

**The 'Newer Ideals' of Jane Addams's Progressivism:
The Realistic Utopia of Cosmopolitan Justice**

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Jane Addams was born in 1860 to an affluent and political Illinois family¹ and died in 1935, winning the Nobel Peace prize in 1931 for her social reform work as co-founder of the Hull House Settlement in Chicago and her leadership of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF). Recognizing her symbolic significance to Americans on matters of social justice, the reform-minded Progressive Party asked Jane Addams to second Theodore Roosevelt's nomination for President in 1912. She, like fellow American progressives, many of whom were children of the American Civil War, experienced a turbulent era of rapid industrial change, mass immigration, and the Great Depression as well as world wars. Her response was directed involvement and experimental activity towards improving social, economic and political conditions, making better the lot of ordinary people.

It was a mindset inspired by Christian humanism and the philosophy of American pragmatism. The social message of Christianity was Addams' life-long quest. Of Christianity, she

¹ Her father, to whom Addams was devoted, was a founding member of the Illinois Republican Party and an Illinois State Senator, who in that office supported the campaign of Abraham Lincoln to the US Senate.

writes, “[t]he doctrine must be understood through the deed. It is the only possible way not only to stir others into action but to give the message itself a sense of reality” (1927, 1197). She lost her religious faith when her father died, but not her spirituality or sense of calling to a social morality. Pragmatism is a practical philosophy with human problems at its center; it tests ideas in experience; and the ‘to and fro’ between ideas and experimental social action was a secular version of her Christianity. Pragmatist philosophy encouraged choice, responsibility and intelligence to be applied in determining means and ends where human-felt need existed.

The disintegrative effects of World War I compelled belief amongst progressives and pragmatists that the social requirements of their day had little respect for sovereign boundaries. Thus, ways of adjustment would have to be found not only in domestic laboratories, but in international ones as well. Jane Addams was a progressive who was actively engaged in experimentation at the international level, leading the WILPF - one of the first non-governmental organizations to set up in Geneva to hold to account that new experiment in international organization—the League of Nations.

Addams’ pragmatism mirrored in its general terms that of *The New Republic*. First, there is the idea that social and political institutions play vital roles in the development of human capacities; and that humane institutions are ones that reflect democratic ideals, domestically and globally. Also shared is an understanding that the destruction of World War I had brought a unique moment of opportunity, one in which the ‘old diplomacy’ of the European system could with directed, cooperative activity give way to a ‘new’ diplomacy built on alternative ideals - democratic ones. And both the editors of *The New Republic* and Addams believed that American pragmatism was a philosophy of democratic life to be applied to human dilemmas of

the kind that defined the Progressive era, the workability of which could only be found in the application and testing of solutions proposed as problems arose.

These were common starting points, but Addams would direct her efforts in more radical, democratic directions that were not always in sync with mainline Progressivism's thought, in particular about US foreign policy. Addams would not leave building international social institutions to the work of national states, as Croly and Lippmann would. She held that state-centered thinking compromised important forms of human agency and international social change. And while progressives believed that the experience of World War I would impel the United States to draw upon American national ideals in remaking the ways international politics would be managed and controlled, Addams disagreed. The most useful aspect of the American experience was its *internationalism* rather than its nationalism on which to model a new mode of diplomacy; that is, the immigrant experience, immigrant communities and their integration into American society, which laid out what engaging community, with all its diversity, demands of a citizenry morally. Finally, Addams held that what American pragmatism intended by democracy as a way of life was not in accord with either US imperialism or its entry into World War I. Whereas Croly would argue that imperialism was an important phase in the unfolding of America's potential as a nation, and Lippmann would offer a geostrategic logic for US entry into World War I to protect the US, UK, and France from the dangers of a German controlled Atlantic, Addams saw these as unworkable attitudes and institutions, ill-equipped to deliver democratic ends.

This chapter will illuminate Addams's distinctive progressivism and pragmatism. It will reveal Addams to be unique among the progressive thinkers in shaping its humanism into a

working *cosmopolitan* ethos that met human ills through an “on-the-ground” international activism across a wide-range of domestic and international social reform issues. Addams chose to steer “new diplomacy” towards concern for human social relations rather than the foreign relations of states. In an age of thought and action for radical social justice at home, Addams outlined a realistic utopia of cosmopolitan justice, rooted in actually-existing international social relations. However, this nascent internationalism needed nurturing. Addams would leave it to neither philosophical reasoning, nor interest-based reasoning anchored in some proposed sense of international interdependence to do that work. Primarily, it required motivation. It needed relational work which focused on *sources* of motivation – primitive, emotional, sentimental - for inspiring compassion for distant others and seeing them as worthy subjects of social justice.² It is Addams’s take on pragmatist method, inseparable from her lived experience as a woman, activist, social worker, sociologist and philosopher, that set her Pragmatism apart.

Unlike many of her “fellow” pragmatists and progressives, Addams was part of a generation of white, upper middle class women with a new, privileged access to higher education³, who wished to put that education to wider social use beyond the household. However, this cadre of women had to carve out public space and craft their own roles to do so.

