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THE LIMITS OF PRAGMATISM AND THE "DEMOCRATIC CLAIM"
IN THE SOCIAL ETHICS OF JANE ADDAMS

By

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ABSTRACT

THE LIMITS OF PRAGMATISM AND THE "DEMOCRATIC CLAIM" IN THE SOCIAL ETHICS OF JANE ADDAMS

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Jane Addams brought human intelligence to bear on the modern problems caused, in part, by industrial capitalism. Through social work, she experimented with social relationships, especially across the divides of race, class, and sex. In the spirit of Emerson, James, and Dewey, she hypothesized that the solution to modern social problems was an expansion of the concept of self-interest through the experimental practice of democracy. With reference to the work of John Dewey, Richard Rorty, and Cornel West, this thesis shows that Addams' social ethics anticipates contemporary dialogues on the limits of liberalism and of a democratic pragmatism which prizes tolerance at the expense of social transformation.

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Introduction

Jane Addams, while much revered in American social history, is an enigmatic figure. She was a feminist, but advocated the perpetuation of women's traditional social roles. She was a co-founder with Ida B. Wells Barnett and others of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), but was willing to compromise her anti-racist commitments when it became politically expedient. She criticized capitalism, but rejected the socialist Marxist analyses of her colleagues. She was a pragmatist who was committed to achieving "the best possible" solution to social problems, but she was also something of an idealist about the nature of human life. While she was profoundly committed to the eradication of social forces that demonize the stranger and dehumanize the laborer, her ability to effect positive solutions was constrained by liberal democratic commitments. In short, her political vision of a democratic community in which the voices of all were valued in and for their difference was undermined by an inadequate philosophical analysis of the problems she faced. By examining the life and work of Jane Addams in this essay, I hope to clarify the extent to which this problem was idiosyncratic of Addams and her colleagues, inherent in liberalism, a tragic flaw in pragmatism, or some combination of these.

Pragmatism has been characterized as the heart of American rationality. Following influential American

cultural figures such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Dewey, and Duke Ellington who affirmed the power of human intelligence and emphasized improvisation and experimentation,¹ the pragmatic view rejects preoccupations with epistemological foundations and quests for certainty, recasting the modern philosophical enterprise as a form of inquiry into human experience understood as practice or intelligent action. Late in the nineteenth century, C.S. Peirce and William James proposed pragmatism, originating as a critique of Cartesian epistemology and metaphysics, as a serious approach to philosophical inquiry. Dewey brought pragmatism to bear on the problems of the twentieth century, deepening its effectiveness as a form of inquiry with his own insights into the nature of human experience and learning. He wrote:

[W]e should recognize that philosophy is a form of desire, of effort at action -- a love, namely, of wisdom; but with the thorough proviso, not attached to the Platonic use of the word, that wisdom, whatever it is, is not a mode of science or knowledge. A philosophy which was conscious of its own business and province would then perceive that it is an intellectualized wish, an aspiration subjected to rational discriminations and tests, a social hope reduced to a working program of action,

¹bell hooks and Cornel West, Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life, (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 34.

a prophecy of the future, but one disciplined by serious thought and knowledge.²

We only desire that which is not in our grasp; we wish for things not yet acquired and aspire to actions not yet performed. Pragmatic philosophical inquiry is a method by which certain desires are satisfied. Where there is a problematic situation or an interruption in experience, the inquirer envisions the future -- desires an "end in view"³ -- in solving a problem or satisfying a desire. Theory is always at the service of practice and arises in response to problems in ordinary experience. Ideas have instrumental value as effective action.

There is a genealogical component to inquiry as well. Dewey suggests that by tracing theories and their products back to their origins in experience, we can determine the problems which these methods and explanations satisfy and gain some new knowledge or insight into a problem or situation at hand.

In the middle of the twentieth century, Deweyan pragmatism fell into disfavor; the Thayer article in the 1967 edition of Encyclopedia of Philosophy says that pragmatism "has disappeared as a special thesis by becoming infused in the normal and habitual practices of intelligent

²Dewey, John. Characters and Events, 848.

³Dewey, A Theory of Valuation, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).

inquiry."⁴ More recently, American philosophers such as Richard Rorty and Cornel West have revived pragmatism as an approach to thinking about and generating alternative practices in order to understand and solve contemporary social problems. But some feminist and critical theorists, including West, are concerned that pragmatism, as revitalized by Rorty, is polemical and not political, concerned with aesthetics instead of activism, and dispassionate about launching a progressive critique and movement of resistance against uses of social power which undermine the actualization of positive human practices and possibilities.

From the beginning, pragmatist philosophers have been involved in social change movements, but have not consistently brought their politics to bear on their philosophical writing. Dewey, for instance, was involved with the socialist democratic movement and supported women's suffrage. He wrote popular essays for magazines like the

⁴H.S. Thayer writes: "While there continues to be an interest in the philosophies of Peirce, James, Dewey, and Schiller, pragmatism as a movement, in the form outlined in these pages, cannot be said to be alive today. But pragmatism has . . . helped shape the modern conception of philosophy as a way of investigating problems and clarifying communication rather than as a fixed system of ultimate answers and great truths. And in this alteration of the philosophical scene, some of the positive suggestions of pragmatism have been disseminated into current intellectual life as practices freely adopted and taken for granted to an extent that no longer calls for special notice." Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol.6, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., and The Free Press): 435.

Ladies Home Journal that examined "the relation of the sexes," but these concerns remained marginal to his philosophical writings.⁵ Dewey writes that inquiry about the world is logically related to inquiry about values because theories about the "way things are" have their origins in human experience, of which action is a constitutive element. A philosophical method which acknowledges the centrality of human experience in philosophical thought, as pragmatism claims to, must also recognize that inquiry takes place within a political framework or a complex of social movements. The philosopher's own social position and that of the institutions within which the philosopher operates are relevant to the ideas and theories he or she puts forth.

In the tradition of Dewey, Jane Addams brought human intelligence to bear on the modern problems of alienation, disenfranchisement, dislocation, and domination caused by industrial capitalism. Through her social work, she experimented with social relationships, especially across the divides of class, race, and sex. She was especially concerned about the conditions of women. In the spirit of Emerson and James, she was not a systematic philosopher in the tradition of Kant or Hegel, but challenged accepted ways of thinking about social problems and brought a concrete

⁵Charlene Haddock Seigfried, "The Missing Perspective: Feminist Pragmatism," Transactions of the Peirce Society 27 (4): Fall 1991, 405.

rationality -- that is, new social practices -- to bear on their solution. She hypothesized that the solution to these social problems was an expansion of the concept and experience of self-interest through the practice of democracy. I will argue that while Addams' work is flawed like Rorty's by the limits of liberalism, her work also speaks to the challenges of West's argument that contemporary pragmatism must be critical of its liberal heritage even as it embraces certain liberal principles such as freedom of expression.

