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Jane Addams and the Lost Paradigm of Sociology

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Abstract The present work is the beginning of a discussion that again addresses the question of Jane Addams' sociological heritage. That latter is defined as a puzzle which may finally have a solution in that all of the pieces now appear to have been collected. The approach taken to recovering Addams' identity as a sociologist involves a historico-sociological exploration of the influences upon the formation of her sociological thought, with a focus on Auguste Comte, the Father of Sociology. The article argues that Addams emulated Comte's scientific mission and took upon herself the task of continuing his project by following another route to the goal. She is thus Comte's successor, and even rival, insofar as she sought to establish sociology as a science that may be placed in charge of producing knowledge about social life and has the social mission of finding solutions to social problems that politicians proved incapable of tackling. Addams emerges from the discussion as the creator of a sociological paradigm that was dismissed, dismantled, and then lost in the process of the scientific revolution that took place unnoticed after the end of World War I, when the normal period of the scientific development of sociology in America came to an end. The suppression during the 1920s of the type of sociology that Addams developed and adhered to has left sociology in a state of unresolved identity crisis and arrested scientific development.

Keywords Sociological Paradigm; Sociological Canon; Addams's Sociological Identity; Comte's Unfinished Project; Mechanism of Emulation; Symbolic Interactionism

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The Puzzle

The voluminous literature on Jane Addams, which addresses her work and life from numerous professional and scholarly perspectives, might at first make us feel that it would be meaningless to attempt to say something new about her. Her many virtues, the many roles that she played, her professional networks and personal relationships, the meaning of every part of her voluminous legacy, including her Hull-House project, have been the subjects of thorough scholarly examination and analysis. In addition, her many biographies have contributed to creative interpretations of virtually all of the pertinent material available, even rare information, rendering every element of her private, public, and professional life, her relationships, her personality, her feelings, and even her dreams, well known.

I wish to argue, however, that although we may be tempted to think that we know everything about Addams—who she was, what she did, what she thought, what she felt and dreamt about—we still do not know Addams. We may indeed have all the fragments, but we do not have the whole that they collectively produced and of which they all were but parts. Reconstructing Addams' system of thought as a coherent whole, in which all thoughts are logically and meaningfully related to each other and revolve around some core idea that served as a motive force and provided the rationale for her actions, remains a scholarly task that is yet to be completed.

A sign erected in 1951 on the outskirts of Cedarville, Illinois—her birth place—identifies Addams as a humanitarian, feminist, social worker, reform-

er, educator, author, and publicist (Elshtain 2002:1). These apparently were the identities with which she was primarily remembered, and which remained with her when she became a sort of mythical figure in the popular mind. But, they do not include the identity of sociologist—the one that she used to refer to herself, and which should then have been the one that provides us with the key to understanding her professional endeavors.

That Addams firmly believed that sociology is the science to which she belonged and for which she worked was clearly attested to in what seems to be the most authoritative and reliable biographical source so far—her nephew James Weber Linn's *Jane Addams: A Biography* (1935). What gives this biography an exceptional advantage in respect to all subsequent interpretations is the fact that Addams personally commissioned it towards the end of her life and provided Linn with

all files of her own manuscripts, published and unpublished; all letters, records, and clippings which she had preserved, from her first valentine to her last round-the-world speech in Washington on May 1, 1935. [Linn 1935:vii]

Even more important in this regard is that Addams herself

read over and annotated the first draft of the first eight chapters of this book, talked over the next three, and agreed upon the proportion of the remainder. [Linn 1935:vii]

But, Linn remarked that he could only write down Addams' personal history on the basis of the rich

information he had since there was something that could not have been written by either him or Addams and could not be found in their works, namely, the vision that places her “in perspective,” a “conception of the view the world seems to have had of her importance to it” (Linn 1935:viii). It is noteworthy that he left this task to the sociologists of the future, who, being “completely acquainted” with “the history of the development of sociology and of American civilization,” would be in the best position to present the picture of how this history has been “illuminated by her life” and by her contribution in casting light “into its dark places” (Linn 1935:vii).

