

## Going Global: New Trajectories in U.S. Women's History

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IN 1915, AMERICAN JANE ADDAMS, together with 1,300 women from around the world, founded the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, an organization dedicated to fostering understanding, preventing war, and laying the foundations for a permanent peace. Addams believed that women in the United States needed to recognize the interdependence of women around the globe in terms of promoting peace, but also regarding economic justice, social activism, and a sense of collective political responsibility. In the twenty-first century, the global perspective adopted by Jane Addams, and those who followed in her footsteps across the years, provides a powerful model for a theoretical paradigm shift in the way women's history in the United States has been written and taught since the 1970s.<sup>1</sup>

### Historical Traditions of U.S. Women's History

The history of women in the United States, like U.S. history in general, traditionally has been analyzed with an emphasis on "American exceptionalism" taking precedence over international, comparative, or global approaches that view the United States in relation to other parts of the world.<sup>2</sup> As the field of U.S. women's history burgeoned in the two decades after 1975, new research and scholarship expanded exponentially. Faculty at colleges and graduate schools developed innovative programs

and courses, trained hundreds of Ph.D.s, and produced scores of books and articles. This work transformed the way U.S. history is understood, and gradually changed the intellectual and social climate of the academy as well as the larger culture. Generations of women learned about their own history and many used new understandings of what U.S. women had faced in the past proactively to shape a different society for their daughters and sons in the present.<sup>3</sup>

Feminist scholarship focused on the political and economic equality of the sexes and viewed gender as a social construction, not as a biological trait that pre-determines individual social identity, political status, or economic rights. Feminism transformed the academy across disciplinary lines, inspired new theoretical work, and changed canonical practice in literature, art, and religion, as well as political science and history. Even scholars who were not self-defined feminists found themselves confronting women's history and gender studies. A broad range of academicians, women and men, in history and related fields first expanded their views of the American past to include women, and then began to accept gender itself as a new category of analysis.<sup>4</sup> During the same period, the experiences of other groups previously ignored or excluded by U.S. historians were being written: the histories of African-Americans, Indians, and immigrants, among others, were incorporated into what came to be called the New Social History. Throughout the United States in the late twentieth century, scholarship in the humanities flourished, with original discoveries, fresh perspectives, and the development of new ways of understanding almost every aspect of society and culture in the U.S.<sup>5</sup>

Ironically, much of this work fostered a reinvigorated sense of "American exceptionalism." Research and teaching in U.S. women's history at times inadvertently reinforced the idea that the experiences of U.S. women across racial and class divisions were unprecedented and unique. Studies of the U.S. women's suffrage movement, for example, initially focused on how groups of primarily white and middle- or upper-class women waged national, state, and local campaigns around the issue of the right to vote for over seventy years, not on the similarities to and connections with women's suffrage movements in other parts of the world. In comparable ways, histories of women and work and the history of women in the academy have emphasized regional differences in women's work and access to education, rather than the international connections and transnational similarities in the way these histories developed. U.S. women's labor historians, too, began by examining workforce participation within different regions of the U.S., while education scholars have recovered the experiences of female teachers and students in schools that run the gamut from privileged enclaves to institutions that could barely survive. Few

studies have emphasized the ways in which women's educational patterns are both similar and different across the globe.

Now is the time to build on the extensive work that has been done in U.S. women's history and expand the field even more by shifting the emphasis from "American exceptionalism" to an approach that analyzes U.S. women's history in a global context—one that focuses on international connections, facilitates comparisons, and traces personal, cultural, and intellectual relationships across national borders and cultural boundaries.

### **Historiographical Approaches**

Over the last forty years, from the late 1960s until the first decade of the twenty-first century, historians of U.S. women's history have documented and analyzed the achievements, struggles, and cultural lives of U.S. women through the publication of thousands of scholarly articles, textbooks, monographs, encyclopedias, documentary films, and most recently works in the digital humanities. The field of women's history in the United States also has undergone several theoretical shifts, from an initial focus on biographical histories of notable American women to an "add women and stir" approach, which involves researching the history of women in the U.S. with the goal of adding women's stories, statistical data, and life experiences to those of men's as part of the collective history of the nation. Another route soon emerged as women's history scholars began to revise first the periodization, and then the narratives of U.S. history. Traditionally organized around wars and presidential administrations, the story of the growth and development of the U.S. as a nation rapidly became more multifaceted as the diverse histories of women, as well as men, became part of our scholarly understanding.

