

ADVANCING FEMINIST PRAGMATISM'S GLOBAL WEB-WEAVING PROCESS OF CREATING POSITIVE PEACE

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ABSTRACT: In these troubled twenty-first century times, diverse interdisciplinary thinkers and visionary activists are turning their collaborative efforts to interlinked processes of continuously making a just, participatory, context-specific, problem-resolving, positive peace at domestic, local, national, and global levels. Having recognized that the kind of just and sustainable peace for which wise thinkers in diverse cultures have been longing and working since ancient times requires more than an end to violence at all levels, these contemporary peacemakers recognize that currently powerful paradigms of political economy, now-normal ways of thinking, culture-infused individual habits, hierarchical social institutions, and history-rooted relational practices among the world's peoples must change in deep, on-going ways. Many of these thinkers and activists acknowledge Jane Addams and other originary feminist pragmatists as showing why and how we must approach this daunting, on-going process of "reweaving the social fabric" to which Charlene Had-dock Seigfried re-called feminist philosophers in 1991. Subsequent efforts world-wide to learn wise lessons from these original feminist pragmatists have shown that resolving our particular issues of social justice requires this kind of social-cultural reweaving, that this requires working for the conditions that Addams called "positive peace," and that this cannot be a local or national process alone—it must be both context-specific and global. In this essay, I will draw on cross-difference insights of two of the original pragmatist feminists (Jane Addams and Anna Julia Cooper), two contemporary feminist philosophers (Sally Haslanger and Maria Lugones), a holistic Indigenous botanist (Robin Wall Kimmerer) who envisions reciprocal and sustainable human relations with nature, and two contemporary theorists of positive peace (Grant E. Rissler and Patricia M. Shields). These thinkers suggest how transformative theorists in diverse disciplines, activists in many good causes, responsive institutional leaders at all levels, and those who care daily for humanity and the Earth can continuously advance this context-specific, democratically participatory web-weaving process in ways that are justice-actualizing, hope-reviving, and continuously transformative.

Keywords: feminism, pragmatism, web-weaving, positive peace, matrix of meanings, 'world'-travelling, reciprocal caring

We live in a time of terrible wars and increasing violence in homes and communities that leads many to support ruthless, autocratic leaders they believe can protect

them from foreign and domestic enemies through terrifying displays of dominance. These displays lead a few to seek "glory" or at least social visibility through imitative, death-dealing behavior, encouraged by websites that treat this as a divine imperative or as required for liberty, for masculinity, or for the emergence of a social movement that can restore their culture's lost integrity and global control. Thus, in response to autocrat-led, ultra-violent, world-endangering wars of aggression in Ukraine and Palestine, and to terrifying events of mass murder in schools, places of worship, shopping centers, and night clubs, many others rally and march in protest, demanding that institutional and national leaders *do something* to make the violence end – but what course of action and what guiding goals would achieve this?

Some thinkers argue for limiting wars of aggression through wider teaching of and adherence to the standards of *just war theory*, which has been developing since Aristotle's time and continues to emerge through the United Nations. However, the *negative conception of peace* that guides just war theory—making wars less frequent, less violent, and less prolonged through limits on when a war may be initiated and how it may be conducted—seems at best to be an incomplete conception of peace that fails to offer adequate guidance in pre-war and post-war contexts. Moreover, just war theory seems like "too little, too late," irrelevant to sufficiently powerful autocrats and non-state actors, and lacking the depth to transform the underlying historical, cultural, and structural problems that cause wars and dreadful events of imitative violence at other social levels.

This is why many interdisciplinary thinkers and visionary activists are turning their efforts toward the complex processes of continuously weaving a just, problem-resolving, structurally sustaining global webwork of *conditions for positive peace* at familial, local, national, and global levels through context-specific, problem-resolving changes in institutions and underlying cultures that are guided by participation of all those affected in continu-

ing transformation processes, supported by specialists, planners, and public administrators. They recognize that the kind of peace for which wise thinkers in diverse cultures have been longing and working since ancient times requires more than ending particular episodes of violence. It requires transforming the underlying causes of violence, including now-powerful paradigms of political economy and now-normal ways of thinking, as well as culture-infused individual habits, hierarchical social institutions, and history-rooted unjust relations among the world's peoples.

Some of these thinkers and activists regard the Norwegian political scientist Johan Galtung as the originator of the concept of "positive peace," as well as the founder of the discipline of Peace and Conflict Studies, and his work clearly offers invaluable guidance in thinking about and advancing the complex processes of creating positive peace.¹ Others recognize that Martin Luther King, Jr., used this concept earlier and outlined a nonviolent transformative method for creating the conditions for positive peace, both in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963) and in his visionary final monograph, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos of Community?* (1967).² However, some contemporary theorists and practitioners of positive peace, including Patricia M. Shields, recognize that Jane Addams and other feminist pragmatists of the Progressive Era that followed America's Civil War had developed and deployed the concept of "positive peace" even earlier, and they regard the insights of these originary feminist pragmatists as having continuing value in the process of "reweaving the social fabric" to which Charlene Haddock Seigfried has re-called contemporary feminist

philosophers.³ In this essay, I draw on cross-difference insights of two of the original feminist pragmatists (Jane Addams and Anna Julia Cooper), two contemporary feminist philosophers (Sally Haslanger and Maria Lugones), a holistic Indigenous thinker and botanical scientist (Robin Wall Kimmerer), and two public administration theorists (Grant E. Rissler and Patricia M. Shields) to suggest how thinkers in many disciplines, activists in many good causes, and institutional and cultural leaders at all levels can collaboratively advance positive peace through a pluralistic, democratically participatory, context-specific and global web-weaving process that is continuously transformative, justice-actualizing, and hope-reviving.

As Seigfried has persuasively demonstrated,⁴ it was not John Dewey and his friend George Herbert Mead, nor the Harvard men who taught them, but the diverse, widely dispersed, first generation of college-educated American feminist pragmatist women—Jane Addams, Anna Julia Cooper, and many others—who originally developed pragmatism's decentralized, public-inclusive process of collaboratively weaving a transformation-guiding web-work of old-and-new meta-philosophical, theoretical, and practical ideas from diverse geographic and social locations.⁵ The intersecting, problem-focused networks they

¹ See Johan Galtung's *Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (Sage, 1996). For the claim that Galtung coined the term "positive peace" and helpful insights about this work, see Baljit Singh Grewal's "Johan Galtung: Positive and Negative Peace" <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2024/07/johan-galtung-positive-and-negative-peace/>.

² See King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and most of the chapters of his *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* in James M. Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (HarperCollins, 1986).

³ See Charlene Haddock Seigfried, 1991. "Where Are All the Pragmatist Feminists?" *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* (6:2), 1-20. I was drawn to pragmatist feminism by Charlene's invitation to participate in this transformative philosophical project from the floor of a meeting of the Society for Women in Philosophy in conjunction with the Eastern Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association.

⁴ See Seigfried, "Democracy as a Way of Life: Addams' Pragmatist Influence on Dewey" (2011), in which she persuasively shows that Jane Addams's *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), which Dewey began teaching and wrestling with at soon as it was published, was responsible more than any other factor for his transformation into the kind of deep democrat who discovered useful philosophical leadings by collaborating with "publics" of real people to transform the problems that were impinging on their lives.

