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AUTHOR Thayer-Bacon, Barbara J.  
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ABSTRACT

This exploration of what feminism has to contribute to pragmatism, and vice versa, considers the idea of contextuality through an examination of the role of current pragmatists, such as Cornel West and Richard Rorty, and current feminists, including Charlene Haddock Siegfried, Maxine Greene, and Seyla Benhabib. To set the stage historically for the discussion, the ways in which C. S. Peirce and John Dewey defined the role of context are explored. Peirce and Dewey's concepts of experience in relation to knowing are significant to the discussion of pragmatism and feminism. They open up space for feminists to argue that when women's experiences are taken into consideration, philosophy and science are transformed. It is important to consider how pragmatists and feminists can appeal to experience in a nonessentialized manner, for immediate experiences help accent contextuality. Cornel West recommends a prophetic pragmatism that sees pragmatism as a form of cultural criticism and locates politics in the everyday experiences of ordinary people. However, West focuses on race and social class at the expense of women's experiences. Richard Rorty's form of pragmatism calls for the foregoing of experience in favor of language. Rorty claims that pragmatism is neutral to feminism and masculinism, but Charlene Haddock Siegfried, a pragmatist feminist, argues that pragmatism begins and ends with experience, as does feminism. The feminist Seyla Benhabib also offers some insight on how we gain awareness of our own contextuality through her discussion of enlarged thinking and the generalized other and concrete other. Maxine Greene, a feminist greatly influenced by Dewey's work, turns to the arts, especially literature, to help explain how we can develop our abilities to respond to experiences and to recognize patterns that exist in the diverse world. The ability to attend to our own contextuality and to others is an act of care. Caring relationships help people achieve alertness, cooperative intelligence, and enlarged thinking. (SLD)

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**“On Contextuality”**

by

**Barbara J. Thayer-Bacon**  
**Bowling Green University**

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"On Contextuality"  
 by  
 Barbara J. Thayer-Bacon, Ph.D.  
 Associate Professor  
 Bowling Green State University

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In Charlene Haddock Seigfried's discussion of the common grounds between pragmatism and feminism she suggests: "Pragmatist philosophy ... explains why the neglect of context is the besetting fallacy of philosophical thought. Feminism cogently and extensively shows how gender, race, class, and sexual preference are crucial parts of context that philosophy has traditionally neglected."<sup>1</sup> What I want to do is explore what feminism has to contribute to pragmatism, and vice versa, concerning the idea of contextuality through an examination of the work of current pragmatists such as Cornel West and Richard Rorty, and current feminists such as Charlene H. Siegfried, Maxine Greene, and Seyla Benhabib. What helps us become aware of our social context and how it has affected who we are, and how we view the world? What helps us be more receptive to the inarticulate experiences we have which our culture does not have a name for? We will find that pragmatist feminist philosophers help us understand how it is possible for this understanding and receptivity to occur.

I begin by having Peirce and Dewey define the role of context, with their ideas of experience, as a way to historically set the stage for this present-day discussion. I then move to a discussion of today's pragmatists' views of the relationship between pragmatism and feminism with regards to contextuality. Like other feminists (critical, and postmodern), I rely on the insights "that the personal is political, that there is direct relation, however complex it may be, between sociality and subjectivity, between language and consciousness, or between institutions and individuals ... ." <sup>2</sup> However, I

argue that it is possible for us to gain insights into the contexts of our lives. We gain insights into our contextuality through our interactions with other people, even fictional people. As we begin to understand this contextuality, we begin to develop the ability to offer fresh, unique perspectives. We will find our ability to improve our awareness of our contextuality is enhanced if we are able to experience sustaining caring relationships. Caring relationships help us develop our abilities to intuit, image, emotionally feel, and reason our way to enlarged thinking (cooperative intelligence). What I offer here is a social feminist perspective, as labeled by Jaggar, which provides a way to explain why culture is dominant and at the same time, preserves "the apparently contradictory claim that women (and other minorities) occupy a distinctive epistemological standpoint that offers unique insight into certain aspects of reality."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Past<sup>4</sup>