More recently, the field of U.S. women's history has benefited from the theoretical work being done in gender and cultural studies, research that offers new insights into the meaning and practice of everyday life with an interdisciplinary approach that draws from history, literature, anthropology, sociology, and psychology. A cultural studies perspective frequently involves examining how a particular phenomenon relates to ideology, race and ethnicity, class, and gender. This approach has facilitated more nuanced and sophisticated approaches to studying U.S. women's history, particularly in terms of generating new work on the social and historical construction of gender.<sup>6</sup> As U.S. women's history continues to evolve, three new trajectories have become increasingly important to scholars working in the field: international, comparative, and global perspectives are constantly changing the ways we view the past, present, and future experiences of U.S. women.

What do historians mean when we use the terms “international”, “comparative”, and “global”? U.S. historians turned to international history after World War II, emphasizing comparisons between two or more nations, or studies of groups or associations with members in two or more countries. Topics such as gender roles, revolution, economic development, slavery, war, religion, and urban development all lend themselves to international comparisons. Comparative history systematically relates the similarities and differences between the U.S. and another nation, society, culture, or economic system in another part of the world. For U.S. historians in particular, comparative studies serve as an antidote to arguments that the “American experience” is unique, or that the United States is a nation with a special manifest destiny. Like international history, comparative history reduces ethnocentrism, generates new insights, and demonstrates how the national and the international interact and modify each other.

The use of the term “global history” increased in the 1990s, as the interconnectedness and mobility of capital, technology, labor, and goods and services throughout the world accelerated dramatically during the latest wave of globalization. Global history in many ways embraced the thematic approach of world history and the analytic methods of transnational history, which, as one scholar put it, opened up “a world of comparative possibility.”<sup>7</sup> These global approaches have moved historians away from an emphasis on nation-states by asserting that historical processes can best be understood by focusing on worldwide economic, political, social, and cultural systems, and by claiming that history is made in different locations and also constructed in the spaces between, as people and ideas move from one place or region to another. International, comparative, and global histories are each distinct, and yet have much in common. Each of these perspectives attempts to analyze aspects of the past that transcend any one nation, empire, or politically defined territory.

These approaches continue to break new ground for most of the history that has been written in the past 100 years, including most U.S. women’s history, following a national narrative that itself rationalizes the existence of the state that produced it. Global, world, transnational, international, and comparative approaches to history each critique such limitations. The field of U.S. women’s history is ready to fully engage these new approaches—doing so is a necessary prerequisite for expanding the field and continuing the ongoing work of writing women into U.S. history in meaningful ways that enlarge our understanding of the past.

### **U.S. Women’s History from an International Perspective**

The field of U.S. women’s history in the twentieth century grew out of

historian Mary Beard's call to write women into the historical record of the United States. As historian Nancy Cott has noted, Mary Beard was "appalled" at the omission of women, and she vowed to change the situation. Beard came to the field from her involvement with the woman's suffrage movement, first in Britain, and then in the U.S., where she organized for the National Women's Trade Union League; joined the National Woman's Party, the militant faction of the suffrage movement; edited *The Woman Voter*; and worked with the Wage Earner's League. She and her husband Charles Beard co-authored *The Rise of American Civilization* (1927), a landmark text that emphasized America's distinctive national character and unique history, and wove together the political, economic, social, and cultural histories of the U.S. In the two decades that followed, she authored and edited *Understanding Women* (1931), *America Through Women's Eyes* (1933), *A Changing Political Economy as It Affects Women* (1934), and *Women as Force in History* (1946).<sup>8</sup>

