clear statement that after all, life does not consist in wealth, in learning, in enterprise, in energy, in success, not even in that modern fetich, culture, but in an inner equilirbriaum, in the "agreement of soul." As well from *Democracy and Social Ethics*, "I'm a good person"", is not adequate to attain individual morality in an age demanding social morality, to pride oneself on the results of personal effort when the time demands social adjustment, is utterly to fail to apprehend the situation". As well as from *Democracy and Social Ethics*, "But at bottom we distrust a little a scheme which substitutes a theory of social conduct for the natural promptings of the heart, even although we appreciate the complexity of the situation. The state of mind which an investigation arouses on both sides is most unfortunate; but the perplexity and clashing of different standards, with the consequent misunderstandings, are not so bad as the moral deterioration which is almost sure to follow."

[15] Addams 1906, p. 11, *Newer Ideas on Peace*. "If we accept this statement when we must assume that the new social morality, which we do dadly need, will of necessity have its origin in the social affections – we must search in the dim border land between compassion and morality for the beginning of that cosmopolitan affection, as it is prematurely acalled."

[16] Once again for further reading see Hamington, 2001, as cited above.

[17] Addams 1922, *Peace and Bread in Times of War*, p. 80-81.

[18] World Central Kitchen, Accessed March, 2025, https://wck.org/mission-vision-values, CST 20:00.

tural prejudice she professed. Segueing to this topic, I can quote Scheler, as he defines love as a central value (Scheler 1922, p. 16),

> … love is that movement wherein every concrete individual object that possesses value achieves the highest value compatible with its nature and ideal vocation; or wherein it attains the ideal state of value intrinsic to its nature.[19]

Section II: Addams, Scheler, and Feminist Sympathetic Values

Presented to us via our emotions and actions, ideas spring forth from our experiences. When our ideas are imbued with successful actions, as meaningful to our life affirming purposes, they become normative. Pragmatic ideas in action resonate through our experiences as values.[20] Sympathetic knowledge, as a mode of understanding and/or analysis, enlarges this process.

Written about widely during the Social Progressive Era, sympathy (and empathy,) were concepts which some Western philosophers and early sociologists, considered as integral to cosmopolitan ethics. Yet, Scheler writes about value theory to replace formal ethics. He finds our individual natures enlarged by our knowledge of love, not by a separate state of experience, such as Kant's sensus communis. He took a sympathetic view of our experiences, offering an alternative to subjective, legalistic, duty-based, and pleasure-oriented ethics. In the final edition of "The Nature of Sympathy", he explains sympathy as a thoughtful and emotional experience, and the primary source of all value knowledge (i.e. factual, self-identity, others, good and bad, right and wrong) (Scheler 1922).[21]

Scheler, a contemporary of Addams, was skeptical of American pragmatism. He critiqued the pragmatism of his time, as a philosophy which is overly Darwinian, and obsessed with material outcomes. Yet, alike to Addams, he presents us with an integrating experience-based view of reality and human/social consciousness, affording human persons imaginative and value-oriented knowledge (Addams 1906, p. 8).[22] Addams' value theory is alike to Scheler's in many ways, as she connects sympathetic knowledge, as individually understood, and felt, yet shared with others via values, through our far-reaching nurturing practices.

Before elucidating how feminist values supersede what is considered by these interlocutors as male values, I want to briefly address critiques of Scheler's writings on phenomenology and ethics, in terms of sexism. At the outset, I need to reiterate, our current discussion is focused on value philosophy explicated in terms of sympathy, and more focused on Addams' views than Scheler's. Accordingly, in "The Nature of Sympathy" Scheler's categories of non-formal ethics of values and his understanding of evolutionary levels of consciousness and feelings, are explicated in terms of experiential phenomenology, as a source of sociology of knowledge. He eases up on his hierarchical approach to values, to find our lives expanded when we are inspired by and acting on our sympathy and love. He makes it clear he is writing about our lived experiences (Scheler 1922, p. xlix),

> Love and Sympathy can also be of significant, indeed crucial interest to *metaphysics,* the central discipline of philosophy; but only *if* it can be assumed that their manifestations are *intrinsic* to our psycho-somatic and cognitive-cum-spiritual life, and incapable of further analysis in empirical or genetic terms.[23]

[19] Scheler 1922, p. 161, *The Nature of Sympathy,* Edition, trans. By Peter Heath, Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1970, p. 161.
[20] See Addams 1906, *New Ideals of Peace,* p. 8. "Moralists agree that it is not so much by the teaching of moral theorems that virtue is to be promoted as by the direct expression of social sentiments and by the cultivation of practical habits; that in the progress of society sentiments and opinions have come first, then habits of action and lastly moral codes and institutions. Little is gained by creating the latter prematurely, but much may be accomplished to the utilization of human interests and affections."
[21] Scheler 1922, *The Nature of Sympathy,* Preface to 1922 Edition, trans. By Peter Heath, Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1954, p. xiviii.
[22] See Scheler 1926, *Cognition and Work*, trans. Zachary Davis, Northwestern University Press, 2021. Specifically, to my point see: Rebecca L Farinas, "Art and Soul: James and Scheler on Pragmatic Aesthetics", *Classical American Philosophy: Poiesis in Public,* Bloomsbury, 2021. Also: Some contemporary pragmatists find Scheler's thoughts on the eternal and transcendental prominence of love, as the value supreme, incongruent with his emphasis on our ongoing philosophical anthropology. See Hans Joas, *The Genesis of Values,* The University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 101-102.
[23] Scheler 1922, *Nature of Sympathy,* p. xlix.

So, while we cannot dispute hierarchical structures in terms of his work on ethics, which can read as reinforcing a patriarchal authority, positing a superior (to our experience) divine echelon of morality, we can discern his writings on sympathy as more focused on how to increase our understanding and caring for other people.[24] Also, Scheler has been thought of as a phenomenologist who thinks "the ultimate destiny of women is matrimony and reproduction", and he writes that abortion and planned parenthood should become obsolete. [25] As well, the very division of a human condition, as a split between our vital urges and our creative spirit, is dubious to feminists and pragmatists, as we will explore in the fourth section of this paper. Undoubtedly such critiques remain extremely problematic among pragmatic feminists, and while I cannot offer a full rebuttal here, I can offer points of clarification, which I think justify our use of his value theory in terms of contemporary feminist philosophy.

We should keep in mind, by adding to his book, *The Nature of Sympathy*, late in his life, Scheler shifted his thinking away from conceptualizing our spirit and autonomous will as the shining and dominate mode of persons, to a more synthetic experiential condition of our everyday experiences. He envisioned an ever more cosmic purpose in terms of our spiritual achievements (Hein 1978, pp. 42-55).[26] Nonetheless, in all of his writings he clarifies feminine values as paramount, to the world's current complacence with a masculine imbalance of values, i.e. rationality, power, ego, and competition over love and sympathetic understanding. He envisions a time when feminist values of love, which are embodied in the struggles and meaningful lives of women, will replace anti-value actions and institutions.[27] His conclusions in this respect, align with Addams' pursuits for the values of peace and nurturing over war.

Contemporarily, Sandra Lee Bartky, takes a deep dive into *The Nature of Sympathy,* finding Scheler's insistence on the personal, individual advent of sympathetic knowledge and on "emotional distance" (Bartky's words) as a source of women's empowerment. Our emotional distance is not the objectification of our desire to use other people, but can be a source of genuine fellow feeling, as we acknowledge each other as unique persons with our own feelings. Thereby, women find a lasting solidarity, in terms of our personalized practices of care for each other, as people who are different than each other (Bartky 2002, pp. 79-83). [28]

Importantly for our discussion of Addams' value theory, Scheler proposes the need for an investigation of "patterns of sympathetic attitude" in his 1924, treatise on a sociology of knowledge (Scheler 1924).[29] He notes how our life affirming value knowledge progresses outwardly, expansively, never enforcing political or national divisions, and never relying on our punitive natures. Scheler's ideas of such a sympathetic knowledge can help us contemporarily with global problems. Although he did not include a critique of male patriarchy, he insightfully writes (Scheler 1922, p. 232),

> The various systems of exacting vengeance, for example, which culminate in the statutory penalties of the criminal law, are all based upon different patterns of sympathetic attitude. Their history is a continuous dissolution of earlier states and finally into indifference. The 'expansion' of sympathies, and their qualitative sublimation and spiritualization (positively, in love, and negatively in hate), always implies a further forma-

[24] For a discussion of employing his more hierarchal axiology to dissolve value imbalance bought on by male oppression, see Ruggeri, C., " A criticism of Young's 'Throwing Like a Girl' through Scheler's understanding of motor action", *Cont Philos Rev* 52, 335–359 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-019-09475-8.
[25] See Hilde Hein 1978, "Comment on Max Scheler's "Concerning the Meaning of the Feminist Movement", 1978 (Fall), Philosophical Forum, 9: 42–54.
[26] See: E. Kelly 1997, "Metaphysical Horizons: Spirit and Life In: Structure and Diversity", *Phaenomenologica*, vol 141. Springer, 1997. Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-3099-0_13. Accessed March, 2025, 20:00.
[27] See Manfred S. Frings 1965, *Max Scheler: A Concise Introduction into the World of a Great Thinker,* Marquette University, 1965. Chapter 10: "The Age of Adjustment", p. 145-156.
[28] Sandra Lee Bartky 2002, *Sympathy and Solidarity, and Other Essays,* Rowman and Litttlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002. See pp. 69-89. Specifically, pp. 79-83.
[29] See, Scheler 1924, *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge,* Translated by Manfred Frings, Intro. Kenneth Stikkers, Routledge, 2021.

> tion and dissolution of solidarity in individual groups.[30]

For Scheler, our propensity to love is a perception of values, preceding understanding of empirical facts or logical, rational understanding.[31] We are truly value-soma, as our love is not just a feeling but an emotional act with embodied meanings. We do not pity people, when loving those in distress, we act to help because we love the person suffering, as we find their genuine value as also a loving person. Values *are* factual, while we individually experience them as emotions, as we conceptualize our experiences. Values also help us objectify our life purposes. For Scheler, analyzing values is finding our values in motion as attached and presented by objects in our world. For example, art and rituals as expressive and relative to our metaphysical thinking and to our historical meanings, are value oriented. We are ultimately decision makers, as we are continually drawn to objectify ourselves, as relative to our values. Surely, we identify ourselves politically through our conjoined circumstances. We present ourselves as value oriented, as well as integrated with our ethical reality.

We can affirm a universal value of love as a life affirming orientation and indispensable to our identities. Amidst post WWI international peace efforts, Scheler revised his book on sympathy, (1922), adding ideas on our understanding of others as reciprocal and creative. Love in terms of "crowds, the communal unit, and society at large", retains our most vital and purposeful sense of who we are as reflective, thoughtful individuals.[32] Scheler writes (Scheler 1922, p. 164),

> With this state of things, we may conjoin the (non-empirical) postulate that all love (once it is somehow perceived), evokes a loving response, and thereby brings a new moral value into being – for a loving response also possesses moral goodness, as an instance of love; and hence there emerges a principle which we propose to call the *'principle of the solidarity of all moral beings'...*[33]

Furthermore, Scheler answers questions of how we solve social problems, as he claims that we are all responsible for each other's moral decisions. We share, emotionally, thoughtfully, and in actions, our love for one another, and we share the guilt for our transgressions.[34] In his preface to that late edition, he criticizes the deterministic and biological nature of Western science, in terms of people's understanding of one another.[35] Surely, he did not approve of pro-eugenic movements, such like Addams' involvement in terms of social constructivism.[36]

Evidently, both Addams' and Scheler did not think of sympathy as pity. Addams' was involved with her own philosophical anthropology, offering thoughts on modern communities as only beginning to realize our cosmopolitan affections, as we experience new and differing moral practices. She was optimistically looking forward to the advent of value solidarity of peace and liberation for women, as she writes (Addams 1907, p. 11),

> If we accept this statement when we must assume that the new social morality, which we do badly need, will of necessity have its origin in the social affections – we must search in the dim bor-

[30] Scheler 1922, *Nature of Sympathy,* p. 232.
[31] See: Max Scheler 1913-1916, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-formal Ethics of Values*, trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk, Northwestern University Press,1973, p. 40.
[32] Scheler 1922, *The Nature of Sympathy,* Preface to 1922 Edition, trans. By Peter Heath, Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1954, p. xiviii.
[33] Scheler 1922, *The Nature of Sympathy*, p. 164.
[34] Ibid. "…It implies that with regard to their respective moral values, each is answerable, in principle,
'or all, and all for each; that were it is a question of mankind as bearers of all moral values, in collective responsibility of the Idea of the morally perfect Being, all stand proxy for one and one for all; so that each must share the blame for another's guilt, and each is party from the outset to the positive moral values of everyone else."
[35] See for reference and more information: John G. Gunnell, "Max Weber in America", *Journal of American History*, Volume 98, Issue 3, December 2011, Pages 870–871, https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jar484. Accessed March 20th, CST: 23:00. Although Scheler does not mention American philosophers in his second edition, it is possible he had knowledge of Jane Addams. Scheler was close friends and colleague of Max Weber. Addams was a collaborator and friend of Marianna Weber, who was married to Max. Interestingly, they did have a profession connection. Max Weber, who knew Scheler and who profoundly influenced Scheler's phenomenology in respect to social relationships, met with Addams in Chicago in 1904. Marianne Weber was at that meeting, and both she and Addams were mutually impressed by each other's work in terms of feminism and social work. Addams and Marianne Weber shared an understanding of how approaches to ethical situations and our social world in general is unfairly gendered.
[36] Scheler 1922, *The Nature of Sympathy,* p. 118.

> der land between compassion and morality for the beginning of that cosmopolitan affection, as it is prematurely called.[37]

Summarily, Addams, along with Scheler, understands love as uplifting the self-worth of each other (for Addams, especially uplifting women and children), and the inspiration for making social change. So, with love we can consolidate our progressive, creative solidarity. Upon close reading of both value theories of sympathy, we can discern three basic values, presenting us with normative practices, and constituting a cosmopolitan feminism: Value Practice I: Nurturing the world is our entry into a world of good and universal values. Value Practice II: Our purposes and meanings as persons are consolidated into loving values by us playing a mindful part in the world's progress. Value Practice III: Participatory compassion, especially for caring for the poor and children, is key to everyone's personhood.

In this section, we have emphasized the vital importance of love and nurturing to our future understanding of how to live happy correlational lives. Scheler has contributed by deepening the phenomenological notions of our perception and expression of values and sympathetic knowledge, while Addams' stresses accomplishing objective aims. We will leave Scheler's axiology here, yet we keep in mind, he was critical of pragmatism and Western positivist approaches to people's understanding of one another. So, it seems to me, that to fulfill an overview of sympathetic, feminist value analysis, we must address Addams' mistaken ideas on eugenics, and social constructivism, as she has unwittingly contributed to the oppression and criminalization of women.

Section III: Feminist Value Solutions to the Ongoing Criminalization and Oppression of Women.

As said, Addams' approaches to sympathy and values are melded with her advocacy for women, hoping to embolden us as members of socio/political life. However, contemporarily for us to fully embrace feminist cosmopolitanism based on sympathy, we must address Addams digressions. For us to understand how privileged social status, as a matter of economic self-interest, and how our legalistic and morally judgmental cultures, stop us from more strongly presenting feminist value solidarity, is particularly important. So, I will point out in more detail Addams' missteps, then revaluing what I have understood in terms of the basics of her value theory.

Value 1: Nurturing each other is our entry into a value-oriented world.

Addams forefronts individual creativity finding women more self-aware of their individual worth and purposes, while born to nurture each other. Likewise, we can enlarge our values when assisting with global needs. The advent of a change in women's consciousness, as possessing human resources greater than weapons, coincides with women's imaginative spirit of freedom as social equity. As well she presents values in action as our initial orientation, without first thinking in terms of financial concerns or geo-political interests.

Addams thought of the post WWI world food challenge, as an opportunity to change the capitalization of human resources in terms of profits by men, as well as how to achieve world peace. Of course, the male patriarchy has intensified financial interests involving many nurturing fields of human endeavor, such as medical care, education, and food. White male capitalists are currently the richest people in the world, and their practices are minimally philanthropic in terms of alleviation of the oppression of women, feeding the world's starving, and lifting the misery of racism.[38]

[37] Addams 1907, *Newer Ideas of Peace,* p. 11.

[38] See: Addams 1922, *Peace and Bread in Time of War, p. 47.*"A great world purpose could not be achieved without woman's participation founded upon an intelligent understanding and upon the widest sympathy, at the same time the demand could be met only if it were attached to her domestic routine, its very success depending upon a conscious change and modification of her daily habits….But it was possible that as women entered into politics when clean mild and the premature labor of children became factors in political life, so they might be concerned

However, women also become value disoriented. Stacy Lynn reports that in 1899, Addams' wrote an apology to her friend Ida B. Wells. Wells had called Addams out on writing offensively about African Americans, in an address protesting lynching. Addams criminalized Black people taking a position of White middle class emotional superiority. [39] She said Black men were "bestial" and "uncontrolled". Addams also suggested Black women were naturally easy prey to disastrous social conditions. Although we should keep in mind her apology, she faltered when thinking of how everyone uniquely presents values to the world, and that this understanding takes precedent over our own genteel circumstances, and our anti-sympathetic understanding of other people's experiences (Lynn 2018). [40] We can think of how much more expansive our nurturing is as a 'joining with' and 'sharing of', rather than a detached, cool handed, socially acceptable, reconstruction of a persistent prejudice.

If we truly consider the limitations of our prejudices, while realizing the present-day problems of capitalizing off the degradation of women, brown, and black people, many of us must admit to being involved with blocking our value perceptions. Many of us continue to depend on and trade with capital made by means of taking advantage of people's needs. Many of us are limited, as we victimize people who struggle with financial problems, and as we prejudice others outside our 'normal' aesthetic understanding.

Value 2: Value Practice II: Our purposes and meanings as persons are consolidated into loving values by us playing a mindful part in the world's progress.

Addams' quest throughout her writings is how to attain women's liberation in an age of social morality? For Addams, our pragmatic tools are only as good as our creative intelligence, as we should not repeat past mistakes, by using outdated and inadequate solutions. It is beyond the scope of this essay to analyze how feminist philosophies, which harbor views on the agency and self-determination of women, allowed writers to critique women's abilities to care for others. We can say Addams did indeed neglect the importance of individual subjective sexuality and the freedoms entailed with private and personal emotions, as well as the global resistance to feminist equalities on such grounds. So, it is appropriate to briefly spotlight recent scholarship critiquing Addams, in terms of two persistence issues, eugenics and criminalizing prostitution.

Addams' mistaken generality of women's positive identity as 'morally pure', can be discerned early in her book, *A New Conscious and an Ancient Evil* (Addams 1912), as well as a late career book, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (Addams 1930). Her proposals which have been proven to be cruel and unhelpful to adding to personal happiness and social betterment, were segregating women, who were thought of as degenerate, from men so they would not have children. In terms of criminalizing such women, she singled out women who worked as prostitutes or committed crimes, and who possibly had learning challenges, or had difficult home lives, as essentially different than 'normal working' girls from good families who had lost their way (Lubove

with international affairs when these at last were dealing with such human and pognanant matters as food for straving peoples who could be fed only through international activities."

[39] Keeping in mind she helped organize the NAACP, forming the Woman's Peace Party, the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and contributed tirelessly to the suffragette movement and acted as an advocate for children's rights.

[40] Stacy Lynn 2018, "Jane Addams, Ida B. Wells, and Racial Injustice in America", Jane Addams Paper Project. August 22, 2018. https://janeaddams.ramapo.edu/2018/08/jane-addams-ida-b-wells-and-racial-injustice-in-america/. Accessed March 19th, CST 19:00. As well see: Addams, *A New Conscious and an Ancient Evil,* Chapter 4. "The community forces the very people who have confessedly the shortest history of social restraint, into a dangerous proximity with the vice districts of the city. This results, as might easily be predicted, in a very large number of colored girls entering a disreputable life. The negroes themselves believe that the basic cause for the high percentage of colored prostitutes is the recent enslavement of their race with its attendant unstable marriage and parental status, and point to thousands of slave sales that but two generations ago disrupted the negroes' attempts at family life. Knowing this as we do, it seems all the more unjustifiable that the nation which is responsible for the broken foundations of this family life should carelessly permit the negroes, making their first struggle towards a higher standard of domesticity, to be subjected to the most flagrant temptations which our civilization tolerates."

1962).[41] Such stigmas of women who behave harshly in harsh environments, deters all mothers and daughters from finding their voices and unique talents, so as to change their environments.

As said, it is well known, Addams' literary techniques, which became embedded in feminist philosophy, elevate the personal stories of people who are experiencing hardship and injustice, so our common values can be felt through open, non-judgmental communication. She continually, throughout her career, elevates the stories of women who were robbed on their autonomy because of prostitution.[42] As noted, she was concerned with women who were driven into prostitution because of sex trafficking or poverty. Addams contribution to opening social analysis and activism for these challenges is significant. Confusedly, her leanings toward trusting evolutionary theories of biology and technological inventions over her value theory, diminishes the nurturing agency and sympathetic understanding abilities of women (Newman and Cohen 1993).[43] At the same time she was empowering women, she undermined women's agency as a matter of a lack of intelligence, claiming women were not able to fully make their own moral choices because they lacked not only social resources and in turn human intelligence because of their circumstances. In part, her social constructivism is dysfunctional because of her misconceptions.

Prostitution, during her time, as it remains in some respects today, a difficult and disappointing life, because of our male dominated society's usury and greed. Addams thought of prostitution as a moral evil, because of cycles of poverty and lack of education. Yet, how could Addams justify that women should be valued as workers with rights, but not as sex workers with rights? There is an argument to be made, that prostitution is no less value oriented than other jobs which are loveless, such as opportunistic insurance or real estate jobs, yet the former is unacceptable because of sex. Regardless of the validity of such a comparison, there seems to be a problem with Addams moral certitude, as she presumes prostitutes are not active moral agents, as they are victims, and thereby robbed of full intelligence. We might hear their stories, but not by them, only by moral translators. Contemporarily prostitution remains a practice impacted by poverty, slavery, emotionally disturbing practices, health problems, insecurity for individuals and families, and usury, but is it illegal for these reasons, or moral reasons? We do know when we victimize prostitutes, we do not put first most the value of the individuals involved, and therefore how can we find the subsequent criminalization of prostitutes helpful? [44]

However, we must now admit that societal fear mongering and the victimization of groups of underprivileged women as deviants, does not promote well-being, and denigrates basic values of individual creativity and societal nurturing. Yet, we have discussed how Addams' emphasis on civic action, is augmented by a deeper analysis of values, and includes the creation of new ideas through our sympathetic understanding. That these analytic practices are generally assumed as come about by a male faculty, is problematic.

Although Addams offers women a new, wide, global path for their aims, she narrowed women's value of caring for others by her restrictive views of each woman's

[41] See Roy Lubove 1962, "The Progressives and the Prostitute", *The Historian,* Taylor & Francis Group, Vol. 24, No. 3 (May, 1962), pp. 308 – 330. As well, White criminals signaled citizens to put more efforts into social resources, while Black culture or some women and poor white people, were criminalized as being inferior culturally, and therefore less important for social progress. See: Addams, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil.*

[42] See: Frances Newman and Elizabeth Cohen et all 2023, "Prostitution: Historical Perspectives on the Study of Female Prostitution", *History of Women in the United States,* Volume 9: Prostitution, DeGruyter Brill, 1993, pp. 99-105.

[43] Gerald O'Brien 2023, *The Eugenic Movement and the Social Work Profession Gerald O'Brien.* HQ 755.5.U5 037 2023. Oxford University Press., 2023.

[44] On the website, 'Jane Addams Peace Association', Accessed March 19, 2025, 20:00 CST. the previously mentioned critiques of her values, are pointed out, with caveats. It seems her turn away from biological determinism to cultural improvement was instrumental to the advancement of women yet flawed in at least two ways "Jane Addams and the White Supremacy of Her Time: Vision and Limitation", Newsletter, Jane Addams Peace Association. https://www.janeaddamschildrensbookaward.org/jane-addams-and-the-white-supremacy-of-her-time/ (Cited Jan. 23, 2025).

personal choices about her body and sexual practices. Scholars now turn to an integrated view of a prostitute's life and their decisions.[45] Yet, to redeem Addams, we can surmise our self-confidence is enhanced by our sympathetic knowledge, as a person is more aware of their value, while focusing on nurturing, not sacrificial aspects of their lives.

We can, however, turning once again to Addams' value conclusions, as she recognizes the need for people in general to value kindness and mutual affection amidst all mitigating circumstances, by their actions (Addams 1912, Chapter V).

> Certainly, no philanthropic association, however rationalistic and suspicious of emotional appeal, can hope to help a girl once overwhelmed by desperate temptation, unless it is able to pull her back into the stream of kindly human fellowship and into a life involving normal human relations. Such an association must needs remember those wise words of Count Tolstoy: "We constantly think that there are circumstances in which a human being can be treated without affection, and there are no such circumstances."[46]

Value 3: Peace and love are prime values by which we are ever expanding and realigning our individual and collective objective aims and value pursuits.

The suffragette movement made progress towards world peace through securing the franchise and influencing governments in many democracies around the world, although in our world today we are still experiencing oppression, war, and violence against women.

Yet, for Addams, an individual moral triumph is nonplus if our society and environments remain unaffected by our sympathetic knowledge of others and our nurturing practices. Her philosophy therefore presents us with a phenomenology of reaching out to other people because we want to care for them, presenting us with a key aspect of our value of love, but such is an ongoing process as our ends and means when changing our environmental and social conditions.

Today there are political movements which are returning to science and technology as means for social constructivism. We are reminded by sociologists and scholars of the history of philosophy, Addams held misguided views on biological re-conditioning and social constructivism. A.C. Kennedy, Erin Blake, and Gerald O'Brien have all written, in their respective fields, about the social harm done by Addams' philosophy in this respect. She was very much involved in the pro-eugenics movement of her time (O'Brien 2023).[47] Kennedy (Kennedy 2008, p. 29) does consider that Addams' pro-eugenics stance was "positioned within her broader focus on the prevention of social ills, the merits of a scientific approach, and advocacy for children's rights."[48] However, the harm done was far-reaching, as we now understand that the pro-eugenics, social progressive movement of the Unites States, during the nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, was a model for Nazi Germany. As heinous,

[45] Frances Newman and Elizabeth Cohen et all 2023, "Prostitution: Historical Perspectives on the Study of Female Prostitution", *History of Women in the United States,* Volume 9: Prostitution, DeGruyter Brill, 1993, p. 104.
"Current perspectives on prostitution are concerned with the experience of the prostitute and with the meaning of the activity for those who engage in it, as well as with the social institutions, forces, and supports that influence the life and choices (and lack of choices) of the prostitute. The combination of these two perspectives has important implications for intervention and remediation. Respect for the individual who has made a particular adjustment to the society in which she lives—as a devalued sexual object in a society which values women primarily as sexual objects—requires that attempts be made to demonstrate other ways to fulfill important needs and goals without violating and devaluing the integrity of her experience. In addition, an understanding of the social systems that influence and control the individual leads to a commitment to social change in the form of decriminalization of prostitution and of more enlightened attitudes toward women in general."
[46] Addams 1912, *A New Conscious and an Ancient Evil*, Chapter V.

[47] Lynn's research is cited above. Gerald O'Brien 2023, *The Eugenic Movement and the Social Work Profession,* HQ 755.5.U5 037 2023. Oxford University Press., 2023. See: Erin Blakemore 2017, Jane Addams's Crusade Against Victorian "Dancing Girls", October 11, 2017, https://daily.jstor.org/jane-addams-crusade-victorian-dancing-girls/ Accessed March, 2025, CST: 20:00. Angie C. Kennedy 2008, Eugenics, "Degenerate Girls," and Social Workers During the Progressive Era, "Feminist Inquiry in Social Work", Volume 23, Issue 1, online https://doi/10.1177/088610990731047, Accessed March, 2025, CST 20:00. Also Roy Lubove,"The Progressives and the Prostitute", *The Historian*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (MAY, 1962), pp. 308-330 (23 pages) https://www.jstor.org/stable/24437958.
[48] Kenney, 2008, p. 29.

was the mass (women and men) sterilization programs of the Twentieth Century. Despite legal changes, these institutionally sanctioned practices continue today, especially affecting women in prisons (Ladd-Taylor 2020).[49]

We will in the final section, investigate further, how Addams' instrumentation of science as a form of meliorism has been harmful, because of her failure to break down dualisms of modern science and society. Especially I point to Addams contradicting her theoretical assumptions with eugenic practices which are irreversible. She thought of moral tests as necessarily expansive, and was a proponent of re-valuation in accord with ethical progress. She wrote (Addams 1902, p. 2),

> But we all know that each generation has its own test, the contemporaneous and current standard by which along it can adequately judge of its own moral achievements, and that it may not legitimately use a previous and less vigorous test. The advanced test must indeed include that which has an already been attained but it includes no more, we shall fail to go forward, thinking complacently that we have "arrived" when in reality we have not yet started.[50]

But we have learned throughout this discussion, that reaching out to others, elevating their stories, and taking their part through activism, means accepting that our expectations for others, and the consequences of our actions can be falsely plotted and authoritatively misguided. Surely, we must love by not merely elevating people's stories, and taking up their causes with our norms and cultural bias, but by sharing our expressions and presentations of loving values. Love needs to be a way of freeing ourselves and others to live more harmoniously, not masking their futures with our own intentions.

