

# Advancing Cosmopolitan Community Solidarity in Struggles for Economic Justice: Pragmatism and Liberatory-Prophetic Traditions

*Avançando a Solidariedade Comunitária Cosmopolita nas Lutas por Justiça Econômica:  
Pragmatismo e Tradições Proféticas Liberatórias Religiosas*

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**Abstract:** In this essay, I offer a pragmatist phenomenology and genealogy of the emergence of norms and practices of cosmopolitan community solidarity and associated understandings of economic justice. Widely shared individual experiences of the need for personal liberation of various kinds may lead us to recognize others' equally important though differing needs, and may thereby motivate us to develop caring, thoughtful, educative practices of cosmopolitan community solidarity in daily living that advance the actualization of these values, including episodes of conflict and the mutual shock of otherness. Such an interactive growth process can be greatly enhanced by gaining a historically realistic understanding of how cosmopolitan community solidarity has emerged as an ideal and how the meanings of social and economic justice have developed within differing earlier contexts. As valuable supplements to secular social and political histories, the liberatory and prophetic strands of various religious and spiritual traditions can function as both "outer" and "inner" histories of practices of caring for and with others amidst prolonged struggles for justice, including the wisdom gleaned from these struggles. These prophetic traditions offer a deep background for intelligently expanding the meaning of the ideals of liberty, equality, and community solidarity that have inspired democratic theorists and democratic movement activists toward democracy since the late eighteenth century. Such an intelligent expansion of shared ideal meanings can advance reasonable democratic agreement among diverse contemporary thinkers and actors about how to achieve cosmopolitan community solidarity and how to do justice in real-world contexts.

**Key words:** Cosmopolitan community solidarity. Social and economic justice. Democracy. Pragmatism.

**Resumo:** Neste ensaio, ofereço uma fenomenologia e genealogia pragmatista da emergência de normas e práticas de solidariedade comunitária cosmopolita e entendimentos associados de justiça econômica. Experiências individuais da necessidade de vários tipos de emancipação pessoal amplamente compartilhadas podem nos levar a reconhecer as necessidades diversificadas e igualmente importantes de outros, podendo, desta forma, nos motivar a

*desenvolver práticas de solidariedade comunitária cosmopolita assistenciais, criteriosas e educadoras na vida cotidiana que promovam a efetivação desses valores, incluindo episódios de conflito e choque mútuo de alteridade. Este processo de crescimento interativo pode ser realçado, significativamente, alcançando-se uma compreensão historicamente realista de como a solidariedade comunitária cosmopolita emergiu como um ideal, e como o significado de justiça social e econômica se desenvolveu dentro de contextos divergentes anteriores. Como valiosos complementos a histórias sociais e políticas seculares, as vertentes proféticas liberatórias de várias tradições religiosas podem funcionar tanto como histórias “externas” quanto “internas” de práticas assistenciais para e com outros, em meio a esforços prolongados por justiça, inclusive a sabedoria colbida desses esforços. Essas tradições proféticas liberatórias oferecem uma experiência profunda para ampliar de maneira inteligente o significado dos ideais de liberdade, igualdade e solidariedade comunitária que inspiraram teóricos democráticos e ativistas de movimentos democráticos pela democracia, desde o final do Século XVIII. Tãmanba expansão inteligente de significados ideais compartilhados pode promover razoáveis acordos democráticos entre variados pensadores e atores contemporâneos, sobre como atingir solidariedade comunitária cosmopolita e fazer justiça dentro de contextos de mundo real.*

**Palavras-chave:** Comunidade Solidária Cosmopolita. Justiça social e econômica. Democracia. Pragmatismo.

## **Why cosmopolitan community solidarity matters in struggles for economic justice**

Since the global financial crisis of September 2008, twenty-first century challenges of economic injustice in local-and-global living have been starkly highlighted in terms of a great and growing gap between the increasing prosperity of the ultra-rich and the increasing insecurity of everyone else – the 1% vs. the 99%, in the language of the world-wide “Occupy” movement that began with “Occupy Wall Street.” This gap in income and wealth correlates with radical inequalities in health and longevity, in opportunities to develop basic human capabilities, in opportunities for social recognition and community leadership, and with a gap in levels of experienced freedom, security, and life satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> Increasing numbers of people see these radical inequalities as the direct result of dysfunctional national and global systems of political economy that have become the focus of widespread middle class and

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1 The remote mountain kingdom of Bhutan is an intriguing exception to this generalization. Recent research suggests that its citizens share one of the highest levels of happiness of all nations in the world, even though their per capita income is among the lowest in the world. However, this apparent anomaly actually offers evidence in support of my claim that community solidarity matters greatly for economic justice, objective human welfare, and subjective life satisfaction, because Buddhist Bhutan has only a small gap in income and wealth between its richest and poorest citizens if we exclude the king and his court, who regard themselves and are regarded by ordinary citizens as community servants devoted to ensuring justice while fostering social welfare and community solidarity. See Andrew C. Revkin, “A New Measure of Happiness from a Happy Little Kingdom,” *New York Times* (October 4, 2005), and a series of related articles by other researchers in subsequent years.

working class anxiety, including widely demonstrated frustration among educated young men and women in both developed and less-developed countries who cannot find good jobs to start careers and thus, are unable to live independently, to found healthy families, and to shape other basic aspects of meaningful and respectable adult lives according to the cultural scripts of their upbringing.

These modern cultural scripts, though they differ in details, agree that education and hard work entitle individuals and the families that depend upon them to the means of living reasonably well and to real choices about where and how they live, within their nations. In experienced democracies, new democracies, and other systems of political economy, most people believe that civic institutions exist for the purpose of creating and protecting the conditions for mutual human flourishing of all citizens as community members, while also benefiting others who constructively transact with them.<sup>2</sup> This modern intercultural agreement among most of the world's citizens is reflected in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which lists not only negative liberties and participation rights, but also the right to a job, the right to join a union, the right to found a family, and rights to nutrition, clothing, shelter, and education as among the basic entitlements that justice requires. This document expands the basic call of the United Nations Charter (1945) for every member nation to assure the human welfare of each and all of its own citizens and to assist citizens of others nations in actualizing their human rights. Such a modern consensus may explain why radical and growing economic inequality and all the local-and-global problems in living to which it is directly linked are widely regarded as *unjust*, and why those who prosper at others' expense are widely regarded as failing to fulfill their ethical responsibilities to their own communities and to others affected by their actions.

The focus of this essay is on *the process of change in social-cultural consciousness* that the individual members of all the significant groups who are now living through what Martin Luther King, Jr., called "a time of revolution" – the rich and the middle classes as well as the increasingly imperiled working classes and the poor, the culturally dominant groups as well as the marginalized, those at revolutionary epicenters and those who can influence their fate from outside – must accept, at least minimally, if *changes in institutions and powers of political economy* toward conditions of *cosmopolitan community solidarity and economic justice* are to be effective and sustainable. I will argue here that, braided together with classical and contemporary strands of pragmatist philosophy, liberatory-prophetic strands of diverse religious traditions (as contrasted with dogmatic claims and institutional structures) offer important insights that can help to expand and generalize the experience-based lessons of Mohandes Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Julius Nyerere, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, and other world-historic revolutionary leaders about how to achieve deeply democratic changes in consciousness toward cosmopolitan community solidarity within context-specific cultural revolutions that constitute a necessary part of local-and-global processes of evolving just institutions and practices of political economy.

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2 For a discussion of differences between experienced democracies, new democracies, and other systems of political economy, see Robert Dahl's brief, well-researched, and insightful book, *On Democracy* (Yale University Press, 2000).