Significantly, Beard's commitment to writing women into history went far beyond an emphasis on the United States. In the 1930s, she worked with Hungarian feminist Rosika Schwimmer to found the World Center for Women's Archives (WCWA), an archive of private papers and organizational records that scholars could use both to develop women's history as an academic field and as a center for pacifist and feminist activism. After World War II, Beard took the controversial step of writing the history of women in Japanese society. In 1953's *Women as Force in Japanese History*, the often-ignored sequel to *Women as Force in History*, Beard adopted an international perspective that bears examination as a template for twenty-first century scholarship.<sup>9</sup>

What Beard began, a handful of U.S. scholars continued during the most intense years of McCarthyism and a Cold War intellectual climate that deemphasized women's history as strongly as it emphasized "American exceptionalism." For example, the work of scholar Alice Hanson Cook focused on the international history and contemporary status of women workers in multiple nations, worker's education in Europe, the roles women played in international labor organizations, and on working mothers in nine countries. As a new generation of women scholars came out of the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s, research and writing on U.S. women's history from an international perspective took off with the publication of *Herstory: Women's History Collection from the International Women's History Archives* in 1972; Berenice A. Carroll's edited volume of theoretical and critical essays, *Liberating Women's History* (1976); and Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood is Global* (1984). In the 1980s and 1990s, Leila Rupp changed the landscape of U.S. women's history with pathbreaking work that examined the role played by U.S. women

in the international women's movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>10</sup>

### **Comparative Women's History**

As U.S. historians became increasingly aware of the historical importance of the international work of earlier generations of U.S. women, they began to do more comparative analysis in their own scholarship. Initially, most comparative women's history focused on the relationship between women in the U.S. and women in the United Kingdom and Western Europe. Gradually, the number of comparative fields has expanded to include women in North America; Eastern Europe and Russia; the Caribbean and Latin America; Eastern, Central, and South Asia; the Middle East and North Africa; and Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>11</sup>

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the areas selected for comparison have become both broader (more geographically and culturally diverse) and more specific (focused on explicit issues). For example, general comparisons of women's lives in different countries have given way to specific comparisons of women workers, professionals, political activists, and intellectuals in various national or transnational venues. Comparative women's history has opened up new ways of thinking about U.S. history as U.S. historians have adopted the methodologies used by a broad range of scholars throughout the world. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s, U.S. social historians drew on the work of the *Annales* school in France, and the ideas of E. P. Thompson and Dorothy Thompson, George Rudé, and Eric Hobsbawm in England. In the 1990s, comparative women's history flourished as U.S. women's historians began to work in collaboration with post-Soviet scholars, and to gather increasing amounts of longitudinal documentation about women's political participation, work, education, culture, religion, and family life in nations around the globe.<sup>12</sup>

Comparative work in women's history requires new sets of analytical lenses and approaches to U.S. women's history. For example, what do we mean when we refer to "American Women's History"? Does it include only women in the "United States"? What would the field look like if we recast its operational definition to refer always to women throughout the "Americas"? What would happen, academically and politically, if American Women's History embraced the histories of women from the Bering Strait to Tierra del Fuego? Clearly, the opportunities for comparative analysis multiply exponentially as the histories of women in the U.S. and Latin America and Canada are compared and contrasted.

## U.S. Women's History in a Global Context

As enticing as this possibility might be, we must push the paradigm of American women's history even further, beyond a comparative approach toward a history that analyzes U.S. women from a global perspective. The worldwide work of women like Jane Addams and Mary Beard in the first half of the twentieth century helps us take this step: the four United Nations Women's Conferences held in the second half of the twentieth century provided an important transition for U.S. women in terms of conceptualizing themselves as part of a global community, both historically and in the present. In 1975, the first United Nations International Women's Conference was held in Mexico City, followed by Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985, and Beijing in 1995.<sup>13</sup>

