Pragmatism invites us to cultivate new relationship between practice and consciousness, practice and spirituality, freedom and solidarity. This book explores different dimensions of pragmatism, spirituality, consciousness, freedom and solidarity. In our related volume on *Pragmatism, Spirituality and Society: Border Crossings, Transformations and Planetary Realizations*, I had discussed how Sri Aurobindo wants to transform pragmatism into a nobler vision and practice of pragmatism. In this volume as we deal with consciousness, freedom and solidarity the following thoughts of Sri Aurobindo are helpful to walk and mediate together with:

A pragmatic mentalism would not be in its essential principle other than the attempt already made by the race to make the intellectual Reason the
governor of life, but this has been done hitherto by a reason preoccupied with the external fact and subjected to it; mind has attempted to read the law of life and its possibilities and organize anew within those limits by invention, device, regulation, mechanisms of many kinds, or it has attempted to govern life by mental ideas of an abstract order, such as democracy or socialism, and devise an appropriate machinery materializing that mental abstraction so as to make the dominance of the idea practical and viable. A subjectivistic pragmatic mentalism would try to act more subtly and plastically on life; it would seek for “truth of being,” some idea or ideal of its perfection or practice or efficiency, right way of being or living, and attempt to let that grow in the individual and govern his nature, grow in the collective life and govern its formations. Or it would place the development and organization of the mental life of man as the primary consideration and life and society as a convenience for this true aim of human existence. A new civilization no longer vitalistic or mainly political and economic, but intellectual, cultural, idealistic, taking up the ancient ideal of man, the perfected mental being in an ennobled life and sound body, a great expansion of human mind and intellect, a mankind more mentally alive, even a human race grown capable of culture and not only of a greater external civilization, thus fulfilling on a large human and universal scale the tendencies which in the past appeared only in a few favored countries and epochs and even then imperfectly and mostly in a cultured class, might be the consequence of this change. That prospect has its attractions, and for the humanist and the intellectual it is in one form another their utopia of the future. But this would not really carry the human evolution farther; it would only give it for a time a larger, finer and freer movement in its widest attainable circle. If the mentality remained too pragmatic, too eager to rationalize or organise life according to the idea, the peril of mechanisation and standardization would be there. If the mental ideas governing the individual and social life took a settled form, became a cultural system of the mind, this system would after a time exhaust its possibilities and human life would settle down into a groove, satisfied and non-evolutive, as happened in the Graeco-Roman world or in China or elsewhere where the mental intellect became the predominant power of life. If this arrest were avoided either by the multiplication of different cultures – different peoples acting upon each other but escaping the tendency to replication and standardization which is the tendency of the human collective mind or by a free progressiveness of the human intelligence making constantly new ideas, new ideals, still the movement would eventually be in a circle or an ellipsis which could be a constant description of a new-old movement in the same field. In fact our external mind moving on the surface tends always to exhaust itself rapidly; if it expends
itself slowly, conservatively, at a leisure pace, it can create a civilization and culture which will last for centuries or even for one or more thousands of years; but that too will exhaust itself in time; if it throws itself into a brilliant or rapid movement as in ancient Greece or in modern Europe a few centuries are likely to see the end of this flaming up as of a new star. Afterwards there must be stagnation, decline and a renewal of the mental circle.

This is because mind and thought are not the sovereign principle or highest term of our existence; mind and thought therefore can to a certain extent fulfill themselves, but they cannot fulfill life nor can they give to man his complete self. Mind is an instrument, not the self of man; nor the complete reality or highest reality of his being. It is a mediator between the being and life; it seeks to know truth of being and truth of life and bring them together. Truth of idea therefore is effective only so far as it can interpret truth of spirit and truth of life, it has itself no essential existence; when it erects itself as a mental abstraction, it has no reality and no effective power; it is only an index, a figure. It can become effective only by taking up life and catching hold of some vital force to effectuate it, but usually it ends by[...], exhausting or stereotyping and sterilizing the forces it uses; or it can become effective only when it canalises and brings out into action of mind and life an inner truth of being, a truth of spirit and it is then powerful only so long as it replenishes itself from its spiritual source and so keep itself true and alive. (Sri Aurobindo 1997: 415–417; italics added)