This approach to the theory and practice of fostering individual and shared deeply democratic changes in social-cultural consciousness may not persuade at least four kinds of critical readers, two on the left and two on the right, to whom I have space here only to sketch brief responses.<sup>3</sup> To the first group of critics on the left, Marxist determinists who believe that any particular human consciousness simply reflects class interests, and that a “one-size-fits-all,” context-independent, top-down kind of revolution toward economic justice is both feasible and desirable, I would suggest that this view vastly oversimplifies Marx’s analysis and that a large body of empirical literature on diverse revolutions shows the importance of the deeper cultural dimension that Gandhi, King, Nyerere, and Lula have stressed, as well as the unacceptable costs and the ultimate futility of efforts to impose top-down cultural revolutions. To the second group on the left, those who think that religious traditions *in toto* have long ago used up any revolutionary energy they may once have had, and now serve only as conservative rationales for unjust socio-economic formations, and as comforting “opiates” that distract the masses from risk-taking participation in struggles for justice, I would reply that whether liberatory-prophetic religious traditions and impulses are always anti-revolutionary, or may sometimes be pro-revolutionary, is an empirical question. The evidence on which I draw here suggests that religious impulses have been and still can be a spur toward expansion of individual and shared cosmopolitan community solidarity as well as personal risk-taking for the sake of socio-economic justice.

To the first group of critics on the right, cultural conservatives who believe that attempts to change cultures in any programmatic way are unwise, and that perceived injustices (if they are such in fact) must be allowed to work themselves out over time, I would point out that progressives like Gandhi, King, Nyerere, Lula, and the American pragmatists I will discuss below all agree with thoughtful conservatives like Edmund Burke that cultural change is difficult to achieve. All of them have argued that wise leaders must take careful account of local traditions, even as they look to evolving, world-wide patterns of insight that have emerged from centuries of human experience as both a critical and a creative resource in efforts to guide change processes, which are in any case inevitable. Finally, to the second group of critics on the right, neo-liberals and libertarians who believe that any effort to influence the values and choices of individuals violates their autonomy, and thus, their basic human rights, I would argue that their analysis is flawed in four important ways. First, the account of the human person on which their objection rests is profoundly anti-empirical and a-historical. Second, all democratic social institutions assume that some forms

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3 I am grateful to Antonio Jose Romera Valverde, who commented of an earlier version of this essay at the *13<sup>th</sup> International Meeting on Pragmatism* at the Pontifical Catholic University of Sao Paulo in November 2011, even though he totally rejected my ideas. I believe he failed to understand my essay because he took it to be expressing views of one or both of the groups of my critics on the right that I briefly sketch and reply to here. I took him to be expressing views similar to those of both groups of critics on the left. In revising my essay, I have tried to be clearer in framing the problems I am addressing and my own proposals about how pragmatism and liberatory-prophetic traditions can help us to understand and transform them, without accepting responsibility to persuade critics of these four kinds.

of social influence are either strongly permissible or inevitable, even though others are not. Third, contrary to their assumption that autonomous individuals naturally resist social impulses that would require them to change, the justice-focused change efforts on which my remarks will focus grow out of widely shared, personally valued experiences of change in the views of individuals in relation to their ideal and actual social communities. Last, I would point out that such changes are not and cannot be imposed or stimulated by what the libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick called an “experience machine.”<sup>4</sup>

Although I do not expect to persuade these four groups of critics, my argument here is addressed to diverse others who believe that it is both possible and highly desirable to actively advance cosmopolitan community solidarity as part of the necessary work of advancing economic justice: egalitarian liberals, contemporary pragmatists, and other open-minded thinkers of all varieties. I will argue that *a pragmatist phenomenology and genealogy* of the personal-and-social emergence of norms and practices of cosmopolitan community solidarity that demand and work toward economic justice can draw fruitfully on *diverse liberatory-prophetic religious traditions*. I will suggest that *a braided theoretical rope* of pragmatist phenomenology, genealogy, and ancient-and-continuing streams of religious experience can help diverse thinkers and actors in widely differing local-and-global contexts to desirably change their individual and cultural habits of thinking and acting, and on that basis, to achieve reasonable democratic agreement about how to understand recent world events and current crises, to intelligently revise currently dominant meanings of key ideal concepts of political economy to respond to these events and crises, and with their guidance, to desirably and feasibly reconstruct institutions and practices of political economy in ways that meet the challenges of cosmopolitan community solidarity and socio-economic justice in twenty-first century local-and-global living.<sup>5</sup>

### **Rooting “seeds” of hypotheses about community and justice in contextual histories<sup>6</sup>**

Inspired by Arab Spring revolutionaries and Occupy encampments, many scholars and journalists have persuasively demonstrated that contemporary problems of economic injustice have been worsened rather than solved by currently dominant

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4 The idea of an “experience machine” was a key thought experiment in the libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick’s influential book, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Basic Books, 1974).

5 Both Charles Sanders Peirce and William James use the methodological image of a braided rope or cable of diverse strands to explain the various kinds of support, and the diverse methods of developing each intellectual strand, that they believe underlie well-grounded, fruitful hypotheses in all areas of inquiry. I became aware of their braided rope image, which contrasts with one-strand linear thinking and methods of justification, through conversations with David W. Woods during the course of his research and writing of *Democracy Deferred: Civic Leadership after 9/11* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

6 I owe this idea of “seeds” to Ivo A. Ibri, who introduced this idea in essays on Peircean aesthetics he presented at the 13<sup>th</sup> International Meeting on Pragmatism at the Pontifical Catholic University of Sao Paulo in November 2011 and at the New York Pragmatist Forum at Fordham University in January 2012.

neo-liberal and libertarian models of macro-economics, by the continuing pursuit of self-interest by wealthy nations in their practices of aid and development assistance to nations in economic crisis, and by reality-denying exhortations from bankers, politicians, and preachers to increasingly poor communities and individuals in economic crisis to practice self-discipline and “pull themselves up by their own bootstraps,” as these ideologues claim others have done before them.<sup>7</sup> Such neo-liberal and libertarian models of political economy ignore vast economic and social inequalities within currently wealthy nations like the United States and Brazil, while covering over the continuing influence of these nations’ colonial histories of slaveholding and exploiting indigenous peoples and their lands that originally created the radical inequalities that are carried forward today through history-denying systems of property law, high costs of political campaigns, allegedly “merit”-based educational opportunities, social-residential patterns that segregate the “haves” from the “have-nots,” and advertising-funded mass media that exclude real human needs that are not “beautiful” and “entertaining” from the experiences they represent to the world as real. The poor and those in immediate danger of becoming poor are effectively silenced by such wealth-conserving practices of social communication, as they are excluded from effective democratic participation by media-cultivated fears, by the narrow social experience of those who currently prosper, and by the unchallenged false beliefs of those who currently constitute the dominant electoral classes.

Socio-economic conditions like these are inherently unstable, as King pointed out in the 1960’s, and no regime or country in the world has sufficient control of all the various kinds of power to enforce forever a system of relations of political economy that so many regard as unjust.<sup>8</sup> However, as King argued, change in political economy can go in either of two directions: chaos or community. The question here, as for King in the civil and human rights struggle he led, is how is it feasible to advance desirable changes in local-and-global situations of economic, political, and social injustice? How can we advance cosmopolitan community solidarity and economic justice in ways that fulfill the deeper meanings of liberty and equality?

An interlinked chain of democratic revolutions fostered by grassroots-controlled media may seem to be the answer, as exemplified in the partially successful 2011 “Arab Spring” uprisings, which the locality-specific yet international “Occupy” movement has carried to global centers of power in a continuing challenge to the justice of neo-liberal and libertarian local-and-global systems of political economy. Thus far, these interlinked revolutions and rebellions have demonstrated a preference for non-violent strategies when these are effective, with some willingness to use defensive violence when this is perceived as necessary. Some of these revolutionaries have shown themselves ready and able to use aggressive violence to overthrow undemocratic regimes that turn arms against their own people, especially when they receive assistance from other nations, as promised in the United Nations documents.