The first U.N. World Conference on Women called for a Women's Convention to promote equal rights for women worldwide. In 1979, the United Nations approved the Treaty for the Rights of Women (known as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women—CEDAW). The U.S. was active in drafting the Treaty, and President Jimmy Carter signed it before he left office in 1980. Since then, despite a commitment by the U.S. delegation in Beijing in 1995 to obtain ratification by 2000, the U.S. has yet to ratify the Treaty for the Rights of Women. Meanwhile, 179 nations around the world have signed the Treaty. This recent history reveals an American exceptionalism of a less progressive sort, and underscores again the importance of doing comparative women's history in a global context. To support that work, the International Federation for Research in Women's History/*Federation Internationale Pour la Recherche en Histoire des Femmes* was founded in April 1987. The IFRWH/FIRHF encourages and coordinates research in all aspects of women's history at the international level by promoting the exchange of information and organizing international conferences.<sup>14</sup>

When we explore the narrative arc of women's experience in the U.S. from a global perspective, we begin to transcend points of view that reinforce the exceptional nature of the "American" experience. A global orientation to U.S. women's history complicates a straightforward comparative approach that relates one nation to another, or one region of the world to the next. A global approach opens the door to a history that recognizes existing boundaries, but at the same time moves beyond them to examine the past across shifting national or regional borders that change over time. A global perspective on U.S. women's history also presents compelling opportunities. Consider the dynamic ways the outside world interfaces with the U.S. and specifically how this affects the lives of American women in the twenty-first century. The past offers the



same complexity as we analyze the multiple ways that U.S. women have acted historically within the context of the larger world. In education and international political, social, and economic organizations, for example, the exchange of ideas, experiences, and institutional traditions back and forth across multiple borders can be explained and understood without privileging any one nation or system.<sup>15</sup>

### **New Trajectories in U.S. Women's History**

Approaches to U.S. women's history that include international, comparative, or global perspectives in many instances have been part of the work of U.S. historians all along. A nation of immigrants, one finds within the parameters of U.S. history the core of a global paradigm. Studies of the social and economic history of immigrant women have moved beyond the processes of assimilation and Americanization to integrate women's experiences in their homelands, prior to emigration. The history of a broad range of diverse topics: suffrage, reform, education, nursing, and occupational segregation, to name a few, all can be examined more effectively in a global context. The study of missionaries has long been conducted from a global perspective and work in that arena provides some useful models. The uneven geography of globalization, like that of industrialization in an earlier era, challenges historians to examine historical processes across broad timeframes and around the world.<sup>16</sup>

As the field of U.S. women's history goes global, the international, comparative, and transnational connections multiply. The strategic effectiveness of international models of civic organization and the collective mobilization of women's organizations raise new questions about power inequities, social change, and economic justice in the U.S. and around the world. A significant amount of this work already has been done by U.S. women's historians and world historians whose research has long crossed national and cultural borders. Specific examples of what happens when we follow these new trajectories in U.S. women's history are readily available. Recent publications that expand our global understanding of North American and U.S. women's history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries include: *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives*, edited by Caroline Daley and Melanie Nolan (1994); Jennifer Lyle Morgan's *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (2004); and Hermione Lee's biography, *Edith Wharton* (2008). *American Dreaming, Global Realities: Rethinking U.S. Immigration History*, edited by Donna R. Gabaccia and Vicki L. Ruiz (2006) and Alice Kessler-Harris's *Gendering Labor History* (2007) are innovative works that reshape the historical narrative in the twentieth century.



These and other recent works point us toward broader conceptions of what we can bring to the field. A great deal can be accomplished if collectively we take a relational approach to the study of U.S. women's history, viewing its social, economic, political, and intellectual dimensions in a global context. International, comparative, and global perspectives challenge us to shift vantage points, rapid fire our historical synapses, multiply connections, and become more adept at engaging the complexity of the past.<sup>17</sup>