Section IV: The Ongoing Struggle of Feminist Criminology and the Value of Love

M. Joan McDermott, in the early part of this century, wrote poignantly for our purposes here, about value theory and feminist criminology. I think Addams' disclosures of values of love bridge the dualisms which McDermott gleamed from Dewey's notes in *Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy* (McDermott 2002).[51] Dewey's thoughts seem to be stated as opposite to Scheler's axiology, but our purpose here is not to realign the former to the later, as we want to discern a pragmatic synthesis of epistemological schisms, in terms of feminist values. Citing four main dysfunctional characteristics of modern society which denigrate values, McDermott highlights Dewey;

> (a) the depreciation of doing and making and the over-evaluation of pure thinking and reflection, (b) the contempt for bodies and matter and praise of spirit and immateriality, (c) the sharp division of practice and theory, and (d) the inferiority of changing things and events and the superiority of a fixed reality.

I align these four problematic dualisms with 4 major global injustices of the criminalization and victimization of women, which Meda Chesney-Lind and Syeda Tonima Hadi (Chesney-Lind and Hadi 2016) write about in their chapter, "Criminalizing Women: Global Strategies for Denying Female Victimization". Throughout this section, I focus on a way forward by sympathetic knowledge and feminist value practices.[52]

Firstly, the abolishment of reproductive rights, correlates with the dualistic fallacy of the depreciation of

[49] See Molly Ladd-Taylor 2020, *Fixing the Poor: Eugenic Sterilization and Child Welfare in the Twentieth Century,* John Hopkins Press, 2020.

[50] See: Addams 1902, *Democracy and Social Ethics,* p. 2. "But we all know that each generation has its own test, the contemporaneious and current standard by which along it can adqueately judge of its own moral acheivements, and that it may not legitimately use a previous and less vigorous test. The advanced test must indeed include that which has a already been attained but it includes no more, we shall fail to go forward, thinking complacently that we have "arrived" when in reality we have not yet started."

[51] M. Joan McDermott 2002, "On Moral Enterprises, Pragmatism, and Feminist Criminology" in Crime and Deliquency, Volume 48 Issue 2, April 2002, pp. 283–299.Such values orient us towards a world without litigious punitive systems and towards better educational, community and cultural enrichment, and more fruitful and secure social programs and institutions. Accordingly, such institutions will be value oriented as well as value-making, being based on our loving interpersonal and world-oriented relationships.

[52] Meda Chesney-Lind and Syeda Tonima Hadi 2016, "Criminalizing Women: Global Strategies for Denying Female Victimization", *Women and Children as Victims and Offenders: Background, Prevention, Reintegration*. Eds, H. Kury, S. Redo, E. Shea, Springer, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-08398-8_23.

doing and making and the over-evaluation of pure thinking and reflection. Surely, concerns for, women's well-being, global over-population, and the prioritized valuation of our ongoing relationships, are practical reasons for changing abortion restrictions.

Criminalizing abortion needs to be rethought as an interdisciplinary problem, across value fields of science, personal experience, social relationships, and most importantly for our purposes here in terms of loving value practices, instead of moral, legal, or political judgements. Reinstating women's 'right to choose', we will be able balance assessments based on certain views of science, such as a right to life, with the inspiring value of individual women's emotional experiences and approaches to problem solving. To continue with what we have discussed so far, the value of our personhood lies with our individual sense of purposefulness to nurture others. In today's culture wars 'My body, my choice' is at odds with "The right to life movement". With such rights coming from societal, theoretical political movements, taking precedence over the doings and makings of our personal experience. Surely understanding the context of a mother's life is lost in a generic understanding of the priority of an unborn person, so the later movement is specifically prone to generalizing people rather than to understanding their uniqueness.

Criminalizing abortion frustrates aims of protecting women from unsafe abortions or preventing unneeded abortions. Anti-abortion laws for adults, can weaken human rights for all individuals, especially regarding a right to health, right to privacy, right to work. Such criminalization lessens the prowess of our communities in terms of practical and symbolic freedoms. It puts a theoretical commanding law of science or God, above our empathy for each other's situations and circumstances.

This brings us to our second area of injustice as the merging of religion and law to criminalize female sexuality and sexual expression. This form of abuse correlates with Dewey's dualism (b) the contempt for bodies and matter, and praise of spirit and immateriality. It is beyond the scope of this essay to disclose problems and search for solutions of gender in the value field of religion. As well, Addams did not write specifically on religious matters, in terms of ethics or values.

She did however relate spirituality with an adjustment between family and social claims as a matter of our "enlarged interest in life" (Addams 1902, pp. 38-39).[53] For Addams such a basic principle relates to our spirituality, and with passages in *Democracy and Social Ethics* she makes a pragmatic move, by including our emotions and actions with our plans of broadening our relationships in terms of cosmopolitan pursuits. She references St. Francis of Assisi, when clarifying that the social claim, as a purposive force for meaningful individual action, involves spiritual love, such as what we often feel in terms of family values. Such values include 1) the love of mercy 2) to do just acts 3) and to walk humbly with God. Her main point at this juncture, is that there is a phenomenologically transcendence of personal virtues, which is emotional, and charitable towards our wide-ranging humanity.[54]

Addams thoughts of family and honor codes, as a matter of keeping women from actualizing their social contributions; can be thought of as an affront to Dewey's dualist division of our bodies and our spiritual values. Patriarchal led families often include punitive praise and blame measures, which in turn are sanctioned by legal decisions. We can think here of father's making marriage decisions and being guaranteed by law material compensation for consummating the marriage of a daughter. Addams wrote a chapter 'Filial Relations", as she was concerned with the dangers of private sanctioned justice, which restricts women from a more public life (Addams 1902).[55] Codes of family honor can still be seen

[53] Addams 1902, *Democracy and Social Ethics, pp. 38-39.*
[54] For further reading see: Fischer, Marilyn 2013, "Reading Addams's *Democracy and Social Ethics* as a Social Gospel, Evolutionary Idealist Text." *The Pluralist* 8, no. 3 (2013): 17–31. https://doi.org/10.5406/pluralist.8.3.0017.
[55] Addams 1902, *Democracy and Social Ethics,* Chapter III.

as preventing women and men from participating with their public claim in mind. 'Civic Housekeeping' is Addams' value enlarged method of civic organization and development in terms of the feminist values of our homes. With such an orientation, we maintain our loving care for others and equal share economy with a pragmatic phenomenological approach to our communities' common projects and decisions. Building a sense of community values, means transforming the meaning of misconstrued values, in respect to oppressive family codes, by allowing everyone to guide their own lives, while participating with the transforming work of living together with life affirming value orientations. Surely, there is work to be done in terms of a comprehensive feminist value analysis of spirituality and sexuality.

Chesney-Lind and Hadi suggest a third major global strategy for denying female victimization is "the use of the courts to punish victims of sexual abuse who run away from their abusers". Such promotes a "legal abuse of women and enforcement of patriarchal privilege". This can be thought of as problematic as a dualistic chasm between practice and theory. Theory and clear-cut laws can be stated in cause-and-effect statements as a form of clarity, over value realization and analysis which can seem fuzzy. Punitive laws, taking away the parental rights or financial support of mothers, who are acting in self-defense or in defense of others are often upheld for the sake of the supremacy of law, or by judges because of future speculative applications. Such laws seem to address general circumstances and normative practices in terms of judicial theory and court practices. But the ability for someone to make a judgement on a law, without fully empathizing with someone accused of circumstantial wrongdoing, is to prioritize theory or the practices of that court over our vital value of understanding and caring for one another.

These dualisms of our modern consciousness seem to persist in our patriarchal dominated world today. To shake off the patriarchy once and for all, feminist pragmatic criminology has been re-interpreted by some contemporary feminists, into a discussion of feminist theory in post-human times. Such analysis is integral to our critical discussion, in that Addams' (and Scheler's) humanism could be understood as under theoretical attack. Post-humanism is antithetical to Addams' (and Scheler's) humanism, in that sympathetic knowledge by women is transformative to others, affording a prioritization of human love as the premiere value of personhood. Obviously, living creatures feel and present love, and non-living objects present love and illicit expression by living creatures, but for Addams and Scheler, only persons can elevate our loving intentions by conceptualizing and broadening those practices indiscriminately. Yet, there might be room to learn from some suggested post-human feminist practices, in terms of caring and nurturing for all life, regardless of rational intelligence or speciesism, in a more value driven world.

Emily Jones explains how we need to take on board, regarding our current laws; civic, federal, and international laws, that most are tainted by White male Western centrism, anthropocentric views of our lives and broader environments. Laws are a means for empowering the very people who place litigious theory over caring practices. On an international scale law generalizes all life in terms of male bias and prejudice. Emily Jones (Jones 2023), a post-human feminist writes,

> International law has played, in some instances, an important role in providing aspirational frameworks for those seeking to create a better future. However, international law is also based upon a series of normative underpinnings, including anthropocentrism and exclusionary humanism, i.e. the centering of the white male subject. International law subsequently plays a core role in structuring a maintaining an unequal global order. [56]

Civic and federal laws in the United States often reflect the criminalization of people for profit. Women are low hanging fruit for such profits, and although there are understanding and value-oriented lawyers, contemporarily laws propagate a punitive and for-profit system. How do

[56] Emily Jones 2023. *Feminist Theory and International Law: Posthuman Perspectives*, Routledge, 2023. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003363798. Accessed March 15, CST: 20:00.

we move away from laws which criminalize women who are thought of as victims, laws which are misconstrued as normative or theoretically true and right, when they uphold a punitive system. It is not surprising that there are a record numbers of women, involved with non-violent crimes being imprisoned in the United States. In terms of domestic violence, often women are in double jeopardy of being released on terms of restraining orders, which can entrap them to recidivism as they are kept from their kids and ostracized from regular employment opportunities. Laws should promote valuing the redeeming and nurturing qualities of each other, rather than punitive measures.

Finally, Chesney-Lind and Hadi alert us to another worldwide problem for women, as the demonization and sexualization of "enemy women as a justification for mass rape in wartime". There is a correlation with this form of oppression with Dewey's dualism, the inferiority of changing things and events and the superiority of a fixed reality. Again, turning to Addams' thoughts on the heroic spirit of war, as often thought of existing throughout human history and as an eternally lasting moral pursuit. War remains a practice acted on despite any other collective and individual moral concerns, or humanistic international laws. However, war is historically difficult for women, thinking here as brutality referenced by Chesney-Lind and Hadi, to the disclosures offered by Addams all those years and wars ago. Addams wrote of single parent households and emotionally broken soldiers and families. Surely, she assumed that by now we would have replaced war with caring for one another, by means of our public spirit founded on nurturing and our sense of inclusion in all our everyday and political practices. Acceptance of differing and changing norms, and pluralism of ideas is paramount for our shared success and progress. Co-shouldering our contemporary problems and anxieties, in our personal and interconnected social lives, replaces values of eternal heroism with primary values of nurturing.

So, a new sense of self-identity is entailed with our value orientations. A participatory, pluralistic approach, by which we analyze political and personal circumstances with those being oppressed, letting them find their vital sense of purpose amongst our common struggles. Women are key players in such efforts, as life-givers we embody the phenomenological values of enlarging, not closing in and destroying, our intertwined worlds.

However, contemporarily, cosmopolitan feminism has been defined by Niamh Reilly (Reilly 2007) as,

> a critical engagement with international human rights law; a global feminist consciousness that contests patriarchal, capitalist, and racist power dynamics in a context of neoliberal globalization; cross-boundaries dialogue that recognizes the intersectionality of forms of oppression; collaborative transnational strategizing on concrete issues; and the utilization of global forums as sites of cosmopolitan solidarity and citizen action.[57]

Surely, this critical approach to intersected oppression is derivative of Addams' thinking about cosmopolitan feminism, as we have discussed, however there are vast differences in respect to a *closed* subjective feminist consciousness or varied relationships and interests, and Addams' ideas of the value of our respect for each person and their circumstances and sympathetic knowledge. I think reinterpreting her ethics and practices of change, in terms of inherent feminist values of love, helps her redemption from past transgressions, as we boldly act to eradicate the criminalization and oppression of women.

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[57] Niamh Reilly 2007, "Cosmopolitan Feminism and Human Rights." *Hypatia* 22, no. 4 (2007): 180–98. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4640111. Accessed March 15th, CST: 18:00.

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HOW TO CARE BETTER FOR INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE TIME OF FRAGMENTATION[1]

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ABSTRACT: The combination of a feminist care ethics and pragmatism can be very effective in addressing the challenges posed by a fragmented and polarized society, not only in Slovakia but also globally. The author connects her individual experience at the level of interpersonal relations with the collective experience of fragmented and polarized Slovak society to explore the possibilities of caring for intergenerational relationships. Drawing on the concepts of care ethics - common caring practices, embodied care and caring spaces - she seeks to understand the causes and factors of paralysis in caring practices and the possibilities of overcoming it at both the micro and macro levels. The combination of philosophy and literature in teaching philosophy is presented as an alternative caring space providing cognitive, emotional and affective resources for the renewal and repair of weakened or broken caring relations.

Keywords: feminist care ethics, fragmented society, intergenerational relations, embodied care, common caring space, teaching philosophy as common caring practice

Introduction

The high level of fragmentation of modern societies is a relatively well-developed theoretical topic in philosophy, as well as in other humanities and social disciplines, from the classics (Durkheim 1893) to postmodern authors (Habermas 1987, Giddens 1990) to contemporary theorists (Bauman 2001, Putnam 2000). Individualism is considered its driving force, and it is understood as a threat to social cohesion and the integrity of society. For feminist thought, the examination of the causes, factors, mechanisms and consequences of fragmentation in modern society is linked to the critique of modernity and its universalism, androcentrism, and atomized individualism, and with the emphasis on contextuality, situatedness, diversity and inclusion of marginalized voices and perspectives in third wave feminism (Benhabib 1992, Young 1990). Within the ethics of care, as it has developed since the 1980s, the topic of fragmentation is explored in relation to the possibility of creating a caring, solidary and inclusive citizenship-based society (Tronto 1993, 2013, 2015; Sevenhuijsen 1998, Held 2005). The themes that are explored within this framework within the ethics of care are trust (Sevenhuijsen 1998, Baier 1994, Held 2005), solidarity (Tronto 2013), universality the needs for human care and particularity and contextuality of the ways how these needs are meeting, uncertainty, contingency and vulnerability, protection and safety (Kittay 2011, Tronto, 2015), complexity and precarity of care, common caring practices and common caring spaces, (Hamington 2004, Barnes 2012, Tronto 2013, Noddings 2013, Banerjee and Karilemla 2020). The works of several theorists in contemporary ethics of care focus on understanding care as a political, social and emotional practice in the context of late modern societies characterized by a high degree of complexity, fragmentation, polarization and singularities. They critically examine the possibilities of democratizing care practices exposed to the influence of neoliberal and various authoritarian and populist forms of power, and thus the possibility of realizing a vision of a better, more caring and just society and world (Engster and Hamington 2015, Urban and Ward, 2020).

They note how our everyday care in these struggles is a multifaceted, multi-meaningful and multifunctional focus of interests of various actors at all levels of social reality. It is exposed to the consequences of the practices of institutions, groups, communities and individuals. It is part of the mechanisms and strategies and policies of exercising power and their aspects. Care becomes an object and tool of distribution and manipulation, and thus also the abuse of power in various forms. However, it can also become and does become an instrument of change that leads to a better life for all. And since, from the perspective of care ethics, a better life is necessarily connected with a caring society based on solidarity and inclusion,

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and since the deepening fragmentation of contemporary societies is one of the fundamental obstacles to social cohesion and solidarity as prerequisites for a good life, the focus in overcoming fragmentation in society is for care ethics theorists important and relevant question.

Fragmentation relates to divisions, isolations, with stereotypical schemes and patterns in perception and behavior. It has consequences in disagreements, misunderstandings, which can escalate into tensions, conflicts and ruptures, and ultimately to the disruption of communication and relationships. Separation, segregation and isolation then further deepen misunderstanding and misapprehension, which can subsequently increase the feeling of threat, uncertainty, fear of the unknown and the unknown. At the same time, the feeling of mistrust increases and the ability and willingness to provide respect and recognition for others is lost. Subsequently, this state can escalate to hatred and aggression, violence and the complete destruction of mutual relationships, and thus to the disintegration of society or its parts. Fragmentation therefore requires attention and our careful examination from the perspective of the ethics of care.

In my contribution, I deal with the possibilities and obstacles to overcoming fragmentation in a specific area of our lives – in generational relations in families, as well as in society. I rely on localized individual experience as a member of the middle generation in the context of the collective situation and broader systemic and structural relationships of care between generations. I see caring for a good life connected with caring for intergenerational relationships. To maintain, continue and repair our mutual caring relations, we must have adequate resources in the form of experience, inspiration, skills and knowledge. We need resources to cultivate our attentiveness and responsiveness, our ability, attitudes, skills and competencies, how to respond to (generationally specific) caring needs and to maintain, continue and repair our caring relations. The sources of care and for care we need to drive from care and from mutual reciprocal dialogic caring practices through which we are creating and establishing new caring spaces.

I argue that in order to be able to care well again or at least better, to be able to repair weakened, broken, ruptured caring relations, without which none of our caring spaces can be maintained, we must have, find, create or renew, regenerate resources for the renewal and repair of these relations, in alternative, parallel, substitute, sometimes temporary caring spaces. Drawing from my specific context, I argue that such caring spaces can also be the practice of teaching and learning philosophy, which, however, needs reconceptualization to be understood as caring practice and embodied care practice. Philosophy and the teaching of philosophy need to be reinterpreted as not only cognitive, analytical and conceptual practice, but also as emotional, affective and situated embodied practice in which we are touching mutually with words, ideas and thoughts, we are touching mutually through texts and stories. And, finally, I argue that the specific individual experience of the middle generation of relationships and practices of care can be a valuable source and inspiration for caring for a fragmented society and relationships, because it is close in space and time to both older and younger people. It has connections with both generations and has similar specific experiences with them, which creates prerequisites for understanding both generational perspectives, their needs, as well as their specific vulnerabilities. I argue that as members of the middle generation we have a specific obligation and a specific responsibility to care for intergenerational relations.

In the first part of the paper, I explain the theoretical foundations and concepts of feminist ethics of care, which I rely on to understand the research question. In the second part, I outlined a specific situation that led me to consider the fragmentation of intergenerational relations as a philosophical issue. I clarify the structural conditions and social and political context of Slovak society as the background of my individual experience

with fragmentation. I then present a specific experience of teaching philosophy through reading a literary story as a practice of care that creates a specific caring space providing resources for the renewal of caring abilities. Finally, I link into a synthesis and show why it is the middle generation that bears the relatively largest share of responsibility for intergenerational relations, what the specific responsibility of the middle generation for caring for intergenerational relations consists of, and how to manage this responsibility in difficult times of deep societal fragmentation.

Care as practice of caring relations

From the perspective of care ethics, care is a fundamental human activity. A widely accepted definition of care is Fisher and Tronto (1990), according to which

> caring as "a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ´world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (Fisher – Tronto, 1990, pp. 40; Tronto, 1993, pp. 103).

explains how care is essential for human surviving and flourishing. I agree with Held (2015), who argues that care is value and practice. She considers that an important aspect of care is that it expresses our attitudes and relationships. The fact that the performance of care and its implementation is relational and that it takes place within and through the relationship between the people providing and receiving care is considered crucial by several representatives of the ethics of care. Noddings explains that

> taking relation as ontologically basic simply means that we recognize human encounter and affective response as a basic fact of human existence. As we examine what it means to care and to be cared for, we shall see that both parties contribute to the relation; my caring must be somehow completed in other if the relation is to be described as caring. (Noddings 2013, 4).

Similarly, Sevenhuijsen argues that relationality is essential for care (Sevenhuijsen 1998, 82). Held believes that care is a relationship in which the caregiver and the care recipient share a common interest in the well-being of the other and both (Held 2015, 68-69). Looking at care, how it is carried out, from the perspective of caring relations, allows us to evaluate the quality of care. According to Held, in the implementation of care, that is, in the practice of care, both the performance (effectiveness) of the effort to fulfill needs and both the motives for providing care matter. In care, caring people strive to create good caring relationships (Ibid., 72). Good caring relationships are both a criterion for the quality of care and a factor in it. As Held (2015) argues, care is a value, and at the same time, specific values are contained in a specific practice of care, while others are absent. Similarly, Sevenhuijsen (1998) argues for understanding care as a form of human agency, whose aims are embodied in the way human agents who are engaged in the caring practices perceive and interpret them. These practices are directed by formal and informal rules and habits, by interpretative conventions and by implicit or explicit normative frameworks. Care can be seen as a mode of acting in which participants perceive and interpret care needs and act upon these needs (Sevenhuijsen 1998, 21 -23). So, care practice, like every human practice, has a normative character, and is shaped by the values of a particular social, cultural and political context. And since these normative frameworks are shaped by a particular social, cultural and political context, the forms of care practice in different areas of life also differ. The way in which caring response takes place is dependent on social interpretations and conflicting notions of what constitutes good care (Sevenhuijsen 1998, 20). However, Held points out that care as a practice is not just a series of individual acts, but it is a practice to which certain attitudes correspond. Care begins with the recognition that others need our attention, energy and commitment. Caring attitudes thus express the values of attention, sensitivity,

trust, concern for others and readiness to respond to care needs, and they are the important driving force behind their implementation in practice. We can therefore describe a particular care practice based on its attributes and standards, but we can also evaluate it and propose its transformation and changes to improve it so that it contributes more to a good life.

By fostering good caring relationships, caring practices hold human communities and groups together. Care builds trust and mutual consideration and connectedness between individuals. For societies to function well, they must foster trust, both among citizens and between citizens and government. Any improvement that a society is capable of requires collaboration, and trust enables this (Held 2005 / 2015, 80 – 81). Care and trust are mutually reinforcing, and where trust is lacking, caring relationships, and therefore the practice of care and its quality in general, are at risk. Tronto (2013) points out that in a society that has systematically devalued care, then, the kinds of moral qualities and capacities associated with care are often not seen among the most important. In *Moral Boundaries* (1993) she identified four moral qualities that align with four phases of care (Fisher and Tronto 1990, 103): attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness. Sevenhuijsen (1998) emphasized that a caring society has a commitment to handle the moral complexities of dependency, vulnerability and otherness, and commitments to plurality, communication, trust, and respect. This is an analogy to the moral qualities that consist in caring with as the fifth phase of care by Tronto in *Caring Democracy* (2013) and that express solidarity. Solidarity means to treat others with respect in their choices as people (Tronto 2013, 164), so to recognize them as our equals. This is an integral part of the inclusion of their lives' perspective into the processes of allocation of responsibilities for care in democratic society. So, recognition, trust and democracy are mutually dependent. If from the perspective of the feminist ethics of care, the best form and practice of care is democratic care, then, as Tronto claims, the democratic practice of care requires a critical understanding of power relations as a prerequisite for eliminating oppression and privileges to achieve a balance of power (Tronto 1993, 2013). She argues further that this approach requires that we all think of ourselves as recipients of care, not just as providers of care. This self-image must become normal and natural to ensure that the sense of alienation in the perception of care-receivers can be overcome more easily. A wider awareness of our own vulnerability and dependence on care in fulfillment of our needs will increase the likelihood that we will not see those in need of care as "foreign objects" or as "others". However, this awareness is linked to a willingness to perceive this fact. Inclusion as a necessary dimension of democratic practice of care therefore requires receptivity and sensitivity to the mutual interconnectedness and vulnerability of all care actors, and the subsequent willingness to consider otherness into one's caring practices. This means being able to perceive and understand differences not as threats, as dangers, but as something in which it is possible to see a piece of ourselves. Others in their difference can be inspiring and interesting for us. Their differences can arouse our curiosity, show us solutions that we have not seen before, feelings that we have not experienced before, or words and images that we lack and now allow us to describe and express what we feel, and to understand our needs and needs of others.

So, better caring requires such a change of our perception of others, that is not false abstraction generalizing and stereotyping others. Only such perception then can be the starting point for forming caring attitudes to others. So, we need to know others to trust them and to recognize them as someone worthy of our trust and to care for. And this can only be done in and through common caring practices. According Tronto citizens would need to spend time learning about the lives of others, and not simply accepting the views of others that they expect are true; and there would need to be the practices that

allowed people to meet beyond their homes, workplaces, and schools. So, this is necessary to create conditions within which the views of others could be heard (Tronto 2013, 147). What should be the space that would enable and strengthen caring practices that would disrupt and eliminate already established stereotypical perceptions, ideas, and images of others, while at the same time enabling knowledge of others that allows for appropriate trust? When we are caring together, in a common environment, space and time, it is necessary to cooperate and communicate; to express feelings, desires, needs, to formulate opinions and arguments. In common joined caring practices are necessary to articulate goals, interests and motivations; it is necessary to negotiate together on ways to achieve them, to avoid destructive conflicts, to preserve capacity to talk together, to listen to each other, to continue dialogue, and to maintain mutual relations. This common caring time-and-space enables more adequate, detailed and specific experiences and produce knowledge about others, and their forms and relations of caring. Common caring practices in common caring space(s) thus present huge dynamic potential for changing our perception of others and eliminating stereotypes as a precondition for the trust and recognition of others and for our ability to react, to respond to the specific and unique needs of others, so for our responsiveness.[2]

So, responsiveness needs resources for cultivation, and those resources are often absent altogether or insufficient and inadequate in situations of isolation, separation, and fragmentation of society. How can responsiveness be cultivated if it depends on our mutual connections, but in deeply fragmented and polarized society we do not communicate with each other, we do not meet each other, and we are isolated from each other by a wall of silence, indifference, fear or even hatred? The fragmentation and polarization of society then results in the inability to achieve common goals. It fundamentally hinders the achievement of a more just society and therefore emancipation as a key goal of feminism and becomes an obstacle to implement the goals of the feminist ethics of care - better caring.

The attempt to overcome fragmentation through mutual care often fails also because of the inability of care actors to adapt to a situation that is completely new. Actors of care relationships and practices either lack experiences from personal lives on which to rely to respond to care needs, or due to mutual (often generational) isolation, they do not have access to similar experiences and patterns of care and ways of dealing with deficits and obstacles to care coming from the past that could inspire them. A serious problem of the failure of mutual care is the absence of cognitive, emotional, affective, and so imaginative resources that would help care actors cope with a wounding, paralyzing or stressful situation of inability to care.

Embodied care and resources of caring practices

Maurice Hamington's concept of embodied care is very inspiring from the perspective of the question of finding resources for the renewal and creation of caring relationships, and caring spaces in which caring practice can emerge, renew itself, and provide imaginative, cognitive, emotional, and affective resources for further various relationships and care practices. Hamington, in his *Embodied Care* (2004), seeks to focus attention on the bodily and social aspects of care that have long been overlooked, even within the ethics of care itself, analyzing our corporeality on a phenomenological level. According to him, care refers to "…an approach to personal and social morality that shifts ethical considerations toward context, relationality, and affective cognition in a way that can only be fully understood by taking into account the

[2] Marian Barnes (2012, 127f.) emphasizes that space and place are vital to understanding of individual and collective well-being. According to her spaces and environment can create material and symbolic conditions for developing confidence and critical thinking and thus for more equal and free democratic practices or, on the contrary, increase distrust, control and obedience.

bodily dimension of care" (Hamington 2004, 3). He explores how embodied care supports social morality. He argues that care is an approach to morality that is fundamental to human existence, to the extent that our bodies are built to care (Hamington 2004, 2). Care is a way of being in the world made possible by the habits and behaviors of our bodies. Care consists of practices that can be developed or allowed to atrophy and disappear. Caring is shaped by embodied and affective knowledge. According to him, embodied care can be characterized as complex and pervasive, distinguishing three interconnected aspects: caring knowledge, caring imagination, and caring habits. Their description, or rather definition, is interconnected (Hamington 2004, 4).

Caring knowledge includes what is known to the body, such as subtleties in emotions communicated outside of explicit language. The body simply "knows" many things through exchanges (information) with its environment. This knowledge can be developed and attended to, cultivated, or ignored and lost. The body requires habits that are expressions of knowledge and so they have epistemological significance. They are not simply repetitions of movements, but bodily practices of knowledge maintained in the body. One of these habits is caring. So, caring habits are practices of caring knowledge of the body (Hamington 2004, 4). Caring habits are a consequence of the bodies we inhabit, their specific physical properties, design, and structure. The habitual nature of care lies in the way our bodies capture and acquire physical movement. Our bodies are the source of both simple habits and complex social habits, but both types of habits together form a continuum. Hamington points out that although caring habits can be instilled (in us as bodily beings) through practice, they remain unfinished and therefore open to exchange with new situations in a changing environment. This means that our habits can be modified, changed, to some extent. It is at this moment of the "new situation" that the caring imagination, so to speak, comes into play, which consists in our ability to transcend, to overcome our bodily limitations, and to come closer in our knowledge to others, even to relatively unknown others (people, beings) (Hamington 2004, 4). According to Hamington, the caring imagination thus connects traditional rational approaches to morality with an appreciation of knowledge through the body – bodily knowledge. According to him, care is thus a corporeal potential realized through habits, with the capacity to care being an aspect of embodiment. Cultural differences result in different expressions of care, but the bodies we inhabit, in which we are situated, enable us all to care and nurture. As a bodily potential, care can be cultivated, nurtured, developed, or neglected and diminished through habits and practices. Hamington does not consider habits purely instinctive but connects them to epistemic knowledge and morality. "Much of our understanding of others is rooted in our bodies and therefore is not always accessible to our consciousness" (Hamington 2004, 5). Knowing others through the body thus co-creates the potential for care.