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7 See, for example, Rachel Donadio’s editorial, “The Failing State of Greece,” *New York Times* (February 26, 2012).

8 See especially the concluding chapter, “The World House,” in Martin Luther King’s *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (Random House, 1967), which is included in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington (HarperCollins, 1990).

Apart from the issue of if and when violence is morally justifiable in revolutionary struggles for justice, another key question must be addressed: *after the fighting ends, then what?* Removing entrenched despots is only the tip of the iceberg in transforming whole systems of national and international injustice by creating new institutions, habits, and practical conditions of social living that can democratically interlink all the members of local communities, nations, and the world community of nations within new relations of power-sharing that meet the basic human needs and cultivate the human capabilities and unique gifts of all and each, while giving each a voice and others' listening ears within on-going processes of creative deliberation about how to meet future human needs and those of the land that sustains us. As Julius Nyerere, the revolutionary founding President of Tanzania pointed out in the 1960's, removing a ruling elite is the easy part of revolution. Changing the hearts and minds of a deeply divided people from the old ways bred by colonial relations to new democratic values and habits of living, while simultaneously developing new institutions and power distributions that can support and further expand these, is different and more difficult.

Julius Nyerere's mid-twentieth century call for what we may describe as a "deeply democratic revolution" in Tanzania toward cosmopolitan community solidarity may seem to echo the authoritarian strategies of revolutionary social-cultural change of Josef Stalin in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mao Zedong in China, and Pol Pot in Cambodia. All these allegedly democratic revolutionary leaders used violence on a mass scale to remove opponents and terrorize others into submission, relocating elite opinion leaders into occupations and places where they would share the life experience of the poor, and requiring all the citizens of their nations to study and practice a new language of equality, as symbolized by Mao's "Little Red Book." However, Nyerere's revolutionary vision was fundamentally different from theirs, because he did not believe that violently imposed social-cultural changes could create desirable and sustainable post-colonial habits of thinking and living that could build a new nation in progressive, deeply democratic, context-specific ways that would reflect the diverse yet distinctively East African experiences of Tanzania's newly empowered, culture-cherishing, local community members who were then reclaiming the land that had nurtured their forebears.

Therefore, Nyerere advocated *uburu na ujamaa*, "social freedom in community," a distinctively African realization of the inclusively cosmopolitan local-and-global "revolution of conscience" King advocated. Nyerere believed that social transformation strategies grounded in education, participatory consultation, and generally advantageous socio-economic changes could both liberate the people and advance the cultural evolution of their local communities and the whole nation. We cannot simply abolish the old ways, Nyerere wisely understood; we must work with and through them, bringing diverse stakeholders into the process as much as possible in order to create new and better institutions while reshaping a multicultural society over time to meet emerging needs.

Activated by a similar vision of promoting democratic community solidarity as necessary to achieving and sustaining economic justice, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva pursued related socio-cultural transformation strategies during his two terms as President of Brazil (2003-2011) as a necessary part of the process of designing and implementing new national policies and institutions of political economy that could

eradicate hunger, lift a large part of the population out of poverty, and place the nation as a whole on a stable and growing economic basis within the deeply flawed real context of a “gap”-promoting international system. Lula implemented reforms in land ownership, taxes, and the minimum wage, as well as national investments in jobs, nutrition, health care, housing, education, infrastructure, energy production, and economic growth stimulation that reflected the participation of thousands of diverse citizens in deliberative assemblies, in some cases working for several years before announcing their recommendations.<sup>9</sup> Raised in poverty and with very limited formal education, Lula began his public career as a union organizer of steel workers who was not discouraged from justice-focused activism by being jailed by a repressive military government. Instead, he helped to found the progressive Workers’ Party that lifted him to the presidency in 2003 after three unsuccessful earlier campaigns. By 2011, Lula’s participatory democratic transformation strategies had helped Brazil to become the eighth largest economy in the world while raising more than 20 million people out of poverty and giving many others some measure of hope, international recognition, and cultural pride.

Lula guided world-historic achievements in Brazil’s continuing struggle for deep democracy and economic justice, but regrettably, in the mega-cities, myriad “*favelas*” still remain that reflect the nation’s earlier, anti-egalitarian transition from a slave-holding colonial past.<sup>10</sup> So-called *favelas* are unplanned, informally built communities with high levels of poverty and drug-related violence and low levels of mainstream employment, housing, sanitation, health care, transportation, education, commercial enterprises, material amenities, and social hope. Some of these radically poor communities are being simply cleared by massive police invasions to remove problem people and eyesores in preparation for Rio de Janeiro’s hosting of the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics. Thus, change continues in Brazil, but the challenge will be to regain Lula’s revolutionary course toward economic justice by developing a consciousness of cosmopolitan community solidarity among those more secure members of Brazilian society who presently prefer to ignore the misery of those who were left behind in the nation’s recent growth.

By rooting these and other suggestive “seeds” of hypotheses about how to achieve deeply democratic transformations of hearts and minds in the rich empirical soil of real relational histories maturely considered, we can evoke and justify new interpretations of the long-recognized democratic ideal values – liberty, equality, and community solidarity – that can guide feasible and desirable transformations of our evolved ways of living within diverse contemporary socio-economic, cultural,

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9 On Lula’s political vision and strategies, as well as the value of John Dewey’s kind of pragmatism for understanding and continuing the deeply democratic transformation of Brazil’s post-colonial and post-military political economy, see the scholarship of Brazilian political scientist Thamy Pogrebinski, who helped to design some of Lula’s deliberative assemblies, e.g., her “Pragmatism: A Philosophy for Latin American Practice” (n.d.).

10 For a discussion of the special challenges mega-cities present to local ecosystems as well as to local-and-global struggles for economic justice, see Chapter 6, “Transforming World Capitalisms through Radical Pragmatism: Economy, Law, and Democracy,” in my *Deep Democracy: Community, Diversity, and Transformation* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).



and natural contexts.<sup>11</sup> Our future as human persons in twenty-first century global contexts will inescapably reflect the values, choices, and impacts of those who have gone before us, as well as emergent interactions among human and other-than-human beings within larger social and natural processes. If we would reason and act intelligently, rather than arbitrarily and irresponsibly in our present time of local and global crisis and opportunity, these aspects of our contextual history must form the ground and conditions from which we feel, think, and make active choices about socio-economic justice as a long-recognized guiding value within our efforts to frame a more just and deeply democratic political economy – one that ameliorates past harms, addresses current human needs, and advances the well-being of all the living members of the biotic community.

