

Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences 14

Núria Sara Miras Boronat  
Michela Bella *Editors*

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# Women in Pragmatism: Past, Present and Future

 Springer

# Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences

Volume 14

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As the historical records prove, women have long been creating original contributions to philosophy. We have valuable writings from female philosophers from Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and a continuous tradition from the Renaissance to today. The history of women philosophers thus stretches back as far as the history of philosophy itself. The presence as well as the absence of women philosophers throughout the course of history parallels the history of philosophy as a whole.

Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt and Simone de Beauvoir, the most famous representatives of this tradition in the twentieth century, did not appear from nowhere. They stand, so to speak, on the shoulders of the female titans who came before them.

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Núria Sara Miras Boronat · Michela Bella  
Editors

# Women in Pragmatism: Past, Present and Future

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# Preface

*Women in Pragmatism: Past, Present, and Future* is the result of many happy coincidences, cooperative endeavors, and conscious efforts to build a more inclusive pragmatist community of inquiry. As is happening in many philosophical traditions, pragmatism is going through a silent but profound revolution. Women and non-binary scholars are demanding a greater openness to issues of social justice, particularly those related to gender and race, organizational changes in order to increase the visibility of minorities in scientific events, and a general reassessment of the conventional understanding of the pragmatist genealogy to allow for a more accurate narrative of its foundation.

The current community of women and non-binary pragmatists started to gain self-awareness in the 1990s when a series of prominent scholars vindicated the contributions of women of the progressive era to Classical American Pragmatism. Mary Jo Deegan in sociology and Charlene Haddock Seigfried in philosophy claimed that Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Mary Whiton Calkins, Elsie Ripley Clapp, Jessie Taft, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Christine Ladd-Franklin, Ella Flagg Young, and many others deserved to be called the “mothers of pragmatism” alongside its already acknowledged “fathers” (usually Charles S. Peirce, William James, John Dewey, Josiah Royce, George Santayana and George Herbert Mead). The family tree of pragmatism would cease to be a “white male pantheon,” to use the expression used by Seigfried in the article “Where Are All the Pragmatist Feminists?” published in *Hypatia* in 1991.

Fortunately, this volume was able to include a preface written by Marilyn Fischer and Barbara Lowe, and a chapter by Charlene Haddock Seigfried, which offer a reconstruction of the formation of this growing pragmatist and feminist community. These scholars have not only been crucial as driving forces of the pragmatist and feminist scholarship; they have also been mentors, colleagues, friends, and practitioners of what Anna Julia Cooper and Jane Addams called “sympathetic understanding,” a distinctive feature of feminist pragmatism.

Most of the chapters were originally presented in the first *Women in Pragmatism International Conference*, hosted by the University of Barcelona, from January 28 to 30, 2020. Besides the Department and the Faculty of Philosophy of the UB,

the conference was sponsored by the Associazione Culturale Pragma (Italy) and Pragmata (France). The conference also had the explicit support of the European Pragmatist Association, the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, the German Pragmatism Network, and the Nordic Pragmatism Network. The *Women in Pragmatism International Conference* was the first of its kind to be hosted in Europe. The aim of the conference was:

to celebrate the past and current work of women researching and advancing philosophy in a pragmatist tradition and highlight their ongoing contributions to specialist academic research as well as public discourse. The conference will also promote mentoring, networking, and sharing good practice between women working on any aspect of the pragmatist tradition, broadly construed.

The scientific committee of the conference comprised leading senior members of the pragmatist and feminist scholarly community, who enthusiastically welcomed the idea to hold the meeting. Their support was crucial in order to obtain funding for the conference, and they also oversaw the scientific content of the papers received. We want to express our deep gratitude to Chiara Ambrosio (University College London, UK), Michela Bella (Université de Nantes, France), Anna Boncompagni (University of California, Irvine, USA), Francesca Bordogna (University of Notre Dame, USA), Mara-Daria Cojocaru (Hochschule für Philosophie München, Germany), Susan Dieleman (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, USA), Roberta Dreon (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italy), Marilyn Fischer (University of Dayton, USA), Federica Gregoratto (University of St. Gallen, Switzerland), Judith Green (Fordham University, USA), Charlene Haddock Seigfried (Purdue University, USA), Ana Honnacker (Forschungsinstitut für Philosophie Hannover, Germany), Agnieszka Hensoldt (University of Opole, Poland), Ángeles Jiménez Perona (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain), Jacquelyn Ann Kegley (California State University, Bakersfield, USA), Cathy Legg (Deakin University, Australia), Rosa Mayorga (Miami Dade College, USA), Núria Sara Miras (Universitat de Barcelona, Spain), Cheryl Misak (University of Toronto, Canada), Eulalia Pérez Sedeño (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Spain), and Shannon Sullivan (University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA). Many thanks also to the organizing committee formed by Marta Campdelacreu (Universitat de Barcelona, Spain), Céline Henne (University of Cambridge, UK), Àger Pérez Casanovas (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain), Hypatia Pétriz Haddad (Universitat de Barcelona, Spain), Bruna Picas (Universitat de Barcelona, Spain), and Andrea Ugalde (Conicyt, Chile/Universitat de Barcelona, Spain) for their valuable help with the organization of the event in Barcelona.

