Am Soc (2018) 49:218–241
https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-018-9369-1

Jane Addams' Social Vision: Revisiting the Gospel of Individualism and Solidarity

Kaspar Villadsen [1]

Published online: 17 January 2018

Abstract Designated an early pragmatist, Jane Addams has significantly inspired contemporary pragmatist research. However, Addams also consistently articulated ideas harking to primordial Christianity and sought inspiration in the social gospel of her time. This article explores how Addams' writing resonated with key tenets of social gospel theology, which imbued her texts with an overarching vision of humanity's progressive history. It is suggested that Addams' vision of a major transition in industrial society, one involving a "Christian renaissance" and individuals' transformation into "socialized selves", constitutes a political eschatology. Of particular interest is how Addams conceived the relationship between the individual and society, inventing the term "new social ethics" to reconcile the difficult balance between individual autonomy and social solidarity. The article suggests some ways in which Addams' writings relate to contemporary issues such as individualism, neo-conservatism, and militarism. Her social thought constitutes a thus far under-examined source of sociological critique in regard to such issues of public concern.

Keywords Jane Addams · Social gospel · Individualism · Solidarity · Political eschatology

Jane Addams (1860–1935) has been portrayed as an early American sociologist (Deegan 1990) and is today recognized as a pioneer in pragmatist research (e.g. Greenstone 1979; Seigfried 1999; Schneiderhan 2011). As a result, sociologists and social scientists generally pay less attention to how Christian theology fundamentally inspired Addams' social thought. This article explores this inspiration, focussing particularly on how social gospel theology continued to shape Addams' thinking throughout her life and her reflections on issues concerning social solidarity, social

✉ Kaspar Villadsen
kv.mpp@cbs.dk

[1] Department of Management, Politics & Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School, Porcelænshaven 18A, DK-2000 Frederiksberg, Denmark

ethics and social change. The article foregrounds her vision of Christian ethics as a regenerative force that would transform and humanize the emerging industrial society in which she lived. Of key interest is how Addams envisioned the relationship between individual and society, and, more specifically, the balance between individual autonomy and social solidarity. On this basis, it is concluded that Addams' social thought, inspired as it was by social gospel theology, constitutes an under-examined source of sociological critique that could prove relevant to contemporary issues like neo-conservatism, individualism, and militarism.

The article is divided into three sections. The first brief section addresses the commonly held view that Addams was an early pragmatist researcher and discusses how this label risks engendering a perception of her writing as too homogenous and theoretically coherent when, in fact, the body of her work evolved in a rich interplay with – and a critique of – the particular intellectual and political traditions of her time. The next section examines Addams' persistent articulations of tenets from social gospel theology – articulations that imbue her texts with an overarching vision of humanity's progressive history. It is argued that Addams' vision of a major transition in society, one involving individuals' transformation into socialized selves, constitutes a "political eschatology". The third and final section considers how Addams' social thinking can be mobilized as a critical perspective on contemporary issues of broad public concern.

Why Revisiting a 'Classic'?

An initial premise of this article is to avoid reading Addams with a strong "presentism", that is, approaching her work through categories and distinctions familiar in our present and thus running the risk of reducing the complexity of her thinking and over-identifying her with particular theoretical traditions. Robert Alun Jones (1997) notes the tendency to situate classic thinkers on "the right track", to locate them too uniformly in a linear development of a distinguished tradition (167). This is indeed a potential risk when Addams is presented and celebrated unambiguously as an early "pragmatist sociologist". In fact, the risk arises in feminist, Marxist, pragmatist or conservative interpretations when they aspire to categorize Addams as (and inevitably reduce her to) an X-thinker.

The writings of a canonized thinker like Addams must be analysed in terms of the particular style and content conveyed to make her texts understandable to her intended audience. When writing her text, she must have constructed it in a way that rendered it "in some sense conventional" (Jones 1997: 147). This premise calls attention to the usage of certain "conventional" vocabularies, concepts and references that resonate with the context of a given text. A text, statement or book always depends for its existence on other texts, for which reason one needs to situate it within a network of explicit and implicit references. Michel Foucault (1972) wrote: "The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network" (23). More specifically, we must pose the question: To whom, and against whom, was Addams writing? A number of dialogue partners come to mind. For example, Addams argued against the natural rights thinking of liberals and conservatives; she undertook a critical dialogue with Spencer's theory of evolution; she wrote against the inflexible class

division invoked by socialists; she criticized American politicians for creating a "legal-punitive state"; and she used a religious vocabulary that did not alienate a diversified audience. In some passages, Addams employed a vocabulary now archaic and hence difficult to comprehend, and to some extent her concerns were not ours.

To avoid anachronistic or "presentist" readings of classic writers and their ideas, we must be mindful of the social and historical context in which they situated themselves. Seeking to understand such writers on their own terms and thus show the radical difference between their intellectual life and our own thought can help distance us from ideas entrenched in our present. Hence, Linda Rynbrandt observes regarding the current relevance of social progressive ideas: "While some of these visions now seem dated and hopelessly idealistic or moralistic, many of their ideas and concerns are still central to contemporary social issues and debates" (1998: 79). Quintin Skinner (1984) also emphasized the reward of studying past writers in minute detail: "Instead of supplying us with our usual and carefully contrived pleasures of recognition, they enable us to stand back from our own beliefs and the concepts we use to express them" (148).

Accordingly, historical texts can be approached in terms of, first, their original contexts and, second, their appeal in terms of current issues, perhaps thus de-familiarizing dominant ideas and notions. Foucault often used this reading strategy, both carrying out careful examinations of primary texts and including statements that addressed themselves to present issues and specific interlocutors (Villadsen and Dean 2016: 403). This end is pursued, first, by examining her texts, giving special attention to how specific Christian ideas, vocabulary and narratives continue to play a significant role in Addams' thought. Second, taking the premise that Addams' contribution to sociology entails an overarching social vision, it is discussed how this vision can offer critical perspectives on contemporary issues. In brief, the article pursues both the work of historical reconstruction and the attempt to critically illuminate the present situation. First Addams' vision of a "socialized self" in a collaborative society is reconstructed; second, this vision is related to present concerns.

Addams tended not to write in a theoretical genre, which involves quoting other thinkers or traditions, but largely preferred narrating through examples and thus avoiding "intellectual sophistication". Hence, Merle Curti (1961) noted: "Jane Addams did not in any of her writings systematically set forth her social ideas in a way to please the scholars nowadays who set great store on what is called intellectual sophistication" (240). Her writings highlighted actions and personal experience, and only rarely did she formalize these observations into explanatory models or theoretical concepts. However, as will be demonstrated, this does not mean that Addams' writing is devoid of more general propositions. In fact, she consistently presented the reader with particular concepts and narrative models that gave her writing a distinctive argumentative structure. Providing the main source for the following analyses, Addams' first and most theoretical book, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), will be examined in detail along with other key writings, mostly published from 1902 to 1911.

Social Gospel Theology in Addams' Writing

Clearly, Addams' thought has significantly inspired pragmatist social science (Deegan 1990; Seigfried 1999; Schneiderhan 2011). However, she also recurrently articulated

ideas in the Christian tradition, including elements of a primordial Christianity, centred on the historical Jesus, and she echoed the social gospellers of her time. It would hence be erroneous to present the "new social ethics" propagated by Addams as without theological anchorage. However, contemporary historians and social scientists have often under-estimated the significance of Christian inspirations in her thought. Steven Stritt (2014) finds a general tendency in later studies "to ignore or de-emphasize the religious roots of her social idealism and lifelong association with Liberal Protestant reformers" (91). Similarly, Rima Schultz (2015) observes that "Addams was culturally more – not less – at home with the social gospel camp than historians have acknowledged" (213).