Partial and provisional insights about struggles for socio-economic justice in specific contexts that can become “seeds” of more general hypotheses are available to us within our shared inheritance of a long human history, as this has been reflexively analyzed and imaginatively extended by scholarly traditions in many disciplines, as well as by wise people in all of the world’s cultures. This braided history of scholarship and thoughtful living teaches us that such general hypotheses are fallible, that they cannot be applied as universal principles in a “cookie cutter” way, and that they will almost certainly need to be tailored to specific situations in which real people struggle for justice, giving rise through their struggles to better insights about the meaning of justice and improved general hypotheses about the best ways of

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11 By “real history,” I mean to acknowledge the importance of facts that become well-established though not infallibly so through careful processes of inquiry, which include processes of interpretation that reasonable people will always regard as pluralistically open to more than one account of relations of causes, consequences, and significance. At the same time, I mean to reject certain kinds of claims about history, including clearly false claims like Michelle Bachman’s claim during a political speech that America’s “founding fathers” worked hard and effectively to end slavery. Well-established facts of American history include the ownership of slaves by Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and many other signers of our Declaration of Independence until the time of their deaths. Jefferson clearly knew that doing so was immoral and tried to make chattel slavery illegal from the beginning of our new nation, so as to be forced to end his own practice at the same time as his wealthy neighbors would face the same economic losses. When instead, slavery was treated as a legal social category in the original formulation of the United States Constitution, Jefferson held onto his slaves. Over the years, he wrote to friends about his worries that many years of chattel slavery had made those so oppressed practically unprepared and psychologically unfit to live in freedom, with responsibility to manage their own economic and social relations. He also floated ideas about transporting former slaves back to Africa because he believed it would be impossible to create a fully integrated society of racial equals here after America’s history of race-based inequality and animosity at all social levels, even among already free blacks and whites. Such well-established facts and relations as these of Jefferson’s biography cannot reasonably be denied or ignored in telling and interpreting real history, as contrasted with historical fiction, historical denial (e.g., of the Holocaust), selective ideological appropriations of history, and historical mistakes like Bachman made. Even philosophers using thought experiments as intuition pumps must reckon carefully with real history, real science, and real experiences of living if they are not to mislead themselves and others who entertain their ideas.

organizing its institutional means.<sup>12</sup> As I will explain below, the liberatory-prophetic strands of various global religious traditions, when considered apart from dogmatic claims and institutional structures, can contribute to such a pragmatist genealogy and phenomenology by functioning as both “outer” and “inner” histories of real practices and experiences of caring for and with others amidst prolonged struggles for justice, offering us opportunities to glean wisdom from these struggles.<sup>13</sup> Thus, they can be useful to contemporary scholars and other thoughtful people as aids in critically clarifying and expanding shared general insights about the meaning and requisite conditions of social and economic justice that have emerged from modern and post-modern political revolutions toward democracy and the social shifts that have followed these since the American and French Revolutions of the late eighteenth century. Such a clarification and expansion of shared general insights is necessary if we are to achieve reasonable democratic agreement about what social and economic justice means, as well as how to do justice in real-world contexts.<sup>14</sup>

### **A pragmatist genealogy and phenomenology of three justice-linked ideal concepts**

Liberty, equality, and fraternity are the public names of the justice-linked guiding democratic ideals of the American and French revolutions that generations of

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12 As Aristotle pointed out thousands of years ago, different kinds of studies have their own range of precision, and the best insights about social living we may be able to reach may tell us only what is “true for the most part. “See Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, *Metaphysics*, scientific writings, and works on method (his “Organon”) for statements about and examples of differing, field-specific degrees of precision that Aristotle believed are possible in inquiring about diverse matters, even when using the best available methods of inquiry in various fields. Like John Dewey many centuries later, Aristotle argued that there is no universal best method of inquiry and no universal form or standard of truth in knowing about the wide variety of things we humans seek to understand, though some methods are better than others for particular kinds of inquiry. Both argue that only non-universal generalities are possible about human behavior, social institutions, and tendencies in history because of various contextual differences and because of differences in the gifts, tendencies, values, developed skills, available technologies, and choices of human actors, as individuals and in social groups.

13 I intend here to evoke William James’s sense of “religious experience” without his hostility or discomfort toward organized religion. This allows me to invoke “outer” aspects of experience such as sacred texts, ritual traditions, and everyday practices, as well as the “inner” aspects of individual mystical experience and prayer on which James focused in his efforts to launch a “science of religions” that would employ the right kinds of methods and focus on the right research questions to illuminate the religious and spiritual aspects of human life, including the lives of those he called moral and religious “geniuses.” It is important to note here that, as much as Dewey, James was intent on avoiding a “two realms” metaphysics, instead contending that human experience includes more depth and variety than can be expressed in a reductive materialism.

14 On the importance of finding ways to achieve shared insights about social and economic justice to ground and guide public deliberations toward reasonable democratic agreement about crucial present issues of social and economic justice, see Richard Bernstein’s comments on Hilary Putnam’s “abstract” discussion of the importance of discovering such “objective” values in Bernstein’s *The Pragmatic Turn* (2010).

philosophers have tried to define more precisely as fixed concepts, even as countless activists have adopted and modified these vague ideals as slogans or general guides for their own revolutions toward socio-economic justice. The philosophical attempt to define and defend these ideals as precise theoretical concepts of political economy has misfired, partly because these are examples of fruitfully vague concepts of a functionally important kind about which both Charles Sanders Peirce and William James wrote, but also because there is a challenging, personally experienced dimension of these ideals that stimulates and gives transformative direction to individuals' and communities' developing goals and changing habits of thought and action. Focusing on this last aspect of the nature and function of these democratic ideals, I will argue here that a pragmatist phenomenological perspective may help us to appreciate how widely shared individual experiences of the need for personal liberation of various kinds (the inner meaning of liberty) may lead to recognition of others' equally important though differing needs (the inner meaning of equality), and may thereby motivate development of caring, thoughtful, educative practices of cosmopolitan community solidarity in daily living (the inner meaning of fraternity) that can advance the actualization of these values, even through episodes of conflict and the mutual shock of otherness. Such individual and cultural interactive growth processes can be greatly enhanced by gaining a historically realistic and morally mature genealogical understanding of how the meanings of liberty, equality, and cosmopolitan community solidarity have emerged within differing local-and-global contexts since the late eighteenth century as motivations for and aspects of the democratic ideal, and as conditions for achieving social and economic justice. Reconnecting these key modern ideals of democratic political economy with ancient and continuing liberatory-prophetic streams of insight and transformative struggle for justice offers both a valuable critical resource and a promising site for working toward necessary changes in contemporary consciousness among those billions of world citizens, rich and poor, who still feel their power at deep levels of their living stream of experience.

Although my earlier allusions to "reasonable democratic agreement" may seem to imply that this project will be a study in "the claims of public reason" or "the requirements of ideal speech situations," this is not a project in ideal theory in the Kantian tradition like those being developed by thinkers who work on the contemporary research platforms established by John Rawls and Jurgen Habermas, though it values and learns from them. Instead, it is a phenomenological and genealogical project in the classical American pragmatist vein that imaginatively extrapolates from felt and reflectively acknowledged aspects of the best and worst experiences we have already had toward future personal and social conditions that would make it possible for all of us to have opportunities to share the best features of such experiences while avoiding their worst ones by reconstructing context-specific, dynamic, just, and sustainable individual, communal, and institutional habits and practices.<sup>15</sup> Such a pragmatist phenomenology makes no claim that experiences of

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15 The language in which I have expressed my framing of this project draws especially from John Dewey, but the project itself also reflects valued insights from Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce, Jane Addams, George Herbert Mead, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Alain L. Locke, as well as my appreciative reading of contemporary pragmatists who

the need for liberty, of felt equality, and of a need to share in developing mutually preferable life conditions with diverse others are *universally* had by all human persons and definitive of their inner lives. Instead, my claim is that *many* human persons have such experiences, that they are *potentially available* to all or almost all human persons, and that they are *desirable* as moments and motivators in our development as social individuals and as cultural-ecological beings. Many but certainly not all contemporary human beings have had such a phenomenological succession of family-resemblant experiences that I, with many other thinkers in diverse liberatory-prophetic religious traditions, would thematize as historically realistic, morally mature, inclusive, and democratic. These are the kinds of experiences that have given rise to and guide our shared sense of what social and economic justice requires and how we can participate in actualizing it, which we hope to make more widely available to others through education and opportunities to participate in practices related to those in which we have found aesthetic depth.<sup>16</sup>