The broader picture first began to emerge when, half a century later, Deegan’s *Jane Addams and the Men from the Chicago School* voiced the claim that Addams “was the greatest woman sociologist of her day,” “integral to the development of the ‘Chicago School,’” and “a founder of American sociology” (Deegan 2005:4, 8, 325). The subsequent explosion of works concerning Addams’ scholarly merits led to a significant increase in the volume of sociological publications within what came to be known as Addams scholarship. However, efforts to reconcile her thought with modern mainstream sociology have to date not been fully convincing. Although Addams is now included in the introductory chapters of twenty-first century sociological textbooks, there appears to be no consensus concerning her precise contribution to sociology (Misheva 2018). It thus remains unclear whether she can be credited at all for playing some decisive role in the emergence of sociology that is comparable in any measure to the recognition she has received in social work, in spite

of the tension recorded between her and the main players in that field (Lubove 1965; Franklin 1986).

It is a puzzle, however, how Addams could have regarded herself as a professional sociologist who made important contributions to the discipline while subsequent generations of sociologists failed to associate her name with any knowledge product of sociological significance. Discovering the true nature of the “enlightenment function” that Addams consciously chose to carry out as a sociologist remains an enduring task. Insofar as a number of social sciences have been very helpful in retrieving various pieces of the puzzle, it may well be the case that the full set of pieces is finally in place, and that we are now in a position to begin the major *puzzle-solving work*. It is my conviction that this work should be properly carried out within sociology and will necessarily involve an examination of its roots.

On Addams’ Becoming a Sociologist

Auguste Comte, the acknowledged founder of sociology, visualized “a system of positive philosophy,” “signaled the beginning of sociology,” and “made a convincing case for the discipline” in his *Course of Positive Philosophy* (Turner, Beeghly, and Powers 2007:25). Nevertheless, there are certain seemingly insurmountable obstacles to acknowledging Comte as the creator of the first sociological paradigm—the positivistic sociological worldview that served macrosociology so well and encouraged the development of its structuralist, functionalist, and systems approaches. These obstacles are associated with what appears to be the “personal tragedy” of a person with a “once great mind” who came to

be regarded as “rather insane” by the end of his life. The fact, so “embarrassing to sociology,” that Comte in his later years “went over the deep end” and became “a rather pathetic man, calling himself the High Priest of Humanity and preaching to a ragtag group of disciples,” was long absent from sociological textbooks (Turner et al. 2007:24-25). In particular, Comte’s second grand effort, *The Positive Polity*, which was written during that period of time, was regarded as both an expression of personal frustration and evidence of his madness. It has never been taken seriously, and only recently have we begun seeing occasional references to it in sociological publications. We should note, however, that texts of some of Comte’s expositors, such as Mary Pickering’s monumental work on his intellectual biography, continue to cast doubt on whether his notion of sociology as a science with an important social mission, or the meaning of his *Positive Polity*, have been properly understood (Pickering 1993; see also Gouhier 1933-1941; Baker 1989).

Particularly evident is the absence of any serious exploration of Comte’s influence upon subsequent generations of sociologists. At the turn of the twentieth century, for example, Comte was rarely mentioned as a possible source of inspiration for one to become a sociologist, although the inspiration for many of those who associated sociology with social reform may have come from reading his work. There is also a perspective from which removing Comte’s later work from the history of sociology, as well as ignoring him “as a theorist who contributed to our understanding of the social universe,” may not be justified (Turner et al 2007:39). In science, the success of one’s scholarly project and demonstrating

the validity of a concept are as important as the failure to do so. Indeed, analyzing failures in science is sometimes more significant for its progress than trying to build further upon the solid ground of confirmed successes.