In contrast to the common use of the term habit as an automated behavior, caring habits open possibilities for imagination that would otherwise remain closed. Hamington points out that, like care, imagination has been and still is largely overlooked in ethics. According to him, care involves a complex interweaving or fabric of imaginative processes together with bodily practices. He focuses on three imaginative processes: 1. the imaginative capacity to empathize with unknown or little-known others. The bodily dimension of care clearly establishes the connection between direct experience and care, but the caring imagination is essential for understanding how we care for those outside our sphere of experience. 2. the second imaginative process is represented by caring imagination as a way of critical thinking. Caring imagination provides an opportunity for reflection – it considers rules and consequences – but does not understand them as universal or absolute. 3. Finally, a third imaginative process associated with bodily care practices is the in-

dividual's ability to consider their subjective position in relation to their psychosocial context. That is, a healthy, caring imagination should understand the activities and habits of care in their environment and avoid excessive or inappropriate use of power over those we care for, or, conversely, letting ourselves get lost in the care of others (Hamington 2004, 5–6).

So, Hamington argues that our bodies have unique cognitive and physical capacities to care for. When those capacities are developed, the potential for increased quantity and quality of care grows. As care habits are developed and reinforced, they become easier and potentially more frequent. Knowing and caring exist in a dynamic relationship with one another. The more one knows about someone, the more opportunity for connection and empathy. Similarly, the more one cares about someone, the more they want to know about that person, which in turn improves the efficacy of care. So, we need to understand the situation, context - causes and factors of determination - the complexity of our caring practice and relations in our context to care better. The concept of embodied care recognizes that care is not an abstract concept, but a lived experience. It encompasses the physical, emotional, and relational aspects of caring for oneself and others. Care is embodied through actions, gestures, touch, and emotional attune. It is not just a theoretical framework, but something that happens through our bodies and interactions. Hamington indicated that care moves beyond strict normative considerations, yet it still maintains a normative quality: an emergent normativity. Response to calling for care is not prescribed behavior; the normative caring response is the product of openness and attentiveness to the need that emerges out of a particular context. This means that we need to cultivate our space and time for mutual connection, meetings, relations and interactions to give a chance for improvement our caring potential.

Fragmented Slovak society - situation and context

Our current social situation can be characterized as deeply fragmentated and polarized. There are the complex factors that drive both unity and division in modern communities. Social cohesion is not merely the absence of conflict, but a dynamic process requiring continuous effort in fostering trust, inclusivity, and shared values. Fragmentation, conversely, often emerges from a breakdown in trust, widening economic inequalities, identity politics, and the unchecked influence of technology, particularly social media. A fragmented society is divided; individuals and communities are isolated. They separate from each other into distinct groups. Usually, social fragmentation occurs based on inequalities related to economic status, social status, ethnicity and race. Nowadays, factors such as age, party affiliation or voter preferences have also been added to this. In Slovakia the differences between rural and urban are relevant as well as the level of education achieved. Generational differences have been often perceived as factors of divisions.[3]

The fragmentation and polarization of contemporary Slovak society is not a new phenomenon, but over the past two years, the fragmentation of society has deepened, and its consequences fundamentally affect almost all its members. Fragmentation influenced even traditionally resilient family and interpersonal connections and relationships, that face deep ruptures and sometimes abysses. They have also significantly affected my personal life. The differences in political preferences between me and my parents were visible since the fundamental political changes related to the fall of the communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia in 1989 after the so-called Gentle or Velvet Revolution. I am part of

[3] The term generation can be characterized in several ways. In this text, I use the term generation in the sense of the genealogical principle, the family cycle and the positions of persons within it, especially in the context of the family as a microworld, especially in the kinship relationship grandparents - parents - children/grandchildren, and in the structural sense through the concepts of childhood - adulthood - old age.

the generation of students who stood on the tribune and symbolically "rattled the keys" at the outgoing political regime. For my parents' generation, this change meant the end of a stable world in which they were guaranteed many certainties of everyday life and social reality (work, income, housing, prices of everyday consumer goods). The fall of totalitarianism and the transformation from real socialism to post-socialist and post-totalitarian democratic reality was a disappointment for them, as for many ordinary people of their generation. Especially the transition from certainty and stability to uncertainty and instability. Although this feeling may not have been in real accordance with their specific life situation, it fundamentally influenced their perception and attitude towards the democratization of Czechoslovak society, and after the division of Czechoslovakia and the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic in 1993, Slovak society.[4] However, the different perspectives of our perception never led to conflicts destructive to our relations, nor did it ever result in a threat to our mutual communication, interaction, and care. However, the experience of the last election period and several elections – from parliamentary to presidential to European Parliament elections – brought a new experience that we never experienced before.

Especially the parliamentary (2023) and presidential (2024) elections both fully demonstrated and deepened the polarization of Slovak society[5] and mutual distrust between different social groups. Dividing lines became chasms - in families, in relationships between friends, colleagues, neighbors, between parents and children. These are experiences of deep frustration, disrespect, ridicule, humiliation, powerlessness from the inability to understand others and to be understood by them, they are experiences of pain, anger, injury, deepening intergenerational gaps and misunderstandings. Personally, I was deeply frustrated and paralyzed - I was not able to fully communicate with my parents, with whom we regularly talk on the phone every day (I live in another city) - for at least two weeks we communicated very sporadically in the form of a necessary exchange of information so that we knew that we were alive, nothing more. I was unable to speak openly, honestly with my mother. I was afraid that I would hurt her irreparably with my words and at the same time I felt hurt, and I was afraid of further injuries. And I was not alone with such kind of experience. This frustration and this paralysis, this deficit in communication with parents, friends, loved ones, were felt by many of my students but also by many of my friends and colleagues. They were not able to speak, to communicate, or even met with their friends, parents, members of family or neighbors.

There are many causes and factors that determine our current situation, and these cannot be seen only in the state and nature of public political discourse, although it clearly contributed to the worsening of situation. Slovakia is one of the most polarized countries in Europe. The causes of this polarization are mostly local and cannot be explained by global or regional trends alone. Examples include historically disrupted social cohesion and fragmented collective identity, as well as more recent causes such as the cost-of-living crisis, the politicization of dissatisfaction with the management of the COVID pandemic, and the abusive behavior and mutual personal animosities of political elites. Related indicators, some of which have a causal and some of which have an amplify-

[4] Slovak sociologist Oľga Gyarfášová points out that the nostalgia of the older generation can also reflect current problems. It does not necessarily have to be a longing for the pre-1989 regime. It can be a longing for something specific that they experienced at the time, an expression of disappointment in unfulfilled expectations and political promises after 1989, and a way of naming problems that people feel intensely today. All this shapes how we remember the past. At the same time, she emphasizes that in the Slovak context, we have an insufficiently processed and critically reflected period of normalization (the 1970s - 1980s). The consequence of this absence in historical memory is also the absence of diversity of experiences. See: *Ako sme žili v rokoch normalizácie? Nenormálne.* Interview with Oľga Gyarfášová. https://uniba.sk/spravodajsky-portal/detail-aktuality/browse/2/back_to_page/aktuality-43/article/ako-sme-zili-v-rokoch-normalizacie-nenormalne/

[5] See: Polarizácia a atentát. Máj 2024. Úvodná analytická správa o polarizácii, spoločenských náladách a populárnych naratívoch po pokuse o atentát na premiéra Roberta Fica. https://www.dekk.institute/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/polarizacia-a-atentat-sk.pdf

ing effect, are the spread of disinformation and the vulnerability of the population to social media algorithms.[6] Research data also shows that we have a high rate of loneliness and isolation. A quarter of those surveyed in Slovakia feel lonely, a fifth are socially isolated, meaning they do not have enough social contacts. Older people are among those most at risk.[7] This confirms the high level of mistrust in society, which leads to the weakening of social cohesion. Loneliness and social isolation also have an impact on political behavior. Either the result is an attempt to punish the system or, conversely, a fatalistic resignation to civic or political activities. The willingness to participate in society is therefore reduced, which is again closely linked to the low level of mutual trust in society.

In this situation the family still represents the safest place from the perspective of Slovaks. However, the survey on the lives of Slovak families showed that the sense of security in Slovak families has two weak points, namely intergenerational disagreements about world events and politics, and concerns about the inability to take care of infirm family members. Disagreements in opinions about politics, society, or values in families have a significant impact on their overall functioning. We most often don't talk to each other in multi-generational households. Politics divides us more than anything else. Because of different opinions in the family, the topic of society and politics becomes taboo. This also happens within households or even between partners. This is our way to avoid unnecessary arguments.[8]

It seems that in some aspect's intergenerational communication and interaction in families in Slovakia is weakened. However, regardless of whether parents and adult children live in a common household or in a dispersed form of family, each "in his own", intergenerational communication is one of the essential signs of functionality. Interaction and communication between grandparents, parents and children enables intergenerational memory as a specific type of collective memory, which plays an important role in the process of forming the personal identity of family members. Talking (and willingness to listen) as part of this communication brings information about the past of the family and its members, but also about the future. It involves giving and receiving, but also rejection and new creation of values (Vrzgulová, Voľanská, Salner 2017). Interaction and communication between generations in a family either strengthens or weakens mutual trust. Trust is a prerequisite for family members to talk about confidential issues, but at the same time, trust can create a "circle of silence" about phenomena that are taboo because they are painful and hurt both the speaker and the listener.[9]

The "ban" on discussing politics and other polarizing topics at home or with friends can divide generations and families. It also makes it difficult to create deep relationships that are created through deep discussions and reduces the ability to have a constructive dialogue about emotionally charged topics. It also contributes to the creation of information bubbles that prevent us from knowledge and understanding those behind the wall. In such a situation the concept of generational differences offers quick and simplified explanations for stereotyped characteristics of individuals. Reducing individuals to certain characteristics of their generational perspectives can support fragmentation and polarization when refer-

[6] Polarization is also strengthened by other factors and social trends such as the growing interest in radical solutions, the reaction to the political crisis (the migration wave in 2015-2016, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine associated with the refugee wave in spring 2022, or the cost of living crisis), while long-term sources of polarization and culture wars, such as bioethics issues, which escalate social tensions, have not receded from the public sphere. See: Polarizácia a atentát. Máj 2024. Úvodná analytická správa o polarizácii, spoločenských náladách a populárnych naratívoch po pokuse o atentát na premiéra Roberta Fica. https://www.dekk.institute/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/polarizacia-a-atentat-sk.pdf

[7] See: The DISCONNECT Project. https://osamelost.sk/en/about-the-project/

[8] A UNIQUA and NMS survey on the lives of Slovak families. See: Rodina ako oáza bezpečia Záverečná správa z výskumu života slovenských rodín, https://velkyprieskumrodin.sk/pdf/prieskum-rodin-sk.pdf

[9] Apparently, these are also the factors of the difficulties with the consolidation of our historical memory and its insufficient influence on the formation of a less fragmented collective identity.

ring to "intergenerational gaps" and "intergenerational conflicts" as consequences of generational identities.

Isolation caused by fragmentation and polarization prevents us from understanding the pain and suffering that talking about certain topics causes others. In polarized situations and relationships, both speaking and silence can be equally hurtful. However, if such emotionally charged conversations are totally missing, there is also a lack of space in which we can learn to process and manage our negative emotions. There is also a lack of space in which we can learn how to approach the differences between us, to our diversity already at the level of the family. The deepening of intergenerational discord and misunderstandings is then co-created by our interactions and communication, or rather by its deficit and its poor quality. Our intergenerational communication needs to be focused more on the diversity of experiences and try to understand even contradictory narratives to see the complexity of individual life and to understand its contingency and situatedness.

Education as common caring practice

The experience of sharing the frustration from paralyzed ability to care for ourselves, for others and for our environment with many of my friends and my students convinced me that we need to talk about it and ask why it is like this and what to do about it? I felt intensely the need to provide each other with hope, inspiration, and solidarity to not feel alone and to be able to act and interreact and response to calling for care.

Commonly, we are very deeply convinced that we know everything important and true about our parents, children, partners and friends, and about our neighbors and colleagues. If communication with them is painful, hurtful or even humiliating, this only supports our will to interrupt communicating with them totally. The necessity to change our perceived attitudes and images about others and their differences is urgent, but its possibility is at the same time decreasing. However, caring relations based on the inclusion of the perspectives of other people, even those who are the closest to us, depends on mutual trust and recognition. It seems to be vicious circle – we need to be joined into common caring practice to develop mutual trust and recognition, and at the same time we need to trust and recognize each other to be willing and open for common caring practices. However, at first, I only intensely felt pain and loss from breaking close and intimate relationships with my mother and father, I realized and admitted my anger later. I felt the necessity to find the way out of this situation, and the necessity to overcome paralysis. Indeed, living further as well as possible is not possible without mutual caring and caring relations.

Space -time for ´common caring practices´ I created together with my students in exercises and seminars of Care Ethics with my students. I find common reading of literary text as a tool for understanding our very similar situations. If we consider the education of philosophy as caring for a good life, and care for a good life as an art (ars vivendi), then the use of art as both a tool and an expression of philosophical content should be an integral part of philosophy education. According to Noddings (2002) story and literary artistic narrative can be a tool of care. She argues that society does not need to make its children first in the world in mathematics and science. It needs to care for its children to reduce violence, to respect honest work of every kind, to produce people who can care (Noddings 2002). Through reading we created space and time for thinking, reflecting, experiencing, recognizing, understanding and accepting (of differences in needs of others), and looking for different ways of responses to calling for care in our common environment. So, we can consider reading together with students as common caring practices. Through interpretation of novel *Saving the world according to G.* by Slovak philosopher and writer Etela Farkašová (2002, 2020) we tried to understand specific needs, desires and fears not only the generation of

my or our parents but many people of different generations in our fragmented and polarized society. Farkašová, as my teacher in period of my study of philosophy at the university, my mentor and supervisor of my diploma and dissertation works, for me represents social mother and person with whom I could talk when dialogue with my mother was not possible. Her text, her words in the novel, touched me and allowed me to empathize with the feelings of uncertainty and anxiety caused by the complexity and contingency of life. It helped me understand my mother. I have tried to understand my and our new situation through her narrative artistic expression. I have drawn inspiration for re-creation of moral imaginary how to overcome ruptures in relations and how to care again and better.

Farkašová[10] in her novel addresses the question of caring for the world and the interconnection of practices and relations of care in the micro and macro worlds. Its protagonist G. is mentally ill (a combination of obsessive-compulsive disorder and autism), which excludes her from the world of "normal" people - she lives only with her caring mother. Her diagnosis shapes her view of the world. G. sees her mission in saving the world through cleaning. She believes that everything is fatally connected with everything and the things we do on a small scale – in the private space of our everyday lives – impacts a more substantial, even global context:

> "You can't want the world to be in order, stable and safe if its individual parts are not in order"
>
> "... on days like these, when everything weighs on her, she scrubs the floor and vacuums the dust even more diligently, ... Especially on days like these, she would like to clean up as much of the world as possible, to clean and repair everything in it that has been damaged. „
>
> "Cracks are signs that warn that the world is sick, we are all sick, the world is incomplete and we are incomplete in it; cracks can also predict the worst changes... cracks are dangerous... because where there is incompleteness, there is also disorder, disharmony, everywhere there is a threat of disorder, confusion and chaos, the possibility of constant shifts, changes, unexpected interventions, injuries.„
>
> "According to G., everything is to blame for imbalance, ... Imbalance brings inequality, ... Imbalance is the path to chaos, to disruption, to destruction, to everything bad...„
>
> "...how to ensure a state of equilibrium in the world when she cannot maintain it even in the house, no matter how hard she tries, ...„
>
> "If she could take control of everything important...„ (Farkašová 2002/ 2020)[11]

In relationship between daughter and mother we can see mutual attachment, recurring conflicts and the effort for mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence:

> "G. reproaches her mother for being little interested in things and their connections, again the growing indifference, which G. is afraid of, comes across it everywhere she looks, it bothers her more and more."
>
> "...just how differently they perceive their misunderstandings, the mother talks about trivialities and banalities, because she wants to trivialize the essence of the conflict, she is convinced that it is a matter of worldview, understanding the basic laws of the world, and human responsibility towards it, the most important thing is that a person does not become indifferent, especially not to orderliness, maintaining order even in the smallest part of the universe." (Farkašová 2002/ 2020)

She feels total misunderstanding, no one understands her – loneliness and alienation, but at the same time she does not give up, and she elevates the effort to save the world to the meaning of her whole life.

On the seminars with students, we can discuss different questions as what the story tells us about its heroine, what it tells us about author and her generation; what it tells us about us; about the world and caring for it. Relevant interpretation deserves the understanding of differences between concepts: reparation and restoration, pro-

[10] Etela Farkašová (1943) - Slovak philosopher; founding member of the Club of Feminist Philosophers at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Center for Gender Studies at Comenius University, the Club of Slovak Women Prose Writers Femina. As a prose writer, essayist, poet she published more than thirty books, and her texts were translated to more than ten languages.

[11] Translated into English by Adriana Jesenková.

tection and preservation, and saving/ rescuing and caring. It is very inspirational to focus on such key concepts in Care ethics as relationality[12], and thinking and discussing its consequences based on concerning passages in the novel. The need to cope with the constant changes of mutually interconnected worlds and the uncertainty and anxiety that arise as its consequences poses challenges not only for literature but also for philosophical reflection in interaction with shared particular experiences. Relevant concepts for interpretation and discussion are changes, chances, random events, disorder, unrest, dirt, instability, uncertainty, sense of threat, anxiety. The main character is mentally ill, so it is a pathological approach to the world, but many people experience similar feelings. Many people, especially of the older generation (my parents, but also the parents of my students), but also of the middle generation and even young people experience a feeling of pressure and stress from the dynamically changing situation and state of the world and environment what relates to an increase in psychological and stress disorders and anxieties. We are in a similar situation, we see similar decisions arising from similar concerns, fears and needs, and so similar actions. We are witnessing of calling for stability, peace, harmony, order and even purity, for the correction and repair of the world – even for a new order – and we can see the people respond to these calls satisfied with the vision of a better world offered. However, this vision is unfeasible if we base it on the pathological practice of care. Where are its deficits? Where are the weak points of "saving the world according to G."? She is alone and the world does not understand her, is indifferent. So, we can reflect, think and discuss absence of responsiveness on both sides – (almost) impossible on the part of a sick person, however, absenting even in "healthy" and "normal" people. In her novel, Farkašová expresses her fears and concerns about contemporary civilization and its future development, combining philosophical content with strong socio-critical content. Reading and analyzing Farkašova's novel helps us, and our students understand why its heroine G. – and perhaps we, our parents, neighbors, or fellow citizens – think, decide, and act similarly or differently, and why she or we may fail in caring better for our world. Cracks, fissures, and ruptures are part of our world, our lives and relationships - we must learn to react to them and take care of them. However, they also could be the driving force for finding new, better ways and forms of care.

Teaching philosophy provided me with free and at the same time safe space and time where we could think together and try to understand what was happening to us, why it was happening and what to do about it. The epistemology and ethics of such teaching approach Banerjee and Karilemla's (2020) vision of teaching in a free, inclusive and hopeful mode. Reading and thinking together, talking together and having dialogues created a space in which we touched each other with words. Here it was possible to listen to different experiences, reflect on different perspectives, try to empathize with different feelings, sometimes similar but also very different. Teaching philosophy was therefore not only a cognitive grasp of the topic, but also emotional expression and experience. In my case, the effort to understand is always connected to the physical experience of understanding or misunderstanding the problem under study. Texts touch me, and when I teach, I also touch my students with my words,

[12] Relationality requires openness, humility, curiosity to environment, to situation – to be responsive and to be inclusive in connection with situation / environment / with other(s). At the same time, we need to know what we do when we care for our world is always just a limited effort that has its boundaries. Our world - a complex network of connections - a life-sustaining web - is always something that transcends us, something of which we are a part and which we try to take care of with our daily activities so that the fabric of a good life is strong and viable. Contingency of our world and so our life means that we can never fully control it. To be a part of a complex life-sustaining web means that we are all vulnerable and vulnerability is a basic fact of our existence, although with varying degrees and depending upon our abilities and status. According to Tronto care presumes that people live in a world in which they cope all the time with vulnerability and need, yet somehow also manage to live with joy (Tronto 2015, 267). So, we are interdependent with other people, other beings and the environment, and the interdependence is at the same time the factor of our vulnerability but also is or can be the factor of our power to care better, factor of our solidarity in caring for each other.

and they touch me. When we have conversations, dialogues about (not only philosophical) ideas, but we can also be moved, angry, excited, enthusiastic, horrified, outraged... If a philosophical text or idea leaves us indifferent, it has not touched us. Teaching philosophy should therefore be also performative, because the understanding it seeks is always also embodied.

Conclusion or common caring space for understanding differences

If responsiveness is a key assumption of our ability to care, then it is necessary continually cultivate and improve our capacities for responsiveness. However, Tronto and Hamington have shown to us that without common space and time for caring practice it is not possible. What feminist care ethics and pragmatism have in common is effort finding space for understanding others, different people, for understanding their differences, for building trust, questioning prejudices and biases in relation to others. Their common starting point is the relational onto-epistemology that allows us to open and shake up rigidly objectified identities with fixed and immovable, unchanging and unambiguously determined specificities, and therefore differences. Differences and similarities become part of a dynamic continuum. Ethics of care, or theories of care, for which relationism is not only an ontological-epistemological starting point, but also an expression of their priority focus on relationality, connect this continuum closely with the realization / doing care/ practice of relationships, relating and connections. Our perception, experience, seeing and understanding of the continuum in which we are situated together and in mutual dependence, can be strengthened, deepened, intensified or, conversely, weakened, ignored and marginalized. This has the consequences for our abilities, capacities, and skills to take better care of ourselves and others.

According to Robinson (1999)the ability to care for others thus includes not only learning to be attentive, receptive and patient, to listen and respond to what is heard, but also the ability to rethink our own attitudes towards difference and exclusion by situating this difference in relationships, thereby refuting and challenging the claim that any group or individuals are inherently and objectively "different" (Robinson 1999, 165). Robinson's "situating difference into relationships" can then be understood analogously as the performance of "common caring practices" in a shared space and time. If Hamington believes that social cohesion and solidarity depends on developing bodily habits that reinforce caring ideas, then it is important to create time, space for caring, caring practices, practice, and provide enough energy to create these conditions for care (Tronto 2013). For example, the caring ability and habit of active listening is something that activates and engages care. According to Tronto, simply spending time with the other, listening to stories, observing and paying attention to the person we care for is an important aspect of care (Tronto 2013, 121). When actively listening, when paying careful attention to others, we can experience others more complexly and in detail and thus create the internal resources necessary for acting on their behalf (Hamington 2004, 6). Creating a shared space and time for shared care activities also creates a context for changing our perceptions of others and eliminating our (mutual) stereotypical beliefs about the "natural and objective difference" of others.

In deeply fragmented society it is difficult although very important to create common caring spaces and these spaces are liminal as they stay on the limen, they enable to cross limen and so enable overcome limens. Sometimes we need to have the opportunity to be in-between space, where it is possible to cope with a situation of deficit or absence any obvious tools or strategies for further life, where it is possible to obtain energy and security for looking for, finding, inquiring and creating new unique ways to interact with our environment. Banerjee (2022) characterizes such in-between-space as liminal space that is "…fluid and dynamic… one of perpetual transition, embodying plurality and multiplicity as

its central virtues." So, such a kind of space is open to the imaginative practice in which interaction of different people with their different experiences, views and perspectives is enriching and has synergic effect on their moral identity and capacity. Such caring space is about challenging, questioning, interrogating, and pushing one´s moral boundaries and that is why common caring practices in this space has potential for individual moral growth as well as social transformation to more democratic and more caring world. We, the middle generation, have a specific responsibility to both generations, the older and the younger. This responsibility arises from our situatedness between the older and the younger generations, the proximity of our experiences, feelings, needs, but also our fears and vulnerabilities in relation to both generations. At the same time, we probably have the best access to resources, both material and symbolic, for carrying out care for intergenerational relationships, even in the case of their weakening and fragmentation. We have extensive networks of connections and relationships, and thanks to them we can draw on knowledge, experience, habits, skills for relax, renewal, regeneration, modification and transformation, but also for the creation of new relationships, acts and practices of care in various parallel, temporary, substitute, alternative caring spaces

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Varia

KANT'S IDEA OF PERPETUAL PEACE: STILL RELEVANT TODAY?

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Abstract: This paper draws on Kant's idea of perpetual peace that is central to his cosmopolitan theory, which remains highly relevant in contemporary debates on global justice, social theory, and education. Kant's cosmopolitanism, while not systematically presented in his major works, is most clearly articulated in his later writings, where he explores the intrinsic value and dignity of human beings. This shift in focus enables a new reading of Kant that emphasizes universal human rights and the ethical obligations that transcend national boundaries. A central tension in Kant's cosmopolitanism is the paradox between state sovereignty and cosmopolitan principles. Kant is often viewed as an advocate for world citizenship, challenging nationalist ideals and promoting the idea that individuals are not only citizens of their states but also members of a global community. He argues that law alone cannot establish cosmopolitanism, but the role of moral formation (*Bildung*) is also essential for fostering the moral motivation necessary for peace and justice, and the paper focuses on the educational dimension which is especially important today. Kant's work *Perpetual Peace* outlines three definitive articles: the establishment of republican constitutions, a federation of free states, and universal hospitality. Republicanism, for Kant, is not a specific form of government but a mode of governance based on freedom, legal equality, and common legislation. The federation of states aims to secure peace without erasing individual state identities, while universal hospitality requires states to treat foreigners with respect, rooted in the shared possession of the Earth. The paper argues that Kant's cosmopolitanism is dynamic, stressing the importance of individual moral development as a prerequisite for global justice. Kant contends that perpetual peace is a regulative ideal – never fully attainable, but a goal toward which humanity must strive through gradual institutional reform and personal moral growth. Thus, Kant's vision of perpetual peace continues to offer a compelling framework for addressing ethical and political challenges.

Keywords: Kant, perpetual peace, cosmopolitanism, republicanism, education

I.

The idea of perpetual peace is the key theme of Kant's cosmopolitan theory, and cosmopolitanism remains one of the most intensively discussed topics in Kantian studies, with many contemporary theories of cosmopolitanism still drawing on Kant's ideas. Although Kant did not work on his cosmopolitan theory in the form of a systematic work, traces of it can be seen in his *Critiques* and in his lecture notes. However, the theme becomes dominant in his short writings from the 1780s, during which time he devoted considerable attention to his fourth question: "What is man?" As there is no "fourth *Critique*", the answer must be found in these works. In connection with this question, Kant reflects on the intrinsic value of human beings, which stems from human dignity.[1] This represents an important shift in Kant's thinking, liberating him from the traditional history of philosophy and creating the conditions for a new reading of his work. Galston puts forward the interesting idea that fifty years ago, the influence of Kant's moral and political philosophy extended little further than a few German professors and their disciplines. Today, evidence of Kant-inspired practical philosophy is everywhere, and he suggests that Kant's surprising comeback is neither a coincidence nor a fad. According to him, it is rather rooted in the fundamental features of our contemporary experience.[2] The relevance of Kant's ideas to the concept of humanity has only been seriously considered since the mid-twentieth century.[3] Today, many authors argue that there is a broad compatibility between Kant's approach and contemporary ideas. For example, González[4] discusses Kant's contributions to social theory, while Garcia[5] and Höffe[6] examine his views on the history of civil society. Other authors, such as

[1] Sensen, O. 2009. "Kant's Conception of Human Dignity." *Kant-Studien* 100, no. 5: 309–331.
[2] Galston, W. A. 1993. "What Is Living and What is Dead in Kant's Practical Philosophy." *Kant and Political Philosophy: The Contemporary Legacy*, edited by R. Beiner and W. J. Booth. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 207.
[3] Fackenheim, E. L. 1956/1957. "Kant's Concept of History." *Kant-Studien* 48: 381–398.
[4] González, A. M. 2009. "Kant's Contributions to Social Theory." *Kant-Studien* 100, no. 1: 77–105.
[5] Garcia, E. V. 2001. "Kant on Founding Civil Society." *Kant und Berliner Aufklärung: Akten des IX. Internationalen Kant-Kongress*, edited by Volker Gerhardt, vol. 4, Sektion XI-XIV, 116–125. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter.
[6] Höffe, O. 2001. *Königlicher Völker: zu Kants Kosmopolitischer Rechts- und Friedenstheorie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp; Höffe, O. 2004. *Kant's Cosmopolitan Theory of Law and Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kneller[7] and Hill[8], have also explored his social philosophy. There is also an emphasis on Kant's conception of humanity[9] and social justice[10].