The pragmatist genealogy and the pragmatist phenomenology I propose here are mutually referential in three ways. First, my pragmatist phenomenology acknowledges that the broad kinds of experiences of and longings for democratic liberty, equality, and cosmopolitan community solidarity on which this part of my discussion focuses are peculiarly modern and perhaps post-modern in their historical context. These are stimulated and structured by globally influential technologies and transnational currents of ideas that promote *some widely shared social habits* (e.g., reliance on private automobiles to interconnect widely dispersed parts of our lives, and on mass media and the internet to ground our sense of reality), *some powerful though objectionable institutional types* (e.g., neo-liberal democracy and transnational libertarian capitalism), and *some widely though not universally developed human capabilities* (e.g., literacy, numeracy, and electronic communication skills), as well as creation of the kinds of *built-and-natural environmental systems that encourage and sustain these habits, institutions, and related capabilities*. Second, my pragmatist genealogy recognizes that the meanings of these concepts and practices do and must continue to develop over time in diverse ways and in local contexts, as they are deployed to name our experiences and aspirations, as well as our criticisms and our counter-proposals for reconstructing our current political economic framework and the types of social interactions this fosters and limits. Third, my discussion of the genealogy includes the phenomenology as focusing on the realm of motivation for

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work in these classical veins such as Cornel West, Richard Bernstein, Hilary Putnam, Larry Hickman, Charlene Haddock Seigfried, Gregory Pappas, Leonard Harris, Alfred Prettyman, David McClean, and others.

- 16 My language here reflects how John Dewey thought and wrote about aesthetic experience as characterized by a quality of depth of feeling that stirs those parts of one's mind and whole being James called "subconscious," stimulating the person who undergoes such an experience to take in the world differently in terms of what one notices and how one feels about it, and on that basis, to think differently, especially after reflection. When this new "take" is more inclusive, more aware of differences and likenesses, and more attuned to values at work in the world, the changes in how one tends to feel, think, and act in the future constitute growth. The arts may stimulate such aesthetic experiences, but they do not always do so, nor are they the only kinds of stimuli that have this effect on us.

adopting or changing previous meanings of concepts and practices as understood by what Mead called the “generalized others” that intersect within us as individuals and as members of communities who struggle to work out our identities, our multiple group memberships, and our interdependent futures within our particular dynamic and often dysfunctional socio-economic, geo-political, and local-and-global ecological contexts.

As a starting point for outlining this pragmatist genealogy of modern and post-modern justice-linked ideal concepts, consider that *freedom* or *liberty* has been a key ideal element of democratic thought and experienced value at least since the beginning of the American Revolution. Some sense of widely shared *equality*, at least under the law, also was part of the vision that began to emerge into conscious awareness and valuation during that late eighteenth century era of struggle, as did some sense of being in this struggle *together as members of a community*, with “our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor” at stake, in Thomas Jefferson’s words. Thomas Paine and other American theorists of human rights developed these concepts and values further, contributing by their writing as well as their social, legal, and political experiments to the French Revolution’s rallying cry of “liberté, égalité, fraternité.” As a guide to the development of new outlooks, daily practices, and shared social institutions for future democratic living, this tripartite value ideal was vague when the French revolutionaries articulated it – vague in both rich and unavoidable ways.<sup>17</sup> It expressed imagined possibilities more encompassing, more inclusive, and more powerful than the glimmering, hope-attracting moments of their previous actual experience of these values. Moreover, these revolutionaries sensed its expansive capacity to guide their struggle across many future years, during which their intellectual and practical efforts would create experimental conditions for discovering deeper insights about how to live democratically. These, in turn, would give rise to somewhat different hopes, loyalties, lessons from history, and plans for the future, as they and their inheritors would learn the consequences of adopting alternative interpretations and experimental actualizations of its component and conjoined ideals, finding out the hard way what works and, equally important, what fails.

More than two hundred years later, contemporary democratic thinkers and activists continue to wrestle with this French tripartite ideal, taking into account what others have said about it and done with it in the intervening centuries while focusing on the needs and conditions of our own times and places. During the past year, including “Arab Spring” and continuing protest actions in major cities throughout Europe and the United States, many people around the world have caught the spirit of its vague ideal guidance and then struggled to carry on their own democratic revolutions “by the seat of their pants,” with some guidance from others about how to put it to work. However, during the fifty years that preceded “Arab Spring,” some political economists argued that it is impossible to actualize all three aspects of this tripartite ideal because of tensions among its component elements; this was Friedrich von Hayek’s final libertarian view about the incompatibility of liberty and

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17 On the necessarily vague character of many key concepts, including those that function as guiding ideals, see William James’s *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909) and William J. Gavin’s *William James and Reinstatement of the Vague* (Temple University Press, 1992).

equality, which led to his claim that liberty must rule alone. Others have argued that one element is of central importance, and the others must be lexically subordinated to it; this was John Rawls's "Kantian constructivist" view about the priority of the right (understood as civil liberties) over the good (understood in terms of primary socio-economic goods) within a just society. A third group, including Michael Sandel and Michael Walzer, has argued that liberty, equality, and fraternity are mutually conditioning aspects of a single, larger ideal of democracy. A fourth group, including contemporary Catholic thinkers in the prophetic stream of Latin American liberation theology who have learned important lessons from Peirce's pragmatism, have suggested that liberty, equality, and cosmopolitan community solidarity are stages of reflexively developing experience in which the third ideal ultimately encompasses and interprets the others without diminishing their importance.<sup>18</sup>

This is how I frame this last group's idea about how a pragmatist phenomenology and genealogy can illuminate our twenty-first century experience of the local-and-global meanings of these concepts, as well as the closely related issue of what economic justice means now: We humans live as social beings in familial, local, national, and international situations in a modern and post-modern world in which these ideal values are at best only partially actualized, in part because they clash with older traditions and in part because they are opposed by contemporary proponents of neo-liberalism, libertarian capitalism, and other rival values. As we struggle to grow up in our particular cultural-ecological niches, to fulfill others' expectations, and to work out our own individuality within power-laden processes of struggle for social recognition and full adult participation in our local-and-global societies, our own liberty (as individuals, a family, or a people) may be the first of these ideal values we deeply feel as a motivator and directional lure for our struggle. However, the ideal of social equality and eventually the ideal of many-rooted cosmopolitan community solidarity will follow if and when we acknowledge and come to share in others' similar and interconnected struggles in our diversity-including relational world.<sup>19</sup>

18 I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss these ideas with Rene Sanchez, Patrick Lippert, Robert Lassalle-Klein, and others at the 2011 Summer Meeting of the John Courtney Murray Group in Alameda, California. Their framing of these ideas drew fruitfully from a way of interconnecting Peirce's ideas with Latin American Liberation Theology that they learned from the group's late founder, Donald Gelpe, S.J. My own framing of these ideas also draws in pragmatist insights from other classical and contemporary pragmatists, and thus, differs somewhat from theirs in what I believe and hope are congenial ways.