As a first-wave feminist, Addams was very much concerned with the claims of modern society on women's labor and interests and the impact of industrial capitalism on the well-being of women and children. As a liberal reformer, her work, like Dewey's, reveals a nearly religious faith in the potential of people to use liberal democratic institutions to solve social problems including racism and war. Much of her philosophy was expressed through autobiographical writing, and all of it was generated in the context of political action, first at Hull-House and later as she organized women against World War I and founded the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom.

I will show that her founding of Hull-House, the Chicago settlement community, with Ellen Gates Starr, was not only "social work" but an experimental approach to reconceiving the relationship of the individual with one's

community and culture. Taking Addams's work seriously -- as philosophical -- may help to shed light on the possibilities and limitations of liberal democratic values and of a neopragmatism which prizes tolerance at the expense of transformation.

While Addams did not approach the construction of social theory and ethics in the same manner as her colleagues Dewey, G.H. Mead, Florence Kelley or even Crystal Eastman,⁶ she rightly can be said to have been "doing philosophy". I take the practice of philosophy to be a dialogical or relational and rational practice having at four primary aspects. The first is descriptive. The philosopher endeavors to show, depict, narrate, portray an object of experience.⁷ This mode is also shared with artists, scientists, and technicians of all sorts. The second mode is analytical. The philosopher seeks to show whether or in what manner the object or value has a rational relation to other aspects of experience, particularly language. The third aspect is critical. In the construction of a description and an analysis of the object under consideration, the philosopher is obliged to analyze

⁶Kelley and Eastman were prominent contemporaries of Addams who were feminists with Marxist economic analyses. Kelley translated a number of Engels' and Marx's essays; Eastman's work will be discussed later in this paper.

⁷I mean here an object of experience broadly conceived, e.g., be a word, concept, emotion, material thing, value, "interruption in experience" (Dewey).

the construction of a theory or argument and the philosopher's own practice from the point of view of those who are different from the philosopher, those who may disagree, those who may and/or may not have an interest in the philosopher's work or the object itself. The fourth mode is action-oriented. All philosophical practices have a relationship to the world of human experience (including the imagination) and activity. Therefore, all conclusions and theories are related to human activity and practice. Since ethics has to do with the practices of human life, philosophy is properly and rightly related to the establishment of good practices of different kinds, e.g., scientific, sexual, institutional, professional.

Most will probably agree that Addams's work is of philosophical interest but not all will agree that she was "doing philosophy." While gaps in her analysis may lead one to conclude that she was not a philosopher, I will argue, on the contrary, that problems with her analysis arise because of presuppositions about which she was not sufficiently critical. Because Addams' starting point and her priority was action rather than description or analysis, it may appear that she was not "doing philosophy" when she was merely starting at a different place and with a different philosophical agenda than conventional philosophers. Nevertheless, this does not explain inadequacies in her social ethics, it only attempts to clarify them.

Jane Addams and the "Democratic Claim"

Jane Addams' philosophical aim was to conceptualize and realize democratic communities that would link women and men across differences of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and age. Jane Addams' conceptualization of modern American life was shaped by her own experience as a college educated middle-class white woman, "well-bred and open-minded."⁸ She noticed that women faced a conflict between two legitimate but distinct social claims: politics and family. Her education prepared her to make a contribution in the political sphere, however, a "conflict between her affections and her intellectual convictions"⁹ -- between claims of a "larger life"¹⁰ and the family -- left her feeling divided against her own interests and welfare. She noticed that when a woman "responds to her impulse to fulfil the social or democratic claim,"¹¹ she violates every tradition; in following one legitimate claim, she violates another.¹² Women's traditional social role and the social sanctions implied by it, hindered a woman of her time (and

⁸Jane Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics [1902], ed. Anne Firor Scott, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge), 1964, 17.

⁹Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 87.

¹⁰Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 86.

¹¹Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 74-75.

¹²Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 74 - 75.

her class) from acting upon the "wider inheritance"¹³ bestowed on her by virtue of her education.

While Addams wrote about middle-strata women of her generation, she illustrated the damage suffered by women living according to prescribed social roles; she wrote:

The social claim is a demand upon emotions as well as upon the intellect, and in ignoring it she represses not only her convictions but lowers her springs of vitality. Her life is full of contradictions. She looks out into the world, longing that some demand be made upon her powers, for they are too untrained to furnish an initiative. When her health gives way under this strain, as it often does, her physician invariably advises a rest. But to be put to bed and fed on milk is not what she requires. What she needs is simple, health-giving activity, which, involving her use of all her faculties, shall be the response to all the claims which she so keenly feels.¹⁴

In her writing, Addams did not explicitly reduce the problems of modern life to a single theme. She tended to let her experiences and the stories of people she encountered speak for themselves.—However, her life's work focused on healing the alienation between the working and middle classes, between blacks and whites, between men and women, and between warring nations. She believed that industrial capitalism's requirement of "unceasing bodily toil becomes wearing and brutalizing."¹⁵ The separation of the working people from owners of capital in a political

¹³Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 85.

¹⁴Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 87.

¹⁵Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 16.

economy sets up two separate but related worlds characterized by different standards of social relations. Addams dedicated her life's work to bridging those two worlds and ameliorating the suffering caused by social inequality.

The solution, she believed, to the alienation experienced in modern life was experimental democracy of the sort exemplified at Chicago's Hull-House, the settlement house she founded. The democratic spirit is dialectical, critical, and pragmatic. With Dewey, she believed that democracy was not merely one kind of social life on a par with others; it is the "precondition for the full application of intelligence to the solution of social problems."¹⁶ Democratic practice involves a willingness on the part of diverse individuals and social groups to engage one another in dialogue; that is, to maintain a sense of relatedness. Once the dialogue is underway, the participants must acknowledge what is at stake in maintaining the dialogue and make judgments about what is best or right for a particular society as a whole at a particular time in history.