As soon as Prof. Dr. Ruth Hagengruber from the Center for History of Women Philosophers and Scientists at the University of Paderborn received the call for papers, she asked the convenors of the conference to submit a book proposal based on the papers presented at the conference. The book proposal also received very encouraging comments and suggestions from the Springer series editor Prof. Dr. Mary Ellen White, and shortly after the conference, Núria Sara Miras Boronat and Michela Bella were entrusted with the task of editing the present volume: *Women in Pragmatism: Past, Present, and Future*.

The volume is divided into three parts: *Part I. Past: The Recovery of the Classics*; *Part II. Present: Contributions to Current Pragmatist Debates*; *Part III. From the Past to the Future: Interdisciplinary Approaches and Global Challenges*. Each part contains six chapters that bear witness to the richness and vitality of pragmatist feminist scholarship, in all the philosophical disciplines represented in the conference. We have made the editorial decision not to distinguish between disciplines, but rather to look for a natural and organic succession of topics across the chapters. We are very fortunate to have a preface written by Marilyn Fischer and Barbara Lowe that provides a narrative of the origins and consolidation of feminist pragmatism. We are also very grateful to Charlene Haddock Seigfried, who traveled to Barcelona to inaugurate the conference and attend the institutional “baptism” of the Sala Jane Addams on the Raval Campus of the University of Barcelona. It is a true honor for us to be able to include in this volume an account of the critical reception of the seminal work of pragmatist feminism *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric* (1996) written by the author herself.

Part I contains the Introduction by Marilyn Fischer and Barbara Lowe entitled “The Growth of Feminist Pragmatism: Opening Channels for Cooperative Intelligence”. Fischer and Lowe discuss how pragmatist feminism has grown over the past thirty years and has taken on an increasingly international character. Particularly, beginning from Seigfried’s impulse, they observe how feminist pragmatism has developed as a collective and cooperative effort. In support of this thesis, inspired by Jane Addams’s idea of creating channels in which moral energy can flow and allow people to fully flourish as human beings, Fischer and Lowe describe four academic conferences on the topic held at the University of Dayton in 2002 and 2012, at St. John Fisher College in Rochester (NY) in 2019, and at the University of Barcelona in January 2020. In the opening chapter, Charlene Haddock Seigfried reconstructs the genesis and reception of *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric* (1996). Seigfried recalls the scholarly and personal prehistory of the book, particularly her intention to explain why pragmatism and feminism needed mutual recognition. In order to provide solid evidence for her initial hypothesis of a pragmatist feminism, Seigfried had to adopt non-standard research parameters for philosophy; most importantly, she wanted to ensure a collective approach in the fulfillment of her project. The growing success of *Pragmatism and Feminism* paralleled the establishment of the legitimacy of a field of study which, ever since, has continued to contribute significant discoveries both to the history of pragmatism and feminism and to their development. Núria Sara Miras Boronat’s chapter is directly related to the suggestion contained in Seigfried’s *Pragmatism and Feminism* (1996) that feminist pragmatism should provide a systematical theory of oppression as a fundamental part of its social and political philosophy. Miras Boronat retraces the important developments made by Classical pragmatists—Jane Addams and the Hull-House residents, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, W. E. B. du Bois and Anna Julia Cooper—on class, gender, and race as the main axes of oppression. Her thesis is that feminist pragmatism can offer useful insights not only for understanding the sufferings of the less privileged, but also for overcoming these social evils. Susan Petrilli’s chapter is the first of two contributions devoted to Victoria Welby. After a concise introduction



to Welby's intense relational life, correspondence, and major works, which testify to her collaboration with other women involved in public life and scientific research, Petrilli focuses on Welby's theory of "significs," a term she introduced to characterize her study of sign and meaning as attentive to the relationship of signs to values and interpretation. As a theory of meaning, Welby's significs transcends narrow epistemological delimitations and can be interpreted as a "semioethics." Petrilli claims that significs is semioethics, because the sense of words in human social practice is part of the development of critical consciousness and responsible global behavior. On this view, Petrilli reads Welby's significs as proposing a new form of humanism that contrasts with semiotic analyses conducted exclusively in abstract gnoseological terms. Building on Petrilli's work, Zoe Hurley recovers Welby's concept of "Ident" in support of her thesis that Welby made a substantial contribution to protofeminist pragmatist ontology by providing a polysemic view of gender, subjectivity, and identity. Hurley claims that feminist pragmatist "salvaging" could be positioned as an interpretive tool for reorientating androcentric ways of addressing troubling theoretical issues and for opening up feminist pragmatist spaces of semiotics, philosophy, and academic inquiry. Capitalizing upon the feminist reconstruction of a relational picture of the history of philosophy and psychology, Michela Bella investigates the Jamesian legacy in the psychology of Mary Whiton Calkins. Her analysis sheds further light on the power of Calkins's claims that herself (or relational) psychology was the best development of James's person-centered and experience-based psychology. Calkins's psychology provided a humanistic research program that was more comprehensive and satisfactory than the mainstream theories of functionalism and behaviorism. Paloma Pérez-Illzarbe addresses Christine Ladd-Franklin's innovative understanding of logic. Besides corroborating Ladd-Franklin's place among the most influential mathematicians, Pérez-Illzarbe investigates the Peircean inspiration in her approach to logic and discusses its main fruits. Following Peirce, Ladd-Franklin's analysis of the form of syllogisms conveys her progressive distancing from traditional Aristotelian-Scholastic logic and the construction of a new conception of logic in which the conversational form of reasoning assumes a prominent role.