A key to classic American Pragmatism is found in understanding the concept of experience in relation to knowledge. For C. S. Peirce, we cannot separate our ideas from our experiences, knowers from knowledge, for there is an inseparable connection between rational cognition and rational purpose, between thought and action, or thinking and doing. "A belief is that upon which a man is prepared to act."<sup>5</sup> Peirce sharply contrasts his view to modern philosophy through his devastating criticism of René Descartes. For Peirce we cannot universally doubt, as Descartes attempted to do, for doubting presupposes something to doubt, therefore this means we must have prior beliefs. We also cannot find the answer to our doubts in our own individual consciousness, as Descartes argued, for this "leads toward a full-fledged subjectivism, an imprisonment in the veil of ideas with no reliable bridge between ideas and things, consciousness and reality, subject and object."<sup>6</sup> Finally, we cannot ignore the relatedness of ideas to other ideas, as Descartes's philosophical method of inference attempts to do. In the end, Descartes relies on God to account for the self

and the world. For Peirce, this result is inexplicable. He argues instead that we determine how clear we are, our concepts, by running them through a functional test, grounding them to experience (Peirce's scientific method).

In "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," Peirce states his famous Pragmatic Maxim this way: "(C)onsider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."<sup>7</sup> In "What Pragmatism Is" we again find Peirce defining meaning in terms of what effects it has on life. Peirce's theory is "that a *conception*, that is the rational purport of a word or other expression, lies exclusively in its conceivable bearing upon the conduct of life."<sup>8</sup>

These pragmatic moves that Peirce made with his epistemological theory help to shift the direction of philosophy in general, and, interesting enough, create support for feminist theory in particular. They highlight "the centrality of contingent and revisable social practices in acquiring knowledge."<sup>9</sup> In exploring the connection/relationship between experience and knowing, as a logician Peirce focuses on signs, and, as a psychologist James focuses on will. Let us explore the philosophical shift which Peirce's pragmatic moves create through the work of another seminal figure in American Pragmatism, John Dewey. One of Dewey's significant contributions to Euro-western philosophy was his accenting of the contextuality in which philosophical theory develops, not just at the micro-level of fallible human beings (Peirce), but also at the macro-level, in terms of ideas being developed within the context of social institutions such as schools. Dewey called his approach "naturalistic" for he addressed biological and cultural influences on inquiry. As West describes Dewey's contribution, he adds "a mode of historical consciousness that highlights the conditioned and circumstantial character of human existence in terms of changing societies, cultures, and communities" to the pragmatic argument of contingency and revisability.<sup>10</sup>

As a pragmatist, John Dewey focused on the connection thinking has with experience and doing.<sup>11</sup> He adopted Peirce's notion of meaning, that our conceptions are analyzed in terms of the consequences of our actions. Dewey viewed philosophy's main role as not solving the problems of philosophy, but rather trying to solve people's problems. As a pragmatic social behaviorist,<sup>12</sup> Dewey focuses on Peirce's pragmatic shift in philosophy by exploring language and culture. His rejection of all mind/body, theory/fact and fact/value dualisms, and his insistence that meaning is "primarily a property of behavior" causes him to be concerned about cognitive meanings as well as aesthetic and moral meanings, always in relation to social context.<sup>13</sup> What kind of society we live in and what experiences we have effects our knowledge. Thus we find Dewey focuses on democracy and education as central to his philosophy. "The core of Dewey's behavior theory of meaning, and perhaps the core of his entire philosophy, is his argument for the natural origin of language in *shared* behavior."<sup>14</sup> "(S)ocial experience (is) social *interaction* and, therefore, simply a continuation of natural experience and existence."<sup>15</sup> There is "nothing more, or less, real than the flux of "existential events," their interactions, and the structures that emerged from their interactions."<sup>16</sup> Or, as Dewey put it: "Meanings do not come into being without language, and language implies two selves [e.g. teacher and student] involved in a conjoint or shared understanding."<sup>17</sup>