⁵ I have argued in other places that both Dewey and Mead, who worked as volunteer lecturers and observers at Hull House during their years at the nearby University of Chicago, were so deeply influenced by Addams's ideas and her ways of working respectfully and as equals with her poor immigrant neighbors that each of them rethought his earlier model of democratic change processes to include key insights from her about how new, more developed interests of individual selves can emerge through educative-and-contributive interactions across social

built empowered these highly gifted feminist pragmatist thinkers and change-influencers to use their specific gifts and their differing standpoints to highlight important issues, to transform existing scholarly disciplines and initiate new ones, to found new institutions and transform old ones, and to model more deeply democratic ways of living in a fast-changing world.⁶ Each of these feminist pragmatist women built on the best of her inherited cultural traditions while critically rejecting the “old ways” that still continue to exclude and oppress many within America’s intersecting hierarchies of race, gender, class, and caste.⁷

differences, and how these growing interactive selves can influence the trajectories of each of the communities that intersect within them. See my essay, “Mead’s Pragmatist Proposals for a Cosmopolitan Democratic Political Economy,” in *George Herbert Mead in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. F. Thomas Burke and Krzysztof Skowronski (Lexington Books, 2013) and my forthcoming book, *Pragmatist Political Economy*.

⁶ Patricia Hill Collins and many other contemporary Black feminist thinkers acknowledge Anna Julia Cooper (and sometimes Sojourner Truth) as the originator of the concept of “intersectionality” that plays an important role in their work. See, for example, Collins, “Piecing Together a Genealogical Puzzle: Intersectionality and American Pragmatism,” *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* (III:2), 2011. For the place of standpoint theory in Cooper’s life and philosophical contribution, see Vivian M. May, *Anna Julia Cooper: Visionary Black Feminist: A Critical Introduction* (Routledge, 2012). See also Kimberly Martinez Phillips, “We Come Not Here to Talk—Revisiting the Work of Anna Julia Cooper: An Analysis of Standpoint Theory and Her Placement in the Academic Canon,” *Symbolic Interaction* (46:3), 2023.

⁷ There is already an extensive interdisciplinary literature on the lives and works of this first generation of feminist pragmatist thinkers and doers that analyzes and traces the genealogies of many more of their insights than I can discuss here. See, for example, Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric* (University of Chicago Press, 1996); Marilyn Fischer, “Addams on Cultural Pluralism, European Immigrants, and African Americans,” *The Pluralist* (9:3), 2014; Marilyn Fischer, Carol Nackenoff, Wendy Chmielewski, ed., *Jane Addams and the Practice of Democracy* (University of Illinois Press, 2009); Maurice Hamingon, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams* (Penn State University Press, 2010); Maurice Hamington, “Feminist Prophetic Pragmatism,” *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (23:2), 2009; Nuria Sara Miras Boronat, “Epistemologies of the Oppressed: Pragmatist and Feminist Approaches to Class, Gender, and Race,” *Pragmatism Today* (12:1), 2021; Patricia M. Shields, “Classical Pragmatism: Roots and Promise for a PA Feminist Theory,” *Administrative Theory & Praxis* (27:2), 2005, and “Democracy and the Social Feminist Ethics of Jane Addams: A Vision for Public Administration,” *Administrative Theory & Praxis* (28: 3) 2006; Vivian M. May, *Anna Julia Cooper, Visionary Black Feminist: A Critical Introduction* (Taylor & Francis, 2007) and “Writing the Self into Being: Anna Julia Cooper’s Textual Politics,” *African American Review* (43: 1), 2009; Patricia Hill Collins, “Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (568), 2000; Judy Whipps and Danielle Lake, “Feminist Pragma-

Each of them guided experimental reconstruction of local institutions and influenced wider social systems to include and to empower vulnerable neighbors in ways that simultaneously gave meaning and purpose to their own lives. Each of them encouraged and critiqued others’ ideas and institutional change strategies, while actively cooperating in transformative projects and practices across the lines that still separate races, classes, regions, and nations. The first thing we must notice about *the decentralized, pluralistic, public-inclusive web-weaving process* that these originary pragmatist feminist women developed is that it grew out of their deeply felt, democratic ideal-guided, distinctively individual psycho-social interests in fixing “something wrong” within America’s underlying cultural habits, developed institutions, legal framework, and systems of education, economy, and meeting citizens’ basic needs.⁸ Across their differences, these women felt great respect for each other and for the communities they aimed to serve by humbly contributing their social perspectives, their highly developed gifts, and their experience-based insights to local and larger projects of advancing urgently needed, pluralistic, democracy-deepening intellectual and practical transformations in the profoundly troubled world they entered. With neighbors who were even more acutely suffering from the complex, intertwined eco-social problems in living they aimed to resolve, these women worked collaboratively to build up effective new institutions and to reconstruct existing ones with more inclusive rules of operation and more responsive public policies. At the same time, they assisted and encouraged one another to become their best selves

tism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (revised 2025); and Leslie Butler, *Consistent Democracy: The “Woman Question” and Self-Government in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford University Press, 2023). In my forthcoming book, *Pragmatist Political Economy*, I interconnect some of the insights and achievements of four of the originary feminist pragmatist women (Jane Addams, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Mary Parker Follett) with those of seven originary pragmatist men (Charles S. Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Alain L. Locke).

⁸ For a detailed discussion of actively motivating psycho-social “interests” in the sense I intend here, see Dewey’s *Ethics, Revised Edition* (1932), Chapter 15, “The Moral Self,” p. 290.

within their particular, interest-linked local, national, and international communities.

To understand how the combined meta-philosophical, theoretical, and practical insights of the originary pragmatist women grew out of their web-weaving methods, it is helpful to begin with the closely related projects of Jane Addams and Anna Julia Cooper, who emerged at the same time from polar-opposite social positions within America's intersecting hierarchies of race, class, and gender. Jane Addams (1860-1935) was born into wealth, social influence, and white privilege in the northern state of Illinois. In contrast, Anna Julia Heywood Cooper (1858-1964) was born into race-based chattel slavery and the segregated poverty that followed its abolition in the southern state of North Carolina. In interlinked yet perspectively differing ways, both Addams and Cooper advanced methods, insights, and models for deepening democracy and advancing positive peace in local and global ways by working within overlapping, diverse, public-inclusive communities of inquiry.

Addams's family-financed college education at the Rockford Female Seminary provided her with the leisure to study and to reflect on a broad liberal arts curriculum—and on the problem of what to do with her life after college. Rockford's curriculum and social norms aimed to create a formative experience that would prepare its graduates to fulfill elite protestant white women's traditional role in American society, combining gender subordination, patriarchal marriage, and privilege-based "charitable efforts." However, Addams and her closest friends, especially Ellen Gates Starr, rejected this life plan as wasting their educations, limiting the growth of their interests, and obstructing their moral path toward transformative social leadership and service guided by Gospel ideals. They felt called to use their educated capabilities to collaboratively develop better ways of caring for poor and marginalized people, while transforming the unjust and undemocratic American economic, legal, and social systems that were causing so much misery for so many.