Part II provides representative samples of how pragmatist feminist scholars are contributing to current philosophical debates. As a contribution to discourse ethics, Llanos Navarro Laespada addresses the issue of ethical claims as approached by both representationalist and classical expressivist theories. In the chapter, Navarro argues that both perspectives mistakenly assume a representationalist notion of proposition that is unable to account for the logical-semantic pluralism of language and therefore poses two difficulties concerning ethical propositions—the placement problem and the Frege-Geach problem. Her view challenges the standard assumption that representationalism is able to account for the phenomenon of predication in its full extent and finally maintains that the inferentialist perspective, as a pragmatist theory of meaning that defines propositions by their behavior and individuates propositions according to their inferential relations, can offer a possible alternative to the debate. Aubrey C. Spivey recovers the theory of truth Hilary Putnam offered in *Reason, Truth, and History* (1981) to defend the broader pragmatist intuition that "usability" is a

guiding value in determining truth. In the wake of pragmatist and feminist philosophers who recognized the importance of social embeddedness and values for the development of theories, Spivey defends the value of usability (and accuracy) from counterexample objections arguing that, in a pragmatist perspective, some theories can be true even in the presence of counterexamples. Sarah Aline Wellan's chapter is a contribution in the philosophy of science to the ongoing research on the relationship between scientific perspectivism and pragmatism. More specifically, Wellan focuses on Ronald Giere's and Michela Massimi's perspectivalisms, as examples of more subjectivist and more objectivist perspectival realisms, and argues that their divide resembles the one existing in pragmatism between the philosophical positions, respectively, associated with James and Peirce. Wellan's analysis employs discussions found in the pragmatist tradition in the conviction that, in addition to clarifying issues both internal to perspectivalism and pragmatism and others connected to the relationship between them, her strategy fosters the potential of integrating certain aspects of pragmatism and perspectivalism. Teresa Roversi's chapter is an attempt to elaborate Dewey's never fully articulated theory of personhood. Based upon his later writings, the Deweyan concept of person is distinguished from the concepts of individual and of the self. Personhood is thus defined through social, institutional, and public dimensions and has therefore a normative status. Roversi recalls the intrinsic connection between personhood and mutual recognition and points out some important implications of the current debates on personhood for the feminist pragmatist analysis. Dina Mendonça underlies the affinities between pragmatism, feminism, and the Philosophy for Children (P4C) movement. Lipman, one of its founders, acknowledged the Deweyan resonances of P4C, since P4C hopes to foster habits and attitudes that inculcate reasonableness and plurality. The concept of "reasonability" used by P4C practitioners has been criticized as ambiguous. Mendonça proposes a way to counter this criticism with feminist and pragmatist tools, especially "caring thinking", which allows for a synthesis between judgment and emotions and therefore does justice to the cognitive and affective elements of the educational process. Maura Striano actualizes Jane Addams's legacy by investigating the "attitude of mental non-resistance" that, according to Dewey, characterized the enduring intellectual effort of his lifelong friend. Epistemic and practical dimensions of mental non-resistance are examined, emphasizing the educational value of the social experiment embodied by Hull-House. In Striano's reading, Addams developed the conceptual tools for meeting the needs of immigrant children and their families and framed a significant number of pedagogical intuitions that could be easily applied in contemporary multicultural scenarios.

Part III continues the exploration of the philosophy of education embarked upon in the previous part. Laura Camas Garrido recalls one of the most important acts of Jane Addams and the Hull-House: the opening of the first public playgrounds in Chicago in 1894. Addams was deeply involved in the Playground Movement of North America. For her, the possibility of having open spaces for play, recreation, and leisure was a means of counteracting the aesthetic insensitivity caused by the industrial conditions of life. Camas demonstrates that by assigning of social, cultural, and educational value to children's play, Addams distanced herself from the traditional

instrumental approach to play as a “preparation for adult life.” Camas reconstructs the historical context in which Addams conceived the relation of play to the socialization of democracy and projects on Addams’ support for the public organization of play to future virtual recreational spaces. Continuing with the feminist and pragmatist reassessment of the philosophy of education, Àger Pérez Casanovas introduces Maxine Greene’s notion of aesthetic education. Greene’s experiential approach to education was influenced by Sartre, whose idea of engagement was key to her framing of the pedagogical practice as existential. As Pérez Casanovas shows, Greene incorporated pragmatist and feminist features in emancipatory teaching practices. Her philosophy transitioned from situatedness to relationality and agency as constitutive of the student’s aesthetic experience. Finally, Pérez Casanovas reflects on how Greene’s work has been received in pedagogy and its potential for shaping contemporary curricula and educational caring communities. Ann Warde’s chapter is another good example of how interdisciplinarity and experimentalism have always been in the program of pragmatist and feminist pedagogies. Warde focuses on the fruitful collaboration between Corine Seeds and Phoebe Harvey James at the UCLA University Elementary School during the early twentieth century. James devised an innovative participative methodology for teaching music called *Creative Rhythms* that involved percussion and movement, and in fact her *Rhythmic Expressions* are linked to pragmatist and progressive views of education of John Dewey and Jane Addams. Survivals of James’s experimentalism are to be found in the work of her nephew, the American experimental composer John Cage. Warde advocates the use of participatory experimental methods for teaching music as a way of enlarging our experience of the environment we share with other human and non-human animals. Pauline Lefebvre narrates the history of the debates around the introduction of pragmatism in architecture in the early 2000s. In the company of Joan Ockman and Gwendolyn Wright, we discover how pragmatism was instrumental for raising uncomfortable questions about the political engagements of architecture. Ockman was the promoter of the seminars entitled *The Pragmatist Imagination* that were congenial to other critical assessments of architecture, particularly post-structuralism and feminism. Wright, one of the participants in the seminars, connected the Deweyan notion of the public to political and spatial concerns. Pragmatism can be seen in architectural practices that have strong social and environmental commitments: social housing, temporary settlements for vulnerable population, pedagogical gardens, rehabilitation programs, and so on. Although Wright did not establish a theoretical link to Jane Addams or other female pragmatists, she saw pragmatism as an architectural alternative for including diversity and “things in the making.” Lefebvre aspires to a future synthesis of pragmatism and feminism in architecture that reconnects with daily experiences and makes practitioners aware of the material effects and consequences of urban planning.

