

## INTRODUCTION

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

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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, re-designing 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 **Kludia 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."