Addams, Starr, and their other Rockford friends struggled for more than five years after their college graduation in 1881 to develop a clear vision of how they, as highly educated, socially and economically privileged white women, could achieve their double objective of finding personal meaning in living and doing a new kind of ameliorative and transformative work with those they aimed to lift out of poverty and social exclusion. Addams's imagination finally caught fire in 1897, when she read a magazine article about Toynbee Hall, a "settlement house" in a poor area of London that was staffed by college-educated men as volunteers-in-residence who were working with their neighbors. During a European trip they took together, Addams convinced Starr to visit Toynbee Hall with her. Two years later, on the basis of that transformative experience and their additional research, as well as Addams's inherited wealth and social influence, Addams and Starr founded Chicago's Hull House.⁹ There they and a small group of other college-educated women lived together as its resident staff, creating a place of welcome and social community for and with their poor immigrant neighbors. At its peak, Hull House included thirteen buildings supporting a wide range of women-inclusive educational courses, debates, dramas, sports, and arts events, while serving as a center for urban research and community-inclusive collaboration to devise effective strategies for resolving the particular eco-social problems its neighborhood members were experiencing in their everyday lives.

During her many years of leadership at Hull House (1889-1935), Addams used her gifts as a speaker and a writer to gain wide support for the practical transformation strategies and the institutional developments the Hull House community devised. In speeches, essays, and books, Addams shared the metaphilosophical, theoretical, and practical insights she was gaining from these

⁹ Hull House's claim as the first settlement house in the United States is challenged by supporters of the University Settlement, which was founded as the Neighborhood Guild on New York's Lower East Side in 1886, and moved to its present location in 1898.

horizontal processes of meeting, listening, learning, and working together as equals across differences in class and culture, ultimately giving rise to her fresh philosophical conception of “social democracy.” As Addams discovered, Hull House’s problem-focused transformative collaborations were valuable not only to their neighbors, but also to countless other young college graduates who were longing for meaningful lives of working toward something better than the limited goals toward which then-prevailing social norms were directing their ambitions.

Addams’s first influential book, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), was highly praised by William James, and quoted by John Dewey in his chapters of the revised *Ethics* (1932), because it exemplifies the key meta-ethical insights he had learned from her: the greatest ethical problems of modern life are social, not individual; and these cannot be resolved top-down and by universal formulas, but only through context-specific, experimental collaborative inquiries.¹⁰ In contrast with mainstream philosophy’s argumentative method, the *narrative philosophical method* that Addams successfully deploys in this and other influential works follows the oral presentation style of the engaging speeches from which it grew. That is, Addams generally implies and exemplifies her thesis, rather than making it explicit, allowing her stories to “work” at a deeper level of readers’ psycho-social being than their more readily accessible beliefs, thus avoiding immediate rejection while implicitly challenging those beliefs and provoking their critical and imaginative rethinking.¹¹

Through the stories she tells in *Democracy and Social Ethics* and the way she frames them, Addams suggests that the process through which highly educated, privi-

leged people can learn how to work across class divisions to help resolve the real social problems that the poor experience in their daily lives must begin with the kind of *intellectual and psycho-social humility* that allows these neighbors to trust them enough to teach them how justice and mercy can intertwine as sustaining threads within lives that are very different than their own, thereby challenging their previous assumptions about how to live morally good lives. Only then can such privileged outsiders begin to earn a deeper trust by *working with*, rather than *for* their neighbors in collaborative inquiries and transformative efforts of all kinds.¹²

Within such collaborative inquiries, disadvantaged participants will acknowledge the “horizontal leadership” of privileged participants only if they earn it and are prepared to use their social position, skills, influence, and hard work to introduce the specific changes they devise together into their cities and their nation’s institutions, laws, systems, and ways of life. For example, when her “horizontal leadership” role at Hull House required Addams to agree to lead the new program of city-wide trash collection in Chicago she proposed to the City Council on behalf of the collaborating Hull House community, she did so willingly, while continuously learning from the suggestions of her neighbors about how to make the program better. At the same time, her visionary leadership, communication skills, and administrative effectiveness earned the trust of Chicago’s power brokers, who also were necessary partners in initiating such immediate, practical, and eventually transformative changes *together*.

In “Charitable Effort,” a memorable chapter of *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Addams’s narrative method conveys the following web of meta-metaphysical, meta-epistemological, and meta-ethical ideas¹³ to the read-

¹⁰ Immediately after its publication, James wrote a letter of appreciation to Addams praising her *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902) as “one of the great books of our time,” and commenting that he “learned a lot” from it. Dewey cites and quotes Addams in *Ethics* (1932), Chapter 16, “Morals and Social Problems.”

¹¹ See Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements” (1892) and “The Objective Value of a Social Settlement” (1892), *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910), *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907), and *The Long Road of Women’s Memory* (1916), as well as many other essays, letters, and speeches.

¹² On the importance of working *with* rather than *for* oppressed members of one’s community to resolve practical problems and to advance social democracy, see Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric* (1996).

¹³ The prefix “meta” as applied to each of these domains implies stepping back to another philosophical level that focuses on the larger purpose, process, and logic that guides their relationships

er: All human persons can contribute experience-based insights and valuable efforts toward advancing humanity's moral evolution toward a future stage in which we will have moved beyond hierarchical privileges and privations. Even now, all of us need and can experience the moral mutuality of living as equal, sympathetic neighbors within existing communities that are working together to influence their cities, their nations, and the larger world toward a deeper, social democracy. Addams subtly leads readers of "Charitable Effort" to understand and to accept this meta-philosophical webwork through five steps of thinking supported by a series of anecdotes, which she unobtrusively frames in terms of five scientifically well-supported philosophical claims:

- 1 We humans evolve morally through a historical process that is always personal, which requires adjusting our moral concepts, ideals, values, principles, and rules to make them more effective hypothetical guides for our conduct in our actual social circumstances.
- 2 In our modern era, the basic sympathetic impulse of many democracy-minded, idealistic young people to dedicate themselves to "charitable efforts" that aim to offer practical assistance to other members of their society who are in trouble often is misunderstood by those whose experience in living is very different from their own because of class inequalities, which are expressed in relational patterns of privilege and privation.
- 3 Even though these privileged young people mean well, their *unscientific* way of approaching "charity" is ultimately responsible for their confusion, frustration, rejection, and ineffectiveness, and even for creating perverse social habits among those they aim to assist; by learning from *new, more scientific* approaches to education and to parenting, they must develop a similarly scientific approach to social service, which

can and should lead to great changes in how those in need and their larger society actually live.

- 4 Transforming charitable social relations toward the moral mutuality of "a larger and more satisfying democracy" is a difficult and personally unsettling process, but all parties to such efforts can contribute valuable insights and memorable examples that can help us to move beyond the currently dominant, hierarchical framework of industrial values that leads to radically unequal rewards for work, opportunities to learn, and quality of life overall.
- 5 Those who would work with others as horizontal leaders in this democracy-deepening process must exemplify intellectual and moral virtues of *mercy, justice, and humility*, which will allow them to learn about the meaning of life and how to make life good for all by collaborating with the *economically, but not morally poor people* they aim to assist.