Several chapters of this volume address topics related to discrimination based on class, gender, and race. We expect that the debates on oppression and domination will be a central issue of pragmatist and feminist political thought in the coming decades. Charlie Brousseau’s chapter is a step forward toward the use of pragmatist methods to the analysis of feminist issues, particularly the production of knowledge

by oppressed groups that cannot be captured by dominant groups. Brousseau makes evident some essentialist consequences of the standpoint theory and applies John Dewey's immediate empiricism for revaluing the experience of minorized subjects. For Brousseau, a medial point between Dewey's notion of the public and Iris Marion Young's definition of the feminist subject as series would be a promising channel to explore how conjunctural collectives can produce a legitimate objective for common experience. Agnieszka Hensoldt closes the volume searching for the historical roots of current degrowth ideas in the works of women of the progressive era: Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Caroline Bartlett Crane. Degrowth is seen as the only sustainable way to organize economic activity compatible with social and environmental justice. Addams's diagnosis of the social inequalities of industrial capitalism, Gilman's utopian critique of the destructive trend of our androcentric culture in contrast to the cooperative maternal community of Herland, and Crane's inclusion of natural resources as public goods all of these were predecessors of ecofeminism. Climate change will be the most urgent global challenge for future generations. They will need all means available in order, in Hensoldt's words, to liberate our Western imaginary from the capitalist growth fetish. In doing this, Addams, Gilman, and Crane were far ahead of their time (and of ours as well). The third part of this volume is entitled *From the Past to the Future* because pragmatist feminism is moving dialectically between these two poles. On the one hand, pragmatist scholars are regaining the contributions of the women pioneers at the infancy of the pragmatist tradition. On the other hand, the interest in the tradition responds to finding creative solutions to current global challenges. These chapters have in common that their authors feel comfortable bringing pragmatism to other disciplines or working across disciplines. In this sense, we are persuaded that the future of feminist pragmatism shall continue promoting its intrinsic interdisciplinarity.

After the conference in Barcelona that gave rise to this volume, and during the editorial process, a global pandemic was declared. The editors had to move to other apartments; Michela gave birth to her daughter Agata, and Núria received her tenure after months of anxiety. The preparation of the volume coincided the editors' teaching and administrative commitments, the writing of papers and assessments, the supervision of master's and doctoral students, the attendance to other conferences, and the concern for our loved ones. Over the course of these months, the work in this volume progressed as smoothly and enjoyably as could be imagined. In the process, the editors reinforced their friendship, complicity, and mutual admiration through informal messaging and video calls. Just as the feminist calling says: the personal is political. The history of women philosophers and scientists is rooted not only in intellectual exchange, but also in the sorority generated by an already preexisting network of relations. Patriarchal historiography, fixed on the romantic metaphysics of the genius, constructs an artificial intellectual history in which philosophers, alone in their rooms, detached from their contemporaries and, from reality, revolutionized philosophy in mental solitude. This schema is often reproduced in the accidental inclusion of women in the history of thought. Feminist genealogies rebel against this deformed picture of what philosophical progress is. Philosophy lives in the conversation. The density of relations and networks that is the condition of possibility of

philosophy is often difficult to reconstruct because until now it has left very few documented traces. Our volume *Women in Pragmatism: Past, Present, and Future* is the testimony of the sorority growing within the pragmatist and feminist community. Let the publication of this volume be our first, totally committed political gesture.

Barcelona, Spain

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: The Growth of Feminist Pragmatism: Opening Channels for Cooperative Intelligence



Marilyn Fischer and Barbara J. Lowe

**Abstract** “The Growth of Feminist Pragmatism: Opening Channels for Cooperative Intelligence” tells of four academic conferences. One of the tenets of pragmatist philosophy is that a person’s intellectual growth is fostered through collaborative engagement with others. These four conferences confirm that observation. Charlene Haddock Seigfried’s initial work of identifying feminist pragmatists from pragmatism’s founding era has now grown into a much larger project of international scope. The first conference discussed in this essay, titled “Exploring Jane Addams,” was hosted at the University of Dayton (Ohio, USA) in November 2002. Its interdisciplinary scope matched the wide range of Addams’s thoughts and activism. A second conference, “Feminist Pragmatism in Place,” was held in October 2012, also hosted by the University of Dayton. Speakers drew on pragmatism’s emphasis on social and historical context to explore the significance of location for feminist reflection. A third conference, “Looking Back to Move Forward,” held in November 2019 at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York (USA), drew deeply on Rochester’s history of social justice activism on behalf of marginalized groups, including women, Native Americans, and African-Americans. Finally, the essay discusses the first “Women in Pragmatism: International Conference” held in Europe, at the University of Barcelona in January 2020. The conference was truly international in its scientific and organizing committees, and in its program with speakers from ten countries. The essay concludes with reflections on the potential for growth as well as challenges for feminist pragmatism.