² A recent edited volume by Susan Dieleman, David Rondel, and Christopher Voparil, *Pragmatism and Justice* (2017, 6) addresses the “conspicuous silence” in Pragmatism on the idea of justice. The editors are convincing on the why of it, writing that its focus on the concrete over the abstract, its distaste for *a priori* theorizing, and its “deep and persistent pluralism, both in respect to what justice is and requires, and in respect to how real-world injustices are best recognized and remedied” all contribute. However, it remains a prominent feature of Addams’s thought and activism despite its failure to resonate with what one finds on the concept in the 20th century literature that John Rawls’s *Theory of Justice* (1971) spawned. This chapter will illuminate justice considerations at the center of her radical social ethics.

³ In accordance with her father’s wishes, Addams attended Rockford Seminary, a school that trained girls for teaching and missionary work. It had been her aim to attend Smith College and earn a BA. However, a year after her graduation from the Seminary she returned to be one of the first of its students confirmed with a BA after it became Rockford College.

It took Addams some time, amidst illness⁴ and depression in her early life, to find her way into the Settlement movement. In becoming a national political figure and one with international stature, she did so not through political election, or occupying a University Chair, or serving as a member of Wilson's "Inquiry" or FDR's "Brain Trust", but through a lifetime's work as an advocate of grassroots democracy and social justice. In the sections that follow, Addams's distinctive pragmatist internationalism will include an account of the historical context of the Progressive era and Addams's experience of it, her part in the American Settlement movement, what she took from American pragmatism especially from her friend John Dewey⁵, and where she herself took it - to a democratic social ethics for which there was no alternative but its expression at the international level.

Addams, Pragmatist method and the Settlement movement

Pragmatists were especially thoughtful about what inquiry requires in the way of method. As conceived by Dewey and best articulated in his 1908 article, "What Pragmatism Means by the Practical," Dewey's idea of pragmatist method was a generalized scientific method which rejects dogmatisms of all kinds, so that inquiry into human problems can be generally open. What counts as a good idea cannot be determined in advance or stipulated as a rule or abstract principle. Instead, it is discovered in an experimental process of social interaction and inquiry which ebbs and flows and has no natural end, reflecting the contingent nature of truth.

Nonetheless, it will have this essence: an attitude of commitment to engage one another in

⁴ Her lifelong health problems began when she contracted tuberculosis of the spine as a child, leaving her spine curved and partly rigid (Knight 2005, 36).

⁵ Dewey named his daughter Jane after Jane Addams and dedicated his 1935 book *Liberalism and Social Action* to Addams's memory. When Dewey's young son Gordon died overseas, Addams held a memorial service at Hull House, the eulogy for which is printed in *The Excellent Becomes the Permanent* (Addams 1932)

solving shared indeterminacies, and inclusively so amidst all those affected no matter differences in race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Problem-solving for Dewey is best done in publics (Dewey 1927) which cohere with knowledge that individuals are “in it together” so to speak; the more inquirers investigating doubts in relation to shared indeterminacies, bringing their particular experience and knowledge to it, the better for critical inquiry. In other words, it is oriented to treating individuals equally as subjects of justice, for both democratic and epistemic reasons. Addams found value in the link between democratic virtues and epistemic virtues in pragmatist method.

However, it was Addams’s experience as a woman and the fact that she was as much an *activist* across a range of social issues as she was a *thinker* that generated her contribution to pragmatist method.⁶ Her method was forged in the Settlement movement that had its start as a Christian social reform movement in England. Addams found inspiration there when she visited Toynbee Hall in London’s East end in 1888. The Settlement house was something apart from other charitable organizations working to extend resources to the poor; instead of charity, college educated middle and upper-middle class young men⁷ lived amongst the poor, engaging them in a range of educational and cultural pursuits to address the whole person and not just his or her material requirements. When Jane Addams took the Settlement idea home to America and co-founded Hull House with Ellen Gates Star less than two years later, it would be college educated women rather than men, with privileges and outlooks - religious and humanist

⁶ The significance of Jane Addams for her contributions to the intellectual tradition of American pragmatism has received considerable attention in recent decades. See Deegan (1988); Mahowald (1997); McKenna (2001); Seigfried (1991, 1996, 1999); and Savarsky (2010).

⁷ Oxford and Cambridge graduates typically, since Settlement houses in England were sponsored by these Universities.

– generating in them a sense of social responsibility. Addams’s take on the Settlement house was less about charitable “improvement” as such. Her unique impact within the Settlement movement was to conceive of Hull House as an experimental site for multicultural exchange that could potentially uplift all through the sympathetic knowledge imparted by their mutual interaction, feeding democratic life.

Thus, Addams’ take on pragmatist method was feminist and relational (Seigfried 1999, Savary 2010,), and it was socially radical (Lynd 1961, Deegan 1988, Hamington 2004). In the context of the Progressive era, Addams lived the method in Hull House and in the immigrant neighborhoods of 19th Ward of Chicago⁸, inquiring into not only political, rights-based disparities, but economic, social, and cultural barriers that impeded effective democratic participation for African-Americans, immigrants, women, and the working poor generally. Her concerns with inclusion and exclusion, entitlements, and the cultural and material wherewithal for democratic participation are justice concerns, and radical for their critical epistemic and emancipatory social content. Her practical judgements in relation to this experience led her to the belief that real and wide social inclusion was necessary to intelligent social inquiry. Dewey would agree, but she went further to argue that what generates the requisite, democratic social ethics – and here she had something to teach Dewey - was plural and diverse human interaction and the reconstruction it affects upon our sympathies and attitudes. For Addams, it is through seeking diverse relational experience in day to day living that democracy better