We find that experience is a key concept in Dewey's work, as witnessed by the number of times he uses the term in titles of his books and papers. In *Democracy and Education* Dewey describes experience as having an active and passive element, trying and undergoing. "We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return; such is the peculiar combination." Experience is not primarily cognitive, but "the *measure of the value* of an experience lies in the perception of relations or continuities to which it leads up. It includes cognition in the degree in which it is cumulative or amounts to something, or has meaning."<sup>18</sup> Experience, for Dewey,

means seeing connections, rather than the formation of ideas. Experience is the perception of relations, especially the relations between our actions and their empirical consequences. This seeing of connections is the necessary ingredient in acquiring knowledge. Experience involves learning, it is not mere action, as it involves the connecting of doing with something which is undergone in consequence. "Thinking is the accurate and deliberate instituting of connections between what is done and its consequences."<sup>19</sup>

In *Experience and Nature* Dewey describes experience this way: "Experience is not a veil that shuts man off from nature ... but rather a growing progressive self-disclosure of nature itself."<sup>20</sup> As Garrison helps us understand Dewey's concept of experience, "(e)xperience for Dewey was simply what happened when human beings *actively participated in transactions* with other natural experiences. ... Experience, for Dewey, is simply *how* the human organism interacts with its environment."<sup>21</sup> Again, as Dewey, himself, describes experience it is:

a double-barrelled word ... it includes *what* [people] do and suffer, *what* they strive for, love, believe and endure, and also *how* [people] act and are acted upon, the ways in which they do and suffer, desire and enjoy, see, believe, imagine - in short, processes of *experiencing* . ... It is "double-barrelled" in that it recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains both in an unanalyzed totality.<sup>22</sup>

Peirce's and Dewey's concepts of experience in relation to knowing are significant to our discussion of pragmatism and feminism. They open up space for feminists to argue, from different standpoints of experience, that when women's experiences are taken into consideration, philosophy and science are transformed.

Feminist scholars have been able to establish that theories about what counts as knowledge, for example, are based on males' experiences, which shape their views, at the exclusion and often derision of females' experiences, as others. Thus, they have been able to argue for a need to redescribe knowing in a more inclusive manner. Feminists have been able to demystify and name as biased theories that before were taken as universal and neutral, due to their ability to appeal to "lived experiences." This has not occurred, however, without many feminists falling into "the traps of essentialism, ahistoricity, false generalizations, and other dangerous traps."

Feminist scholars made the mistake of speaking about "women" as if all women have the same experiences, not acknowledging the many contextual differences of women (such as race and ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation). In order to avoid these traps, some pragmatist and feminist scholars have recommended that feminists scrap "women" and "experience" as categories altogether. However, their efforts to avoid the pitfalls of false unity have lead them right into the traps of "false difference, and methodological essentialism (compulsory historicism)."<sup>23</sup> It is important that we further explore how pragmatists and feminists can appeal to experience in a nonessentialized manner, for immediate experiences help us accent our contextuality, at the micro and macro levels, and remind us of the need for continual revising of our theories due to our own contingency. I move on to a discussion of Cornel West's and Richard Rorty's pragmatist views concerning experience, and compare these to works by current Charlene H. Siegfried, Maxine Greene, and Seyla Benhabib to help us further explore the issue of contextuality.

### The Present

Cornel West<sup>24</sup> describes John Dewey's pragmatism as American pragmatism come of age. West praises Dewey's linking of culture to knowledge, thus situating knowledge in human experience. West argues that, like Peirce, Dewey avoids