I contend that Comte’s *Positive Polity* is one of the most interesting and valuable failures in the history of sociology, and the seeming taboo against analyzing it may have played a role in creating and deepening sociology’s identity crisis. Under the circumstances, it would not be surprising to find that the fact that Addams read Comte and was influenced by him was downplayed or deliberately not mentioned at all. Doing so would indeed have left her without any intellectual biography that might have prepared her to choose sociology as an intellectual occupation, accepting it as her life-long undertaking to contribute to its establishment and institutionalization.

Addams apparently read Comte, and she went on record as saying that she was especially impressed by his work during her second journey to Europe. Nonetheless, some of her expositors who note Comte’s influence on her do not do justice to her reading of his work. They instead claim that Comte was a source of her belief in the power of science “to undermine religious superstition and philosophical speculation by replacing them with careful observations and experimentation,” which would enable one to cure social ills and diseases and undermine the authority of tradition and gender stereotypes (Seigfried 2010:67-68). However, this provides a basis only for claiming that his unquestionably positive philosophy provided her with an educated and

modern scientific view, not for concluding that reading Comte committed her to sociology.

However, we may conclude from Addams' notes in *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910) that she was interested in Comte's unsuccessful effort as well, and perhaps even more so. She wrote about her interest in the "efforts of the trade-unions," as well as those of the Positivists, whom she regarded as a "manifestation of 'loyalty to humanity' and an attempt to aid in its progress." She also acknowledged being "enormously interested in the Positivists during these European years." Stebner has observed that Comte's "religion of humanity" was a source of inspiration during the maturation process of her idea of a "cathedral of humanity." But, although we cannot overlook the similarity of these two concepts, it does not mean that this is evidence of a reconstructing of her "religious formation and perspective" (Stebner 2010:207). Since sociologists have been reluctant to seriously engage with an analysis of the reasons for Comte's failure, it is perhaps only natural that some might seek to explain Addams' fascination with an "alternative" positivism in a way that would alienate her from science and bring her closer to religion. This would create further obstacles to retrieving her sociological identity.

My argument in this regard is that Addams was perhaps the only sociologist in her time who undertook a serious exploration of Comte's failure to establish sociology as a science of social life. Her being influenced by him would then comprise a case of emulation, which is well known in the world of science as a mechanism through which continuation in science is secured. Emulation was notably explored

by Charles Horton Cooley (1902), although his contributions in this regard have long remained unacknowledged, taken to be more a nostalgic response to the disappearance of the spirit of cooperation in science after the turn of the twentieth century than a discovery of the mechanisms that render science a cooperative enterprise. An application of emulation in its proper sense to the case of science indicates that the next generation of scholars acquire the "spark" for science by coming in touch with a living tradition. They evaluate its purpose as fascinating, aesthetically pleasing, and ethically attractive, and take it over, internalize it, and make it their own (Misheva 2019).

In this sense, my claim is that Addams was a sociologist not simply because this is how she described herself, but also because she received the "torch" or spark directly from the source and became committed to the goals that she found in Comte's work. A proper starting point for this statement, however, is an analysis of Comte's sociological project, including its own inspirations and background.

Comte's project may be approached in a sociological sense as a type of action that has its own motive, reason, and purpose. A view considered to be the most reliable interpretation of his intellectual life appears to me to be a plausible *motive* in this respect, namely, Comte, an atheist concerned with moral regeneration, was motivated by the desire to find a worldly substitute for Catholicism. Such a motive would certainly appeal to Addams in light of the evidence for her own atheism, which was accompanied by an appreciation of religious and moral values.

The specific *reason* for Comte's monumental work concerning positive philosophy is typically regarded to be his effort to establish science as the only truth producer, although not for its own sake. He instead does so for the *purpose* of establishing sociology as the science at the top of the hierarchy of sciences, all of which emerge according to an internal system's logic whereby metaphysics is replaced by positivism. This process is located at the center of his theory of knowledge.