⁸ Addams writes that between Halsted Street where Hull House was located and the river “live about ten thousand Italians: Neapolitans, Sicilians, and Calabrians, with an occasional Lombard or Venetian. To the south on Twelfth Street are many Germans, and side streets are given over almost entirely to Polish and Russian Jews. Further south, these Jewish colonies merge into a huge Bohemian colony, so vast that Chicago ranks as the third Bohemian city in the world. To the northwest are many Canadian-French, clannish in spite of their long residence in America, and to the north are many Irish and first generation Americans (1892, 226-7).

equips itself for adjustment in the face of rapid societal change. Indeed, Dewey would credit Addams with bringing to pragmatism the idea of democracy as “a way of life”.⁹

The Need for a Democratic Social Ethics

From the mid 1880s, a new social radicalism began to develop rapidly in response to the ravages of industrialism. A sense of malaise in relation to society’s organization, feelings about the “perplexities”, as Addams would say, of contemporary American life and disconnection with the social order were challenging individuals to explore what their consciences and their conduct demanded in relation to conditions of extreme poverty, poor working conditions, dispiriting work, class division, dislocation, crime and delinquency. In this, Addams identified an emergent humanitarianism. She described a growing concern for human welfare, manifested around her, that sought to overcome feelings of maladjustment through meeting others anew in shared activity towards growth and reciprocal recognition, magnifying “the obligation inherent in human relationships as such.” (Addams 1935, 55).

Addams’ responses were in part cultural and generational. Her own experience of ennui, evidenced in her autobiographical writing, was one she read across the newly educated upper-middle class women of her generation, women who had degrees but severely restricted access to professions. Despite further education there was little or no expectation of women’s roles

⁹ In his 1902-03 “Lectures on the Sociology of Ethics”, Dewey recommends reading Addams’s *Democracy and Social Ethics* for its presentation of “a series of concrete social-ethical problems, in a very concrete way, and at the same time in a way that presupposes general principles” (Lecture 9, October 16, 1902, 2303). In Lecture 22, Dewey takes up its discussion saying, “the most original and powerful part of this book is the clear statement, - which I cannot recall as ever having been stated before so definitely, - that *democracy means certain types of experience, - an interest in experience in its various forms and types...You set out with an interest in life,—in experience; in life because it is the experience of people.* Hence the demand for becoming acquainted,—for making that a part of your experience” (November 18, 1902, 2379-80). Dewey was well-acquainted with democracy as “a way of life” lived in Hull House, serving on its board and providing lectures there. He wrote to Addams of his first visit in 1892, “[m]y indebtedness to you for giving me insight into matters there is great...Every day I stayed there only added to my conviction that you had taken the right way” (Quoted in Davis 1973, 96-7).

changing. These women were expected to return to conventional roles, happy for their intellectual interests to be met and whatever refinement might obtain in the domestic sphere. As Addams wrote, it has “all the elements of a tragedy” (1893, 14). Women were feeling acute, conflicting demands between the old family/domestic claims and new social/civic claims. Thus, the Settlement movement was a vital outlet in which these women feeling a social call could answer it in something akin to a domestic setting, capable of mediating old cultural demands and new forms of individual self-actualization.

Another cultural and generational divide she witnessed in her work at Hull House and would write about was that between first and second generation immigrants. “We were often distressed by the children of immigrant parents who were ashamed of the pit whence they were digged, who repudiated the language and customs of their elders and counted themselves successful as they were able to ignore the past” (Addams 1923, 37). Here too Addams worked to make Hull House a site for mediation of this divide. She writes of “an overmastering desire to reveal the humbler immigrant parents to their own children”, leading to the creation of the Hull House Labor Museum with Saturday evening exhibits of varieties of spinning performed by immigrant women and lectures on industrial history (Addams 1923, 235). The aim was to foster a “sense of relation” and meaning between the generations through revealing the connection of traditional crafts with industry of the day. “Could we not interest the young people working in the neighboring factories, in these older forms of industry, so that, through their own parents and grandparents, they would find a dramatic representation of the inherited resources of their

daily occupation” and perhaps, “a foundation for reverence of the past”.¹⁰

The general social unease of this era was being shaped not only by cultural and generational change, but by profound social and economic changes connected with industrialism: extreme poverty, poor working conditions, few workers’ rights, uninteresting and dispiriting work, a rise in consciousness of class divisions, and dislocation, crime and delinquency connected with urban life in industrial cities. According to Lewis Feuer, radical intellectuals in America were “discovering sociological determinism, the operation of impersonal historical forces ... finding that poverty had social causes” linked to the social environment and the economic system (Feuer 1959, 547). Daniel Levine writes that coming into the 20th century, a new outlook on poverty was emerging which linked it not to differences between individuals but to an “evil economic system or an evil social system”, and that not just “the dying needed help, but also those on the edges of impoverishment” (Levine 1964, 11). Accompanying this outlook was the idea that there was new scope for human action.