One of the most frequently discussed issues in cosmopolitanism is the paradox, or even contradiction, between state sovereignty and cosmopolitan principles. From various discourses, Kant is often perceived as an anti-nationalist philosopher whose concept of world citizenship abolishes the aspirations of nationalism and specific nations. Another topic discussed is the pedagogical legacy of Kant in the context of cosmopolitanism[11], and showing pedagogy as one of the practical dimensions of Kant's ethical conception[12]. Recent studies also respond to the educational nature of cosmopolitanism. Although law is considered a fundamental building block of cosmopolitanism, Kant emphasized that education must also be cosmopolitan. This idea is perhaps even more relevant today than in Kant's time, when the role of education in fostering cosmopolitan principles was first discussed.[13]

Environmental issues are also a theme reflected in contemporary cosmopolitanism, and the Kantian approach – from ethics to cosmopolitanism – seems useful in this context. As awareness of global warming has spread over the last few decades, it has become clear that humanity faces an existential threat. Several Kantian social and political theorists, including David Held[14], have attempted to address issues of climate justice.

II.

But what about the idea of perpetual peace? Since governments have not followed Kant's six preliminary articles from his work *Perpetual Peace*, we can conclude that the world is no more peaceful or secure than before. Political reality shows daily that the idea of perpetual peace is difficult (or rather impossible?) to achieve. It should be stated that Kant did not intend to provide instructions on how to immediately achieve perpetual peace. He suggested ways to gradually achieve peace in the future and acknowledged that perpetual peace could never be globally achieved, yet it is a worthwhile aspiration for humanity.

Kant writes that political history has been characterized by the frustration caused by incessantly diverting economic and human resources into wars and preparations for them. He knew this course of human history could not easily change, yet he hoped lasting peace could be guaranteed if states accepted the three definitive articles of peace.

The First Definitive Article states that "the civil constitution of every state shall be republican"[15, 16]. A republican constitution is founded on three principles: first, freedom for all members of society as individuals; second, dependence on a single common legislation as subjects; and third, legal equality for all as citizens.[17]

To Kant, "republican" does not refer to a specific form of government (e.g., democratic, aristocratic, or monar-

[7] Kneller, J. and S. Axinn, eds. 1998. *Autonomy and Community: Readings in Contemporary Kantian Social Philosophy.* New York: State University of New York Press.
[8] Hill, T. E., Jr. 2012. *Virtue, Rules and Justice. Kantian Aspirations.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[9] Ruffing, M. 2012. "Moral Bildung and Cosmopolitanism According to Kant." *Studia Philosophica Kantiana* 1, no. 1: 9–21.
[10] Reitemeyer, U. 2012. "Kants bildungsgeschichtlicher Entwurf der Moderne in weltbürgerlicher Absicht." *Studia Philosophica Kantiana* 1, no. 1: 22–42; Ripstein, A. 2009. "Kant on Law and Justice." *The Blackwell Guide to Kant's Ethics*, edited by T. E. Hill Jr., 161–178. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell; Fleischacker, S. 2004. *A Short History of Distributive Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Seidler, J. V. 2010. *Kant, Respect and Injustice: The Limits of Liberal Moral Theory*. London: Routledge.
[11] Heitger, M. 2005. "Aufklärung als pädagogisches Programm." *Kant – Pädagogik und Politik*, edited by L. Koch and Ch. Schönherr, 133–143. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag; Ruhloff, J. 2005. "Auch Moralisierung? Bemerkungen zur Aktualität von Kants Gliederung der Erziehungsaufgabe." *Kant – Pädagogik und Politik*, edited by L. Koch and Ch. Schönherr, 23–31. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag.
[12] Johnston, J. S. 2006. "The Education of the Categorical Imperative." *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 25, no. 5: 385–402.
[13] Pinheiro Walla, A. 2018. "Kant on Cosmopolitan Education for Peace." *Con-Textos Kantianos – International Journal of Philosophy*, no. 7: 332–347.
[14] Held, D. 2010. *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
[15] Kant's works are cited in accordance with Akademie-Ausgabe (AA), Berlin 1900ff.
[16] Kant, I. 1991. "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch." *Political Writings*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, AA 8:349, p. 99.
[17] Ibid.

chical), but rather to a mode of governance whose opposite is despotism. A lawful constitution that guarantees everyone's freedom through laws represents the public good, and this establishment should be institutionalized. Only in a republican system will states be able to exist within a system of law.

The Second Definitive Article of a Perpetual Peace states that the right of nations shall be based on a federation of free states because, just as individuals can group themselves into a nation, each nation can and should demand that the others enter into a constitution similar to a civil one, within which the rights of each nation would be secured.[18] Based on a peace contract, Kant introduces the concept of states forming an international state (*civitas gentium*).

These states should form a federation of nations in which each state would have its own rights and there would be no danger of states merging into one. For Kant, the idea of a large state is out of the question because the basis of federal unification is the republic. The other states would join this union, thus securing the freedom of states on the basis of international law. States should unite in the same way individuals do. They surrender their freedom and submit to public laws, forming a commonwealth. States should do the same to create a *civitas gentium* that grows ever larger until it could encompass all the nations of the Earth. Therefore, according to Kant, there must be a peace union, which differs from a peace treaty because a treaty ends only one war, whereas a union ends all wars forever, as Kant argues. Federalism should gradually be introduced to a larger number of states that would be united in this union. This federation would represent a legal state based on commonly accepted international law, and it would guarantee perpetual peace. Therefore, the condition of the first article is necessary, and the states in this federal union must have a republican form of government.

[18] Ibid., AA 8:354, p. 102.

The Third and final Definitive Article specifies the subject of universal hospitality. According to Kant, "cosmopolitan right shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality"[19]. Here, hospitality is understood as the right of a foreigner to be treated in a friendly manner in the state in which he is, as long as he behaves friendly. Thus, a state of peace based on international law is not enough; a law that binds all people together is necessary. Kant writes that a violation of the law anywhere on Earth affects everywhere, so the idea of cosmopolitan law is not an exaggerated concept, but rather a necessary addition to national and international law. All acts are interrelated, and the threat of a rights violation cannot be limited geographically. A foreigner has a right of visitation in a country he enters, which guarantees that, as long as he behaves in a friendly manner, he will not be met with hostility.[20]

The current challenge is to address the long-standing confusion over the meaning and justification of the right to hospitality. This can be done by showing that the right cannot function as a stand-alone, positive, quantitative claim that can be enforced by foreigners.[21] Additionally, it cannot be used negatively to wage war against those who can be described as enemies under traditional state law. This right is valid only as a necessary condition for functional legal treaties and contracts and should not be used in isolation. This raises important questions for current theories of global justice. In arguing for property rights, Kant reminds us that the Earth's surface is finite and spherical. If the Earth's surface were infinite, people could scatter themselves so much that they would not come into contact with one another. Thus, community would not be a necessary consequence of human existence on Earth. Kant adds that the right of hospitality belongs to all people because they have a right to the

[19] Ibid., AA 8:357, p. 105.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Meckstroth, Ch. 2018. "Hospitality, or Kant's Critique of Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights." *Political Theory* 46, no. 4: 537–559.

common possession of the Earth's surface but because the Earth's surface is spherical, people cannot scatter themselves indefinitely and the formation of a human community is inevitable.

The Earth's surface is a real space available to all of us to share within a certain period of time. Only when we have a living space at our disposal can we organize interpersonal relations within it. This includes ways of acquiring rights to external objects, which are only a small part of the many dimensions of interpersonal interactions that derive from the idea of original common ownership. Kant's emphasis on individuals as the true creators of the commonwealth is not an end in itself. Individuals unite into states through the expression of a common, general will. States function based on this general will. The expression of the general will ultimately creates a federation and states are higher structural units of human society. As long as states do not function as such, a world federation cannot be created by the will of states alone. It must also be created by the will of individuals, who are the basic structural units of a world federation. Only then can it realistically function according to Kantian principles.

According to Kant, this means that the role of the individual is crucial in the theory of perpetual peace. Margit Ruffing[22] and others discuss *Bildung* (moral formation) in the context of cosmopolitanism. However, *Bildung* should not be understood as a form of indoctrination, but rather as the development of the individual personality that follows the motives given by reason (*Vernunftrecht*) toward realizing oneself as an autonomous, moral, and rational being. This *Bildung* is an unconditional prerequisite for achieving cosmopolitan consciousness. Similarly, Muthu[23] emphasizes that, for Kant, individuals have a moral obligation to develop their human capacities because only through individuals can communities achieve *Bildung* on a global scale.

According to Cavallar[24], Kant assumes that, despite differences in cultural development, skin color, religion, talents, and moral capacities, people are equal in terms of their humanity, dignity, and moral vocation (*Bestimmung*). He says that Kant's cosmopolitanism has three basic characteristics: it is embedded, dynamic, and pedagogical. Everyone belongs to a particular community, and Kant emphasizes shaping a synthesis of republican patriotism, republicanism, and moral cosmopolitanism. He also focuses on understanding the dynamic tension between entrenched local attachments and cosmopolitan commitments. This dynamic element is linked to the ultimate goal of the human species and serves as the basis for cosmopolitanism. Cavallar claims this dynamic element is present in Kant's understanding of *Bildung* as the key means by which individuals and the human species approach the ultimate end of their existence. Kant criticizes parents, teachers, and rulers who do not care about the moral formation of children[25] because this concept is essential to the educational process. According to Kant, moral formation can be achieved by helping young people understand themselves so they can participate in public affairs. This cannot be done through traditional teaching methods, in which students are expected to "learn"; rather, they should be taught to "learn to think" for themselves.

But if one cannot impose values from the outside, or obligate oneself to develop the capacities of others, how can one arrive at the idea of cosmopolitanism on a global scale? The answer lies in human reason and freedom. Both are inherent in every human being, forming the basis of every society. When Kant incorporates the concept

[22] Ruffing, M. 2012. "Moral Bildung and Cosmopolitanism According to Kant." *Studia Philosophica Kantiana* 1, no. 1: 9–21.
[23] Muthu, S. 2003. *Enlightenment Against Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 28.

[24] Cavallar, G. 2015. *Kant's Embedded Cosmopolitanism: History, Philosophy and Education for World Citizens*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter.
[25] "Parents usually care only that their children get on well in the world" and princes "regard their subjects merely as instruments for their own designs" (Kant, I. 2007. "Lectures on Pedagogy." *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, AA 9: 448, p. 442). "[M]oral formation […] also demands the most insight from the side of the parents and the teachers" (Ibid., AA 9: 480, p. 468).

of cosmopolitan law into his legal system, he does so because he acknowledges the uniqueness of nations' and communities' ways of life as expressions of freedom and reason common to all human beings, regardless of their cultural affiliation. According to Kant, freedom, insofar as it can coexist with the freedom of all others in accordance with universal law, is the only original right that belongs to every human being by virtue of their humanity.

In its narrower sense, cosmopolitan law concerns the relations between states and individuals, regulating their cross-border interactions in trade and communication. However, its primary role is to institutionalize the political-legal order to ensure peaceful coexistence, which is required by the original human right: man's innate right to freedom. Cosmopolitan law's systematic task is not to establish a civil society (national law's task) nor to ensure world peace (international law's task). Cosmopolitan law transcends the state of nature in all its aspects and is therefore complementary, not substitutive, to national and international law.[26] Cosmopolitan law creates a global rule of law to promote justice as a universally valid ethical category, giving this law a moral dimension.

Although one might be tempted to excuse oneself from personal responsibility by appealing to circumstances beyond one's control, such an appeal is not justified within Kant's moral and political philosophy. Kant's conception of freedom is not that of isolated autonomy but rather the shared exercise of practical reason, which is fundamentally social in nature. According to his account of the social contract and the general will, the legitimacy of laws and institutions depends on their conceivability as products of a united rational will, as if all citizens had participated in their formation. This "original contract" is not a historical event, but rather an idea of reason – a regulative principle that guides both sovereigns and citizens to act as if their choices could be universally willed. Kant's notion of co-responsibility is thus future-oriented rather than rooted in history. His philosophy of history and his system of public law are directed toward the gradual institutionalization of justice and peace – a process that unfolds through the contributions of individuals acting in concert across generations. In this Kantian sense, shared responsibility does not collapse into undifferentiated collective responsibility. Rather, it acknowledges that, although individuals may be limited in their immediate power to alter circumstances, their cooperative efforts, guided by reason and law, can shape the trajectory of humanity's moral progress. Kant's preference for reform over revolution further underscores his belief that historical progress is an ongoing, open-ended process realized through the cumulative effect of countless individual actions that set precedents for others to follow.

The question of cosmopolitanism is not merely theoretical, but also practical. It concerns how individuals understand themselves as agents within the broader project of humanity's moral development. Although the ultimate realization of cosmopolitan ideals, such as perpetual peace, may only be achieved at the level of the species, Kant insists that the participation of individuals is indispensable. By recognizing their own responsibility in this collective endeavor, each person becomes a bearer of the cosmopolitan idea and contributes to its gradual realization. Moreover, Kant's practical philosophy acknowledges degrees of responsibility, recognizing that obstacles can affect the extent of one's responsibility. Nevertheless, the fundamental stance remains that to be a moral agent is to take responsibility, which is not negated by external constraints but rather calls for a rational assessment of what can be achieved individually and collectively. Thus, Kant's framework precludes abdicating personal responsibility based on external circumstances. Instead, it situates moral agency within a dynamic interplay of individual initiative and shared rational purpose oriented toward realizing justice and cosmopolitan ideals.

[26] Cavallar, G. 2002. *The Rights of Strangers: Theories of International Hospitality, the Global Community, and Political Justice Since Vitoria*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, p. 363.

III.

Unlike many contemporary approaches, Kant does not assume that cosmopolitan values are automatically present. Instead, he emphasizes the role of *Bildung* as an end in itself. Perpetual peace is an idea that requires long-term work and concerns every person, who should understand its importance. Kant's practical philosophy proposes conditions for the possibility of cosmopolitanism as a regulative principle. In a political context, each individual is a citizen of a particular state; in a cultural context, however, the individual is a citizen of the world.[27] Thus, it is necessary to reflect on the need for education for cosmopolitanism, which contributes to the overall development of the individual personality – namely, a person who understands themselves as an autonomous, rational, moral, and responsible being. Each person plays an important role in the development of humanity. Through active involvement, individuals directly impact the progress of humanity.

For Kant, human beings are culturally formed and must create institutional government structures. These governments should then create an international federation based on international law, referring to the highest ideal of perpetual peace based on cosmopolitan law. The permanent existence of war indicates that perpetual peace is an unattainable ideal, yet people should still strive for it. In his work on perpetual peace, Kant formulates an optimistic idea that "perpetual peace is a task which, as solutions are gradually found, constantly draws nearer fulfilment, for we may hope that the periods within which equal amounts of progress are made will become progressively shorter"[28].

Similarly to the idea of perpetual peace, reforming our way of thinking is a long-term task. Therefore, each generation should focus on making further improvements. He adds that, in the moral formation of people, states must also make an effort. Currently, states illogically use their power to expand themselves; however, they would be much more useful if they tried to educate their citizens. Without this effort, it will be impossible to take the final step toward cosmopolitanism, the ultimate form of culture.

Kant emphasizes the importance of individuals who "take an interest in the best of the world and are capable of conceiving the idea of a future improved condition" and who believe that "the gradual approach of human nature to its purpose is possible"[29]. According to Kant's understanding of history, individuals can no longer escape their private morality or merely react to moral problems that arise in life. Instead, they must initiate global changes, such as world-ethical, political, and educational reforms, whose purpose is not only to make the world good, but also to make the world a good place overall.[30] Education plays a crucial role in this process. Kant writes, "[o]ne must stress to him (young man) philanthropy towards others and then also cosmopolitan dispositions. In our soul there is something that makes us take an interest 1) in our own self, 2) in others with whom we have grown up, and then also 3) an interest in the best for the world; must come to pass. One must make children familiar with this interest so that they may warm their souls with it. They must rejoice at the best for the world even if it is not to the advantage of their fatherland or to their own gain"[31].

The goal of education is naturally linked to the idea of approaching the cosmopolitan state. It is a future-oriented project in which education can focus not only on strengthening knowledge but also on considering the individual as part of and representative of the whole.

[27] Castillo, M. 2008. "Kant's Cosmopolitanism Today." *Človek – dejiny – kultúra II*, edited by Ľ. Belás and E. Andreanský. Prešov: Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, p. 129.
[28] Kant, I. 1991. "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch." *Political Writings*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, AA 8:386, p. 130.
[29] Kant, I. 2007. "Lectures on Pedagogy." *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, AA 9: 449, pp. 443–444.
[30] Yovel, Y. 1980. *Kant and the Philosophy of History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 269.
[31] Kant, I. 2007. "Lectures on Pedagogy." *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, AA 9:499, p. 485.

For Kant, the noblest idea that man can consider as his goal is the state of a person who realizes that he is at once a citizen of a nation and a member of the society of world citizens – cosmopolitan citizens. Anthropologically, it is a form of self-understanding that progress is conditioned by the individual. According to the cosmopolitan idea, humans are inhabitants of this planet who think and act freely. This means people participate in public affairs and understand themselves and others as citizens of the world and representatives of humanity. A key component of this is *Bildung*, which directly impacts the self-understanding of individuals who can think independently while making decisions that benefit the community.

Kant's vision of cosmopolitanism, developed through his concepts of perpetual peace, republican governance, and universal hospitality, is fundamentally forward-looking and grounded in the continuous moral and educational growth of individuals and societies. This vision is neither utopian nor static. Rather, it is a regulative ideal that guides humanity's gradual progress toward justice, peace, and a global community through the cumulative efforts of individuals acting together. Kant's emphasis on *Bildung* as the development of autonomous, rational, and moral individuals highlights the importance of education in the form of the cultivation of critical self-understanding and the capacity to act for the common good.

Pragmatist philosophers, especially John Dewey, complement this Kantian legacy by emphasizing the practical, experimental, and participatory dimensions of moral and political life. For Dewey, good political systems are ongoing processes requiring active engagement, public deliberation, and continual re-evaluation of values and institutions, not fixed achievements. Like Kant, Dewey sees education as central to social progress; however, he further stresses the importance of learning through experience, dialogue, and cooperation across diverse communities. Pragmatists also challenge the idea of absolute or final truths in ethics and politics, favoring a pluralistic and fallibilist approach instead. This aligns with the dynamic, open-ended nature of Kant's cosmopolitan ideal, which is perpetually coming nearer to its final realization yet never fully realized. Both the Kantian and pragmatist perspectives acknowledge that achieving cosmopolitan ideals depends on the ability of individuals and communities to adapt, learn, and respond to new political, social, and environmental challenges. These ideas open a promising field for further investigation of the practical dimensions of Kantian cosmopolitanism.

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WILLIAM JAMES'S PRAGMATISM IN EDUCATIONAL THEORY: A COMPREHENSIVE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ANALYSIS IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT: William James's pragmatic educational philosophy is discussed in relation to the principles of practicality, experiential learning, and personalization in teaching. James saw education as an important tool to help students face reality and thus emphasized the application of knowledge to problems rather than just theoretical instruction. The article delves into the origins of James's thought, rooted in his evolutionary and psychological background, and examines its key components, including goals, teaching methods, and student engagement. This article further explores historical, recent, and progressive issues of education that are put into practice, such as STEM and online education. Analysis of other philosophical ideas reveals something new in James's thinking. The article attempts to capture the significance of James's philosophy in the era of globalization and recommends its further application to Vietnam's changing educational policy from an over-focus on teaching theory to a more pragmatic approach.

Keywords: Pragmatic Epistemology, Constructivist Pedagogy, Individualized Instruction, William James, Vietnam

1. Introduction

Renowned as a founding figure in American philosophy and psychology, William James established himself as a leading proponent of pragmatism, a doctrine that emphasizes the practical effectiveness of knowledge in solving real-world challenges. William James came from a distinguished intellectual lineage: He studied medicine at Harvard University. There he became a distinguished professor of psychology and philosophy. William James skillfully combined scientific rigor with human inquiry. In addition to his theoretical contributions, James excelled as a pragmatic educator. His most notable work was his influential Talks to Teachers on Psychology, which reflected his deep dedication to understanding and meeting the psychological needs of students. He rejected abstract concepts, and his educational philosophy prioritized experiential learning and practical application. He also advocates an approach that equips learners to face the complexities of life with adaptive intelligence and insight.

His contribution to contemporary philosophy and education is unquestionable, primarily through his advocacy of a new conception of knowledge: knowledge is not an unalterable block of information but rather a pliable instrument that people use to adjust to their surroundings. In education, this means that the goal is not just to communicate information but to equip students with the necessary skills to face the realities of life, from solving personal problems to adapting to social changes. Studying James's pragmatic philosophy of education helps us better understand his thoughts and offers new perspectives on how education can be improved to suit the requirements of the times, such as flexibility and creativity.

As he explained, "pragmatic philosophy" is a way of thinking that evaluates an idea's value and truth regarding the results it accomplishes in real life[1]. Instead of pursuing facts or eternal truths like most philosophies do, James' pragmatism cares about the usefulness and applicability of facts. He developed this idea from the early foundations of Charles Peirce, who initiated the concept of pragmatism. Still, James expanded it by emphasizing the role of personal experience, beliefs, and emotions in shaping knowledge. Compared to John Dewey, another

[1] Sharma, Sunita, Reeta Devi, and Jitendra Kumari. 2018. "Pragmatism in Education." International Journal of Engineering Technology Science and Research 5 (1): 1549–54

well-known pragmatic philosopher, James focused less on the social aspect of education and more on personal consciousness and how each person builds understanding through the learning process[2]. James' philosophy of pragmatism allows for experiential learning by integrating real-world situations into the educational framework[3]. This methodology consists of two parts: discipline taught and discipline learned. Its impact rests on its flexible, practical philosophy that challenges conventional practices and equips students to thrive in a complex and ever-changing world. The paper's main argument is to examine William James' philosophy of education in terms of his ideas on practicality, experiential learning, and individualization in instruction[4]. Furthermore, this paper will relate these thoughts with contemporary practices such as STEM education and technologyenhanced personalized learning to demonstrate the relevance of James' principles in the current environment.

Finally, the paper will evaluate this philosophy's outstanding values and potential limitations, such as its high flexibility but lack of clear structure or the risk of underestimating theoretical foundations. The article wishes to provide a comprehensive view of James's legacy in the field of education and suggest new directions for applying his ideas in the future.

2. Theoretical basis of pragmatic philosophy in education

William James's pragmatic philosophy did not appear by chance but was formed from the profound inspiration of science and thought of the time in which he lived[5]. One of the biggest influences on James' thinking was Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, which he approached during his medical studies at Harvard University[6]. The consideration of adaptation is well highlighted by Darwin, who states that life exists and evolves due to a species' ability to adapt to its environment. James applied this presumption to his epistemology by claiming that knowledge must adapt to be applicable in real-life situations. This perspective shows that knowledge is not permanent but a powerful instrument forged and refined through man-made actions and activities in the real world. Hence, within the context of education, James stresses that learning encompasses more than the rote reproduction of information. It is about assisting learners in acquiring the ability to apply knowledge to real-life situations. Besides Darwinian influences, James's psychological thinking also played a fundamental role in shaping pragmatic philosophy[7]. As the author of the classic The Principles of Psychology (1890), he explored how human consciousness operates as a tool for understanding and navigating the world around him. The proposal made by James on the "stream of consciousness" states that awareness is not broken down into separate events[8]; rather, it is an ongoing process in which individual experiences heavily shape knowledge and behavior. Regarding education, it means a student should not be expected to learn in a conventional passive way but rather let them experience the world uniquely and construct their understanding meaningfully. James argues that the sense

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[7] McGranahan, Lucas R. 2017. Darwinism and Pragmatism: William James on Evolution and Self-Transformation. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315273891.

[8] Pollio, Howard R. 2013. "The Stream of Consciousness Since James." In Reflections on the Principles of Psychology, edited by Michael G. Johnson and Tracy B. Henley, 271–94. New York: Psychology Press. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203761656-13/stream-consciousness-since-james-howard-pollio.

of the individual is central to the learning process, and education must take advantage of this to help students develop their full potential[9].

In addition, James was influenced by the diversity of contemporary philosophies, especially John Stuart Mill's empiricism and Charles Peirce's empiricism[10]. From Mill, he learned the importance of experience in testing knowledge. At the same time, Peirce, the originator of the pragmatic concept, provided James with a theoretical foundation for evaluating ideas based on practical results[11]. However, James has personalized these influences by emphasizing the role of beliefs, emotions, and personal choice in building knowledge, which Peirce paid less attention to. Education, to James, goes beyond the dissemination of information; instead, it focuses on building skills that facilitate making decisions based on actual experiences, which form valuable thinking and action patterns in a person's life[12].

James's approach to education comes from a practical philosophy of life with three central tenets. The first principle is critical for teaching and emphasizes that an idea is valid only if it brings about beneficial or practical change[13]. For instance, a scientific proposition can only be termed "true" after it has worked in practical situations like Newton's laws and the movements of objects. Understanding should be helpful in education so students can see its practical significance, like applying mathematics in real-life situations beyond mechanical memorization of formulas. In this regard, James's goal is to ensure that students will be more adaptable in real-world work, especially when dealing with realworld problems, emphasizing the need for information-based education[14].

The second principle deals with the importance of action and experimentation in constructing knowledge. James writes, "A pragmatic philosophy is an attitude of seeking, a method of solving problems."[15]. He suggests that people and scientists learn through doing and adjusting according to the results obtained. In education, this encourages hands-on learning methods, where students engage in activities such as doing experiments, undertaking projects, or solving practical math problems to draw knowledge for themselves rather than relying solely on theoretical lectures from teachers. The "trial and error" process that James emphasizes helps students understand more profoundly and trains patience and creative thinking in the face of failure, thereby preparing them with the skills they need to adapt to complex situations in life.

The third principle is individuality, in which James asserts that each person has their approach to knowledge, depending on their experiences, beliefs, and life circumstances[16]. This starkly contrasts the traditional view of education, which often imposes a uniform curriculum on all students without regard to the differences between them. James believes that a student's steering toward what resonates with them must be done to preserve cultural diversity. Anything else will be counterproductive[17]. A good example would be a classroom where one

[9] James, C. R., G. Dunning, and M. Connolly. 2006. How Very Effective Primary Schools Work. London: Paul Chapman Publishing. https://www.torrossa.com/en/resources/an/4912686.
[10] Cobb, David. 2022. Empiricism in the Philosophy of Science. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh. https://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/21458/.
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[16] Thomas, Gary, and David James. 2006. "Reinventing Grounded Theory: Some Questions about Theory, Ground, and Discovery." British Educational Research Journal 32 (6): 767–95. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920600989412.
[17] James, M., Jeremy Carrette, William James, and Eugene Taylor. 2003. The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203398470.

student may learn best by actively participating in projects such as charting. In contrast, another student may learn best by reading or participating in discussions. This approach ensures maximum efficacy in education as the driving factors in motivating learning are heightened.

The link between practical philosophies and education is quite vividly brought out by James in the notions of education not just being the transfer of knowledge but rather a way where students are equipped to function in real-life situations. In Talks to Teachers on Psychology, he emphasizes that education aims to help students develop thinking habits and acting in the face of unpredictable situations, such as the ability to solve problems or make decisions in uncertain circumstances[18]. While this coincides with the idea of "learning through experience," as proposed by John Dewey, James's distinction lies in the fact that he considers personal self and experience more important than social factors or collective activities. James believed education should be centered around critical thinking, where students can validate or challenge information rather than passively accept it.

James' idea was that the teacher was not the only one, nor were other factors. He theorized that knowledge had to be discovered by the student himself. Thus, the teacher should facilitate their investigation and experimentation rather than fill the students' heads with information. James wrote: "A good teacher is the one who arouses curiosity and helps students find their answers". This requires a major shift in the approach to teaching, from passive communication to facilitating students' active participation in the learning process. Teachers must understand the psychology of the students; they should understand every single child's specific needs and interests and then approach them in a way that would make learning effective[19].

Lastly, it is James' practical philosophy that education presupposes a solution to the unknown. He thinks students should have creative and flexible thinking capacity in the face of perpetual change instead of relying on set guidelines or borrowed knowledge. This, he considers, to be very pertinent in modern times. Shifters such as technological innovations and globalization will make it far too necessary to possess skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability, which are practically crucial in today's world. Applying James's idea's premise is a challenge for educators, but not a theoretical one. It helps them move away from understanding education only through rigid systems and embrace its temporality.

3. The Central Components of James' Philosophy of Education

A core aspect of William James' views on education, in particular, learning, education should not only involve the transfer of theoretical concepts but also stage students into real-life challenges through developing effective problem-solving abilities[20]. Rather, information has some tangible usefulness only when it enables people to act competently within given particulars and not merely as abstract phenomena. For instance, rather than only learning the laws of physics through reading textbooks, students should be taught how to use these laws practically: figuring out how much force is needed to lift something heavy or make a basic model representing a sphere. This point of view emphasizes that education must be highly applicable, helping students see the direct connection between what they learn and their daily life problems. James does not want education to stop at providing knowledge but to turn that knowledge into a helpful tool, thereby improving students' ability to act and think practically in all circumstances.

[18] Sternberg, Robert J. 2001. "Why Schools Should Teach for Wisdom: The Balance Theory of Wisdom in Educational Settings." Educational Psychologist 36 (4): 227–45. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3604_2.

[19] Lindsay, Geoff. 2007. "Educational Psychology and the Effectiveness of Inclusive Education/Mainstreaming." British Journal of Educational Psychology 77 (1): 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1348/000709906X156881.

[20] Yilmaz, Kaya. 2008. "Constructivism: Its Theoretical Underpinnings, Variations, and Implications for Classroom Instruction." Educational Horizons 86 (3): 161–72. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42923724.

