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Feminist Relational Theory

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INTRODUCTION

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Accounts of human beings as essentially social have had a long history in philosophy as reflected in the Ancient Greeks; in African and Asian philosophy; in Modern European thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, David Hume, Adam Smith, and Karl Marx; in continental philosophy; in pragmatism; in Indigenous thought, and in contemporary communitarian theories. It can be said, then, that the language of relational theory has taken a variety of forms. That relational theory is broad and captures various threads in the history of philosophy is captured in the main title of this special issue, *Relational Theory*. That this special issue zeroes in on the distinctive features and contributions of feminist relational theory is captured in the subtitle, *Feminist Approaches, Implications, and Applications*, and explained in this introduction. This special issue of *Journal of Global Ethics* is devoted to exploring, extending, applying, and deepening relational insights emerging from today's feminist relational theory.

In general terms, relational theory can be contrasted with Modern and especially Western liberal accounts of the human being that take the primary unit of analysis to be the individual, who is owed certain rights and freedoms to pursue a rational plan of life without undue interference from the state or others. Along with other anti-oppression theorists, feminist relational theorists have entered these debates about the ontological status of human beings by offering relational accounts of people as necessarily born into and shaped by and acting in and through relationships. By using relationships as the focal point for description and the unit of analyses for moral and political theory, these relational theorists have provided critical perspectives on accounts that have focused on either sociality as such or on individualism to describe human beings and they have teased out moral and political implications and applications.

We begin this introduction with a word on how this collection came together. Encouraged by fellow co-lead editor of the journal, Eric Palmer, this special issue is a credit to the vision of one of its guest editors Christine Koggel. Koggel has been a significant force in the development of the field of feminist relational theory and has brought particular attention to its transformative significance for global ethics. Koggel brought Ami Harbin and Jennifer Llewellyn on board as guest editors to give additional content and substance to contemporary accounts of relational theory and, more specifically, to articulate what is distinctive and important about contemporary feminist relational theory. Our experience of one

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another's scholarship and leadership has modelled the significance of relationship for the development of theory and practice through commitment and dedication as colleagues and mentors. This has continued throughout our work as co-editors on this Special Issue. We worked together and in step through the process that started with a call for papers, had the best of the submissions go through rounds of anonymous reviews and revisions, and had us provide final sets of suggested revisions—all the way to what we now present as an excellent set of articles that forge new paths and cover new ground in feminist relational theory. The process also had all of us, guest editors, authors, and reviewers, go through the uncertainties and changing landscape of COVID-19, with some authors bringing discussion of the relational implications of COVID-19 into their articles.

We use "we" throughout this introduction because we are feminist relational theorists in our work as academics; in our commitments to identifying and addressing oppression as it manifests in relationships at all levels of the interpersonal, institutional, systemic, local, national, and global; and in the work we and the authors do to highlight networks of relationships that interconnect to capture multiple and intersecting factors, features, and kinds of oppression. We take these to be insights that are fundamental to those working on and with feminist relational theory and approaches today. In the section that follows, we outline some of the history and development of feminist relational theory over the past several decades. We then identify what we take to be core features of contemporary accounts of feminist relational theory and differentiate feminist relational theory from other approaches and theories. In the final section, we summarize the content of the articles themselves: the complexity of the cross-cutting themes and core features; the engagement with some of the broader literature on relational theory; and the honing in on what feminist relational theory has to offer in and through the use of the core features.

Feminist relational theory: what it is and how it has developed

Over the course of the last four decades, feminist relational theory has developed from projects of identifying and fine-tuning critiques of mainstream liberal theory to delineating and expanding relational approaches that extend the insights, approaches, implications, and applications of feminist relational theory. Annette Baier's (1985) concept of 'second persons' was an early key touchstone in responding to taken-for-granted individualism within the history of philosophy. According to Baier, 'A person, perhaps, is best seen as one who was long enough dependent on others to acquire the essential arts of personhood. Persons essentially are second persons, who grow up with other persons … Persons come after and before other persons' (84).