In the above passages, Sri Aurobindo deals with important themes with regard to the work of pragmatism and mind what he calls “pragmatic mentalism.” For Sri Aurobindo, even a “subjective pragmatic mentalism” working more subtly on life and “seeking for truth of being” is not enough unless it realizes that “mind and thought are not the sovereign principle or highest term of our existence.” Our journey with action, thinking, pragmatism, mind and consciousness has to bring out “an inner truth of being, a truth of spirit.” This inner truth has to be understood and realized going beyond the linguistic and conventional boundaries between the outer and the inner and spirit and matter, body and mind, and mind and spirit and as part of unfolding non-dual realizations of relationships. Consciousness also refers to dynamic movements of establishing and weaving threads of relationships across and is not bound to any of the fixed terms of dualism such as body and mind, mind and spirit (Ingold 1986). Our book, *Pragmatism, Spirituality and Society: New Pathways of Consciousness, Freedom and Solidarity*, deals with a new pragmatics of consciousness work which simultaneously deals with body, mind, spirit,
and action in new ways. It also involves new visions and practices of consciousness meditation. It also involves rethinking and transforming freedom and solidarity involving both freedom of being and spirit of inter-being together. As Sri Aurobindo writes in the following epochal lines in his epic *Savitri*:

A lonely freedom cannot satisfy
A heart that has grown one with every heart:
I am a deputy of the aspiring world,
My spirit’s liberty I ask for all.

With this prelude and continuing the journey with our book, it begins with Part One of the book, “Pragmatism and Spirituality: Consciousness, Freedom and Solidarity.” This begins with Nishant Alphonse Irudayadason’s essay, “Pragmatism and Belief” in which Irudayadason discusses the many sided relationship between pragmatism and belief including religious belief. Irudayadason discusses the significance of Kant in being open both to belief beyond scientific verification as well as being interested in putting belief to creative use and practice. Irudayadason then discusses the works of classical pragmatists such as Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey and contemporary pragmatists such as Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam. Irudayadason tells us how pragmatist thinkers help us “approach belief as a choice of existence, the concept of God as an ideal social value, and the analysis of religious experience in psychological terms” but this does not mean that “they renounce all forms of transcendence.” For Irudayadason, the significance of pragmatism and belief lies in the fact that the conventional transcendence in the field of religion is realized as a “human transcendence, situated on the moral, psychological, sociological level.”

Irudayadason’s essay is followed by Robert McDermott’s essay, “Pragmatism, Consciousness and Spirituality: William James and Rudolf Steiner” in which McDermott discusses approaches of William James and Rudolf Steiner with regard to methods of understanding religious and mystical experience as well as consciousness. McDermott tells us how James and Steiner shared “a critique of belief as a way to overcome the limits on religious knowledge set by science and naturalistic philosophy.” For McDermott, “Their case, again in different terms, rested on privileged, and highly transformative, experience, not on a belief system oblivious to the demands for validation and discernible positive effects. James sought evidence for the source of religious experience, for
the ‘Something More’ to which large segments of the human community—some quite demonstrably—have access, and Steiner looked to the tradition of mystics, gnostics, and theosophists as evidence on behalf of the case for knowledge of the spiritual world.” McDermott also tells us how

Steiner’s vantage point differs sharply from James’s in three important respects: (1) James wrote typically as an observer, whereas Steiner wrote as one who regards his experience as authoritative, although Steiner did not intend the results of his spiritual scientific research to be considered infallible; (2) the evolution of consciousness informs all of Steiner’s philosophic and esoteric descriptions, whereas James, despite his acceptance of Darwinian evolution, paid little attention to the evolution of consciousness as an interpretive category; and (3) both James and Steiner are thoroughgoing empiricists with an eye to the consequences of experience, but Steiner’s empiricism is better described as transformational than as pragmatic.

In his pragmatism and approaches to religious experience, James valued the significance of experience and he was open to experiences beyond the known empirical and sensible means. But James did not develop the spiritual discipline of opening oneself to realms of experiences beyond the sensible and the empirical thus deepening the project of deep and radical empiricism that Jamesian pragmatism sought to realize. Steiner did not consider his experiences born of spiritual discipline as infallible and here what McDermott writes deserves our careful consideration for our project of cultivating new pathways of pragmatism, consciousness and spirituality:

Steiner acknowledges the limits of his knowledge concerning the process of transformation in individual cases, but the intent of his spiritual scientific method is to penetrate such mysteries, beginning with one’s own experience. Such knowledge, of course, requires disciplined effort, or spiritual practice.