James's second goal for education is to cultivate creativity and flexible thinking, qualities that he considers indispensable in an ever-changing world. In Talks to Teachers on Psychology, he encouraged teachers to create a learning environment where students could ask questions, experiment with new ideas, and explore different approaches instead of just following rigid rules. In a science class, instead of just providing a formula and asking students to memorize it, teachers can organize an open-ended experiment where students design their way of testing their hypothesis, such as measuring the rate of fall of different objects. James believes that creativity is not only a skill but also a habit of thinking, which helps students develop the ability to adapt to new and complex situations. This was especially important in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the development of industrialization and science and technology required people to innovate to meet the new requirements of society constantly. This idea is still valid today when creativity is seen as one of the key factors to success in fields such as technology, business, and the arts.

The last point is that James regards schooling as an essential element that prepares the learner to grapple with the uncertainties of existence that is life, which is a reality of the world. He states, "Life is a set of problems to be solved, and education must teach us the effective way of dealing with such problems". Contrarians to common educational ideologies, which rest on the provision and exposition of static, permanent, and unchangeable knowledge, James argues that students should be able to reason, value, make decisions, and cope with the randomness of life. For instance, in a history lesson, instead of rote learning of a sequence of events and dates, students can be tasked with interpreting the implications of the Industrial Revolution and devising how those lessons could be useful in today's issues: climate change. This view consolidates and effectively justifies the reasoning behind James's educational philosophy, which arguably is innovative, particularly nowadays because of the plethora of global challenges, whether pandemics, economic meltdowns, or unprecedented technological sprints.

James believed students learn better when they engage in project-based learning, which stems from his practical teaching philosophy[21]. Students should participate in tasks and activities over and above, listening to lectures or reading books. In a biology class, children do not only need to learn the theoretical part of the life cycle of plants. Instead, they can be allowed to grow a plant from seeds, and let them track its growth and make observations to come up with their deductions. This method helps students retain knowledge for longer and helps them understand the connection between theory and practice, thereby developing the ability to apply knowledge to real-life situations. Although James shares this idea with John Dewey, he differs in that he focuses more on the student's individual experience rather than on group activities or the social aspect of learning[22]. For James, each student needs space to explore independently and build an understanding based on what they have directly experienced.

Another essential feature of James's teaching method is that it encourages doubt and questioning rather than passively accepting knowledge[23]. James argued that he did not deem learning to be just a droning reproduction of instruction given to students by their educators. Rather, it was an independent process, and learners were encouraged to ask questions and challenge the status quo. Take math, for example: instead of completing worked problems as the instructions suggest, students could be required to 'prove' the Pythagorean theorem by manipulating actual drawings or models. Not only

[21] Capraro, Robert, and Scott W. Slough. 2009. Project-Based Learning: An Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Approach. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. https://byvn.net/EFth.
[22] Dewey, John. 2024. Democracy and Education. New York: Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.7312/dewe21010-003.
[23] Fenstermacher, Gary D., Jonas F. Soltis, and Matthew N. Sanger. 2015. Approaches to Teaching. 5th ed. New York: Teachers College Press. https://byvn.net/3TIr.

does this technique foster the development of critical analysis, but it also enables students to appreciate the true essence of knowledge, that it is not stationary and absolute but sustained through constant probing and revision. James argues that teachers need to promote doubt in their learners, so he perceives doubt as the root of knowledge and learning.

Individualization in teaching is another fundamental concept in James's philosophy. As he points out, every student possesses unique requirements, interests, and backgrounds, so teachers must modify their teaching approaches to suit the prevailing diversity instead of adopting a uniform system. For instance, in a literature class, one student interested in writing may be required to express his feelings toward a specific work through a personal essay. In contrast, another student may be able to learn through active participation in group discussions or text analysis. James goes on to state that effective education has to take into account individual differences, which will help students have the liberty to find out what best suits them instead of being bound by a set curriculum. In any case, teachers would need to be more adaptable, know their students' needs very well, and change their methods to help each student work their best to achieve optimum learning results for each individual.

In James' pragmatic philosophy of education, students have a key role in learning. James contended that students are not merely passive recipients of the learning process but are active participants in constructing their knowledge based on individual experiences[24]. As an illustration, while learning geography, a student living next to the ocean will understand the concept of tides differently than a student living in the mountains. This self-efficacy creates meaningful experiences and relates to students' lives, encouraging them to learn. James explains that when students take an active part in the lesson, they acquire knowledge and learn how to think critically and solve problems independently. James also emphasizes students' freedom of choice and responsibility during the learning process. He argued that students should be allowed to decide how they learn and take responsibility for those decisions rather than just following the teacher's instructions. It alludes to engaging students enough so they can select their individual research questions for a science project, for instance, how solar energy can be applied in practical situations or plant growth, which will foster a sense of responsibility towards one's education. It serves the dual purpose of increasing personal motivation and developing self-regulatory skills, which are crucial for success later in life. James offhandedly comments that responsible actions and their particular consequences can only be dealt with through taking personal ownership of decision-making[25].

In addition, for James, knowing involves an endless cycle of hypotheses and corrections, analogous to research. He wrote, "We learn by acting, making mistakes, and correcting them". According to this view, students should be encouraged to develop hypotheses, test them, and learn from failures to perfect their knowledge. In a physics exercise, students can try various ways to balance a lever, from changing the position of a heavy object to adjusting the length of the swing and exploring the basic mechanics independently. This process helps students build in-depth knowledge and trains patience, resilience, and creative thinking in the face of difficulties. James believes that learning is not a straight path but a challenging journey in which failure is just as critical as success.

Regarding the evaluation, James criticizes using standardized exams or cut-off scores as the only criterion in evaluating a student's performance. He has argued that such methods typically measure an individual's ability to recall information in the short term, which suffers from

[24] Danforth, Scot, and Terry Jo Smith. 2004. Engaging Troubling Students: A Constructivist Approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. https://byvn.net/YHx6.

[25] Weick, Carl W. 2008. "Issues of Consequence: Lessons for Educating Tomorrow's Business Leaders from Philosopher William James." Academy of Management Learning & Education 7 (1): 88–98. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2008.31413866.

an understanding or practical skill level. In his view, nevertheless, pragmatic education should concentrate on evaluating knowledge about real-life situations. For instance, instead of a written chemistry test comprising predominantly theoretical questions, learners could be required to conduct a simple experiment illustrating a basic chemical reaction and explain the results in light of the theory. Such techniques serve the purpose of gauging the level of understanding and the ability to apply the knowledge that embodies the essence of practical education.

How James evaluates a learner is equally broad and pan-cultural, as he employs different assessment forms rather than sticking to one set method only. He supports through assessments done in practice, such as field trips, class debates, or even practical sessions, as long as they relate to the subject and interest of the students. For instance, in a literature class, students may be required to write a personal essay about their feelings about a work, or instead of just answering multiplechoice questions, participate in a debate to try to explain the meaning of the work. This strategy gives teachers the power to evaluate the student's knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, and eloquence. James emphasized that diversity in assessments helps to reflect students' true abilities more fully, rather than relying solely on a rigid criterion such as grades.

Finally, James asserts that the goal of the assessment process is not to classify or punish students but to support them in their learning[26]. He wrote, "Good evaluation is an evaluation that helps students to recognize their strengths and improve their weaknesses". In this view, the assessment results should be used as a tool to guide students, help them better understand themselves, and adjust their learning styles for greater effectiveness. Here, as in the rest of the world, modern education grapples with the popularity of the formative assessment method, which focuses on supporting the learning process rather than just on the result achieved. James's evaluation philosophy reveals not only the humanity of his thoughts but also the prescience of his construction of a student-centric education system.

[26] Wiliam, Dylan. 2011. "What Is Assessment for Learning?" Studies in Educational Evaluation 37 (1): 3–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2011.03.001.

4. Application of James's pragmatic educational philosophy in practice

William James's pragmatic philosophy left a deep mark on the history of education, especially in the United States in the 20th century, through his lectures and works such as Talks to Teachers on Psychology (1899). Although James did not directly build a complete education system, his ideas inspired educational reformers greatly, especially in the Progressive Education movement led by John Dewey. In experimental schools in the U.S. in the early 20th century, such as the Dewey Experimental School in Chicago, students were allowed to participate in practical activities such as farming, building models, or participating in community projects to learn from experience rather than just learning theory from books. These activities clearly reflect James's idea of connecting knowledge with practice, helping students understand the lesson and see its practical value in daily life. Nonetheless, while Dewey emphasized the role of community and social cooperation in education, James focused more on each student's individual experience. This was shown in small American classrooms of the time, where teachers encouraged students to explore their unique interests through activities such as choosing books to read on a whim, writing a personal journal, or taking on small projects based on their interests, such as animal studies or astronomy. James's influence was particularly pronounced in teacher training, as pedagogical schools focused more on educational psychology, a field in which James pioneered The Principles of Psychology (1890). The courses based on this work have helped teachers understand how psychology can be applied to tailor teaching methods to each student's unique needs and abilities, thereby improving teaching effectiveness in the classroom.

Compared to Dewey's progressive education movement, James's philosophy is less systemic but stands out for its flexibility and ability to accommodate the diversity of students. While Dewey focuses on building an integrated curriculum that combines theory and practice in an organized framework, James advocates giving students the freedom to experiment and adapt their learning styles based on their individual experiences. While Dewey's class may require students to work in groups to build a housing model, a James-style classroom may allow each student to choose a unique project on their own, like drawing a map or making a simple object, according to their preferences. This flexibility makes James's thought valuable inspiration for educators who want to balance individual freedom with the overall goal of education, especially in heterogeneous learning environments.

In modern education, James's pragmatic philosophy continues to maintain its value. It is widely applied in many fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education and personalized learning methods through technology. STEM education, focusing on hands-on projects, clearly demonstrates the spirit of experiential learning that James values. In a STEM classroom, students may be asked to design a simple robotic arm using basic components, thereby not only learning about mechanics and programming but also understanding how to apply that knowledge in practice, like assisting people with disabilities. Similarly, experiments on renewable energy, such as building a wind turbine model, help students see the connection between physical theory and modern environmental problems. These activities reinforce knowledge and reflect James' call that education must prepare students to solve practical problems in life.

Personalized learning through technology is another area where James' ideas are applied effectively. With the development of online learning platforms such as Khan Academy, Coursera, or AI-based learning applications, today's students are free to choose the learning content and learning pace that suits their unique needs and preferences, a core principle of James's pragmatic philosophy. A student who is passionate about technology may focus on lectures on computer programming, while another student who loves history may choose courses on ancient civilizations or interactive stories about world wars. AI technology also enhances personalization by analyzing each student's learning data to make appropriate suggestions, such as suggesting advanced assignments for students who are good at math or supplementary reading for students with weak writing. This approach reflects James's view that education should respect individual differences and provide a meaningful learning experience for each student.

In the context of globalization, James's thoughts also play an essential role in preparing students to face the world's constant changes. He emphasized that education must equip students to adapt and think flexibly - skills indispensable in a society affected by the rapid development of technology, economics, and culture. International educational programs such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) encourage students to participate in practical projects, such as research on climate change or sustainable development, and require them to reflect on their own learning. These activities not only help students apply knowledge to practice but also practice independent and creative thinking, just like the pragmatic spirit that James proposed. In a world where new professions are constantly appearing and old ones are disappearing, James's thought provides a guideline for education to teach knowledge and how to learn and adapt to the unknown.

Although James's pragmatic educational philosophy brings many significant benefits, its practical application also faces many critical challenges. The first challenge is the difficulty of measuring practical results, a principle that James emphasizes in his philosophy. He argued that students' abilities should be assessed based on their ability to apply knowledge in practice rather than based on

grades alone. Be that as it may, this requires assessment tools that are much more complex and flexible than traditional standardized tests. How do you quantify how successful a student is when designing a product like a solar-powered car model? The lack of clear and uniform criteria can make it difficult for teachers and administrators to evaluate learning effectiveness, especially in large classrooms or large-scale education systems. This requires a significant shift in the approach to evaluation, from focusing on quantitative results to evaluating the process and quality of the actual product.

The second challenge is the conflict between James's ideas and the traditional education system, which often emphasizes imparting theory and using standardized curricula. In many countries, especially in Asia, such as Vietnam, education still prioritizes memorizing knowledge to pass national exams or simultaneous tests, which goes against James' view of experiential learning and personalization. In a traditional classroom, students may be asked to memorize the chemical periodic table without understanding how the elements interact in practice. In contrast, a James-style classroom will encourage students to conduct experiments to explore chemical reactions. This contradiction can lead to resistance from teachers, parents, and students alike, who are accustomed to the traditional approach and see it as the standard for measuring success. Changing from a rigid system to a flexible one requires time and broad consensus from all stakeholders.

Finally, applying James's pragmatic philosophy requires a major investment in training teachers to adapt to the new role he proposes. James emphasized that teachers should be imparters of knowledge and instructors, arouse curiosity, and support students in self-discovery. However, not all teachers are fully equipped with the skills to do this, especially those used to traditional teaching, where they play a central role in the classroom. A teacher who is used to reading lectures and asking students to take notes may have difficulty designing hands-on activities, such as organizing a group project or instructing students to research independently. This requires teacher training programs to change, focusing on developing skills such as flexible classroom management, real-world activity design, and project-based assessment, a task that is not simple, especially in under-resourced or large-scale education systems. This change not only requires financial investment but also time to change the mindset and habits of teachers.

5. Evaluate and criticize

William James's pragmatic philosophy of education offers many outstanding advantages, making it a valuable thought in history and modern education. First, the high practicality of this philosophy makes education an effective tool to prepare students to face the practical challenges of life. By emphasizing experiential learning and encouraging the application of knowledge to specific situations, James ensures that education is not only the accumulation of theory but also the process of equipping practical skills. In today's STEM apprenticeships or classrooms, students learn how to repair machines, program software, or design technological models, reflecting James' view of the close connection between knowledge and action[27]. This helps students gain a deeper understanding and prepares them with the skills they need to succeed in realworld fields.

Second, James's philosophy encourages independent thinking and creativity, qualities that are important in a constantly changing world that requires constant innovation. He argued that education should create conditions for students to freely ask questions, experiment with ideas, and explore new approaches instead of just following what is taught passively. This is evident in modern teaching methods such as project-based learning, where students can design a product, such as a mobile app or a

[27] Pham, Kien Thi. 2022. "Ho Chi Minh's Educational Philosophy and Its Meaning in Educational Innovation in Vietnam Today." Aufklärung: Revista de Filosofia 9 (1): 109–24. https://doi.org/10.18012/arf.v9i1.62412.

smart home model, thereby developing creative thinking and problem-solving skills. This emphasis on innovation not only helps students grow personally but also meets the needs of the global economy, where companies and organizations are always looking for individuals who can come up with new solutions to complex challenges.

The third advantage of the James philosophy is the ability to meet the diverse needs of students through individualization[28]. He argued that each student has his or her approach to knowledge, which depends on his or her experiences, interests, and life circumstances, and that education should respect this difference. In practice, this aligns with the trend of using technology to personalize learning, such as online learning platforms such as Duolingo or EdX, where students can choose lessons that suit their level and interests, from language learning to data science. This flexibility enhances learning motivation and ensures that education truly serves the individual rather than applying a one-size-fits-all model. Thanks to these advantages, James's philosophy retains its appeal and value in shaping education today.

On the other hand, James's pragmatic philosophy of education also faces notable limitations and criticisms, highlighting the challenges of applying it to practice. One of the most significant limitations is the lack of clear structure in his proposed education system. James emphasizes flexibility, experiential learning, and personalization[29]. Still, he does not offer a specific framework for implementing these ideas on a large scale, such as in public schools or national education systems. This makes it difficult to apply his philosophy in environments that require unity and tight organization. A classroom of 40 students, teachers may have trouble designing activities individually for each child instead of teaching according to a standard curriculum, leading to inconsistencies in classroom management and evaluation of outcomes.

The second limitation is the risk of overemphasizing practical experience and ignoring the importance of theoretical background knowledge; a problem pointed out by critics from the school of essentialism. Essentialists, like William C. Bagley, argue that education should focus on imparting basic knowledge such as math, science, and literature to ensure students have a solid foundation before entering the real world. Conversely, if the focus is only on practical activities in James' style, students may lack the theoretical concepts necessary to develop more profound knowledge. A student may know how to use a machine through practice but does not understand its physical principles, resulting in limitations in solving more complex problems. This raises the question of whether James's philosophy is suitable for all stages of learning or is limited to certain aspects of education.

William James's pragmatic philosophy of education offers valuable suggestions for improving Vietnam's education system, which is transitioning from a traditional model that focuses on theory to a practice and application orientation. With the principle of experiential learning, James encourages students to participate in practical activities to build knowledge. In Vietnam, this can be applied by enhancing practical natural sciences or technology lessons. Instead of just learning the theory of chemical reactions, grade 10 students can perform simple experiments such as mixing solutions to observe color changes, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of knowledge. Vocational schools can also apply this idea by giving students internships in repairing machinery or assembling equipment, which aligns with the actual labor needs of the economy.

James's personalization is also very much in line with the trend of educational innovation in Vietnam, especially in the 2018 General Education Program emphasizing personal capacity development. Instead of adopting a uniform curriculum, teachers can design flexible assign-

[28] Dung, Bui Xuan, and Kien Thi Pham. 2022. "Education Philosophy of Pragmatism and Its Impact in the Global Context Present." Contemporary Pragmatism 19 (3): 310–329. https://doi.org/10.1163/18758185-bja10042.
[29] Pham, Kien Thi, and Bui Dung Xuan. 2021. "Pragmatist Idea of Democracy in Education and Its Meaning for Educational Innovation in Vietnam Today." Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association 94:975–95. http://www.gilsonsociety.com/files/975-995-Pham-Bui.pdf.

ments, such as giving students the option of a research project on local culture or planning a small business, depending on their interests and abilities. Technology also supports this, with learning applications such as the Viettel Study allowing students to self-adjust their learning paths, from mathematics to foreign languages, reflecting James' ideas on respecting individual differences.

However, the application of James Thought in Vietnam faces challenges from the tradition of theoretical education and exam pressure. The shift to experiential learning requires investment in facilities, such as laboratories, and teacher training to shift from traditional teaching to instructional roles. A teacher in a rural area may lack the tools to organize practice, or a parent may object because they are worried their child will not prepare well for the national exam. To overcome this, Vietnam needs to gradually integrate the James Thought through pilot projects, such as the New School Model (VNEN), combined with policies to encourage creativity and reduce the theoretical load, thereby improving students' adaptability in the context of international integration.

7. Conclusion

William James's pragmatic educational philosophy revolves around three core elements: practicality, experiential learning, and individualization in teaching. He sees education as a process of preparing students for reality by imparting knowledge and equipping them with practical skills and the ability to adapt to life. Experiential learning is the cornerstone of James' thought, which encourages students to engage in real-world activities to build their knowledge. At the same time, individualization ensures that education meets each student's unique needs and interests. These principles constitute a flexible approach that transforms education into a living process, far from rigid traditional methods and empty theories.

James's thought is important because it shapes education as a tool for developing creativity, flexible thinking, and the ability to deal with uncertainty. From his influences in the history of American education, such as the progressive education movement, to modern applications in STEM and personalized learning, James's philosophy has proven its timeless value. In the contemporary context, when technology and globalization are rapidly changing the way we live and work, his ideas provide a solution for education to teach knowledge and how to learn and adapt to new things. Educators and policymakers can learn from James to build flexible learning programs encouraging students to self-explore and apply knowledge to practice. Still, James's thoughts leave issues that need further study. In addition, combining his ideas with modern technologies, such as artificial intelligence and online learning, is also a potential research direction that can bring breakthrough innovations to education in the 21st century, making it closer and more effective for each student.

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SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION, ANTI-AUTHORITARIANISM, AND FORM: RICHARD RORTY'S LITERARY CRITICISM

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ABSTRACT: In many of his texts, Richard Rorty endeavors to bring together philosophy and literature. When he talks about literature he primarily means the novel. He intends to use the novel for purposes of moral education and orientation. Seeking to elucidate the novelty of what he terms a literary or poeticized culture, Rorty advances the idea that in this anti-authoritarian and antirepresentationalist culture literature is more important than philosophy as regards the formation of future intellectuals. Rorty's proposal is significant insofar as the much-debated renaissance of pragmatism has not yet entailed the development of a sophisticated pragmatist literary criticism. A literary criticism, that is, which illuminates the insufficiency of the against-theory gesture, directs attention to the vulgarity of the instrumentalization of the novel for moral purposes, and thus does not refrain from discussing aesthetic questions. When literature plays such a central role for Rorty's version of pragmatism, then it seems interesting to ask whether his understanding of the novel can prepare the ground for the development of a pragmatist literary criticism. The essay is divided into three parts. The first part explains what Rorty means by "sentimental education" when he talks about the novel. It also briefly discusses the main difference between Rorty's understanding of the relation between literature and morality and Martha Nussbaum's literary ethics. The second part concentrates on anti-authoritarianism and the novel. It tries to clarify the following question: Why is the novel important for Rorty's anti-authoritarianism? In Rorty studies, giving a detailed answer to this question is still a desideratum. One can say the same about the following question: What role can aesthetic form play for a pragmatist literary criticism that positions itself within a broader anti-authoritarian framework? The final part of this essay seeks to answer this important question.

Keywords: Richard Rorty, Pragmatist Literary Criticism, Pragmatist Aesthetics, Anti-Authoritarianism, Aesthetic Form, Literature and Ethics

For philosophers as different as Heidegger, Sartre, Lukács, Adorno, and Cavell, literature played a central role. They demonstrated that the endeavor to bring together philosophy and literature produced highly interesting results. The same can be said about Richard Rorty. Seeking to elucidate the novelty of what he termed a literary or "poeticized culture" (Rorty 1989, 53), Rorty advanced the idea that in this anti-authoritarian and antirepresentationalist culture literature was more important than philosophy for the formation of future intellectuals.[1] Rorty's proposal is significant insofar as the much-debated renaissance of pragmatism has not yet entailed the development of a sophisticated pragmatist literary criticism. A literary criticism, that is, which illuminates the insufficiency of the against-theory gesture, directs attention to the vulgarity of the instrumentalization of the novel for moral purposes, and thus does not refrain from discussing aesthetic questions. Rorty's pragmatist humanism as anti-authoritarianism plays a crucial role in this context. There are three reasons for this. First, what he says about literature, primarily the novel, is sometimes stimulating and thought-provoking. Second, his version of literary criticism offers the unique possibility of discussing the novel within an anti-authoritarian framework. Finally, Rorty's unwillingness to confront aesthetic problems urges one to pose a question that is of the utmost importance for the development of a pragmatist literary criticism: What role can aesthetic form play for pragmatist anti-authoritarianism?[2]

In many of his texts, Rorty tells a story that is full of replacements and transitions. Religion was replaced by philosophy, Kant's transcendental idealism and its ideal of philosophy-as-science was replaced by Hegel's historicism, Romanticism was replaced by pragmatism, and philosophy has finally been replaced by literature. Highlighting the humanistic character of his notion of a literary culture, Rorty asserts that this culture "drops a presupposition common to religion and philosophy – that redemption must come from one's relation to something that is not just one more human creation" (Rorty 2004, 11). Moreover, he states a thesis that is central to many of his texts: "It is that the intellectuals of the West have, since the Renaissance, progressed through three stages:

[1] For a detailed discussion of the Rortyan idea of a poeticized culture, see Schulenberg 2015.
[2] For a discussion of Rorty's anti-authoritarianism, see Bacon 2023, Rondel 2011 and 2021, and Schulenberg 2023.

they have hoped for redemption first from God, then from philosophy, and now from literature" (ibid., 8). In a Rortyan de-divinized culture, a culture that is humanist, anti-authoritarian, and historicist, one must no longer strive to enter into a relation with a nonhuman entity or power; instead, one should seek to get in touch with the present limits of one's imagination. When literature plays such a central role for Rorty's version of pragmatism, then it seems interesting to ask whether his understanding of the novel can prepare the ground for the development of a pragmatist literary criticism. We will see that this is only partly the case and that his refusal to address the question of form, and aesthetics in general, has far-reaching consequences.[3]

This essay is divided into three parts. In the first part, I will explain what Rorty means by "sentimental education" (Rorty 1998a, 176) when he talks about the novel. I will also briefly discuss the main difference between Rorty's understanding of the relation between literature and morality and Martha Nussbaum's literary ethics. The second part concentrates on anti-authoritarianism and the novel. It tries to clarify the following question: Why is the novel important for Rorty's anti-authoritarianism? In Rorty studies, giving a detailed answer to this question is still a desideratum. One can say the same about the following question: What role can aesthetic form play for a pragmatist literary criticism that positions itself within a broader anti-authoritarian framework? I will discuss this important question in the final part of this essay.

Sentimental Education

When Rorty talks about literature he primarily means the novel. He intends to use the novel for purposes of moral education and orientation. It is his contention that reading novels can offer one the possibility of transcending one's background and thus of achieving greater self-reliance and a more complex individuality. By reading novels, one gets a detailed knowledge of other people; that is, one learns about their actions, their motivations, their idiosyncrasies, their needs, and self-descriptions. Rorty maintains that we have a more developed and educated moral outlook when we are capable of grasping more of these needs and desires and when we become more curious about these self-descriptions. By reading novels, if one follows this American pragmatist, readers become more inclined to worry about whether they are sufficiently aware of the needs and problems of others. Some novel readers might achieve spiritual growth in the sense of an increased flexibility, empathy, and sympathy in the making of moral decisions. Novels by, for instance, Proust and Henry James can fuel the desire to transform oneself into a different and morally better sort of person by changing one's sense of what matters most. In his posthumously published essay, "Redemption from Egotism," Rorty claims that "the novel is the genre which gives us most help in grasping the variety of human life and the contingency of our own moral vocabulary" (Rorty 2010, 393). Furthermore, he states that he wants "to see the rise of the novel in the last two centuries as something new under the sun, something that may help initiate a new form of cultural life […]" (ibid., 404).[4] When he presents himself as an intellectual historian (a field that always profoundly fascinated him), he lets his anti-authoritarian and antirepresentationalist stories of progress and emancipation begin with the Romantics. This is also crucial to see when one seeks to fully appreciate what he writes about the novel and moral progress. Rorty argues that the past two centuries ought not to be regarded as a period in which humans have achieved a deeper and more complex understanding of the core of morality and the real nature of rationality. Rather, they should be seen

[3] As regards the future of pragmatist aesthetics, see Dreon 2022 and Koczanowicz and Liszka 2014.

[4] For interesting discussions of Rorty's understanding of the novel, see the chapter "The Politics of the Novel" in Voparil 2006, 61-88; and the chapter "Richard Rorty's 'cultural politics': Ironist philosophy and the ethics of reading" in Doran 2017, 79-95. On Rorty's ethics, see Malachowski 2021 and Marchetti 2022.

as a time in which we finally grasped the significance of telling and listening to sentimental stories: "These two centuries are most easily understood not as a period of deepening understanding of the nature of rationality or of morality, but rather as one in which there occurred an astonishingly rapid progress of sentiments, in which it has become much easier for us to be moved to action by sad and sentimental stories" (Rorty 1998a, 185).

In Rorty's aforementioned poeticized and postmetaphysical culture, strong poets, creative redescribers, nominalist historicists, and other anti-Platonists would delight in the stimulating plurality of new ways of speaking that do not pretend to offer a single, firm, unequivocal, and transhistorical truth and that contribute to the critique of the idea that there is a permanent reality to be found behind the many temporary appearances. The members of this literary culture, the literary intellectuals, would be capable of elegantly combining a Shelleyan emphasis on the significance of the imagination, a Nietzschean perspectivism and radical antifoundationalism, and a Kunderian stress on the strict incompatibility between the plurality of the novel and the traditional conception of truth. In this kind of culture it becomes obvious that one should see moral progress as a history of making rather than finding. For Rorty, moral progress is a history of poetic achievements that stresses the importance of an increase in imaginative power, instead of claiming that one has gotten ever closer to the Good or the Right.[5]

In the famous last sentence of the preface to *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), Lionel Trilling avers that "literature is the human activity that takes the fullest and most precise account of variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty" (Trilling 2000, 548). This is also Rorty's opinion. Both American liberals also agree that literature, particularly the novel, can shape our morality. Novels that offer detailed descriptions of forms of cruelty, pain, and humiliation might increase their readers' sensitivity and their responsiveness to the needs of others. Hence, they ought to be regarded as contributing to moral progress. Faithful to his anti-Kantianism, Rorty maintains that we do not need theoretical abstraction, formalist analysis, or firm and transhistorical moral principles, but as malleable human beings we need storytelling. By speaking of "sentimental education" (Rorty 1998a, 181) in this context, he also proposes that a pragmatist literary criticism ought to refrain from becoming interested in aesthetic theory and the question of form. The abstraction of form, as he seems to hold, is incompatible with pragmatist anti-authoritarianism. I will expand on this in part 3 of this essay.