Regardless of the inspiration she drew from contemporary pragmatist thinking, Addams' deep-seated Christian sensibility never left her. Curti (1961) instructively notes: "But the pragmatism that later provided support for an enlarged view of human nature did not lead to a rejection of presuppositions more or less unconsciously acquired and interwoven with Christian humanism and Christian mystery" (244). This inspiration she drew from Christianity means that Addams' thinking cannot be understood in strictly modern social science terms, for she has more at play, having derived key ideas from early Christian humanitarianism and social gospel theology. It is productive to consult scholars that insist a religious wellspring within Addams helped to shape her character and writing (Curti 1961; Dorrien 2010; Stebner 2010; Fischer 2013; Schultz 2015). Gary Dorrien (2010: 394) locates Addams among the social gospellers of the 1880s, Elenor Stebner (2010: 203) emphasizes Addams' background in liberal Protestantism, Marilyn Fischer (2013) carefully demonstrates the social gospel components of *Democracy*, while Rima Schultz (2015: 207) argues that Christian theology underpinned Addams' social rights and social work efforts. To understand what this Christian inspiration consisted of – and to develop what will be termed Addams' "political eschatology" – we examine how Addams' articulated elements from Christianity, particularly social gospel theology.

The social gospel movement began gaining momentum in America during the 1880s and 1890s, peaking in the early twentieth century. Designated as "a particular kind of Protestant concern", the term "social gospel", observes Robert Handy (1966), only came into common use after 1900 (5). Social gospellers promoted a renewed theology, arguing that social redemption was inseparable from Christian redemption. They believed that the Second Coming would only occur if humankind purged itself of misery and selfishness through its own efforts in social science and reform. Social gospel theology thus mediated between inherited Christianity and modern thought by positing a continuity between revelation and reason. The most influential figures in Christian social thought include Washington Gladden (1836–1918), Richard T. Ely (1854–1943) and Walter Rauschenbusch (1861–1918) (Handy 1966: 16). Addams addressed many of the same issues as the social gospellers, such as child labour, long work hours, public health, hygiene and a cultural uplift of the poor. She and the gospellers shared the belief that industrial society entailed the promise of the reign of God on earth – a regenerated society attainable when all individuals were allowed to develop their human capacities in full.

Table 1 indicates the centrality of Christian social teachings in Addams's thought over a period of several decades.

Table 1 Jane Addams' Christian inspiration

Year of publication	Title of publication	Selected quotes
1883	To Ellen Gates Starr, 11th July, 1883 (letter from Addams)	"I wish that I could express to you the sort of blessing and happiness I feel that you have come to the good cherishing mother church. I wish you could tell me how to come there, for I feel as you do that so much is dependent on habits of mind. My experiences of late have shown me the absolute necessity of the protection and dependence on Christ" (p. 182).
1891	Outgrowths of Toynbee Hall, December 3, 1891. Address delivered to the Chicago Woman's Club	"It seems simple to many of us to search for the Christ that is in each man and to found our likeness on Him - to believe in the brotherhood of all men because we believe in His" (cited in Schultz 2015, p. 210).
1893	The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements	Early Christians "were eager to sacrifice themselves for the weak" and "they believed in love as a cosmic force" (p. 59). "That Christianity has to be revealed and embodied in the line of social progress is a corollary to the simple proposition that man's action is found in his social relationships…By this simple process was created a deep enthusiasm for humanity, which regarded man as at once the organ and object of revelation" (p. 59). "The Settlement movement is only one manifestation of that wider humanitarian movement which throughout Christendom … is endeavoring to embody itself, not in a sect, but in society itself" (p. 60).
1902	Democracy and Social Ethics	"The Hebrew prophet made three requirements from those who would join the great forward-moving procession led by Jehovah. 'To love mercy' and at the same time 'to do justly'… 'to walk humbly with God', which may mean to walk for many dreary miles beside the lowliest of His creatures" (p. 69–70). "It is akin to the assurance that the dead understand, because they have entered into the Great Experience, and therefore must comprehend all lesser ones; that all the misunderstandings we have in life are due to partial experience, and all life's fretting comes of our limited intelligence; when the last and Great Experience comes, it is, perforce, attended by mercy and forgiveness" (p. 276–277).
1907	The Newer Ideals of Peace	The mutual benefit societies is "….one of those instinctive movements which carry onward the progressive goodness of the race" (p. 25). Reference to the prophet Isaiah: "He founded the cause of peace upon the cause of righteousness, not only as expressed in political relations, but also in industrial relations. ... It was as if the ancient prophet foresaw that under an enlightened industrialism peace would no longer be an absence of war, but the unfolding of worldwide processes making for the nurture of human life" (p. 237–238).

Table 1 (continued)

Year of publication	Title of publication	Selected quotes
1909	The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets	"It would seem a golden opportunity for those whom is committed to the task of spiritual instruction, for preach and seek justice in human affairs is one of the oldest obligations of religion and morality. All that would be necessary would be to attach this teaching to the contemporary world in such a wise that the eager youth might feel a tug upon his faculties, and a sense of participation in the moral life about him" (p. 153).
1910	Twenty Years at Hull-House	"I certainly bore away with me a lifelong enthusiasm for reading the Gospels in bulk, a whole one at a time, and an insurmountable distaste for having them cut up into chapter and verse, or for hearing the incidents in that wonderful Life thus referred to as if it were merely a record" (p. 52). "(I)t seemed to me a sufficient basis for a course of six lectures which I timidly offered to a Deaconess's Training School during my first winter in Chicago, upon the simple ground that this early interpretation of Christianity is the one which should be presented to the poor, urging that the primitive church was composed of the poor and that it was they who took the wonderful news to the more prosperous Romans" (p. 84)
1911	The Social Situation: Religious education and contemporary social conditions	"After all the business of religion is not only to comfort and conserve, but to prophecy and to fortify men for coming social changes" (p. 150). "The religious teacher must go forth into the midst of modern materialism if only effectually to insist upon the eternal antithesis between the material and the spiritual, and to prove that religious enthusiasm is all-enduring when founded upon the realities of life" (p. 151).

Incorporating 'the Great Experience'

Commentators have described Addams' central concern as a quest for the ethical principles that should guide people's actions in the emerging industrial city. Hence, Louise Knight (2005) foregrounds Addams' new social ethics: "The theory was to become the key to all her moral puzzles" (385). With the term "new social ethics" Addams' called for a shift from the dominant ideology of individualism, also a key target of the social gospellers' critique, towards a society based on cooperation and fellowship. In *Democracy*, Addams assumed a nascent social ethics that was emerging across diverse social domains like family, philanthropy, schools, and employment relations. In the book, Addams pursued a narrative strategy of weaving this new ethics from a range of specific situations, showing how this ethics was essential to the progressive humanization of industrial society. This narrative resonated with social gospel theologians, who believed that the secular institutions of society too "could come under the law of love" (Handy 1966: 11). They also believed, notes Eldon Eisenbach (2007: 58), that historical and social inquiry would reveal laws of progress inherent to humanity's evolution.

A key tenet across Addams' writing is that individuals need to be incorporated in the larger society and allow the process of social transformation to profoundly influence their personalities. To progressively realize a reformed community of human brotherhood, individuals must relinquish their self-interested motives and take the perspective of "the greater whole". Notably, Addams (1902) distinguished between an outmoded ideal of self-achievement versus a self that becomes spiritually uplifted and "enlarged" through its integration into "the larger whole":

> [W]e all know how unlovely the result may become; the character is upright, of course, but too coated over with the result of its own endeavour to be attractive. In this effort toward a higher morality in our social relations, we must demand that the individual shall be willing to lose the sense of personal achievement, and shall be content to realize his activity only in connection with the activity of the many. (275).