Descartes subjectivism by beginning with a transactional concept of experience that is intersubjective. West presents Dewey's commitments to "historical consciousness, evolutionary biology, and Emersonian sentiments of contingency, revisability, and amelioration" as leading him to "affirm evasion and emancipation (of philosophy)" (p. 94). Without getting sidetracked by a discussion of West's argument for a Deweyian connection to Emerson<sup>25</sup>, we find that while West praises Dewey's attending to contextuality, he does wish, in agreement with Rorty, that Dewey was a more consistent historical pragmatist. However, he does acknowledge Dewey's own contextuality limited his views. Dewey and Peirce were both strongly effected by Darwin's theory of evolution, and we see this in their open embracing of the scientific method as a recommended method for inquiry. Dewey highlights the role of critical intelligence and education to help democratize American society, yet he neglects to fully address power as an issue. His views, while appearing quite liberal at the time, are actually more White, middle class, and androcentric than Dewey acknowledged or probably realized. West points out, and Seigfried confirms, that while Dewey was a social activist, he publically avoided political controversy that might affect his career (at the University of Chicago, concerning the opportunity to address sexist practices with wives of academics, with the dismissal of his wife as principal of the Lab School, and at Columbia University, with his sidestepping and ignoring of Marxism).

West recommends a "prophetic pragmatism" which "understands pragmatism as a political form of cultural criticism and it locates politics in the everyday experiences of ordinary people" (p. 213). Prophetic pragmatism shares with Foucault a preoccupation with the operation of powers and the genealogical mode of inquiry (p. 223). This may sound like a view feminists might feel comfortable embracing, except that West's lack of representation of women's contributions to pragmatism is a warning sign to be suspicious. We find that West focuses on race and social class at the expense of women's experiences. (Foucault also neglects women's experiences.)

Clearly, West, and Foucault, are as embedded in androcentric perspectives as Dewey was. West wholeheartedly embraces American Protestant Christianity values "wedded to left romanticism" for they offer him a utopian impulse and "a profound sense of the tragic character of life and history" (p. 227-228). However, Christianity has a long history of holding racist, homophobic, and sexist views which have contributed to the tragic character of life and history. We find West embraces democracy *and* individualism as values, in contrast to Peirce's social, Dewey's transactive, as well as feminist arguments for a relational ontology. Again, this is another sign of his own embeddedness, for individualism in the Euro-western world has come at the expense of those not considered worthy of individuality, the "noncitizens" (of ancient Greece up to and including America's more recent past/present). We find, that like West toward Dewey, we must excuse West from his own contextuality, and lament that he is not a more consistent historical pragmatist. Richard Rorty does not escape this criticism either.

Richard Rorty's<sup>26</sup> form of pragmatism calls for the foregoing of experience in favor of language. One could ask, is it possible to be a pragmatist under such conditions? Rorty's language emphasis and his distinction between a liberal society and an individual ironist work to maintain a separation between public and private worlds, as well as between theory and practice. He embraces dualisms that other pragmatists and feminists have worked hard to remove from philosophy. Rorty's pragmatism is greatly affected by the logical positivism, analytic philosophy, and existentialism of his times. Rorty foregoes "experience" because he contends it "connotes a natural kind with a fixed set of intrinsic features and so cannot help but pose unanswerable questions about the relative accuracy of various linguistic representations in expressing its true content."<sup>27</sup> Rorty favors language because it is ultimately arbitrary.

As Rorty describes experience, "what you experience yourself to be is largely a function of what it makes sense to describe yourself as in the languages you are able to use."<sup>28</sup> For Rorty, each of us learns who we are because we have been given the language to describe ourselves from others with whom we are in relation. If Rorty is right, this means that experience is not directly accessible to us, because our language acts as a filter, sifting and sorting through our experiences and helping us to name and give meaning to what we experience. Those experiences we do not have a language for fall through our filter and are lost as experiences. According to Rorty, we may feel "outlaw emotions," but if we live in a culture that has no language for those feelings, we will have no way to directly access that experience and note the sensations we have. Without the language to name what we are experiencing, we will not be able to maintain that feeling and will lose it.<sup>29</sup>

Kaufman-Osborn humorously points out in his discussion of Rorty's work, using the metaphor of talking fish, that "Rorty effectively "forgets" that language is always relationally implicated in palpable webs of immediate experience that must be "had" before anything caught up within them can be "known" as a determinate subject of discursive inquiry."<sup>30</sup> There is an active transformation in the relationship of experience to meaning, it is not merely assimilation. It is true that the language we inherit from our social contexts has a tremendous impact on our lives. Language affects how we view the world, and how we make sense of the experiences we have. But it is also true that much of what we experience remains unnamed, and cannot be reduced to its articulated meanings.

