

11. Sherna Gluck, ed. *From Parlor To Prison: Five American Suffragists Talk About Their Lives* (New York, 1976); Calendar for 1912, NAWSA, Reel 48, LC.
12. Monday Club of Richburg, New York, Calendar for 1912, NAWSA, Reel 48, LC.
13. Quoted in Gluck, *From Parlor To Prison*, 12-13.
14. House Committee on the Judiciary Hearing on Woman Suffrage, February 16, 1904, Statement of Mary C.C. Bradford, Women's Rights Collection, Folder 42, SL.
15. Carrie Chapman Catt to Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, October 19, 1909, Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, Reel 3, LC.
16. See Dorothy Scura, "Ellen Glasgow and Women's Suffrage," *Research in Action* 6 (Spring 1982): 12-15. For Mary Johnston, see Elizabeth D. Coleman, "Penwoman of Virginia's Feminists," *Virginia Cavalcade* 6 (Winter 1956): 8-11; and Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, "Mary Johnston, Suffragist," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 100 (January 1992): 99-118.
17. Margaret Campbell to Henry B. Blackwell, May 14, 1900, NAWSA Reel 5, LC.
18. Harriet Stanton Blatch and Alma Lutz, *Challenging Years: The Memoirs of Harriet Stanton Blatch*, (New York, 1940), 91-92.
19. *New York Call*, March 11, 1917. Quoted in Mari Jo Buhle, *Women and American Socialism, 1870-1920* (Urbana, Ill., 1983), 225.
20. *Literary Digest* 36 (February 29, 1908): 290-292.
21. For a detailed discussion of tradition and its uses, see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), 1-12.
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23. HWS 5: 204-206. Anthony's interest in placing the work is documented in Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, 3 vols., (Indianapolis, 1898 and 1908), 1278-1279.
24. Carrie Chapman Catt to Alice Stone Blackwell, November 6, 1908, Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, Reel 2, LC.
25. Speech by Anna Howard Shaw, "The Fate of the Republic," (1892) Dillon Collection, Folder 499, SL. "That is where the weakness of every Republic lies," Shaw continued, "they have been fathered to death."
26. HWS 5: 263.
27. Edith M. Phelps, ed., *Selected Articles on Woman Suffrage*, Debaters Handbook Series, (Minneapolis, 1912).
28. Mary Gray Peck, Report of the Headquarters Secretary, quoted in HWS 5: 266-268.
29. Press Release, "Anti Suffrage News and Comment" (n.d.), Issued by New York State Association Opposed Women's Suffrage, Folder 2, SL.
30. Speech by Anna Howard Shaw to the NAWSA Convention, April 14, 1910, Women's Rights Collection, Folder 514, SL.
31. Ida Husted Harper, "Why Women Cannot Vote in the United States," *North American Review* 179 (July, 1904): 30-35.
32. Pamphlet by M. Cary Thomas, "A New Fashioned Argument for Woman Suffrage," (October 17, 1908) Women's Rights Collection, Folder 730, SL.
33. Volume 5 of HWS devotes ample coverage to the pioneers in its chapters on the annual conventions. For the quotation, see HWS 5: 123.
34. Anna Howard Shaw, Letter to "Progress," (March, 1910) Dillon Collection, Box 22, SL. For examples of pioneer celebrations, see HWS 5: 30-31 and 219-220.
35. Ellen Carol DuBois, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton/Susan B. Anthony: Correspondence, Writings, Speeches* (New York, 1981), 226.
36. Not only were Stanton's more radical activities omitted from the suffrage pioneer tradition, but her role in founding the American women's rights movement was also forgotten. According to historian Ellen DuBois, Stanton's papers were not collected and she found no biographer until 1940. See DuBois, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton/Susan B. Anthony...*, 191-192.
37. Maud Wood Park, "The College Equal Suffrage League: Introductory notes," (1942), Women's Rights Collection, Folder 696, SL; HWS 5: 660-662.
38. HWS 5: 167; and Anna Howard Shaw, *The Story of a Pioneer* (New York, 1915), 221-223.
39. HWS 5: 170.
40. *Ibid.*, 171.
41. Maud Wood Park, "Address to the 28th Annual Convention of NAWSA, College Night," February 8, 1906, Women's Rights Collection, Folder 855, SL.
42. Typescript of *Woman's Journal* article, "Debt to the Pioneers," March 30, 1907, Women's Rights Collection, Folder 855, SL. For examples of this theme, see HWS 5: 173 and 226.
43. HWS 5: 1373; *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, 1355.
44. Program, Kings County Political Equality League, Brooklyn, New York, February 14, 1903, NAWSA, Reel 26, LC.
45. Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*.
46. *Pearson's Magazine* March, 1903. Excerpts from this article also appear in Harper, *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, 1298-1304.
47. *Ibid.*, 1295-1304.
48. Ellen DuBois used the term "suffrage saint" in reference to Anthony in a conversation with the author in 1986.
49. Anna Howard Shaw, *The Story of a Pioneer*, 189-190.
50. *Ibid.*, 232-234.
51. Harper, *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, 1604 and 1606-1607.
52. *Ibid.*, 1607-1610.
53. Anna Howard Shaw, "Address at Memorial Service for Susan B. Anthony," March 15, 1906, Dillon Collection, Box 22, SL.
54. Accounts of the Anthony funeral are drawn from Shaw, *Story of a Pioneer*, 235-238; and Harper, *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, 1429-1444.
55. *New York Times*, March 18, 1906. Clipping in the Breckinridge Family Papers, Box 700, LC.
56. Notes from KERA Memorial Service for Susan B. Anthony by Mary Clay, March 22, 1906, NAWSA, Reel 5, LC.
57. For example, see Program, ERA Club Memorial Service for Susan B. Anthony, May 8, 1906, NAWSA, Reel 26, LC.; and Program, "A Meeting of Appreciation of the Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony," Interurban Political Equality Council of Greater New York, April 1, 1906, NAWSA, Reel 26, LC.
58. Eugene V. Debs, "Susan B. Anthony: Pioneer of Freedom," *Pearson's Magazine* (July, 1917). Copy in NAWSA, Reel 26, LC.

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Jane Addams, Progressivism, and Woman Suffrage:

An Introduction to "Why Women Should Vote"

Victoria Bissell Brown

and

"Why Women Should Vote"

Jane Addams

Editor's Introduction: In the passage that follows, historian Victoria Bissell Brown illuminates for us one of the most popular and influential pro-suffrage documents written during the long campaign for woman suffrage, Jane Addams's "Why Women Should Vote." Brown, who is writing a two-volume biography of the revered Progressive reformer and suffragist, discusses the popularity of Addams's essay and analyzes it in the context of Progressive reform philosophy and pro-suffrage rhetoric.

An understanding of the Progressive movement and its relationship to woman suffrage as explained by one of the movement's luminaries is crucial to our understanding of the success of the woman suffrage movement. For of all the factors leading to the victory in 1920, the emergence around 1900 of this new era of reform—the "Progressive Era"—is one of the most important.

Progressivism, which energized American politics until World War I, began at the grassroots level and strongly affected American politics at all levels—including both major political parties. Indeed, in 1912, Progressives in the Republican Party bolted and formed the "Progressive Party" with Theodore Roosevelt as their candidate, after the Republicans chose to back President William Howard Taft for re-election. Roosevelt and Taft then lost to Woodrow Wilson, the Progressive politician nominated by the Democrats.

This reform zeal arose in response to the many ills that plagued American society in the last half of the nineteenth century as a result of massive industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. Progressives insisted that the hands-

off, non-interventionist style of government demanded by conservatives, while appropriate, perhaps, for a rural, agrarian society, was no longer adequate in a new era in which an individual's pursuit of happiness brought him or her constantly into conflict with others, when large corporations ran roughshod over smaller businesses and exploited workers without restraint, and large numbers of people lived in close proximity in cities without adequate provision for sanitation, disease control, or recreation. Progressives demanded that government—from municipal to federal—*take action* on a variety of fronts, including (to name a few): regulating corporations to protect workers and consumers; safeguarding public health; banning child labor; establishing compulsory education, juvenile courts and public playgrounds; and reforming government to make it more responsible, accountable, and free of corruption!