Those who continue to act according to individual morality, emphasizing an exclusive obligation to one's family and associates, fail to understand that society is an organism in which everyone is interdependent. Society is undergoing a movement towards interconnectedness which necessarily, Addams asserts, "urges us toward social and individual salvation" (1993: 63). Consequently, there is no individual salvation separate from society's regeneration, or what some social gospellers termed a "Christianization" of society. Josiah Strong (1913), a leading social gospel theologian, articulated a similar view to Addams', stating that "selfishness is not only unsocial but antisocial. It is disintegrative" (125). Strong (1913) argued that the industrial revolution placed man in such complex relations of interdependence that self-seeking behaviour had become outmoded and harmful:

> Hence the more multiplied and far reaching, the more complex and delicate human relations are, the more destructive does selfishness become. 'Every man for himself' in the midst of the new social order is an anachronism. It is the spirit of the eighteenth century animating the body of the twentieth. (125).

When Addams insisted that the individual should "lose the sense of personal achievement", she was going against the dominant individualism of her day, which was associated with Herbert Spencer. Addams had an ambiguous relationship with Spencer's interpretation of Darwinian natural selection. Clearly inspired by the theory of growing interdependence, Addams found in Spencer a useful social evolution model that described how the increasing division of labour in industrializing society led to greater interdependence (Quandt 1970: 86). On the other hand, she opposed the assertion of Spencerian Darwinism that evolution occurred through individualistic competition. Like contemporary social gospellers, she saw how industrialists embraced Spencer's rendering of Darwinian natural selection to proclaim the moral rectitude of their actions. Hence, Beth Eddy (2010) observes: "Addams is quite aware of American industrial appropriations of 'the evolutionary sciences' to justify their accumulation of wealth". This was the "gospel of wealth, aggression, and polarization of the social classes" (30).

"Evolution" was a highly contested concept which took different meanings depending on whether it was articulated from the perspective of Darwin, Spencer or Christian theology. Social gospellers drew upon a long tradition of evolutionism in Christianity where pre-Darwinist ideas of evolution posited the psychological and spiritual development of humanity towards perfection (McCalla 1998). However, social gospel theology reconceptualised evolution in Christian providentialism shaping the concept particularly in opposition to Spencer, imbuing it with very different political implications. Hence, social gospel theologians like Strong sought to re-articulate the Spencerian notion of evolution, arguing that society, not just the individual, is an organism of purposeful evolution (e.g. Strong 1915: 63 pp.). They then used this adaptation of Spencer's evolutionary thought to underpin their faith that the reign of God could be realized through social reform. The influential gospel theologian Walter Rauschenbusch (1912) aptly embodies this discursive strategy, saying: "Translate the evolutionary theories into religious faith and you have the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. This combination with scientific evolutionary thought has freed the Kingdom ideal ... and adapted it to the climate of the modern world" (90).

When Addams spoke in a more religiously inspired idiom, she described how the self expands when an individual engages in developing a society of Christian fellowship. She spoke about allowing oneself to be swallowed up in the community or society, asserting how this leap would lead to a "wider self", another key tenet of social gospel theology (Fischer 2013: 20). Addams frequently repeated this appeal to conduct oneself for the sake of a greater purpose in her writing, including in her comments on young women's urge to pursue "a more universal duty", that is, to expand their duties from the family to the larger society. She mentioned the social conflicts born of this quest and referred to Saint Francis of Assisi, who left his wealthy family to become a beggar monk and later founded *The Order of Poor Clares* (Addams 1902: 80). This reference can be seen as a call to move away from a notion of charity based on sentimental almsgiving and a hierarchical relationship between benefactor and beneficiary. She criticized charity workers who treated men struggling for their livelihood "as children with defective wills" (Agnew 2004: 105). Addams' key principle for Settlement activities, "not alms, but a friend", notes Elizabeth Agnew (2004), "represented an effort to resuscitate the New Testament notion of caritas, or love, and do away with charity in its debased and familiar form of almsgiving" (73).

Yet, Addams was not looking to reinstate some long-lost Christian past, for an increasingly interdependent society prompted her diagnosis that individuals were entering into collaborative relations and taking "the larger whole" into account. Emphasizing the sense of companionship that arises when workers take a collaborative perspective, Addams (1902) contended that: "The situation demands the consciousness of participation and well-being which comes to the individual when he is able to see himself in connection and cooperation with the whole" (218). In Addams' analysis, the need to become collaborative men and women applied across all sectors of the emerging industrial society. The social gospel movement was on a similar quest to reconstruct the individual and create a "new man", as exemplified in the great social gospel theologian Washington Gladden's (1895) proclamation that the collaborative society "awaits the advent of the cooperative man" (240).

Addams envisioned that the individuals who adapted to the interdependent society would not only develop a better ethics but also produce a more unified knowledge. She spoke of a movement away from "partial experience", marked by limited understanding, to the "Great Experience" of all-encompassing understanding and forgiveness:

> It is akin to the assurance that the dead understand, because they have entered into the Great Experience, and therefore must comprehend all lesser ones; that all the misunderstandings we have in life are due to partial experience, and all life's fretting comes of our limited intelligence; when the last and Great Experience comes, it is, perforce, attended by mercy and forgiveness. (Addams 1902: 276–277).

The above quote articulates the idea that humans progress from an unconscious state through increasing stages of developing consciousness – an idea, as Tiffany Miller explains (2012: 233), that connected evangelical perfectionism with scientific progress. Addams became critical of evangelicalism already in her youth. Instead, her use of the notion of the last Great Experience resonates with the postmillennialist tenet of the social gospel concerning the Thousand Year Reign assumed to precede Christ's Second Coming. Social gospel theologians adhered to a postmillennialist vision which assumed, explains Jean Quandt, that the reign of God would be gradually realized in this world when Christ's teachings of justice, peace and love were pursued: "Unlike premillennialism, with its catastrophic notion of the second coming of Christ, postmillennialism believed in the gradual redemption of the world under the influence of Christ's spirit rather than his physical presence" (1973: 391). Social gospellers believed their essential duty lay in working practically to establish the reign of God on earth.

Mid-nineteenth-century evangelists like Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong and Edward Beecher defined secular institutions as tools for furthering the Kingdom as long as they were infused with the divine Spirit. Beecher argued: "The Kingdom can only be affected by the universal indwelling of God in the individuals of whom human society is composed, inclining and enabling them to act on his principles...in all departments of life" (Beecher quoted in Quandt 1973: 393). Addams' writing displays affinities with this postmillenarian framework articulated by the social gospellers. She repeated the demand to act to further an overarching process that was bringing about a higher morality in the world (1902: 275). Although Addams did not repeat Henry James' idea that "the divine was in-dwelling in Democracy" (Murphy 2007: 18), she voiced very similar ideas when proposing that individuals let their selves

become "enlarged" by immersing themselves in the democratic movement towards the Great Experience.

While Addams saw the Christian and Jewish traditions as "offering prophetic ideals of universal brotherhood" (Agnew 2004: 78), she did not envision believers who realized this predestined plan by letting God's will engulf their own. To her, entering "the Great Experience" did not require individuals to follow the letter of a preordained plan, but rather to act as autonomous agents with a heightened consciousness and intelligence: "A code of social ethics is now insisting that he shall be a conscious member of society" (Addams 1902: 192). Like the social gospellers, Addams accentuated the progressive growth of humankind's intelligence and the idea that reason constitutes modern man's revelation. By undergoing learning processes, individuals would intelligently and progressively acquire the world given by God.

A Society of Sympathetic Cooperation

The belief that society comprises an intrinsic ethical dimension is central to Addams' writing insofar as she persistently argued that each individual is ethically bound and obliged to the community. Like contemporary social gospellers, Addams invoked an idealised notion of a primordial Christianity characterised by self-sacrifice and communal courage. She echoed the view that early Christianity, epitomized in the life and work of Jesus Christ, contained lessons valuable for social life in any era, or in Strong's (1893) words, "principles, intended to control the organization of human society" (121). Social gospel theology indeed had as a key tenet the appeal to reinstate the centrality of Christ's teachings in a renewed theology, as Rauschenbusch's (1912) writing also evinces. "We call this 'Christianizing' the social order," he declared, "because these moral principles find their highest expression in the teachings, the life, and the spirit of Jesus Christ…he is the ultimate standard of moral and spiritual life" (125).