What would seem to be missing in James’s work is precisely such a practice that might have enabled him to see deeper into the subjects who so intrigued him and on whose transformative experiences he tried to build a genuinely radical empiricism, that is, a philosophy that grants primacy to individual experience. It might be time to supplement, and perhaps transform, James’s philosophical and religious insights by means of the kind of spiritual discipline that Steiner exemplified and explained.
McDermott’s essay is followed by Sarah Louise Gates’ essay, “Pragmatic Non-Duality in William James, Swâmî Vivekânanda and Trika Shaivism” which cultivates creative dialogues between pragmatism and Indic philosophical and spiritual traditions. Gates explores the vision and practice of non-duality what she calls pragmatic non-duality in William James, Swâmî Vivekânanda and Trika Shaivism. Gates tells us that “Rather than dwelling on absolutes, [...] Swâmî Vivekânanda agrees in practice, if not overarching methodology, with James, that binary choices between absolute unity or absolute plurality can not of themselves, in theory, make of us good people or shift humanity toward any kind of substantial ‘betterment’.” Gates also tells us: “In spiritual life, there is a need to bear in mind the absolute toward which the yogi aims, without losing sight of the part, the individual self, and its continuity with other parts, which make up systems. The cultivation of self toward the higher Self, means integrating into the scope of practical application, matters we may not initially be able to fully expand upon with empirical evidence or reason due to the subjectivity of experience. That there is a higher Self, an aspect beyond the limited ego, might be accepted as a matter of faith until there is evidence to the contrary. In doing so, Karma Yoga is one of many yogic paths transforming ordinary activities to increase meritorious action by concern, not only for things we can see, but with awareness that we cannot see all things, nor can we know the degree to which our actions will contribute to the destiny of humanity.” Here Trika Saivism challenges us to realize our internal bondage and for realization of creative practice in pragmatism we need to overcome our internal bondage. As Gates writes: “Spiritually, if persons are internally bound, they cannot fully unfold as beings, and must be perpetually shaped by outer forces into becoming what culture demands of them. [...] Knowing in Advaita Vedânta and Trika demands ‘seeing’ directly, as insight, in the same way as the ‘seeing’ thread that James imagines unifies the entire universe. In aligning with that universal vision, the identity trappings that govern our actions are cast off to reveal that the same self that sees through our own eyes, also sees through those of others. And serving others is, in this way, also serves our-selves both toward and following liberation. In this way the parts are harmonised with the whole in non-linear ways, with open-ended outcomes, where rewards and failings are viewed concurrently and evenly, where maximising pleasure and minimising pain for oneself, cease to be the primary agenda.”
Gates’ essay is followed by Justin M. Hewitson’s essay, “Peterson vs. Žižek on the Evolution of Consciousness and Happiness: From Pragmatism to Sarkar’s Tantra.” This chapter insightfully deepens and broadens our engagement with pragmatism and spirituality by bringing new contemporary interlocutors to our field such as psychologist Jordan B. Peterson and philosopher Slavoj Žižek. Hewitson begins with a discussion of their perspectives on the nature of happiness. Hewitson first details how the capitalist and Marxist framework of the discussion is transformed by Peterson and Žižek’s ultimate critique of Christian religious and Indian spiritual approaches to happiness. By examining the influences of William James’s pragmatism on Peterson and Žižek’s engagement with the biblical fall of consciousness, Hewitson shows how both thinkers’ appraisal of the duality inherent in Christian ideology and ontology makes permanent happiness beyond the scope of human realization. He then examines Žižek’s Marxist concerns with the negative effects of Indian mysticism presented in the Bhagavad Gitā as contrasted with the Indian philosopher P. R. Sarkar’s Tantric exegeses of the classic spiritual text and presents a spiritual account of happiness that arises from pragmatic approaches to understanding consciousness. Here, Hewitson simplifies complex Tantric and Vedic accounts of permanent happiness as the realization of consciousness of Oneness that arises through profound meditative states.