In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Rorty develops his notorious private-public distinction. According to him, it is one of the consequences of this dichotomy that one ought to distinguish books that help one become autonomous from books that help one become less cruel in one's behavior toward other people. There is, of course, no need to discuss this Rortyan idea once more. However, for our purposes it ought to be noted that his differentiation between the poet and the novelist goes back to this private-public split. The Nietzschean strong poet serves as a model for the pursuit of private perfection; that is, he has created himself by creating a vocabulary that completely belongs to him. Furthermore, in an Emersonian manner he has demonstrated that he will never imitate, while in a Coleridgean manner he has created the taste by which he will be judged by posterity. The strong poet's self-creation and self-renewal should lead us to reweave our webs of beliefs and desires in a way that results in the same kind of originality. By contrast, the novelist serves as a moral exemplar. There are certain novelists who are primarily useful for purposes of

[5] On the ethical turn, see Adamson, Freadman, and Parker 1998, Doran 2017, Davis and Womack 2001, and Garber, Hansen, and Walkowitz 2000. For an illuminating discussion of the ethics of the novel and the question of form, see Hale 2020. In this context, it is interesting to see what Nussbaum writes about texts that discuss the moral task of the novel: "For much of this writing has understandably given ethical writing about literature a bad name, by its neglect of literary form and its reductive moralizing manner" (Nussbaum 1990, 172).

self-creation. Proust, for instance, increases his readers' skill at recognizing and describing the little mortal things around which individuals center their lives. Rorty reads Proust as an ironist novelist. He submits that this French writer does not desire to escape from contingency, but rather uses it in order to redescribe and rearrange all the people he has met and all those little things, from the madeleine to the hawthorn bushes and Vinteuil's little phrase, which have been a part of his former life.

By contrast, novelists like, for instance, Stowe, Dickens, Zola, Wright, and Orwell are supposed to sensitize their readers to the pain, suffering, and humiliation of others. On Rorty's account, literature offers models of self-description that call attention to the suffering of others and seek to avoid humiliation. He claims that the novel ought to be regarded as a principal medium of a liberal democratic culture, since it allows the reader to recognize that cruelty is the worst thing we do (think of Judith Shklar's influence on Rorty's understanding of what it means to be a liberal here). Literature, ethnography, and journalism are supposed to offer a "thick description of the private and the idiosyncratic" (Rorty 1989, 94), and by doing so, they sensitize us to the pain and suffering of those who otherwise would be ignored since they do not speak our language. One of the central sentences of Rorty's *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* concerns the role of literature in a nominalist and historicist liberal culture: "The metaphysician's association of theory with social hope and of literature with private perfection is, in an ironist liberal culture, reversed" (ibid.).[6]

The novel for Rorty is the ideal medium for what he terms sentimental education, since it draws attention to the possibility of developing an antiessentialist understanding of morality and moral progress. Offering a plurality of perspectives, viewpoints, descriptions, self-descriptions, characterizations, contingent belief systems, and moral outlooks, the novel prevents one from asking big questions about human nature or the meaning of life. Rather, it focuses on more practical questions. In "Heidegger, Kundera, and Dickens," Rorty expands on this aspect thus:

> A society which took its moral vocabulary from novels rather than from ontotheological or onti-co-moral treatises would not ask itself questions about human nature, the point of human existence, or the meaning of human life. Rather, it would ask itself what we can do so as to get along with each other, how we can arrange things so as to be comfortable with one another, how institutions can be changed so that everyone's right to be understood has a better chance of being gratified. (Rorty 1991b, 78)

As regards the endeavor to use the novel for the attempt to confront moral problems, the work of Martha Nussbaum is of particular significance. In *Love's Knowledge* (1990) and *Poetic Justice* (1995), she develops some thought-provoking arguments. Nussbaum should be seen as part of a liberal humanist tradition of literary criticism that reaches back to such important critics as F.R. Leavis (*The Great Tradition*, 1948), Lionel Trilling, and Wayne Booth, whose work in ethical criticism culminated in *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (1988). Henry James's *The Art of the Novel* (1907), to a certain degree, might be seen as a kind of urtext in this context. Like Rorty, Nussbaum is a liberal philosopher who argues for a different way of doing philosophy, who is dissatisfied with the limitations of analytic philosophy, and who therefore contends that an exploration of the connections between philosophy and literature might be an interesting and fruitful task. In her discussion of the moral potential of the novel, she avers that "the novel is itself a moral achievement, and the well-lived life is a work of literary art" (Nussbaum 1990, 148). Her contention is, as she unequivocally formulates it, "that certain novels are, irreplaceably, works of moral philosophy," and that "the novel can be a paradigm of moral activity" (ibid.). The use of novels and the storytelling imagination should lead to

[6] One should note that Rorty in many texts argues that in Western liberal societies moral progress is in the direction of greater human solidarity. However, faithful to his Deweyan anti-Platonism as antiessentialism, he stresses that solidarity must not be "thought of as recognition of a core self, the human essence, in all human beings" (Rorty 1989, 192).

"a merely human nontranscending philosophy" (ibid., 388). Throughout *Love's Knowledge*, Nussbaum insists on the idea that literature ought to play "a part in our search for truth" and that, moreover, "the right way for literary discourse to be philosophical is to be more, not less, in love with truth" (ibid., 228). In contrast to Rorty's radical rejection of the concept of truth and of the correspondence theory of truth, Nussbaum holds on to a modified understanding of truth.

On Rorty's account, Nussbaum refuses to accept fully the necessity, or desirability, of a transition from philosophy to literature. She uses novels to strengthen her philosophical arguments. To her mind, both poetry and philosophy have something to do with truth, but the poets are capable of offering a different kind of truth (instead of helping us to break radically with Platonism, representationalism, and authoritarianism).[7] Rorty writes in this context: "On her view poetry and philosophy are both truth-seeking activities, and the truths they find help us answer some of the same questions" (Rorty 2010, 398). Nussbaum, as Rorty reads her, wants more than a plurality of perspectives, descriptions, and self-descriptions that call attention to the contingency of our moral vocabulary. Still under the influence of the quest for certainty (to use Dewey's term), Nussbaum never questions the idea of a (Aristotelian) moral philosophy, but rather strives to enhance it by adding the poet's truth.

Rorty's critique of Nussbaum helps one to further grasp his notion of a poeticized culture. This kind of culture is supposed to illustrate the full implications of the idea that the search for God was replaced by the striving for truth and that the latter has finally been replaced by the search for novelty, by an emphasis on the power of the imagination, and by the recognition that redemption can be found only in human creations and artifacts, not in the escape from the temporal to the eternal or transcendental. Preparing the ground for the establishment of this kind of postmetaphysical and anti-authoritarian culture, Rorty underscores that he holds that literary criticism is not a cognitive activity and is not a form of knowledge. Rather, his pragmatist literary criticism centers on terms such as redescription, self-creation, sentimental education, hope, inspiration, and the avoidance of cruelty and egotism. Particularly as regards the question about the task of literary criticism, Rorty radically rejects any attempt to make the intellect sovereign over the imagination. It is with his romantic and humanist version of literary criticism that his critique of the endeavor to give priority to the intellect over the imagination begins. This critique would later shape his cultural criticism.[8]

Anti-Authoritarianism and the Novel

The posthumous publication of Rorty's *Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism* (2021) illuminated how thought-provoking the idea that pragmatism will contribute to a Second Enlightenment is. In his "Foreword: Achieving the Enlightenment" to Rorty's volume and in *Pragmatism and Idealism: Rorty and Hegel on Reason and Representation* (2022), Robert Brandom underscores how important the work of his *Doktorvater* is in this context.[9] According to Brandom, the Rortyan notion of anti-authoritarianism is central to the idea of a pragmatist enlightenment. Brandom writes:

> The theme of *Pragmatism as Anti-authoritarianism* is that pragmatism should be understood as defined by its commitment to bringing about a *second* Enlightenment. Its task is to broaden the anti-authoritarian lesson of the first Enlightenment beyond the practical sphere, applying it to the theoretical sphere. It is to be applied not only to ethics and politics, but to epistemology. (Brandom 2021, x)

The idea of a pragmatist enlightenment should be of primary concern in any discussion that seeks to clarify the significance of pragmatism in the twenty-first centu-

[7] For stimulating discussions of Nussbaum's literary ethics, see Diamond 1998, Harpham 2006, and Stow 2007.

[8] In this context, see Koopman 2013.

[9] See also Brandom 2000.

ry. For four decades, from the 1970s until his death in 2007, Rorty demonstrated how his combination of anti-authoritarianism and Darwinism enabled him to tell his antifoundationalist and antirepresentationalist story of progress and emancipation. The later Rorty's anti-authoritarianism is central to his version of pragmatism as humanism.[10] Brandom comments on the development of Rorty's thought thus: "During the last decade of his life Rorty formulated a new line of attack: seeing anti-representationalism in semantics as a version of pragmatist anti-*authoritarianism*. This more overtly political line both drew on and, in an important sense, brought to a logical conclusion the evolution of his thought in the intervening decades" (Brandom 2022, 10-11).

If one is capable of appreciating the implications of Rorty's proposal that "[w]e have no duties to anything nonhuman" (Rorty 1998a, 127), then one is in a better position to grasp the multilayered complexity of his brand of pragmatism. In most of his texts, Rorty teaches the same lessons: there is no nonhuman authority whose commands human beings have to obey (neither the Will of God, the Intrinsic Nature of Reality, the notion of an Objective Reality, nor the Truth). There is no such thing as human answerability to something nonhuman. Furthermore, we should radically question the gesture of a convergence to the antecedently real, true, or pure. Instead of questing for the certainty, reliability, solidity, transhistoricity, immutability, or purity of something that would be more than another human creation or invention, humans should finally appreciate that they have no duties to anything nonhuman, that their norms for beliefs and actions are solely their doing and responsibility, that normative statuses thus are ultimately social statuses, and that they should strive to reach a point where they no longer experience the desire to humble themselves before a nonhuman authority. Rorty's anti-authoritarianism as part of his humanism teaches us that there is nothing to be responsible to except ourselves and that our self-understanding and self-description should no longer be intimately linked to the idea of human nature or essence, but should rather be constructed around a relation to a particular collection of human beings. In other words, Rorty's anti-authoritarian and humanist thought is directed against the picture of a common nature that is oriented toward correspondence to reality as it is in itself, and it insists that we have to start from where we are (without metaphysical crutches) and that we moreover must work by our own lights.

Radically demetaphysicizing the world, Rorty's anti-authoritarianism suggests that instead of losing themselves in theoretical abstractions, philosophers should focus on the practices of real live humans who are engaged in causal interactions with the environment. Rorty's texts are governed by the endeavor to call attention to the significance of making, creating, inventing, poeticizing, dreaming up, or imagining; that is, his emphasis on *poiesis*, imagination, and creativity seeks to convince his readers that they ought to develop a new understanding of intellectual progress. According to Rorty, we ought to switch from the authoritarian Cartesian-Kantian picture of intellectual progress, which is dominated by the correspondence theory of truth and the notion of an increasingly better fit between mind and world, to a Darwinian picture. The latter would help us reject the alleged necessity of arriving at some goal nature has set for us, it would aid us in grasping that we no longer need the nonlocal and noncontingent rightness or the noncausal condition of possibility with which religion and traditional philosophy provided us, and, above all, it would let us see intellectual progress as an increasing ability to shape the tools that are needed for the species' survival and permanent transformation. Rortyan anti-authoritarianism constantly stresses humans' creativity and their desire for novelty: new vocabularies, new metaphors, new tools, new logical spaces, and new practices. As we have seen, Rorty's anti-authoritarian and antirepresentation-

[10] For a detailed discussion of Rorty's humanism, see Visnovsky 2020.

alist story of progress culminates in his idea of a literary or poeticized culture, whose members, as postmetaphysicians, concentrate on the contingent plurality of acts of *poiesis*, who understand Nietzsche's lesson that once God and his view go, there is just us and our idiosyncratic and ethnocentric view, and who have stopped to ask for noncausal, nonempirical, and nonhistorical conditions and thus for a human language that corresponds to some nonhuman, eternal entity.

By showing that the only possibility human beings have of getting beyond their current practices is dreaming up and creating better practices, a Rortyan poeticized culture makes clear that the notions of "answering" and "representing" are still governed by the image of the relation between humans and nonhuman entities that can be termed authoritarian; that is, an image of human beings as subject to a judgment of an authority that would trump the consensus and free exchange of justifications of other humans. In this new anti-authoritarian and postmetaphysical culture, we would finally be capable of realizing the full implications of the attempt to give up world-directedness and rational answerability to the world. Moreover, by grasping that the hope for a noncontingent, nonhistorial, and powerful ally is the common core of Platonism, most religions and their notion of divine omnipotence, as well as Kantian moral philosophy, Rortyan postmetaphysicians would be in a position to continue the secularism of the Enlightenment by underscoring that human beings are on their own and have no supernatural light that guides them to the Truth or the Real. When pragmatists interpret the quest for certainty as an attempt to escape from the world of praxis, they simultaneously argue that there is no such thing as ultimate justification; that is, justification before God, Reason, or timeless moral imperatives, but only men and women's attempts to justify their beliefs and actions to a finite human audience in a historical world. On Rorty's account, the process of de-divinization or demetaphysicization "would, ideally, culminate in our no longer being able to see any use for the notion that finite, mortal, contingently existing human beings might derive the meanings of their lives from anything except other finite, mortal, contingently existing human beings" (Rorty 1989, 45).

Rorty's pragmatist humanism is an anti-authoritarian philosophy of human freedom and social justice that proposes that progress is possible without reliance on a nonhuman power and that moreover suggests that talk about humans' responsibility to Truth, Nature, or Reason must be replaced with talk about their responsibility to their fellow human beings. In Rorty's opinion, for humans, there is no duty that would supersede their duty to cooperate with one another in order to reach free consensus, to replace force with persuasion in the public sphere, and to make room for the Nietzschean and Proustian idea that the unpredictable contingency of self-creation can take the place once occupied by obedience in the private sphere. In Rorty studies, clarifying the connection between Rorty's anti-authoritarianism and his appreciation of the task of the novel still is a desideratum.

Concerning Rorty's understanding of the novel, it is crucial to note to what degree he had been influenced by the work of the Franco-Czech novelist and essayist Milan Kundera. The latter's *The Art of the Novel* (2000) plays a particularly significant role in this context. However, there are also some passages in, for instance, *Testaments Betrayed* (2001) that confirm the influence Kundera had on Rorty's approach to novelistic questions. It is Kundera's contention that the European novel "teaches the reader to be curious about others and to try to comprehend truths that differ from his own," and that it moreover demonstrates that "uncertainty is the ground of man's very existence" (Kundera 2001, 8, 22). In a central passage, Kundera makes clear that what he terms humor governs the novel and that it urges its readers to confront moral ambiguity, relativity, and the lack of certainty: "Humor: the divine flash that reveals the world in its moral ambiguity and man in his profound incompetence to judge others; humor: the intoxicating relativity

of human things; the strange pleasure that comes of the certainty that there is no certainty" (ibid., 32). In *The Art of the Novel*, Kundera, in a manner that most presumably delighted Rorty, opposes what he terms "the spirit of the novel" to the singularity of Truth; that is, the Platonist yearning for a transcultural and transhistorical Truth: "The world of one single Truth and the relative, ambiguous world of the novel are molded of entirely different substances. Totalitarian Truth excludes relativity, doubt, questioning; it can never accommodate what I would call the *spirit of the novel*" (Kundera 2003, 14). Moreover, Kundera stresses that the novel, with its plurality of perspectives, its ambivalences and ironies, is incompatible with ideological and theoretical closure. He writes of the novel that "it does not by nature serve ideological certitudes, it contradicts them. Like Penelope, it undoes each night the tapestry that the theologians, philosophers, and learned men have woven the day before" (ibid., 160).

In his reading of Kundera's *The Art of the Novel*, Rorty pays particular attention to the notion of plurality. To Rorty, Kundera's essay is crucial since it is useful in the attempt to bring postmetaphysics, plurality, and morality together. Rorty describes Kundera's anti-Platonist emphasis on a plurality of perspectives, descriptions, and redescriptions as follows:

> The novelist's substitute for the appearance-reality distinction is a display of diversity of viewpoints, a plurality of descriptions of the same events. What the novelist finds especially comic is the attempt to privilege one of these descriptions, to take it as an excuse for ignoring all the others. What he finds most heroic is not the ability sternly to reject all descriptions save one, but rather the ability to move back and forth between them. (Rorty 1991b, 74)

Kundera, as Rorty understands him, makes the term "the novel" "roughly synonymous with the 'democratic utopia' – with an imaginary future society in which nobody dreams of thinking that God, or the Truth, or the Nature of Things, is on their side" (ibid., 75). What this boils down to is that Rorty reads the Franco-Czech novelist as someone who also realizes the possibility, and the necessity, of developing a postmetaphysical culture. Rorty speaks of "Kundera's utopia," which is "carnevalesque, Dickensian, a crowd of eccentrics rejoicing in each other's idiosyncrasies" (ibid.). Kundera, it seems, strengthens Rorty's idea of the necessity of developing a literary or poeticized culture; and he is also important for Rorty's argument that the novel is the ideal medium for what he calls sentimental education, since it draws attention to the possibility of introducing an antifoundationalist and antiessentialist understanding of morality and moral progress.[11]

Concerning the relationship between anti-authoritarianism and the novel, it is of the utmost importance to see that Rorty avers that the novel does not offer what in "Philosophy as a Transitional Genre" he calls "redemptive truth." He highlights the fact that this idea of "redemptive truth" is incompatible with an anti-authoritarian and postmetaphysical culture. It is the kind of truth that philosophy has traditionally hoped to offer; a truth that provides one with a firm set of beliefs. Once one is in possession of those beliefs, one would no longer see the necessity of imaginatively reflecting on what to do with oneself; that is, one would no longer desire new kinds of self-description and redescription. "Redemptive truth," in other words, would fulfill the philosophical need "to fit everything – every thing, person, event, idea, and poem – into a single context, a context that will somehow reveal itself as natural, destined, and unique" (Rorty 2004, 7). To believe in redemptive truth, if one follows Rorty, is to believe in "something that is the reality behind the appearance, the one true description of what is going on, the final secret" (ibid.). Redemptive truth, governed by a "desire for completeness," would produce "maximal clarity and maximal coherence" (Rorty 2010, 392, 391).

Rorty not only holds that the novel does not offer redemptive truth. He also thinks that it critiques the notion that there is only one context that would matter for purposes of shaping humans' lives; only one context, that is,

[11] Rorty's ignores the darker aspects of Kundera's analysis of the novel. They become obvious in Kundera 2007.

in which those lives appear as they really are. In Rorty's view, novels depict human attempts to meet human needs, they are about concrete cases of particular people being insensitive to or even ignoring the suffering of other particular people in specific historical circumstances. Hence, they (indirectly) contribute to the critique of the alleged necessity of acknowledging the power of a nonhuman being that is what it is apart from human needs and desires. The novel expands our sense of solidarity and of the diversity and variety of human life, and it strengthens the notions of historicity, particularity, and contingency. Novels can be useful when we seek to balance our needs against those who are unlike ourselves, whose values differ profoundly from ours, and whose actions we thought we would never understand or be able to justify. As we have seen, Rorty is of the opinion that the novel has contributed enormously to the attempt to replace religion and philosophy with literature, since it has helped young intellectuals grasp that one might enlarge one's self by becoming acquainted with other ways of being human and that this imaginative and creative enlargement of self is preferable to the idea that the subject should strive to be adequate to the demands and imperatives of a nonhuman, noncontingent authority. Rorty states that the "great virtue of the literary culture that is gradually coming into being is that it tells young intellectuals that the only source of redemption is the human imagination, and that this fact should occasion pride rather than despair" (Rorty 2004, 13).

"Accuracy of representation" is characteristic of realistic, mimetic art and literature. In *Contingency*, Rorty maintains that there is no place for this in an anti-authoritarian, literary culture. In a Deweyan manner, he formulates as follows: "Literary art, the nonstandard, nonpredictable use of words, cannot, indeed, be gauged in terms of accuracy of representation. For such accuracy is a matter of conformity to convention, and the point of writing well is precisely to break the crust of convention" (Rorty 1989, 167). Furthermore, Rorty underscores that the main lesson Proust's *Recherche* teaches him "is that novels are a safer medium than theory for expressing one's recognition of the relativity and contingency of authority figures. For novels are usually about people – things which are, unlike general ideas and final vocabularies, quite evidently time-bound, embedded in a web of contingencies" (ibid., 107). In order to further grasp the link between Rortyan anti-authoritarianism and the novel, one should bring Rorty's fascination with the Proustian (and Nietzschean) emphasis on contingency, historicity, finitude, particularity, plurality, and perspective together with Rorty's following suggestion in *Philosophy as Poetry*: "If we have a plausible narrative of how we became what we are, and why we use the words we do as we do, we have all we need in the way of self-understanding" (Rorty 2016, 40).[12] From Rorty's anti-authoritarian standpoint, novelists are very important for cultures because they tell stories that help us appreciate who we are and "how we became what we are," and who those are that are utterly unlike us. A Rortyan pragmatist story of progress and emancipation has to rely on novelists, since their tales are more complex, unpredictable, and exciting than the stories humans usually tell each other. From what we have discussed thus far, it should be obvious that Rorty instrumentalizes the novel primarily for moral purposes. He almost completely ignores aesthetic questions. This has far-reaching consequences for his literary criticism.

Anti-Authoritarianism and Form

Pragmatist aesthetics has never offered a thought-provoking or stimulating conception of form. This is deplorable. The significance of aesthetic form preoccupied crit-

[12] In "Texts and Lumps," Rorty writes: "There is no synoptic view of culture which is more than a narrative account of how various cultures managed to get to where they now are. All of us who want big broad pictures are contributing to such an account. If we could see ourselves *as* doing that, then we would worry less about having general principles which justify our procedures. Pragmatism declines to provide us with such principles, and it offers some suggestions about what a culture might be like in which we did *not* think this" (Rorty 1991a, 92).

ics and theorists throughout the twentieth century, and there has been a revival of interest in form in the past two decades.[13] By contrast, for most pragmatist aestheticians form means abstraction, formal analysis is synonymous with the rigidity of method, and a focus on form-content dialectics too easily degenerates into another version of the scheme-content distinction. There is always the danger that the abstraction of form transforms problems that have their origin in experience and the contingent practical world, the problems of men and women in the Deweyan sense, into purely formal issues. Moreover, form does not signify particularity, plurality, and idiosyncrasy; rather, it is ahistorical and acontextual, without connection to the particulars it seeks to govern. Behind this, it seems, is the Aristotelian idea that form is immutable and permanent. Refusing to reconcile the world of pure reason with the concrete order of experience, form transcends life and descends from without upon material. Form is the general and universal, it categorizes and, moreover, strives to separate purely intellectual studies from the pragmatic and from action. One should also see that most pragmatists and pragmatist aestheticians would advance the idea that form is static, immutable, and necessary and hence directly opposed to the empirical world that is governed by contingency and the unpredictability of humans' actions. What this boils down to is that form belongs to a world of thought that is completely removed from the world of experience and ordinary life.

Most pragmatist aestheticians will be inclined to assert that the form-content dualism in aesthetics confirms the pernicious subject-object dichotomy and is diametrically opposed to the Deweyan notion of continuity. Form and formal analysis as strict method reinforce the distinction between knowing and doing and thus the prestige of the theoretical over the practical. Form is central to what Dewey termed the quest for certainty, since it helps one to grasp that only the systematic discipline of philosophy, employing reason and logical form, can apprehend the absolute, noumenal, transcendent, or ultimate reality. In other words, a concentration on form is of the utmost importance if one intends to demonstrate that only the realm governed by philosophy is marked by a superior dignity, since only philosophy is capable of going beyond the ordinary, empirical, and phenomenal world of everyday experience. As Dewey pointedly puts it in *The Quest for Certainty*: "In form, the quest for absolute certainty has reached its goal" (Dewey 1988, 16). Form, as pure thought, offers a higher knowledge.

It should be clear from what I have argued thus far that pragmatists hold that aesthetic form is a metaphysical concept that will not find its place within a pragmatist framework. Because of the intimate connection between form, transcendence, and the desire for the certainty, reliability, firmness, immutability, transhistoricity, and purity of what would be more than another human invention or creation, pragmatists think that the use of this concept would inevitably lead to many undesired consequences. By contrast, form plays an important role in what is still the most thought-provoking text in pragmatist aesthetics, Dewey's *Art as Experience.* At the same time, however, one has to see that while his naturalist aesthetics has gained in importance in the past two or three decades, particularly after the aberrations of poststructuralism and postmodernism, his understanding of aesthetic form is highly problematic. *Art as Experience*, which was published in 1934, is not a theory of aesthetic modernism or the avant-garde. Dewey's text does not try to explain the multilayered complexity of artworks by, for instance, Flaubert, Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Kafka, Eliot, Picasso, Kandinsky, or Schönberg. Instead of illuminating this often hermetic and formally complex modernism, Dewey intends to make clear why one can speak of a continuity between ordinary, everyday experience and "intensified forms of experience that are works of art" (Dewey 2008a, 9).

Regarding Dewey's understanding of aesthetic form,

[13] Concerning this revival of interest in aesthetic form, see Hale 2020, Leighton 2007, Levine 2015, and Wolfson and Brown 2006.

one of the most important passages can be found near the end of *Experience and Nature*, where he avers: "'Forms' are not the peculiar property or creation of the esthetic and artistic; they are characters in virtue of which anything meets the requirements of an enjoyable perception. 'Art' does not create the forms; it is their selection and organization in such ways as to enhance, prolong and purify the perceptual experience" (Dewey 2008b, 292). Do Dewey's suggestions that forms "are not the peculiar property or creation of the esthetic and artistic" and that art "does not create the forms" offer the possibility of approaching the complexity of modernism from Flaubert to Joyce and Picasso or from aestheticism to the historical avant-garde (surrealism, dadaism, futurism, and constructivism)? Or is modern art and literature the limit, as it were, of Dewey's naturalist aesthetics?[14]

As far as the form-content dialectics of the work of art is concerned, Dewey clearly reduces the significance of form (which should also be regarded as a gesture directed against the formalism of the New Critics and some analytic philosophers). This becomes obvious, for instance, in the chapter "The Common Substance of the Arts" in *Art as Experience*. Dewey goes very far when he avers: "Apart from some special interest, every product of art is matter and matter only, so that the contrast is not between matter and form but between matter relatively unformed and matter adequately formed" (Dewey 2008a, 195). Further below he formulates even more pointedly: "'Stuff' is everything, and form a name for certain aspects of the matter when attention goes primarily to these aspects" (ibid., 195). Throughout *Art as Experience*, Dewey places a stress on the notions of wholeness, organicity, union, coherence, balance, and harmony. In a manner that reminds one of idealist aesthetics, he maintains: "The *form* of the whole is therefore present in every member" (ibid., 62). Moreover, he advances the idea that "[m]utual adaptation of parts to one another in constituting a whole is the relation which, formally speaking, characterizes a work of art" (ibid., 140). It is crucial to understand that Dewey does not see the necessity of historicizing his concept of aesthetic form. Rather, it is one of his primary concerns to make clear that one should not regard aesthetic form as a transcendent term, that is, as something that descends "from without": "Is 'beauty' another name for form descending from without, as a transcendent essence, upon material, or is it a name for the esthetic quality that appears whenever *material is formed* in a way that renders it adequately expressive?" (ibid., 112).

A discussion of the Deweyan conception of form offers one the possibility of bringing together his critique of traditional epistemology in *The Quest for Certainty* with his analysis of the function of art in *Art as Experience*. Dewey's antidualism calls attention to how problematic it is to identify form with the rational and intelligible and matter with the irrational, unpredictable, and contingent. His anti-Platonism, and anti-Kantianism, radically critiques this metaphysical understanding of the form-content dialectics. There is no room in Dewey's thought for the notion that form has a dignity and necessity that matter or content lacks. In the chapter "Substance and Form," he contends:

> Moreover, since things are rendered knowable by these forms, it was concluded that form is the rational, the intelligible, element in the objects and events of the world. Then it was set over against "matter," the latter being the irrational, the inherently chaotic and fluctuating, stuff upon which form was impressed. It was as eternal as the latter was shifting. This metaphysical distinction of matter and form was embodied in the philosophy that ruled European thought for centuries. Because of this fact it still affects the esthetic philosophy of form in relation to matter. It is the source of the bias in favor of their separation, especially when that takes the shape of assuming that form has a dignity and stability lacking to matter. (ibid., 120-21)

For our purposes, it is crucial to note that both Dewey and Rorty tell their anti-authoritarian and antirepresentationalist stories of progress without granting significance to

[14] On Dewey's aesthetics, see Eldridge 2010, Hildebrand 2008, Jacob 2018, and Stroud 2011. The most thought-provoking interpretation is still Shusterman 2000.

the modern conception of aesthetic form. While Dewey at least saw the necessity of discussing the question of form within his pragmatist framework, Rorty clearly has no use for the notion of aesthetic form. As we have seen, the latter's contention is that pragmatist literary critics should concentrate on highlighting the moral task of the novel and that this does not necessitate an analysis of aesthetic form. Rorty proposes that one must not regard the aesthetic as a "matter of form and language," but rather as being governed by "content and life." In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, he puts this as follows:

> This idea that somehow language can be separated from authors, that literary technique is a godlike power operating independently of mortal contingencies, and in particular from the author's contingent notion of what goodness is, is the root of "aestheticism" in the bad sense of the term, the sense in which the aesthetic is a matter of form and language rather than of content and life. (Rorty 1989, 166-67)[15]

Why does Rorty speak of "the disastrous Kantian distinction between form and content" (Rorty 1989, 168n)? In his opinion, most literary and cultural critics refuse to ignore the question of form. He holds that this refusal confirms that professional literary critics and scholars, using abstract categories such as form and narrative technique, too often assume that their task has something to do with knowledge. By contrast, Rorty's notion of a literary or poeticized culture stands for the pragmatist move against theory and toward narrative. Literary and aesthetic theory that insists that literary criticism and aesthetics are forms of knowledge that can elucidate the real structure and meaning of a text or an artwork belongs to an old way of speaking. Theorists claim that one has to step back from the literary text and analyze it by means of conceptual tools, and this would eventually allow one to penetrate the text's depth. The direction of this process is vertical (like that of the metaphysician's perspective).