Addams's guiding insight in "Charitable Effort" is that fulfilling our moral responsibilities as human persons requires a more deeply democratic kind of social living that America had not then and has not yet achieved. Our Statue of Liberty's implied pledge that our nation will be a democratic refuge for the world's oppressed peoples is profoundly incompatible with their actual experience on arrival in a hierarchical society that extracts their industrial labor while failing to offer them a safe home as free and equal citizens. Achieving such a deep intellectual-and-practical democracy, Addams suggests, requires working for changes in our mainstream culture, in our eco-social systems, in our existing institutions, and in our current public policies. Gaining the knowledge of what kinds of changes we must make, as well as the power to make them, requires learning humbly with diverse neighbors about how we can think and act well together in on-going experimental processes of strategic thinking, communicating our proposals effectively, actively implementing these with help from powerful others, evaluat-

and the contents of each of them.

ing our results, and taking these problem-focused efforts to the next stage of social transformation at all levels required.

In this way, Addams's approach to progressively actualizing democratic ideal goals involves *a community-inclusive approach to generating shared social knowledge* as a basis for actions that will meet immediate needs, while transforming public policies, institutions, systems, and underlying cultures over time. As James, Dewey, and Mead testified, her writings, speeches, community service, and collaborative, public-inclusive approach to building new institutions and initiating necessary social services played a key role in developing *pragmatism's non-ideal, context-specific, problem-oriented approach to theorizing in the social sciences*, growing of collaborative interventions in community life that are effective in four ways:

1. They immediately meet urgent human needs in ways that their "beneficiaries" value and help to design.
2. They change the ways in which the participants think about many things—including unacknowledged biases related to class, gender, race, and culture, as well as incorrect beliefs about "how the world works"—by teaching all of them to think-and-act well together concerning shared problems, based on gaining mutual trust through frank exchanges of life stories, opinions, and various other kinds of information, to which people "listen with their hearts."
3. They lead to the creation of new public policies and institutions, or reconstructed versions of existing ones, that can meet such urgent needs on an on-going basis.
4. They serve as examples for further social scientific study, criticism, comparison with related examples, and development of "low-rise" metaphysical generalizations that may be helpful in the future for re-solving the same complex eco-social problems if these recur, and for guiding efforts to transform

the institutions and larger systems that give rise to these, as well as cultural norms and social habits that support them.

All of these strands of Jane Addams' transformative practice-based, meta-philosophical, theoretical, and institutional thinking developed simultaneously, stimulated by and stimulating the Hull House community's efforts, as well as those of diverse philosopher-activists within the emerging pragmatist movement's de-centralized national and international processes of weaving a new intellectual-and-practical webwork of ideas.

Building on the lessons and achievements of the poverty-focused transformative efforts of the Hull House community, Addams took up a collaborative leadership role within struggles for racial and gender justice in America,¹⁴ as well as for international peace. Following a series of lectures on peace as positively understood,¹⁵ Addams wrote a series of fallibilistic, experience-based, self-correcting books and essays, including *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907), *Women at the Hague: The International Congress of Women and Its Results*, co-authored with Emily G. Balch and Alice Hamilton (1915), *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922), and "Later Reflections on Peace" (1932).¹⁶ In *Newer Ideals of Peace*, Addams anticipates the eventual substitutions of the progressive change-making ways of peace for the horrifying ways of war as emerging from an evolutionary process she believed was well underway

¹⁴ For example, Addams was a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a public supporter of Ida B. Wells-Barnett's anti-lynching crusade, and a well-known advocate for women's right to vote.

¹⁵ See, for example, an article in *Chataqua Assembly Herald* (July 9, 1902), on her second lecture on "The Newer Ideals of Peace" at *Jane Addams Digital Edition*, <http://mail.digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/1167>.

¹⁶ I discuss Addams's writings on positive peace—the "newer ideal" in which she framed the first of these books—in my essay, "Social Democracy, Cosmopolitan Hospitality, and Intercivilizational Peace: Lessons from Jane Addams," Chapter 9 in Maurice Hamington, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams* (Penn State University Press, 2008). For rich insights on Addams's views on social democracy and peace, see Marilyn Fischer et al., *Jane Addams and the Practice of Democracy* (University of Illinois Press, 2009), and Marilyn Fischer and Judy Whipps, *Jane Addams's Writings on Peace* (Thoemmes Press, 2003).

and would soon lead to cosmopolitan hospitality across lines of national and civilization differences.¹⁷

When the horrors of World War I began, Addams revised this hypothesis from evolutionary inevitability to *the higher evolutionary possibility of peace*, building on her Hull House fame and its methods of collaborative inquiry to co-found the Women's Peace Party—which also demanded women's suffrage—in 1915. Shortly thereafter, Addams represented this new organization at a conference of international women leaders at the Hague that focused on women's role in peace making, about which she, Emily G. Balch, and Alice Hamilton wrote in *Women at the Hague: The International Congress of Women and Its Results* (1915). On this basis, Addams launched the still-existing International Women's League for Peace and Freedom (1919), for which she shared the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize, as an active collaboration to gather objective information about the realities of war, to inquire into its causes, to strategize about how to transform these, to meet the needs of the suffering, and to bring together warring peoples and their leaders in social and educational relationships that would critically challenge their previous beliefs, build a shared, motivating “sense of humanity,” and guide the design of cooperative actions and new institutions of social democracy.

In *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922), Addams reflects on the IWLFP's efforts during World War I and the lessons she and other participants learned from them. In contrast with Woodrow Wilson, who imagined democracy as a universal, primarily political system of rights and duties based on the American model, Addams foresaw diverse experiments in democracy as deeply social, context-specific, and emerging out of each nations' experiences of pain and hope, improving over time as nations and civilizations learn from their own efforts and the examples of others. Within this process, Addams looked toward individuals who would be willing and able to think and act

in ways that would advance the moral quality of their cultures, in spite of the costs of dissent in times of danger. She hoped that institutionalizing peace-building through the new League of Nations would contribute to this evolutionary process.

However, in “Later Reflections on Peace” (1932), Addams was still arguing against the belief of many international analysts that military forces is necessary for peace, while calling instead for a “gradual moralization of international relations” that substitutes law for violence.¹⁸ Addams suggested that this was already happening through a three-stage process: (1) the creation of mechanisms for arbitration and adjudication through the League of Nations, (2) a sense of security arising from their use, and (3) gradual disarmament. She insightfully criticized the armaments industry as blocking this process and called for its nationalization. Of course, even as she was writing and speaking these words, autocrats were preparing for World War II.

Addams's greatest mistake in “Newer Ideals of Peace” and these later works on positive peace may have been failing to take adequate account of “the new nationalisms” that gave rise to both World Wars and continue to guide violent conflicts in our own times. However, her insight that new habits of peace-building can arise from equally deep human impulses as the impulse to violence is still important. Moreover, her meta-metaphysical insight about which evolutionary possibility will be actualized is equally important: *history's process is moved by those who move it*. Therefore, we must *think and act well together* toward the ideal goals of justice, social democracy, and positive peace throughout the courses of our lives, if these are to become *actual features* of the world's eco-social systems someday, instead of remaining only possible, but never actualized lines of history's evolutionary development at local, national, and global levels.

¹⁷ See my “Social Democracy, Cosmopolitan Hospitality, and Inter-Civilizational Peace: Lessons from Jane Addams,” op. cit.

¹⁸ See Addams, “Later Reflections on Peace” (1932), in Christopher Lasch's edited collection of her essays, *The Social Thought of Jane Addams* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 253.