It is fitting that Hewitson’s essay is followed by Ramesh Chandra Pradhan’s essay, “Spirituality, Pragmatism, Vedanta and Universal Consciousness: A Study of the Philosophy of R. Balasubramanian,” which also continues the dialogue between pragmatism and Indian philosophical and spiritual traditions. In his essay, Pradhan makes creative dialogues between pragmatism and Vedanta especially as it has been nurtured by R. Balasubramanian, a philosopher from contemporary India. Pradhan discusses the nature of spirituality and pragmatism in the philosophy of Professor R. Balasubramanian (in short, RB). For Pradhan, “RB [is] the greatest Advaitin of our times who not only commented on many Advaita texts, but also outlined in an original way the Advaitic philosophy of man and the world. RB championed the spiritual view of man and the world as he believed not only that man is a spiritual being but also that the world itself is ultimately spiritual in nature.” RB strives to make bridges between the empirical and the transcendental and cultivates pathways of integral spiritualism which helps us in our journey of cultivating creative border
crossing between pragmatism and spirituality. To understand this the following thought of S. Radhakrishnan, the deep philosopher of our times who also draws upon Vedantic sources are helpful: “Spiritual values are realized on Earth through the empirical means of family love and friendship which blossom in loyalty and reverence” (Radhakrishnan quoted in Anand 2016: 12). Pradhan’s essay is followed by Subhash Sharma’s essay, “A Quantum Bridge Between Science and Spirituality: Towards A New Geometry of Consciousness,” which also continues dialogue between pragmatism and Indic thought and spiritual traditions. In this essay, Sharma argues that broadly there are two approaches to consciousness viz. Scientific and Spiritual. In scientific approach, consciousness is an emergent phenomenon of matter. This can be referred to as matter route to consciousness. In spiritual route, consciousness is an infused phenomenon wherein matter is infused with spirit. In scientific approach, consciousness is an emergent phenomenon of matter. This can be referred to as matter route to consciousness. In spiritual route, consciousness is an infused phenomenon wherein matter is infused with spirit. Now there is a need to combine the two approaches to consciousness. This can be done by building a quantum bridge between science and spirituality and border crossing between pragmatism and spirituality can facilitate this. Sharma’s essay is followed by Meera Chakraborty’s essay, “Freedom, Spiritual Praxis and Categorical Imperative.” In her essay, Chakraborty discusses paths of freedom and spiritual practice with a focus on the vision and the works of the mystics who challenge human beings to experience the rich tapestry of human experience including the supra-rational mystical dimensions of life and reality. The mystics have shown that when they offer their rich experiences subsuming these within the versatile activities of people aimed at freedom it can help people find a way out of their conflicts through the practice of spiritual praxis. This way mystics make people aware of their original freedom, a prerogative, they believed, inherent in human beings though they are not aware of this and therefore surrender it willingly as they are indecisive about life’s priority of cherishing freedom. What appears to have evolved from the practice of spiritual praxis is a transforming process by which people from any strata could be empowered to achieve the freedom in order to evolve meaningfully. This is not to say that this is an abstract theorization of an imagined behavior. The very practice by mystics such as Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and others involving themselves against the traditional caste equations and similar discriminations was from the premise that all are born equal and since in God’s
kingdom there are no such things as caste, class and other barriers it is
the prerogative of everyone to be included in all activities of life.

Chakraborty’s essay is followed by John Clammer’s who in his essay
“Spiritual Pragmatism and an Economics of Solidarity” explores limits of
mainstream of economic thinking and practice and discusses the vision
and practice of solidarity economics. He also explores different aspects
of spiritual economics. Here what Clammer writes deserves our careful
consideration:

A “spiritual economics” points us in several essential directions at once:
derminating the psychological assumptions of the dominant economic
model, recognizing the multi-dimensionality of human beings as social,
spiritual, aesthetic, moral, erotic, and cultural beings as well as economic
ones driven by narrowly materialistic motives, and recognizing that an
ideal economy is one that is entirely ecologically responsible and caring
while promoting conviviality, mutual affection and encouraging the cul-
tivation of what a generation ago Herbert Marcuse called the “education of
desire” along lines that are not only congruent with the preservation of
our beautiful planet, but which encourage fraternity not competition and
point us collectively towards fuller conception of our human potential. A
just, psychically, spiritually and ecologically sound economy is an essential
prerequisite of any such move towards a new society and must be the space
in which our social imagination is given full rein to devise forms of life that
enhance and do not diminish the total quality of life for all beings, human
or otherwise, who co-inhabit this Earth.

It is quite fitting that Clammer’s essay on economics of solidarity
is followed by Julie M. Geredien’s essay on pragmatism and soli-
darity. Solidarity is at the heart of vision and practice of pragmatism as
Richard Rorty suggests and as Vattimo (2011) argues that solidarity
needs to be accompanied by caritas-mercy and charity. Julie M.
Geredien’s essay embodies both the concerns. She also tells us how
organizations within civic society such as LiKEN in Appalachia, USA
and FUNDAEC in rural Colombia are building solidarity and coun-
tering the space-time frames of global capitalism by engaging in spiritual
pragmatism. For Geredien, “both organizations cultivate fluency in
their work addressing human needs and the real-world consequences of
human actions.” Geredien also discusses and analyzes “the creative
tension that exists between structure and agency” and makes “a
beginning theoretical account of how social entities, like LiKEN and
FUNDAEC, address problematic power complexes and global contradictions.” Geredien outlines a mode of development in which “different publics may likewise recognize their ability: to interact with the causal powers within structure and agency, and to manifest the virtue of intellectual solidarity.” In our contemporary worlds of brokenness, fragility and isolation especially on the wake of the recent and ongoing COVID pandemic, this focus on solidarity across boundaries especially intellectual solidarity involving the knowing publics and those who are in need has an urgent need and an epochal salience now.

