

**Dark Days & The Universal Continuum
Pragmatist Cosmopolitanism for the 21st Century**

One of the enduring themes of pragmatism is that *truth is group work*. Knowing better requires knowing together. In epistemological matters, there is no ‘them’ and ‘us’ – only us.

But in our contemporary world, we stand in a strange moment with respect to knowledge communities: we have both incredible access to information about distant places and peoples, and the formation of what Elizabeth Anderson has called ‘epistemic bubbles’, insular information silos within which agreement is prized and inquiry curtailed. For advocates of free and open inquiry, these may seem like dark days.

The affinity between pragmatism and cosmopolitanism has been richly developed throughout its history. Peirce thought logical thinking required us to regard ourselves as “welded into a universal continuum”; James called us to recognize ourselves as an ethical republic; Addams and Mead developed social ethics for the world of the early 20th century. Contemporary pragmatists – including Anderson, Abouafia and many others – have continued to develop the idea of a universal continuum and to argue for the epistemic, moral, and practical necessity of recognizing ourselves as placed within that continuum.

In this session, I have two aims: to develop the epistemic basis for broadening our knowledge communities, and to consider what habits of mind and action this deeply pragmatist form of cosmopolitanism can concretely recommend in our contemporary context.