### **When the Paradigm Shifts**

North American society was structurally, politically, and culturally international from the beginning of settlement. In seventeenth-century New England, the lives of Puritan theologian Anne Hutchinson and Quaker Mary Dyer speak to the intellectual and religious activism of some North American colonial women. Determined free thinkers who argued that women had equal access to the word of God, such women of the colonial church came face-to-face with a broad range of hostile reactions, from having their work suppressed, to being silenced, to excommunication, imprisonment, banishment, and execution. These first efforts by British colonial women to influence the emerging political power structure in the North American colonies had their intellectual roots not in Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, or Rhode Island, but rather in England, where Hutchinson and Dyer were born and educated. The fathers of these women were activists themselves; their mothers came from relatively well-to-do backgrounds, from families in which daughters were encouraged to read, write, and speak their minds. Emigrating to the colonies as young adults, these women were transformed by the rigors of their death-defying trip across the Atlantic and the disease and deprivation they experienced in the early decades of colonial settlement. Communication continued between British colonists and family, friends, and colleagues who remained in England. Hutchinson's radical Puritanism came from England; Dyer contemplated returning to London.<sup>18</sup>

British colonial women, together with women from North American Indian civilizations, became adept at bridging diverse cultural worlds.<sup>19</sup> Their remarkable experiences had a dramatic effect on their inner lives. Emboldened by their ability to survive the trauma and disruption involved in emigrating or encountering colonial settlers, they spoke their minds. The heterogeneity of American culture, from before the colonial period to the twenty-first century, created an environment of ongoing cultural exchange and interaction, even within existing colonial and national boundaries—from widely diverse Indian nations to British indentured servants

and enslaved Africans to immigrant groups from around the world, cultural chasms as wide as those between nations have existed throughout the history of colonial America and the United States.

From the earliest years of the Republic, women participated in an international conversation about feminism. Feminists in the United States were influenced by a broad range of British and European writers: Mary Wollstonecraft, who published *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792; Charles Fourier, who criticized limitations on women's talent; George Sand, who penned radical critiques of traditional marriage; and John Stuart Mill, who promoted women's suffrage in his book *The Subjection of Women* (1869). During the same period, Americans became supportive allies of British and European feminists, including Frances Wright, whose book *Views of Society and Manners in America* (1821) painted a positive view of U.S. women and their access to higher education; Harriet Martineau, who underscored the leadership and courage that U.S. women brought to the anti-slavery movement; and Harriet Taylor Mill, who reported for the British press on U.S. suffrage conventions in the mid nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Each of these women traversed the Atlantic and toured the U.S., where they found receptive audiences among citizens eager for new ideas about women's rights, anti-slavery, and suffrage. Across class and racial lines, U.S. women involved in social and political reform benefited from international collaborations that brought increased vitality and power to their movements.

Thus, in 1915, when Jane Addams founded the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, her ideas for the organization emerged out of a long line of women's international initiatives. For example, Dorothea Dix's innovative work on prison reform and on behalf of the insane poor began in the U.S. in 1841, and then spread to England. Between 1854 and 1856, she traveled widely in fourteen countries investigating deplorable conditions for the insane, agitating for reform, and instigating many changes in treatment. U.S. women worked in much the same way on issues from prohibition and temperance, to slavery and civil rights, to women's suffrage, birth control, and peace. Anti-slavery organizations across the U.S. depended heavily on women activists who reached across racial barriers to work together, and then garnered support from women in the United Kingdom and on the European continent. Women from the U.S. traveled to The Hague for peace conferences beginning in 1899, and continuing in 1907 and 1915. U.S. women played crucial roles in founding the International Council of Women in 1888, and the feminist International Alliance of Women, originally called the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, in 1904.<sup>21</sup>

The interwoven histories of these organizations shed new light on the

history of the international women's movement and the roles played by U.S. activists in a variety of areas. Women's suffrage movements in the United States, like those for world peace, had international dimensions from their inception in the mid nineteenth century. Following a similar pattern, those in the U.S. committed to making birth control available to all women forged international alliances that supported their work on a global scale. A number of international conferences on birth control were held during the 1920s, and in 1930, the Birth Control International Information Centre was established in London, with Margaret Sanger as President. The Centre worked to spread the knowledge of birth control around the world, and the organization coordinated international birth control activities in over thirty countries. In the 1940s, the work done by the Centre was carried on by the International Committee on Planned Parenthood.<sup>22</sup>