Jane Addams's triply privileged life was intertwined at many levels with the less well-known, triply disadvantaged, yet equally contributive life of another originary feminist pragmatist, Anna Julia Heywood Cooper, who overcame triple obstacles of race, slavery-based poverty, and gender to make complementary theoretical, institution-building, and practical contributions to domestic, local, and global struggles for justice and positive peace, including her invaluable insights about how to sustain one's commitment to these struggles over the long-term.¹⁹ Despite the great disadvantages into which she was born, Cooper became even more highly educated than Addams, because she, her mother, and her recently-enslaved Black community were determined that poverty and racial bias would not hold this gifted young woman back, and they all saw education as the high road to liberation for her and for the countless others she would lead. She studied first at St. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute for gifted Black boys and girls in the Southern city of Raleigh, North Carolina, where she served as a peer teacher, earned her diploma, and then married Rev. A. C. Cooper, a classical Greek scholar and Black theologian from the West Indies. After his death six months later, Cooper enrolled with a full-tuition scholarship in the more demanding "Gentleman's Course" at Oberlin College, in the Northern city of Oberlin, Ohio, which was among the first American colleges to admit women and African Americans into its integrated classrooms. Even while struggling to pay her living expenses, Cooper became broadly educated in the sciences and humanities at Oberlin, earning both a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in mathematics.²⁰

¹⁹ For additional valuable insights on Anna Julia Cooper's life and work see Charles Lemert & Esme Bahn's helpfully annotated collection of her writings, *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), Vivian M. May's brilliant literary biography, *Anna Julia Cooper: Visionary Black Feminist* (Routledge, 2007), and V. Denise James's prize-winning essay, "Reading Anna J. Cooper with William James: Black Feminist Visionary Pragmatism, Philosophy's Culture of Justification, and Belief," *The Pluralist* 8: 3 (Fall 2013), 32-45.

²⁰ During those same years, George Herbert Mead also studied at Oberlin College, where his father was Professor of Homiletics

Many years later, at the age of 66, Cooper became the fourth African American woman to earn a Ph.D., as well as the first to earn a doctorate at the Sorbonne in Paris (1924). Although Cooper had begun her doctoral studies in 1911 at Columbia University in New York, with an emphasis on Medieval French Literature, she withdrew when she will unable (or unwilling) to meet Columbia's residency requirement after adopting her late brother and sister-in-law's five children in 1915 and moving them to Washington, D.C., where she was simultaneously pursuing a demanding professional career in teaching and educational administration, and an equally demanding career in intellectual and practical activism. This is why Cooper shifted her doctoral studies to French history at the Sorbonne, where she wrote and successfully defended a highly original doctoral dissertation, *L'attitude de la France à l'égard l'esclavage pendant la revolution*, a powerful critique of French liberal political thinkers in the years after the French Revolution who, in spite of their avowed values of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*, could not agree to end chattel slavery in Saint Domingue (Haiti), or to treat Black plantation owners as their social equals.²¹ In *L'attitude*, Cooper analyzes the causes of these French political leaders' failure to live out their own democratic values as springing from two interlinked causes: (1) anti-Black racism, and (2) the French national economy's reliance on revenues from the slavery-based international sugar trade.

Cooper deeply understood both of these toxic social diseases because of her experience of struggle with these same obstacles in America, which guided her research, her teaching, her community service, and her years of national and international advocacy for racial, economic, and gender justice. After she finally retired from teaching and administrative leadership at Washington's Dunbar School in 1930, Dr. Cooper began a new phase of her life-

and his mother served on the Women's Board of Managers.

²¹ Frances Richardson Keller later translated Anna Julia Cooper's doctoral dissertation into English, expressing its title as *Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionists* (1988).

long commitment to education as President and Professor at Frelinghuysen University, which served Black adult learners.

Earlier, during those same years when Jane Addams and her privileged white friends were struggling toward founding Hull House and learning through its social transformation process, Anna Julia Cooper was writing about her race-linked experiences as “a Black woman of the South,” and showing that her contributions and those of other college-educated women were needed in order to undo distortions in all of the scholarly disciplines and to assure that the education of new generations of girls and boys, women and men would be responsive to the real needs of the day. Cooper’s widely read, path-breaking book, *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South* (1892), includes chapters on how to advance on-going transformative struggles against problems of gender and race. In “The Higher Education of Women,” Cooper argues that college-educated women can bring both their knowledge and their caring perspective to challenge and balance out the distorting lens that educated, economically privileged, predominantly white men have brought thus far to all the intellectual fields, thereby creating the basis for much-needed critical reconstruction in all the disciplines that can replace the kind of “old thinking” that has created countless world problems with a more realistic, more inclusive, more caring, and more effective kind of “new thinking.” Cooper’s meta-epistemological claim about what educated women can bring to such critical and creative collaborations with educated men is not an “essentialist” claim based on biological sex alone, although she clearly believes that women’s embodiment plays a role in shaping shared aspects of their experience. Rather, hers is a general historical and sociological claim about the kind of *widely shared perspective* that emerges among college-educated women when they gain opportunities to combine what they have learned within women’s “normal” social sphere with what higher education teaches them about the arts, the sciences, and the humanities.

Cooper suggests in “The Higher Education of Women” that college-educated women are aware that they represent countless other women who have been excluded for centuries from higher education and from leadership roles in intellectual and practical life. They recognize that it is their responsibility and their opportunity to *contribute educated women’s perspectives to collaborative processes of shaping new ways of thinking-and-acting* that can satisfy their own, experience-based, previously unstudied intellectual and moral standards, while at the same time actively helping to meet humanity’s practical and aesthetic needs.²² Thus, in this essay, Cooper introduces some key meta-epistemological and meta-ethical ideas that have become transformative tools for contemporary feminist theory across the disciplines:

1. The importance for the growth of knowledge of including group-linked “perspectives” from differing social locations
2. The importance of including the “caring” perspective that historically has been more common among women, and
3. The continuing value of extra-scientific sources of wisdom in living.

This and other essays in Cooper’s *A Voice from the South* are full of memorable bits of wisdom from which contemporary theorists and activists can learn valuable lessons about how to think well enough, individually and together, in times of crisis and over the long struggle for justice and positive peace. They suggest ways of feeling-and-thinking that grow out of and continuously support a way of effective, joyful, morally principled living.²³

²² Patricia Hill Collins and other contemporary feminist theorists of “intersectionality” credit Cooper with initiating this emphasis on differences in perspective that arise from gendered experience as this is infused with other, context-specific, often hierarchically structured aspects of an individual’s or group’s experience, including differences in race, class, culture, nation, and religion.