Addams associated with Marxists, but was not one herself. She saw capitalists and laborers not as two

¹⁶Hilary Putnam, "A Reconsideration of Deweyan Democracy," in Pragmatism in Law and Society, ed. M. Brint and W. Weaver, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 217.

warring classes, but as members of a common social network.¹⁷ Addams believed that the democratic solution to modern problems would be mediated by women who, by nature she thought, are inclined toward the democratic spirit as caretakers, providers of comfort, and are comported toward the world with a sympathetic attitude.

What Addams called the "democratic claim" also characterizes social morality. As characterized in her early writings social morality exemplifies Christian prescriptions to perform works of mercy: to feed the hungry, visit prisoners, the poor, and the sick.¹⁸ In her later writing, influenced by Dewey, G.H. Mead, feminism, and pacificism, Addams emphasized the role and limitations of social institutions in liberal society. Democratic institutions should function to facilitate social morality.

¹⁷Mary Jo Deegan, Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892-1918, (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), 236.

¹⁸Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 3.

We are learning that a standard of social ethics is not attained by traveling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of one another's burdens. To follow the path of social morality results perforce in the temper if not the practice of the democratic spirit, for it implies that diversified human experience and resultant sympathy which are the foundation and guarantee of Democracy.¹⁹

Those social institutions which create or promote the conditions under which war or hunger thrive or do not facilitate the making of "peace or bread" -- that is, create the conditions under which democracy can thrive -- should be reformed.

The Problem of Alienation

The problem to which Jane Addams devoted most of her career and her philosophical writing was the alienation of Americans from one another, particularly the urban poor from the rest of society. She observed that industrialization and urban factory life in Chicago caused a new kind of poverty unknown in agrarian America. Urban poverty posed grave dangers of disease, violence, and exploitation of immigrants, women, and children. The living standard of the average unskilled immigrant was lower once arriving in the U.S. than the rural standard in the country they left. The factory system of production and the maintenance of industrial capitalism in the United States was built upon the labor of unskilled immigrants which opened chasms

¹⁹Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 6-7.

between social classes, particularly the skilled assimilated workers and the new arrivals.²⁰ She wrote:

As its prototype rested upon slavery and vassalage, so this commerce is founded on contempt for the worker and believes he can live on low wages. It assumes that his legitimate wants are the animal ones comprising merely food and shelter and cost of replacement. . . [this is] more easily extended to immigrants than to any other sort of workman because they seem further away from a common standard of life.²¹

Addams believed that implications of the factory system and "the conditions of living which this well-established system imposes on the workers"²² had neither been fully realized nor formulated by American intellectuals or politicians.

— Her books are filled with stories and examples of the exploitation of vulnerable workers. She was particularly concerned about the impact of factory labor and urban living on families. She recounts that one evening as she left a school board meeting she encountered a young woman scrubbing floors. The front of her dress dripped with breast milk because she couldn't return home to feed her hungry infant until the middle of the night. Addams lamented:

It is curiously inconsistent that with the emphasis which this generation has placed on the mother and upon the prolongation

²⁰Christopher Lasch (ed.), The Social Thought of Jane Addams (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc, 1965), xiii.

²¹Jane Addams, A Centennial Reader, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), 214.

²²Jane Addams, Centennial, 214.

of infancy, we constantly allow the waste of this precious material.²³

Addams thought it a "wretched delusion" that a woman could both support and nurture her children in an industrial society where the worth of a person is judged by her wage-earning capacity and women bore the double burden of domestic and industrial work.²⁴ The industrialized modern world offered uninteresting work, satisfaction of appetites rather than long-term gratification, and a lack of intellectual food.²⁵

The Charitable Relation

She experienced the alienation of the middle classes from the poor most acutely in philanthropic enterprises in which educated women, like herself, set out to "help" the lower classes, one of the few socially acceptable ways to use their skills and knowledge. The so-called "charitable relation" figures significantly in her analysis of the problem of class alienation and her formulation of the solution.

The relationship of the "charity visitor" with a poor person or family is very complex. It is an encounter with Otherness. When a charity visitor comes to "help" she is

²³Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House with Autobiographical Notes, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1910), 174-175.

²⁴Addams, Centennial, 173.

²⁵Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 3.

viewed with suspicion; her motives may be entirely self-serving.²⁶ The visitor herself also begins to question the conventions of her own class, "which fail to fit the bigger, more emotional, and freer lives of working people."²⁷

The daintily clan charitable visitor who steps into the little house made untidy by the vigorous efforts of her hostess, the washerwoman, is no longer sure of her superiority to the latter; she recognizes that the hostess after all represents social value and industrial use, as over against her own parasitic cleanliness and a social standing attained only through status.²⁸

While the middle-class educated woman has a more materially comfortable life, her social value is nil in an industrial society, except for her role as a wife and mother. The charitable relation, argues Addams, is a clash in social ethical standards. Those standards which apply in the life of one class, do not readily translate to new situations. If there is such a thing as social ethics or a social morality, it can only be attained by the nurturing of people's imaginations through education, and widening of their concept of self-interest through a "realization of the experiences of other people."²⁹ Selfish people, she writes, "have the conviction that they are different from

²⁶Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 16.

²⁷Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 38.

²⁸Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 16.

²⁹Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 9.

other men and women, that they need peculiar consideration because they are more sensitive or refined."³⁰ However, she argues that in fact, they have a "narrowness of interest which deliberately selects its experience within a limited sphere."³¹ This narrowness of interest is inconsistent with the spirit of democracy and is at the core of the social alienation fueled by industrial capitalism. As long as personal interest defines the social and economic landscape, the truth of democracy -- that diverse human experience is necessary for moral progress -- will fail to be realized.

Democracy as Experimental Social Practice

Moral progress, for Addams, consists in the widening of an individual or social unit's sphere of interest. Every human being, as a "creative agent and possible generator of fine enthusiasm"³² can contribute to "greater freedom, strength, and subtilty of intercourse and hence an increase in dynamic power" through education. At Hull-House, Addams and her colleagues created the conditions for the coming together of people from different races, sexes, ethnic, and class backgrounds so that the "diversified experience of human life" might be articulated. She believed that the expression of one's talents, desires, and aspirations would

³⁰Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 10.

³¹Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 9.

³²Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 179.

bring social energy to those who have little.³³ About the relations between the poor and the rich, she wrote:

[The poor] live for the moment side by side, many of them without knowledge of each other, without fellowship, without local traditions or public spirit, without social organizations of any kind. . . Men of ability and refinement, of social power and university cultivation stay away from them. Personally, I believe the men who lose most are those who stay away.

