ABSTRACT. We concentrate on four questions among the many posed by this special collection of papers on Pragmatism and the Hispanic world. They are, first, what took pragmatism beyond the borders of the United States and into the Hispanic world? Next, what are the ideas of Dewey (or pragmatism) that have had the greatest impact on Hispanic culture? Third, what are the past and present obstacles that has kept the Hispanic world from using pragmatism to deal with many of their educational and social problems? Finally, why does pragmatism still hold great promise and potential for the Hispanic world?

KEY WORDS: Dewey, hispanic, imperialism, Latin America, modernization, pragmatism

After reading, discussing, and reflecting on the foregoing papers, we concluded that among the many issues and questions they raise regarding the relation between pragmatic philosophy of education and the Hispanic world, we would concentrate on the following:

1. What took pragmatism beyond the borders of the United States and into the Hispanic world?
2. What are the ideas of Dewey (or pragmatism) that have had the greatest impact on Hispanic culture?
3. What are the past and present obstacles that has kept the Hispanic world from using pragmatism to deal with many of their educational and social problems?
4. Why does pragmatism still hold great promise and potential for the Hispanic world?

Our response will address these complex questions in this order but because of their reticulated character, what comes later often bears on what went earlier. With the help of the contributors to this collection, we hope to take some steps toward answering them. Nonetheless, we recognize our limits, so in several places we will conclude our response with open-ended queries for the reader. The authors of the
papers comprising this collection have done a good job of beginning to address these questions; so, our response only seeks to continue the conversation.

In many ways what took pragmatism, especially Deweyan pragmatism, beyond the borders of its birth and into the Hispanic world, is what took it to China, Turkey and other emerging, or perhaps sometimes more accurately, reemerging, nations as well. Jaime Nubiola states “Spain and the countries of South America have been a world apart, lagging far behind the mainstream Western world.” Pragmatism, especially as a philosophy of education, remains appealing to such nations because, as we will suggest later in our response, it too lies far from the mainstream. It is important to remember that Dewey once wrote, “If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow-men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education (MW 9:338, our emphasis).” Dewey critically and creatively combined the original pedagogical thinking of such educators such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel and Herbert into an original synthesis.

The broad answer to the first question is that the Deweyan synthesis was useful to those in the Hispanic world whose economic, political, and social interests led them to pursue modernization, radical reform and nation building, which, of course, requires modifying fundamental dispositions. If Dewey is right, and we think he is, you can reconstruct the “mentality” of a society by reeducating it, but then you must alter the national philosophy.

The ideas of Dewey and pragmatism that had the greatest impact on Hispanic culture are those centering on the themes of modernization such as secularization, economic development, the growth of scientific knowledge, liberalism, democracy and progress. Mendonça and his colleagues note, “a common attitude” in Brazil was “the adoption of the model of institution of leader countries.” At the start of the twentieth century, the US was, for better or worse, among such “leader countries” in that it was the most “modern” scientific,

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1 When referring to works in the present collection, we do not provide citations for quotes taken from the contributors. Citations of the works of John Dewey are to the critical edition published by Southern Illinois University Press. Volume and page numbers follow the initials of the series. Abbreviations for the critical edition are: 
EW The Early Works (1882–1898)
MW The Middle Works (1899–1924)
LW The Later Works (1925–1953)