Other important contributions emerged from Baier's *Moral Prejudices* (1995). In the chapter, "The Need for More than Justice," Baier explored answers to the following sorts of questions: 'Is justice blind to important social values, or at least only one-eyed? What is it that comes into view from the 'care perspective' that is not seen from the 'justice perspective'?' (21). While framed in terms of what a care perspective offers, Baier brought to light several longstanding assumptions in theories of justice that focused on individuals, on the role of rationality, on relationships of equals, and on chosen relationships. For Baier, what 'comes into view' are the many kinds of relationships considered to be irrelevant to justice theory in the liberal tradition: relationships of inequality (between 'states and citizens, doctors and patients, the well and the ill, large states and small states' (28))

and unchosen relationships (vulnerable future generations, children born into families, parental roles and responsibilities (29)). For Baier and other care ethicists, these relationships call on skills and capacities beyond those associated with independence, autonomy, and rationality. Among the many things that were then challenged was the close alignment of autonomy with rationality and absence of affect (Oshana 1998).

Into the 1990s, a critical mass of feminist philosophers, bioethicists, and legal theorists worked to propel a relational turn in conceptions of autonomy, equality, rights, knowledge practices, health care practice, and moral responsibility (Code 1991; Koggel 1998; Nedelsky 1989, 1993; Sherwin 1992, 1998; and Walker 1998). Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar's edited anthology *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self* (2000) collected many of the key theoretical perspectives on the topic of autonomy, together challenging 'the conviction that the notion of individual autonomy is fundamentally individualistic and rationalistic' (3) and providing accounts of autonomy as relational. Later when we summarize the content of the articles in this special issue, it will become clear that many of the authors reference this early work on relational autonomy but some argue that the focus was more on individuals than on the social, economic, and political structures that shape autonomy relationally in the full sense. This is but one of the ways in which feminist relational theorists have utilized and expanded on earlier accounts (Koggel 2020).

In the decade to follow, feminist relational theory became solidified as a key starting point for many feminist ethicists and bioethicists (Meyers 2004; Sherwin 2008). In 2012, Jocelyn Downie and Jennifer Llewellyn's edited anthology *Being Relational: Reflections on Relational Theory and Health Law* offered advancements in the field of feminist relational theory scholarship, on relational conceptions of autonomy, judgment, equality, justice, identity, memory, and conscience, alongside reflections on the implications of these relational concepts for issues in health law and policy (resource allocation, reproduction, Indigenous health, mental health, and research on non-human animals). Drawing out the significance of relationships to theory and practice allowed contributors writing in health law and policy to move beyond the too often taken-for-granted starting points in health care ethics (e.g., consent, confidentiality, beneficence, dyadic doctor-patient relationships) to begin their analyses from more nuanced points of origin. As the volume's editors write, 'The relational conception of the self with which we are concerned recognizes not only that we live in relationships with others but also that relationship and connection with others is essential to the existence of the self. The human self in this view is constituted in and through relationship with others. We define ourselves in relationship to others and through relationship with others. In this view, relationships play a constitutive role because of the "inherently social nature of human beings"' (Llewellyn and Downie 2012, 4, quoting Nedelsky 1989). Many of the authors in this special issue reference and build on insights in this important collection of essays on relational theory. In the next section, we use this starting point of relational commitments to unpack several features of feminist relational theory in the present and reflected in this volume.

Features of contemporary feminist relational theory

Our approach to understanding the terrain of feminist relational theory is to identify what we take to be eight distinct features. While not intended as a comprehensive list, these

features will help differentiate feminist relational theory from other theoretical approaches in contemporary moral and political theory.

Feature 1: Oppression

Feminist relational theory is informed by, and contributes to, anti-oppression theory. Feminist relational approaches begin from a commitment to clearly understanding and representing dynamics of oppression and privilege as structural features of all social relationships, institutions, and identities. While attention to oppression is common to feminist theory and to anti-oppression theory more generally, feminist relational theory uses the lens of relationships as a way of providing descriptions and analyses of the structures, institutions, norms, and practices that shape individuals, social groups, and their specific and intersecting experiences of oppression.