Hull House was for all intents and purposes a cooperative of women sociologists, led by Addams, who sought knowledge of and assisted experimental activity in the ways of democratic life as they understood it; that is, as having ethical and radical social intent. As Staughton Lynd writes they sought to prove “the scope and exact proportions of their society’s sickness” (1961, 57). They gathered statistics, investigated factories, conducted health examinations, examined sanitary conditions, lobbied for legislative and political reform, and social betterment. In 1895,

¹⁰ It is perhaps interesting to note that another interest of Addams in relating the story of this activity is to share, “[t]here has been some testimony that the Labor Museum has revealed the charm of woman’s primitive activities” (Addams 1923, 243).

the residents of Hull House published, *Hull House Maps and Papers*, which Mary Jo Deegan describes as a “sociological masterpiece” which had a great influence on the Chicago School of sociology which in this era would make ethical thought central to the discipline (Deegan 1988, 11 and 55). Addams combined the activity of scientific observation of the communities of the 19th Ward of Chicago, in which she had co-founded Hull House in September 1889, with social, cultural, economic and political activism and a “back to the people” ethic¹¹ that sought to apply democratic principles to all areas of life - social, cultural, economic and political - with a view to a more just society. Her passion was what she read as “the social passion of the age...that nothing will satisfy the aroused conscience of men short of the complete participation of the working classes in the spiritual, intellectual and material of the human race” (Addams 1912, 136).

For Addams, the integration of immigrant communities, the working poor, black Americans, and women in all aspects of social life was critical to meeting the malaise.¹² This belief was rooted in her philosophical anthropology. She understood human nature in evolutionary terms.¹³ Addams understood the person to be a growing organism, organically linked through an ancient race life of instincts that have evolved over time and that these are primordial motivations within us (Addams 1983, 10).¹⁴ At base she thought humans to be

¹¹ Addams writes that this idea was associated with the original Settlement movement in England where inspiration for Hull House was found (1923, 38).

¹² Addams was a co-founder with Chrystal Eastman of the American Civil Liberties Union and a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

¹³ Dewey and Addams both accepted Darwinism and were influenced by his theory of evolution. Peter Kropotkin, the anarchist and follower of Darwin who saw in evolution cooperation as well as struggle, spent time at Hull House in 1901.

¹⁴ This was a view consistent with the evolutionary anthropology of her day. More on the imprint of ancient race memory can be found in her book, *The Long Road of Women's Memory* (Addams 1916). Marilyn Fischer (2004, 87) notes in her review of the 2002 edition with introduction by Charlene Haddock Seigfried that mention is made in a

“pliable”, capable of adaptation, and inherently social, with a will to help others. It can be found in the ancient traces on all of us, what Addams speaks of as the “starvation struggle”, which calls out in us “great opportunities of helpfulness” and use of a fuller range of human faculties (Addams 1893, 10-11). Thus, it is within the capacity of society to adapt to change and shape human activity in a direction that cooperative, creative intelligence chooses.

To release this potentiality, broad recognition of the problem was needed. As she wrote, “[t]o attain individual morality in an age demanding social morality, to pride one’s self on the results of personal effort when the time demands social adjustment, is utterly to fail to apprehend the situation” (Addams 1907, 2-3). Addams was clear that social morality emerges from the enlargement experienced by individuals engaged in a relational practice, and in particular, one that was inclusive and embraced community in all its diversity. To be “in contact with the moral experiences of the many” is how one comes to “an adequate social motive” (1907, 5). For Addams, it was the marginalized at the bottom of society, directly experiencing the defects of contemporary social, political, and economic arrangements from whom we had the most to learn. Indeed, she claimed that it was an ethical responsibility upon us all to seek diverse social relationships, and that collaborative efforts were enriched to the extent we do so. Important to this too was how they were performed; that is, they should be engaged with humility and a will to build trust and mutuality as opposed to charity. Charity for Addams could be overlaid with formations of class, ethnic, race, and cultural inequalities and thus, mistrust.

Los Angeles Times review of *The Long Road* of a blurb on its slipcover saying, “[t]he underlying purpose of the book is to show wherein modern civilization goes back to old tribal customs, to explain, in other words, the scientific theory of race memory”. Fischer critiques Seigfried for not providing in her introduction context for this science known at the time of publication, but is not as recoverable today for the contemporary reader.

Hull House, Addams writes, “was opened on the theory that the dependence of classes on each other is reciprocal” (1892, 226).

As always, Addams began from her own experience and the clearest statement of her “genuine emotion” for turning these convictions into motive can be found in the essay, “The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements”.¹⁵ There she writes that three subjective aims motivated her work at Hull House and arguably many of those working within the Settlement movement: “first the desire to interpret democracy in social terms” (1893, 21-2). For Addams, democracy of the time was partial, left only to “political expression” in the ideas of franchise and political equality which failed to secure the good of all. “We are forced to acknowledge that it is only in our local and national politics that we try very hard for the ideal [of democracy]...We have almost given it up as our ideal in social intercourse” (1893, 3), where Addams believed it was sorely needed. The second was Addams’s invocation of the “primordial” motives within us to assist in the development of our race life; that is, how “[o]ur very organism holds memories and glimpses of that long life of our ancestors which still goes on among so many of our contemporaries” (1893, 12), the will to helpfulness, to act – especially among the youth who are as “yet so undirected” and to her mind was “as pitiful as the other great mass of destitute lives”; indeed, “[o]ne is supplementary to the other.” (1893, 16). Thirdly, she sees evident “a