**Keywords** Feminism · Pragmatism · Conferences · Charlene Haddock Seigfried · Cooperative Intelligence · Jane Collective · Feminist Pragmatism in the United States · Feminist Pragmatism in Europe

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This volume represents a thirty-year effort to bring together the sensibilities and methodologies of pragmatism and feminism. All throughout, this effort has been an ongoing enactment of what pragmatists call “cooperative intelligence.” This essay, centering on four academic conferences, tells some of that story. Many more individuals than can be named here have collaborated in the growth of feminist pragmatism or pragmatist feminism, as one prefers. Both designations are used by scholars, and this essay will use the terms interchangeably.<sup>1</sup>

One of Jane Addams’s favorite descriptors for her work is to create channels through which moral energy can flow, clarifying that “[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.”<sup>2</sup> These conferences have been such channels, a primary way for scholars to reflect together on what often begins as quiet murmurings, unsettling experiences, inchoate thoughts, and intellectual itches. Without channels, these can get tucked away in the corners of the mind and there diffuse or dissolve. For those who dare to imagine a world that is more just and open to possibilities for human flourishing, for those who dare to move categories of thought out of the column of “natural traits” and into the column of socially constructed systems of oppression, for them to have a voice at all within the academy, these imaginings need channels through which moral energy can flow.

## 1.1 Feminist Pragmatism in the United States

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, with protesters marching against US involvement in the Vietnam War and US cities literally in flames over the denial of civil rights to African-Americans, a handful of philosophers rebelled against the stifling binary of the analytic-continental divide and formed the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy (SAAP). Within SAAP, participants could find sustenance in the patterns of thought initiated within the American tradition and particularly by the early pragmatists. Though white privilege and male privilege were carried over into SAAP, the organization also provided the soil in which pragmatist feminism emerged. For many of us, SAAP has become an indispensable source of intellectual nourishment as well as institutional legitimacy.

To claim that pragmatist feminism grew out of concrete experience states the obvious. In the 1970s and 1980s, professional slights were a wearying, daily occurrence for women who dared to claim membership in the profession of academic philosophy, slights that sometimes rose to the level of sexual harassment and sexual assault. Work on feminism was routinely discounted and interpreted as evidence of one’s lack of seriousness.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Judy D. Whipps for clarifying this point.

<sup>2</sup> Addams uses variations of this expression in a number of texts. This version is from *Twenty Years at Hull House*, where she attributes it to Lincoln (Addams, 1910, p. 40).

In 1990 Charlene Haddock Seigfried, already a respected scholar of pragmatism, gave the first paper on feminism ever presented at a SAAP conference. She posed the simple question then being asked in every field of study: “Where are the women?”<sup>3</sup> A handful of people at the conference wanted to create opportunities at SAAP to discuss feminist issues in supportive environments. They decided to begin by holding annual luncheons at future conferences for discussions of feminism and later sponsored panel sessions on feminism at subsequent conferences. The inspiration spread. Some read papers at Society of Women in Philosophy (SWIP) conferences; in 1993 Seigfried edited a volume of *Hypatia* devoted to feminism and pragmatism. They could not then predict how much these small beginnings would foster new growth in both pragmatism and feminism over the next thirty years.

If pragmatist feminism has a founding text, it is Charlene Haddock Seigfried’s *Pragmatism and Feminism and Feminism* (1996). Seigfried surveyed the all-white, all-male canon of classical American pragmatists, principally Charles S. Peirce, William James, John Dewey, Josiah Royce, and George Herbert Mead. No wonder Seigfried was attracted to James. His metaphoric, allusive style matched her own bent toward sniffing out potentially fertile intellectual soils. She sniffed out compatibilities between feminist and pragmatist orientations, as both begin with lived experiences of humans as inherently social beings. Both aim for liberation from oppression, and toward individual and social flourishing. Seigfried sensed how pragmatism and feminist philosophy could enrich each other if the historically erected separations between them were dismantled. Surely there were women intellectuals among the now-canonical early pragmatists who made theoretical contributions in their own right.

Seigfried dug out the names and in *Pragmatism and Feminism* laid out a historical recovery program. She sketched how Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Jane Addams, Elsie Ripley Clapp, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Jessie Taft, Mary Whiton Calkins, Christine Ladd-Franklin, Ella Flagg Young, Ethel Puffer Howes, Marion Talbot and more walked and talked and debated and enabled the more well-known canonical men to grow. All throughout the book, Seigfried put her mastery of European and American philosophy and of historical and contemporary feminist writings to good use. Since its publication in 1996 *Pragmatism and Feminism* has served as an invitation to others to participate in the work.