The Progressive coalition included a diverse group of people determined to remedy the social evils produced by unrestrained capitalism but not always in agreement about solutions. In fact, Progressivism was riddled with contradictions. For example, Progressives generally supported democratic reforms including the secret ballot, the nomination of candidates by primaries rather than meetings in "smoke-filled rooms," and the direct election of United States Senators by the voters rather than the state legislatures. But some Progressives, believing that corrupt urban political machines were manipulating the "ignorant immigrant vote," favored undemocratic reforms such as literacy tests to eliminate the uneducated from the electorate. Most Progressives were middle class, and many patronizingly believed that the working class needed to be protected more than empowered: they believed that citizens like themselves should shape social policy out of a sense of noblesse oblige.

Progressivism aided the woman suffrage movement in several ways. New ideas about the functions of government were more in line with old ideas about woman's nature and abilities: a government that was expected to nurture and protect and arbitrate conflicts rather than focus exclusively on national defense and economic development might benefit from woman's presumably innate characteristics and domestic experience. In addition, public support for woman suffrage grew as a result of the widespread belief that women—if enfranchised—would support Progressive reforms because they were more moral, compassionate, and nurturing than men. People also assumed that woman suffrage would be a boon to Progressivism because hundreds of thousands of women were clearly demonstrating their support for Progressive reform as lobbyists and political activists. Indeed, many of these reform-minded women were converted to the suffrage movement out of frustration when politicians failed to take their lobbying seriously and/or opposed the reforms they supported. Like the women of the WCTU before them, women Progressives—and their male supporters—believed that they would be much more effective if women were able to vote rather than rely exclusively upon "indirect influence."

Suffragists recognized the advantages offered by this political climate. As the previous essay by Sara Hunter Graham demonstrates, early twentieth-century

suffragists were eager to avoid the taint of radicalism, to counter the anti-suffragists' claim that suffrage was unwomanly, and to link their movement with popular ideas. Indeed, though suffragists never ceased to argue for woman suffrage on the grounds that it was *right* and *just* and due to them as citizens of the United States, they were at all times searching for ways to persuade politicians that enfranchising women was politically *expedient*.

In the Progressive Era, rather than arguing against the idea of separate spheres, suffragists typically proclaimed that woman suffrage was completely compatible with woman's traditional duties. They often argued that, as a result of industrialization and urbanization, women were no longer able to protect their homes and children without the vote! Some suffragists, either believing in women's innate differences from men or pandering to this popular supposition, insisted that women would *naturally* support the new nurturing role many believed government should adopt. As one widely used suffrage poster stated: "Women are by nature and training housekeepers. Let them help in the city housekeeping. They will introduce an occasional spring cleaning."

As Victoria Brown explains, Jane Addams's "Why Women Should Vote" is in some ways consistent with and in other ways different from the prevailing usage of Progressive ideology in pro-suffrage rhetoric. Addams's essay is extremely important as one of the strongest statements of the argument that changed conditions *require* women to vote in order to continue to fulfill their traditional functions. Publishing this powerful endorsement of woman suffrage as inextricably linked to Progressivism was of inestimable value to the suffrage cause—the seal of approval from America's best-loved Progressive.

Brown insists, however, that Addams—though a leading suffragist—was not necessarily typical of suffragists and did not focus her political energies primarily on this cause. In fact, she presented woman suffrage as of crucial importance primarily as an *implement* through which women could more effectively reach their political goals, a way for women to assert their political values while still fulfilling their traditional functions.

Brown defends Addams against charges that have been leveled against her by some historians, accusations that she pandered to popular ideas and prejudices. For example, Brown rejects the idea that Addams "grounded her suffrage reasoning in biological essentialism." Rather, Brown insists, Addams believed that whatever differences existed in the political values of men and women were attributable to women's *experience*, not innate habits or instincts. Furthermore, Addams did not employ the nativist, elitist, or racist arguments embraced by some suffragists. Brown insists that Addams was a woman of principle, and that this essay is a sincere statement of her Progressive reform philosophy—not mere suffrage propaganda.

Still, Brown concedes that Jane Addams was a brilliant strategist and a habitual diplomat, owing to her desire to avoid conflict and promote harmony. In this and other works, writes Brown, Addams astutely presented woman suffrage as inevitable given the new focus of government in the Progressive Era. Many a

suffragist would follow her lead, presenting suffrage as something women were *compelled* to embrace given changed historical circumstances rather than the result of woman's desire for equality and power. "If there was any guile in Addams's pro-suffrage position," writes Brown, "this was surely it."

Yet Brown's emphasis here is on the sincerity of Addams's essay. The power of the essay, she argues, was in the neat fit between Addams's focus on the connection between suffrage and reform and the appeal of Progressivism. That the essay was so popular was a testimony to Addams's "unusual ability" to weave her Progressive concerns "into a pro-suffrage argument that appealed to mainstream sensibilities without bowing to mainstream prejudices."



IN THE YEARS between 1900 and 1915, close to two hundred articles appeared in popular American magazines concerning American woman suffrage. In the year 1910 alone, the interested American reader could sample some twenty-five articles on the subject. Perched at the top of this stack of articles for and against and about woman suffrage sits Jane Addams's editorial, "Why Women Should Vote," published in the January 1910 edition of *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Of all the popular articles on suffrage that appeared in these years, Addams's has probably been reprinted the most often, quoted the most regularly, cited the most frequently. The modern reader must ask, has this pro-suffrage essay received such attention over the years simply because it was written by the most famous woman of her day or because it best reflects the era's pro-suffrage ideology? Are the arguments Addams put forth in *The Ladies' Home Journal* unique to her or representative of the dozens of pro-suffrage articles Americans were reading in these years?

The answers to all of those questions are "yes." The article has, of course, received special attention because of Jane Addams's fame. But Addams's fame was due in no small part to her ability to craft popular articles that resonated with strong currents in public opinion while still marking out a unique philosophical position. Scholars have not always appreciated this particular talent in Jane Addams, nor have they always looked favorably on Addams's position in "Why Women Should Vote" that women "need this implement in order to preserve the home."

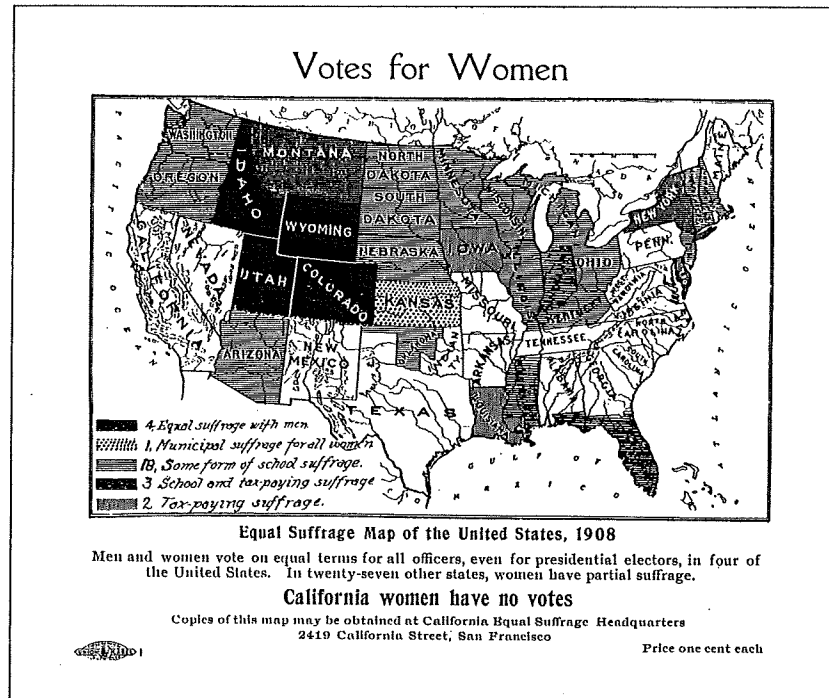
Back in the 1970s, when scholars of women were measuring every text by the single ideological yardstick of "liberal" feminism, Jane Addams's pro-suffrage argument appeared to fall short because she did not put the classical liberal emphasis on women's individual right to the vote. At that time, it was thought that her embrace of women's traditional domestic role in this *Ladies' Home Journal* essay, along with her focus on the social good women could perform with the vote, constituted an accommodation to, even a pandering to, popular gender politics.¹ Current scholarship, however, allows for a new reading of "Why Women Should Vote." This scholarship reminds us that women's progress

depends as much on "republican" commitments to the common good as on "liberal" rights and individual autonomy. Read in the light of contemporary research on female culture and moral values, Addams's assumption that women speak "in a different voice" appears to be more a positive assertion of the need for that particular ideological voice in politics than a capitulation to existing notions of women's innate moral nature.² Read, too, in light of the work of current historical research on women reformers in the Progressive Era, Jane Addams's focus on women's collective duty to reform (rather than their individual right to autonomy) in "Why Women Should Vote" appears to be more a reflection of the political climate unique to the Progressive Era, and more a function of the very particular emphasis Addams placed on economic democracy, than an accommodation to conservative nostalgia for selfless womanhood.³