Experience is indispensable to feminists, not as a "natural kind" or as universal women's experiences. "The term "experience" indicates (literally: points at) the nondiscursive material out of which reflective distinctions are teased."<sup>31</sup> Feminist scholars urge people to be receptive and attentive to the inarticulate too, not just what is named, for in an androcentric society much of women's experiences are not named.

"Rorty's fear of essentialism, when joined to his claim that "all awareness is a linguistic affair," requires that he reject the reality of anything that might plausibly be called nondiscursive experience."<sup>32</sup> This move is a dangerous move that feminists cannot embrace. As Dewey explained: "experience warns us that all intellectual terms are the products of discrimination and classification, and that we must, as philosophers, go back to the primitive situations of life that antecede and generate those reflective interpretations, so that we re-live former processes of interpretation in a wary manner."<sup>33</sup>

What helps us become aware of our social context and how it has affected who we are, and how we view the world? What helps us be more receptive to the inarticulate experiences we have which our culture does not have a name for? Rorty does not offer feminists much hope.<sup>34</sup> His pragmatic view of the political utility of philosophy is that philosophy is "not a source of tools for path-breaking political work" (p. 100). Pragmatism, and deconstructionism, can do no more than show that everything is a social construct. From a feminist perspective, this is a lot! Philosophy can critique ideology, but Rorty calls this "mopping up" work rather than path-breaking work. "It is parasitic on prophecy rather than a substitute for it" (p. 100). However, Rorty does admit that philosophy can help free our imaginations so our future practices will be different from our pasts (p. 100). Again, this is a lot! "Neither pragmatists nor deconstructivists can do more for feminism than help rebut attempts to ground these practices on something deeper than a contingent historical fact - the fact that the people with the slightly large muscles have been bullying the people with the slightly smaller muscles for a very long time" (p. 101). I think most feminists would find pragmatists' contribution to the debunking of an universal transcendental philosophy, by calling attention to theory's significant relationship to experience, an important and valuable contribution.

Rorty claims that pragmatism is neutral to feminism and masculinism, however this is probably due to his "pragmatism" being severed from experience. Seigfried disagrees with Rorty, arguing that pragmatism begins and ends with experience and so does feminism. "Pragmatism is a helpful ally of feminist criticism; ... the pluralism and emancipatory goals of pragmatism require that feminist issues be addressed."<sup>35</sup> Feminists have been able to take the importance of contextuality, and apply this understanding to the inarticulated experiences of their lives. We must turn to pragmatist feminists for further help in answering our question, what helps us become more aware of our contextuality and more receptive to our inarticulated experiences?

### Pragmatist Feminism

Charlene Haddock Seigfried is a pragmatist feminist who has made significant contributions to current pragmatist conversations, especially through her work on William James. Seigfried concludes her book, *Pragmatism and Feminism*, with a discussion of cooperative intelligence (Dewey's term), and a summing up of what pragmatism and feminism have in common as well as their differences. She does not hold an in-depth discussion about cooperative intelligence to help us understand *how* it is achieved. She speaks about "sympathetic apprehension of the point of view of others" (261) and "consensus," not as coercion, but as "freely offered participatory agreement" that is "temporary, revisable, strategic, and directed toward specific ends in view" (275). She points in a suggestive direction rather than exploring these ideas in any depth. However, she models cooperative intelligence throughout her book.

In *Pragmatism and Feminism*, Seigfried recovers the voices of many women who have contributed to pragmatism, but their voices have been lost. We discover female students of Dewey, Peirce, James, Mead, and Royce, such as Elsie Ripley Clapp, Ella Flagg Young, and Lucy Sprague Mitchell. We learn about the original contributions of the women who directly influenced the historically recognized

pragmatists, such as Jane Addams, Irene Tufts Mead, and Alice Chipman Dewey. Published work and dissertations by these women are unburied and discussed by Seigfried. By tracing back through past publications of the historically recognized pragmatists, to original acknowledgment pages, and personal letters written to these women, Seigfried even uncovers where the men thank the women for their significant contributions. Their contributions were lost because it was the custom not to cite women's work within the text.