U.S. women workers, from the nineteenth century on, played active roles in transnational labor organizations, and throughout the twentieth century, increasing numbers of U.S. women became members of international unions. The first International Council of Working Women met in Washington, D.C. in 1919 to address the problems of women and children in industry. In several subsequent biennial meetings, the group, renamed the International Federation of Working Women, drew delegates from nations in North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Representatives argued that "as the problems of working women are world-wide, statesmanlike solution of them must accept no narrower boundaries." The reform agenda established by these early international organizations set the course for women activists, labor reformers, and trade unionists during the first half of the twentieth century. Organizations addressing the needs of women workers ranged from dozens of trade unions, especially those with a majority of women members—including the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, to the National Women's Trade Union League, and even the League of Women Voters and the Young Women's Christian Association, which specifically addressed the needs and concerns of women industrial and clerical employees.<sup>23</sup>

The template of industrial development, that veritable dream of progress and profit, has both a history and a future, going backward and forward, across time and place: from England to New England; from New England to the U.S. South; from the U.S. South to Mexico, and then on to Central and South America, and simultaneously around the globe. The point where North meets South, a metaphor for development/undeveloped nations, is constantly shifting. But the signification of women's activism within these contexts has not changed. In the field of women's labor history,

our understanding of gender and work is enriched by transnational and global approaches. Patterns of work, labor migration, worker organization, ethnic and racial identities, and cultural production become clearer when viewed from a global perspective that takes into consideration economic, political, and cultural forces that operate across national, cultural, and economic boundaries.<sup>24</sup>

As global interdependence increases, transnational feminist organizations are working more actively than ever to address systematic changes in the world economy. U.S. activists participate in a broad range of organizations, including established groups like the YWCA and League of Women Voters, both of which have new global initiatives that target women and build leadership skills through education and exchange programs, and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), which has endorsed a "Women in the Global Economy" campaign that fights sweatshops and supports trade that improves wages, living standards, and working conditions.<sup>25</sup> New labor alliances have formed as well, particularly as U.S. industries have moved their factories into Mexico and Central and South America: the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, Women on the Border, the *Colectiva Feminista Binacional* and *La Mujer Obrera*, the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), and the *Comité Fronterizo de Obreros* (CFO)-Committee of Women Workers all sponsor cooperative programs that foster the transnational organization of women workers.<sup>26</sup>

Scholars across the world are increasingly focusing on global studies that examine the experiences of both men and women. Published in the U.S. since 1989, the *Journal of Women's History* is devoted exclusively to the international field of women's history and emphasizes the particular historical constructions of gender that shape and are shaped by women's experience.<sup>27</sup> In women's intellectual history, scholars are examining the interchange of ideas in philosophy, literature, art, and music between the U.S. and Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Economic history and the study of women's work and participation in labor movements now considers the impact of global markets, reserve labor forces, and international labor organizations. An understanding of women's political participation in the U.S. has benefited greatly from comparative work on women's suffrage and representation in governmental bodies around the world. A global perspective compounds the ways in which we think about the meaning of citizenship and political activism outside the limited parameters of U.S. democratic practice. The history of U.S. women in a broad range of political movements—nationalism, conservatism, utopianism, socialism, anarchism, communism—cannot be understood without examining these political beliefs in multiple national and international contexts.<sup>28</sup>

### What is the Payoff?

Following these new trajectories in U.S. women's history has practical value in terms of scholarship and activism. The field already has a rich legacy, with roots in the eighteenth century and a promising vision for the twenty-first. That vision brings us back to Jane Addams's belief that women in the United States must recognize the interdependence of women around the globe in order to work for the lasting peace that can be realized only through economic justice, social activism, and a sense of collective political responsibility. These words present as much, or even more, of a challenge in post-9-11 America than they did in the early decades of the twentieth century. But what do they mean for historians? How can scholars, teachers, and students in U.S. women's history apply Addams's challenge to the work of globalizing the study of women's experience?