But the paradox is here: when cultivated people do stay away from a certain portion of the population, when all social advantages are persistently withheld, it may be for years, the result itself is pointed at as a reason, is used as an argument, for the continued withholding.³⁴

The aim of the Settlement House was to provide opportunities for education, political conscientization,³⁵ advocacy and assistance with family and social problems.³⁶ Addams believed that to shut one's self off from people who are

³³Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 29. It is important to keep in mind that while she noted that uneducated immigrants had fewer resources and even a more "primitive" morality rooted in the family, she also saw the upper classes as morally impoverished by their contempt for people who are different from themselves.

³⁴Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 31.

³⁵Although this is not a term Addams used, it reflects the process by which residents and visitors to Hull-House would identify political and social problems and discuss them with one another and with visiting scholars from the University of Chicago and elsewhere around the world.

³⁶The mission statement of Hull-House says: "To provide a center for higher civic and social life; to institute and maintain educational and philanthropic enterprises, and to investigate and improve the conditions in industrial districts of Chicago." Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House, 112.

different is to shut one's self away from the most vital part of one's humanity. The individual's possibilities are evoked and nourished through a relationship with "the great mother breasts of our common humanity."³⁷

The optimal qualities she envisioned in residents and other participants in the Settlement are also those of participants in a working democracy.

- 1) They must be hospitable and ready for experiment.
- 2) They must be open to conviction and have a deep abiding sense of tolerance.
- 3) They should demand of themselves "a scientific patience in the accumulation of facts and the steady holding of their sympathies" as one of the best instruments for that accumulation.
- 4) They must be grounded in a philosophy whose foundation is on the solidarity of the human race, a philosophy that will not waver when humanity is represented by someone repulsive.
- 5) They must be emptied of all conceit and self-assertion and ready to arouse and interpret the public opinion of their neighborhood.
- 6) They must be content to live quietly side by side with neighbors until they grow into a sense of relationship and mutual interest.
- 7) They must be pledged to good citizenship and arousing of social energies.³⁸

This list evinces what Addams valued in American democracy: flexibility, experimentation, freedom of speech, tolerance, science, solidarity with others, and mutuality.

³⁷Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House, 117.

³⁸All of the above are taken from Twenty Years at Hull-House, 126.

The role of the citizen and of the social worker and philosopher is one of facilitation and interpretation. Those who have no voice in society are to be given the opportunity to articulate their experience because

in every social grade and class in the whole circle of genuine occupations are mature men and women of moral purpose and specialized knowledges, who because they have become efficient unto life, may contribute an enrichment to the pattern of human culture.³⁹

That democracy had yet to be extended into social affairs, particularly among women and African Americans⁴⁰ -- beyond the franchise -- contributed to the burgeoning alienation experienced by urban workers. Addams complained that "we conscientiously followed the gift of the ballot hard upon the gift of freedom to the negro, but we are quite unmoved by the fact that he lives among us in a practical social ostracism."⁴¹ Democracy could be extended fully into the American social fabric, she argued, through education and freedom of expression.⁴² The articulation of the

³⁹Addams, The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House, September 1909 to September 1929 with a Record of Growing World Consciousness. (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 380.

⁴⁰Democracy and Social Ethics was written prior to the granting of suffrage to women.

⁴¹Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 30.

⁴²She writes in Twenty Years at Hull-House that free speech "was a sensitive point with me" (185). One of her objections to the socialists that would often meet at the House was their insistence that "fellowship depends on identity of creed." (187). She felt that similarity of aim and sympathy to one's situation were enough upon which to build political movements. She rejected any ideology or

experience of the oppressed or marginalized was central to bringing the middle classes out of their slumber and into solidarity with the whole of society. The extension of the individual's sense of self-interest to encompass the well-being of those who are different from one's self, would foster the social expression of the truth about human experience and intelligence.

We know, at last, that we can only discover truth by a rational and democratic interest in life, and to give truth complete social expression is the endeavor upon which we are entering. Thus identification with the common lot which is the essential idea of Democracy becomes the source and expression of social ethics.⁴³

Bread Labor and the Role of Women in American Democracy

Addams thought that women would be the arbiters of this expansion of democracy in the social realm. By temperament and habit, Jane Addams was herself more comfortable in the middle of the road. As she said, "I had been for the 'best possible'" in political situations.⁴⁴ As a feminist, she was also reformist rather than radical. She accepted the appropriateness of women's traditional work as care-takers and homemakers, but also asserted the importance of seeing this work in light of the need for communities and

methodology that resulted in the silencing of anyone.

⁴³Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 11.

⁴⁴Addams, Peace and Bread in Time of War. (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 133.

individuals who understand their own welfare to be deeply connected to the welfare of others. Addams thought that women could change and improve society by acting on traditional values in the world as it had been defined and shaped by men. If women were to preserve their homes and families at all under industrial capitalism, she argued, they need to influence the society at large.⁴⁵ Her work as a feminist on behalf of women was among her greatest legacies as a social worker. Her conception of the democratic experiment in which every member of society is permitted an authentic voice was enriched by her commitment to the inclusion of women's voices. However, Addams' own liberal reformist praxis weakened her political successes in this arena as she sought "the best possible" for women within social conventions and institutions formed and dominated by men's interests.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were a number of different conceptions of feminism and its goals. Women involved in socialist, communistic and liberal democratic political movements were united in their commitment to improving the material conditions of women's lives. However, there were many disagreements about political strategy and priorities. These differences are exemplified in the different emphases of Jane Addams and

⁴⁵Deegan, Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 230-231.

Crystal Eastman.

Addams, like many of the liberal feminists of her day, believed that women were by nature, more nurturing, empathic, gentle, and caring than men. These attributes prepared women to carry out the social duties of childbearing and rearing, and home-making. Addams and her liberal counterparts did not publicly challenge these virtues. However, there is evidence that Addams was not fully committed to a women's "nature." As a pragmatist, she was interested in the origins of observed differences in behavior and values of men and women, but only to the extent the origins were informative with respect to solving problems for women at the present time. While Addams admitted that the woman's role as provider of food and comfort is tied to a undeveloped or "primitive morality"⁴⁶ which originated in the first civilizations, women are nevertheless bound to fulfill that role. Addams' own life was full of the contradictions to which she alluded above, for she never married or accepted traditional family roles in her own adult life. But while she did not exemplify the "feminine familial virtues" she instead, saw herself as providing vehicles for education, feeding, and social healing for whole communities and, later, for the world. At Hull-House Addams attempted to conserve traditional notions about women's qualities or virtues and expand the social

⁴⁶Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 108.

sphere in which they were relevant.