Feature 2: Interpersonal relationships and care ethics

Feminist relational theory understands interpersonal relationships as situated in structural relations. We are not only interested in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, including caregiving or other intimate relationships. Rather, we are interested in *networks and structures of relationships*, as creating the context for the dynamics of smaller scale interpersonal relationships, including partnerships, familial, friendship, and kin relations, as well as professional-client, doctor-patient, teacher-student, and other relationships. Another way to put this is that interpersonal relationships provide part of, but not the whole picture. Interpersonal relationships are nested in broader social, economic, and political relationships, ones that shape personhood and possibilities for autonomy. The central idea is that individuals are situated in networks of relationships in and through which they are co-constituted within the broader social framework of institutions and norms. Feminist relational theory situates interpersonal relationships in social and institutional networks and structures, all of which also respond to and shape each other and have implications for accounts of factors and features of oppressive relationships.

Some of these insights are reflected in recent developments by care ethicists, some of whom now distinguish two strands: care as practice and care as critical political theory. The first strand focuses on 'providing the normative basis for prescriptive arguments and policies related to care work' (Robinson 2020, 12). In exploring the transformative power of care ethics as a critical political theory, the second strand 'allows for a radical critique of institutions and governing norms, and inherently destabilizes the dominant understandings of the purpose, structure, and role of government and public policy' (Fitz-Gerald 2020, 248). Both strands are evident in Joan Tronto's *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (1990). The second strand is evident in recent work by Fiona Robinson (2020), Maggie FitzGerald (2020), as well as Tronto's "Caring Institutions" (2010):

> to imagine a world organized to care well requires that we focus on three things: *politics*: recognition and debate/dialogue of relations of power within and outside the organization of competitive and dominative power and agreement of common purpose; *particularity and plurality*: attention to human activities as particular and admitting of other possible ways of doing them and to diverse humans having diverse preferences about how needs might

be met; and *purposiveness*: awareness and discussion of the ends and purposes of care (162, our emphasis).

As a critical political theory, this strand highlights some of the synergies between these recent accounts in care ethics and feminist relational theory. In the final section, we explain that two of the authors reference the role of care in this broad sense of its economic, social, and political significance.

Feature 3: Individualism and capability theories/approaches

The first two features emphasize feminist relational theory's explicit discussion and analyses of structures and institutions as these exist in and are shaped in and through broad networks of relationships. These moves can be further contrasted with the third feature that engages with recent discussions of those using capability approaches/theories. The basic goal of capability approaches/theories is to answer questions about 'what people are able to do and what lives they are able to lead' (Robeyns 2017, 7) and they do this by providing accounts of what *individuals* are able to be and to do. In an important survey and re-examination of the capability approach in *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice* (2017), Ingrid Robeyns addresses charges of individualism by distinguishing between 'ethical or normative individualism on the one hand and methodological and ontological individualism on the other' (184). Robeyns explains that ethical or normative individualism 'makes a claim about who or what should count in our evaluative exercises and decisions. It postulates that individuals, and only individuals, are the units of ultimate moral concern' (184). She then explains that methodological and ontological individualism, by contrast, make claims about the nature of human beings: 'society is built up from individuals only' and/or 'all social phenomena can be explained in terms of individuals and their properties' (185). This distinction is a welcome development in that Robeyns takes capability approaches/theories to be a rejection of ontological accounts of the self as isolated and atomistic and as having interests, projects, and goals prior to their entry into the world. It allows capability theorists to argue that its 'commitment to normative individualism is not incompatible with an ontology that recognizes the connections between people, their social relations, and their social embedment' (185).