With these, we come to the second and final Part of our book “Pragmatism and Spirituality: Reconstructing Language, Self and the World.” This begins with Mikael Stamm’s insightful essay, “Pragmatic Metaphysics: Language as a Battlefield Between Truth and Darkness.” This attempts to interpret a central text of the South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta through a kind of linguistic Gnosticism. In this cross-cultural experiment, Stamm views the force of darkness, ānāvamāla, as an existential hardening in which we perceive ourselves and our environment as utilities. But still, he claims, our fundamental openness is expressed in a continual strife or contradictions in our understanding implemented in the configuration of our language. And furthermore, that this configuration reveals fragments of the Absolute present in us, emerging through the connection between materiality and ideality. Thus, Stamm concludes, this points toward a pragmatic or material spirituality, redefining what we really are, as opposed to what we think we are. Stamm’s essay is followed by a related but different engagement with spirituality and pragmatism in Rafae1a Campos de Carvalho’s essay, “Monistic Elements in Levi-Strauss’s Structuralism: New Pathways of Consciousness, Pragmatism and Solidarity.” In her essay, Campos de Carvalho discusses the structuralist engagement of Levi-Strauss which is concerned with discovering patterns of unity and analogy between nature and culture. Campos de Carvalho finds similarity between such as structuralism and spiritual practices and philosophies such as Tantra from India. Campos de Carvalho essay is followed by Johannes Heinrichs’ essay, “Action, Language, Art and Mysticism As Reflection-Levels of an Alternative Semiotics and the Spiritual Perspective of a Value-Levels-Democracy,” which explores the challenges of action, language, art, mysticism and democracy. It engages with semiotics, pragmatism and systems theory. His insights emerge from his reflection-system-theory comprising as well of society as well as of individual activities. The notion of an inner, ontological or constitutive
reflection is what was lacking in Parsons’ at his time famous theory of social systems. Therefore in the early seventies, there was a break and fight between individual action-theory and theory of social systems, represented mainly by Jurgen Habermas and Niklas Luhmann, respectively. Heinrichs claims to have overcome this gap by deepening the epistemological reflection theory of Kant and German idealism to a constitutive and ontological reflection, already intended, but not yet clearly developed by Hegel whose dialectic was not yet a dialogical one. From the individual point of view, the ontological levels of reflection are “pragmatic” in form of action, language, art and mysticism. From the intersubjective (collective) point of view, the social reflection shapes subsystems of society the insight of which results in a new model of a value-levels-democracy, including very practical postulates.

Heinrich’s essay is followed by Benedetta Zaccarello’s, “Paul Valéry ‘Mystique sans Dieu/: writing as a spiritual practice?” in which Zaccarello discusses the life and work Paul Valery, the great French poet, and its implication for rethinking spirituality and pragmatism. Zaccarello discusses his work Notebooks which emerged from Valery’s early morning writing everyday before sunrise for more than fifty years (1871–1945). From such daily exercises of love and labor, Valery had produced some tens of thousands of pages and though he did not want to publish these he considered this work the most important part of his legacy. Zaccarello discusses how such writing is simultaneously literary, philosophical and spiritual. Writing here combines practice and spirituality in a creative way embodying a unique form of spiritual pragmatism.

For Zaccarello, the goal of such writing practice was to “enhance self-awareness in the writing and thinking subject and to formulate a language suitable for the translation of consciousness into words.” As Zaccarello tells us: “Beside quoting and questioning authors and practices belonging to the Western spiritual tradition, Valéry often describes himself as the ‘mystique sans Dieu’, revealing in this way a surprising interest for spirituality, given his skeptical, analytical and phenomenological approach. Transcending the individual self is a crucial goal of Valéry’s philosophical and literary aim, and in this goal ‘spirituality’, philosophy and even literature seem to converge from the point of view of the French poet and thinker.” It is quite appropriate and fitting that Zaccarello’s engagement with Valery is followed by Vinod Balakrishnan and Shintu Dennis’ essay on another great literary and spiritual seeker O. V. Vijayan whose literary work embodies deep spiritual quest. The essay by Balakrishnan
and Dennis “Spirituality of Action” examines the surface in relation to the depth in their reading of William James together with the Malayalam writer, O. V. Vijayan. There is a definite sympathy in James for eastern philosophy and its spiritual way of life which is not visible on the surface. The fictional universe of O. V. Vijayan has pragmatic depths which, on the surface, appears to be the simple spiritualism of the quotidian. The authors invite us to walk and meditate with James and Vijayan as exemplars of a shared space called spiritual pragmatism.

