

EDITORIAL FOREWORD

This book is about diversity and difference in community. The vision is a multicultural community that emphasizes differences over sameness. The principle of diversity recognizes the strengths of working across artificial culturally imposed differences. Diversity means sharing power, and shared power is often associated with democracy. True democracy requires equitable treatment for all citizens, irrespective of diverse backgrounds.

The traditional “melting pot” conception in the United States, by contrast, champions a version of equality based on sameness. While this conception is rejected by identity politics for proposing assimilation as the sole means to a national unity, it is still a familiar theme in common sense ideals of liberal democracy. As a result, groups differing from the dominant culture continue to be oppressed by race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and class. African Americans and Latinos, numbering twenty-five percent of the population in the year 2000, must contend for equal respect with the dominant white population. Women must compete twice as hard with men for an equal share of recognition in the public arena of economic and governmental affairs. Wealth and political power continue to accumulate in the hands of those with race, class, and gender privilege.

In the midst of these artificial divisions, the United States is struggling to overcome a culture of violence, which is fueled by a white male backlash against the equity gains made by women and people of color during the 1950s–1970s. The domestic sale of guns is out of control, and the United States continues to sell its military weapon systems to enemies and allies alike. Our prison industry is growing, and capital punishment remains a popular solution to crime. The “war on drugs” places addicts in jails rather than hospitals. Corporations further competitive, self-promoting agendas. Money, whether “soft” or “hard,” has become highly influential in securing public offices and programs. Nevertheless signs of hope and change exist: students demonstrating in opposition to sweatshops; states re-evaluating capital punishment and penalties for drug addictions; polls favoring gun control; the Million Mom March against guns and violence; the current U.S. Congress striving to institutionalize campaign finance reforms; and groups of citizens, religious and secular, caring for the needy.

Dialogue is the means, and peaceful reconciliation of conflicts, the goal. Mohandas Gandhi argued for a democracy based upon nonviolence so that diverse views about the role of government in various types of legislation could be deliberated without fear of retaliation. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that further myriad causes and reforms are significant in specifying the role government needs to pursue. The poor and the oppressed will have a legitimate voice in government only when cultural biases are restrained.

The book’s content blends theory with practice. The key topical conceptions of community, diversity, difference, democracy, multiculturalism, and peacemaking are clarified and defined from a variety of philosophical

perspectives. These chapters start a conversation on the rightful role of modern government. There are also chapters that focus on applied concerns, such as desegregating schools, identity and the barrios, racism, mind viruses, cyberspace, persuasion, and even Verdi's *Rigoletto*.

The issues addressed go beyond the borders of the United States. Various authors explore global community and world governance. With the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, international interest has shifted toward a world in which national leaders must be made accountable for the actions they take within their nation-states and against neighboring states. Might is not right, and human rights are beginning to be taken seriously for ethnic minorities. With the emerging European Union, previously fiercely independent sovereign states are reaching out for a more inclusive interdependence that functions within a broader federation of states. Community, diversity, and difference are significant concepts with important implications for worldwide cooperation.

The contributors to this volume are mostly members of Concerned Philosophers for Peace (CPP), a North American association of philosophers that for twenty years has turned its tools of analysis toward issues of peace. The book's topic was the theme for an annual CPP conference held at the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio.

With the emergence of George W. Bush as President of the United States, along with a Republican House of Representatives and a Democratic Senate issues of diversity, difference, privilege, and community are again center stage. The new President has gained a major tax cut for the rich, and proposes a rollback in environmental programs, no new gun control measures, more drilling for oil, a major defensive system against missiles and possible arming of outer space, and a withdrawal from "outdated" arms control treaties. Our allies fear the United States is acting unilaterally in foreign policy. So the issues raised in this volume are timely.

I wish to thank the coeditors Alison Bailey and Paula J. Smithka for overseeing the comprehensive editing process from its inception. They have interacted well with all authors, while upholding a qualitative set of standards. Having philosophers apply a peace perspective to issues of community and diversity is a special event. I believe this book will quickly earn the respect of scholars in the field. The volume makes an admirable addition to the Philosophy of Peace special series within the Value Inquiry Book Series. It would make an excellent text for undergraduate college courses that focus on community, diversity, and international peace.

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