²³ The citations from Cooper in this list and the following paragraph are from Lemert and Bahn’s annotated collection, *Co-*

- “Building up manhood without considering women’s hopes is like trying to grow trees from leaves.” (78)
- “Get your heart power.” (131)
- “Universal reciprocity” (165)
- “Be true to the aspirations of your soul.” (226)
- “Let nothing in you starve.” (257)
- “Live into the world—don’t brood over it.” (285)

These bits of Cooper’s wisdom also help to illuminate *Voice’s* seemingly paradoxical chapter on race relations, “Has America a Race Problem? If So, How Can It Be Solved?” She answers the first question in the affirmative, and the second question with the proposal to “Let it alone and mind my own business” (171). In explaining what she means by this, Cooper writes that America’s race problem is so long-term, deep-rooted, and systemic that fully understanding it is beyond human powers. Thus, comprehensively mapping in advance a complete, fully adequate process of transformative action is impossible. Nonetheless, Cooper argues, each American has a moral responsibility to make helpful, consistent efforts to defeat this great evil an important part of their life plan and way of living, so as to be ready, willing, and able to work with others as promising possibilities emerge to advance this great struggle, including by advancing the growth of knowledge and by instituting reformative socio-systemic changes that eventually will bring about democratic equality. Thus, “minding [her] own business” meant using her gifts and following her own calling within this larger change process by focusing her continuing efforts on educating Black students, on institution-building to provide for Black people, and on intellectual leadership through speaking, writing, and participating in national and international conferences at which Black thinkers worked together to understand and to strategize how to overcome America’s and the world’s “race problem.”

per’s Voice. Vivian M. May, op. cit., quotes many of these same bits of wisdom.

As these essays suggest, Cooper’s primary interests focused on education, including efforts to transform scholarship across the disciplines and to create academic institutions to support the education of Black young people and adults, who lacked both life-sustaining resources and liberatory developmental opportunities within oppressive existing hierarchies of gender, race, class, region, and nation. Based on her educational attainments at Oberlin College, her teaching experiences at St. Augustine’s and at Wilberforce University, and her long-term record of community service, Cooper had been recruited to teach mathematics and science, and later to serve as Principal, at the only high school for African Americans in Washington, D.C. (later known as The Dunbar School), which offered “a rigorous education in a politically engaged environment.”²⁴ In this respected role, Cooper became a well-known African American scholar, organizational leader, and public speaker at national and international conferences. She worked closely with other college-educated African American women through the Negro Women’s Club Movement, becoming a valued leader and collaborator in many effective transformative efforts that focused on empowering all African Americans, “Lifting as We Climb” in the memorable words of Mary Church Terrell, president of the National Association of Colored Women.²⁵

Joining the growing Settlement House Movement that was learning from the efforts of Jane Addams and other college-educated white woman at Hull House, Anna Julia Cooper co-founded and co-led The Colored Social Settlement in Washington, D. C. (1906), “the first community house built expressly for the social improvement of colored people, in the United States and probably the world.”²⁶ Like Addams, Cooper also served on city-wide commissions on basic urban problems. Ac-

²⁴ See Vivian May, op. cit., 18.

²⁵ See Angela Davis’s critical analysis of the Negro Women’s Club Movement in *Women, Race and Class* (1981).

²⁶ See “The Colored Social Settlement: What It Is and What It Does” (2017), which lists Mrs. Anna J. Cooper as Supervisor, at https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_css/1.

knowledging the importance of her work, Cooper was invited to address a predominantly white audience at the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exhibition, where she presented "Women's Cause Is One and Universal." However, the small number (six) of African American women on the program led an equally famous African American feminist pragmatist, Ida B. Wells, to boycott that event, even though she worked with both Addams and Cooper on other projects, including the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the national anti-lynching campaign she led. Such interracial collaborations within the growing network of college-educated feminist pragmatist women were always fraught with tensions, because the needs for change were so urgent and varied, because the opposition was so great, and because mutual understanding and trust were limited.

W. E. B. Du Bois, the founding leader of the NAACP, was deeply influenced by Cooper, having read her *Voice* shortly after its publication.²⁷ Both served as members of the American delegation to the 1900 Pan-African Conference in London, which Cooper helped to organize, and where she presented her essay, "The Negro Problem in America," and Du Bois drafted the Conference's concluding Manifesto, "Address to the Nations of the World." His key claim in this Manifesto—"The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the colour-line"—became the framing concept for Du Bois's influential 1903 philosophical and sociological analysis of the race problem in America, *The Souls of Black Folk*,²⁸ including his visionary

prescription for overcoming this problem through continuing, conjoined struggles for work, culture, and liberty.

However, in spite of the fact that Du Bois knew Cooper well as a global leader in the struggle for racial justice, his later book, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (1920), echoes her book title without acknowledgement, and it includes a chapter, "On the Damnation of Women," in which he quotes her without naming her, thus making her doubly invisible behind the "veil" he first theorized in *Souls*.²⁹ In "Damnation," Du Bois analyzes America's racialized, class-structured gender system, which leaves poor women vulnerable to sexual exploitation and disrespect by white men and boys, while forcing all women to choose between "normal" motherhood in submission to husbands, and well-paid, meaningful work: "Only at the sacrifice of intelligence and the chance to do their best work can the majority of modern women bear children. This is the damnation of women" (1920: 62). Du Bois further analyzes the causes of frequent break-ups of Black families, as well as the problem that urban Black women face in finding suitable marriage partners, as primarily economic in origin. Black male "breadwinners" in small towns and rural areas are paid substandard wages and have limited opportunities to get better jobs, Du Bois writes, but Black women can get domestic work and industrial jobs at standard women's wages in cities. However, Black women outnumber Black men in cities, which disadvantages them in choosing marriage partners.

Nonetheless, Du Bois argues, for the sake of "the race" and to fulfill their own gifts, Black women must become educated, as well as economically indepen-

²⁷ Derrick P. Alridge claims that Cooper eventually became the American Negro Academy's first female member; see his essay, "Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism: The Educational Ideas of Anna Julia Cooper and W.E.B. Du Bois, 1892–1940," *History of Education Quarterly* 47:4 (2007). The website of the Episcopal Church USA concurs. However, I could find no other evidence that the ANA ever included women among its members.

²⁸ *The New York Times* ranked Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* as #2 on its list of the 100 most influential books of the twentieth century, close on the heels of James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), which greatly interested Ludwig Wittgenstein, among other influential twentieth century philosopher. Martin Luther King, Jr., read the works of both James and Du Bois in the course of his on-going development as a philosopher, theologian, and leader for social justice and positive peace.

²⁹ See Joy James, "Profeminism and Gender Elites: W. E. B. Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett," *Next to the Color Line: Gender, Sexuality, and W. E. B. Du Bois*, ed. Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum (2007); and Shirley Moody-Turner, "'Dear Dr. Du Bois': Anna Julia Cooper, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Gender Politics of Black Publishing," *MELUS: The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 40:3 (2015). See also LaRese Hubbard's evidence that Alexander Crummell served as a mentor to Cooper (as well as to Du Bois), in her "Anna Julia Cooper and Africana Womanism: Some Early Conceptual Contributions," *Black Women, Gender and Families* 4:2 (2010). See also V. Denise James, op. cit.

dent, free to pursue their own work, and free to choose whether to have children. Such college-educated Black women are already emerging, Du Bois continues, lifting up all Black people by their work and by the way they live their lives.

To no modern race does its women mean so much as to the Negro nor come so near to the fulfillment of its meaning. *As one of our women writes: "Only the black woman can say 'when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me'"* (Du Bois 1920: 65).

Please note that, even though he does not cite her as its author, this passage Du Bois quotes comes in its entirety from Cooper's *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*.