19 Since ancient times, there have been two strands of cosmopolitan thought, one that rejects a local identity and any claims from a local community for the sake of the global or cosmic community of living, thinking, feeling beings, and one that seeks to fulfill local loyalties while contextualizing and limiting these within and for the sake of wider loyalties that include others' differing local loyalties. The latter kind is what I mean by "rooted" cosmopolitanism, which like Josiah Royce's "loyalty to loyalty," includes loyal-and-critical commitment to one's local community that he referred to as "provincialism." For a more detailed discussion of my own pragmatist cosmopolitanism, see "Cultivating Pragmatist Cosmopolitanism: Democratic Local-and-Global Community amidst Diversity," in *Pragmatism and Diversity: Dewey in the Context of Late Twentieth Century Thought*, ed. Judith M. Green, Stefan Neubert, and Kersten Reich (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Thus, if and when we become aware of others' non-liberty and how this links to our own, their existential lack may become a motivator and a lure for us, too, leading us to feel and frame our own deep desire for liberty in terms of these now-related others' equal need and longing for liberty. The sense of equality we feel and think about is not arithmetic identity; rather, it expresses our situational comparability, parity, and interconnection as social peers. When this feeling and thought of equality so understood begins to emerge in our experience, we may be drawn beyond our own limited struggle for personal, group, or local liberty into the beginnings of learning from and caring about these others whose struggles for liberty may be like ours in some ways and different in others, and whose situated needs may combine needs for non-interference with needs for fair social inclusion and needs for material stuff and practical support of various kinds.<sup>20</sup> As our learning from and caring about others grows, an engaged sense that we must do something to help them and ourselves by collaboratively struggling together with them also may begin to emerge as a sense of responsibility and an attractive, meaningful opportunity that takes our everyday activities and our life plans in a new direction. We now search for new life practices and new social institutions, as well as more opportunities for problem-solving inquiries with these non-identical peers that will make life better for all of us, together and in our differences. We transcend "myself," "my people," and "those others" to become loyal members of a living "We."

*Cosmopolitan community solidarity* is this engaged, deeply valued, moral and metaphysical experience of living and belonging together in a larger struggle that leads us to act with the goal of forging the kinds of interconnections that will allow us to help each other to sustain present sources of meaning, beauty, and practical sufficiency, while transforming social institutions and power concentrations that currently block a more just local-and-global future – one in which all of us as differing peers will be well-supported and will better understand the broad dynamics and kinds of practices that are involved in sustaining such free, equal, communally interconnected ways of living. This on-going process of valuing and advancing cosmopolitan community solidarity with non-identical others emerges out of and reinterprets processes of seeking liberty and then social equality-in-difference through learning to discover fuller ideal meanings and to take up one's own related practical responsibilities to, with, and for others as one comes to more fully understand one's own situation in relation to theirs. This process involves continuing development of characteristic habits of felt concern for and with others, which over time become reflectively expressed in collaborative, ecologically sensitive, transformative practices in which cosmopolitan community solidarity takes on meanings of mutual recognition, interactive support, and growth of new knowledge and insight through everyday processes of reflective living, as well as processes of problem-solving inquiry.

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20 On the inextricable interconnections among these human needs for non-interference, for fair social inclusion, and for material stuff and practical support of various kinds, and what these imply for others' responsibilities as nations and as individuals, see the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), as well as contemporary works on communitarian ethics by Michael Sandel and Michael Walzer, and on capabilities theory by Amartya Sen and Martha C. Nussbaum.

## Braiding liberatory-prophetic insights with pragmatist insights about justice

A helpful way to understand the liberatory-prophetic Biblical values of faith, hope, and love is as grounding their processively unfolding and sustaining “inner” meanings within such expansive “outer” processes of evolving cosmopolitan community solidarity, which they illuminate, motivate, and guide. These meanings, too, are always social in their specific contexts and implications, even as they are also deeply personal in their felt qualities and meanings. That is, recognizing one’s situation as socially framed and socially implicating is necessary, but not sufficient for imaginatively experiencing and actively practicing faith, hope, and love in community solidarity with known and unknown others. This requires personal growth, opportunities for engagement, and actual co-involvements in both everyday practices and collaborative inquiries that one has *faith* in advance can succeed, so that one acts in *hope* to achieve a dynamic, powerful, actual universal from interlinked, increasingly empowered and valued differing individual experiences of embodied, historically and culturally situated individuals who effectively *love* one another, personally or with mediation through institutions that sustain and desirably transform their social and natural life ecologies, in feeling and in noted fact.

Faith, hope, and love so understood function as the “inner” meanings of the justice-guiding democratic values of liberty, equality, and community solidarity in the liberatory-prophetic pastoral letter of the American Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All* (1985).<sup>21</sup> Because their intended audience includes diverse thinkers of other faiths and of no faith at all, the Bishops’ argument focuses on widely shared biblical texts as well as the church’s historical experience to express from an “outer” or “objective” perspective a set of closely related ideas about social justice that they argue also can be derived from reflecting on the philosophical writings of Aristotle and Kant. Thus, the Bishops’ argument meets Rawls’s test for “public reason” as articulated in his final works, though it leads reflection on social and economic justice in a somewhat different direction that Rawls’s himself took, because it assumes with pragmatism that humans are fundamentally social beings.<sup>22</sup>

I call *Economic Justice for All* “liberatory” because its aim is to lift the oppression of the poor, and I call it “prophetic” because it meets Cornel West’s test for prophecy: it calls for justice by reflectively drawing out the meaning of our shared experience, which can be done within the language of various religious traditions and also in the language of non-religious humanism.<sup>23</sup> Three intertwined aspects of economic justice

21 See the American Catholic Bishops’ pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All* (1985).

22 See especially John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), *Political Liberalism* (1996), and *The Law of Peoples* (2000), in which Rawls maintains the claim that metaphysical differences between individualism and socialism are parts of equally viable or publicly unobjectionable “comprehensive doctrines.” In contrast, the American Catholic Bishops argued or assumed in *Economic Justice for All* (1985) that any reasonable account of social and economic justice must recognize the fundamental interconnectedness of our lives as the basis for our moral and public institutional rights and obligations to one another.

23 Cornel West explains this use of the idea of prophetic truth-telling in many of his works, including in his contribution to *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (2011), a recent collaborative public conversation with Jurgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, and Judith Butler at the Cooper Union in New York City, which was organized by Eduardo Mendieta,



emerge out of the American Catholic Bishops' reflections: distributive, commutative, and social justice, each of them implying its own particular kind of economic entitlements and responsibilities. In part, their thinking agrees with Rawls's "Kantian constructivism," i.e., because all human persons as bearers of infinite dignity have basic needs if they are to sustain their lives, contribute to their communities, and fulfill their individual gifts, each and all are entitled to the contribution and support of others in meeting these needs through just social institutions, as well as through their own efforts, and are likewise responsible to contribute to and support others' basic needs and efforts.

I interpret the prophetic nugget of the Bishops' thinking that goes beyond Rawls's thinking as follows: in our real world, in which historical practices of systematic injustice and hierarchical oppression have blighted and polluted the development of many individuals' and whole peoples' future visions, social hopes, developed capacities, wells of resources, ecological nests, and networks of social stimulation and support, a "preferential option for the poor" is necessary as a guide to our striving to actualize justice in all three of the intertwined aspects of justice that they and others identify. That is, one must do more than imagine the situation of the worst-off members of a just society as better off than they would be with in alternative set of social institutions – one must be actively present with, to, and for the poor in one's society and in other societies with which one's own is linked as fellow members of "We," working to assure that as soon as is possible, all will experience full social inclusion as equal citizens, all will listen to and learn from others' insights and experienced needs, and all will collaborate to transform existing social institutions to meet diverse felt needs in stable, respectful, and creative ways.

This also means, I would add from both liberatory-prophetic and pragmatist perspectives, that those who are poor in any of these respects must learn to overcome any reluctance they may feel to ask others for the help and support to which they are entitled within that "We," understanding that the poor, too, bring good gifts. Those who are well-supplied must share with those in need as a matter of acknowledging their right to support in a spirit of community solidarity, as John Locke argued, not in a spirit of doling out what "I" choose to spare from a sense of entitlement to control transactions with recipients of "my" wealth and goods.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, as the liberatory-prophetic classical pragmatist thinker Jane Addams recognized, responding justly to those in need involves recognizing that one's own freedom and growth requires a generous spirit of communal sharing.<sup>25</sup> Achieving Addams's kind of "social democracy" now will require experimenting with new practices, as she and others did at Hull

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Jonathan Vanantwerpen, and Craig C. Calhoun, and then published in a volume edited by Mendieta and Vanantwerpen with an epilogue by Calhoun.