Robeyns, however, identifies the critique of ontological individualism as mostly coming from communitarian philosophies (185). Yet we think that this misses what feminist relational theorists have said and continue to say that distinguishes us from communitarian accounts as well as from most capability approaches/theories. Feminist relational theorists are committed to taking the unit of ultimate moral *concern* to be individuals (not communities), but they can be said to take what individuals are able to be and do to be more clearly and accurately revealed when the focus is on relationships as the unit of moral *analysis* (Koggel 2019, 579). Using the lens of relationships can better capture (from the start) the effects of oppressive structures and norms on individuals and groups. It isn't that individuals disappear from the analysis. Rather, a relational approach moves immediately to the normative *and* ontological implications of our being embedded in networks of relationships at all levels – of the personal, public, local, institutional, national, and global. Feminist relational theorists thereby uncover the role of norms, structures, and power and draw out the implications of these for how we understand individuals and their effects on what *individuals* can be and do.

Feature 4: Empirical investigation

Emerging from the first three features that distinguish feminist relational theory from other theories/approaches are the two that follow. The fourth feature is that feminist relational theory is committed to an 'empirically obligated' approach (Walker 1998, 104). We begin with accounts of phenomena that draw on and contribute to empirical investigations. Feminist relational theory is interdisciplinary by nature. While this can also be said to be the case for capability approaches/theories, Robeyns admits that there are gaps in the capability literature with respect to paying attention to and accounting for social and cultural constraints that emerge from and are embedded in inequalities in power. This leads Robeyns to encourage capability approaches/theories to fill these gaps by integrating 'a feminist account of gender relations, which includes an account of power' (192) and 'a rich account of power that is supported by research in anthropology, sociology, and other social sciences' (193). In his role as President of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA), Jay Drydyk's keynote address was blunt about what is missing: 'the capability approach focuses on understanding and removing unfreedom, so it is surprising that connections between capability and oppression have been little discussed' (2021, 527). With its focus on relationships, feminist relational theory goes straight to where relations of power can be uncovered and analyzed in the institutions, structures, norms, and policies that sustain and perpetuate oppressive relationships.

Feature 5: Emancipatory goals

The fifth feature is related to the discussion of the fourth: feminist relational theory takes its emancipatory goal to be front and center. The goal is not only to accurately represent and theorize, but also to transform harmful dimensions of structures and networks of relation. While early feminist relational theory did more to reveal the shortcomings and gaps (what is missing) in liberal accounts of justice, equality, personhood, autonomy, and so on, as the articles in this special issue show, much of the current work in feminist relational theory directs attention to how to rethink and challenge structures, institutions, and norms so as to change them.

Feature 6: Non-ideal theory

Feminist relational theory is informed by non-ideal theory (Mills 2005; Schwartzman 2006; Tessman 2009). While relational theory is grounded in emancipatory, anti-oppression commitments, which frame the character or elements of ethical or just relations, it is not focused on identifying or determining ideal relationships. Instead, feminist relational theory insists on attention to the current conditions, context, and circumstances of relationships as a starting point for moral and political theory. We are motivated to start with accounts of what is wrong with the world, to establish a clear-eyed sense of existing injustices and, to the extent we are able, to offer guidance on actions that can and should be taken within the world as it is, not within an ideal world as we might envision it.

Feature 7: Implications for epistemology

Attention to relationships of power at all levels of the personal, local, regional, national, and global also have implications for accounts of knowledge: who can know, how they are taken to know, and what they know. These insights have been explored more extensively in the literature on epistemic injustice, but they have implications for and applications in feminist relational theory. With relationships as the focal point, the idea is that those who are excluded or lack power and voice due to factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, and so on, can bring a diverse range of experiences and perspectives that shed light on conditions, structures, and institutions that entrench inequalities and injustices. These epistemological commitments mean that context and situatedness not only reveal whose knowledge is dismissed, denigrated, or ignored but also what that can "known" from these marginalized perspectives about oppression and ways of being that defy and challenge the dominant discourse or, as expressed in the literature on epistemic injustice, the dominant collective interpretative resources that generate hermeneutical injustice. Some of the authors use feminist relational theory to draw out insights about epistemic injustice and some use insights on epistemic injustice to highlight features of feminist relational theory.