Addams shared with social gospellers the view of society as posing ethical demands, a view she expressed in appeals to forget selfishness and practice "sympathetic cooperation" and "Christian fellowship". The social gospel called for salvation here on earth – a sweeping social salvation in which everyone participated, in contrast to individual salvation achieved through personal virtue. Addams' (1902) formulations on the issue suggest that individuals should incorporate the emerging social ethics in their own practice or "experience", thus integrating those ethics in their own subjectivity:

> A man who takes the betterment of humanity for his aim and end must also take the daily experiences of humanity for the constant correction of his process. He must not only test and guide his achievement by human experience, but he must succeed or fail in proportion as he has incorporated that experience with his own. (176-177).

While Addams did not exactly speak of a "Christianization" of society, she believed that secular institutions could become infused with a spirit of brotherhood, collaboration and kindness.

Her project could be said to entail extending the Protestant experience far beyond the confines of clerical institutions. Like many social gospellers, she broke with the earlier

belief in churches as the locus of redemption, instead assigning secular institutions something akin to redemptive power. The social gospel movement took part in a transformation of Protestant thought in which, as Arthur Vidich and Stanford Lyman (1985) observe, "the responsibility for salvation turned from prayer to praxis" (282). Addams similarly asserted that redemptive power did not radiate from the Church, because secular agencies such as economic management and government would become agents of evolution if infused with certain Christian sentiments. *Democracy* contains numerous examples of how key institutions – philanthropy, industry, education, and city administration – began to serve as carriers of evolution, as they taught the values of cooperation and brotherhood. Addams (1910) proclaimed: "Christianity must seek a simple and natural expression in the social organism itself" (124). This idea parallels Rauschenbusch's view in *Christianizing the Social Order* (1912), which described how religion found a new role when practices and institutions throughout society became imbued with Christian sentiments: "Religion always does its most powerful and permanent social work when it supports and invigorates tendencies in the common life of men" (136). Similar to Addams, Rauschenbusch (1912) made the diagnosis that "sections of the social order", including the patriarchal family, schools and political life were being democratized:

> Four great sections of our social order – the family, the organized religious life, the institutions of education, and the political organisation of our nation – have passed through constitutional changes which have made them to some degree the organism through which the spirit of Christ can do its work of humanity (154).

Rauschenbusch and Addams differed, however, in that Addams did not talk about the need to 'Christianize' or 'redeem' society, but they propagated similar moral values and a progressive, evolutionary view of history. Rauschenbusch (1912) wrote: "The structure of society can never be up to date. It is necessarily a slow historical growth, and men will always have to labor hard to rid it of antiquated and harmful customs and institutions brought down from a worse past" (126). This evolutionary historicism was perhaps most forcefully articulated by Lyman Abbott (1835–1922), another leading social gospeller, who posited that "higher and more democratic ideals were immanent in the development of new forms of social, economic, and religious life" (Eisenach 2007: 68).

Addams' writings reflected a more general shift towards worldly social activity in late nineteenth-century Protestant culture, which implied, notes Quandt (1973), that a "redeemed society" would be the work not of supernatural forces alone, but of human forces too (391). This shift also implied an increasing belief in science, social reforms, social work and other secular institutions as agents of progress toward a perfected society. Addams believed that economists and administrators would pass through experiences after which they could no longer treat individuals "as mere data". They would begin to "feel themselves within the grasp of a principle of growth, working outward from within", and would "gain the exhilaration and uplift which comes when the individual sympathy and intelligence is caught into the forward intuitive movement of the mass" (Addams 1902: 272). Addams' formulations here can be compared to the idea of individuals losing themselves in a collective body uplifted by religious enthusiasm.

An important inspiration for Addams in rendering Christianity practical by embracing self-denial and self-sacrifice was the famous Russian writer Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910). Addams frequently made favourable references to Tolstoy's writings on religion and ethics, she included a chapter entitled Tolstoyism in her influential book *Twenty Years at Hull House*, and in 1896 she paid Tolstoy a visit in Russia (for details on Addams' references to Tolstoy, see: Nichols 2014: 154–156). In particular, Addams found in Tolstoy resources for evading violence as a legitimate tool for pursuing political aims. She was inspired by Tolstoy's teaching that a renewed Christianity implied overcoming conflict and evil through an ethics of non-violence and loving collaboration. Early on, Anne Fior Scott noted in her introduction to *Democracy and Social Ethics* that Addams "was moved by the idea of universal brotherhood, and idea which was also central to Tolstoy's thought" (Scott 1964: xxii). In a significant passage from Addams' chapter *The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements*, she attributed to Tolstoy the idea of expansive bonds of corporation spurred by the cosmic force of love:

> Tolstoi has reminded us all very forcibly of Christ's principle of non-resistance. His formulation has been startling and his expression has deviated from the general movement, but there is little doubt that he has many adherents, men and women who are philosophically convinced of the futility of opposition, we believe that evil can be overcome only with good and cannot be opposed. If love is the creative force of the universe, the principle which binds men together, and by their interdependence on each other makes them human, just so surely is anger and the spirit of opposition the destructive principle of the universe. (Addams 1893: 60).

The excerpt is taken from one of the contexts where Addams wrote most extensively about Christian values, asserting that Social Settlements expressed a spirit that was as old as Christianity itself. She emphasised that the Early Christians "were eager to sacrifice themselves for the weak" and that "they believed in love as a cosmic force" (1893: 59). Indeed, Louise Knight notes: "The passage stands as the most cogent statement Addams ever made of her philosophy of Christian nonresistant, loving cooperation" (2014: 254). She invoked Tolstoy to reject the violence of social revolution, appealing for persuasion of the powerful and moral strengthening of the working poor.

> We must deny to the humble the possibility of the initiation of progressive movements employing revolution or, at least, we must defer all advance until the humble many can persuade the powerful few of the righteousness of their cause, and we must throw out the working class from participation in the beginnings of social revolutions. Tolstoy would make non-resistance aggressive. He would carry over into the reservoirs of moral influence all the strength which is now spent in coercion and resistance. (Addams 1907: 233)

While Addams was deeply inspired by Tolstoy, she expressed some reservation about the realism in "the dramatic formulation given by Tolstoy to the nonresisting spirit" (1907: 231), and she engaged in political activism rather than simply trusting in love as vehicle of change. James Cracraft suggests that detectable in Addams' praise of Tolstoy

is an "uncertainty as to whether her Tolstoyan assurance that evil 'can be overcome only with good and cannot be opposed'…was really up to the job (2012: 6). Here, we leave aside Addams' critical assessments of Tolstoy's philosophy and self-conduct (see: Knight 2005: 371–376). Suffice to say that Tolstoy's articulation of Christianity as a doctrine of social change through non-violence significantly influenced Addams' evolving vision of a social change through sympathetic collaboration and industrial peace.

The vision advanced by Addams contrasted greatly with legal and economic models of society. She (1911) refused to view "the nation as an agglomeration of selfish men each moved by self-interest" (147), as society was much more than a market or a political entity instituted by the Constitution. In this respect, her views again intersect with those of social gospellers, who argued against atomistic and contractual views of society. Hence, Abbott (1905: 38) believed that the philosophy of individual industrialism was false, and Strong (1913: 194) condemned the socially perverting effects of the individual contract. Addams (1910) also envisioned an expanding human community bound together by sympathy, a "wider humanitarian movement" striving to embody itself in the very society in which it exists (124). Addams explicitly identified democracy with Christian fellowship at the end of *Democracy* (Scott 1964: iviii), but this democracy exceeded the "one man one vote-model". Addams' (1910) message about "a certain renaissance going forward in Christianity" (122) comprised a postmillennialist and universalizing vision not easily aligned with the modern tethering of political and social rights to nation states. Addams shared with social gospellers the assumption that democracy was inherent in Protestant faith itself, but she extended her vision from the nation to a universal form Christian fellowship.

