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## Jane Addams's Critique of Capitalism as Patriarchal

*Marilyn Fischer*

In the 1970s, socialist feminists, by synthesizing elements of Marx's critique of capitalism with radical feminism's insights into patriarchy's pervasiveness, argued that capitalism is patriarchal. Jane Addams, feminist and pragmatist of the Progressive Era, also analyzed industrial capitalism as patriarchal. In this essay I will point out affinities and distinctions in the two analyses.

But why an article on capitalism as patriarchal in a book about Dewey? In *Pragmatism and Feminism*, Charlene Haddock Seigfried (1996, 10) points out many respects in which pragmatist and feminist perspectives

are closely aligned. She decries the paucity of feminist literature on pragmatism and brings to our attention many women from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who worked within the pragmatist tradition. Seigfried (1993, 5) writes, "Although Addams's philosophy is virtually neglected in classical pragmatist writings, there is more evidence for her contributions to pragmatism than for any other woman I have discovered so far."

This essay is a response to Seigfried's invitation to explore historical writings of women within the pragmatist tradition. In the first part, I show how Dewey's and Addams's shared appreciation of evolutionary perspectives, concrete experience, context, and sympathetic understanding led them to similar conceptions of social democracy and similar critiques of industrial capitalism. In Part II, I explain how Addams's critique of industrial capitalism goes beyond Dewey's in explicitly linking capitalism with philanthropy as then practiced, and criticizing both as patriarchal. In Part III, I compare Addams's account to that of socialist feminists, and show that while there are clear differences in their accounts, there are also many affinities.<sup>1</sup>

## I. Commonalities in Dewey and Addams

Addams and Dewey had a long and close association. Alice Hamilton ([1945] 1985, 65), a longtime resident of Hull House, speaks of Dewey as one of Addams's "closest friends and counselors." In her writings, Addams mentions Dewey frequently, with both appreciation and humor. Acknowledging Dewey's tenure as a Hull House trustee, Addams (Lasch 1966, 177) notes, "Unlike many trustees, he actually worked on the job." Dewey used Addams's book *Democracy and Social Ethics* as a text in his teaching and cites Addams and the work of Hull House as contributing significantly to his conceptions of democracy and education (Seigfried 1996, 74). Without a detailed history of their collaboration, it is impossible to say how and from whom these ideas originated. No doubt they emerged in true pragmatist fashion from the remarkable mix of activity and reflection that Addams and Dewey shared with the residents of Hull House and colleagues from the University of Chicago.

Both Addams and Dewey write from an evolutionary perspective. Working within the tradition of Auguste Comte's evolutionary ethics,

Addams describes in some detail stages she calls individual ethics, and social ethics or social democracy (Fischer 1995). This evolutionary perspective gives Addams a pattern for ethical analysis. As social organization changes, so ethical codes and values should adapt accordingly. Values of a previous stage should not be discarded, but adjusted and supplemented to meet the challenges of newly evolving circumstances. Addams often analyzes ethically troubling situations, not in terms of right and wrong or good and evil, but in terms of maladjustment, where values and codes of earlier times have not been readjusted with changing social conditions and newly emerging values.

For Dewey, Darwinian evolutionary theory shifted philosophical thinking profoundly. For two thousand years, knowledge, goodness, beauty, and truth had been understood in terms of transcendence, perfection, and static permanence (Dewey [1910] 1977, 3). Post-Darwin, Dewey claims, knowledge and truth should be sought in patterns of change and growth. Philosophical inquiry should focus on specific organisms in constant interaction with concrete and complex environments, constantly doing and undergoing, initiating and responding (Dewey [1917] 1980, 26). Since "every occurrence is a concurrence," the context of change is crucial. Here, context includes the spatial and temporal environment within which the organism functions, as well as culture, traditions of interpretation, and values. The philosopher's stance cannot be that of an external, objective observer. Dewey calls this "view from nowhere" an absurdity. Rather, the philosopher should adopt an artist's perspective, shaping ideas and theories with care, concern, and affection (Dewey [1931] 1985, 9–15).

With this orientation, philosophy, like science, should be experimental. In ethics, moral principles are not eternal verities, but hypotheses to be tested, adapted, readjusted, and verified by experience (Dewey [1922] 1988, 164–65). Deliberation is a form of experimentation, which takes place in the imagination (132). Rather than simply providing commentary on other philosophical theories, philosophy should address perplexing issues of its own time.