In attempting to improve women's lives, Addams emphasized the need to protect women laborers, particularly factory workers. Implicit in this goal was a presupposition that women needed protection because they were unable to protect themselves from unscrupulous employers. Liberal social reformers, such as Addams, reaffirmed the naturalness of women's place in the home and thereby, argued that women needed special protection in the alien environment of the industrial labor force.

On the other hand, Crystal Eastman was committed equally to socialism and feminism -- and equally critical of both. She was a labor lawyer and pioneer in industrial safety. However, she strongly disagreed with Addams' position. Eastman argued that protectionist labor policies kept women from well-paying jobs. The central task of feminism, she believed, was to

arrange the world so that women can be human beings, with a chance to exercise their infinitely varied gifts in infinitely varied ways, instead of being destined by the accident of their sex to one field of activity -- housework and child-raising.⁴⁷

Her goal, as a feminist, was to "create conditions of outward freedom in which a free woman's soul can be born and

⁴⁷Crystal Eastman, "Now We Can Begin," in Blanche Wiesen Cook, ed., Crystal Eastman on Women and Revolution, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 56.

grow."⁴⁸ And while Eastman was a radical, was mindful of the limitations of socialism and the primacy of feminism for women's well-being. She wrote:

The true feminist, no matter how far to the left she may be in the revolutionary movement, sees the women's battle as distinct in its objects and different in its methods from the workers' battle for industrial freedom. . . she knows that the whole of woman's slavery is not summed up in the profit system, nor her complete emancipation assured by the downfall of capitalism. . . If we should graduate into communism to-morrow . . . man's attitude to his wife would not be changed.

Addams and Eastman worked together on labor and peace issues in New York City and while they tended to have similar deep commitments to the improvement of women's lives, they tended to part company on matters of style and strategy in accomplishing their common objectives. Nevertheless, the feminist movements of this period reflected the tension in the concepts of equality and difference when involved in political activities. Addams argued that it was women's difference from men that was morally significant; Eastman argued that it was their similarity. Neither thinker fully recognized the complexity of the problems of misogyny and patriarchal oppression. However, I offer this comparison of Addams' thought with Eastman because it shows the liberal reformist position in relief against a sympathetic but more radical position. Addams, as a liberal, was more willing to use liberal institutions as tools to improve the material

⁴⁸Eastman, "Now We Can Begin," 56.

conditions of women's lives; Eastman insisted that those institutions would not "create freedom" for women.

Addams implied that women have a different relationship to moral progress than men. She asserted that moral progress involves the extension of the area or range of persons whose welfare is considered part of the common good. Women, she argued, think contextually and situationally about moral problems and less about abstract concepts like justice or fairness. They are naturally more peace-loving and able to see the importance of community and the inefficiency of conflict. Taking her inspiration from Tolstoy, whom she saw as "a man who has the ability to lift his life to the level of his conscience, to translate his theories into action,"⁴⁹ she portrayed women as "bread givers" to the world. With Dewey, she asserted that a "meager and narrow" social life diminishes one's opportunity to deliberate and make choices.⁵⁰

In her later work as a pacifist war-resister, it was her commitment to feminism that informed her analysis of war and the pacifist response to it. She sought to re-create the meaning of pacifism; to take it out of the patriarchal framework of "non-resistance" and frame it instead as

⁴⁹In Marshall Fishwick, Illustrious Americans: Jane Addams. (Morristown, NJ: Silver-Burdett, 1968): 166.

⁵⁰Dewey, Ethics 1908, The Middle Works of John Dewey 1899-1924 Volume 5, Edited by JoAnn Boydston (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 385.

"forming new centres of spiritual energy."⁵¹ Pacifism, she argued, is a product of women's culture and based in a maternal instinct which values peace and harmony among people. In her writing, Addams portrayed war from the point of view of women, who at that time served as civilians in helping roles. In every area of the human life women, she believed, have the capacity and the responsibility to nurture peaceful relationships.

Ethics, she argued, is a way of manifesting truth in everyday life. Democracy is the highest social ethical standard because a democratic standard of morality fosters an ethical imagination in which the realizations of the experiences of people different from oneself can be incorporated into one's world view. The ethical life that is the practice of democracy would eliminate war and poverty because the individual's sense of self would be so expanded so as to exclude the possibility of eliminating or exploiting another person or group.

Addams as an American Pragmatist

Addams' conception of democracy has an Emersonian flavor. We might go as far to say that it is a peculiarly American conception. Unlike Mill or Hegel whose social theories cast suspicion and fear on identification with the common lot, Addams and Emerson (and Dewey as well) have a

⁵¹Deegan, Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 239.

confidence in the common lot akin to religious faith. But is it a pragmatist conception? Addams' social thought is pragmatic and philosophical in the Deweyan tradition in two main ways: in its conception of intelligent action and the relationship between truth and democracy.

Addams accepted John Dewey's conception of "the practice of knowing"⁵² which involves intelligence, that is, direction of one's actions towards the accomplishing of some goal. For Addams (like Dewey), education was the key to permitting individuals to develop the capacity to exercise purposive rationality. She recognized that all institutions are educational in so far as they shape attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors and provide an environment for human experience.⁵³ Liberal democratic institutions (such as public schools) have the best opportunity to promote intelligent action because they can tolerate a diversity of experience and opinion. Intelligence, therefore, is not an individual endowment, but a social achievement⁵⁴ enacted by individuals which brings together the past (revealed by the situation or problem at hand) and the future (resolution of the problem). One can only probe the content of an idea through one's own practice

⁵²Dewey, The Quest for Certainty, (New York: G.P. Putnam Sons, 1929, [1960]), 242.

⁵³Deegan, 251.

⁵⁴Dewey, Quest for Certainty, 245.

and the examination of the practices which manifest the idea. Social experience itself holds the answers for social problems; the "ideas" are present (albeit obscured often) in our experience.⁵⁵

It is through social experience that truth is given expression. Addams, as a pragmatist, views truth as partial and contingent. The truth of human experience and human knowledge is evolving. This is evidenced, she says, in the fact that we often act according to social customs and beliefs that we as individuals no longer hold. The experience of this discord generates the identification of a problem, a hypothesis for its solution and the development of a new practice or way of acting in the world.⁵⁶

Because truth is contingent, she argues, it requires democracy. Without the expression of the full diversity of human values and practices, we can never come to know the truth about much of human life and therefore will not develop the practices to match our aspirations for freedom embodied in the social and governmental institutions of our society.