The women in Seigfried's book are people who were not issued doctoral degrees at the end of their successfully completed dissertations, who could not obtain academic positions in philosophy or education yet were allowed to teach as graduate assistants for years, who lost their jobs when they married or their husbands were promoted, all due to their gender, as women who lived in a sexist society. Because Seigfried is able to recover their experiences through her research efforts, and she helps us become more aware of the layers of contextuality (political, social, economic, racial, etc.) that surrounded their lived experiences, we begin to have a better understanding of pragmatism's relationship to feminism and vice versa. She also shows us that the way we better understand our own contextuality is by engaging in conversations with others not like us. These conversations need to be sympathetic ones that help us apprehend the point of view of others, for others helps us see ourselves more clearly and help us find ways to articulate our unnamed, unknown experiences.

Seyla Benhabib also offers some insight on how we gain awareness of our own contextuality through her discussion of enlarged thinking and the generalized other and concrete other.<sup>36</sup> Much of Benhabib's work can be traced to Habermas, who traces his work back to Dewey. However, her concept of "enlarged thinking" she references to Hannah Arendt's "representative thinking," who traces that idea back to Kant's conception of reflective judgment. Benhabib says that to attempt to understand

our own subjectivity and other people's points of view, we need the possibility of interacting with others. Even if we have the willingness to reason from others' points of view and we have the sensitivity to hear their voices, "(n)either the concreteness nor the otherness of the 'concrete other' can be known in the absence of the voice of the other. The viewpoint of the concret other emerges as a distinct one only as a result of self-definition. It is the other who makes us aware both of her concreteness and her otherness" (p. 168). As we try to believe and therefore hopefully assure ourselves of understanding what another thinks, we need to practice enlarged thinking, anticipating "communication with others with whom [we] know [we] must finally come to some agreement." Enlarged thinking does not imply consensus, just some agreement, and it cannot function in strict isolation - it needs the presence of others (pp. 8-10). (Note that Benhabib's agreement is like Seigfried's consensus.)

Given that we are all social beings embedded in rich levels of context, what kinds of skills do we need to practice such methods as enlarged thinking? We may be born with the faculty for enlarged thinking as social beings, but we need to practice and develop skills that help us be successful at understanding others and gaining further insight into our own perspectives. The faculty for enlarged thinking is not something we have an innate capacity for, rather it is something we must painfully acquire. The kinds of skills I am alluding too that are needed for enlarged thinking are relational and communication skills, the ability to tune into our intuitions and emotional feelings, the development of our imagination, and reasoning skills, what I call constructive thinking.<sup>37</sup>

Maxine Greene continues to challenge us to experience the world in new ways and to stir "to wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility."<sup>38</sup> Greene, another feminist greatly influenced by Dewey's work, turns to the arts, especially literary art, to help us understand how we can further develop our attending skills and our abilities to respond to ordinary and unusual experiences, as



well as recognize patterns and commonality that exist in our diverse world. We do this by arousing our imaginations. "Imagination is what, above all, makes empathy possible. ... (I)magination is the one (cognitive capacity) that permits us to give credence to alternative realities" (p. 3).

Greene is interested in helping us see the world big and see the world small. She's interested in "shifting perspectives and different modes of seeing," to seeing things close and from a distance, to viewing people "in their integrity and particularity" and not just as numbers or objects (p. 10). "All we can do, I believe, is cultivate multiple ways of seeing and multiple dialogues in a world where nothing stays the same" (p. 16). Greene shows us how the arts can be used to release imagination and open up new perspectives. Art helps us name what we see around us for it helps us become conscious of the margins and the silences, and "to find our own lived worlds lacking because of them" (p. 111). The arts subvert our thoughtlessness and complacencies. The arts make images visible and accessible. They open doors and move us to transform ourselves. They help us develop a sense of agency.