¹⁵ The essay is based from a lecture Addams gave at a summer school in Plymouth Massachusetts with those involved in the early days of the American Settlement movement (Addams 1923, 113). The essay was originally published in *Philanthropy and Social Progress*, but much of it is reproduced as Chapter VI of *Twenty Years at Hull House* she says, because it was “impossible to formulate with the same freshness those early motives and strivings, and ... it was received by the Settlement people themselves as a satisfactory statement. Here I will refer to the original published essay (Addams 1893).

certain *renaissance* of Christianity” (1893, 2), a movement resembling Christianity’s early humanitarianism which over the ages saw that fellowship with others in social relationships had fostered “a deep enthusiasm for humanity” and in sharing “the common lot that they might receive the constant revelation” (1893, 18). Writing in a more contemporary idiom, Addams says this humanism takes on “simple and natural expression in the social organism itself” (1893, 19). The Settlement movement was evidence of a growing humanitarianism for Addams and arguably, Hull House was a manifestation of realistic utopia as she envisioned it.¹⁶

This essay of 1893 anticipates the global turn her thought and action would take – the exploration of what could generate the dynamic democratic social ethics needed at this level of interaction too. There she writes that “the good we secure for ourselves is ... floating in mid-air; until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life” (1893, 7). With America’s entry into the club of imperial powers and World War I, social conditions had shifted in another set of troubling directions that produced in her a will to cultivate a democratic attitude for living globally. However, our social relatedness in this arena required illumination and again she turned her attention to the motivations that might generate a global ethics of this kind.

The Need for a Global Democratic Social Ethics

In 1915 Addams traveled to The Hague to serve as Chair of an International Congress of Women to discuss the war in Europe and possible responses to it. Hosted by the Dutch pacifist and feminist, Dr. Aletta Jacobs, over one thousand women from neutral and belligerent nations

¹⁶ Drawing upon McKenna (2001, 86), Hamington (2007, 173) identifies Hull House as a feminist, process utopia. A process utopia is context in which a series of realistic goals are set out in a manner such that once fulfilled, possibility for the next among the “ends-in view” to be achieved is enhanced McKenna (2001, 86).

participated, many of whom – including Addams - were active in the international suffrage movement and all attending with the understanding that their cause had run headlong into global forces beyond their control. The subjective necessities of their cause meant taking on another, that of peace. It was decided at The Hague that a permanent international conference was needed; and the International Committee of Women for a Permanent Peace [ICWPP] was formed with Addams as International Chairman. Later, when the ICWPP became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1919, Addams was selected to be its International President. In that role, she presided over its International Congresses - where WILPF resolutions were passed, setting its aims and agendas of advocacy - until its 1929 Prague conference at which she was given the honorary title of "President for Life".

As with Hull House and its work, WILPF arose from a collective sense that inquiry and action on the part of women into the indiscriminate and harmful effects of social change was needed, in this case its *transnational* effects. And WILPF acted to influence the regulation or control of these effects along lines like those set out by Addams domestically; that is according to a global, democratic social ethics. As early as the 1915 Hague Congress before WILPF was formed, a conception of peace as justice was articulated in its resolutions, but not solely in terms of the political rights of *states* to sovereignty, territorial integrity and self-determination. Again, it was a radical, social conception of justice, working for an authentic progress towards *individual* autonomy in its political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. The imprint of Addams's pragmatic feminism can be found in five core, related beliefs expressed in the resolutions of its International Congresses passed during the years of her leadership: 1) that conflict cannot be resolved by force; 2) that the means employed to achieve ends matter; 3)

that the most appropriate means to ensure lasting peace are efforts to realize the democratic autonomy of individuals in *both* national and international politics; 4) that women have an entitlement and a responsibility to enter into and make their views authoritative in domestic and international political spheres; and 5) the idea of “unity in diversity”.

WILPF’s work was as relational as it was in Hull House. WILPF said to its membership in 1919, the “importance of a movement like ours is measured, not by numbers but by moral power and the genuine devotion of each individual member.... New courage and growing confidence in and affection for one another are our best assets.”¹⁷ That relational work was conducted over many thousands of miles, with none of the advantages of social media today. There was interaction within separate national organizations of WILPF and between national organizations, which were orchestrated through the National and International Executives. In addition to cherished time together at bi-annual (or at times tri-annual) International Congresses, were speaking tours among members, newsletters linking national sections, educational programs like the WILPF summer schools. And WILPF too had a house, La Maison Internationale, its International Headquarters at 6, rue du Vieux College in Geneva from which the International Secretary worked in coordinating its lobbying of the League of Nations, hosted lectures and events. WILPF members were always welcome to visit and take rooms when available.