Like Dewey, Addams begins with the premise that moral perception and knowledge must be based on concrete, lived experience. She acted on this premise in founding Hull House, a settlement house in Chicago located in an immigrant neighborhood of Russians, Polish people, Germans, Greeks, Italians, and others. In her article "A Function of the Social Settlements" Addams is explicit that Hull House was founded as

a pragmatist test: to verify that the truth of an idea lies in its application. Those founding a settlement are motivated by "a desire to use synthetically and directly whatever knowledge they, as a group, may possess, to test its validity and to discover the conditions under which this knowledge may be employed" (Addams [1899] 1994, 77; see Seigfried 1996, 196–201). Addams and the residents of Hull House were careful not to be identified with any religious and political doctrine. They feared such identification might cloud their perceptions in reading experience and hinder their ability to respond with flexibility (Addams et al. [1893] 1970, 22–23).

Both Dewey and Addams conceptualize people as inherently social beings, organically interconnected. In *Democracy and Education* Dewey ([1916] 1980, 129) writes, "What one is as a person is what one is as associated with others, in a free give and take of intercourse." Intelligence itself is inherently and contextually social (see Seigfried 1996, 95–101). Addams shares this perspective, and adds to it a belief in "universal brotherhood." She was deeply influenced by Tolstoy's conception of early Christianity, interpreted simply as love for all humankind, without dogma or theology. Addams (Addams et al. [1893] 1970, 19–20) believes that "love is the creative force of the universe, the principle which binds men together and by their interdependence on each other makes them human." Here Addams ([1902] 1964, 63) blends a pragmatist commitment to action as the test of knowledge with Tolstoy's belief that faith must be enacted. Solidarity among all humankind is undergirded by compassion for the vulnerable, extending to worthy and unworthy alike.

Thus, both Addams and Dewey write of entering imaginatively and sympathetically into the perspective of others. Addams is careful to pair sympathetic understanding with carefully acquired facts. She and her colleagues were emphatic that a first step to addressing social concerns was to gather accurate information and statistical data. Addams (1906, 160, 10) gives detailed accounts of how the charitable impulse uninformed by knowledge can be cruel and disastrous; without concrete knowledge, she claims, sheer sentiment is blind. Yet without sympathy, one cannot gain access into how others perceive and experience a situation; that is, one cannot know about the event or context. Sympathy is itself an entrance requirement for understanding. Sympathetic knowledge, Addams (1912b, 11) writes, "is the only way of approach to any human problem."

Dewey's and Addams's conceptions of democracy are strikingly similar. For both, democracy is far more than a way of governing; it is a way of

associated living. Dewey ([1916] 1980, 88–93) would assess a democracy by asking how freely and fully the people associate, and how many and varied are the interests they share.

Addams would ask the same questions. For Addams, social democracy is the ethics suitable to an urban, industrial society. Addams viewed her own society as one in which traditional kinship-village patterns had been replaced by complex, reciprocal, industrial interdependencies. For Addams, social democracy is a mode of association, concomitant with this complex interdependency. However, this interdependency is far more than economic. Repeatedly, Addams (1906, 64ff.) points out what her immigrant neighbors can teach more-assimilated Americans; how their customs, art, and conceptions of justice and sociability can enrich understanding and social life immeasurably.

Democratic values of equality and freedom are best understood in terms of growth and reciprocity. In contrast to social contract theorists who view persons as bundles of rights and duties, Addams (1906, 38) sees the person dynamically, as ever growing and evolving. Each person is a source of social power, “a creative agent and a possible generator of fine enthusiasm,” with something of unique value to contribute (Addams [1902] 1964, 179).

Addams ([1910] 1990, 258) and Dewey (Gouinlock 1994, 190–92, 208, 223) both assess democracy, not in terms of political or legal rights, but by whether all members of a community have the opportunity to develop their capacities, to share in the community’s economic wealth and cultural inheritance, and to contribute to the community’s enrichment. Thus, for both Addams and Dewey, social democracy should pervade all aspects of life: in industry, community, and family, as well as in government. Hull House provided the experimental testing grounds. Addams (Addams et al. [1893] 1970, 10) writes, “The social and educational activities of a Settlement are but differing manifestations of the attempt to socialize democracy, as is the existence of the settlement itself.”