- 24 See the first of Locke's *Two Treatises of Civil Government* for his argument that we are morally obliged in ways that precede any social contract to meet others' basic needs out of our sufficiency, not only if we have excess, and that justice not charity requires this of us.
- 25 See Jane Addams' *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902) and *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1909), which Charlene Haddock Seigfried has helpfully explained and applied to our own times in her *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric* (University of Chicago Press, 1996).

House during America's Progressive Era, seeking collaborative, daily ways to meet the differing needs of ethical and spiritual equals who are part of a transformative struggle to progressively free all the transacting parties of "We" from the weight of troubled histories and now-overpowering empires.

Contemporary liberatory-prophetic pragmatist thinker Cornel West insightfully adds that actually launching and clearly guiding the kinds of effective, justice-focused transformative projects that can teach us how to do justly with one another in diverse global contexts requires that the poor and marginalized in any and all of these senses must play leading roles in prophetic visioning, as well as in guiding and populating social movements "from below."<sup>26</sup> Drawing on African Americans' long history of prophetic struggle for justice that has been sustained and often guided by leaders of black churches, including Malcolm X (Shabazz)<sup>27</sup> and Martin Luther King Jr., West writes that such "tragicomic" communities of mourning and hope allow people who are suffering through injustice to gain strength together from deeply undergoing their feelings, giving them expression in music, dance, and through the spoken word, and then carefully planning how to meet their urgent needs while using their moral-and-practical leverage to change the conditions that oppress them toward those evoked by the democratic ideal.<sup>28</sup>

In West's view, King represented the best of the liberatory-prophetic black tradition when he called people to stand up for their own "somebodiness" through principled, non-violent, justice-seeking transformative struggle through the kind of nationally and internationally publicized, but locally focused campaign he outlined in his famous "Letter from the Birmingham City Jail" and interpreted as having global significance in his Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech.<sup>29</sup> In these and other speeches, sermons, and essays, King contrasted *desegregation* or non-discrimination, the limited goal many Americans regarded as the meaning of justice under law, with the wider, positive *integration* into community life in its economic as well as social and political phases that the Civil Rights Movement sought throughout his years of leadership. As King argued, making relatively minor changes in the law and tweaking our current economic institutions in ways that are comfortable for those who currently enjoy their protection, following plans developed by elected representatives who unfairly serve

26 Again, Cornel West argues that this is the practical meaning of prophetic calls to justice in many of his works, including *Prophesy Deliverance* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* (Monthly Review Press, 1991), *Race Matters* (Knopf Doubleday, 1994), *Democracy Matters* (Penguin, 2004), and *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (Columbia University Press, 2011).

27 Malcolm Little changed his name to Malcolm X when he became a member (and later a leader) of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam. He changed his name again to Malcolm Shabazz after his conversion to orthodox Islam and his hajj to Mecca. Since Malcolm's assassination in 1963, his family has used the name Shabazz, though many people who are not familiar with his final conversion and re-naming still refer to him as Malcolm X.

28 See, for example, West's *The American Evasion of Philosophy* (1989) and his *Democracy Matters* (2004).

29 See especially "The Ethical Demands of Integration" and "The World House" in *Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington (HarperCollins, 1986).

narrow race and class interests, will not do enough of the right things, for the right reasons, and in the right ways to make sufficiently and sustainably just changes. We need democratic civic participation of all our society's members in all phases of this global-and-local, cross-difference, long-term, justice-seeking transformation process, which must continuously connect grassroots efforts toward social-cultural change with government efforts to adopt better laws and more effective institutional policies.

Many contemporary Buddhist thinkers, including Thich Nhut Han and the Dalai Lama, deeply agree with West's and King's liberatory-prophetic and pragmatist account of the emergence of experiences and guiding norms of cosmopolitan community solidarity and personal meaning from growth processes of liberty and equality, though they would frame the issues and actors somewhat differently. Like these Buddhists, many contemporary Native American "religious" thinkers would include the whole biotic community within the co-dependent sphere of interactive living beings of infinite dignity that rightly call forth aesthetic, moral, and spiritual responses of mutual recognition, mutual care, and mutual engagement in processes of liberation and transformation toward sustainable and meaning-filled mutual flourishing.<sup>30</sup> Thinking by their lights, we can rediscover similarly life-inclusive, liberatory-prophetic strands within ancient Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religious traditions that have regained contemporary importance in a time of combined ecological, economic, political, cultural, and psycho-social crisis on a global scale. When we take these convergent ideas from differing liberatory-prophetic traditions together, we find an expanded, non-anthropocentric sense of the life community as the ground of just social living, which requires care for the land as well as care for our human "others," based on learning to understand and to meet needs that are linked to, yet different from our own. Economic justice within such lifeworlds takes life-inclusive relations, obligations, and opportunities for mutual support as primary, paying attention to natural-social sustainability and rejecting selfish interest-seeking in favor of felt commitment to respecting one's own and others' human integrity, as well as the integrity of diverse life processes within whole social-natural ecological systems.

Dewey's classical pragmatist image of "the community of life" as the source of human being, the teacher and test of intelligent living, the locus of our consummation experiences of fulfilled meaning, and the ultimate focus of our responsibilities is fully compatible with such a cosmopolitan, life-inclusive, liberatory-prophetic perspective.<sup>31</sup> So is his way of understanding the difference between *the scientific attitude* as a general problem-focused approach to learning and responsive adaptation, and *the*

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30 I put "religious" thinkers in scare quotes because many of them would deny that there is some separate aspect of living or functionally distinct set of institutions involved in such ideas and practices. Rather, such a value-laden, metaphysically holistic engagement with nature is part of their culture-specific ways of life. See, for example, Robert Bunge, *An American Ur-Philosophie: Philosophy B. P. [Before Pragmatism]* (University Press of America, 1984); Dennis McPherson and Douglass Rabb, *Indian from the Inside: A Study in Ethno-metaphysics* (Lakehead University, 1993); Scott L. Pratt, *Native Pragmatism: Rethinking the Roots of American Philosophy* (Indiana University Press, 2002); and Bruce Wilshire, *The Primal Roots of American Philosophy* (Penn State University Press, 2000).

31 See the last two pages of John Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct*, 1922 (Southern Illinois University Press, 1988).

*scientific method* as one means of inquiry among others. That is, the scientific method is well-suited to certain kinds of specialized, highly controlled, collaborative inquiries about our environment, natural and social; however, the arts, moral reflection, and other systems of reaching out intelligently and with sensitive attunement within the flow of experience may offer better means of inquiry concerning less-controllable life problems and opportunities.

Drawing on both scientific method and moral reasoning, Dewey's younger contemporary Aldo Leopold, who is now recognized as the founder of the interdisciplinary science of ecology, drew upon years of detailed field notes from his work as a forester in Sand County, Wisconsin, as well as his experience of the beauty of the interwoven lives of diverse species across the seasons in this still-intact ecosystem, to frame his liberatory-prophetic call for justice to "the land" and the living members thereof that would require continuing moral evolution among us humans. Tracing a history of moral evolution from the cultural perspective of ancient Greece that affirmed Ulysses' preemptory hanging of the entire group of slave girls who served his rivals in his absence, across the centuries to Kant's revolutionary framing of the categorical moral imperative in terms of the equal dignity of all rational beings, Leopold called for another revolutionary reframing of morality that would lead all of us humans to regard ourselves as simple, responsible members of the biotic community. When we understand ourselves in this way, Leopold argued, we can guide our lives by "the land ethic," which assesses social habits and particular courses of action in terms of their impacts on the stability, integrity, and beauty of the living ecosystem as a whole.