It has been argued in this essay that Rorty is convinced that humans do not need theoretical abstraction, formal analysis, and transhistorical moral principles. Rather, as malleable human beings in a historical and contingent world they need sentimental education and storytelling. They certainly do no need aesthetic theory. Underscoring his "scepticism about 'aesthetics' as a field of inquiry," he makes clear that he is "not sure that we need an aesthetic theory, or an aesthetic programme, at all. I doubt that there is much to be said about what unites painting, literature, music, sex and birdwatching while distinguishing all these from science, morals, politics, philosophy and religion" (Rorty 2001, 156). Rorty's aversion to method plays a central role here. In his critique of Sidney Hook in "Pragmatism without Method," Rorty advises his readers to try to "fulfill the mission of the syncretic and holistic side of pragmatism – the side that tries to see human beings doing much the same sort of problem-solving across the whole spectrum of their activities (*already* doing it and so not needing to be urged to start doing it)" (Rorty 1991a, 76). Radically rejecting the use-interpretation distinction, he maintains that "all anybody ever does with anything is use it" (Rorty 1999, 134). As pragmatist literary critics, we do not need aesthetic theory or a rigorous method with predictable results. Rather, we can be shamelessly unmethodical.[16] Rorty describes unmethodical literary criticism thus:

> Unmethodical criticism of the sort which one occasionally wants to call "inspired" is the result of an encounter with an author, character, plot, stanza, line or archaic torso which has made a difference to the critic's conception of who she is, what she is good for, what she wants to do with herself: an encounter which has rearranged her priorities and purposes. (Rorty 1999, 145)

In what most literary scholars would consider an unspeakably frivolous gesture, Rorty advances the idea that read-

[15] In this context, see Shusterman 2019.

[16] Interesting discussions of twentieth-century literary theory and criticism are Cunningham 2002, Elliott and Attridge 2011, and North 2017.

ing texts "is a matter of reading them in the light of other texts, people, obsessions, bits of information, or what have you, and then seeing what happens" (ibid., 144).[17]

Rorty repeatedly mentions in his texts that he has no problem with the idea that we simply hammer the text we analyze into the shape that we need for our specific purpose. Undoubtedly, this is not exactly the way of approaching literary analysis that is taught in grad schools. Rorty was influenced by the Bloomian notion of "strong misreading." In one of his most important early pieces, "Nineteenth-Century Idealism and Twentieth-Century Textualism," Rorty explains this notion as follows:

> The critic asks neither the author nor the text about their intentions but simply beats the text into a shape which will serve his own purpose. He makes the text refer to whatever is relevant to that purpose. He does this by imposing a vocabulary […] on the text which may have nothing to do with any vocabulary used in the text or by its author, and seeing what happens. (Rorty 1982, 151)

There is, of course, a line that connects the Bloomian idea of a strong misreading with what Dr. Charles Kinbote does with John Shade's poem in Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962). Kinbote is one of the most radical and fascinating strong misreaders ever invented. Most presumably, this is one of the reasons why *Pale Fire* was one of Rorty's favorite novels.[18]

In an important passage, Rorty argues that pragmatism "is the philosophical counterpart of literary modernism, the kind of literature which prides itself on its autonomy and novelty rather than its truthfulness to experience or its discovery of pre-existing significance" (ibid., 153). I think he is right in advancing this idea. In contrast to Rorty, however, I would maintain that the idea of pragmatism presenting itself as "the philosophical counterpart of literary modernism" necessitates an interest in the practice of form-giving and hence a refusal to consign aesthetic theory to the dustbin of history. Particularly pragmatist literary critics should appreciate what aesthetic theory has to offer. It can explain the significance of poetic agency and the role of form-giving for a pragmatist humanism. This also signifies that aesthetic theory adds to the pragmatist's understanding of the development from finding to making and to his or her endeavor to grasp the role of poetic agency and form-giving for the anti-authoritarian story of progress and emancipation. Theory here should not be understood as a definition of necessary and sufficient conditions, or as defining rules and universal, necessary, and eternal principles in an abstract manner.[19] I think that pragmatist humanists could use aesthetic theory pragmatically; that is, by recognizing that pragmatist aesthetics has certain limitations, they could become interested in attempts at mediation with other approaches. An interest in aesthetics could show them that their toolbox needs additional tools. A more complex notion of aesthetic form, as I have argued, would offer them new possibilities of approaching modern and avant-garde art and of grasping the significance of poetic agency. For pragmatist literary critics and aestheticians, one of the most stimulating ways of confronting the task of reorganizing and refunctioning their tools is by establishing a dialogue with other versions of literary criticism and aesthetics. One only has to think of what Adorno's late *Ästhetische Theorie* (1970) has to offer in this context, particularly as far as the social nature or register of aesthetic form is concerned.[20]

When Rorty's brand of literary criticism and Dewey's naturalist aesthetics do not offer the possibility of regarding the practice of form-giving, as poetic agency, as an anti-authoritarian gesture, then pragmatist literary criticism and aesthetics have a serious problem. Both Dewey and Rorty refuse to see that in modernism, the idiosyncrasy and particularity of form-giving often

[17] In this context, see also Rorty 2002.
[18] In this context, see Rorty 1992.
[19] A good overview of theory's development in the twentieth century can be found in Birns 2010.
[20] See, for instance, the chapter "'Kunst hat soviel Chance wie die Form': Theodor W. Adorno and the Idea of a Poeticized Culture" in Schulenberg 2019, 69-95.

defy aesthetic norms and standards; that is, form often is associated with nonorganicity, fragmentation, and dissonance. Form-giving urges one to confront the dialectics of wholeness (or unity) and fragment (or difference). Moreover, in modernism, the act of form-giving problematizes the link between unity, meaning, and totality. New forms offer new perspectives, new constellations and relations, new symmetries and dissonances, and a new appreciation of harmony and fragmentation or linearity and nonlinearity. Form-giving is a creative practice that expands our imagination and hence may provoke new vocabularies; the novelty of forming draws attention to the indefinite expansibility of the human imagination. Like the imagination, form-giving keeps proposing new candidates for belief, new things to desire, or it may reinforce the wish to begin practical work from a radically new position and perspective. What this boils down to is that the radical nature of new forms can undermine or criticize traditional authorities in society and politics. They have the potential to urge the artwork's recipients to change their ways of thinking and of approaching social questions, and eventually to question their wish to subordinate themselves to something larger and nonhuman. Form-giving is an anti-authoritarian and humanist practice whose analysis seems more promising than the instrumentalization of the novel for moral purposes, the idea of offering a strong misreading, or the suggestion that one ought to focus on literature's "inspirational value."[21]

According to Rorty, it is an important feature of literature "that one can achieve success by introducing a quite new genre of poem or novel or critical essay *without* argument. It succeeds simply by its success, not because there are good reasons why poems or novels or essays should be written in the new way rather the old" (Rorty 1982, 142). From what I have argued in this essay, it should be clear that in my view Rorty's suggestion that a new literary genre "succeeds simply by its success" is highly problematic. This is one of the many passages where he completely ignores the question of aesthetic form. The fact that he refrains from discussing aesthetic questions severely weakens his version of literary criticism. Pragmatist aestheticians and literary critics need more than Rorty has to offer.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have discussed three aspects of Rorty's pragmatist version of literary criticism. First, I have endeavored to elucidate what he means by sentimental education and how he establishes a firm link between the novel and morality or moral progress. Second, I have discussed the question of why the novel is important for Rorty's anti-authoritarianism. Finally, I have illuminated the significance of aesthetic form when one intends to consider pragmatist literary criticism within a broader anti-authoritarian framework. I have advanced the argument that it is problematic that Rorty's literary criticism does not offer the possibility of regarding the practice of form-giving, the idiosyncrasy, particularity, and contingency of the act of forming, as an anti-authoritarian gesture. In the confrontation with modern or avant-garde artworks, pragmatist literary critics need more than his instrumentalization of the novel for moral purposes has to offer.

Rorty states that pragmatists "hope to fill out the self-image sketched by the Romantic poets and partially filled in by Nietzsche and James" (Rorty 2021, 191). The Western novel is of great significance in this context. Rorty associates the attempt to abolish the idea that there is something nonhuman that has authority over humans with the notion of a decidedly more beautiful future. In the preface to *Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism*, he formulates thus: "In the last two centuries, it has become possible to describe the human situation not by describing our relation to something ineffably different from ourselves, but by drawing a contrast between our ugly past

[21] See "The Inspirational Value of Great Works of Literature" in Rorty 1998b, 125-40.

and present and the more beautiful future in which our descendants may live" (ibid., xxix). Highlighting the centrality of "the project of fashioning institutions and customs which will make human life, finite and mortal life, more beautiful" (ibid.), Rorty proposes that it is literature, primarily the nineteenth- and twentieth-century novel, which expands our imagination, forces us to experience doubts about ourselves, and which eventually transforms us into a better sort of person by changing our sense of what matters most. As we have seen, even though it does not really add something new to the liberal humanist tradition that runs from Leavis and Trilling to Nussbaum, this is a valuable suggestion. However, I have argued that a pragmatist literary criticism that operates within an anti-authoritarian framework needs more. If it desires to approach the formal and narratological complexity of modern and avant-garde works of art, it should refrain from radically rejecting aesthetic theory. It is time for pragmatist literary criticism and aesthetics to become interested in the anti-authoritarian potential of aesthetic form.

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Book reviews

REVIEW: *WOMEN IN PRAGMATISM: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE*

Women in Pragmatism: Past, Present and Future. Eds. Núria Sara Miras Boronat and Michela Bella. Springer, 2022.

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This book combines historical and experiential accounts of the beginnings of feminist pragmatism by the very women who started it, including Marilyn Fischer, Susan Petrilli, and Charlene Haddock Seigfried, with the work of newer generations. The book is a testament to the past, present, and future of pragmatist feminist studies that not only looks to retrieve the names of women in the field but also acknowledges the significance of their proposals. In other words, the book does not aim to identify women pragmatists merely for being women but because their work is important for the history of thought. There is an honest belief that in missing the reflections of pragmatist feminists on their own experiences, we miss a meaningful perspective on life that is important for its own sake and has the power to address old and new problems and to create new outlooks.

For this reason, this book may be of interest to a wide range of readers: For those who look to expand the tradition of pragmatism; for pragmatists who are interested in exploring ways in which pragmatism could be enriched through new experiences; and also for those who love to see how philosophy, in this case, pragmatism, can inform, influence and bring about new experiences for hope in a better world. In short, it may interest those who want to see pragmatism in down-to-earth fashion, including its interwoven interdisciplinary relationships.

The first two chapters of the book go back to the roots and history of feminist pragmatist studies. In the first chapter, Barbara J. Lowe and Marilyn Fischer introduce the antecedents of the pragmatist feminist movement in the United States, particularly in the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy (SAAP). This chapter highlights the importance of cooperative intelligence in the flourishing of the feminist pragmatist movement. While mainstream philosophical practice, individual efforts were the rule, the experience of the pragmatist feminist encouraged and embraced collective and collaborative efforts to open avenues to make their voices heard and valued during the hostile times of the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Lowe's and Fisher's accounts are valuable not only for their detail but also because they narrate their own reflective experience of how they lived this time of history in feminist and pragmatist philosophy in making explicit many of the biases normalized in the past. Their experiences were kindled not only by a growing interest in feminism but also by the generous and vibrant conversations among different disciplines in a very pragmatic tone. They show us that what feminist theory has to say is valuable because of this common effort, and perhaps more importantly, for its communal and caring practices aimed at flourishing for all.

Lowe and Fisher also analyze the tasks and challenges ahead of us. Inclusion remains a difficulty in the profession of philosophy. Not only are feminism and pragmatism still considered marginal fields of interest but philosophy in general has low rates of graduation and inclusion of minorities in the professional context. This panoramic account of the history and experience of pragmatist feminism makes an effort to connect the professional history of the field with social, political, and personal efforts for flourishing.

In the second chapter, Charlene Haddock Seigfried develops themes from the first. She reflects on the prehistory, both personal and academic, of her groundbreaking 1996 book on feminist pragmatism, *Pragmatism and Feminism*. According to her, "pragmatism needed feminism to realize its own potential and (...) feminism needed to recognize the contributions of American pragmatists to recover its own academic and activist roots"

(p. 15). For her, it was also important to show that if pragmatist theory were to begin with experience, and if there were women close to the pragmatism movement, these women should also have reflected and theorized on their own experiences. Therefore, there should have been some pragmatist feminism. She also reveals that pragmatism has historically been an interdisciplinary philosophy of the borders. This is evidenced by the fact that pragmatism in all of its versions has been interested in experience. However, it also reveals how blind history has been to acknowledging the pragmatist vein in authors like Jane Addams.

In a detailed manner, she recaps the hindrances and transitions. Her exhaustive examination shows how the importance of making feminism culturally visible is not only crucial to improving women's situation in society but also to generate a common search for "friendly philosophical methods" (p. 21).

A very interesting aspect of her analysis is how she describes the transitioning narrative on feminist pragmatism. While early and transitioning feminist pragmatist accounts will point to the affinities between some feminists and pragmatism, post-transitioning accounts of feminist pragmatism will need to recognize feminist pragmatism as a narrative of its own with the capacity for changing and influencing philosophical and historical narratives. Toward this end, she emphasizes the importance of Jane Addams and her influence on pragmatism, particularly the works of John Dewey. Ironically, Dewey has always been recognized as one of the fathers of pragmatism, while Addams was mostly recognized as a cultural thinker, social worker, and pacifist, limiting the influence of her philosophical thought. Throughout her career, Seigfried has drawn attention to Addams' philosophical theory, and her final statement is a evidence of Addams' original pragmatist philosophy, with which Dewey not only felt a kinship but from which he was willing to learn.

Several chapters of the book use pragmatic theoretical tools to illuminate important problems. In her chapter "Toward a Pragmatist and Feminist Theory of Oppression: Thoughts on Class, Gender, and Race," Núria Miras Boronat reflects on how the concept of oppression arose as an important epistemological tool for raising awareness of the habits and subtle norms of mainstream society aimed at perpetuating discrimination against marginalized communities. She tries to explain why these habits were also perpetuated in mainstream pragmatist philosophy. Although affinities among pragmatist women and men scholars were evident, the oppressive experience of women did not reach the reflections of mainstream political pragmatic theory. Following this idea, Miras Boronat reconstructs the pragmatist feminist theory of oppression, on how it "originated," and is "maintained and resisted" (p. 29). She emphasizes the methods and forms of reasoning that Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, W.E.B. DuBois, Jessie Taft, Anna Julia Cooper and Christine Ladd-Franklin used in enriching the pragmatist tradition and the theory of oppression.

Jane Addams' social experimentalism and conception of social vulnerability founded a method for producing social knowledge, with an attitude that was neither paternalistic nor naive. She promoted the acquisition of social and political agency. She applied innovative methods, not only in the use of social cartography to graphically show factors influencing social vulnerability, but also already recognizing intersectional factors that influence these vulnerabilities, such as gender, race, and class. Moreover, she studied prostitution as an exemplar of her overall approach to social illnesses; she did not focus on it as an individual problem but as a social and collective issue that has to be faced collectively.

Núria Sara Miras Boronat exhibits a deep knowledge of the authors she analyzes, not limiting her study to the more theoretical or philosophical texts, but also attending to their various literary expressions. Accordingly, she explores, for instance, the theoretical value of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's poems and fictional pieces for grounding her feminist stance and social theory. She addresses

issues such as the institution of marriage as an exchange of sex for economic stability, and prostitution as a related issue that exposes how the dehumanization of women has not only hindered the possibilities of our literary narratives (limiting women interest to stereotypical subjects like cooking and fashion) but also the possibility of "human amelioration" in general. Finally, Anna Julia Cooper and W.E.B. DuBois provide significant insights on the psychological aspects and repercussions of racism and sexism with concepts such as DuBois' "double consciousness" and Cooper's groundbreaking reflections on the intersectionality of gender and race and her common acknowledgment with Addams of the need for sympathetic knowledge.

With her analysis and account of Victoria Welby's theoretical development, in "On Sense, Meaning, and Responsibility: Victoria Welby's Significs," Petrilli aims to establish her as the founding mother of modern semiotics. Welby's approach to meaning argues against the reification of meaning as the essence of signs and the idea of language as a mere instrument of communication. In contrast, she values vagueness, polysemy, and metaphors as fundamental aspects of meaning that have an important influence on our conduct and our aesthetic appreciation of life. Meaning, according to this, is signifying behavior (p. 46), and language is a synonym for inquiry into otherness.

Thus, Petrilli recuperates Lady Welby's theory of significs or today's semioethics as a field of knowledge that explores the relationship between meaning (or interpretation) and its implications for human behavior. Part of Welby's original work addresses the philosophy of the "Man in the Street," to which her coinage of the term "significs" makes reference, and focuses on the operative pragmatic, ethical, and aesthetic value of meaning.

In exploring Welby's epistolic exchanges, Petrilli testifies to Welby's work as a proof of community work that did not renounce being both critical of and amicable toward the growth of knowledge, while highlighting concepts, such as translation and dialogical interrelation, that show the broad scope and applicability of her theory. Her theory was not limited to verbal behavior and aspired to see what is different as an opportunity to explore the richness and polyphony of experience. In this sense, Welby's project points to an education for a responsible life free of dogmatism and aware of the ideologies and values underneath the way we signify. Petrilli ends her essay by showing all the possibilities of encounter, development, and enrichment that this theory has with other more well-known theories of meaning and communication oriented toward humanism.

Zoe Hurley's chapter, "Feminist Pragmatist Salvaging of Victoria Welby's Theory of 'Ident'," explores Welby's theory of ident by showing how abstract theoretical concepts can engage in vital matters. In this case, she explores how the theory of ident is also related to the "woman question". Welby's theory of subjectivity is based on the idea that an I or Ident is in dialogue with a self, in which the ident is a matrix-of-selves that is not only open to one self but also to others. As a result, subjectivity is strongly grounded in otherness, in contrast to the nominalist perspective of the individual, i.e. individualism, broadly debated within pragmatism. Moreover, this conception of subjectivity is related to the conceptual tool of "feminist pragmatist salvaging", which aims to battle the invisibility of women in the category of "mankind."

"Mother sense" is another concept coined by Welby around 1890 that, according to Hurley, refers to "the intuitive, emotional, and empathetic capacity of human reasoning" present in men and women (p. 56). It is based on this idea that Welby configures her concept of ident as interconnected and dependent on a plurality of factors, such as social, political, and personal relations. Hurley affirms that this conception of a complex and discursive subjectivity is not essentialist and can work as the foundation of a non-essentialist reading of gender. In sum, she claims that the Welbian ident is an important philosophical tool for reflexive pragmatist theorizing of which we are very much in need, and brings to the fore "a global philosophy of connection, care, and empathy" (p. 62).

Llanos Navarro's "Where Are Ethical Properties? Predication, Location, and Category Mistake" introduces a critical review of expressivism and representationalism. While representationalism maintains that ethical claims can be located in place and time, expressivism affirms that ethical claims are expressions of the speaker's state. Navarro's main thesis is that the placement problem is a pseudoproblem based on the pragmatism of María José Frápolli, particularly based on her notion of organic intuition, according to which "to be a proposition is to have propositional properties." Navarro explains Frápolli's eight types of propositional properties or content to show that propositions do not need to be about physical objects but may also address ethics. In other words, Navarro wants to establish that from Frápolli's inferentialist and pragmatic perspective we can ascertain that ethical predicates are meaningful from a logical point of view, if they are also understood as higher order predicables referred to functions of concepts. More interestingly, Navarro explores some of the consequences of this new outlook.

Michela Bella's article, "Unconventional Legacy in American Psychology of Self: William James and Mary Whiton Calkins," revives Mary Whiton Calkins' and William James' humanistic model of psychology. Although James' model is connected with "the great problems of life", it was deemed as unscientific in the field of psychology, given psychology's tendency to value analytic and experimental data as more than reflexive analysis. Against many odds, Mary Whiton Calkins pioneered personality theory in the United States, further developing James' humanistic model. Calkins established three important points in her theory: "First, the methodological primacy of introspection, and the supplementary role of experimental methods (against reductionist psychological theories that biologized psychology). Secondly, her understanding of the self as relational (against the pre-eminence given either to intellectual or sensation elements in consciousness), and finally her Jamesian-sympathetic philosophical understanding of psychology." (p. 72). These points evidence her commitment to a humanistic model of psychology.

Calkins envisioned her psychology as an alternative position that harmonizes the methods and types of psychological analysis provided by structuralism and functionalism, along with Watson's behaviorism, which she considered a type of functionalism. James also shared this harmonizing intention and methodological pluralism. She did experiment on psychological phenomena, but never thought that this experimentation could exhaust consciousness; both James and Calkins thought there was a moral importance and ground in psychology from the perspective of ameliorating human lives. Beyond these kinships, there are points of separation, but, most importantly, developments of her own, such as her examination of the personal sense of the relational side of the experience that still influence the psychological conception of personality. The idea of personality can suffer from a limited understanding if detached from the humanistic conception of psychology shared and developed by James and Calkins as presented by Bella.

Christine Ladd-Franklin forged a name in the development of logic with her contributions. Paloma Pérez-Ilzarbe explores her work in "Christine Ladd and the Form of Syllogisms," analysing the influence that pragmatism, and most particularly, Peirce's idea of logic had on Ladd-Franklin's thought and the connections and developments she advanced in this field. To illustrate Ladd-Franklin's importance, Pérez-Ilzarbe analyses how she overcame the traditional Aristotelian-Scholastic syllogistic logic by proposing a new form of symbolization that prescinded from the relation between subject and predicate by privileging symmetrical copulas and the "rejection of the inferential perspective" providing a new synthetic form of representation and validation of syllogisms by just one simple rule instead of many, according to the type of syllogism, that is, the antilogism. Pérez-Ilzarbe highlights both Ladd-Franklin's originality and her continuity with Peirce's perspective on logic. Both thinkers thought of logic as a

tool for the analysis of thinking that should be graphic and iconic and that, in her case, allows us to see the form of all valid syllogisms through the antilogism. This also reveals, according to Ladd-Franklin, from a philosophical point of view, that rebuttal rather than concluding is a more primitive form of reasoning—an idea that could open a new way to understand logic or some aspects of it.

In the chapter "Reason, Truth, and Counterexample," A.C. Spivey begin a defense of usability as a trumping value, based on Helen Longino's idea that scientific practices are social in nature and, therefore, value-laden. Values, according to this perspective, affect how we look for evidence and how we evaluate it. Spivey frame their value of usability on Hilary Putnam's theory of truth based on rational acceptability as a way to make flexible the criteria to accept scientific discoveries that allow for their constant evaluation concerning the best evidence.

Facts, theories, and values are related; not only do values affect the way we see facts, but also facts affect the way we value and can change our values. This helps to improve the convergence between our theories and the external world; however, there is never perfect convergence, nor one truth only, but many. Rational acceptability opposes the god's eye assumption that there could be a definitive list of criteria to accept what is or is not true. In particular, to Spivey, counterexamples are not a sufficient criterion to abandon a theory.

Spivey want to make a plea for usability as an important value for truth, that we can find in Jane Addams' perspective as well as in feminist moral philosophers and philosophers of law, for whom a theory that does not help us in grasping and understanding life and the world in general is rather limited, to say the least. To Spivey, usability can trump other values when a theory fails to provide a fully accurate explanation of facts. As a result, a theory can stand if it meets the value and criteria of usability despite the presence of counterexamples.

It would be useful to approach this proposal from a probabilistic perspective, since it would, in my view, corroborate the value of usability but also provide more detail on how this idea is used and can be used in scientific research.

Wellan's proposal shares with Spivey the idea of accepting scientific practice as a social practice since she values perspectivism in attunement with pragmatic views that assume that knowledge is situated in a time and a cultural context, and is permeated by them. In the chapter "Pragmatism and Scientific Perspectivism," Wellan accepts the existence of a commonality between perspectivism and pragmatism and explores how a more relativistic version of pragmatism, defended by James, and a more objectivistic version of pragmatism, traditionally associated with Peirce, can be related to versions of perspectivism. To this aim, Wellan analyses Ronald Giere's and Michela Masimi's perspectivist proposals.

Giere presupposes a unique world that is commonly shared but that can be differently, although not contradictorily, perceived, as in the case of a dichromat and a trichromat observer. This idea can be applied, according to Giere, to the different results we get from processing data on the same object but with different instruments, and the use of representational models to explain some aspects of the world, which differ following the purpose of the scientist. Giere proposes a thoroughgoing perspectivism in which a complete and correct description of the world is not possible (p. 126). There is no objective truth; at most, an intersubjective truth, which we can check in constructivism with sociology and history. Massimi, on the other hand, defends perspectival realism's endorsement of the idea that a theory aspires to truth. This can be so insofar as it corresponds to the "states of affairs in the world" (p. 127), since the world is also mind-independent. In this case, Massimi wants to establish scientific progress and a perspectivist notion of truth as key ideas of perspectival realism.

In this context, for a theory to be true, it needs perspectival sensitivity, different from perspective relativity, and performance adequacy. In other words, it needs to

work according to its purpose and be assessed across theories. If the theory not only works in the context under which it was conceived but can also be useful and validated in other contexts and theories, this is an indicator of its claim of truthfulness or "getting things right." In her case, for instance, cross-validation suggests that natural kinds are real and not merely perspective-dependent.

Welland considers Giere's proposal in relation to James's pragmatism since the latter also maintains that the search for truth is mostly "instrumental human discoveries"; accordingly, there is no absolute truth but there are relative and partial truths. For Welland, both Giere and James agree that there are no mind-independent natural kinds. On the other hand, Welland focuses on Peirce's difference from James in highlighting his idea of "convergence at the end of inquiry" (p. 131), grounded on the existence of a mind-independent reality. Welland claims that in comparing and contrasting these positions can help to provide a better theoretical ground for the possibilities and limits of perspectivism and pragmatic theories of truth.

In "Individuality to Personhood in Dewey's Later Works" Teresa Roversi throws light on Dewey's unfinished task of building a social theory of personhood. She reconstructs a Deweyian theory of personhood based on Dewey's later works, specifically based on his work "Things and Persons," as a concept different from the self and the individual with philosophical potential and implications for feminist thought. Roversi characterizes the individual as the particular behavior or habits built from our natural capacities engaged with the environment, the persona as the connections of these habits to our socio-cultural roles in a community, and the self as a mediator between the habits that spring from our natural characteristics and our particular way to embody them and our socio-cultural habits exhibited through our mind and language. Roversi highlights the affinities between such definitions and feminism to postulate their potential to criticize oppressive social structures. Person is an embodied and, therefore, situated concept, following the importance of habits in its formation. As a result, personhood is a social practice instead of an abstract entity or lifeless fact. According to the author, assuming this perspective allows us to rethink the social and political status of minorities to whom full social and political recognition has not been given, despite the important roles they play in social communities. This lack of recognition is guided by the idea that what they do should be deemed private or instinctual work with no public and political relevance.

Charlie Brousseau explore the pros and cons of objectivity versus feminist standpoint theories in their chapter "Experiences, Objectivity, and Collective Action in Feminism: A Pragmatist Analysis." In their opinion, while standpoint theories acknowledge the political and social context in which theories are rooted, which is important if one expects to change the conditions of life through theory, objective knowledge is still necessary to share a common ground to implement such initiatives. If we side entirely with standpoint theory, particularities and subjectivity would be prevalent, and we would fall into epistemological relativism, in which no common ground of experience could be reached. On the other hand, if we accept objectivity uncontested, experiences could be standardized or homogenized. Brousseau find in Dewey's conception of experience a middle ground, where the standpoint is understood as based on common problems and strategies for solution, more than on an idea of identity. Along the way, they reconceptualize identity using Marion Young's concept of series, according to which a group is a construction produced by the awareness of common problems and shared goals. In this way, individual experiences are not a subjective starting point for knowledge and action, but the final test of particular knowledge that provides objectivity and commonality to problems and possible solutions. Here, they highlight that particular experiences are never totally subjective, since they are interpreted through shared matrices of experience. As a result, Brousseau provide

promising pathways to overcome problems raised by the feminist standpoint epistemology through pragmatism, aiming for a common goal: the possibility of illuminating and empowering our practices through theories.

Pragmatism is usually linked to human progress; this much is true. However, Agnieszka Hensoldt explains, in her chapter "Looking for Feminist Pragmatist Roots of Degrowth Ideas: Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Caroline Bartlett Crane," that progress does not necessarily have to be understood as implying economic and industrial growth. According to the author, we can easily track different ways to understand progress in attunement with ecofeminism in the voices of three pragmatist women: Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Caroline Bartlett Crane. This also explains why ecofeminism originated among women linked to the Department of Sociology of Chicago and Hull House, led by Addams. According to Addams, industrialization and migration demanded a new social morality instead of an individual morality. This idea took form in her conception of democracy understood as a social ethic, aimed at the development of the capacities of its members and a common share in its culture and its economic wealth. However, capitalism –as embodied by 19th century industrialization–created huge social inequalities; and philanthropy, which decided who and how wealth distribution should be provided in a vertical and patriarchal way, both hindered the pathway of democracy, and excluded marginalized people from "active participation in common life" (p. 242).