Feature 8: Multiple frameworks and approaches

As reflected in many of the articles in this special issue, feminist relational theory increasingly borrows from and makes use of relational insights from a range of frameworks and approaches. The result is an even richer engagement with, for example, disability and critical race theorists, Indigenous scholars and frameworks, and with literature in postcolonial, postsecular, continental, and non-Western traditions. This literature not only informs feminist relational theory in the work it continues to do in reconceiving concepts, but also in the work that it does in providing new approaches, implications, and applications to contemporary issues and problems. Ami Harbin (2016) exemplifies this feature of using multiple frameworks and approaches to sketch positive strategies that can emerge from being disoriented. Recognizing oppressive relationships, structures, institutions, and norms can be disorienting, but it can also provide space for challenging conditions and contexts of racism, ableism, colonialism, post-industrial poverty, heterosexism, and mass-incarceration.

The articles: themes, frameworks, arguments, and summaries

By way of summarizing the features identified above, we hope to have shown how feminist relational theory reorients moral and political assumptions, including assumptions of individualism, liberalism, and siloed, institutional, and professionally controlled state-based solutions for major social problems. Feminist relational theorists argue that neither sociality nor individualism can fully or satisfactorily account for issues of power and oppression that can be best revealed and addressed in and through descriptions and analyses of actual relationships at interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels that shape the lives of many people, groups, and communities; and these relationships are further impacted and affected by those at national and global levels. The articles

collected here explore and advance the unique explanatory and transformative potential of feminist relational theory by challenging and shifting disciplinary boundaries and in its impact and potential to analyze and address pressing ethical issues in our contemporary global context.

This collection of articles extends the purpose, aims, and achievements of relational theory as a powerful theoretical framework with important and powerful implications and applications in the world. This special issue is intended, therefore, as another point in the development of feminist relational theory and approaches and their implications and applications for important issues in global ethics. Articles in this issue exemplify some of the range and strengths of feminist relational theory as described in the discussion of the eight features in the previous section. As will be shown below, the authors in this special issue, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, make use of most if not all of the eight features. The different strategies and approaches used by the authors can be said to highlight the differences, the similarities, and the intersections between and across the articles—all with the shared goal of enriching and expanding feminist relational theory.

Some authors start with concrete circumstances and turn to feminist relational theory to find resources for conceiving, reconceiving, diagnosing, or working with/beyond the circumstances at hand. For instance, Daniela Mercieca and Duncan Mercieca start with the issue of the death of migrants and turn to relational insights to reconceive the role of grief and mourning. Other authors such as Anna Mudde draw from the concrete and bodily practices of craft making to expand or critically reflect on new directions for feminist relational theory in crafting accessible spaces and places. Other authors start with descriptions of particular relationships and employ feminist relational theory as a lens for critically analyzing these relationships. For example, Sarah Clark Miller conceptualizes harm in parent-child relations, while always situating them as nested in the networks and structures which partly form them. Élaina Gauthier-Mamaril inverts doctor-patient to patient-doctor to situate these relationships in frameworks that shape and constrain what they can be. Other authors start with the structures and institutions that shape relationships and use feminist relational insights to rethink ways to uncover, address, or alleviate the effects of oppressive relationships. For instance, Felicity Gray takes dominant conceptions of peacekeeping and policing in the protection of civilians and focuses on relationships among all the different actors as a way to reshape how we think about security, safety, and protection. Leon Schlüter starts with mainstream egalitarian political theory and employs insights from feminist relational, disability, and critical race theories to uncover the inequalities that remain hidden and invisible.

Many of the authors in the volume engage with the ongoing project of reconceiving key moral and political concepts by providing relational accounts of concepts such as harm (Miller), egalitarianism (Schlüter), accessibility (Mudde), virtue (Gauthier-Mamaril), protection against violence (Gray), time (Hunfeld), prosperity (Murphy), mourning and grief (Mercieca and Mercieca), agency (Schubert), and territory and land (Szende). Moreover, these projects of reconceiving make use of multiple frameworks and approaches to highlight and provide what many of the authors describe as accounts that are 'more fully relational' of concepts such as autonomy (Gauthier-Mamaril) and agency (Miller, Schubert). These accounts, in turn, expand the reach of relational approaches and insights in their applications to contemporary moral and political issues in the global context.