Understanding "Why Women Should Vote" requires understanding that Jane Addams's central political goal was the legislative enactment of a Progressive social agenda, including protective labor legislation, health and welfare programs, educational reform, and legal equity for blacks and immigrants. When she said that woman suffrage was an "implement" women needed to "preserve the home," she was saying that she regarded the achievement of the Progressive agenda as essential to the preservation of the homes of millions of poor and working-class Americans. Further, she was saying that woman suffrage was crucial to enacting that agenda because women occupied the homes that needed preserving and, therefore, were most likely to support Progressive reform. It was this set of assumptions that motivated her active support for woman suffrage and that shaped the arguments she crafted for woman suffrage.

Placed alongside the other pro-suffrage articles published at the time, "Why Women Should Vote" thus appears to be quite representative of the pro-reform, "Progressive" mood dominant in American political life in 1910. And in being representative of Progressives, Addams appears unique among suffrage leaders. Her devotion to improving the lives of the working class by creating an interdependent polity as responsive to domestic as to commercial needs meant that questions of women's particular situation were subordinated, in her writing, to questions of women's duty to demand expansion of the nation's entire political agenda. Whatever readers today may think of this approach, its popularity at the time may be detected in the fact that a year after this essay appeared in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, Addams was elected to a vice presidency in the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

Close inspection of "Why Women Should Vote" suggests that Jane Addams's popularity derived not only from her Progressive concern for economic and political democracy, but from her unusual ability to weave that concern with her own mediating temperament, diplomatic style, and genuine respect for domesticity into a pro-suffrage argument that appealed to mainstream sensibilities without bowing to mainstream prejudices. "Why Women Should Vote," is, first and foremost then, a statement of Jane Addams's Progressive reform philosophy. As such, the essay serves to inform our understanding of the ways in



By 1908 only four states allowed women the vote. Sophia Smith Collection

which woman suffrage and Progressivism were mutually reinforcing movements in the early twentieth century and the role Addams played in linking the success of one movement to the success of the other.

Jane Addams and Progressive Era Reform

When Jane Addams wrote "Why Women Should Vote" in 1910, she was fifty years old and enjoying a decade, 1905-1915, that would mark the peak of her power and influence in America. Four years before her pro-suffrage essay appeared in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, an article on Addams in *Current Literature* was published with the title, "The Only Saint America Has Produced." And in the year following her *Ladies' Home Journal* essay, when *The Independent* asked its readers to name "the most useful Americans," Addams was ranked second, behind Thomas Edison but ahead of Andrew Carnegie. Indeed, when *The Ladies' Home Journal* invited Addams to write "Why Women Should Vote," the magazine itself was on record in opposition to woman suffrage. Still, it gave Addams space to make a case for suffrage that was bound to be very appealing to *Journal* readers, and, three years later, hired her to write a monthly column on civic matters. The

Journal introduced that column with the claim that "no woman in America today is so closely in touch with those great social and economic movements that are outside the home and yet vitally touch the home as Jane Addams."⁴

Addams had launched her reform career by opening, in 1889, the second, and by far the most famous, social settlement house in the United States, Hull-House on Halstead Street in Chicago. The settlement began as one building, but by 1910 it comprised thirteen buildings encircling an entire square block of a working-class, immigrant neighborhood on Chicago's west side. Addams's settlement served as a meeting place for political activists, workers, students, immigrants, women's groups, unionists, artists and reformers, children and teenagers. It served as well as a catalyst for social legislation, political reform, social science theory, and labor organizing at the city, state, and national levels. Until her death in 1935, Jane Addams presided as the calm center of the storm that was Hull-House, attracting extraordinarily gifted, innovative people around her and adroitly leading them in the development of all the sorts of social service programs and legislative agendas that have come to typify the "Progressive Era" of the 1890s and early 1900s.

Because of her close ties to the University of Chicago during that institution's glory years around the turn of the century, Addams is often called the founder of the academic discipline of social work. She was by nature more a sociologist than a social worker, however, and with the eye of a sociologist—and the voice of a kind and tactful but brutally honest aunt—she delivered thousands of speeches both in the United States and around the world, wrote over a dozen books, and published over five hundred articles for magazines and journals ranging from *The Ladies' Home Journal* to the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. She was active with labor unions in strike mediation and labor legislation, was a founding member of the NAACP, served on the Chicago School Board, was the paid garbage inspector for her ward (the only paid position she ever held), staged unsuccessful political campaigns against corrupt ward bosses, worked on state programs for the criminal and the insane, was president of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, and, as noted, served as a vice president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1911 until 1914. Addams was a leading figure in Teddy Roosevelt's Progressive Party, becoming in 1912 the first American woman to give a nominating speech at a presidential political convention. In the course of her career, she traveled to every continent as a distinguished visitor, sat on countless boards and advisory committees, and counseled presidents, governors, mayors, senators, and congressmen as well as leaders of anarchist, socialist, feminist, immigrant, African American, and labor organizations.

Finally, Jane Addams was a peace activist who held out against supporting America's participation in World War I and formed, in protest, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. This unpopular political stance, the only political stance she ever adopted that was completely out of sync with her times, transformed Addams from a beloved American icon into public

enemy number one. Almost fifteen years after the war was over, however, in 1931, Addams's on-going peace activism was vindicated when she became the first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. But during the interim years, when she was vilified as a dangerous subversive, her critics published elaborate "spider web" charts on which they demonstrated that Jane Addams was the secret link connecting every reform and radical group in the country. Whatever we may now think of her critics' politics, we have to concede to the accuracy of their claim: Jane Addams was the secret link connecting every reform and radical group in the country in the years between 1890 and her death in 1935.⁵

The Appeal of Jane Addams

There were myriad reasons for Addams's enduring stature, not the least among them her ability to write about contentious public issues like woman suffrage in a persuasive but non-argumentative voice. Her argument for woman suffrage in *The Ladies' Home Journal* of 1910 is an excellent example of her unique stylistic ability to disarm opponents by gliding past fundamental disagreements, presuming shared goals, focusing almost entirely on the great good to be gained, and ignoring the position that was to be defeated. Though she herself would detest a military analogy, the contemporary reader cannot help but picture Addams striding untouched through battlefields where her comrades were engaged in bloody combat, always pointing to the hill that was to be captured and paying little heed to the enemy all around. Indeed, she was a master at occupying the enemy's ground. Her argument in "Why Women Should Vote" that the suffrage would help, not hurt, the home was not unusual; plenty of other suffragists made the same case. But other suffragists made this, and other arguments, in a contentious way, directly attacking the antis' claim that woman suffrage would destroy the home. Addams, by contrast, never once mentioned that opponents of woman suffrage claimed to be preserving the home. She simply refused to contend that point and thus rose above the fray. This was vintage Addams.

A non-confrontational style is not the only feature distinguishing Jane Addams's approach in "Why Women Should Vote." There is, as well, her targeted deployment of woman suffrage as part of the Progressive assault on Gilded Age greed in politics and the economy, and there is her careful derivation of female values from history and experience, not biology and intuition. But in order to appreciate fully Addams's idiosyncratic handling of these issues and their relationship to woman suffrage, it is perhaps useful to examine first some of the popular magazine articles on suffrage appearing contemporaneously with "Why Women Should Vote."