Feminists continued to build a presence in SAAP until around 2000 when Seigfried posed the question, “Can we do anything besides meeting at the annual SAAP conference?” “I could host a conference,” Marilyn Fischer offered. The University of Dayton Philosophy Department had a template, as it held an annual conference on whatever theme a faculty member was willing to sponsor. With some trepidation, Fischer organized “Exploring Jane Addams” for November 2002, while questioning whether enough scholars even existed to fill a conference program on Addams. Yet they came, and the conference was as interdisciplinary as Addams herself. Twenty-seven scholars representing twelve disciplines presented papers. Seigfried gave a

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<sup>3</sup> The paper, titled “Where are all the Pragmatist Feminists?” was published in *Hypatia* 6 (Summer 1991), 1–20.

keynote address on “The Courage of One’s Conviction or the Conviction of One’s Courage? Jane Addams’s Principled Compromises,” and historian and Addams’s biographer Victoria Bissell Brown keynoted with “The Sermon of the Deed: Jane Addams’s Spiritual Evolution.” Performance artist and videographer Suzanne Lacy presented a world premiere of “Art and Life: A Full Circle in the Work of Jane Addams.” Earlier that year Swarthmore College had had a similar inspiration and had hosted a conference, “Rediscovering Jane Addams.” Its organizers, political scientist Carol Nackenoff and historian Wendy Chmielewski, with Fischer, co-edited a volume of essays from the two conferences, titled *Jane Addams and the Practice of Democracy* (2009).

In the mid-2000s as younger scholars joined SAAP, those interested in feminism wanted to organize more formally and make more concrete the channels of support and cooperative intelligence that had slowly but steadily emerged within the organization. By naming their group, they hoped to spur further growth of feminist pragmatism as a way of doing philosophy, thus increasing the channels through which their intellectual and moral energy could flow. They chose the name, the Jane Collective, in honor of Addams and in memory of an underground Chicago group that arranged for abortions when the procedure was illegal in the U.S. Celia Bardwell-Jones volunteered to coordinate communications and take meeting minutes. Maurice Hamington set up listservs and a website.

The Jane Collective initiated the Jane Addams prize to recognize a paper presented at the annual SAAP conference that displays excellence in feminist thought, including intersections with race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age, and so on. A rotating committee of Collective members selects the prize recipient and the winning essay is published in *The Pluralist*. The prize is funded by individual contributions. The Collective’s intention was to encourage work in pragmatist feminism and to give that work professional weight. Now it does carry some weight, and more successfully than when Seigfried was newly hired at Purdue University. She had been told to omit feminist work from her tenure file since feminism was not “real” philosophy, and even pragmatism was a marginal sub-field.<sup>4</sup>

Many scholars joined the efforts, giving presentations and publishing articles on pragmatist feminism and related fields that intersected with its concerns. Seigfried edited *Feminist Interpretations of John Dewey* (2002) and Maurice Hamington edited *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams* (2010). Hamington and Bardwell-Jones edited *Contemporary Feminist Pragmatism* (2012). A group of Midwestern scholars from several disciplines formed an informal discussion group and called themselves the Interdisciplinary Jane Addams Society (IJAS).

Interest in feminism and pragmatism had grown enough by 2012 that the University of Dayton Philosophy Department hosted a second conference. Denise James had joined the Department with her particular interest in “place” as a marker for communities of struggle. She and Fischer sponsored a conference, “Feminist Pragmatism in Place,” with “place” construed broadly to include natural and built environments, as

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<sup>4</sup> Fortunately, by the time Seigfried came up for tenure, the committee had forgotten this statement and she was able to include her work on feminist philosophy in her tenure application.

well as spaces of exclusion and belonging in historical and contemporary contexts. Although the majority of the session presenters were philosophers, the generative nature of feminist pragmatism was on full display. “Place” received specific focus on topics ranging from immigration to insurrection, dance to dermatology, domestic spaces to wicked problems, and adult education to the traumas of aging for women. The two keynote speakers brought multidisciplinary lenses. Lisa Heldke, philosopher, editor of a multidisciplinary journal on food and culture, and a community garden activist spoke on “Urban Farmers and Rural Cosmopolitans? Pragmatist Musings on Contemporary Food Movements.” Historian and Addams biographer Louise W. Knight spoke on “Reading Addams’s Rhetoric on Social Justice.”

The community of pragmatist feminist scholars continued to grow. Younger scholars who had benefited from what older faculty scholars never had—the chance to study feminism and pragmatism in undergraduate and graduate classrooms—became faculty members. Their intelligence and initiative accelerated the growth of feminist pragmatism. Resources became more plentiful as a number of books and many articles from pragmatist feminist perspectives were published. Judy D. Whipps and Danielle Lake wrote a detailed survey of the field in their entry on “Pragmatist Feminism” for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2020).<sup>5</sup>

Inspired by the energy and collaborative spirit of the 2012 conference in Dayton, Barbara Lowe and Katie Terizakis organized a feminist pragmatist conference for November 2019 in Rochester, New York. Jointly sponsored by St. John Fisher College and the Rochester Institute of Technology, the conference received a public philosophy grant from the American Philosophical Association and an additional grant from SAAP. The conference stretched in every direction. One participant said it was “truly an interdisciplinary and multi-modal conference.” Another commented, “The conference lived up to its theme, by clarifying our knowledge of the past in order to address future challenges, particularly those of social justice.” A session dedicated to the work of Charlene Haddock Seigfried also exemplified the conference theme, as participants looked back thirty years and forward to new directions for feminist pragmatism. Participants representing three countries and thirteen states in the U.S. along with a significant number of students and people from the local community engaged in lively exchanges.