A call for imaginative capacity is a call "to work for the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise" (p. 19). Greene refers to Hannah Arendt's concepts of "in-between" and a "web of relations" to help us understand how we begin to understand each other and develop Benhabib's enlarged thinking, or Seigfried's cooperative intelligence (p. 39):

All we can do is to speak with others as passionately and eloquently as we can: all we can do is to look into each other's eyes and urge each other on to new beginnings. Our classrooms ought to be nurturing and thoughtful and just all at once; they ought to pulsate with multiple conceptions of what it is to be human and alive. They ought to resound with the voices of articulate young people in dialogues always



incomplete because there is always more to be discovered and more to be said. We must want our students to achieve friendship as each one stirs to wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility (p. 43).

The ability to attend to our own contextuality, and to others, is what I call "an act of care." By caring I mean being receptive and valuing of others and what others have to say. I mean being generous and attempting to understand others by having the others tell us their perspectives in their own words. Caring is an effort to attempt to believe others, in order to be sure we understand, before we move to critiquing the others' views. The effort to believe, in order to understand, causes us to be willing to suspend our own views and be open to others. What we care about is what we choose to attend to, what we choose to be engrossed with, and be receptive to. We become more aware of our own contextuality by being able to compare and contrast our own situatedness to others that are different from ours. And, we become more aware of our own inarticulated experiences by learning about others' articulated experiences. Others' help stretch our imaginations and get us to experience things in new ways. The more we are able to communicate with and establish relationships with others, even fictional others, in a caring manner, the more we learn about ourselves, and are able to imagine our selves and others in new ways. Caring relationships help us achieve wide-awakeness, cooperative intelligence, and enlarged thinking, by helping us become more aware of our own contextuality.

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## NOTES

1. Seigfried, Charlene Haddock. Summer, 1991. Where are all the Pragmatist Feminists? *Hypatia*, 6(2), 1-20, 16.

2. de Lauretis, Teresa, ed. 1986. Feminist studies/critical studies: Issues, terms, and context, in *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
3. Jaggar, Alison. 1983. *Feminist politics and human nature*. Sussex: Harvester: 377 and 382. I am not a feminist standpoint epistemologist , for I think that position (in its many forms) has a tendency to reembrace androcentric myths of epistemic agency and realism, which a pragmatist feminist such as Seigfried, and myself, would argue misses the point of radical empiricism.
4. This discussion is from Chapter Two of (in process). *Transforming critical thinking: Constructive thinking*. New York: Teachers College Press.
5. Peirce, Charles Sanders. 1958. The fixation of belief, in *Values in an universe of chance: Selected writings of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914)*, P. P. Wiener (Ed.). Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Co, Inc., p. 92.
6. I am indebted to Cornel West's discussion of Peirce, James, and Dewey in *The American Evasion of Philosophy* for my own discussion in this essay. West, Cornel. 1989. *The American evasion of philosophy: A genealogy of pragmatism*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, Ltd., p. 44.
7. Peirce, *Values in an universe of chance*;, How to make our ideas clear, 124.
8. *Ibid.*, What pragmatism is, 183.
9. West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy*, 45.
10. *Ibid.*, 69-70.
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19. Ibid., 151.
20. Dewey, Experience and nature, 5.
21. Garrison, Realism, Deweyan pragmatism, and educational research, 9.
22. Dewey, Experience and nature, 18. Jim Garrison brought this quote to my attention in his discussion of Dewey's concept of experience within: Realism, Deweyan pragmatism, and educational research, 9-10. Charlene Haddock Siegfried points to this same quote from Dewey and credits James with this concept of experience, in *Pragmatism and feminism*.
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24. West, *The American evasion of philosophy*.
25. Charlene Haddock Seigfried addresses this issue in her *Pragmatism and feminism*.

26. Rorty, Richard. 1991. Feminism and pragmatism, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 30(2): 231-258, 244.
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32. *Ibid.*, 128.
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Organization/Address: <u>Bowling Green State U., EDFI</u>	Telephone: <u>419-372-2697</u>
<u>Bowling Green, OH 43403</u>	FAX: <u>419-372-8265</u>
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