Given that he knew Cooper well as a leading Black intellectual, educator, and institution-builder, it seems odd that Du Bois sweeps her into the mass of Black women about whom he writes, instead of acknowledging that hers is a leading voice that has helped to shape his own. It is hard to know why Du Bois failed to credit Cooper in *Darkwater*, whether it was because he believed that he could give her ideas greater social impact in those woman-silencing times by affirming them in his own male voice, or because his attention was on advancing his own position within the on-going struggle for paramount patriarchal leadership within African American transformative change efforts.

Many years later, Martin Luther King, Jr., continued to practice this same kind of patriarchal appropriation of women's voices as the paramount African American male leader within the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's, and as a prophetic leader within the global struggle for positive peace.³⁰ Positive peacemakers since King have acknowledged and built on his contributions to the theory and practice of this local-and-global

process, as well as those of Du Bois. and Addams. Cooper has not yet received her due for her theoretical work, her institution-building leadership, and her practical insights about why perspectival diversity matters and how to sustain ourselves in our on-going struggle.

Contemporary pragmatist feminist leaders like Sally Haslanger must add these still-valuable web-weaving lessons from Addams and Cooper to those they have inherited from King in order to stock their memories and imaginations with resources that will help them to expand their already valuable contributions to struggles for justice into peacemaking theory and practice. In Haslanger's Presidential Address to the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, "Social Meaning and Philosophical Method" (2013),³¹ she argues against the limits of contemporary individualism as a moral and political framework by stressing the importance of a shared matrix or social web of meanings, which requires cultural, linguistic, and structural change if it is to allow individuals and groups to make an interactive shift toward pursuing social justice. Like the original feminist pragmatists, Haslanger argues in this essay that individuals are always members of culture-specific social groups, and their actions alone can neither make their society just nor make it unjust, because how their societies are organized always matters. Even the actions of educated and otherwise responsible individuals can contribute to unjust outcomes, if their societies are organized in ways that unjustly oppress those who are exploited or culturally marginalized through the social roles that are assigned to them and the limited options these create. Likewise, good social structures "provide roles for people to do good; structures can facilitate, by the roles they make available, vision, creativity, generosity, leadership, and other good things" (18). "We are embedded in *social meanings*," Haslanger writes, which are structured

³⁰ See King's final monograph, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos of Community?* (1967), as well as my discussion of his life and work in my *Pragmatist Political Economy* (forthcoming).

³¹ See Haslanger's "Social Meaning and Philosophical Method" in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 88 (January 2014), 16-37.

by *social practices*. These can change, she notes, but “*the change must be social change, collective change, cultural change*” (20).

This is why collective responsibility, collective action, and “socially embedded agency” matter so much as aspects of social justice that an individualist “political liberalism” inevitably overlooks or downplays. As Haslanger argues,

The terms of our action and interaction are not up to us as individuals. What is valuable, what is acceptable, even what we do, and want, and think, depend on *cultural frameworks of meaning*...Given that all action—by individuals or the state—occurs within a *cultural context* that gives it meaning, one might argue that individual and institutional injustice are just the tip of the iceberg. These injustices are the manifestation of *deeper and less tractable sources of inequality in culture, or social meaning*. (20, emphases added)

The culture-linked social structures Haslanger has in mind are “networks of social relations,” e.g., family and kinship relations, relations to property, civic relations, and relations within work, all of which take differing forms in differing cultural and familial contexts that may not be transparent to outsiders.

These *social relations* are constituted through *social practices*, Haslanger argues, which may fall on a continuum between “thin” and “thick.” At the “thin” extreme, such practices may be nothing more than “simple patterns of interaction, regularities in our behavior” (21). In contrast, “thick” practices partly constitute social structures through actions that may be intentional, norm-guided, aiming to fulfill our responsibilities, and based on shared expectations. Because we may be confused, misled, or unaware of the social structures that guide and are influenced by our actions, Haslanger aims for a general account of social practices that falls “somewhere between the thickest and the thinnest” (22).

Social practices so understood function as organized ways of achieving a goal or resolving a coordination or access problem. They evolve over time through trial and error in self-sustaining ways that may lead later practitioners

to lose track of their original purpose, and they may not be rational or mutually advantageous (23) when they are “materially realized” (24). As contemporary anthropologists and other social scientists use this concept, practices “consist of interdependent *schemas* and *resources* [that] mutually imply and sustain each other over time.” Schemas are variable and evolving, but also sticky and change-resistant “clusters of culturally shared concepts, beliefs, and other attitudes that enable us to interpret and organize information and coordinate action, thought, and affect.” Resources are “things of all sorts—human, non-human, animate, or not—that are taken to have [positive or negative] value,” whether this value is practical, moral, aesthetic, religious, or of some other kind (24). Within this relational framework, “A *social group*—e.g., a gender, a race, but also farmers, nurses, the unemployed—is a *set of people who function at a node (or set of nodes) in a structure*... Schemas are the basis of social meaning” (25).

Thus, to say that an action or a thing has *social meaning* is to point to a significance that grows out of a widely shared, culture-linked understanding that both exceeds and contextualizes whatever *personal meaning* it may have. Thus, Haslanger argues, “Insofar as social meanings partly constitute our social practices, and internalized meanings guide our interactions, *social justice requires attention to—and changes to—social meanings*,” for example, when these involve social stigma or harmful social ideals (26). Changing these social meanings may require changing how we interpret *our key social concepts* or deploying alternative ones.

Broadly, Haslanger claims, “The act of ‘*defining*,’ of assigning a stereotype or schema to an expression, of *deciding* which words to include (or not) in our vocabulary are *political acts*” (30). Moreover, “*How we revise schemas*—whether we discard or modify the concepts, core beliefs, evaluations, emotive scripts—*must be justified holistically and in terms of the impact on social practices*.” (31). Finally, “Because many of the social practices/structures within which action is meaningful are unjust,

we should subject the schemas to a form of critique that depends on rich empirical investigations. Note, however, that our theorizing itself [is] a social practice, so should also be subjected to critique" (32). Unless we do this, "An uncritical acceptance of truths and the concepts they depend on may actually cause systematic harms" (33). Positively expressed, "Philosophy has the power to create culture; we are not just bystanders but producers" (33).

The phenomenological insights of contemporary feminist theorist Maria Lugones complement Haslanger's insights by suggesting how we, as cross-culturally interacting individuals, groups, and social movements, can begin to shift the social matrix or web of meanings toward deep, positively peaceful changes that are personal, cultural, and institutional. In her frequently reprinted and widely read, essay "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception,"³³ Lugones suggests that "loving," rather than arrogant perception of other cultures, their members, and their lifeways, opens us up to learning from them while recognizing the limits of our own culture's web of meanings, its history, and its achievement of justice. Building our knowledge of another culture we hope to understand and learn from prepares us for "world"-travelling, i.e., experiencing that cultural world "from the inside," as its members experience it, through active, "playful" relationships with some of its individual members that are different in purpose and quality from scholarly, "objective" efforts to study a people. In the back-and-forth of playful relationships, we can try to speak, interact, and see the world as our friends who live within it do, allowing ourselves to laugh, to be laughed at and corrected, to share food and ideas, and to enjoy living, questioning, and making up new meanings together.

We are changed by these travels, so that we bring back new possibilities for our own culture's shared matrix or web of meanings, as well as its social-institutional structures, public policies, and the ideal goals that guide these.