It was a traveling conference that moved throughout Rochester and nearby Seneca Falls, both centers of nineteenth-century social justice activism. The travels began at Mt. Hope Cemetery at the graves of abolitionists and women’s rights advocates, Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony. Knight gave a keynote address, “Before Seneca Falls: Women’s Equality in the Thought of Sarah and Angelina Grimke,” the subject of the biography she is currently writing. Interspersed among paper presentations, attendees enjoyed a living history performance by AKWAABA. Bringing history, politics, and art together, this group performed “A Circle of Women” in which the performers imagined the women who influenced Frederick Douglass,

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<sup>5</sup> An article on Pragmatism more broadly, recently revised by Catherine Legg and Christopher Hookway, is also to find at the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. See Legg and Hookway (2021).

including Anna Murray Douglass (his first wife), Harriet Tubman, and Harriet Bailey (Douglass's mother). Participants ate dinner at the museum and home of Anthony, with keynotes by the museum's curator, historian Deborah Hughes, on recent controversies on Anthony and race, and by Fischer on Addams's argument for suffrage. They spent a day in Seneca Falls at the Women's Rights National Park and the Elizabeth Cady Stanton home and toured the chapel where the 1848 Declaration of Rights and Sentiments was drawn up and ratified. Rochester and Seneca Falls are within the traditional Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) territory, a matrilineal confederacy that dates back over four hundred years. As the oldest living participatory democracy, it inspired feminists in the nineteenth-century. Louise Wakerakats:te McDonald, Clan Mother of the Mohawk Nation, and Sally Roesch Wagner, scholar of feminism and Native American culture, spoke with conference participants about the Iroquois matrilineal traditions and culture and their influence on the suffrage movement.

One of the conference's innovations was the Scholars' Circles, a carefully facilitated, two-hour writing and idea workshop in which participants shared work-in-progress with small groups of colleagues. The purpose of the Circles was to aid scholarly research while also making visible the contextual and social nature of creating and applying knowledge. In other words, the Scholars' Circle was intentional in its efforts to create channels through which moral energy could flow, acknowledging and valuing cooperative intelligence. Participants were uniformly enthusiastic about the Circles' value; they appreciated others' comments and the networks of support they were building. This innovation has already been born fruits. One participant has just published a book that contains content she had presented in the Scholars' Circle. A group of scholars is now holding monthly virtual meetings to share drafts at every stage of development. SAAP is looking for ways to incorporate Scholars' Circles into future conferences.

The Rochester conference organizers, in light of feminist pragmatism's commitment to inclusion and justice, sought ways to mitigate barriers to participation in academic conferences. For many scholars, getting financial support from their home institutions depends on being in the conference program. By including all Scholars' Circle participants in the program, the Circle helped to mitigate this barrier. Further, several senior scholars gave generously to support grants to individuals needing financial help. Students and community members were invited to attend sessions without charge.

## 1.2 Pragmatist Feminism in Europe

Interest in pragmatism has also been growing in Europe. A number of pragmatist societies have been formed, including the Central European Pragmatist Forum, Associazione Culturale Pragma, the Nordic Pragmatism Network, Pragmata, Association

d'études pragmatists, and the European Pragmatism Association.<sup>6</sup> These organizations have sponsored conferences in which a number of feminist pragmatists papers have been on the programs. These efforts led up to the first conference in Europe dedicated to feminist pragmatism, *Women in Pragmatism: International Conference*, held at the University of Barcelona in January 2020.

The impetus for the conference came during the June 2018 conference of the European Pragmatism Association in Helsinki, at a breakfast meeting arranged by Chiara Ambrosio of University College, London. Participants voiced the need for policies to stop aggressive behavior in conference sessions, most often at the expense of junior faculty women. Longer-term goals included holding Women in Pragmatism workshops, finding ways to cooperate with SAAP and the Jane Collective, and providing support for research on topics often considered outside the philosophical mainstream. While eighteen women presented papers at this conference, very few papers with a feminist orientation could be identified from the program. An exception was a panel titled "Hull House: Gender, Pragmatism, and Social Change: A Reassessment." Two of the panel members, Agnieszka Hensoldt of the University of Opole (Poland) and Núria Sara Miras Boronat of the University of Barcelona, had met at "Kant Pragmatist Conference" in Berlin in 2017. They invited geographer Núria Font of the University of Barcelona and Marilyn Fischer of the University of Dayton to join the panel in Helsinki.

After the conference, Miras Boronat proposed the idea of a conference dedicated to women and pragmatism to Hensoldt, Ambrosio, and Federica Gregoratto of the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). Their enthusiastic support, as well as the work of the international, interdisciplinary group of scholars who served on the scientific committee and the organizing committee, confirm the European philosophers' determination to give feminist pragmatism a more expansive voice.<sup>7</sup>

*Women in Pragmatism: International Conference* opened with an inauguration celebration of the Sala Jane Addams, a newly renovated hall at the University of Barcelona where the conference sessions were held. Seigfried, echoing the theme of the Rochester conference held only months before, gave the opening keynote, "Looking Back to Look Forward: On Writing *Pragmatism and Feminism* (1996) and its Reception." The more than thirty presenters came from eight European countries, as well as Dubai and the United States. Paper topics were wide-ranging and included historical recovery projects on Anna Julia Cooper, Mary Whiton Calkins, and Caroline Bartlett Crane. Others presented their work on neopragmatism, linguistics, architecture, and several aspects of education. Pragmatist feminist perspectives on metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, social philosophy, and philosophy of science were also examined. There were workshops on networking, mentoring, and international cooperation. A video of the Rochester conference, edited by Barbara Lowe, expanded this network of international cooperation.