Popular Suffrage Arguments of the Day

A chronological survey of articles published between 1900 and 1915 makes several points quite clear: first, that pro-suffrage arguments were one half of an

active, national debate with anti-suffrage arguments, and both sides in that debate were shaped by the other. Second, suffragists and anti-suffragists alike had, by 1900, moved away from the broad philosophical debates over women's "rights" and "female nature" that typified the latter half of the nineteenth century. The debate after 1900 centered on more prosaic discussions of whether the majority of women actually wanted the vote and whether women's votes would actually bring about the benefits to Progressive reform that suffragists claimed. It is here that another point comes clear, and that is the extent to which woman suffrage had become linked in the public mind with the Progressive movement for political and economic reform, but also the degree to which it was easier for conservatives to attack woman suffrage than to attack Progressive reform. Anti-suffragists never openly opposed woman suffrage on the grounds that women voters would enact reform; rather, they tried to argue that woman suffrage was irrelevant to reform. This development in the debate was partially rooted in the peculiarities of United States suffrage history, which was distinguished by women's state-by-state, city-by-city acquisition of voting rights. The discussion of suffrage in popular magazines was, thus, not occurring in a political vacuum; it was all being conducted while women were actually going to the polls and voting in an increasing number of states and in dozens of municipalities. As the aged reformer Julia Ward Howe pointed out in 1909, concrete events meant that the whole question of woman suffrage had become entirely practical.⁶

Given the gradual accretion of women's voting rights in the United States, it is hardly surprising to find that over a third of the fifty articles surveyed for this essay were devoted to descriptions of woman suffrage campaigns, debates over whether woman suffrage in Colorado or Wyoming or Idaho or Utah had achieved the Progressive benefits suffragists predicted, and arguments over whether women were actually going to the polls. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the time for philosophical debates about female nature and women's rights had pretty much passed.

This is not to say that the suffragists never mounted a principled argument for their position in popular magazines. On the contrary, the magazine evidence strongly supports the recent claim by historian Paula Baker that "the suffragists made every conceivable argument, from equal rights to home protection to the need for an intelligent electorate."⁷ But what is interesting here is not that one pro-suffrage article would argue for equal rights while another would argue for home protection. The most striking characteristic of the popular pro-suffrage literature of the day is that within a single article could be found the whole array of justifications possible for woman suffrage.

So we find suffragists like Frank Parsons arguing on one page of *The Arena* in 1908 that "sex has nothing to do with the reasons on which the suffrage rests," and arguing two pages later that "women have a higher regard for principle than men... their gentleness, sympathy, refinement and incorruptibility are sadly needed in our politics." Or Rosamond Sutherland, another pro-suffrage writer, arguing in a 1910 issue of *North American Review* that "the emancipa-

tion of women is a natural evolution which can no more be stopped than the tides of the sea," while at the same time arguing that "woman is instinctively a home-maker," and the vote would not wash away that apparently non-evolving fact. Or the editors of *The Independent* asserting in 1915 that "partial suffrage—the suffrage of men alone—is a denial of democracy. Democracy will never be full and complete until every individual in the community has an equal right to determine how the affairs of the community shall be managed," and, in the same article, also asserting that "women, by the very nature of their being, ... are experts on certain vital subjects. ... Women have different qualities of mind from men. Men are ... reasoning beings. Women are creatures of intuition."⁸

None of the authors of these articles worried about the inconsistencies now detectable in their positions; they slipped and slid easily from democratic principle to practical politics to biological determinism. As Julia Ward Howe said in 1909, "the fundamental argument for woman suffrage, of course, is its justice; and this would be enough were there no other. But a powerful argument can also be made for it from the standpoint of expediency."⁹

This "flexibility" in the pro-suffrage position allowed considerable room for volleying with the anti-suffragists. When the antis argued that women should rely on men for protection, not the ballot, the wealthy widow and suffrage militant Alva Belmont retorted that experience proved women could most definitely not rely on men for protection. When the antis argued that politics was a dirty, bloody battlefield that would soil and injure women, the suffrage movement's most prodigious publicist Ida Husted Harper said that politics should be a cooperative effort, not a bloody battle. And in mock sympathy for the adversarial mess she said men had made of civic life, the attorney and suffragist Florida Pier offered women's help with the cleanup. (This was the sort of help, said Pier, that any human being would offer to another who was in a "pickle.") When the antis said that women's domesticity had made them too narrow-minded to vote, the suffragists responded that the vote would expand women's horizons. When the antis said that the majority of women did not wish to vote, Sutherland responded that in matters of principle, numbers were irrelevant. When the antis said that ignorant, immoral, and immigrant women would vote, some suffragists retorted that citizens in a democracy should have more faith in the common folk and others argued that women would double the "respectable" vote and out-poll the already-enfranchised unfit men. Finally, and most importantly, when the antis—skirting the knotty question of biology—argued that woman's social function as a mother was far too demanding and far too important to afford them the time and energy for civic activities, the suffragists turned that argument right on its head, insisting that it was precisely because their maternal duties were so vital to national life that they needed a voice in government. "Woman has a right to this most effective means of transforming the social environment into greater fitness for herself and all her loved ones," wrote Frank Parsons in 1908.¹⁰ This, as it turned out, was the suf-

fragists' most unassailable argument. And it was this argument that Jane Addams made most eloquently in her pro-suffrage writings.

Jane Addams's Progressive Suffrage Argument

The Ladies' Home Journal essay was one of dozens of speeches and articles Addams penned on woman suffrage in the years between 1897 and 1920. Comparing the *Journal* piece to her other writings makes clear that "Why Women Should Vote" was typical of her approach to woman suffrage and illuminates how her approach was both similar to and different from that of the other popular arguments being made at the time. Addams's writings on woman suffrage are distinctive because they do not "make every conceivable argument"; she did not blend a biological argument with a human rights argument with an elitist argument with a utilitarian argument. Like the proverbial hedgehog, Addams knew one thing, she knew it well, and she repeated it often: "Only when all the people become the governing class can the collective resources and organizations [of the society] be consistently utilized for the common weal."¹¹ As has already been noted, in applying this overarching Progressive philosophy to the question of woman suffrage, Addams was unique among suffrage advocates. Unlike other suffrage leaders, Addams subordinated women's particular gender-based situation to the broader, class-based concerns of the Progressive program. In addition, she was uniquely consistent, single-minded, even redundant, in not mixing her fierce commitment to democracy and practical results with abstract liberalism. In "Pragmatism and Politics," written for *The Survey* in 1912, Addams declared:

The American voter is not content with the 18th century formulae of liberty and equality, high-flown as they are, for they do not apply to the situation. Liberty has come to be a guarantee of equal opportunity to play our parts well in primary relations, and the elemental processes of birth, growth, nutrition, death are the great levellers that remind us of the essential equality of human life. No talk of liberty or equality "goes" that does not reckon with these.¹²

The pro-suffrage arguments Addams made must be viewed within the very particular political and historical context of the Progressive Era's assertion of collective over individual interests. Considered in terms of her outrage at Gilded-Age selfishness gone wild, Addams's focus on women's vote as a potential tool in the service of community interests makes all the sense in the world.

"Why Women Should Vote" requires no apology for its lack of attention to individual rights. In Jane Addams's world, individual rights had created the urban, industrial problems she and her neighbors battled every day. Her emphasis on the community good that housewives could enact with the vote does not make her a sellout to comfortable, bourgeois domesticity. Rather, it marks her as a fully engaged, Progressive Era reformer whose daily life was con-

sumed with solving serious urban problems evident in every household in her neighborhood. From where Addams sat in Chicago's crowded, dirty Nineteenth Ward, living with other college-educated women who had joined her Hull-House settlement in order to use their privileges on behalf of the working poor, it was not gender per se that distinguished the disadvantaged in American society, it was class. And the remedy for that disadvantage was not, in Addams's experience, more individualism. Whatever "personal ambition" might have accomplished in the past, said Addams in 1912, "it is certainly too archaic to accomplish anything now. Our thoughts, at least for this generation, cannot be too much directed from mutual relationships and responsibilities."¹³

Contrary to what her critics have suggested, Addams did not focus on the collective utility of woman suffrage in order to take the sting out of female independence. Her focus derived honestly out of her political priorities; she was intent on eradicating the evils of economic inequality in American society and believed collective action was the only means to that end. She did not emphasize women's domestic role because she wished to placate the patriarchs or because she did not understand the power of patriarchy to manipulate women's traditional work to its own ends. She assigned great significance to female domesticity because her daily experience taught her that domesticity was no bourgeois ideal but a utilitarian reality for her working-class neighbors, and one that could be powerful if deployed in the political arena against America's individualistic patriarchs.