Central to the sense of community WILPF achieved was the figure of Jane Addams and a leadership style which infused the organization with her pragmatic method. Under Addams’s leadership of the first Congress at the Hague, deliberative and democratic methods of

¹⁷ WILPF News-sheet 1, May 26, 1919. Swarthmore College Peace Collection Microfilm Reel 102:128.

procedure that operationalized values of inclusivity, openness to difference, critical debate, and an experimental attitude were put in effect.¹⁸ Resolutions issued at their Congresses and International Executive meetings were not only deliberatively and consensually arrived at, but they were, in the minds of these women, their best efforts at knowledge creation and genuine solutions to real problems. They offered themselves as a knowledge community, expert in the sensibilities that can be derived from women's experience as mothers, nurses, social workers, and teachers whose experiences were underexplored and who were unrepresented in the international political discourses of the day. The WILPF was an international testing ground for the pragmatist notion of 'pooled intelligence'.¹⁹

In addition to their existence as a knowledge community, they conceived of themselves as a moral community - upholding principles of the inviolability of life; political, social, cultural and economic human rights regardless of sex, race or class; with an orientation to publicness - aiming to model new forms of international organization along the lines of such principles. The moral community such interactions generated²⁰ was also a source of internal strength, especially when the organization met the challenges of the 1930s, which forced them to grapple with pronounced differences between national sections in approach to questions concerning the levels of "force" their pacifism could embrace and their relationship to revolutionary movements in Europe. But no issue of controversy ever threw the WILPF itself; it

¹⁸ Anne Marie Pois (1988) provides a compelling account of the democratic organizational process exhibited in US WILPF during these years with insights into the workings of its International Executive as well.

¹⁹ Dewey (1937, 220) wrote of it, "while what we call intelligence be distributed in unequal amounts, it is the democratic faith that it is sufficiently general so that each individual has something to contribute whose value can be assessed only as it enters into the final pooled intelligence constituted by the contributions of all".

²⁰ WILPF would grow to 33 countries with national sections. From its early history, WILPF strived for diversity, however, it was not successful in altering the overwhelming majority of its white, well-off, well-educated American and European membership.

cohered as a community, and even though it ceased its work with the start of WWII, it resumed when the war concluded.

There were four other major international women's organizations at the time lobbying the League of Nations (See Rupp 1997). However, WILPF was unique among them for the wide-ranging nature of issues with which it engaged. This was the nature of Addams' leadership of WILPF. Her globalized democratic social ethics, shared by like-minded progressive, internationalist women, informed WILPF's conception of peace as justice and its program of advocacy. Accordingly, action taken by WILPF based on these principles over the interwar years spanned in wide-ranging directions, since there was little that their idea of justice did not touch upon.²¹

On the way to the 1919 Zurich Congress, Addams was handed an advance copy of the latest proposal for a Covenant of the League of Nations.²² Despite concerns that the League in many ways reflected the political terms of the Allied victors, WILPF decided at the Zurich Congress to work with the new organization. The League was an important resource for them, since the League employed a rhetoric of democracy consistent with the liberal internationalism born of the Progressive era, and was like the WILPF's expansive. The rights of small nations and minorities gained new acceptance through the League, but also, the social and economic needs of individuals were to be part of its purview. The League's Social Section addressed issues such

²¹ For example, Emily Balch, International Secretary of WILPF wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934, urging him to use the power of his office to end lynching in America. This was a matter of the peace work of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, because as Balch argues in the letter, "every example of lawlessness and violence in one country reacts in every other" and closes by saying that the Nazis justified their persecution of the Jews with reference to the treatment of Negroes in America.

²² According to Balch, WILPF was the first international body to issue "considered criticism" of the Covenant of the League of Nations and condemnation of the Peace Pact (Balch 1938, 9-10). Their critique is reported in the *New York Times* 15 and 16 May 1919.

as fair labour standards, the control of disease, action in relation to the traffic in women, children, and drugs. WILPF attached itself to the League offices, catching League officials in corridors if not in meeting rooms, pressing its views upon them.

WILPF began with food politics, taking up concerns related to food shortages and relief work. They enjoyed early success in bringing the League to take on humanitarian relief work in the case of thousands of Armenian, Assyrian, and Greek women and children who were being held captive in conditions of slavery and forced prostitution in Turkey. WILPF also engaged in political democratic reform work, urging that the League make the Covenant more easily amendable, advocating German membership, lobbying for the direct representation of peoples and keeping channels of communication open with voluntary or non-governmental organizations. It pressed the League to make good on its claim to be representative of women and to protect minorities and native peoples within its Mandates system. With other international women's organizations, it urged that a place on the Mandates Commission be permanently reserved for a woman. The first and only two women to serve were WILPF members.

Addams approach to the WILPF reflected the three subjective necessities of the Settlement movement, and mirrored the activity at Hull House. First, Addams insisted that democracy should be interpreted in social terms for the global realm. It is reflected in her insistence that the human factor must be brought into the foreground of the relations between states and any new forms of international organization. Whether a dynamic social democracy of the nation, or for the world, the basic idea was the same for Addams: an attitude of respect for all persons, motivated through the relations of global neighbors engaged in the daily practices of life-

sustaining activities is a requirement. Diplomacy that made individuals, and not only states, subjects of justice, and a justice that was conceived not only in political terms, but in its economic, social and cultural aspects too was a requirement. For Addams, states placed limits on relational activity, obscuring an emergent transnational interest and thus, the scope of a global social ethics. A focus on relations that were inter-societal began by putting the daily needs of existence at the center of a more expansive welfare community. In “helping relations” the seeds of a new international order built on cosmopolitan justice could find foundations.