A deeper exploration of Comte's own journey towards a full commitment to his grand sociological project leads back to Henri de Saint-Simon's influence on Comte. This reveals the evidence for emulation, whereby Comte borrowed the goal of his endeavor from Saint-Simon, but developed it in a different direction. Pickering established that Comte was not very interested in "the theoretical base of social reconstruction" through industrialism, and did not go further to ponder Saint-Simon's notion that industrialism would replace militarism. He instead took up Saint-Simon's mission "of founding the scientific system, that is, the positive philosophy, together with its keystone, the science of society" (Pickering 1993:213). In doing so—and just as Cooley's theory of emulation predicted—Comte brilliantly executed the project that Saint-Simon had outlined and thereby surpassed his teacher, as John Stuart Mill maintained (see: Pickering 1993:215). Saint-Simon was thus a predecessor and a rival of Comte.

Pickering (1993) also argues that the Saint-Simonians may have exerted a much greater, and largely unacknowledged, influence upon Comte than his

direct contact with Saint-Simon, under whose leadership he worked. This fact is important since it suggests that it may not be enough to simply borrow a role model by reading some author's texts. Participation in an interaction system with the followers of a given scientist may be of substantially greater importance for receiving the torch and becoming qualified for a mission of enlightenment.

On the basis of Pickering's analysis, the significance of the Saint-Simonians (the generation of the 1820s who were born between 1792 and 1803) can be measured merely by the fact that they were actively involved not only in further developing Saint-Simon's ideas and project, but also in criticizing Comte's early work and the direction in which he took his master's thought. A series of lectures beginning in 1828 that presented the Saint-Simonian doctrine at length contained, in addition to praise for the "God of love," "a doctrine of sympathy" as the root of progress. And instead of reason, it elevated women as "the model of this sympathetic power" and celebrated "humanity" as a "collective being" that was "equivalent to society at large" (Pickering 1993:221). Pickering (1993:221) notes that the Saint-Simonians particularly criticized Comte for undermining religion, regarding "positive" as an intelligible term, and, above all, for "not wanting to recognize the elements of irrationalism contained in the so-called positive sciences themselves." They also claimed that Comte misinterpreted Saint-Simon and underestimated "the role of artists" (such as poets and priests) "in the creation of a new society." The Saint-Simonians sought to raise up "imagination and sentiment" as "key to the creative process even in science" (Pickering 1993:222).

This brief overview of the ideas that influenced Comte provide a good background for the Saint-Simonians' criticism of his *Positive Polity*—Pickering (1993:222) notes that Comte himself purchased the book of lectures and was acquainted with its contents. It also provides a better idea of what Addams meant when she referred to the extraordinary impression that the "Positivists" made on her during her second trip to London. We can also recognize here certain important principles in Addams' own thought, as well as the background for her many ideas that relate her to symbolic interactionism, a sociological tradition of decisive importance for the emergence and development of the discipline. We also see the roots of important ideas that Addams later introduced into social practice at Hull-House. It appears to be significant that we can discern some of these same ideas in Cooley's and even Mead's work, even though they have not been directly influenced by Saint-Simon, but tracking down their source goes beyond the scope of the present article. We should note, however, that the important concept of "sympathy" found in Addams', Cooley's, and Mead's scholarly vocabularies, as well as the entire ethics of symbolic interaction, might well have entered symbolic interactionism by means of Addams and her London trips, when she became a participant in interactions very relevant to sociology that could not be found in academia, including universities, at that time.

Not being able to convincingly demonstrate Addams' identity as a sociologist appears to have much to do with the fact that the traditional explanations of the roots of symbolic interactionism presented in symbolic interactionist self-narratives lack an