Addams' Political Eschatology

It has been demonstrated that Addams' narrative about the rise of Christian humanitarianism in industrial society has parallels with social gospel theology and its message that the reign of God would gradually be realized in this world. Although Addams may not have precisely identified God with all the civilizing forces, one still finds that her writing echoes the postmillennialist message characteristic of social gospel theology. In many respects Addams' writing displays the social gospel belief in inevitable moral progress, and she articulated the promise of society's conversion within a progressive evolutionary framework.

Yet, Addams neither spoke in the strong religious idiom of God's reign on earth nor invoked the Divine Promise. She probably had to be cautious about using explicitly Protestant language, since the members of and visitors to the settlement house came from diverse denominations. She, therefore, deployed "a pragmatic strategy to make conversations about religion non-threatening to the neighbors" (Schultz 2015: 208). Nevertheless, a consistent social gospel inspiration can be detected in *Democracy* and throughout Addams' writings. Marilyn Fischer (2013) demonstrates how the book resonates with social gospel texts that Addams used in her teaching curriculum: "Addams uses little explicit religious language in *Democracy*, but what she does use goes to the heart of social gospel theology" (18).

It has already been noted how her texts borrow from the narrative models of social gospel and re-articulate its vocabulary. As such, it is constructive to compare the above analysis of Addams' writing with the following list of key social gospel tenets, offered by Vicky MacLean and Joyce Williams (2012):

> (1) belief in the innate goodness of humankind; (2) acceptance of evolution as compatible with God's plan for the universe; (3) rejection of the determinism of evolution in favor of the idea of development as progress; (4) belief in the inevitable progress of society; (5) redefinition of the Kingdom of God as an earthly utopia; and (6) belief that the Kingdom would be established in the United States. (343–344).

Notice how evolutionary historicism, social reform and Christian nationalism intermingled in the minds of social gospellers. The last tenet about America's becoming the redeemer nation of the world, also termed "American Exceptionalism", contrasted with Addams' universalizing aspirations, but some Christian neoconservatives still invoke this tenet today.

Clearly, the above list with its postmillennialist message significantly overlaps Addams' writing, although the social gospellers were admittedly a less homogenous group than presented here. Their views regarding the need for radical change and the moment of the Second Coming diverged. Some believed Jesus Christ would return before the new millennium, but most had a postmillennial outlook, proclaiming that the reign of God had already begun, and that their task was to further it. Addams can best be aligned with the latter view, since she believed that a reinvigorated society was in some measure already present but as yet unconsummated.

Addams clearly viewed Christianity as a socially transformative force. She spoke of the need to reinvigorate religion at a time when religious teaching had lost touch with "the social situation" in the industrial city. Religion was "designed for men who had withdrawn from the world', and hence it remained contemplative rather than "stirring religious experiences" (Addams 1911: 145). Echoing the idea shared by social gospellers that man advances from his lower material existence to his higher spiritual nature, Addams (1911) wrote:

> The religious teacher must go forth into the midst of modern materialism if only effectually to insist upon the eternal antithesis between the material and the spiritual, and to prove that religious enthusiasm is all-enduring when founded upon the realities of life. (151).

Indeed, true freedom is won in the achievement of a "higher human reason" or "spirit". The Christian message of wider humanitarian movement served, in Addams' view (1911), as an indispensable idiom for demanding expansive social change, since religion "can lift a man from personal pity into a sense of universal compassion" (150). The proclamation of a coming community of sympathetic bonds constituted a disruptive force against American politicians that organized society in "militaristic terms" and defended a "legal-punitive" state.

Addams' message that society would be totally and imminently transformed can be seen as the articulation of eschatology. Handy (1966) observes that the social gospellers

in propagating a new theology "recognized the necessity of a restatement of eschatology, the doctrine of the last things" (7). They retained the hope of the coming of a redeemed society, yet insisted on the need for human forces to further its realization: "There was a high expectation of a much improved if not perfect social order. Thus the whole movement had something of a utopian cast" (Handy 1966: 10).

In the Christian and Jewish tradition, the concept of eschatology designates the coming of God's reign on earth, a state of perfection achieved as the triumphal result of the struggle between good and evil (Jones 2004: 2834). Foucault (2007) noted that since the Middle Ages eschatology was one of the themes used to contest clerical authority within the Church. In modern times, eschatology was rearticulated in political ideologies attempting to locate directionality, meaning or a teleological history unfolding itself in present events. "Political eschatologies" would be used to challenge rulers and the existing order by positing the coming of a new, perfected community proclaiming that "the times are fulfilled or in the process of being fulfilled" (Foucault 2007: 214). In Foucault's view, eschatology, whether or not it has determinate religious content, provides a powerful idiom that can take diverse political forms. When articulated in totalitarian ideologies like Stalinism and Fascism, eschatology promised the rise of a community that would be purified and non-antagonistic while also realizing a greater cause in history – hence justifying human sacrifices.

Addams' proclamation that a new time was coming led Eleanor Stebner (2010) to term Addams' thought eschatological: "Addams pointed towards a spirituality of human interdependence and mutuality, an eschatological hope that could be realized on earth by people willing to work for – and suffer for – its fulfilment" (204). Indeed, Addams (1911) occasionally articulated the religious idiom as a force of political mobilization: "After all the business of religion is not only to comfort and conserve, but to prophecy and to fortify men for coming social changes" (150). Although we cannot superimpose the notion of the sacrifice true Christians should make to promote the coming of the Kingdom, Addams did express the belief that religious conviction can spur social change through self-sacrifice: "Win the good life...know the truth and attempt to live up to it and die for it if need be" (Addams 1933, in Stebner 2010: 202).

Addams' eschatological message of a rising Christian renaissance signalled the progressive diffusion of redemptive power from religious to secular activities. However, as her idea of progress had only tenuous ties to a transcendent Deity, understood as the Creator at work infinitely within all finite entities, Addams' view of religion as an immanent force in history that incites individuals to participate in its progressive evolution arguably turns her writing into a "political eschatology". The most forceful construct of this political eschatology was, perhaps, how freedom was identified as the fulfilment of human nature – a construct Addams shared with social gospellers and other progressives (Miller 2012: 237). In contrast to freedom defined as a natural right, Addams defined freedom as the unrealized potential inherent in all human beings. Freedom was hence a state to be attained through the full development of all human capacities.

If we understand Addams' new social ethics as a political eschatology to "die for it if need be", then it was a call to work for freedom through ethical self-work *and* to take political action to realize a collaborative society already in the making.

Society Is an "Over-Soul"

Addams' social vision implied a much denser conception of society than contractual relations or economic transactions; it was rather akin to a sublime body transcending its constituent parts. When she refused to conceive of society as "an agglomeration of selfish men" (Addams 1911: 147), she meant agglomeration in the sense of a gathering of isolated individuals, whereas "society" or "community of fellowship" constituted a network of collaborative relationships. "Society", then, as opposed to "agglomeration", implied something very different from economic and constitutional conceptions of society. This view of society as subsisting independently of its members took on a sacred sheen, yet it did not imply a subordination of its members, since Addams emphasised the irreducible worth and vitality of each individual. Eddy (2010) notes: "This understanding of democracy was undergirded by a romantic appeal to the over-soul that guaranteed the good of the whole. It also assumed the divinity of nature and each human as a vital part of and contributor to that divinity" (36). The intricate link between society as whole and individual ethics was articulated by other Christian thinkers in parallel fashion, including contemporary Unitarians. Notably, Francis Greenwood Peabody (1847–1936) who was minister and professor of theology at Harvard University introduced a course in "social ethics". Peabody saw society as an organic and indivisible whole, shifted the emphasis from personal salvation to social action and stressed Jesus' significance for social questions and individuals as agents of change (Peabody 1900). The key link between Addams and theologians like Peabody was their belief that Christian values could inform social ethics and brotherly association.