Secondly, one finds in Addams’s international writing the theme of primal instincts as both a motivational source and a relational epistemology for building this kind of international society. Accessing the sympathies inherent in these instincts requires imagination, for which Addams turned in “The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements” to Romantic poetry and mythical figures²³. Wordsworth’s poem, “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” and the idea he expresses that “[o]ur birth is but a sleeping and forgetting” is with her as she works to remind us of our longings for social relations and to assist where we can transnationally.²⁴ The starvation struggle is, as she writes, “the physical complement of the “Intimations of Immortality” on which no ode yet has been written”.²⁵ Addams invokes the myths of feminine spirits such as the Corn Spirit and the Rice Mother to bring women back to the race memory of their primitive bread labor (1922, 77-8). Her pragmatic method incorporates aesthetic and rhetorical tools for motivating sentiment and imagination to work at a scale that can build

²³ Addams (1893, 8), writes that literature in general has an important role in motivating a “desire to know all kinds of life” and fuels belief in the idea that knowing its diversity leads to “better social adjustment – for the remedying of social ills.”

²⁴ Addams’s book, *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922) is where her international food politics and idea of peace as global democratic social justice is told through both the ancient starvation struggle her work with WILPF during the war and immediate period after.

²⁵ Addams (1893), 11.

caring relationships with global reach, lending women's helping relations a "poetry and significance"²⁶

For Addams, the moment was ripe for investing women's experience and primal sympathies with epistemic authority. War "had forced the nations to consider together the primitive questions of famine and pestilence"²⁷, enabling new ethical possibilities. The practical work of women managing global food needs, cross-border health issues, and the suffering of refugees, as happened in the war years and immediately after, would make contributions to internationalism like those she attributed to the networks of immigrants she lived and worked with at Hull House, which were "interlacing nation to nation with a thousand kindly deeds"²⁸. Thus, Addams transforms the starvation struggle into a global politics in which she encourages women to seek out new inter-societal outlets for fulfilling this age-old responsibility.

Finally, this new global social ethic was grounded in humanitarian sentiment into which Addams channeled much democratic hope.²⁹ It was a cosmopolitanism ethos that understood

²⁶ Addams (1922), 77. Addams' wish to give "poetry and significance" to this form of women's helping is not by my reading an epistemological claim, presuming an essentialist relationship between women and nutrition, but more one intended to lend a general symbolic significance to the experience of women's helping relations in all forms to inspire women to enter into and find roles for themselves in a *global* public sphere. Addams has been charged of gender essentialism in her writing on women's nurturing roles and peace, however, this does not take sufficient account of the role of experience in her pragmatism and its method. See MacMullan's (2001, 95-102) response to this critique of Addams, arguing that she appeals to women to oppose war because women's base of experience has wider familiarity with the costs of war due to their larger societal part in raising and caring for those who would be killed or broken by its effects, and because men, in their experience, have less cultural scope to oppose it.

²⁷ Addams (1922), 85.

²⁸ Addams (1916), 132.

²⁹ I use the words "democratic hope" intentionally to signpost a title by one of the most important "new" pragmatists, Richard Rorty (2005), who turned to the international, invoking sentiment and its uses in cultivating a global "human rights culture" (Rorty, 1993). Like Addams, he is looking forward, positing an idea of social justice contingently held and sources for affecting understanding in relation to it. There are good reasons to think about the parallels between the democratic social ethics of Addams's pragmatism and Rorty's own, both locally and globally, and their radical, critical intentions. Rorty credits Dewey's influence on his thought, but he forgets

all human beings as linked in community regardless of nation, race, religion or sex and deserving of equal moral respect. Judith Green argues that it is Addams's "renascent Christianity", which impels her "expansive social interpretation of the democratic ideal" (2010, 229). However, this cosmopolitan outlook was, as Wendy Savarsky (2010, 297) points out, also part of what Addams believed to be the college educated woman's inheritance: to become, in Addams words, "a citizen of the world", taking on the responsibility of "the human claim" (Addams 1898, 4). What Allen F. Davis (1973, 52) argues about Addams's decision to start a Settlement house and live among the working poor – that despite never resolving her religious doubts, the decision was "essentially a religious act" – I think can be said of her international involvements through WILPF too. As much might be read from her tombstone which bears the words: "Jane Addams of Hull House and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom". The work of WILPF in Geneva was a future-oriented experiment, putting in processes through trial and error a remaking of intersocietal interaction guided by cosmopolitan or humanitarian intent. Just as the Settlement movement was an example of a revived Christian humanism on the national scale for Addams, so too was the potentiality inherent in the League of Nations and the work of organizations such as WILPF.

Addams' Newer Ideal for Peace: Cosmopolitan Justice

Both Addams and Dewey conceived of realistic utopias for an international realm with democratic intent. However, when it came to practical judgment about what democracy as a way of life requires at the international level, they disagreed on arguably the most significant

Addams's influence on Dewey. For a comparison of Addams and Rorty on "ameliorating injustice", see Voparil (2017).

matter of their day: the US decision to enter World War I. For Dewey, defeating Germany and moving on to the important business of public control of transnational interests and world organization required US participation. War was a necessary means to international democratic ends. Jane Addams, in the face of harsh public criticism from the public as well as from fellow progressives, maintained a pacifist stance; democracy as a way of life could not be realized through such means.³⁰

Disagreements such as theirs are part and parcel of what pragmatic method generates on the way to realistic utopia. The endpoint cannot be fixed any more than human nature. Practical judgment in relation to an ideal has no fixed decision rules beyond what epistemic openness requires for good problem solving. Testing democracy as a way of life and what it yields as a guide for international interaction can only be confirmed or denied in practice, and the interpretation of outcomes can vary with experience. Pragmatism's epistemic openness is confirmed in the separate judgments each took at the fork in the road that was US entry into WWI.