important degree of accuracy. These narratives assert without any further clarification—and against interactionism's own principles—that the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment, particularly those of Adam Smith, came to North America not through face-to-face interactions, but merely through the reading of literature without the intervention of any human agency or live interaction. I would instead argue that a more thorough explanation of this unusual, distant, and in some sense quite unbelievable resemblance between some aspects of both Mead's and Cooley's works with those of Adam Smith might be more logically and legitimately explained if we shift our focus from Mead as a founding figure of symbolic interactionism to Addams insofar as it was her who became the living connection between the European traditions of sociological "positivism" and the American practice of social reform, in which science was applied with a focus on education and interaction. As is now clear, Mead's expositors never actually succeeded in finding in Mead's biography anything that could link him to the birthplace of an alternative sociology that we could term the European root of symbolic interactionism. The closest they get is to discuss Dilthey's influence on Mead, trying to retrieve from it the supposedly true philosophical basis of symbolic interactionism. However, in order to close the "circle of emulation" through a process of direct, face-to-face interaction, in which main ideas are transferred and the goals of particular role models are internalized, we should note that Saint-Simon himself was a very passionate admirer of Adam Smith, considering him to be the greatest living scholar of his time. Certain reasons for why Addams' contributions to sociology were ignored have begun to assume a more clear shape. They

are associated with the “Red Scare” that preceded the social changes of the 1920s, and with Addams’ thick dossier as a purportedly dangerous “socialist.” Under these unfavorable social conditions and circumstances of that period, it would certainly not have been smart for the young science of sociology to flag its origins and mark its genealogical relation to Saint-Simonism, which came to be known in history as “the most influential form of early socialism, as far as mainstream social and political thought is concerned” (Claeys 2005:87). It is noteworthy that this movement was founded by a nobleman who renounced his title, much like the way in which Addams renounced her middle-class social status and moved her home into the slums. It is also indicative that Saint-Simonism exerted an influence upon Addams’ favorite author during her college years, Thomas Carlyle, who himself was committed to “positive philosophy” as both a science and a “new religion” (Claeys 2005:87-188). It thus appears that politics, more than any other factor, was the driving force for the marginalization and then complete elimination of Addams’ thought from the historical annals of sociology. However, the traces of such drama, which shook individuals, institutions, social structures, and society as a whole, can never be completely erased and may come to the fore again at any time.

On the Question of the Lost Sociological Paradigm

In Thomas Kuhn’s opinion, the acquisition of a paradigm was “a sign of maturity in the development of any given scientific field” (Kuhn 1970:11), as well as a mark of the beginning of “normal puzzle-solving

research” (Kuhn 1970:179). The presence of a paradigm is thus a necessary and sufficient condition for the identification and definition of the problems and puzzles that are to be solved and for the transformation of the scientific community into “an immensely efficient instrument” for that end (Kuhn 1970:166). However, Kuhn himself was not convinced that the concept of paradigm is applicable to the social sciences, for which the absence of theoretical consensus is normality. There is nevertheless a conviction in sociology that the acquisition of a paradigm would be desirable in this case as well since it would finally solve the problem of sociology’s identity crisis, including the associated lack of self-confidence and low scientific prestige. However, Kuhn (1970) did not undertake a historical exploration of American sociology, which could be characterized until the beginning of World War I as what he would term “normal or paradigm-based research.”

The possible existence of paradigms in sociology was a matter of heated debate in the second half of the twentieth century. Perhaps structural functionalism was the most prominent candidate to date for such a paradigm, but it never won the sympathies of a significant part of the scientific community and the loyalties of its members have always been divided. Conflict theory and action theory have also been viewed as candidates for sociological paradigms (Long 1990), although not quite rivals in the strict sense of the term, in view of the many shortcomings of structural functionalism as “increasingly crisis-ridden” and “hegemonic” (Bryant 1975:358). Although interpretivism and symbolic interactionism have been true rivals opposed to the others, neither has yet managed to win the dispute and unite the

discipline by offering an aesthetically and ethically pleasing worldview.