The Limits of Liberalism, The Limits of Pragmatism

In the remainder of this essay I will show how Addams' philosophical pragmatism exhibits some of the same strengths and flaws as contemporary pragmatist philosophers with

⁵⁵Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 7.

⁵⁶Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics, 13.

contrasting perspectives, Richard Rorty and Cornel West. I am using the work of neopragmatists to highlight the possibilities and problems of the American pragmatic tradition going back to Dewey. We will also see that some of the problems in Addams' analysis are linked to the tragic nature of liberal democracy and the limits of pragmatism. I will outline major points of Rorty's and West's positions and then show how Addams' work challenges Rorty's claims, anticipates West's critique of pragmatism, but ultimately fails to overcome the pitfalls facing a liberal democratic social ethic.

A Revived Pragmatism: Rorty

For some socialist, feminist, and liberationist intellectuals pragmatism appears to be the best philosophical method for asking questions about which kind of social frameworks that can foster "nonindividualist, nonelitist, nonmasculinist . . . relations of work and play, citizenship and parenthood, friendship and love."⁵⁷ Nevertheless, there is disagreement about whether a pragmatist methodology can work within broader philosophical frameworks like feminism or Marxism or whether pragmatism, as one of the "master's tools"⁵⁸ co-opts or subverts the

⁵⁷Nancy Fraser, "Solidarity or Singularity? Richard Rorty Between Romanticism and Technocracy," Praxis International 8: October 1988, 270

⁵⁸Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools will Never Dismantle the Master's House," Sister Outsider. (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984).

political goals of those philosophical positions. For the pragmatist, ideas have instrumental value; they are powerful in so far as they stimulate or enable effective action.⁵⁹ Viewing the power of ideas in this way makes it possible to conceive of a philosophical work as contributing to the development of experimental, creative solutions to deep, even deadly, social problems.

Inherent in pragmatism are values widely held in the American culture of which it is a product. It is antifoundationalist and emphasizes pluralism, human powers and possibilities, contingency, and history. Richard Rorty characterizes pragmatism this way:

[it is] the doctrine that there are no constraints on inquiry save conventional ones -- no wholesale constraints derived from the nature of objects, or of the mind, or of language, but only those retail constraints provided by the remarks of our fellow inquirers.⁶⁰

However, as the relationship of politics to pragmatism has been reconstructed by Rorty, pragmatism, say contemporary critics, loses its force as a way to critically interpret experience. Instead, it has become the tool of the disengaged armchair commentator who emphasizes tolerance of different views or conversations rather than the tool of the

⁵⁹hooks, bell and Cornel West. Breaking Bread, 27, and West, The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press), 5.

⁶⁰Rorty, Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972-1980) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 165.

agent with an alternative social vision. Philosophers Nancy Fraser and Cornel West -- both concerned with issues of race, class, and gender -- have charged that Rorty's contribution is fundamentally flawed because the outcome of his version of pragmatism "requires no change in our cultural political practices."⁶¹ West writes,

Rorty's neopragmatic project for a post-philosophical culture⁶² is an ideological endeavor to promote the basic practices of liberal bourgeois capitalist societies.⁶³

Rorty has attempted to resolve the tension between Romanticism and pragmatism by casting a dividing line between the private and public sectors of life in a liberal democratic society. Fraser charges that this dividing line requires us to "turn our backs on the last hundred years of social history"⁶⁴ in which the political character of interactions considered private has been clarified by feminist and Marxian theory.⁶⁵ In Rorty's taxonomy, public life is the preserve of pragmatism; it is the place where utility, convention, and solidarity predominate. Private life is the preserve of romanticism -- where the individual

⁶¹West, Evasion of Philosophy, 206.

⁶²Rorty says, "A post-philosophical culture . . . would be one in which men and women felt themselves alone, merely finite with no links to something beyond."

⁶³West, Evasion of Philosophy, 207

⁶⁴Fraser, Solidarity, 264.

⁶⁵Fraser, Solidarity, 258, 264 - 265.

can indulge in self-discovery, irony, and sublimity.⁶⁶ Non-liberal oppositional or "prophetic" discourses are rendered non-political by definition in Rorty's work because the vocabulary of radical thought is "romantic" and remains outside the public sphere; radical discourses belong to the lone, alienated, heroic individual outside of the concerns of collective life and concerns with liberal problem-solving.⁶⁷ Critics argue that Rorty's position, taken to an extreme, is anti-democratic in spite of itself because the discourses of those who suffer under the institutions of modern liberalism are not considered co-equal with discourses of those who are privileged. The goal of the liberal society, says Rorty, is freedom or "open mindedness with respect to words" for its own sake.⁶⁸ According to Rorty, those who suffer "do not have much in the way of language"⁶⁹ -- there is no privileged language or voice of the oppressed as liberationists suggest. Liberal society will speak for them.⁷⁰

Rorty emphasizes that social progress results from an "accidental coincidence of private obsession with a public

⁶⁶Fraser, *Solidarity*, 263.

⁶⁷Fraser, *Solidarity*, 267

⁶⁸Rorty, Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 46 - 52.

⁶⁹Rorty, Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, 91.

⁷⁰Rorty, Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, 94

need."⁷¹ In liberal society an open mindedness with respect to speech and words creates conditions in which redescription -- that is, speaking differently -- rather than cogent argumentation is the chief instrument for social change.⁷² The liberal ironist, the chief figure for Rorty, is the person who thinks that cruelty is the worst thing we do and who faces up to the contingency of beliefs and desires.⁷³ The ironist attempts to get out from under inherited categories and ways of thinking, and find new ones. Ironist thinking is concerned with self-creation and autonomy "rather than affiliation to a power other than themselves."⁷⁴ Social hope is irrelevant to ironist thinking.⁷⁵

Whereas the [liberal] metaphysician takes the morally relevant feature of other human beings to be their relation to a larger shared power -- rationality, God, truth, or history, for example -- the [liberal] ironist takes the morally relevant definition of a person, or moral subject, to be "something that can be humiliated". Her sense of human solidarity is based on a sense of a common danger, not a common possession of shared power.⁷⁶

⁷¹Rorty, Contingency, Irony, Solidarity, 37.

⁷²Rorty, Contingency, Irony, Solidarity, 7.

⁷³Rorty, Contingency, Irony, Solidarity, 6.

⁷⁴Rorty, Contingency, Irony, Solidarity, 97.