Addams's and Dewey's route to realistic utopia does not provide a marker, such as John Rawls's *The Law of the Peoples* (1999), for a realistic utopia. Rawls applies a conceptual distinction between ideal and non-ideal theory, formulating his 'law of the peoples' as a contractual arrangement under ideal conditions such that measurement can be taken as to how far we've come or how far we have left to go. Dewey's and Addams' is an open-process that is best fueled and tested through plural and diverse perspectives. It is in these situations of

³⁰ Addams believed that war's end would be best won by a neutral US brokering peace. See Addams, Balch, and Hamilton (1915).

seeking out diverse perspectives that the meddle of our ideas get tested. When our arguments meet opposition, unless blinded by dogma, we are forced to give pause.³¹

Addams' take on pragmatist method aimed to create connection and explore the sentiments women held, projecting them outward into civic and international realms, enlarging sympathy and a sense of social responsibility. Her method was both a relational epistemology and a call to democratic social advocacy. Making good on this aim meant seeing from the margins of society - from the vantage point of women, of the poor, of immigrants, of minorities, of native peoples - looking for what spurs a democratic attitude in matters of everyday life not normally invested with democratic significance internationally. For Addams, these groups and the particular complex of inequalities each experienced carries a different form of embodied knowledge from which we find alternative ways into knowledge creation for coping with social change. This knowledge is a good in and of itself, but as knowledge *felt* it triggers a sense of responsibility to engage others in working cooperatively towards not just better coping, but cosmopolitan justice. As Addams writes in *Newer Ideals of Peace*, we are changed through the relational process as we seek "diversified human experience and resultant sympathy" (1907, 7). It is the thesis of this book, but the idea is suffuse in her life's work, that just social institutions are humane institutions built on "sympathetic knowledge" fostered in immediate relational experience.

Dewey posed the problem of the public, but it was Addams whose thought and action worked towards assisting publics in finding themselves. She illuminated at domestic and global

³¹ At a speech on the occasion of Dewey's 70th birthday, Addams said, [o]nly once in a public crisis did I find my road taking a sharp right angle to the one he recommended. That fact in and of itself, gave me pause to think and almost threatened my confidence." (Addams 1929).

levels the nature and scope of shared social ills, applied and tested what her idea of democratic social ethics might contribute to alleviating those ills, and looked all the while for that which generates social sentiment and importantly, what turns sentiment into moral energy and democratic action of this kind. Addams was unique among pragmatists for the focused attention she gave to the motivations required to nurture any emergent possibilities for cosmopolitan justice and what associated feeling and accompanying knowledge can contribute to it.

Her feminist and relational pragmatic method sought to illuminate what microlevel social relations could bring to emerging macrolevel international institutional arrangements lived democratically. In the advocacy of WILPF, like the helping relations Addams aimed to realize through Hull House, WILPF sought to uncover the empirical facts at the base of situations of international concern with a view to using that knowledge.³²

However, in international politics there was less scope for women's action than in Settlement politics. The WILPF had to fashion its own epistemic authority and it did so on the basis of women's experience - as relief workers, food providers in the war and nurturers in the domestic sphere - as through expertly crafted rhetoric, metaphors of maternal protection, maternal care for life, and notions of women's guardianship over morality. Also social relatedness required settings in which connection could be found. WILPF's *Maison Internationale* was a site of such exchange, as were regular International Congresses of national

³² WILPF like Hull House worked as a knowledge community, appointing referents to become experts in areas of League policy WILPF wanted to influence; referents would conduct research and organize site visits and conferences with relevant experts.

sections of WILPF, corridors and meeting rooms of the League, and yearly WILPF international summer schools. These were the routes to inter-societal democracy as a way of life.

Arguably, Addams and WILPF did identify an immanent global ethical idea and made their own contribution to shaping cosmopolitan humanitarian sentiment. The idea that welfare provision then and in the future required global cooperation and that this functional cooperation would require new institutional structures, and socially democratic ones, putting individual human beings at their center anticipates the global politics of today. Addams's future-oriented experiment for global justice is still in process. Addams understood that creating and sustaining motivation for the work was vital and could not be stimulated by practical need alone, nor could it be forced by command from above. Individuals coming to a social morality in themselves was key. Thus, with all the tools in her power – sociological data gathering, creating fora and institutional outlets for the exchange of social knowledge and interaction, political lobbying, and sentimental education through literature, the arts, music, encouraging sympathy through expertly crafted rhetoric and the use of autobiographical narrative – Addams explored the motivations in modern life capable of cultivating the democratic practices that could generate a dynamic social ethics. Our best practical judgments are won in involvements with uncommon others, meeting the challenges of plurality and experimenting with what works among those affected. This is no small feat, requiring tireless energy, of which Addams was a model.

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