But in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chicago, social democracy did not pervade industrial life. Addams’s knowledge of industrial capitalism grew from her experience with its effects on her immigrant neighbors, many of whom worked fourteen hours a day in Chicago factories and sweatshops. She recounts these experiences in poignant detail. Little girls refused candy at a Hull House Christmas party, because they “worked in a candy factory and could not bear the sight of it” (Ad-

dams [1910] 1990, 117). Scarlet fever broke out in rural areas from coats sewn in infected city sweatshops; children were injured and killed for lack of inexpensive factory safety equipment (117). Factory workers were "heavy and almost dehumanized by monotonous toil," their days "filled with monotonous and deadening drudgery" (Addams 1964, 207, 189–90). Modern industry, Addams ([1910] 1990, 219) writes, is "needlessly ruthless and brutal to her own children."

Both Addams ([1902] 1964, 206–7) and Dewey ([1934] 1987, 345ff.) write about how workers need an artist's perception; they need to have a sense of industry as a whole and to know and appreciate what they contribute to that whole. Many of the immigrants' children in Addams's neighborhood worked in textile factories; many of the parents had been weavers and spinners in Europe, yet neither saw continuity between their endeavors. Addams called this chasm "unnecessarily cruel and impassable," and sought some way of bridging the distance between Americanized children and immigrant parents, while showing to both the continuity of their labor. Addams recounts how she first discussed her ideas with Dewey and then started a labor museum that gave a living history of textile production from the immigrants' traditions. The museum served both of Addams's purposes. Workers could see historic continuity from spinning wheels and hand looms to industrial textile production, and the immigrants' children found new pride in their parents' craft (Addams [1910] 1990, 139–41).

Seeing one's role in the whole of production is but a part of transforming industry into social democracy. Dewey and Addams were also concerned by workers' lack of control over the machines they tended. Dewey writes of how workers do not contribute to deciding what the machines are to be used for; they do not understand how the machines work, hence they have no care and concern for the purposes to be achieved. Labor becomes a burden rather than active fulfillment (Dewey [1922] 1988, 100, 86–87). Addams ([1909] 1972, 128) adds that machines should function as tools, controlled by the workers' creative intelligence, rather than the workers being controlled by the machines.

Addams and Dewey are troubled by the class-based division of labor in industrial capitalism. Dewey ([1916] 1980, 346) states explicitly that class divisions between those who labor with their muscles and those freed from such labor are the source of classic philosophical dualisms: rational-empirical, universal-particular, intellect-emotions, and so on. Addams ([1902] 1964, 195) provides a historical perspective: "Apparently we have

not yet recovered manual labor from the deep distrust which centuries of slavery and the feudal system have cast upon it." Addams (1906, 116) adds race and ethnicity to her class-based analysis, noting how modern industry exhibits contempt for the worker, not unlike contempt for the slave, and much of the physical and psychological burden falls on the immigrants.

## II. Addams's Critique of Capitalism as Patriarchal

We have seen how many similarities there are in Dewey's and Addams's critiques of industrial capitalism. But Addams goes beyond Dewey in explicitly linking capitalism with philanthropy as then practiced, and in using the patriarchal family as a model for arguing against both. For Addams, the salient traits of the patriarchal family are hierarchical authority, where the subordinate is expected to respond with gratitude, and social responsibility limited by the boundaries of the family.

Experiences with her own family and with her immigrant neighbors gave Addams rich materials to draw upon in understanding the patriarchal character of families. In "Filial Relations" Addams ([1902] 1964, chapter 3) describes the tensions between parents and their adult daughters in families of some social standing. These parents expect their sons to enlarge their fields of interest and endeavor beyond the family, but when their daughters respond to the ethical claims of the larger world, the family accuses them of being selfish. "It is always difficult for the family to regard the daughter otherwise than as a family possession," Addams (82) notes. The family here is patriarchal in that the parents feel they have the authority to restrict their daughters' activities to the family realm, and they do not feel their daughters' responsibilities should extend beyond the family to larger social needs.