Addams never openly argued with the antis' claims that the mass of women were too weak or passive or uninterested to vote. Instead, she silently smothered those claims with her argument that the vote would make women stronger, more responsible, and more civic-minded. Note that the editorial for *The Ladies' Home Journal* is not titled "Why Women Should HAVE the Vote," but, rather, "Why Women Should Vote." She was not arguing constitutional principles here; she was talking about the pragmatic effect—on women and on men—of the act of voting.

Jane Addams, Biology, and Elitism

If all Jane Addams had cared about was the attractiveness of her pro-suffrage arguments to middle-class audiences, she would have done what so many of her peers in the movement did; she would have "made every conceivable argument." The fact that she did not, the fact that editorials like "Why Women Should Vote" made such a consistent and relatively narrow set of democratic and utilitarian arguments, deserves notice. Examination of her pro-suffrage language makes clear, for example, that Addams did not ground her suffrage reasoning in biological essentialism. Despite what some critics have charged, she did not claim that women were innately, "essentially," more moral than men.¹⁴ Nor did she say that women were biologically destined for domesticity. In the opening paragraph of "Why Women Should Vote" Addams states that

she regards women's domesticity as a product of history that could only be ended by "social change." She speaks of "tradition" in this and other pro-suffrage writings, and she speaks of women's "different experience." But this most careful of writers did not speak of biology determining women's nature or women's role. Yes, she does refer in *The Ladies' Home Journal* to "those affairs which naturally and historically belong to women," but readers familiar with Addams's phrasing as well as her psychology will agree that she used the word "naturally" in all sorts of arguments. It was, for her, a synonym for "logically," and served her need to sweep past opponents, leaving them with the burden of proving that she was not merely stating the obvious.

Back in the early 1970s, the historian Jill Conway claimed that Addams "accepted [the] idea of biologically determined masculine and feminine temperaments," and argued that Addams was incapable of "seeing men and women as moral equals."¹⁵ But these claims are not supported by the language in Addams's own texts. Her argument in *The Ladies' Home Journal* against women influencing men's votes rests on the assumption that a man's "point of view" was "quite as honest and valuable" as a woman's. Indeed, in her first public address on woman suffrage in 1897, speaking before the Chicago Political Equality League, Addams stated:

I am not one of those who believe—broadly speaking—that women are better than men. We have not wrecked railroads, nor corrupted Legislatures, nor done many unholy things that men have done; but then we must remember that we have not had the chance. But my understanding of the matter is that woman should have the ballot because without this responsibility she cannot best develop her moral courage. As Mazzini once said...we have no right to call our country a country until every man has a vote, and surely no logical mind can stop at sex in granting suffrage.¹⁶

Seventeen years later, writing for the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Addams would still claim, "good government is not a matter of sex when it means...defending little children."¹⁷ She did believe, and recent historical research has borne Addams out on this, that women's daily experience made them more likely than men to place human welfare and aesthetics above concerns with profit—but she rooted that difference in nurture, not nature.¹⁸

The one possible exception to this general rule can be found in *The Ladies' Home Journal* for June of 1913 when Addams wrote an atypically ironic essay titled, "If Men Were Seeking the Franchise." There, in tones suggesting the influence of radical feminist philosopher Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Addams showed what women's objections to men voting would be if women controlled the government. Some of her arguments there—that men might not be good voters because they are "always so eager to make money," are "so reckless," think "so little of dust," and "are so fond of fighting...you always have

been since you were little boys"—could be read as a biological, essentialist view of masculine and feminine nature. But it seems just as likely that Addams was trying to show the absurdity of essentialist claims. Certainly her concluding remarks for that article indicate that "such talk" was not serious, that "as far as the guardianship of the State is concerned there is no distinction between the powers of men and women save those which custom has made."¹⁹ It would not be until the masculine carnage of World War I had seared her soul that Addams's language would begin to imply that female nature had any corner on morality. This was not her approach during the woman suffrage campaign.²⁰

Just as she did not join other suffragists in making biological claims for women's right to the vote, so, too, Addams did not join the chorus of elitists, racists, and nativists who tried to argue that woman suffrage would double the "respectable," white, native-born vote more than it would expand the votes of the rabble. "Why Women Should Vote" is an excellent example of her view that working women and immigrant women and poor women not only needed the vote in order to protect their own interests and those of their families, but also wanted the vote in order to be responsible, active agents in their communities. By telling her largely white, largely middle-class readership that Scandinavian women were accustomed to the vote, that Jewish women had "covered markets" in Russia and Poland, and that Italian women saw no distinction between voting in school board elections to protect the education of older children and voting in state or federal elections to protect the milk drunk by younger children, Addams was slyly shaming those who had been surprised by the suffrage enthusiasm among these groups of women. True, she did romanticize her neighbors by implying that ethnic women's naivete gave them an organic grasp of political common sense, but in the context of the era's ethnocentric elitism, Addams's romanticism looks more like protection than pandering.

Had Addams been purely a strategist, she would have brushed past her working-class women's suffrage enthusiasm in the way she brushed past other potentially controversial points. But Addams calculated where to earn and where to spend her political capital. She ignored questions of women's individual rights precisely because she did not want to ignore the political aspirations of the women in her neighborhood. It was her concern for their collective need to improve their lives, rather than her concern for her own individual right to vote, that fueled Addams's suffrage energies in the first place. To say that she fashioned a palatable domestic argument for woman suffrage in order to make female voters less threatening completely overlooks the very real political risk she took by predicting that working-class, immigrant women would, as voters, actively demand services and legislative protections from federal, state, and municipal governments. This was hardly a neutral stance to take during the Progressive Era, and it speaks volumes about the class-oriented nature of Addams's political activism.



Jane Addams, 1898.
Swarthmore College Peace Collection

Twelve Reasons Why Women Should Vote

1. BECAUSE those who obey the laws should help to choose those who make the laws.
2. BECAUSE laws affect women as much as men.
3. BECAUSE laws which affect WOMEN are now passed without consulting them.
4. BECAUSE laws affecting CHILDREN should include the woman's point of view as well as the man's.
5. BECAUSE laws affecting the HOME are voted on in every session of the Legislature.
6. BECAUSE women have experience which would be helpful to legislation.
7. BECAUSE to deprive women of the vote is to lower their position in common estimation.
8. BECAUSE having the vote would increase the sense of responsibility among women toward questions of public importance.
9. BECAUSE public spirited mothers make public spirited sons.
10. BECAUSE about 8,000,000 women in the United States are wage workers, and the conditions under which they work are controlled by law.
11. BECAUSE the objections against their having the vote are based on prejudice, not on reason.
12. BECAUSE to sum up all reasons in one—IT IS FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF ALL.

VOTES FOR WOMEN

NATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE PUBLISHING CO., INC.
171 Madison Avenue, New York City

Woman suffrage leaflet, c. 1915.
Smithsonian Institution

The Strategic Power of Addams's Argument

The modern feminist may well cringe at the link Addams made between women's traditional domestic duties and the vote. But that reaction should not blind us to the sincerity of her argument—or to the strategic value of her argument.

While it took political risks, Addams's "spin" on suffrage was also strategically brilliant. In her hands, suffrage advocates became steadfast defenders of women's right to care for home and family, not the destroyers of domesticity depicted in anti-suffrage lore. In her hands, the feminine powers of "persuasion" which anti-suffragists preferred in place of voting became dishonest tools of manipulation, just as unworthy of women as they were unfair to men. Finally, and most interestingly, in Addams's hands, it was historical inevitability that required women to move their caregiving into the public sector, not some feminist scheme to alter the course of history. With a curious but very characteristic mix of assertiveness and self-effacement, Addams trumpeted women's ability to rise to history's challenge while sliding right past the role women reformers like herself had played in changing history by placing women's traditional concerns on the political agenda.