Across the Atlantic, in 19th-century France one can find a broadly parallel view of the social body in discussions about the continued role of religion in industrial society. French philosophers and political economists debated what kind of moral cohesion could develop that did not rely on the archaic structures of inherited authority, social hierarchy and the Catholic Church. The Saint-Simonians, a group of thinkers inspired by the Christian socialist Claude de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), sought to reconceive religion as a way to regenerate society through association (Behrent 2008). Like Addams, these thinkers were searching for religious forms adapted to a society based on social interdependence, industrialism and scientific progress. They similarly believed that "republicanism required a far denser conception of society than that which could be elicited from the social contract or individual rights alone" (Behrent 2008: 220).

Saint Simonian thought would be most notably represented by Émile Durkheim who famously claimed that moral obligations can only spring from a distinct dimension of social existence, which he termed 'sacred'. Durkheim argued that although morals have often been embedded in religion, their obligating force does not derive from religion as such. Following his realist sociology, Durkheim asserted: "There remains beyond the individual one single, empirically observable moral being...that is, society" (1973: 60–61). Paralleling the view in Christian theology of the Church as an ideal being rather than a physical body, so was society for Durkheim a transcendent source of moral obligation (Behrent 2008: 232). Writing in times of both social transformation and moral rupture, Durkheim and Addams shared the awareness that as a transcendent source of moral obligation, society can embody very divergent moralities. In the

context of post-revolutionary France, the urgent problem was to find a way to operationalize the abstract doctrine of social solidarity, for which purpose a state-administered social insurance system became the main instrument. Although Addams gave appreciative comments on such early welfare arrangements in Europe, she never theorized her appeals for 'sympathetic cooperation'.

Perhaps her main weaknesses were her belief in the quasi-automatic coming of a new social ethics, industrial peace and her optimism regarding "the progressive goodness of the race" (Addams 1907: 25). In this regard, Addams' thinking resonated with the ethos of American Christian Socialism, which Vidich and Lyman (1985) define by "both its ethical criticism of capitalism and its unwillingness to become political revolutionary" (181). Clearly, Addams can be criticized for failing to recognize the crucial role labour militancy has historically played in wrestling concessions from the privileged. Dorrien pointedly emphasizes a certain political naïveté in the social gospel: "The social gospel movement mistakenly thought that a cooperative commonwealth was literally achievable, partly because it refused to accept that group egotism is inevitable" (2012: 130). Nevertheless, Addams' political vision contains a number of challenges to the current economic and political organization still worthwhile exploring both in sociological theorization and political inventiveness.

The issue of how to conceptualize society outside the contractual and economic models, as a form of associative life, still remains a key sociological challenge, as does the problem of how to envision a society organized around goals that transcend individuals and groups, steering us from individualism and partisanship towards solidarity and mutual "sympathy". A rare contribution is Dorrien's (2010) proposal for a social ethics that addresses the contemporary political and economic situation through the values of Christian humanism. Addams' most pertinent contribution is perhaps her conceptualization of a longstanding issue in Christian humanitarianism as well as in modern social thought: How to establish an appropriate relationship between the individual and society. In a time of rapid industrialization, her writing navigated the tension between the received pietistic morality and rising expectations of individual and social fulfilment. However, Addams' thinking could be connected with more recent critiques of the "unencumbered self" voiced by Michal Sandel (1984), who emphasised liberal philosophy's paradoxical image of the self as free from obligations antecedent to rights *and* submitted to multiple dependencies and expectations. In a society where individual achievement, status and hierarchical relations are constantly celebrated publicly, Addams' claim that humans have an end that leads elsewhere than their own self-fulfilment would be controversial.

Addams developed a quite complex vision for how individualism could be enhanced within a morally generative society. Her celebratory descriptions of individuals who adopted the new social ethics did not entail an ultimate submission to the state or public morality. David Rothman (1978) poignantly criticized Addams and the progressives for positing a harmonious fusion of individual and public interests. As a result, he claimed, the 'progressive' reforms were highly moralizing, installing "the state as a parent" (Rothman 1978: 78). However, the critique that Addams depreciated the individual in favour of the social, or the state, inadequately characterizes her position. Her emphasis on the development of individual intelligence and autonomy escapes the critique that she posited an absolute, state-sanctioned morality to which everyone was obliged (Villadsen and Turner 2015: 13). Notably, Addams defined the term "social control"

very differently than we do today. To her, and contemporary progressives, it meant the development of human intelligence, the ability to cooperate and an increasing capacity for self-governance. Addams' Christian inspiration did not mean that she reduced the individual to a tool in God's plan, but rather that she emphasized the inviolable life-force inherent in each person. Her contention that there is "a piece of God in every man" affirmed the individual's dignity and the humanity that dwells within each person but unfolds uniquely. Here, Addams echoed William James who, observes Cornelius Murphy (2007: 52), conceived of individuals as far more than mere objects for an omniscient God.

Addams advanced the today unexpected idea that individualism is absolutely compatible with solidarity. This implied that greater personal autonomy could dovetail with stronger social cohesion. Regard for the self would be replaced with regard for others, extending from family, social group, nation, to finally embrace all humanity. By instituting love and sympathy for others, which ultimately extended to humanity as a quasi-divine being, Addams' vision bypassed the need for an external God-figure. The Godly spirit would, as it were, dwell within each one. This belief mirrors social gospel theology, namely its assumptions of continuity between Christ and other men as well as between God and man (Handy 1966: 8). Addams' specific blending of such assumptions from the social gospel with ideals from Christian humanitarianism could be re-articulated in conversations that move beyond the economism and the "legal-punitive" model of society prevalent in American political thought today.

Addams' Social Vision Today

While Addams has mainly been taken up by contemporary social scientists as a pragmatist contribution to specific and 'local' research fields, including feminism, communitarianism, social work and 'pragmatic public administration', much less effort has been made to connect her broader, political thinking with current issues. As a result, large-scale political concerns have failed to receive the same attention Addams gave them in her own thought. In this regard, consider Hans Joas' assessment of the legacy of the early pragmatist tradition:

> I am convinced that the pragmatists tended to neglect those important forms of political and sociological analysis that lie between abstractly universal statements about the origins of human communication, on the one hand, and overtly concrete comments about the social conflicts of the day, on the other. (1997: 277).

This critical observation is arguably quite adequate for Addams' social scientific legacy today. Following this lead, let us now consider how Addams as a figure inspired by Christian humanitarianism could speak to contemporary sociology and to the present political context.

This context encompasses the recurrently voiced critiques that the social science research community is unfit to engage in politics. Richard Rorty thus argued that the American intellectual left "is unable to engage in national politics" (1998: 91). Other observers have characterized the present as "post-political", an era in which the model of economic liberalism has globally triumphed. Social scientists have become

specialized, preoccupied with the technicalities of their disciplines, and with few intellectuals in the public domain, moral and ethical issues are increasingly left to administrators and bureaucrats. This development allegedly implies the disappearance of the genuinely political insofar as different opinions are embraced as long as they do not fundamentally contest the existent neo-liberal political and economic order. The demise of ultimate values and utopian projects from our contemporary context is what Erik Swyngedouw (2014: 123) terms a "post-democratic" situation, since the alliance between the economic and political elites effectively block real contestation of the given liberal capitalist order.

By comparison, Addams' thought was explicitly and unashamedly political. Her proclamation that a 'new social ethics' was rising displayed how the borderline between the descriptive and the normative often blurred in early twentieth-century social thought. Integrating activism and moral appeals with social research and theorizing Addams' thinking was characteristic for the transition time in which the early American sociologists were writing. Linda Rynbrandt notes: "The first professional sociologists were in a time of transition between moralism and voluntarism on the one hand, and professionalism and scientism on the other. Many tried to bridge the gap by having a foot in both camps" (Rynbrandt 1998: 79). Producing knowledge that could influence social and political development was Addams' explicit goal (1910). She emphasized the ever value-laden nature of scientific knowledge and hence took a very different stance than more scholastic social scientists who were promoting naturalism, positivism, and value-free knowledge. Indeed, it has been emphasized that one of the social progressives' major achievements was "to link the systematic pursuit of social knowledge to political reform" (Eisenach 2007: 78).