Balakrishnan and Dennis’s essay is followed by Nirmal Selvamony’s essay, “Is Homing Spiritual Praxis?” which explores the relationship among homing as coming home and pragmatism and spirituality. Selvamony argues that homing is the ultimate human praxis which is not exclusively spiritual. It is at once sacro-naturo-human and he presents the idea of *tiṇai* from Tamil cultural, philosophical and spiritual traditions where it embodies love-based kin relation of all the three members of home, namely, humans, nature and supernature. Reinterpreting home in light of the theory of *tiṇai* in *tolkāppiyam*, the most ancient grammatical treatise in the world, Selvamony shows how human praxis which privileges one of the three members of *tiṇai* (to the exclusion of the others) disrupts the love-based kin relation among the three members of home. If spiritual praxis, which consists in questing after truth, entails abandonment of home or exhoming, nature-centered praxis such as biological invasion, and exclusive human enterprises like state formation, development and colonialism result in dehoming. The urgent need, in Selvamony’s view, is homing, which will effectively counter the impact of the state societies we live in and usher in the holistic home or *tiṇai*. Homing also becomes an act of spiritual pragmatism.

Selvamony’s essay is followed by Ranjan Kumar Panda’s who in his essay, “Performativity as the Language of Pragmatism: *A Reading of Indian Spirituality*,” delves into the normativity of philosophical dialogues and conversations to show that spirituality is one of the central themes of Indian philosophy. The chapter opens up with a dialogue between Yājñavalkya and his wife Maitreyi from *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* to draw a difference between the materiality of life and the spirituality of life. A spiritual seeker must be contemplative and critical for developing a sense of self-knowledge. The self is not just a source of action, but also a source of articulation of knowledge. The author in this connection refers to dualism embedded in the very nature of knowing—is an act itself and logically connected to the knower. The basic urge here is to grasp
this logical relation (dharma) to understand the immortality of the self. The self is identified through the act of addressing. The identification is construed non-descriptively, though the conversational relationship which itself is descriptive and dialogical. The language of spirituality transcends the realm of the dialogical. In this regard, the cultivation of contemplative spiritual thinking and practice—sadhana is a prima facie condition of knowing oneself—atmajnana. The author highlights that there is a culture of spirituality and it is well reflected in the contemporary Indian philosophers like S. Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, et al. who have critiqued the language of spirituality and have shown the future of humanity needs to cultivate the spirituality for collective wellbeing. In his subsequent and the final essay to the volume, Ananta Kumar Giri explores the challenge of rethinking an important language of religion and politics, i.e., the language of Kingdom of God. In his essay, “Gardens of God: Spiritual Pragmatism and Transformation of Religion, Politics, Self and Society,” Giri tries to rethink and reconstitute the language of God and cultivate and generate a language and relationship of Garden of God animated by visions and practices of mutual love, labor and care in gardening our lives together rather than being preoccupied with rules and regulations and using the name of God to justify unjust powers in self, culture, society and history. Giri explores the transformation of religion, politics, pragmatism and spirituality implicated in this journey from Kingdom of God to Gardens of God.

Thus, our book explores different dimensions of works of consciousness, freedom and solidarity which hopefully can help us in cultivating new and creative pathways of spiritual pragmatism to come to terms with our contemporary challenges of crises such as Corona virus and the rise of nationalistic jingoism and xenophobia. Spiritual pragmatism can help us listen to each other including our fear and anger and cultivate new pathways of consciousness, freedom and solidarity. Spiritual pragmatism can help us become apostles of ears rather than apostles of fear. Here we can conclude provisionally with this poem as an invitation for new adventures of relationship and consciousness:

Apostle of Ears
Apostasy
Apostle of Fear
Where are Apostles of Ears?
Marching in the Name of Kingdom of God
On the Way
Sacrificing Innocents as Lambs
Where are your tears?
Where are your Ears? (Giri forthcoming)

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