In "Votes for Women and Other Votes," which appeared in *The Survey* in 1912, Addams expanded on the argument for historical inevitability implicit in "Why Women Should Vote" and downplayed the role of historical agents like herself. Addams claimed in this article that history is "merely a record of new

human interests" becoming "the subjects of governmental action and the incorporation into government itself of those classes who represented new interests." As government became involved in commerce, merchants became voters; as government became involved in industrial affairs, workers became voters. The campaign for woman suffrage, reasoned Addams, was the inevitable, sensible result of contemporary government's involvement with "the basic human interests with which women have been traditionally concerned." Thus skirting the female activism that had placed these "basic human interests" on the Progressive Era's political agenda, Addams argued that these new public duties had fallen to women simply through the natural unfolding of history. Pushing this argument even further, Addams claimed that women were only demanding a new household tool—the vote—"because they insist that they will not cease to perform their traditional duties, simply because these duties have been taken over by existing governments."²¹

If there was any guile in Addams's pro-suffrage position, this was surely it. According to her construction, the link between Progressive Era reforms and woman suffrage had arisen organically. Women's political activism was a result, not a cause, of the Progressive Era, and women's need for the vote was a result, not a cause, of historical change. Addams knew different, of course, but this approach satisfied her political and temperamental need to soothe the nerves of those dizzied by the explosion of Progressivism's government activism and women's connection to that activism. Rather than pandering to Americans' elitism or their nativism or their affection for biological essentialism, Addams instead insisted on democracy—economic, social, and legal—and then played to Americans' comfort with historical inevitability and with women's role as dutiful servants to posterity.

Conclusion

As one of America's most revered public figures, Jane Addams played an important role in the campaign for woman suffrage. Since her fame and stature did not reside in the woman suffrage movement, and since Americans perceived her as sincerely committed to the common good, her arguments for woman suffrage as a tool of reform carried special weight. It is doubtful that the majority of the readers of "Why Women Should Vote" in 1910 shared Addams's deep convictions about economic democracy, the dignity of immigrants and workers, or the historical (rather than biological) roots of female domesticity. But it is likely that they were sympathetic to her view that enfranchised women would strengthen contemporary efforts to clean up the factories and the cities, reduce poverty, and improve education and public health. And while Addams fashioned an emphasis on domesticity out of her desire to show the interdependence of the public and the private in modern life, it is also likely that readers found in Addams's domestic emphasis a comforting reassurance that woman suffrage would not destroy the traditional family. In this way, then, Addams

maintained her own principles while still achieving popular appeal. The argument here is that Jane Addams's particular approach to woman suffrage, specifically her lack of attention to women's individual rights, arose less from political timidity about gender than from overriding, firm convictions about social and economic reform. As it happened, this focus on the link between suffrage and reform intersected sufficiently with the Progressive attitudes of many Americans to be attractive—despite the fact that Addams was more democratic in her goals than the majority of her readers.

Women's rights were always an avenue to matters of class for Addams; they were never the final destination on her political journey. "Why Women Should Vote" is just one piece of evidence that Addams's support for woman suffrage was rooted in her primary commitment to economic democracy, but it is a very strong piece of evidence. In addition, her writing in this essay, as in so many others, makes clear that, just as Addams always felt more comfortable privileging class issues over gender issues, so, too, she always felt more comfortable arguing for her causes in non-argumentative language. Over the course of her life, consciously and unconsciously, Addams trained the stream of her thinking to flow in elegantly diplomatic channels. Her personal recoil from conflict, coupled with her conviction that all conflict should be mediated, meant that she always presented her case in terms of ultimate harmony, not ultimate victory; this was no more or less true of her suffrage writings than of her writings about labor or militarism.

"Why Women Should Vote," like all of Jane Addams's contributions to the suffrage cause, is thus an exquisitely clever, carefully phrased, determinedly practical, democratic argument. One need not agree with it in order to appreciate its brilliance and its sincerity.

Why Women Should Vote

by Jane Addams, of Hull-House, Chicago

For many generations it has been believed that woman's place is within the walls of her home, and it is indeed impossible to imagine the time when her duty there shall be ended or to forecast any social change which shall release her from that paramount obligation.

This paper is an attempt to show that many women today are failing to discharge their duties to their own households properly simply because they do not perceive that as society grows more complicated it is necessary that woman shall extend her sense of responsibility to many things outside of her own home if she would continue to preserve the home in its entirety. One could illustrate in many ways. A woman's simplest duty, one would say, is to keep her house clean and wholesome and to feed her children properly. Yet if she lives in

a tenement house, as so many of my neighbors do, she cannot fulfill these simple obligations by her own efforts because she is utterly dependent upon the city administration for the conditions which render decent living possible. Her basement will not be dry, her stairways will not be fireproof, her house will not be provided with sufficient windows to give light and air, nor will it be equipped with sanitary plumbing, unless the Public Works Department sends inspectors who constantly insist that these elementary decencies be provided. Women who live in the country sweep their own dooryards and may either feed the refuse of the table to a flock of chickens or allow it innocently to decay in the open air and sunshine. In a crowded city quarter, however, if the street is not cleaned by the city authorities no amount of private sweeping will keep the tenement free from grime; if the garbage is not properly collected and destroyed a tenement-house mother may see her children sicken and die of diseases from which she alone is powerless to shield them, although her tenderness and devotion are unbounded. She cannot even secure untainted meat for her household, she cannot provide fresh fruit, unless the meat has been inspected by city officials, and the decayed fruit, which is so often placed upon sale in the tenement districts, has been destroyed in the interests of public health. In short, if woman would keep on with her old business of caring for her house and rearing her children she will have to have some conscience in regard to public affairs lying quite outside of her immediate household. The individual conscience and devotion are no longer effective.

Chicago one spring had a spreading contagion of scarlet fever just at the time the school nurses had been discontinued because business men had pronounced them too expensive. If the women who sent their children to the schools had been sufficiently public-spirited and had been provided with an implement through which to express that public spirit they would have insisted that the schools be supplied with nurses in order that their own children might be protected from contagion. In other words, if women would effectively continue their old avocations they must take part in the slow upbuilding of that code of legislation which is alone sufficient to protect the home from the dangers incident to modern life. One might instance the many deaths of children from contagious diseases the germs of which had been carried in tailored clothing. Country doctors testify as to the outbreak of scarlet fever in remote neighborhoods each autumn, after the children have begun to wear the winter overcoats and cloaks which have been sent from infected city sweatshops. That their mothers mend their stockings and guard them from "taking cold" is not a sufficient protection when the tailoring of the family is done in a distant city under conditions which the mother cannot possibly control. The sanitary regulation of sweatshops by city officials is all that can be depended upon to prevent such needless destruction. Who shall say that women are not concerned in the enactment and enforcement of such legislation if they would preserve their homes?

Even women who take no part in public affairs in order that they may give themselves entirely to their own families, sometimes going so far as to despise

those other women who are endeavoring to secure protective legislation, may illustrate this point. The Hull-House neighborhood was at one time suffering from a typhoid epidemic. A careful investigation was made by which we were able to establish a very close connection between the typhoid and a mode of plumbing which made it most probable that the infection had been carried by flies. Among the people who been exposed to the infection was a widow who had lived in the ward for a number of years, in a comfortable little house which she owned. Although the Italian immigrants were closing in all around her she was not willing to sell her property and to move away until she had finished the education of her children. In the mean time she held herself quite aloof from her Italian neighbors and could never be drawn into any of the public efforts to protect them by securing a better code of tenement-house sanitation. Her two daughters were sent to an Eastern college; one June, when one of them had graduated and the other still had two years before she took her degree, they came to the spotless little house and to their self-sacrificing mother for the summer's holiday. They both fell ill, not because their own home was not clean, not because their mother was not devoted, but because next door to them and also in the rear were wretched tenements, and because the mother's utmost efforts could not keep the infection out of her own house. One daughter died and one recovered but was an invalid for two years following. This is, perhaps, a fair illustration of the futility of the individual conscience when woman insists upon isolating her family from the rest of the community and its interests. The result is sure to be a pitiful failure.