The last point is evident in the work that the authors in this special issue do in applying 'more fully relational' accounts to pressing issues such as climate change (Szende), poverty (Murphy), forced migration (Mercieca and Mercieca), and violence (Miller, Gray).

Some of the authors challenge taken-for-granted and dominant frameworks such as liberalism with its assumptions about the workings of markets and capitalism as promoters of freedom, autonomy, and agency. These authors take these assumptions to be at the bottom of norms, practices, and policies of control of nature, of land, of resources, of peoples and communities (Murphy, Hunfeld, Szende), and of gendered, racialized, and colonial norms (Murphy, Schubert). Some highlight the presence of these assumptions and norms in contemporary accounts of development policy (Hunfeld) and in capability approaches/theories (Murphy). Others use approaches that draw attention to histories of colonization and ongoing processes of colonialism and oppressive structures to challenge theories of global justice that assume understandings of history as linear (Hunfeld), of peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and policing as hierarchical and top-down (Gray), of policies that distance "us" from migrants who die in their efforts to escape oppressive forces (Mercieca and Mercieca), and of people and perspectives that are dismissed or marginalized (Mudde, Gauthier-Mamaril, Mercieca and Mercieca, Hunfeld, Schlüter, Schubert).

In keeping with commitments to non-ideal theory and to empirical investigation, all authors specify the context within which they use relational theory and approaches. Some work within Western/North countries (Miller, Schlüter, Gauthier-Mamaril, Mudde); some apply relational approaches and insights to issues in particular countries or regions such as Cambodia (Schubert), South Sudan (Gray), and the Mediterranean Sea (Mercieca and Mercieca); and some use relational approaches and insights that cross borders and apply to the global context more broadly (Hunfeld, Murphy, Szende). In all cases of descriptions and analyses, whether of specific issues as they manifest in countries or regions or of the local as impacted by regional, national, and global factors, the focus is always on relationships as the lens through which to view how individuals, groups, peoples, and communities are shaped in and through networks of relationships. In other words, common to all the articles is the use of relationships as the focal point for moral analysis.

The special issue opens with two authors who use specific kinds of interpersonal relationships as the starting point. Sarah Clark Miller examines cases of psychological abuse in parent-child relationships, limiting her discussion to Western/North contexts where the harm of child abuse has been defined in the psychological literature. Miller zeroes in on psychological abuse as undertheorized in both the psychological and philosophical literature. She identifies three kinds of harms that emerge from childhood psychological abuse: harms to the relational and agential capacities of individuals; harms to intrapersonal relationships in the inability of selves to relate to the self; and harms to relationships with others. In all cases, Miller places her analysis into the broader networks of relationships that can result in hindering or promoting harms to agential capacities, the self in relation to the self, and the self in relation to others. Miller ends by arguing that a relational theory of harm reveals relationships as sites of human brutality that damage the relational self at the same time as they can be sites for the relational reconstitution of the self.

Élaina Gauthier-Mamaril examines standard accounts of autonomy in patient-doctor relationships, opening with a discussion of policies in the UK. Gauthier-Mamaril references Mackenzie's own admission that the edited volume, *Relational Autonomy*, still focused too heavily on individuals and paid insufficient attention to the structures, norms, and institutions that shape rationality as central to autonomy. For Gauthier-Mamaril, the central role given to rationality follows Modern philosophers from Descartes forward to entrench binaries of reason/emotion or, as she puts it, of rationality/affectivity with the effect of validating the exclusion of some people as legitimate knowers. Gauthier-Mamaril finds support in the work of Baruch Spinoza on the significance of external conditions, of Filipino accounts of autonomy as a virtue, and of critical disability accounts to sketch a defense of the role of 'para-rationality' in reconceiving autonomy in patient-doctor relationships.