Addams' social thought has critical pertinence to a number of urgent public issues in contemporary North America. Let us consider a few. As Dorrien observes, the mainstreams within American conservatism and liberalism remain "overly occupied with individual rights and individual success" (2012: 127). The three-strike laws are in function, escalating the filling and expansion of American prisons on an unprecedented scale. An unencumbered corporate capitalism and its recurrent crises continue to produce great numbers of 'working poor'. The Christian Right refurbished the myth of American exceptionalism, connecting it to their doctrines of 'Less-Big Government', restricted fiscal policies and austerity measures. At the time of writing (August 2017), we have recently witnessed a Republican President taking office with promises to 'run America like a business', radicalizing what Barack Obama called 'the unleashed capitalist vision of the Republican Party'. Today, the reform programmes of the social gospelers and Addams' vision, which promised a community brotherhood, equality and forgiveness seem a world away. This thinking appears in many aspects as a 'counter-discourse', a set of ideas that compels us see our present through a different lens and as less self-evident.

The above developments run counter to Addams' social vision and could, in her words, be identified as the remnants or resurgence of "militarism" (1907). She believed that militarism was an outmoded societal model in which a few rulers dictate the many, and society is organized around the need to meet external threats. Ordinary people suffer from the inherent "violence" of laissez-faire domestic economics, and foreign policy revolves around brutal, commercial competition (Addams 1907). Notably in the light of recent political developments, Addams defined 'militarism' as an ideology that

invokes heroism, spins patriotic myths and measures national success in terms of business profits. Consider this striking passage:

> Unrestricted commercialism is an excellent preparation for governmental aggression. The nation which is accustomed to condone the questionable business methods of a rich man because of his success, will find no difficulty in obscuring the moral issues involved in any undertaking that is successful. (Addams 1907: 223).

We recall that Addams viewed society as a network of social bonds irreducible to a legal order and economic relations. Her refusal to view the nation as an "agglomeration of selfish men" (Addams 1911: 147), calling instead for a society of cooperation continues to challenge liberal thought in its reliance upon natural rights and constitutional jurisprudence. Whereas current public and political discourse often portrays society as *constraining* the individual, Addams advanced the conception of society as a source of growth and inspiration, creating a 'socialized self'. In this way, she reflected the sociological idea that society is indeed a source of self-expansion (Joas 1993: 255).

This social vision articulates Christian values in a call for a morally generative society disparate from that propagated by the Republican Party and the Christian Right. Proponents from this camp have frequently advanced the label of 'socialist' to dismiss political adversaries and ideas. In the role as defenders of America's founding constitution Christian conservatives can dismiss other political programmes as contradicting the founding document. For example, at the 2010 Faith and Freedom Coalition conference, held in Washington D.C., former Ohio Secretary of State, Kenneth Blackwell, rebuked Barack Obama for being a "socialist, whose "collectivizing impulse" faced one major impediment: "Mr. Obama's problem is that the Constitution of the United States stands in his way" (Blakwell quoted in Wilson and Burack 2012: 183). Promoting an agenda of lower taxes, restricted welfare and anti- 'Big Government', Christian conservatives thus invoked the founding fathers' original intentions and the divine plan for 'God's own country'. Indeed, the Tea Party's political vision of America's restoration, observe Angelia Wilson and Cynthia Burack, consists of "a set of identifications that link the founders—and the particular forms of fiscal and moral probity they are understood to exemplify—with contemporary Tea Party conservatism" (2012: 182).

By contrast, Addams and like-minded Christian progressives had an entirely different reading of the American constitution and its implications for government (Miller 2012: 239). Addams also viewed the aim of government, as defined by the Founders, to be individual freedom, but she redefined it from a negative to a positive conception of freedom. She refused the natural rights doctrine in the founding constitution, including the premise that government is limited to securing rights by legal means. Indeed, she held the view that there are no natural rights that disallow governmental measures for *substantially* securing individual rights and equal opportunity. Addams critically portrayed Thomas Jefferson and his fellow founders as "men who were strongly under the influence of historians and doctrines of the eighteenth century" (Addams 1907: 31). The key proclamation that "all men are created equal" merely expressed, Addams argued, "the empty dignity of inborn rights", which secured only the liberties of white, male property owners (1907: 32). She believed that freedom is not reducible to abstract

rights but is to be achieved through spiritual growth and engagement in society, which would 'enlarge' the individual. Addams thus redefined individual rights by identifying 'individualism' with the right to satisfy physical and intellectual needs.

Progressives held that the enjoyment of rights was predicated on 'human growth', which in turn required that individuals' material necessities and mental development were secured. "No matter how deeply rights talk came to penetrate American reformist political discourse," notes Eldon Eisenach, "an enduring legacy of the Progressives was to ask that all the rights be tied to durable national ends" (2007: 68). Along with other progressives, Addams rejected the Founders' natural rights doctrine as too abstract, for it simply defined freedom as men's right to rule themselves. She argued that freedom is a *latent potential* that requires nourishment for its realization. Accordingly, this notion transformed the purpose of government to one of promoting 'positive' freedom, conceived as the fullest development of all human capacities in each person, through welfare and education. Without developing the human potential, cautioned Addams, the ballot easily paves the way for politicians who act like industrialists, who defend partisan interests or are corrupted. That individual freedom cannot be reduced to the mere right to consume and vote is very pertinent to the present-day situation.

Conclusion

This exploration of Addams' writing has centred on its relationship with the social gospel tradition with which she remained in close dialogue. The recent identification of Addams with pragmatist thinking has meant that less attention is paid to how her religious inspirations shaped the overarching structures and the broader political visions in her thought. While her pragmatist inspiration helped Addams to avoid metaphysical speculations on the human subject, morality and knowledge, thus leading her to foreground situated value-setting, her inspirations from social gospel theology imbued her writing with the tenor of a more grandiose, political vision. Describing how industrialized society opened for a "Christian renaissance" and the progressive evolution of human freedom, Addams eschewed the modern distinction between what is empirical and what is normative, emphasising the value-laden nature of all social science. Her "empirical" detection of the emerging, new social ethics was intrinsically connected to her appeals regarding individual responsibility and the government of the state. The "new individualism" promoted by Addams and social gospellers insisted that the subordination of individual desire did not entail a limitation but an "enlargement" of the individual.

This reconstructed individualism fundamentally challenged the liberalism of Addams' time, and her assertion that individualism is compatible with social solidarity still challenges today's possessive individualism. The logic of Addams' argument regarding the mutual development of individualism and solidarity can be condensed in this key assumption: Since society is composed of collaborative networks, the growth of each point in the network – achieved when individuals expend their inherent vital energies – strengthens the whole network and leads to social growth. Addams could then posit that the state is responsible for securing the fullest possible development of individuals' latent potentials, since only then will personal and societal growth be simultaneously achieved. Addams' thought speaks to a context in which the key

problem of industrial society has gained new urgency: What measures must be taken to release the masses of poor and underpaid labourers from the constraints on their growth capacity, and thus to realize a more all-embracing democracy? Revisiting this problem brings into focus the currently neglected question of the relationship between the promise of political freedom and individuals' political capacity.

Acknowledgements I wish to warmly thank Editor, Lawrence Nichols, for his fruitful comments on an earlier version of the article. I also wish to thank my colleagues, Mads Peter Karlsen and Stefan Schwartzkopf, Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, CBS, for their detailed and helpful comments.

References

Abbott, L. (1905). *The industrial problem: Being the William Levi bull lectures for the year 1905*. Philadelphia: G.W. Jacobs & Co..