In "Household Adjustment" Addams ([1902] 1964, chapter 4) gives a lengthy analysis of domestic service, focusing primarily on young, unmarried women as isolated, live-in servants to a household. Addams's analysis of the patriarchal family is appropriate here, even though the "mistress" and "the servant," as they were then called, are unrelated biologically and are both women.

Many dimensions of this relationship are undemocratic; Addams points them out in considerable detail. The mistress functions patriar-

chally in that she is in a position of relatively unbounded authority over the servant and there is not even the pretense of contractual limits to what she may ask the servant to do. Excessive demands in terms of hours and tasks may be imposed at whim. The servant is expected to be grateful for any consideration or affection. Also, from the mistress's point of view, the servant's obligations are defined and limited by the mistress's dedication to her own family. The servant's obligations beyond those limits, to her own aged parents or even for her own independent social life, for example, are of little account. Addams ([1902] 1964, 124) notes the irony in how the mistress's demands come from her "zeal to preserve her own family life intact," without noticing that she is denying the same to the servant.

This patriarchal pattern of authority and responsibility belongs to the stage in evolutionary ethics that Addams calls "individual ethics." Addams did not conceptualize the individual in terms of natural or contractual rights and duties, as did Locke, nor in terms of individual autonomy, as did Kant. Instead, "the individual" is a social unit that functions like a patriarchal family, regardless of the sex or blood relationship of the members of the unit.

In the examples given here, the parents' and the mistresses' moral codes are within this stage of individual ethics. The adult daughters and the servants, with their broader perspective of social ethics or social democracy, do not reject their obligations to family and employer, but wish to redefine those obligations democratically. Addams writes that these two moral stances are "maladjusted." The answer is not to discard either, but to adjust both claims, so that "neither shall lose and both be ennobled" (Addams [1902] 1964, 75).

While Addams does not name Andrew Carnegie, his highly influential essay, "The Gospel of Wealth," published in 1889, provides a context for her critique of industrial capitalism and philanthropy as patriarchal. Carnegie's thesis was that the wealthy should not squander their wealth on personal indulgence; instead, they should use it for public betterment. He gives a clear utilitarian argument for capitalism, and adds that it ensures the survival of the fittest. Like Adam Smith ([1776] 1993, 10, 177), Carnegie ([1889] 1992, 130) claims that the poor under capitalism are far better off than they otherwise would be, even though the increasing inequality between rich and poor leads to class friction.

Carnegie advocates philanthropy as a way of extending opportunities to the "deserving poor." He is clear that decisions about how to use their

wealth belong to wealthy persons themselves, given their superior wisdom and judgment. By contributing to projects such as universities, public libraries, hospitals, museums, concert and lecture halls, public parks, and so on, the wealthy provide "ladders on which the aspiring can climb" (Carnegie [1889] 1992, 140). This path would reconcile the rich and the poor, enabling them to live in social harmony (Carnegie [1889] 1992, 136). For Carnegie, then, the path to social betterment is capitalism plus philanthropy, working together.<sup>2</sup>

It is a patriarchal family in literature that provides Addams with a model for how capitalism is patriarchal, and explains why Carnegie's solution of capitalism plus philanthropy will not lead to social betterment and harmony. In *A Modern Lear*, Addams draws a parallel between King Lear's troubled relation with his daughter, Cordelia, and George Pullman's troubles with his striking workers. Of this work Dewey (Lasch 1965, 176) wrote, "It is one of the greatest things I ever read both as to its form and its ethical philosophy." Although written in 1894, the work was not published until 1912, because it was so controversial. George Pullman, manufacturer of railroad cars, had built a model town for his employees, with decent houses, beautiful parks, and other amenities. Thus he functioned both as capitalist employer and as philanthropist toward his employees. In the summer of 1894 the Pullman workers, who were not allowed to unionize, went on strike over a reduction in wages. The American Railway Union, under the leadership of Eugene Debs, called a nationwide sympathy strike. Addams ([1910] 1990, 126), as a representative of Chicago's Citizens' Arbitration Committee, served in arbitration efforts.