Many other eco-ethicists writing after Dewey and Leopold have reframed earlier insights within the Western philosophical tradition in such terms. William Blackstone argued that "the right to a livable environment" is implied though not explicit within John Locke's influential account of human rights, because the smaller size of the world's human population and the simpler, less invasive technologies of Locke's time made the idea that humans could ever overrun the restorative powers of nature unthinkable. Since the emergence of ecology as a science, we can now think in terms of the "carrying capacity" of local ecosystems for human populations and various kinds of development, and this introduces empirically based moral constraints, as well as a basis for enforceable law and public policy, including urban and regional planning requirements. Pragmatist eco-ethicists Eric Katz and Andrew Light have argued that it doesn't matter why people live within these sustainable limits, whether intentionally or unintentionally, so long as they do. However, the experienced quality of our individual lives as well as the preservation of what N. Scott Momaday calls "sacred places" during a time of harsh contestation among narratives about the background and specific requirements of social and economic justice may depend on giving more specific answers to the question, "How can we motivate people to see economic and social justice as including the biotic community, and to act accordingly?" Working together to find answers to this question may stimulate the emergence of shared moral-epistemic norms to guide future democratic deliberations, as Richard Bernstein and Hilary Putnam have envisioned.<sup>32</sup>

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32 See Richard Bernstein's *The Pragmatic Turn* (Polity 2010) as well as Hilary Putnam's "Pragmatism and Moral Objectivity," in *Words and Life* (Harvard University Press, 1994).

## **How liberatory-prophetic and pragmatist insights advance solidarity and justice**

If we guide our thinking about social and economic justice with the pragmatist and prophetic-liberatory ideal premise that all human persons are, and should be treated in cosmopolitan solidarity by their fellows as, free and equal members of Earth's biotic community, to which each and all of us have responsibilities and from which each and all of us derive benefits, we will be able to draw realistically and maturely on both "outer" and "inner" histories of the meanings of liberty, equality, and community solidarity in fostering a revolutionary change in individual and cultural consciousness through processes of collaboratively inquiring what justice requires now and how to live justly in our times. In the past, the norms and institutional means of justice have been regulated by nations, cultures, and families using institutional means of law and economy with varying degrees of moral-epistemic adequacy and practical efficiency. Our contemporary times of crisis require us to intelligently reevaluate and effectively reconstruct these in feasible and desirable ways. If, as I suggested above, arithmetic equality is not the proper distributive norm for justice, but rather a locally-and-globally contextualized set of social and historical factors, such as full social inclusion, parity in life opportunities, and freedom to shape one's adult career of creative, contributive, and caring activities and relationships offers better guidance, then it will not be possible to define a "one size fits all" criterion for determining what social and economic justice require in particular cases – this will require deliberative judgment collaboratively exercised. Moreover, this will always be a contextual and relational comparison rather than a matter of purely individual desserts. We must look and see what is possible in a particular social-historical context, drawing upon local insights about the meaning and value of particular goods, opportunities, and social-natural responsibilities, while intelligently guiding the continuing evolution of transhistorical and transcultural general understandings of human needs, contributions, capabilities, and rights within the carrying constraints of "the land." This will mean, of course, that individual persons and social groups cannot simply be used or sacrificed for the benefit of others, nor can other-than-human species and the land in general be wantonly destroyed. It will also mean that no one may finally claim a portion of the land or of the fruits of social cooperation as "my own," and thus declare it unavailable to meet the basic needs of others, but rather that one must always contribute to meeting these while acknowledging, calling upon, and stimulating others' differing contributions and levels of developed capabilities.

In a poor society – whether its poverty is due to war, famine, a low level of social and economic development, an unsupportive ecological niche, or a long history of injustice due to colonial exploitation or despotic suppression – no one should control great private wealth unchallenged or consume a quantity and quality of goods that could only be widely distributed in a society with a larger quantity and quality of sustainable resources. Moreover, as long as there are poor societies or communities anywhere, no one should live with great private wealth, and everyone should freely make available a significant portion of his or her current holdings toward projects that have a good chance of improving the situation of the locally and globally poor, relieving their current suffering and transforming the continuing impacts of whatever causes have made them poor. Living modestly, generously, and sustainably should be the valued norm, which can be expressed in countless colorful and meaningful

ways of life that help others immediately while working with them to devise and establish more just institutions and practices of political economy.

Some open-minded thinkers who have not experienced the kind of value-emergence process of the meanings of liberty, equality, and cosmopolitan community solidarity I have discussed here may find the insights of liberatory-prophetic and pragmatist thinkers about these meanings rationally tolerable, but not emotionally compelling. Some may argue in a Kantian vein that it is better to separate reason from feeling in our efforts to achieve rational clarity and universality about ideal values. Other thinkers may resist my conclusions because of their attachment to a rival value or to a differing interpretation of a value we share, or because their own reading of history makes them wary of combining religious and revolutionary energies. For example, non-religious humanists may be skeptical about my claim that liberatory-prophetic religious traditions can offer all of us contemporary human persons valuable insights about social and economic justice.

However, I would point out to all of these thinkers that recognizing that such liberatory-prophetic religious streams of experience still flowing in the backgrounds of many cultures helps to explain a shared sense among diverse contemporary thinkers and activists that *justice* requires creating conditions of social living that actualize some or all of the democratic ideal concepts of liberty, equality, and cosmopolitan community solidarity. A pragmatist genealogy and phenomenology of the emergence of these vague, justice-linked guiding values within diverse individuals' and peoples' modern and post-modern lives will help to make their still-growing meanings both historically realistic and useful in framing inquiries and deliberations about what social and economic justice means now and what it requires in specific local-and-global contexts. Drawing on and learning from the diverse liberatory-prophetic religious traditions that have guided and still guide many remarkable individuals and whole peoples world-wide will aid both theoretical and practical aspects of this pragmatist inquiry, while reminding us of the continuing importance of advancing it out in a spirit of cosmopolitan community solidarity.

In addition to theorizing the processes of deeply democratic change in social-cultural consciousness I have discussed here by viewing these liberatory-prophetic religious traditions through the dual lenses of pragmatist phenomenology and genealogy, the challenge remains of theorizing the processes of building and assisting contemporary democratic social movements that can lead to new local-and-global institutions and practices of just political economy. This other aspect of a more complete analysis and general prescription would add an account of the processes of forming and rationalizing "outer" or shared and public goals and specific ends-in-view toward achieving these to the processes of naming and claiming "inner" or personal and mutual goals with motivating power, expansive potential, and existential sustainability on which I have focused on here. Which comes first in real situations: change in consciousness or change in institutions? In my view, these two processes may not be separable. In any case, both kinds of processes must interact to frame and sustain new local-and-global values, habits, institutions, and practices that can advance cosmopolitan community solidarity and socio-economic justice. Fortunately, we have rich historical and contemporary examples to help us generalize this dual-aspect theory and further develop this transformative practice.

Like Gandhi in India, King inspired thousands of American civil rights activists to long for justice enough to put their lives on the line for it. In recent months, so have thousands of “Arab Spring” activists for democracy and thousands of “Occupy” activists for economic justice. These movements have awakened millions more people world-wide to the possibility of just local-and-global institutions of political economy that will require changes in distributions of wealth and other powers, in cultural habits and beliefs, and in entrenched patterns of international use of violence. Nyerere in Tanzania and Lula in Brazil have shown the world that it is possible to involve large numbers of ordinary citizens in context-specific, deeply democratic processes of framing public priorities and creating new institutions to fulfill such goals. Of course, those who envision rapid change at little cost are sure to be disappointed. However, those who choose to participate in what my student Rachel Jones calls “the beautiful struggle” for cosmopolitan community solidarity and economic justice may find their lives full of meaning within a “We” of intelligent, creative, diverse, and hope-filled people they will be glad to know.

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