⁷⁵Rorty, Contingency, Irony, Solidarity, 83.

⁷⁶Rorty, Contingency, Irony, Solidarity, 91

However, the powerful and the lowly moral subjects are not equally at risk for humiliation and therefore, by this inequality, the potential for solidarity is compromised and limited as is the possibility of the elimination of social conditions which make humiliation a viable activity.

An Alternative Conception: West

Cornel West proposes a version of pragmatism that draws on the distinctive features of American society to invigorate intellectual, social, and personal life. The features he sees as distinctively American are 1) its revolutionary origin coupled with a slave-based economy, 2) an elastic liberal rule of law coupled with priorities dominated by business interests, 3) a hybrid culture coupled with collective homogeneous self-definition as Anglo-American, 4) obsession with mobility, contingency, and "pecuniary liquidity combined with a deep moralistic impulse", 5) impatience with theories and philosophies coupled with a valuing of comfort, convenience, technological innovation, and politics of compromise.⁷⁷ West dubs his alternative conception of pragmatism "prophetic" because it harkens back to the "rich, though flawed, traditions of Judaism and Christianity" which keep alive collective memories of moral (anti-idolatrous) struggle and "nonmarket values" such as love for others,

⁷⁷West, Evasion of Philosophy, 5.

loyalty to an ethical ideal and social freedom.⁷⁸ However, West admits that despite the influence and impact of Christianity on American culture, a theological conception of prophecy need not characterize a critical pragmatism which has a number of methodological commitments.

Prophetic pragmatist commitment to individuality and democracy, historical consciousness and systemic social analyses, and tragic action in an evil-ridden world can take place in -- though usually on the margin of -- a variety of traditions.⁷⁹

A viable prophetic pragmatism, while displaying these commitments, is also self-critical. Each of them is expressed in an American society whose history exhibits serious deviations from its declared values. West explains the basis for holding these to be viable commitments of pragmatic inquiry.

First, individuality is distinguished from an individualism in which one's moral development is judged in terms of independence or disconnection from community or society. To be committed to individuality and democracy requires the critical pragmatist to resist the liberal tendency to separate the personal domain from the political. Individual moral agency -- the capacity to deliberate and make choices -- is a requirement for self-governance and

⁷⁸West, Evasion of Philosophy, 232 and "The Limits of Neopragmatism," in Pragmatism in Law and Society, ed. M. Brint and W. Weaver (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 121 - 126.

⁷⁹West, Evasion of Philosophy, 232.

therefore, judgments about agency and personhood must be made with respect to the social and political dynamics in which action and reflection occur. Individualism, however, does violence to the individual person.

A commitment to democracy implies a belief in the capacity of individuals to act together in a modern society to create rational institutions which serve the well-being of the society. This involves a commitment to an experimental rationality. Institutions are created to address (either real or potential) social problems. New problems arise in the solving of old ones and a society is rarely in agreement about the nature of the problem or correct about all of the potential outcomes of a particular solution to a problem. American democracy is an experimental social practice rooted in the American philosophical tradition which is oriented the future, and accents human powers and action.

Elements of critical theory inform the prophetic pragmatist commitment to historical systemic social analysis. Pragmatic social analysis starts with the material conditions of human experience in a particular time and place. There is no universalistic or totalizing standpoint; all knowledge is partial, i.e., contextual and historical. A systematic analysis views institutions, problems, possibilities in terms of the connections among

them, thereby identifying and conceptualizing problems holistically.

Unlike Rorty's articulation of the pragmatist commitment to tolerance in a liberal society, critical pragmatists assert that alternative social practices are generated not by increased toleration of multiple discourses but by paying particular attention to those who have little stake in the status quo. Feminist commitments to the well-being of women and to asking questions about who benefits from the status quo, who suffers, and why the benefactors strive to maintain it⁸⁰ are consistent with prophetic pragmatism's emphasis on attentiveness to the social margins.

Finally, West says that pragmatism is committed to tragic action. I take him to mean that individual and social action involve real dilemmas. That is, human activity is not heroic because it generates oppositions. In taking one action or set of actions, additional problems, responsibilities, questions, or dilemmas are generated; action, therefore, is always tragic.

Thus West, Fraser, and others advocate a transformed pragmatism which "frames its research programme and its conceptual framework with an eye to the aims and activities of those oppositional social movements with which it has a

⁸⁰Katie Geneva Cannon, Resources for a Constructive Ethic: The Black Women's Literary Tradition, Syllabus, 1993, page 5.

partisan though not uncritical identification."⁸¹ West says this another way.

The goal of a sophisticated neopragmatism is to think genealogically about specific practices in light of the best available social theories, cultural critiques, and historiographical insights and to act politically to achieve certain moral consequences in light of effective strategies and tactics.⁸²

The pragmatist philosopher, on this view, is to "allow suffering to speak"⁸³ and foster the development of new social practices by which suffering can be ameliorated and its causes eradicated. This view holds that genealogy influences analysis. Thought is contextual and responsive; inquiry arises in response to a problem or question and generates action.

A critical or prophetic pragmatism, therefore, is linked genealogically to strategic action; in Dewey's terms, intelligence is mobilized in response to a particular problematic situation. Therefore, all thought has political consequences. A critical or prophetic neopragmatism "is inextricably linked to oppositional analyses of class, race, and gender and oppositional movements for creative democracy

⁸¹Nancy Fraser, "What's Critical About Critical Theory?," Critical Theory: The Essential Readings. ed, D. Ingram and J. Simon-Ingram. (New York: Paragon House, 1992), 357.

⁸²West, Evasion of Philosophy, 209.

⁸³hooks and West, Breaking Bread, 34.

and social freedom."⁸⁴ It is linked to the genealogy of American intellectual life, for West, not so much as tradition which puts forward solutions to traditional philosophical problems as a set of interpretations and commentary that attempt to explain America to itself.⁸⁵

In the remainder of this essay, I will argue that Jane Addams work is pragmatic and problematic in the Deweyan tradition. Her work focuses on the problem of social alienation in industrial capitalist America, particularly the situation of women. The solution she poses to the problem of alienation is an expansion of people's experience of self-interest which is rooted in democracy. As a feminist Addams argues that women, by nature, are particularly well-suited to be agents of this expansion. I will argue that Addams' work on social ethics is a significant in so far as she offers an account of social alienation and demonstrates an inherent and important connection between political action and philosophical reflection. Like Rorty, she accepts the contingency of truth and an approach to inquiry that is constrained by convention, not by metaphysical commitments. Unlike Rorty, however, Addams insists that the free individual is not a romantic notion, but a pragmatic one linked to the interests and well-being of other individuals. Like Cornel West,

⁸⁴West, Evasion of Philosophy, 210.