As is typical of Addams's writings, she took a concrete case that she knew intimately and used it to make a larger, theoretical point. King Lear, as owner of the kingdom, had the authority to dispose of his riches as he saw fit. He was indulgent, ready to bestow his wealth lavishly upon his daughters. Pullman was indulgent toward the workers, far beyond expectations of the time. Both had dictatorial relations in regard to their subordinates; both expected gratitude and deference in return. Both assigned their beneficence in terms of their own independent assessment of their subordinates' needs and deserts, without involving them in the decision process or viewing the situation from the perspective of the subordinates' moral sensitivities (Addams 1912a).

Cordelia and Pullman's workers were responding to a wider arena of moral concern. Addams describes Cordelia's refusal to declare her devo-

tion in the way Lear expected as "the awkward attempt of an untrained soul to be honest, to be scrupulous in the expressions of its feelings." Rather than responding solely as a dutiful daughter, she answered Lear as "a citizen of the world," with moral obligations beyond that of mere gratitude to her father. Likewise, Pullman's workers were joining in the worldwide movement toward social justice for the working class, desiring international solidarity. Their work-related moral obligations were not limited by the boundaries their employer imposed; with other workers they "had learned to say in many languages that 'the injury of one is the concern of all' " (1912a, 134, 135). Addams (132) notes, "Historically considered, the relation of Lear to his children was archaic and barbaric, holding in it merely the beginnings of a family life, since developed. We may in later years learn to look back upon the industrial relationships in which we are now placed as quite as incomprehensible and selfish, quite as barbaric and undeveloped, as was the family relationship between Lear and his daughters."

Thus, Addams shows how the pattern of authority and responsibility characteristic of the patriarchal family is also descriptive of late nineteenth-century philanthropy and industrial capitalism. From their perspective of individual ethics, philanthropists such as Carnegie and Pullman feel entitled to select recipients of their largesse and to determine what their needs are. Recipients are considered blameworthy if they do not respond with gratitude. Similarly, private-property ownership gives capitalists hierarchical authority to manage employees' activities as they see fit and to retain profits. It also limits their scope of responsibility, assuming that they have no obligation for the well-being of the community or workers outside the factory walls. But in fact, industrial production is inherently and complexly social, characterized by interdependence and reciprocity of effort and contribution by all. The form of the factory is social, the ends anachronistically individual (Addams [1902] 1964, 139). Addams (2-3) writes, "To 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."

Like the rest of society, the workplace should be characterized by social democracy. At that time, government regulation of industry was virtually nonexistent, and with other Hull House residents Addams worked tirelessly for legislation regarding hours, wages, sanitary conditions, and restrictions on child labor. But that was just the beginning of her concern.

She compares the emancipation of workers with the emancipation of slaves and advocates that together, employees and employers should labor cooperatively. In production, all parties should be motivated by affection and social justice. Like Dewey (Morris and Shapiro 1993, 170), Addams envisions labor as a medium for understanding, self-expression, and self-development. The goal, Addams (1912a, 136) writes, is "the complete participation of the working classes in the spiritual, intellectual and material inheritance of the human race."

Seigfried (1996, 150) suggests that the pragmatist approach becomes more pragmatist when women's experiences are included. Although their analyses of industrial capitalism are similar in many respects, Addams's knowledge of women's experiences in families of many configurations strengthens her critique. Dewey, in contrast to many canonical philosophers, also uses the family as a model and source of insight. Dewey (Morris and Shapiro 1993, 64) speaks of the family as an ethical community, in which individuality is not lost, but in which there is "unity of interest and purpose," and he then proposes that industry should function analogously. Now for Dewey to use the family as a model for industry is itself remarkable, but the model is limited by his idealized conception of the family (see Seigfried 1996, 95–104). By contrast, many of Addams's experiences were with troubled families, with drunken husbands, neglectful fathers, troubled and troublesome children, and women who naively and cheerfully put up with domestic abuse. Because of her concrete experience with many families and her awareness of women's varied experiences within families, Addams has a clearer, more nuanced perspective for understanding and evaluating industrial capitalism.

### III. Addams and Socialist Feminism

In the 1970s, socialist feminists developed sophisticated critiques of capitalism as patriarchal by synthesizing, in varying ways and degrees, a Marxist critique of capitalism with a radical feminist critique of patriarchy. Socialist feminist thinking continues to be refined and revitalized by work on intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality.<sup>3</sup> Since Addams was writing in an earlier time and out of a different theoretical orientation, her critique of capitalism as patriarchal of course differs from more recent socialist feminist critiques. I will indicate some of these differences

and also note points of affinity between Addams's and socialist feminists' critiques of capitalism as patriarchal.