One of the interesting experiences in the Chicago campaign for inducing the members of the Charter Convention to recommend municipal franchise for women in the provisions of the new charter was the unexpected enthusiasm and help which came from large groups of foreign-born women. The Scandinavian women represented in many Lutheran Church societies said quite simply that in the old country they had had the municipal franchise upon the same basis as men since the seventeenth century; all the women formerly living under the British Government, in England, Australia or Canada, pointed out that Chicago women were asking now for what the British women had long had. But the most unexpected response came from the foreign colonies in which women had never heard such problems discussed and took the prospect of the municipal ballot as a simple device—which it is—to aid them in their daily struggle with adverse city conditions. The Italian women said that the men engaged in railroad construction were away all summer and did not know anything about their household difficulties. Some of them came to Hull-House one day to talk over the possibility of a public wash-house. They do not like to wash in their own tenements, they have never seen a washing-tub until they came to America, and find it very difficult to use it in the restricted space of their little kitchens and to hang the clothes within the house to dry. They say that in the Italian villages the women all go to the streams together; in the town they go to the public wash-house; and washing, instead of being lonely and disagreeable, is made pleasant

by cheerful conversation. It is asking a great deal of these women to change suddenly all their habits of living, and their contention that the tenement-house kitchen is too small for laundry-work is well taken. If women in Chicago knew the needs of the Italian colony they would realize that any change bringing cleanliness and fresh clothing into the Italian household would be a very sensible and hygienic measure. It is, perhaps, asking a great deal that the members of the City Council should understand this, but surely a comprehension of the needs of these women and efforts toward ameliorating their lot might be regarded as matters of municipal obligation on the part of voting women.

The same thing is true of the Jewish women in their desire for covered markets which have always been a municipal provision in Russia and Poland. The vegetables piled high upon the wagons standing in the open markets of Chicago become covered with dust and soot. It seems to these women a violation of the most rudimentary decencies and they sometimes say quite simply: "If women had anything to say about it they would change all that."

...The duty of a woman toward the schools which her children attend is so obvious that it is not necessary to dwell upon it. But even this simple obligation cannot be effectively carried out without some form of social organization as the mothers' school clubs and mothers' congresses testify, and to which the most conservative women belong because they feel the need of wider reading and discussion concerning the many problems of childhood. It is, therefore, perhaps natural that the public should have been more willing to accord a vote to women in school matters than in any other, and yet women have never been members of a Board of Education in sufficient numbers to influence largely actual school curricula. If they had been kindergartens, domestic science courses and school playgrounds would be far more numerous than they are. More than one woman has been convinced of the need of the ballot by the futility of her efforts in persuading a business man that young children need nurture in something besides the three r's. Perhaps, too, only women realize the influence which the school might exert upon the home if a proper adaptation to actual needs were considered. An Italian girl who has had lessons in cooking at the public school will help her mother to connect the entire family with American food and household habits. That the mother has never baked bread in Italy—only mixed it in her own house and then taken it out to the village oven—makes it all the more necessary that her daughter should understand the complication of a cooking-stove. The same thing is true of the girl who learns to sew in the public school, and more than anything else, perhaps, of the girl who receives the first simple instruction in the care of little children, that skillful care which every tenement-house baby requires if he is to be pulled through his second summer. The only time, to my knowledge, that lessons in the care of children were given in the public schools of Chicago was one summer when the vacation schools were being managed by a volunteer body of women. The instruction was eagerly received by the Italian girls, who had been "little mothers" to younger children ever since they could remember.

As a result of this teaching I recall a young girl who carefully explained to her Italian mother that the reason the babies in Italy were so healthy and the babies in Chicago were so sickly was not, as her mother had always firmly insisted, because her babies in Italy had goat's milk and her babies in America had cow's milk, but because the milk in Italy was clean and the milk in Chicago was dirty.... She also informed her mother that the "City Hall wanted to fix up the milk so that it couldn't make the baby sick, but that they hadn't quite enough votes for it yet." The Italian mother believed what her child had been taught in the big school; it seemed to her quite as natural that the city should be concerned in providing pure milk for her younger children as it should provide big schools and teachers for her older children. She reached this naïve conclusion because she had never heard those arguments which make it seem reasonable that a woman should be given the school franchise but no other.

But women are also beginning to realize that children need attention outside of school hours; that much of the petty vice in cities is merely the love of pleasure gone wrong, the overrestrained boy or girl seeking improper recreation and excitement. It is obvious that a little study of the needs of children, a sympathetic understanding of the conditions under which they go astray, might save hundreds of them. Women traditionally have had an opportunity to observe the plays of children and the needs of youth, and yet in Chicago, at least, they had done singularly little in this vexed problem of juvenile delinquency until they helped to inaugurate the Juvenile Court movement a dozen years ago. The Juvenile Court Committee, made up largely of women, paid the salaries of the probation officers connected with the court for the first six years of its existence, and after the salaries were cared for by the county the same organization turned itself into a Juvenile Protective League, and through a score of paid officers are doing valiant service in minimizing some of the dangers of city life which boys and girls encounter....

The more extensively the modern city endeavors on the one hand to control and on the other hand to provide recreational facilities for its young people the more necessary it is that women should assist in their direction and extension. After all, a care for wholesome and innocent amusement is what women have for many years assumed. When the reaction comes on the part of taxpayers women's votes may be necessary to keep the city to its beneficent obligations toward its own young people.

...Ever since steam power has been applied to the processes of weaving and spinning woman's traditional work has been carried on largely outside of the home. The clothing and household linen are not only spun and woven, but also usually sewed, by machinery; the preparation of many foods has also passed into the factory and necessarily a certain number of women have been obliged to follow their work there, although it is doubtful, in spite of the large numbers of factory girls, whether women now are doing as large a proportion of the world's work as they used to do. Because many thousands of those working in factories and shops are girls between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two there

is a necessity that older women should be interested in the conditions of industry. The very fact that these girls are not going to remain in industry permanently makes it more important that some one should see to it that they shall not be incapacitated for their future family life because they work for exhausting hours and under insanitary [sic] conditions.

If woman's sense of obligation had enlarged as the industrial conditions changed she might naturally and almost imperceptibly have inaugurated the movements for social amelioration in the line of factory legislation and shop sanitation. That she has not done so is doubtless due to the fact that her conscience is slow to recognize any obligation outside of her own family circle, and because she was so absorbed in her own household that she failed to see what the conditions outside actually were. It would be interesting to know how far the consciousness that she had no vote and could not change matters operated in this direction. After all, we see only those things to which our attention has been drawn, we feel responsibility for those things which are brought to us as matters of responsibility. If conscientious women were convinced that it was a civic duty to be informed in regard to these grave industrial affairs, and then to express the conclusions which they had reached by depositing a piece of paper in a ballot box, one cannot imagine that they would shirk simply because the action ran counter to old traditions.

To those of my readers who would admit that although woman has no right to shirk her old obligations, that all of these measures could be secured more easily through her influence upon the men of her family than through the direct use of the ballot; I should like to tell a little story. I have a friend in Chicago who is the mother of four sons and the grandmother of twelve grandsons who are voters. She is a woman of wealth, of secured social position, of sterling character and clear intelligence, and may, therefore, quite fairly be cited as a "woman of influence".... I happened to call at her house on the day that Mr. McKinley was elected President against Mr. Bryan for the first time. I found my friend much disturbed. She said somewhat bitterly that she had at last discovered what the much-vaunted influence of woman was worth; that she had implored each one of her sons and grandsons, had entered into endless arguments and moral appeals to induce one of them to represent her convictions by voting for Bryan! That, although sincerely devoted to her, each one had assured her that his convictions forced him to vote the Republican ticket.... I contended that a woman had no right to persuade a man to vote against his own convictions; that I respected the men of her family for following their own judgement regardless of the appeal which the honored head of the house had made to their chivalric devotion. To this she replied that she would agree with that point of view when a woman had the same opportunity as a man to register her convictions by vote. I believed then as I do now, that nothing is gained when independence of judgement is assailed by "influence," sentimental or otherwise, and that we test advancing civilization somewhat by our power to respect differences and by our tolerance of another's honest conviction.

This is, perhaps, the attitude of many busy women who would be glad to use the ballot to further public measures in which they are interested and for which they have been working for years. It offends the taste of such a woman to be obliged to use "indirect influence" when she is accustomed to well-bred, open action in other affairs, and she very much resents the time spent in persuading a voter to take her point of view, and possibly to give up his own, quite as honest and valuable as hers, although different because resulting from a totally different experience. Public-spirited women who wish to use the ballot, as I know them, do not wish to do the work of men nor to take over men's affairs. They simply want an opportunity to do their own work and to take care of those affairs which naturally and historically belong to women, but which are constantly being overlooked and slighted in our political institutions....