The next set of five authors examine relationships that tend not to be thought of as relationships at all and thereby extend the reach and promise of relational approaches. In the first, Duncan Mercieca and Daniela Mercieca examine relationships between the living and the dead and call for responses of recognition, grief, and mourning for migrants who die in efforts to escape oppressive conditions. They use relational insights from Judith Butler to show that who counts as human, who is vulnerable, whose lives are precarious, and whose lives are ignored are all shaped in conditions and contexts of oppression and injustice. What is forgotten in international policies that focus on controlling or preventing movement across borders are the lives lost at sea. Mercieca and Mercieca argue that mourning and grieving these lives are not only proper moral and political responses in our relations to these dead bodies, but that these responses can be sites of collective resistance that challenge and reshape norms and policies.

Anna Mudde uses her own experiences as a knitter to explore relationships between crafters/artists and their crafts/art as practices of 'bodyminds' needing to attend carefully to material and detailed activities. Quoting Tronto and Berenice Fisher's broad account of care as 'everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as well as possible' (Tronto 1993, 105), Mudde draws out the embodied, material, and knowledge making skills and activities of craft as care work. Knowledge that emerges from bodies immersed in the materiality of relationships with others and with things in the world has been overlooked in philosophy; however, Mudde argues that being with and learning from others in bodily/material ways has implications for issues of accessibility in the design of physical spaces. Mudde's account of knowers as co-responsible, co-relational, and co-constituted has her reflect on how COVID-19 has changed how we respond to human needs and to issues of accessibility.

The final three in this group shape a set that explores relationships between capitalism and colonialism—in relationships between poverty and prosperity, between Western and non-Western accounts of time, and between peoples and land. Susan Murphy examines dominant views in economics and mainstream development policy that take poverty and prosperity as binary and uni-directional and assume that promoting prosperity alleviates poverty. She argues that poverty reduction through policies of increasing prosperity at individual and national levels ignores the ecological embeddedness of humans with nature/ecosystems and interdependencies that make care work necessary for human well-being and survival itself. Masculinist norms of control fuel the extraction of natural resources, the destruction of functioning ecosystems, and the entrenchment of gendered

norms of social relations of care. Murphy calls for challenging norms that inform under-standings of prosperity, economic globalization, and responsiveness to needs under capitalism. Murphy ends with reflections on how COVID-19 highlights the need for fem-inist relational values of reciprocity, care, connection, and interdependence.

Katharina Hunfeld identifies how relations with, and understandings of time are under-explored in global justice debates. Global justice debates reflect the coloniality of Western temporal assumptions—that time is linear, teleological, neutral, and universally valid. These assumptions reflect "world" political time as the time of liberal capitalist states and the globalization of capitalism and shape dominant understandings of work, pro-ductivity, and history itself. Hunfeld explores two approaches that present alternative ways of conceptualizing and experiencing temporality: feminist relational theory that pays attention to processes of marginalizing and silencing in the remembering of histori-cal injustices and African *ubuntu* thought that takes personhood as a process of becoming through time and with responsibilities to the living, the dead, and the yet to be born. These and other alternative frameworks of time (such as Hindu and Indigenous approaches) reveal hermeneutical injustices that emerge from dominant collective inter-pretative resources that marginalize and denigrate the values, knowledge, and ways of being of non-Western and colonized peoples. Hunfeld concludes with a call to recuperate and bring into dialogue alternative non-linear temporalities to draw out the importance of challenging the coloniality of Western assumptions of time.