Historically, socialist feminism developed out of Marxism. The socialist movement was vibrantly alive in Chicago's immigrant communities in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Addams studied socialism intensely and worked closely with many socialists on union issues and social reform measures. Florence Kelley, who lived at Hull House for seven years and, according to her son, regarded Addams as her "dearest and most intimate friend," was a committed socialist (Linn 1938, 138). Kelley corresponded with Engels and had translated his "Conditions of the Working Class in England" before coming to Hull House (Addams [1910] 1990, 116). Addams credits Kelley with directing Hull House's focus toward research and social reform (Seigfried 1996, 78).<sup>4</sup>

Addams was not a socialist, although people often associated her and Hull House with radical movements. In fact, chapters 9 and 10 of *Twenty Years at Hull House* can be read as Addams's pragmatist reply to socialism. She ([1910] 1990, 110) deeply appreciated the socialists' dedication to relieving poverty and to promoting solidarity among the working poor through union activity. Addams also found great value in the endless theoretical discussions on socialism held at Hull House. These discussions aroused the community's conscience and helped settlement workers "learn the difference between mere social unrest and spiritual impulse" (116).

Addams uses her concrete experience in the Hull House neighborhood to test socialist theories. Working in the midst of great poverty and social chaos, she reminisces, "I also longed for the comfort of a definite social creed." But parallels between then current theoretical discussions on socialism and her childhood ruminations about the doctrine of foreordination troubled her. Neither doctrine placed at its center "the essential provisionality of everything" that day-to-day experience reveals (116).

Addams lived through many strikes, negotiated many of them, and gave solace to the broken bodies and spirits left in their aftermath. In *A Modern Lear*, although Addams's sympathies are clearly with the workers, she chides them. Just as Cordelia needed to go back to her father, "so the emancipation of working people will have to be inclusive of the employer from the first or it will encounter many failures, cruelties and reaction" (Addams 1912a, 137).

Knowing how variable people are, and how intertwined cooperative efforts must be, Addams (1906, 86) gently rebukes the socialists, saying,

"Their orators are busily engaged in establishing two substitutes for human nature which they call 'proletarian' and 'capitalist.' They ignore the fact that varying, imperfect human nature is incalculable, and that . . . in time 'the proletarian' and 'the capitalist' will become the impedimenta which it will be necessary to clear away in order to make room for the mass of living and breathing citizens with whom self-government must eventually deal."<sup>5</sup> Addams advocates social change through "associated effort," rather than class struggle, with cooperative, full participation of all those affected. Progress will be slower, but deeper, as the process creates sympathetic understanding among all those involved (1912a, 137).

Addams's critiques of both capitalism and socialism exhibit her pragmatist methodology. As a pragmatist she focuses on how industrial capitalism actually functions, rather than on its theoretical lineage. While she criticizes political liberalism as an inadequate theory, she does not argue against capitalism for being based on that inadequate theory. She examines the meaning and impact of industrial capitalism on concrete lives and finds its patriarchal character by analogy with the concrete experience of living in patriarchal families. The limitations of socialism that concern her are the ones revealed likewise through pragmatist examination of socialism as lived and tested by concrete experience and sympathetic understanding. For Addams ([1902] 1964, 273), "action is indeed the sole medium of expression for ethics." Addams would be encouraged by moves in contemporary feminism away from totalizing theory toward more localized, nuanced analyses in terms of race, class, ethnicity, and historical and geographical location. She would approve the emphasis on context, but would be concerned if the results were to entrench differences more deeply.