Contemporary indigenous botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer expands Addams's and Cooper's ideal relations of mutual learning, mutual trust, and mutual caring within reciprocal relationships to include the living world, echoing Haslanger that actualizing these norms requires changing capitalist frameworks and underlying cultures, while practicing Lugones's "world"-travelling.³³

She empowers this process by "braiding" together indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge of botany and related fields, and the teaching of plants, treating each of them with a "loving" rather than an arrogant perspective, and using narrative rather than argumentation to persuade. In one of her beautiful essays, "An Epiphany in the Beans," Kimmerer tells the story of working in her garden on a hot summer day, cultivating the beans with which she aims to feed her daughters and herself, when she realizes that the Earth and its plants already love her and other humans, asking only that their care for us be reciprocated. In another essay, "The Pledge of Gratitude," she tells about the overarching educational ideal at an elementary school on the nearby lands of another indigenous people, the Onandaga nation (a member nation of Haudenosaunee, often referred to as the Iroquois Confederacy), where each week begins with students at each level leading parts of the "Thanksgiving Address" that thanks each kind of being in the larger world that cares for them, with each part concluding, "Now our minds are one." In a recent interview with David Marchese, Kimmerer

³³ See Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 2: 2 (Summer 1987), 3-19. See also her earlier essay with Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory For You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for the Woman's Voice," *Women's Studies International Forum* 6: 6 (1983), 573-581, and her later essay, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," *Hypatia* 25: 4 (Fall 2010), 742-759.

³³ See Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Milkweed Editions, 2015), and *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* (Scribner, 2024). See also Kimmerer's interview with David Marchese in *The New York Times Magazine* (February 5, 2023). Kimmerer is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and a scientifically trained botanist who leads the Center for Native Peoples and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

explained that she “does not understand the ‘taker’ attitude. People with that perspective were not raised with the world ‘humility’ as a good thing.”

The important work of collaborative work of theorists and practitioners of positive peace, including Grant E. Rissler and Patricia M. Shields, can be helpfully informed by Cooper’s originary Black feminist pragmatism as well as the diverse methods and insights of Haslanger, Lugones, Kimmerer, and other contemporary feminist and indigenous theorists, as it already is by the work of Addams and King. In their collaborative essay, “Positive Peace—A Necessary Touchstone for Public Administration,”³⁴ Rissler and Shields trace the history of important efforts to advance justice, democratic participation, institutional reconstruction, and positive peace within their profession back to Addams, while arguing that the ontologically social, institutionally reconstructive, and pluralistically normative strands of positive peace theory and praxis should replace their discipline’s now-dominant strands of ontological individualism, top-down leadership, and a “negative” conception of peace as guides for developing their discipline’s theory and professional practice. Advancing positive peace as a normative goal, process, and practical framework offers four key advantages for guiding the systemic changes we need, in their view:

1. Positive peace is multidimensional in sectors and levels, always seeking to understand and to resolve the root causes of problems, which requires collaborative, cross-sector governance (68).
2. Positive peace involves a tension between justice and order in institutional structures, public policies, and habits of living that must be resolved in particular contexts through negotiation or mediation among affected parties, while “holding space” for those who are nervous or not ready to speak (63, 68).

3. Positive peace recognizes that human beings are inherently relational and interdependent (68).
4. Positive peace is pluralistic, recognizing that this concept has many meanings that arise from its long history of development and deployment within differing cultures, which gives each conception on-going standing, value, and potential usefulness in specific contexts, while requiring competent interpreters of its diverse conceptions of peace and the standpoints within which they matter (68).

Rissling and Shields demonstrate the fourth of these advantages—cultural pluralism that allows collaborating participants and theorists to learn from and “travel” with others—by showing how eight different, yet potentially mutually informative, culture-specific conceptions of positive peace can be, all of them including justice in its conditions. These include:

- shalom (Hebrew): “right relationships or unity and prosperity in alignment with the will of Jehovah” (62-64)
- ubuntu (Zulu): “humanity toward others” (62-64)
- ahimsa (Indian): “to kill no living creature” (63-64)
- shanti (Indian): “to maintain a tranquil mindset even in suffering or conflict” (63)
- heiwa (Japanese): “aligning oneself to the common good/social order” (63)
- al-Islam (Arabic): “to be at peace in alignment with the will of Allah” (63-64)
- eirene (Greek): “prosperity and order” (63-64)
- justapaz (Spanish): “peace requires justice in order to be sustainable” (64)

Each of these cultural conceptions of positive peace has already played an important role in context-specific peacemaking processes from which others can learn, without trying to simply replicate them in contexts that differ in important ways. For example, Archbishop Des-

³⁴ See Grant E. Rissler and Patricia M. Shields, “Positive Peace—A Necessary Touchstone for Public Administration,” *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 41: 60-78 (2019).

mond Tutu drew on both *shalom* and *ubuntu* in framing, guiding, and explaining South Africa's post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the multi-year hearings it led in order to build an enduring peace between factions that had been divided by systematic violence. It worked through truth-telling by those who had done great harms and open-hearted listening by those who had endured them. We can imagine how bringing together several of these and other culturally diverse conceptions of peace, justice, and mutual caring might help to resolve the long-term violent struggle in Palestine, as well as American struggles over gun violence in homes and public places, and global struggles over how to make a positive peace over climate change.

Rissler and Shields make another important contribution in this essay in their analysis of the skill sets or competences that public administrators (and others) need to develop in order to be effective horizontal leaders within context-specific positive peacemaking processes like these.

The cultivated skills or competences they list include active listening, problem-solving, dialogue, negotiation, and mediation, as well as trauma awareness, appreciative inquiry skills, self-reflection, and cultural competency "to understand their own biases and culture frames and account for these as they work with others" (65, 71,75). An educational curriculum for positive peacemakers at all levels will help future public administrators to develop these professional skills, competences, and attitudes (69, 73). Rissler and Shields suggest that a pluralistically imagined conception of positive peace must become "a global touchstone" to guide morally desirable and practically effective processes of personal, cultural, institutional, and political change at all levels that respond to now-widespread, reasonable suspicions of individualist conceptions of "democracy," "good governance," and the "taker" systems they now guide (74).

In concluding this essay, may I suggest that the efforts of these and other contemporary theorists to advance

ancient ideals of positive peace with justice that so many of the world's peoples' have cherished, demanded, and worked for can become even more insightful and effective by drawing on the interlinked lives, theories, institution-building practices, educational models, and deeply democratic practices of the originary pragmatist feminists, including Jane Addams and Anna Julia Cooper, about how to build a transformative web of relationships that is both context-specific and global in scope. Insights from diverse contemporary feminist theorists, leaders, and practitioners, including Sally Haslanger, Maria Lugones, and Robin Wall Kimmerer, will help all of us to realize that each culture's now-dominant social matrix of meanings and the institutional structures it guides must change, that we can advance these change processes by "travelling" to other people's worlds within and outside our own culture, and that the reciprocal caring that we must theorize, teach, and practice must include all humans as well as other living beings. A final piece of wisdom that these thinkers offer when taken together is this: we do not need, nor can we develop a comprehensive vision of positive peace in advance; but we can find our own places within this great struggle through reflection and active participation, and we can sustain these commitments as sources of long-term hope by doing, rather than brooding about it.

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