Addams, J. (1883). To Ellen gates Starr, July 11, 1883. In: M. Lynn, M. Bryan, B. Bair, and M. de Angury (eds.) (2009) *The Selected Papers of Jane Addams. Vol. 2: Venturing into usefulness, 1881–1888*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 182–183.

Addams, J. (1893). The subjective necessity for social settlements. In J. Addams (2017) *On Education*. London: Routledge, 49–64.

Addams, J. (1902). *Democracy and social ethics*. New York: Macmillan.

Addams, J. (1907). *The newer ideals of peace*. New York: Macmillan.

Addams, J. (1910). *Twenty years at hull-house*. New York: Macmillan.

Addams, J. (1911). The social situation: Religious education and contemporary social conditions. *Religious Education, 6*(2), 147–148.

Addams, J. (1933). Opening of the first session, June 18, 1933. In M. Fischer and J. D. Whipps (eds.) (2005) *Jane Addams' Essays and Speeches* (p. 365–366). London: London Continuuum International.

Agnew, E. N. (2004). *From Charity to Social Work: Mary E. Richmond and the creation of an American profession*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Behrent, M. C. (2008). The mystical body of society: Religion and association in nineteenth-century French political thought. *Journal of the History of Ideas, 69*(2), 219–243. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhi.2008.0019.

Cracraft, J. (2012). *Two Shining Souls: Jane Addams, Leo Tolstoy, and the Quest for Global Peace*. Plymouth: Lexington Books.

Curti, M. (1961). Jane Addams on human nature. *Journal of the History of Ideas, 22*(2), 240–253. https://doi.org/10.2307/2707835.

Deegan, M. J. (1990). *Jane Addams and the men of the Chicago school, 1892–1918*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.

Dorrien, G. (2010). *Economy, difference, empire: Social ethics for social justice*. New York: Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.7312/dorr14984.

Dorrien, G. (2012). What kind of country? Economic crisis, the Obama presidency, the politics of loathing, and the common good. *CrossCurrents, 62*(1), 110–142. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-3881.2012.00223.x.

Eddy, B. (2010). Struggle or mutual aid: Jane Addams, Peter Kropotkin, and the progressive encounter with social Darwinism. *The Pluralist, 5*(1), 21–43. https://doi.org/10.1353/plu.0.0041.

Eisenach, E. J. (2007). Progressivism as a National Narrative in biblical-Hegelian time. *Social Philosophy and Policy, 24*(1), 55–83.

Fischer, M. (2013). Reading Addams's democracy and social ethics as a social gospel, evolutionary idealist text. *The Pluralist, 8*(3), 17–31. https://doi.org/10.5406/pluralist.8.3.0017.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge: And the discourse on language*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gladden, W. (1895). *Tools and the man: Property and industry under the Christian law*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin.

Greenstone, D. J. (1979). Dorothea dix and Jane Addams: From transcendentalism to pragmatism in American social reform. *Social Service Review, 53*(4), 527–559. https://doi.org/10.1086/643782.
Handy, R. (1966). *The social gospel in America, 1870–1920*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Joas, H. (1993). *Pragmatism and social theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Joas, H. (1997). G.H. Mead and the renaissance of American pragmatism in social theory. In C. Camic (Ed.), *Reclaiming the Sociological Classics: The State of the Scholarship* (pp. 262–281). Oxford: Blackwell.
Jones, R. A. (1997). The other Durkheim: History and theory in the treatment of classical sociological thought. In C. Camic (Ed.), *Reclaiming the Sociological Classics* (pp. 142–173). Oxford: Blackwell.
Jones, L. (Ed.). (2004). *Encyclopaedia of religion*. Detroit: Macmillan.
Knight, L. W. (2005). *Citizen: Jane Addams and the struggle for democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226447018.001.0001.
MacLean, V. M., & Williams, J. E. (2012). 'Ghosts of sociologies past': Settlement sociology in the progressive era at the Chicago school of civics and philanthropy. *The American Sociologist, 43*(3), 235–263. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-012-9158-1.
McCalla, A. (1998). Evolutionism and early nineteenth-century histories of religions. *Religion, 28*(1), 29–40. https://doi.org/10.1006/reli.1997.0086.
Miller, T. J. (2012). Freedom, history and race in progressive thought. *Social Philosophy and Policy, 29*(2), 220–254. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265052511000276.
Murphy, C. F. (2007). *Person and Society in American Thought: A study in Christian humanism*. New York: P. Lang.
Nichols, L. T. (2014). Modern roots of the sociology of love: Tolstoy, Addams, Gandhi, and Sorokin. In V. Jeffries (Ed.), *The Palgrave handbook of altruism, morality, and social solidarity* (pp. 149–175). New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137391865_7.
Peabody, F. G. (1900). *Jesus Christ and the social question: An examination of the teaching of Jesus in its relation to some of the problems of modern social life*. New York: Macmillan.
Quandt, J. B. (1970). *From the Small Town to the Great Community: The social thought of progressive intellectuals*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
Quandt, J. B. (1973). Religion and social thought: The secularization of postmillennialism. *American Quarterly, 25*(4), 390–409. https://doi.org/10.2307/2711630.
Rauschenbusch, W. (1912). *Christianizing the social order*. New York: Macmillan.
Rorty, R. (1998). *Achieving our country: Leftist thought in twentieth-century America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Rothman, D. J. (1978). The state as parent: Social policy in the progressive era. In W. Gaylin, I. Glasser, S. Marcus, & D. Rothman (Eds.), *Doing Good: The Limits of Benevolence* (pp. 67–97). New York: Pantheon.
Rynbrandt, L. J. (1998). Caroline Bartlett crane and the history of sociology: Salvation, sanitation, and the social gospel. *The American Sociologist, 29*(1), 71–82. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-998-1020-0.
Sandel, M. J. (1984). The Procedural Republic and the unencumbered self. *Political Theory, 12*(1), 81–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591784012001005.
Schneiderhan, E. (2011). Pragmatism and empirical sociology: The case of Jane Addams and hull-house, 1889-1895. *Theory and Society, 40*(6), 589–617. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-011-9156-2.
Schultz, R. L. (2015). Jane Addams, apotheosis of social Christianity. *Church History, 84*(1), 207–221. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640715000062.
Scott, A. F. (1964). Introduction. In J. Addams *Democracy and Social Ethics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, vii-lxxvi.
Seigfried, C. H. (1999). Socializing democracy: Jane Addams and John Dewey. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 29*(2), 207–230. https://doi.org/10.1177/004839319902900203.
Skinner, Q. (1984). Negative liberty: Philosophical and historical perspectives. In R. Rorty, J. B. Schneewincl, & Q. Skinner (Eds.), *Philosophy in history* (pp. 193–221). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511625534.012.
Stebner, E. J. (2010). The theology of Jane Addams: Religion seeking its own adjustment. In M. Hamington (Ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams* (pp. 201–222). University Park: Penn State University Press.
Stritt, S. (2014). The first faith-based movement: The religious roots of social progressivism in America (1880-1912) in historical perspective. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, 41*(1), 77–105.
Strong, J. (1913). *Our world: The new world-life*. New York: Doubleday.
Strong, J. (1915). *Our world: The new world-religion*. New York: Doubleday.
Swyngedouw, E. (2014). Where is the political? Insurgent mobilisations and the incipient 'return of the political'. *Space and Polity, 18*(2), 122–136.

Vidich, A., & Lyman, S. (1985). *American sociology*. London: Yale University Press.
Villadsen, K., & Dean, M. (2016). State phobia, civil society and a certain vitalism. *Constellations, 19*(3), 401–420.
Villadsen, K., & Turner, B. S. (2015). Tracing the roots of social citizenship: Jane Addams' thought between formal rights and moral obligation. *Citizenship Studies*, 20(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2015.1107028.
Wilson, A. R., & Burack, C. (2012). 'Where liberty reigns and god is supreme': The Christian right and the tea party movement. *New Political Science, 34*(2), 172–190. https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2012.676395.