However, in many respects Addams's work anticipates contemporary socialist feminist perspectives. Addams did not intend her reform measures as mere tinkering with the political-economic system already in place. Her conception of social democracy shares more affinity with the socialist vision than with that of classical liberalism. While not a socialist, Addams also was not a classical political liberal, and she criticizes liberalism for many of the same reasons that socialists do. Addams (1906, 31–33) criticizes the social contract tradition vigorously, centering her pragmatist critique on its lack of sympathetic understanding and its vast distance from concrete experience. Experience reveals, for example, how political liberalism has failed immigrants by defining democracy in terms

of political rights and the franchise. Addams (1906, 42–43) reveals her pragmatism, her clarity, and her scorn in writing: “As children who are allowed to amuse themselves with poker chips pay no attention to the real game which their elders play with the genuine cards in their hands, so we shut our eyes to the exploitation and industrial debasement of the immigrant, and say, with placid contentment, that he has been given the rights of an American citizen, and that, therefore, all our obligations have been fulfilled.”<sup>6</sup> Addams’s conception of humans as inherently social, as changing historically, and as having creative potential to develop through association all resonate with a socialist feminist approach.

Jaggard (1983, 132) points out, “The one solid basis of agreement among socialist feminists is that to overcome women’s alienation, the sexual division of labor must be eliminated in every area of life.” Addams’s writings and political activity are not this sweeping. She never discusses the politics of reproduction and does not suggest that men share child-care responsibilities equally with women; Addams (1912b, 115) at one point refers to child rearing as women’s “supreme social function.” However, Addams knew of and sought to change many dimensions of the sexual division of labor, both in the home and in the workplace.

Addams does not make the liberal distinction between private and public spheres, but like socialist feminists, sees continuity and interpenetration between family and community. Because the Hull House neighborhood was not only multiethnic, but also “multihistorical” in the sense that for many of her neighbors, centuries-old, historical traditions were vital ways of life, Addams watched the lines and tasks of public and private waver, overlap, and become redrawn. Like socialist feminists, Addams views the family as an historically evolving institution, and notes how women’s responsibilities have changed accordingly.

Addams’s analysis of the stages of individual ethics and social ethics needing adjustment can be applied here. Before industrialization, women defined their responsibilities in terms of the family, in the stage of individual ethics. Since the home was a center of economic activity, women’s work included textile production, agriculture, and often administrative responsibilities directing the work of many others (Addams [1902] 1964, 104–5). But through industrialization those tasks have been socialized by their being moved into the factory and placed under industrial and municipal control. As a result, women lost administrative and productive control over the processes necessary for caring for their own families. The old line between family and society is maladjusted to current industrial

conditions. It was painfully evident to Addams that a Victorian mother, tending only to her separate sphere, could not possibly succeed in the Hull House neighborhood. Addams ([1910] 1990, 172) tells of a neighbor, single-mindedly devoted to keeping her own home clean, who could not stop typhoid from claiming her daughter. A city, Addams writes, is in many respects "enlarged housekeeping." Clean milk, untainted meat, and adequate garbage collection are both civic matters and intimate family concerns. Women cannot care adequately for their families unless they are also involved in civic affairs (Addams 1906, chapter 7).

Hull House tried many experiments, seeking to help families adjust to industrial conditions. One of its first undertakings was a day nursery; young and old alike were welcome while their family members worked in factories (Addams [1910] 1990, 100). Hull House also experimented with a community kitchen. Knowing that women in the sewing trades did not have time to prepare nutritious meals, the residents gathered data and methods on large-scale food preparation and sold nutritious stews and soups to factories and households. The results of this experiment were mixed. Addams summarized many neighbors' attitudes in her account of how one woman rejected the community-kitchen products, the woman explaining that she preferred to eat "what she'd ruther." A coffeehouse, which gave neighbors an alternative to the saloon for social gatherings, was more successful. Addams comments on how this experiment reinforced the need for sympathetic understanding. Hull House residents should be responsive to the neighbors' own assessment of their needs, rather than deciding what is good for them (Addams [1910] 1990, 78–79).

Guiding Addams in these and other experiments was her understanding of the family, not as a private haven, but as intertwined with the community. "The sacredness and beauty of family life do not consist in the processes of the separate preparation of food, but in sharing the corporate life of the community, and in making the family the unit of that life" (Addams [1902] 1964, 110). This understanding was no doubt developed and reinforced by life in Hull House, itself offering a kind of family. There were male as well as female residents at Hull House, but it was clearly a female-led and -dominated space. Addams ([1910] 1990, 89–90; 255–58; see also Seigfried 1996, 73–79) drew great strength, intellectual stimulation, and activist collegiality from living there.