Gilman similarly criticizes American culture for being oppressive to people and destructive of nature through her works *Herland* and *With Her in Ourland*. In these works, she also denounces the intricate relationship between capitalism and patriarchy, both of which display values around the drive to master and foment the survival of the fittest. Opposite to this, Herland, Gilman deemed, was more in tune with nature in acknowledging the interconnectedness of life and the importance of cooperation. Finally, Caroline Barlett Crane shared Gilman's perspectives on the importance of public space and the care of nature. She was mainly interested in problems of public sanitation and social justice. Her conception of progress was democratic, with public access to natural resources, unpolluted air, beautiful environments, water, and food.

In these three thinkers, we can see the feminist pragmatist roots of the degrowth theory, particularly in their ideas on social, environmental, and climate justice. They stated their conception of progress following ideas of anticonsumerism, social justice, peaceful coexistence between human and non-human animals, communal life and responsibilities, which imply a change in human values opposite to the logic of individualism, domination, and oppression of human beings and nature as promulgated by today's savage capitalism.

To conclude, Hensoldt suggests that these thinkers are not only forerunners of these ideas but that they can also help us in changing our imaginaries of domination towards a more harmonic way of life with our environment.

Lastly, for those interested in approaches that show pragmatism in action and how it informs concrete practices, I would suggest the chapters by Dina Mendonça, "Foundations of Philosophy for Children, Reasonableness, and the Education of Thinking;" Maura Striano, "The Educational Value of 'Mental Non-resistance' and 'Understanding' in Fostering Intellectual and Social Life: A Lesson fom Jane Addams;" Laura Camas Garrido, "Bringing the Origins of Playgrounds into the Current Educational Debate: Jane Addams and the Kitchens of Socializing Democracy;" Àger Pérez Casanovas, "Maxine Greene: Teaching Philosophy in Aesthetic Environments;" Ann Warde, "Instigators of Experimental Artwork: Resonances of Jane Addams in Arts Education;" and Pauline Lefebvre, "The Introduction of Pragmatism in Architecture (1990–2010)—The Role of Women and the Fate of Feminism."

Mendonça's article aims to clarify the notion of reasonableness, a key concept of Philosophy for Children (P4C), but very much under dispute due to its vagueness and generality. To this end, Mendonça recovers

the pragmatic tradition on which it (P4C) was conceived and puts it into conversation with some core concepts of feminism, which, according to her, can provide more clarity. The first two concepts that she puts into conversation are the feminist concept of situatedness and the pragmatist concept of pluralism. Mendonça claims that acknowledging situatedness is an important aspect of critical thinking as well as Dewey's plurality, since in the absence of plurality, there is no other way to tackle biased thinking, to acknowledge privilege, and to address the dynamics of power. In other words, plural voices are fundamental for fallibilism. Other key ideas that resonate between both traditions are the importance of emotions and their education for reasonableness; moreover, from Peirce she recovers the idea of the community of inquiry in underscoring that reasonableness is always a communal and intersubjective experience instead of a private or individual one, that is improved through reflexivity and self-correction. Reasonableness, as a consequence, is a pluralist, communal, intersubjective, reflexive, self-correcting ability that has to be sensitive to the context and should inform P4C practices, as her examples illustrate.

In her proposal, Maura Striano aims to overcome Addams's traditional view as a mere caring and activist figure to bring to the fore the epistemological and practical value of her thought, in connection with her motto: action is "the only medium man has for receiving and appropriating truth" and the "sole medium of expression for ethics." Striano successfully shows how Addams' concept of mental non-resistance inspired Dewey's thought and established the connection and continuity among a situated epistemology, a normative ethic, and a political stance. Mental non-resistance is understood as a willingness to let down one's guard with prejudices and conventions to listen to other people's stories. Here, Addams is depicted as an original thinker greatly sensitive to the problems of her age but also open to the opportunities of amelioration. Hull House is acknowledged as the social experiment in which all these connections were lived and enriched, and where democracy was experienced as a human faith and an ideal, all of which makes Addams' thought much more original and alluring.

Camas Garrido's text walks us through the life and social context of Jane Addams and the problems she saw in industrialized cities, such as Chicago, where society and government did not take responsibility for guaranteeing places of healthy leisure for their people. Addams considered that this approach was fundamental for a healthy society. Parallel with this lack of public responsibility, new forms of leisure arose, permeated by the interests of the market. In this way, the hedonistic life was promoted by industry, while there was no place for the cultivation of imagination. Children and young people were left with no care and adult supervision while working at the factories, and gangs appeared as a social institution where they could learn to exchange acts of corruption for protection. All these factors were the cause of a generalized "aesthetic insensibility." We all share a human playful impulse, according to Addams, that has to be channeled for developing imagination and virtuous forms of organized leisure to enrich spiritual life and imagination as a virtue for democracy. Play is the scenery in which differences are overcome and comradeship is built with a sense of cooperation and justice through sympathetic knowledge.

In reconstructing the metaphor of the settlement and the playground as sociological laboratories, Camas Garrido proposes another image that is more in tune with Addams' project, "the kitchens of democracy". The playground and the settlement were spaces that allowed for continuity between the public and private spheres, which also enabled women to face public life and work. Industrialization liberated the domestic sphere of women, and Addams made an effort to liberate women by bridging the gap between both spheres of action. Finally, Camas Garrido proposes a new way to read our reality through Addams' theory in the defense of play as educative in the context of industrial life, parallel with what we face today with digital play spaces. The author claims

that they take the form of the commercial leisure analyzed by Addams, and challenges us to question if there could be new ways to establish a more caring, safe, and democratic way to use these digital spaces.

Àger Pérez Casanovas' chapter "Maxine Greene: Teaching Philosophy in Aesthetic Environments" recovers the importance of Maxine Greene's idea of aesthetic education and its impact on the teaching praxis. Greene was a contemporary pragmatist for whom education was key, and despite the current attempts to keep women's thought visible, she has also been overlooked. Greene was a Jewish woman profoundly impacted by Sartre's philosophy understood as the "development of a fundamental project" of life. She defended education for democracy and Dewey's conception of philosophy as the general theory of education in which this is conceived as "the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow-men." She also developed Dewey's concept of aesthetics as an experience that provides formative opportunities to liberate imagination, create awareness, and enable plurality--an important value for democracy. Pérez Casanovas interweaves different milestones in Greene's life with the evolution of her thinking, from the concepts of autonomy to relationality and the conception of aesthetic education as a situated experience that puts ourselves in caring relation to others. This idea is also informed by Pérez Casanovas' own experience as a teacher, which brings in an inspirational approach to Greene's theory.

In her essay, "Instigators of Experimental Artwork: Resonances of Jane Addams in Arts Education," Warde explores how the experimental work of Phoebe Harvey James, in teaching music and making music for children throughout the United States's school system, incarnated the idea of progressive education theorized, exercised, and promoted by Jane Addams and John Dewey. James's work is a clear exemplar of pragmatism, mainly due to its focus on child-centered activities and participatory methods of active learning. Moreover, given the close relationship and collaborative work between James and her nephew, John Cage, Warde claims that this analysis could also be extended to explain the link that other scholars have found between John Cage's works as an artist and pragmatism.

Following a deeper analysis, Warde explores some essential ideas from Addams and Dewey, which show their influence on James's approach and evidence how her work furthers pragmatist ideals of democracy and inclusion. From Addams, the author underscores her critical, insightful, and active collegiate discussion and activities with Dewey and George Herbert Mead around Hull House, where constant experimentation took place to make democracy and its promise of "equal access to economic and social resources" real. Warde recovers Dewey's idea of philosophy and education for democracy as a way to facilitate the constant adjustments needed to embrace plurality through experimentation. Dewey claims that to learn something, you have to do something with things, that is, you have to purposefully participate in the events to learn how to meet ends. According to Warde, this type of participation and experimentation is present, for example, in James's proposal of reconstructing the sounds and attitudes of animals. Children observe, participate, and recreate in a unique way the activities and behaviors of these animals and incarnate the theory of rhythm. The development and channeling of the play impulse and imagination are key to Addams, as we have seen in previous chapters, and Warde focuses on the integrating force of game and artistic expressions among children as well as on its capacity to engender the expression of identity and character. Warde's detailed description of how James structured her music, and how its apparent incompleteness left a place for self-expression and creativity, shows these intricate connections. Warde understands James's and Cage's music as a "carrier of pragmatism" that, against all odds and the sidelinedness of pragmatism during the 20th century, survived throughout the culture of the United States.

Finally, Pauline Lefebvre develops how the incursion of pragmatism influenced the debate in architecture around the critical and postcritical tradition, in her chapter "The Introduction of Pragmatism in Architecture (1990–2010)—The Role of Women and the Fate of Feminism." Joan Ockman was the first scholar to introduce pragmatism into this debate, however, its reception was problematic, since it was used to articulate the postcritical stance without a real connection to the pragmatic tradition. Lefebvre aims to recover Ockman's original initiative, which addressed two main problems: the role of theory in architecture, which was so predominant that it made them forget that architecture should focus on use and experience, and the political stance of architects against the logic of capitalism. Up to this point, according to Ockman, architects were left without tools to resist this logic, and pragmatism could offer such tools. Moreover, Lefebvre wants to underscore the role of Joan Ockman and Gwendolyn Wright in introducing pragmatism to architectural theory and, through them, "the fate of feminism" (p. 215). On the one hand, Ockman's efforts to include pragmatism in the discussion mostly aimed to make architecture a socially engaged practice, aware of its social consequences following the "evolutionary, organic and democratic" traits she found in pragmatism (p. 218).

On the other hand, although Wright was mainly interested in finding heirs of pragmatism in architectural proposals, characterized by their social and environmental commitments, and practices of participation and inclusion, she also indicated how pragmatism's attention to the social and the political could develop a natural relationship with the theories on feminism and architecture, despite its general rejection in the academic context. This idea was later welcomed by scholars as Mary McLeod and Sherry Ahrentzen, and nowadays enjoys a more favorable context for its acceptance, thanks to the work of these authors, in changing the practical and political approach to theories in architecture.

In this collection of essays, readers will find a wide range of interests and perspectives situated in the knowledge of women conversing with past, present and future problems pragmatic feminist fashion. This promises to broaden our horizon of thought beyond cultural, administrative and academic boundaries, to offer new creative possibilities for growth in pragmatist philosophy and its borderlands. Moreover, the vitality of this tradition, its breadth, and usability, as stated by Aubrey C. Spivey in her article, attest to its compelling aspiration for comprehensive and pluralistic ideas of truth and democracy.

REVIEW: ANDREJ DÉMUTH: *ANGER AS A/MORAL EMOTION*

Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2024, 219 pages.

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While anger is a common emotion present in every person's life, it is generally deemed by many as something unnatural, unhealthy, and undesirable. Very few people would look someone externally demonstrating anger and conclude that their behavior is reasonable. In his book *Anger as a/moral emotion*, Andrej Démuth argues that anger is misunderstood and thus needs further research. "Despite the "omnipresence" of anger, it is striking how little of the philosophical tradition focuses on the study of anger"[1], Démuth states, and therefore delves into the study of anger to explore its dual nature, to examine whether it serves as a moral response to injustice or an amoral, self-serving reaction.

From Aristotle to neuroscience: the many faces of anger

"If anger bothers us and destroys our lives, we have no choice but to try to understand it, because only then can we control it"[2]. To grasp this prevailing emotion, an interdisciplinary approach is taken, drawing from philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and cultural studies. This decision is informed by the recognition that interpretations vary across disciplines, as each field is grounded in unique premises and analyzed through differing perspectives. Pursuing an interdisciplinary path serves several purposes, primarily the potential achievement of a more holistic understanding that eliminates the oversimplification of the topic's complexity. The author's approach also challenges the prevalent binary conceptualization of anger, based on which it can only be understood in two extremes, simply 'good' or 'bad', but nothing in between. Rather, the book positions anger within its broader context to underscore its moral and psychological relevance. It is also noteworthy that Démuth highlights cultural variations, pointing out that the perception of anger is not objective and universal but shaped by cultural values.

The opening chapter presents definitions of anger from different disciplines and various sources, such as the American Psychological Association, Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Bible, and more. Démuth also quotes, among others, works of Flanagan[3] and van Manen[4] to interpret other scholars' understanding and contribution to the study of anger. Dedicated subchapters address the study of this topic and provide several philosophical perspectives, mentioning Aristotle's advocacy for *virtuous anger*[5], Buddhist and Stoic views, along with examples from modern psychology. The author's study would not be complete without an overview of the history of research into anger, from ancient Greek philosophy (with major contributions from Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics), through anger's moral categorization within medieval Christian theology as one of the seven deadly sins, its representation within Shakespearean drama (e.g., *Titus Andronicus, Othello*), modern psychology (e.g., Paul Ekman), and neuroscientific interpretations. To lay the groundwork for further exploration, several methodological approaches are presented with four key perspectives: first-person - focusing on the subjectivity of anger and individual experience, second-person – anger seen in social contexts, third-person – anger examined through a scientific and objective lens, and interdisciplinary perspectives – combined approaches to create a holistic view.

[1] Andrej Démuth, *Anger as a/moral emotion* (Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2024), 19.
[2] Démuth, *Anger*, 25.

[3] Prominent American philosopher known for his work in the philosophy of mind, ethics, and moral psychology.
[4] Canadian scholar specializing in phenomenological research methods and pedagogy. He is known for his work concerning the phenomenological study of lived experience, which can also be applied to anger.
[5] Anger to the right degree - aimed at the right person, at the right time, for the right reasons. For a deeper analysis read Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

A few thoughts highlighted

Considering that Démuth's work presents a selection of commentaries and interpretations on different views of anger, this review adopts a selective approach rather than providing a chapter-by-chapter analysis. A full recapitulation is intentionally avoided, allowing the reader to discover the work in its entirety.

While each chapter contributes to a larger conversation about anger's nature and role, a few stand out as particularly essential to the book's central themes. A portion of the book critically examines the role of anger within social relationships and its placement within a moral framework. This analysis is particularly significant, as it directly engages with the central question the text seeks to address, whether anger is inherently moral or amoral.

> Anger, like madness, cannot be controlled; it forgets decency, disregards human relationships, obsessively and fervently engages in what it started, is impervious to reason and advice, is provoked by trivial stimuli, is incapable of discerning what is right and true, resembles a collapsing house that falls apart over what is has collapsed upon[6].

Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Roman Stoic philosopher, describes anger as an irrational, unhealthy, and purely destructive emotion[7]. Démuth discusses the Stoic perspective; while he acknowledges the Stoic pursuit of mental peace, he raises thought-provoking questions: Is anger always a failure of self-control, or can it be morally virtuous? Does anger inevitably lead to further harm, or can it also be a justifiable response to injustice? This chapter stands out because it does not offer a simple answer; instead of condemning or defending anger, it explores its complexity based on different contexts.

Another section studies anger from literary and artistic perspectives, exploring how it is represented across different cultural traditions. Starting with visual art and various examples of anger as a destructive force, as a weakness, or as an expression of self-centeredness, through its literary representation in Shakespeare's works, contrasting anger as a sign of femininity as opposed to its cold masculine version, this chapter is with no doubt an unexpected addition to the book. While the rest of the volume focuses on anger from a more practical standpoint, drawing from real-life examples and experiences, here, the author takes a surprisingly insightful detour that adds significant depth to the book and allows the reader to experience anger through narratives and artistic expressions. It is often said that artists see the world differently than the rest of the world, and bearing that in mind, the displayed artistic illustrations of anger inevitably compel readers to view it from points of view they might not have considered before. The author encapsulates the importance of art and its far-reaching impact, stating, "It can motivate us to take action against injustice, to protect the oppressed, and to save the world from self-destruction"[8].

A particularly sharp critique of anger emerges in a section that examines its egocentric and impulsive nature. Whereas in other parts of the book the author tends to highlight the morality of anger, as if trying to defend it from the common judgment it gets, this view is balanced out with a more negative perspective in one of the latest chapters. Is anger inherently self-centered? Does it always resolve conflicts or does it sometimes, on the contrary, escalate them even more? In addition, a rather remarkable point is made by examining the societal role of anger; Démuth draws attention to its prevalence in today's era and studies anger's dominance in social and political discourse.

> The ability to be angry, along with the unpleasantness, intensity and urgency of this feeling, compelled me to think. To think about what both-

[6] Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *O hněvu*, in *O duševním klidu*, ed. L.A. Seneca (Prague: Odeon, 1999), 13,24, quoted in Andrej Démuth, *Anger as a/moral emotion*, 77 (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2024).
[7] For a deeper analysis read Seneca's *De Ira* (On Anger).
[8] Andrej Démuth, „Anger and Art (Cabanel's Fallen Angel and Shakespeare's Tamora), "chap. 7 in *Anger as a/moral emotion* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2024), 125.

> ers me, why I feel what I feel, how to avoid it in the future, how to better manage myself and my emotions. I'm not claiming that I have learned it all or that I understand the world and myself to any great extent. But I was able to experience something and learn about myself after all[9].

In the foreword, the author reveals his subjective experience with this intensive emotion, and one of the last sections of the book, titled *Anger and Forgiveness*, encourages the readers to reflect on their own experiences as well. Inspired by Martha C. Nussbaum[10], this chapter offers an intellectually stimulating discussion by its engagement with the debate between anger and forgiveness. This raises a fundamental question: Is anger a necessary instrument of moral engagement, or should it be replaced by forgiveness and reasoned reflection? The question to think about is whether letting go is always the better path to take. The acknowledgement that forgiveness has both appeal and limitations is what makes this chapter especially noteworthy. Anger is a deep emotion that often resists easy solutions.

Strengths and limitations

One of the book's greatest strengths lies in its broad, interdisciplinary framework. Démuth successfully integrates perspectives from philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, sociology, literature, and cultural studies to create a holistic analysis. Rather than isolating anger within a single academic tradition, he connects ancient wisdom with modern research, making the study both historically rich and scientifically grounded. Unlike some scholars who refuse to look at anger as a destructive force and consider it a necessary tool for achieving justice, or the ones whose opinions are on the opposite side of this spectrum, the author does not take an extreme position on this matter. Readers who are expecting to find a straightforward answer to the question the title of the book suggests, whether anger is a moral or amoral phenomenon, will end up either surprised or even fascinated by the time they finish reading. The complexity of anger requires judgment that is not black-and-white but one that navigates between perspectives. This allows the readers to contemplate, and to think critically about the function and consequences of anger in different contexts.

An initial concern, that the author puts an overemphasis on Western philosophical traditions, slowly vanishes throughout the book, as he starts touching upon Buddhist and Eastern perspectives more frequently. Since anger is a culturally shaped emotion, a much broader study would be needed to fully explore all the other alternatives.

One factor that could be considered as a limitation is the book's practical application for anger management. However, with Démuth's statement that "the presented book is not a detailed manual on how to handle anger, how to regulate it or possibly completely avoid it"[11], this aspect cannot be criticized, as it was never meant to be the purpose of his research. Nevertheless, a case study discussing real-life scenarios or a chapter on practical anger regulation would potentially help translate theory into practice.

"Why should I read it?"

The discussion of anger is highly relevant in today's world, particularly in the context of political polarization, with frequent protests and digital activism.

> We are living in an era where the expression of anger is almost fashionable. We see mass movements protesting against sexual harassment, racial discrimination, social or economic oppression, rights related to sexual orientation, political views, environmental burden, national or religious oppression, and more[12].

[9] Démuth, *Anger*, 11.
[10] American philosopher and scholar who critically examines the concept of anger, questioning its value and rationality in her work *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, Generosity, Justice*.
[11] Démuth, *Anger*, 11.
[12] Andrej Démuth, „Anger as an Egocentris and Amoral Emotion (with a Note from Jessie Prinz)," chap. 9 in *Anger as a/moral emotion* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2024), 150.

The book's relevance to contemporary issues is barely questionable. Rather than treating anger as an abstract concept, the book examines how anger operates in modern society, making it particularly useful for readers interested in ethics, politics, and social behavior. As the book is highly intellectual, engaging with complex philosophical arguments and scientific discussions, it is predominantly aimed at academics, students, and people with prior knowledge in philosophy and psychology. With that said, even readers without specialized knowledge will find valuable and thought-provoking ideas and implications within this book if they are interested in political anger, social justice, and artistic representation.

Anger as a/moral emotion is a timely exploration of one of the most misunderstood emotions. It challenges the reader to reconsider their views on anger, thus creating a captivating and relevant work. The book offers significant insight into how anger shapes the lives of individuals, as well as modern society. Ultimately, this volume is not just about anger but about the human condition – the way one sees anger as a moral compass, a social weapon, a destructive impulse, and so on. This is a text that will likely resonate with readers long after they have finished it, perhaps even compelling them to revisit it from time to time.

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THE INHERENT DIVERGENCE OF THE COMPARISON. FOUCAULT'S AESTHETIC OF EXISTENCE MEETS SHUSTERMAN'S SOMAESTHETICS

"Foucault's Aesthetic of Existence and Shusterman's Somaesthetics." Ethics, Politics and the Art of Living, edited by Valentina Antoniol and Stefano Marino, London; New York; New Delhi; Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. pp. 208.

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Foucault's Aesthetic of Existence and Shusterman's Somaesthetics. Ethics, Politics and the Art of Living continues at Bloomsbury a tradition of books interested in the issues of politics of living and political aesthetics.

In recent decades, scholarly discourse has increasingly sought to bridge the divide between the disciplinary domain of philosophy and the lived realities of everyday experience. The volume under review undertakes a comparative analysis of two such integrative frameworks: Michel Foucault's *aesthetics of existence* and Richard Shusterman's *somaesthetics*. Both frameworks aspire to rearticulate the legacy of ancient philosophical traditions in response to contemporary theoretical and practical challenges. Rather than embracing a nostalgic revival of antiquity's conception of philosophy as a way of life linked to different schools of thought, as formulated by Pierre Hadot, these approaches endeavour to construct novel philosophical systems that interweave classical concepts with diverse intellectual lineages. Each, in its own way, seeks to engage with the present: Foucault through a transcendental mode of inquiry, and Shusterman through a corporeal orientation. The volume's subtitle delineates the three principal dimensions through which these conceptual trajectories unfold: the ethical, the philosophical, and the aesthetic.

Edited by Valentina Antoniol (University of Bari "Aldo Moro") and Stefano Marino (University of Bologna), the volume brings together two scholars whose work engages deeply with the intersections between philosophy and various dimensions of contemporary society. Antoniol, a scholar of political philosophy, has conducted research on the concept of war in the thought of Michel Foucault and Carl Schmitt, and focuses on mechanisms of social control in the context of digital technologies. Marino, whose intellectual orientation aligns with the concerns of cultural studies, demonstrates a wide-ranging engagement with popular culture—exploring figures and phenomena such as Radiohead, Frank Zappa, fashion, and critical theorists including Adorno, Gadamer, and, of course, Richard Shusterman. Despite the diversity of these interests, Marino succeeds in articulating a coherent philosophical perspective that traverses traditional disciplinary boundaries.

The book builds on the assumption that for the two philosophers featured in the title, philosophy is a "way of life" and explores specific implications of this thesis in nine distinct chapters. These chapters deal with the following problems. Phillipe Sabot (University of Lille) signs a chapter on the baudelaire-ian roots of Foucault's notion of the aesthetic of existence. Arianna Sforzini (University of Paris-Est Créteil) asks how the body becomes the site of political aesthetics by jeopardizing traditional ways of subject formation. Daniele Lorenzini (University of Pennsylvania) is interested in the inherent radicalism of the somatic *Askesis*. Martin Jay (University of California, Berkeley) addresses the classical dualism of the lived and objectified body by addressing the possibilities of the body to act as a political arena. Vincent M. Colapietro (Pennsylvania State University) reflects upon the practices of bodily care as essential to ethical self-formation and the constitution of responsive communities. In the sixth chapter, Richard Shusterman (Florida Atlantic University), one of the two philosophers addressed in the title of the book, develops the possibility of dealing with somaesthetics as a program of the philosophical life. The last three chapters address specific experiences through the lenses of the two philosophical traditions. Chris Vo-

paril (Lynn University) reflects upon ethical challenges of whiteness. Barbara Formis (Sorbonne University, Paris) analysis what she calls the "stylistic of reciprocity" (pp. 165.) in the phenomena of aphrodisia, eros and caris. And finally, Leszek Koczanowicz (SWPS University, Poland) attempts a critical ontology of the present by using the concept of somapower (pp. 190.) to understand the recent women's strike in Poland.

As previously noted, one of the chapters in the volume is authored by Richard Shusterman himself—a particularly intriguing aspect from a methodological standpoint. The comparative framework of the volume juxtaposes two philosophical approaches, yet one of these—somaesthetics—is presented not through external interpretation but in the voice of its original proponent. This shift from interpretative to declarative presence introduces a unique dynamic: Shusterman's own contribution functions as both a theoretical articulation and a self-positioning within the comparative dialogue.

Including Shusterman as a contributor is logically consistent; he has extensively engaged with Foucault's thought throughout his work, and his project emerges, in many respects, in critical succession to Foucault's. However, this editorial decision carries important methodological implications. It raises questions about authorial authority, philosophical dialogue, and the role of interpretation in comparative analysis. In this respect, the volume becomes self-reflexive, using its very structure to illuminate the complexities it seeks to explore.

Barbara Formis underscores this tension when she notes, "Indeed, the interpretations of theories are often more restrictive and constraining than the philosophies from which they draw their inspiration" (pp. 166). This observation frames a central issue in the volume: while Foucault's *aesthetics of existence* emphasizes critique and the inherent subversiveness of subjectivation, Shusterman's *somaesthetics* foregrounds amelioration, embodiment, and experiential cultivation. Despite their divergent trajectories, the comparative approach employed throughout the volume reveals points of resonance—particularly in their shared commitment to rethinking the mind/body dualism foundational to Eurocentric philosophical traditions.

Rather than fixating on epistemological or methodological incompatibilities, the essays chart a common ground, building conceptual bridges between postmodern and late modern perspectives on embodiment. In this context, Shusterman's closing remark acquires particular significance: "We certainly need admirable exemplars to guide us in the thought and action of our philosophical lives. Foucault has been a crucial exemplar, indeed a hero, for me and for somaesthetics. But sometimes heroes are better to admire than to follow" (pp. 141). Here, somaesthetics emerges not as a doctrine but as a cultivated attitude—rooted in freedom and admiration, and the philosophical pursuit of embodied transformation.

A transversal reading of the volume reveals two central themes that, while not explicitly foregrounded by the contributors, emerge as conceptually integral to the overarching inquiry. The first concerns the notion of the present and the ways in which philosophy might engage with contemporary conditions. The second revolves around the body and its positioning within the respective philosophical frameworks of Foucault and Shusterman. These two thematic axes—the ontology of the present in Foucault's thought and the theory and practice of the purposive, sentient body in Shusterman's somaesthetics—constitute a shared methodological foundation underpinning the volume's contributions. More to this, they illuminate a key divergence in the aesthetic orientations of the two thinkers: whereas Foucault's approach is rooted in an existential interrogation of temporal situatedness, Shusterman privileges embodied experience as the primary locus for cultivating an existential aesthetics.

Within academic discourse on Michel Foucault, considerable attention has been devoted to the tension between his so-called "transcendental presentism" and his sustained engagement with the past, particularly

through genealogical inquiry. In this volume, Sabot and Lorenzini interrogate the historical dimensions of Foucault's *aesthetics of existence*, emphasizing how such a project is preceded and shaped by practices of *Baudelairean* self-stylization and ancient exercises of *askesis* (pp. 63). This historical perspective is further expanded through contemporary theoretical engagements with issues of agency (Sforzini), whiteness and ethical subjectivity (Voparil), somapower (Koczanowicz), care (Colapietro), reciprocity (Formis), and the body politic (Jay). Such reflections not only trace a discursive genealogy of the present but also foreground a radical and activist potential in Foucault's thought—an aspect often criticized as absent. By re-situating Foucault's project within a broader historical and embodied framework, the contributions in this volume underscore its continued relevance for interrogating structures of power, subject formation, and social transformation in the present. In doing so, they offer a powerful rejoinder to critiques that cast Foucault's work as politically disengaged or merely diagnostic.

Conversely, and in light of this presentist genealogy, the body emerges in the volume as a site of critical rearticulation, particularly through its interrogation in relation to contemporary discourses on corporeality and political embodiment—arguably one of the volume's most significant contributions. The project of sensory perception, from which aesthetics traditionally draws its conceptual impetus, is here reframed by the exigencies of political agency and the recognition of the inherently political nature of *aisthesis*. In this context, concepts such as care and reciprocity acquire renewed urgency, positioning embodied agency as a locus of ethical and civic responsibility.

The collected articles demonstrate how diverse philosophical traditions concerned with the textures of everyday life can meaningfully inform practices of civic engagement, while simultaneously enriching the imaginative horizons of possible life forms. In foregrounding the intersections of aesthetics, ethics, and politics, the volume not only advances scholarly discourse but also gestures toward a transformative vision of philosophy as a practice grounded in lived experience and oriented toward social change.

While there may be a degree of methodological indiscipline in comparing highly asymmetrical philosophical frameworks, the volume testifies to the vitality of philosophical concepts oriented toward the cultivation of *arts of living*. By engaging with both the embodied dimension of experience and the pressing concerns of the present, the volume's contributions demonstrate that philosophy remains a vital exercise in civic responsibility.

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