To turn the administration of our civic affairs wholly over to men may mean that the American city will continue to push forward in its commercial and industrial development, and continue to lag behind in those things which make a city healthful and beautiful. After all, woman's traditional function has been to make her dwelling-place both clean and fair. Is that dreariness in city life, that lack of domesticity which the humblest farm dwelling presents, due to a withdrawal of one of the naturally cooperating forces? If women have in any sense been responsible for the gentler side of life which softens and blurs some of its harsher conditions, may they not have a duty to perform in our American cities?

In closing, may I recapitulate that if woman would fulfill her traditional responsibility to her own children; if she would educate and protect from danger factory children who must find their recreation on the street; if she would bring the cultural forces to bear upon our materialistic civilization; and if she would do it all with the dignity and directness fitting one who carries on her immemorial duties, then she must bring herself to the use of the ballot—that latest implement for self government. May we not fairly say that American women need this implement in order to preserve the home?

Notes

The article, "Why Women Should Vote," was first published in *The Ladies Home Journal*, 27, (January 1910): 21-22.

1. For examples of this critical view of Addams, see: Jill Conway, "Women Reformers and American Culture, 1870-1930," *Journal of Social History* 5 (Winter, 1971-72): 164-177; Jill Conway, "Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution," *Victorian Studies* 14 (September, 1970): 47-62; Judith Lacerte, "If Only Jane Addams Had Been a Feminist," *Social Casework* 57 (December, 1976): 656-660; William O'Neill, *Everyone was Brave: A History of Feminism in America* (Chicago, 1971), 120; Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement* (New York, 1965).
2. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982); Joan Tronto, "Beyond Gender Difference Toward a Theory of Care," *Signs* 12 (Summer, 1987): 644-663; Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Antigone's Daughters," *Democracy* 2

(April, 1982): 46-59; Mary Dietz, "Context is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship," *Daedalus* (1987): 1-24; Kathleen B. Jones, "Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity," *Signs* 15 (Summer, 1990).

3. Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (June, 1984): 620-647. Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Hull House in the 1890's: A Community of Women Reformers," *Signs* 10 (Summer, 1985): 658-677; and "The Historical Foundations of Women's Power in the Creation of the American Welfare State, 1830-1930," 43-93 and Eileen Boris, "The Power of Motherhood: Black and White Activist Women Redefine the 'Political,'" both in *Mothers of the New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*, Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds. (New York, 1993), 213-245.

4. "The Only Saint America Has Produced," *Current Literature* 40 (April, 1906); "The Most Useful Americans," *The*

Independent 74 (May 1, 1913): 956-957; Editor's Introduction to Addams's 1913 column, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, 30 (January, 1913): 25.

5. The best published biography of Jane Addams is *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* by Allen F. Davis, (New York, 1973). Davis includes a copy of a "spider web" chart on p. 265.

6. Julia Ward Howe, "The Case for Woman Suffrage," *The Outlook* 91 (April 3, 1909): 780.

7. Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," 642.

8. Frank Parsons, "Shall Our Mothers, Wives and Sisters Be Our Equals or Our Subjects?" *The Arena* 40 (July, 1908): 92-94; Rosamond Sutherland, "The Appeal of Politics to Woman," *The North American Review* 191 (January, 1910): 82, 85; "The Justice and Desirability of Woman Suffrage," *The Independent* 82 (April 5, 1915): 3-4.

9. Howe, "The Case for Woman Suffrage," 781.

10. Alva P. Belmont, "Woman's Right to Govern Herself," *The North American Review* 190 (November, 1909): 664-674; Florida Pier, "The Delightfully Quaint Antis," *Harper's Weekly* 53 (December 11, 1909): 34; Harper, "Would Woman Suffrage Benefit the State, and Woman Herself?" 374; Sutherland, "The Appeal of Politics to Woman," 82; "Margaret vs. Bridget," *The Independent* 67 (1909): 1394; Parsons, "Shall Our Mothers, Wives and Sisters Be Our Equals or Our Subjects?" 93; Molly Warren, "The Housekeeper's Need of the Ballot," *The World Today* 12 (January-June, 1907): 418-421. For examples of anti-suffrage arguments in popular magazines in these years, see: "Concerning Woman's Suffrage," *The Outlook* 64 (March 10, 1900); Lyman Abbott, "Why Women Do Not Wish the Suffrage," *The Atlantic Monthly* 92 (September, 1903); Elizabeth McCracken, "The Women of America: Woman's Suffrage in Colorado," *The Outlook* 75 (November 28, 1903): 737-744; Annie Nathan Meyer, "Woman's Assumption of Sex Superiority," *North American Review* 178 (January, 1904): 103-109; Lyman Abbott, "The

Assault on Womanhood," *The Outlook* 91 (April 3, 1909): 784-788; "Do Women Wish to Vote?" *The Outlook* 94 (February 19, 1910): 375-377; Molly Elliot Seawell, "The Ladies' Battle," *The Atlantic Monthly* 106 (September, 1910): 289-303; Jessie Atkinson McGriff, "Before the American Woman Votes," *The Ladies' Home Journal* 27 (April, 1910): 56.

11. Jane Addams, "Votes for Women and Other Votes," *The Survey* 29 (June 1, 1912): 368.

12. Jane Addams, "Pragmatism in Politics," *The Survey* 29 (October 5, 1912): 12.

13. Jane Addams, "A Modern Lear," *The Survey* 29 (November 2, 1912): 137.

14. Conway, "Women Reformers," and "Stereotypes of Femininity"; Davis, *American Heroine*, 187, 316.

15. Conway, "Women Reformers," 174, and "Stereotypes of Femininity," 58.

16. Jane Addams, "The Working Woman's Need of the Ballot," *The Woman's Journal* (November 20, 1897).

17. Jane Addams, "The Larger Aspects of the Woman's Movement," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 56 (November, 1914): 6.

18. See, for example, Maureen Flanagan, "Gender and Urban Political Reform: The City Club and the Woman's Club of Chicago in the Progressive Era," *American Historical Review* 95 (October, 1990): 1032-1050.

19. Jane Addams, "If Men Were Seeking the Franchise," *The Ladies' Home Journal* 30 (June, 1913): 21.

20. Jane Addams, "Women, War, and Suffrage," *The Survey* 35 (November 6, 1915): 148-149. This article indicates that Addams did not, in the years before 1920, rest her claims for women's role in international relations on biological essentialism.

21. Addams, "Votes for Women and Other Votes," 367-368.

Eleven

"Better Citizens Without the Ballot":

American Anti-suffrage Women
and Their Rationale
During the Progressive Era

Manuela Thurner

Editor's Introduction: In this fascinating essay, Manuela Thurner discusses the women who organized to *oppose* woman suffrage, the anti-suffrage women popularly known as the "Antis." Thurner insists that these women are often misunderstood—when they are discussed at all—by historians who have accepted without sufficient examination the suffragists' characterization of their despised female adversaries as: "puppets of more powerful male forces"; selfish, pampered socialites, motivated by a desire to maintain their own highly privileged status; and reactionaries with an extremely narrow view of woman's proper role. Misunderstanding of the anti-suffrage women also stems from the fact that historians have at times generalized about anti-suffragists after studying only the writings of anti-suffrage men—who, in many cases, *were* reactionaries disturbed by the increasing public activity of women, or claimed that woman suffrage would "ruin women" and "destroy the home" out of fear that it would threaten their economic interests.

Thurner's own study, focusing particularly on Antis in the Northeast between 1900 and 1920 and based on the writings of anti-suffrage women and major Anti periodicals, avoids both of these pitfalls—and offers very different conclusions about anti-suffrage women. Thurner rejects the idea that the Antis were controlled by male anti-suffragists, and downplays the socio-economic differences between anti-suffragists and suffragists.

Most significantly, Thurner challenges prevailing assumptions about the *ideology* of the female anti-suffragists, who "portrayed themselves as very much in line with and in favor of turn-of-the-century Progressive reform and female activism." According to Thurner, the Antis *urged* women to play an active role in public affairs, but believed that this could best be done "without the ballot" by disinterested, nonpartisan women. They opposed woman's entry into politics believing that political activity—like participation in the woman suffrage