Certain sociologists have argued in the past for the need to disregard Kuhn's theory and discuss sociology as a science that is, and most likely will remain, "multi-paradigmatic" insofar as it is too complex to be subordinated to one single paradigm (Ritzer 1975; Eckberg and Hill, Jr. 1979). The acceptance of unrestrained pluralism in sociology may well be taken as a mark of normal development in sociology in particular and the social sciences in general in light of the "inexhaustible sources of conceptual variations" and the "ambiguous and multi-faceted character of social relations," which may additionally be interpreted in a number of ways (Bryant 1975:358). It has also been argued that Kuhn's notion of successive paradigmatic development is narrowly restricted to the natural sciences, and that it must be removed from these confines and further interpreted in relation to the sociology of knowledge, within the context of the socio-economic development reflected in Western philosophy, in order to be made useful (Harvey 1982:85).

These discussions perhaps seem a bit out of fashion today, although one may say that Kuhn's judgment about sociology as dominated by disagreement, conflict, and controversy that could be ended by the existence of a paradigm still counts. However, the concern that sociology might never be able to become a "real" science persists (Turner and Turner 1990).

I wish to argue, however, that revisiting the history of classical sociology and retrieving the forgotten sociologists may make it possible to address this

question anew. It may well be the case that such explorations may be instrumental in uncovering a lost paradigm in the turmoil of a century initially inspired by great social optimism, the idea of progress, and a belief in the power of enlightenment and social reform, but which ended with a succession of hot and cold world wars, revolutions, and both economic and social crises, none of which sociology was able to predict or help resolve.

My position is that the more thorough exploration of Jane Addams's intellectual heritage will reveal that she was a "founder" of sociology in a very particular way. She was, in my opinion, the creator of a scientific paradigm that may be defined as "micro-sociological." That is not to say that she was the author of a sociological paradigm that would organize efforts to cure the ills of society, but rather received inspiration for this task from direct contact with the living Comtean sociological tradition. She thoroughly explored Comte's successful, as well as unsuccessful works, and emulated his goal in the same way that Comte emulated Saint-Simon's project and Saint-Simon emulated Adam Smith's. She climbed upon Comte's shoulders to see into the future and dream of a better world. Addams' famous biographical record entitled "The Snare of Preparation" (Addams 2002a) is, in my interpretation, nothing less than the announcement of an already mature decision to begin acting on her determination to go further than Comte, to take a different route to the goal, and perhaps accomplish what her predecessor, and perhaps "rival," did not succeed to do.

Addams' early scholarly works reveal a conscious purpose that was well thought through during the

years after her graduation from college and her travels to Europe. She had the bold ambition to materialize her idea for the need of a new science capable of employing the power of the human imagination in the resolution of social problems. This idea was already crystallized in her graduation essay “Cassandra” (Addams 2002b), which is thus a valuable element of her intellectual heritage as a product of already trained scholarly mind, however young. This essay is, I believe, an outline of a program for action that was further articulated in two subsequent texts in which Addams described in greater detail her subjective motive (Addams 2002c), as well as the objective reason or necessity (Addams 2002d) for her program to be realized for the good of those young women who could apply their youthful energy in a meaningful social enterprise. This would also be done for the good of society at large insofar as she was offering a solution for its overwhelming social problems.

In this respect, Addams’ purpose was already well-known. She endeavored to establish sociology as a science of social life, and the settlement at Hull-House in the slums of Chicago was a social enterprise that comprised a means for facilitating the achievement of her goal. A more detailed presentation of this conception will be the subject of a subsequent study.

Coda

While Addams was referred to at times as a saint, she became a villain in the troubled times after 1920, although Deegan (2005:322) observed that her reputation was restored in the 1930s and she was once

again honored and treated as a saint. However, receiving the recognition of those who seemingly canonized her contributed nothing to Addams’ reputation as a scholar and sociologist. A place is reserved in the sanctuary of science for martyrs who have been known to be exceptional men, but the figure of a great sociologist who labored, suffered greatly, and died for his/her work is unknown in the history of science. It is even more unheard of in this group of venerated scientists to speak of women who also deserve to be proclaimed martyrs who suffered for the progress of science. But, for everyone acquainted with Addams’ life and work, who take an unbiased look at her scholarly production and evaluate it as original sociological thought, it will be no surprise if she comes to be regarded as one of those martyrs of science who, like many other known and unknown scientists, worked for the progress of humankind.