Jennifer Szende discusses relationships of peoples and communities to land to provide an account of the relational value of land and its relevance to debates about climate change. Climate change has focused on actual loss of land and territory in terms of increased flooding, desertification, erosion, changes to migration, and loss of biodiversity. Szende claims that these are not the only harms and injustices of climate change befalling peoples and communities. Szende uses insights from feminist relational theory, Indigen-ous thought, and attachment theory of territorial rights to argue that these approaches are better able to explain harms that emerge from changes to ways of life, identity, self-understandings, and self-determination when relationships to land, space, and terri-tory are disrupted. Her account of the relational value of land works in both directions of how features of the land impact and affect identities of peoples and communities and how peoples and communities in turn shape and reshape the land. Loss of land and value of land result from the gains of industrialized, developed, colonial, and settler-colo-nial states in the Global North at the expense of Global South countries and Indigenous peoples and communities. Together the three approaches enrich relational theory by pro-viding deeper and fuller accounts of relationships of people and communities with land, place, and territory to show injustices that emerge through climate change.

The three final articles by Leon Schlüter, Felicity Gray, and Lara Schubert place particu-lar kinds of relationships straight into broader networks of relationships to reframe how we think about equality and relationships of inequality (Schlüter), relationships between peacekeepers and the civilians they protect (Gray), and relationships of women religious leaders with the church, the state, and global capitalism (Schubert). Schlüter supports what he refers to as a 'negative-critical turn' in relational egalitarian accounts that move away from positive projects of describing ideal conditions of equality to identifying and analyzing existing hierarchical and unequal relationships. Schlüter uses insights from the literature on non-ideal theory, critical race and disability theories, feminist relational

theory, and epistemic injustice to argue that the perspectives of marginalized and oppressed groups are vantage points for uncovering and understanding inequalities that remain invisible or are ignored in mainstream relational egalitarian accounts. Schlüter sketches three ways in which invisible inequalities can be revealed and addressed. He contends that political philosophers should learn from social-movement claims and demands, adopt an ethnographic sensibility that uses reflexive and relational learning with marginalized others, and remove formal and informal barriers that exclude marginalized knowers from academia.

Felicity Gray challenges the dominant view of the protection of civilians from violence and harms of armed conflict that focuses on identifying and addressing who provides it and who receives it. This view has those providing protection as active peacekeepers and those receiving it as passive civilians. Gray inverts the dominant view by showing that these assumed protection architectures/structures themselves shape what is possible among the relevant actors and that these in turn shape understandings of security, safety, and protection. By focusing on structured inequalities and power imbalances, Gray reveals current 'architectures' of armed peacekeeping and policing as built on militarized, racial, and gendered hierarchies that sideline civilians from engaging with the dominant discourse on protection. Gray places her relational account of protection into the context of her fieldwork on the United Nations police mass cordon and search activities conducted in South Sudan. Interviews with the policing and civilian sides illustrate the positive potential emerging from a relational understanding of civilians as agents of change. A fully relational approach to civilian protection can reveal unjust structures, create opportunities for new research, and challenge and reorient dominant peacekeeping strategies.

The final article by Lara Schubert explores the relationships that women religious leaders in the context of Cambodia have with the church, the state, and global capitalism. Her ethnographic fieldwork zeroes in on the lives of two women, one Christian and one Buddhist, to illustrate that they do not directly resist power structures or seek freedom from values espoused by their religious and cultural affiliations. While this may suggest they lack agency because they live within gendered and oppressive structures, Schubert sketches an account of agency that is not preoccupied with resistance and liberation— there is no core essence apart from relationships in which possibilities for agency emerge. Schubert uses decolonial insights from postsecular feminism and feminist relational theory to show that women religious leaders display a non-oppositional agency, a 're-existence', in the face of hegemonic global capitalist forces of coloniality/modernity. Women religious leaders show re-existence by not prioritizing the values and meaning-making of the global capitalist system. Instead, they live and flourish in alternative value frameworks where they can thereby weaken, even if slightly, dominant social structures and institutions.

We believe that this collection offers a significant step forward in the development of feminist relational theory. Following early forays in identifying and criticizing mainstream liberal theory in the Western tradition, articles in this collection draw on approaches by anti-oppression theorists found in critical disability, critical race, anti-colonial/decolonial, and non-Western theories, to further broaden the descriptions and analyses of relationships and networks of relationships and to extend and advance feminist relational theory and its applications. We want to thank all the authors and the wide range of

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