Addams also worked to ameliorate the impact of the sexual division of labor in industry. Many of her female neighbors worked in sex-segregated

sweatshops and factories. Addams and her colleagues helped to organize many women's unions and a workingwomen's living cooperative. Hull House residents and neighbors worked tirelessly for legal regulation of factory safety and sanitary conditions and for child-labor restrictions (Addams [1910] 1990, chapter 10).

Because Addams was both activist and theorist, and wrote as both simultaneously, it is difficult to ascertain just how deeply she understood the sexual division of labor in the family and in industry. Many of her female neighbors finished their twelve-to-fourteen-hour factory shift, only to begin their heavy domestic responsibilities. Addams advocated protective labor legislation for women, which would have restricted women to a forty-eight-hour work week and prohibited them from working at night. Was she more concerned that the workplace not incapacitate women from meeting gender-assigned obligations to the family than with achieving male and female equality before the law? In contrast to much of the rhetoric supporting protective legislation at the time, Addams ([1910] 1990, 103) writes that women do not need protection because of physical inferiority. But she ached for her neighbor who late every night scrubbed office floors, the pail water mixed with flowing milk because she could not nurse her infant. We have since seen how such legislation worked against women's interests. But at the time, wage equality with men was not a politically viable option, and many thought that protective legislation for women would be a wedge opening the way to improving men's working conditions as well (Kessler-Harris, 1982, chapter 7). Often, Addams had "the sickening sense of compromise," which activists must experience if they are to work *with* the people, rather than seeking to impose their vision of the good society. What mattered most to Addams were the needs of overworked, impoverished women who needed relief right then and who could not wait until gender roles within family, workplace, and law were reconfigured equitably.<sup>7</sup>

Addams's critique of capitalism as patriarchal is a study that richly demonstrates the mutually supportive resources of pragmatism and feminism. By centering her analysis on women's experiences, Addams was able to refine and enrich Dewey's critique of industrial capitalism. Also, Addams's linking of capitalism and philanthropy is particularly useful today as the political debate regarding the poor (and most often, poor women) is so often cast in terms of government welfare programs versus the efforts of nonprofit voluntary associations. Both alternatives embody the same structure as the patriarchal family; both suffer the same funda-

mental flaws. Finally, comparison with the socialist feminist critique of capitalism illustrates how many affinities Addams's pragmatist approach has with more contemporary scholarship.

## Notes

1. Throughout *Pragmatism and Feminism* (1996) Seigfried points out many affinities between pragmatist and feminist perspectives. See especially chapters 7 and 9.

2. Alice Hamilton ([1943] 1985, 6–7), who investigated industrial poisons, comments in her autobiography, "I used to despair of relief for the overworked, underpaid immigrant laborers. . . . It was they who did the heavy, hot, dirty, and dangerous work of the country. In return for it they met little but contempt from more fortunate Americans. . . . The Carnegie Company's principle of a high tariff to shut out cheap foreign-made goods, and a wide-open door to let in cheap foreign labor, resulted in the building up of great fortunes; but measured in terms of human welfare it was cruel and ruthless."

3. See Eisenstein 1979 and Jaggar 1983, chapter 6; also Tong's (1989) overview of socialist feminism. Hennessy and Ingraham 1997 gives selections from the 1970s into the 1990s.

4. See Sklar 1995, chapters 8–12, for a history of Kelley's years at Hull House.

5. Addams's arguments against socialism here parallel her arguments for pacifism; regardless of the justice of the cause, the actual struggle between opposing sides causes great misery and further entrenches hatred and divisions (see Fischer 2000).

6. Chapter 2 of *Democracy and Social Ethics* (Addams [1902] 1964) can be read as a critique of the social contract tradition, which Addams calls "eighteenth century philosophy."

7. Theorist-activists are well acquainted with this dilemma, which Addams faced daily. In discussing whether we should work to reform society or to transform it, Jaggar (1994, 25–26) writes, "Feminists should embrace both horns of this dilemma. . . . Feminists should continue to struggle for women to receive a fair share of the pie, carcinogenic though it ultimately may be," and at the same time seek more thoroughgoing social transformation.

See Seigfried's (1996, 262–68) discussion of how feminists, in setting their research and activism agendas, should not let the aesthetics of theoretical purity overshadow the needs of the most vulnerable.

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