The efforts of scholars from many different social sciences over the last three decades appear to have been directed to promoting Addams’ candidacy for canonization or inclusion in the sociological canon. These aspirations, particularly on the part of certain feminist scholars, have been regarded with suspicion, and even ridiculed as uninformed and preposterous. However, their efforts have directed attention to an examination of the nature of the sociological canon itself, and one may easily conclude that if there is no room there for such scholars as Addams, then something should be wrong with the canon itself.

It has in fact already come to the attention of a new generation of sociologists that the sociological canon in its present form is restrictive to the point that it

is not sufficient to serve as a foundation upon which the entire complex and diverse enterprise of modern sociology can reside, with each tradition finding support in previous thought and tradition. It may well be the case that a great portion of that foundation still remains unilluminated.

In the middle of the last century some prominent sociologists of the time, above all Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils, established a sociological canon “that emphasized European theory, displacing much of the work that had oriented American sociology before,” whereby not just Addams, but “many of the American founders were literally forgotten” (Calhoun 2007:x; Parsons 1968a). A canon of this type is meant to provide the basic criteria, rules, and norms by which the quality of sociological works would be judged and to suggest the name of the authors of exemplary sociological books. However, Parsons (1968b) judged it necessary to exclude all “micro-sociologists,” above all Simmel, Cooley, W.I. Thomas, and Mead, and to unconditionally canonize only two European scholars, Weber and Durkheim. Some twenty years ago, when the question of the canon was raised in connection with Addams and the forgotten sociologists, a thorough exploration of why the canon had to come into being at all came to the conclusion that it had been created as “a part of an effort at reconstruction after the collapse of the first European-American project of sociology” (Connell 1997:1545). Such rebels as Addams apparently had no chance of being included, for it was not a question of excellence in science as a free spirit, involving ethics and art, but rather about excellence in science as a craft in the best traditions of methodological positivism.

However, by establishing a sociological canon that was meant to suppress sociology’s memory of its coming into being, at times referred to in the literature as “sociological amnesia,” and by attempting to erase the historical records of its emergence in association with forces outside academia, such as Hull-House, sociology committed itself to a deep and permanent identity crisis.

It might seem to an external observer that this leads sociology to a “peaceful existence” on the margins of society, having no particular social function other than teaching young minds, with no authority to speak and be heard. Burawoy’s appeal to make sociology public once again was particularly energizing, and it promised to become a new sociological movement, but, oddly enough, it did not bring Addams’s sociology, as a model of public sociology, into discussion and reconsideration.

Further exploration in the sociology of science will be necessary to establish what the price of withdrawing from public life was for a science that had defined the social as its object of study, but defined it exclusively in terms of structures and dead social matter. Moreover, it still prefers to deal with the social in the same manner. It may be the case that the price for the peaceful existence of sociology within society, with no involvement, has been the internalization of the unresolved conflict between two different understandings of sociology. This has left it in a state of permanent revolution, however. When Kuhn (1970) could find no sign of normal scientific growth in sociology and no agreement about its basic principles, he pronounced his verdict that sociology either

is to be regarded as an “immature” science that exists in a pre-paradigmatic state, which explains why its “normal” situation is conflict, disagreement, and unresolvable controversy, or that it is not a science at all, since science is, and always has been, a cooperative enterprise. This also explains why sociology has been so incapable of helping society solve its everyday “puzzles” and problems—incapable above all, in spite of all its knowledge about society and social structures, of

making any prediction about precisely when such structures are in danger of collapse.

With a reference to Addams’ earliest preserved writing, her college essay “Cassandra,” one could say that when Addams’ project for sociology was discontinued in the 1920s, sociology lost its public presence, its public authority, and its voice. It thus turned into a modern Cassandra, with no power to resolve even its own persistent identity problems.

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