

INTRODUCTION: PRAGMATISM AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

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The current environmental crisis, and particularly, the climate crisis, represents a major challenge to societies around the globe. Citizens are not only facing challenges regarding food supply, decrease of biodiversity, or the rise of sea levels. Moreover, climate change puts our very habitual ways of organizing human life – social, political, cultural, intellectual, aesthetic, or educational – under radical scrutiny. Hence, it can be seen, as Daniel Kersting puts it in his contribution to the issue, as a blockade in political problem-solving, i.e., as a crisis of the capacity of current societies to deal with first order problems, one that demands reflexivity, criticism, and collective engagement. In this context, a set of questions arises: What (radical) transformations should democratic societies undergo to respond to current environmental developments? What potential role can science, technology, art, design, and education play? And what is the role of philosophy in this context?

The aim of this issue is to show that the tradition of American Pragmatism can provide fruitful contributions to respond to these questions. Pragmatism can help us to rethink the way we define the environmental crisis and to find new, creative ways of addressing the problems derived from it. Emphasizing ethical pluralism, environmental pragmatism has also put emphasis on cooperative planning as a way of rethinking environmental ethics. It can also contribute to developing our ecological imagination in new and disruptive ways as well as to address the authoritarian dangers of some form of environmentalism by promoting an ecological democracy. More fundamentally, pragmatist philosophy can help us rethink of the relation between theory and practice, between human and non-human nature, as well as between politics and economics in ways that disclose the

potential of democratic ways of life to address the current crisis.

The texts brought together in the present issue all make original and compelling contributions to this broader discussion. In her contribution, Ana Honnacker proposes to “reconstruct environmental pragmatism in the light of the Anthropocene” by drawing on a comprehensive idea of meliorism. This allows, according to her, to connect environmental pragmatism to a critical social philosophy that is aware of the need of social and cultural criticism. In his contribution, Daniel Kersting undertakes some important conceptual work that aims at clarifying what sort of crisis we talk about when we talk about the environmental crisis. He connects this task with a particularly compelling attempt at connecting the environmental crisis to the crisis of liberal democracy, and the need to deepen our democratic way of life. For his part, Bob Hanson’s paper provides an agent-focused account of environmental pragmatism, one that is able to address the challenge according to which, pragmatism’s defense of open-minded inquiry is incompatible with attachment to particular environmental values. As a response to this concern, Hanson shows that environmental pragmatism can provide a framework for making case-specific, holistic, and practical decisions in environmental questions, “grounded in philosophically tenable foundations.” Finally, Giovanni Mariotti argues for a pragmatic reading of eco-emotions which is able to promote “the potential for pro-environmental transformation inherent in eco-emotions.”

The issue also includes contributions from young scholars at early phases of their research career. In her contribution, Weronika Mazurek makes a pragmatist argument for non-design, as a way of reducing the kind of material interventions that come with architecture. Her aim is to show how pragmatism provides resources to think of more sustainable forms of “organizing our living spaces.” While Mazurek focuses on the environmental consequences of architecture, Anna Kwapitsz turns to

design and argues for the need to develop a critical approach that develops responsibility for the environment. Finally, Abdi Kitesa Keno provides a defense of environmental pragmatism in discussion with Lars Samuelson's ideas. The miscellany includes a contribution by Yikun-amlak Mesfin's on the moral agency of technology.

One of the main conclusions one can draw from reading the papers is that pragmatism is particularly well suited to counter authoritarian responses to the current

environmental crisis: directly, by showing how democratic cooperation and deeper democratic forms of life are possible and necessary, and, indirectly, by showing how practices of social critique, the use of imagination, collective and individual responsibility, as well as eco-emotional responses are deeply intertwined as central parts of a philosophical project that aims at responding to one of the greatest challenges of our time.