⁸⁵West, Evasion of Philosophy, 5.

Addams believes that the poor and the socially alienated have their own authentic voice which, in a democracy, must be articulated -- not by liberals as Rorty suggests, but by themselves. And, says Addams, it is to those voices -- of women, negroes, immigrants, laborers, children -- that a liberal society must pay heed. However, the effectiveness of Addams' philosophical analysis and the realization of the community she envisioned suffered from problems inherent in liberalism.

Addams' Links to Contemporary Pragmatism

There are several ways in which Addams' thought is sympathetic to the contemporary re-crafting of pragmatism. First, they share a Deweyan approach to inquiry which is constrained only by the limits of cultural conventions including language. In her approach to the critical analysis of social problems Addams did not ordinarily appeal to the nature of things; she looked for answers to questions as they are interpreted in experience. There is one significant exception to this. In her work on the condition of women in society she criticized the traditions which restricted women's role to the family. However, she appealed to women's kind and gentle "nature" to justify her social ethics. Second, like Rorty, in her autobiographical method, Addams attempted to "speak differently" about the areas about which she cared very much rather than put forth the soundest logical argument -- convinced that presenting

an issue such as pacificism in a different light would be effective. As I outlined above, she attempted to take the meaning of pacificism out of a male-defined framework which made it synonymous with "weakness," and claim it as part of women's culture, thus mobilizing thousands of women worldwide to protest war and state-sponsored violence. Another way in which Addams is linked to Rorty's work is that she also recognized the significance of solidarity with others in the creating of a social environment in which individual freedom can prosper. Thus Addams' work is consistent, in some respects, with Rorty's.

However, her social ethics challenges Rorty's division between the public and the private, the pragmatic and the romantic in two primary ways. First, Addams denies that self-discovery and self-assertion is the theater of the romantic impulse. For Addams, self-discovery is a necessary aspect of the democratic impulse. However, the free individual which asserts itself is not unfettered by social concerns, but embraces others or draws them to oneself as part of one's own well-being. The expression of the artist and the poet are also the expression of the laborer and the politician. At Hull-House, self-expression in art and literature was fostered and encouraged as the articulation of oneself to and for the community. In Addams' social ethics, every person ought to seek expression in relation to other persons within the public sphere, not outside of it.

Second, Addams would agree with Rorty that a liberal society will necessarily be openminded with respect to words. However, she parts company with him on their intrinsic value in a liberal society. For Addams, free expression is valued precisely for its relationship to individual and collective experience. She dedicated her life's work to facilitating the expression of the unique voices which Rorty denies exist: the voices of the oppressed. It is the expression of these voices which Addams, with West, argues are necessary for the success of a liberal society. Without them, the lives of the middle-class, in particular, become "meager and narrow;" without them, there is no solidarity.

The contribution of Addams to philosophy is linked more clearly to the work of Cornel West. She anticipates his insistence on the entanglement of the personal and political domains with respect to moral agency and moral progress. She also shares West's optimism about the possibility of liberal institutions (if not in their present form) to facilitate the articulation of multiple (even conflictual) social discourses. Addams' philosophical approach and political sympathies developed with a critical eye toward the social institutions which make the American version of a liberal democracy click or sputter. However, in some ways Addams was insufficiently critical.

Both West and Addams are committed by their political vision and "prophetic witness" to generating oppositional discourses, albeit Addams' is not consistent in this commitment. Their social analysis is fueled by a critique of the dominant intellectual, political, and economic forces. However, this commitment to critique from "outside" means that the dialogue or discourse is always defined at least in part by the oppressor. While Addams was committed to the creation of women's culture, her insistence on dialogue and doing business with the very institutions that suppressed women's voices limited the generation of possibilities for Addams own efforts. She defended the laborer against capitalist exploitation but did not develop a sufficiently critical analysis of class divisions and alienation which could disarm the capitalist instead of manage him. Unlike some of her contemporaries, such as anarchists Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin of the Catholic Worker Movement, Addams was a mainstream reformer. A sufficiently critical or "prophetic" pragmatism which is linked to political action and committed to oppositional discourses, must also be able to facilitate a community speaking for itself and to itself. That is, if, as West and Fraser argue, prophetic pragmatism is "inextricably linked to oppositional analyses and movements", how can it be linked to those movements which have opted out of opposition in some significant way without co-opting them; for example,

separatist movements which have decided that the discourse is no longer important or useful.

Both West and Addams list democratic values that inform their philosophical analysis of social problems. These values include individuality, experimental rationality, flexibility, contingency, mutuality, and solidarity. West asserts that pragmatism is committed to tragic action. It seems that this tragic aspect of pragmatism may be linked to its roots in liberal democracy which generates contradictions, conflicts, and oppositions in virtue of its own values. If democracy is to generate justice and community instead of totalitarianism or mob rule, then some establishment of authentic shared authority and wisdom is necessary. Liberal democracies tolerate injustice and suppression of difference in order to facilitate some manner of individual freedom. And yet, this very dynamic undermines the possibility of establishment of shared responsibility or authentic democratic community authority on anything but a small scale.

Conclusion

Jane Addams' contributions to the evolution of the social work profession, women's suffrage, civil rights, and the peace movement are undeniable. Her commitment and experience in these areas, contributed to her writing on ethics, education, social criticism and influenced other intellectuals such as Dewey, Mead, Green, and Eastman. Her

intuitions about and analysis of alienation in a sexist and capitalist liberal democracy inspired experimental community practices in the settlement houses and global efforts to make peace in times of war. The potential of her analysis to inspire the creation of communities in which human freedom and rationality are actualized was also undeniably limited by values which give rise to contradictions in theory and practice. Her philosophical work was pragmatic in so far as it grapples with problematic situations and applies intelligence in seeking non-ideal solutions which, in turn, produce new -- hopefully better -- situations or conditions for human life. Among contemporary philosophers, Addams' work is positively and critically linked to Rorty, Fraser, and West. She can be considered a predecessor of prophetic pragmatism because she dedicated her work to uniting the personal and the political to articulate and interpret the experience of marginalized and alienated in society so as to determine the best possible way for human beings to live together given the tragic nature of liberal democracy.

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