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<sup>6</sup> See the references list.

<sup>7</sup> Members of these committees and the conference program can be found at the conference webpage, see the references list.



The immediate fruits of the conference include an archive of women who are actively doing research on pragmatism.<sup>8</sup> Papers from the conference are in this volume, *Women in Pragmatism: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by Miras Boronat and Michela Bella. Future feminist pragmatist conferences in Europe are also being planned.

### 1.3 Continuing Growth and Challenges

Over the past thirty years as pragmatist feminism and voices from communities marginalized in the academy have become more pronounced, the scope of American philosophy has expanded to include Central and South America as well as North America. Feminist voices and voices from marginalized communities have increased steadily, as evident in conference programs. After much inter-American dialogue, the 2020 SAAP conference was held in Mexico, with some sessions conducted in Spanish. Feminist themes covered all the territory between the earth's two poles. The Jane Collective changed its name to reflect this expansion and is now the Jane Collective for Feminism in American Philosophies. Erin McKenna and Scott Pratt fully incorporated these new perspectives into their 2015 text, *American Philosophy from Wounded Knee to the Present* (2015). The book could not have been written twenty years earlier.

Another marker of how much feminist philosophy has become more valued in SAAP is the list of those awarded the Schneider prize, SAAP's lifetime achievement award. Before 2013, women who received the award did so without recognition for feminist work. Seigfried's citation, written thirteen years after *Pragmatism and Feminism* were published, praised her deep knowledge of pragmatism and her expertise on James but did not mention her work on pragmatist feminism or her many writings on Addams. Citations for the three women awarded the prize since 2013, Mary Mahowald, Marilyn Fischer, and Judith Green, explicitly honored their feminist contributions.

Channels for feminist pragmatism's moral energy continue to be extended, branching out and connecting with other channels for intellectual growth. It is not unusual for scholars from several continents to attend the same conference and publish in the same journals. These scholars participate vigorously in other professional societies dedicated to public philosophy, intellectual history, disability studies, studies of education, sports, food and culture, and many more. Many of these scholars contribute to direct action efforts and non-academic organizations within their local communities. Fruits of these efforts will be seen in a forthcoming issue of *Hypatia* that will feature a cluster of papers on philosophical activism in and through feminist

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<sup>8</sup> Access through the webpage of the conference, see the references list.

pragmatism, edited by Judy D. Whipps and Danielle Lake.<sup>9</sup> Also, a future feminist pragmatist conference in the U.S. is being planned that will emphasize public philosophy and interconnections between the academic and the nonprofit sectors.

Challenges remain. Putting into practice one's commitment to egalitarian, inclusive, and collaborative processes takes constant effort. Universities continue to be hierarchical institutions, retaining white, male-centric habits, norms, and expectations for students and faculty. This is especially true for philosophy. The 2017 "Survey of Earned Doctorates" by the National Foundation of Sciences found that, of all the doctorate degrees awarded in the United States, 46.7% were women, approaching parity with men. However, the data in philosophy looks much different. In that same year, women represented only 27.2% of those doctorates awarded in philosophy (Women in Academia, 2018). Similarly, among eleven humanities reviewed in 2015 by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, philosophy ranks the lowest in the number of women earning advanced degrees (Master's and Doctorate's) at just 33% (American Academy, 2015a). Even more troubling are the 2015 numbers for traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, with only 7.4% of doctoral degrees in philosophy awarded to this group (American Academy, 2015b). While some academic departments are receptive to pragmatist and feminist scholarship, others are indifferent, if not hostile. Women in philosophy must still push against norms that value individual, abstract and analytic theorizing over collaborative, interdisciplinary, and applied ways of teaching and doing research. Scholars of pragmatist feminism continue to experience intellectual isolation on a daily basis; it is rare to find more than one scholar of feminist pragmatism in a given university. Very few graduate departments offer coursework or mentoring on pragmatism or pragmatist feminism.

Thus, feminist pragmatist scholars continue to confront both external and internalized norms and expectations of what it means to be a successful academic and a fully flourishing human being. Faced with a conflict between responsibilities to care for a family member and a commitment to participate at the Barcelona conference, Chiara Ambrosio noted how it took a fellow feminist pragmatist colleague to point out the obvious, "Family comes first." Reflection on this personal experience forced Ambrosio to consider her own habits and how they "reinforced a work ethos in academia that separated work and care." She realized that this needed to change. Though change for her had to start with a shift in her own practice, she came to see this only when her feminist pragmatist colleague challenged her internalized norms. The conferences and connected practices discussed above are one means through which new channels are created. Visualizing and creating these channels is a social and creative process, requiring we imagine new ways of being and doing in our personal and professional lives. The conferences and connected practices create the space in which and through which these processes can take place.

Pragmatists stress how experience is unavoidably contingent and precarious; creating channels through which moral energy can flow is one response to uneliminable uncertainty. We act, but we cannot assess the weight of our actions until

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<sup>9</sup> These essays are available online through FirstView! at <https://www.doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2021.11>.