The established practice of women's history in the U.S.—internationally, comparatively, and globally—has always been connected to activism, all along the political spectrum. From pacifism to war mobilization, from anti-suffrage to fighting for extended rights along multiple facets of the fragmented political landscape, women have written and protested in order to change the world around them. The first generation of women's historians, Mercy Otis Warren and Julia Sargent Murray, emerged during the American Revolution. The long fight for woman's suffrage produced generations of women committed to remembering the work of those who came before them, even as they recorded their own experiences. A new cohort of women's history scholars came out of the movements for civil rights and women's liberation in the 1960s and 1970s, and out of their work came new fields of inquiry, including gender and cultural studies.<sup>29</sup> Rather than being mutually exclusive categories of analysis, these innovative directions mark the success of women's history and expand its relevance for successive generations of scholars. Work that explores the history of women in the United States in a global context provides new ways of seeing and understanding that record. Jane Addams's call for U.S. women to initiate "a better understanding between the people of the world" resonates powerfully in the twenty-first century. This is a call that scholars and teachers in the field of U.S. women's history can answer by leaving "American exceptionalism" behind and going global.

## Notes

*Many thanks to my wonderful women's history colleagues, Judith P. Zinsser and Brigid O'Farrell, for their support and suggestions.*

1. Jane Addams is the subject of multiple biographies, including most recently Louise W. Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005). See also Victoria Bissell Brown, *The Education of Jane Addams: From Heroine to Democrat in the Gilded Age* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy: A Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); and Allen F. Davis, *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). For details regarding her leadership at The Hague in 1915 and her call to U.S. women, see Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, and Alice Hamilton, *Women at the Hague: The International Congress of Women and its Results*, introduction by Harriet Hyman Alonso (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1915, reprint 2003); and Harriet Hyman Alonso, "Jane Addams: Thinking and Acting Locally and Globally," *Journal of Women's History* 16, no. 1 (2004): 148-164. Linda K. Schott, *Reconstructing Women's Thoughts: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom before World War II* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997). Information on current WILPF work at <<http://www.wilpf.org/>>.

2. U.S. citizens are not unique in believing that their nation is exceptional. Most, if not all, countries have shared such a national ideology. The French *mission civilisatrice*, the British Empire, and the Third Reich, all had their versions of national exceptionalism. See Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood, eds., *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

3. Gerda Lerner, "U.S. Women's History: Past, Present, and Future," *Journal of Women's History* 16, no. 4 (2004): 10-27.

4. Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.

5. Nancy Cott and Elizabeth Pleck, *A Heritage of Her Own* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979); Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in America's Working Class and Social History* (Oxford, U.K.: Basil Blackwell, 1977).

6. Kathi Kern, "Productive Collaborations: The Benefits of Cultural Analysis to the Past, Present, and Future of Women's History," *Journal of Women's History* 16, no. 4 (2004): 34-40.

7. See "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," Participants: C. A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connolly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed, *American Historical Review* 3, no. 5 (December 2006): 1440-1464. Patricia Seed referred to transnational history as a new field that offers a "world of comparative possibility." On gender and world history, see Judith P. Zinsser, "And Now for Something Completely Different: Gendering the World History Survey," *AHA Perspectives*, May-June 1996, <<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/1996/9605/9605TEC3.CFM>>.

8. Nancy Cott, ed., *A Woman Making History: Mary Beard through Her Letters* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991). Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (one volume edition) (New York: MacMillan, 1930); Mary R. Beard, *Understanding Women* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1931); Mary R. Beard, *America Through Women's Eyes* (New York: MacMillan, 1933); Mary R. Beard, *A Changing Political Economy as it Affects Women* (Washington, D.C.: American Associa-



tion of University Women, 1934); and Mary R. Beard, *Women as Force in History* (New York: MacMillan, 1946).

9. Mary R. Beard, *Women as Force in Japanese History* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1953).

10. See Helen Laville, *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women's Organisations* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2002). On Alice Hanson Cook, see Alice H. Cook, *A Lifetime of Labor: the Autobiography of Alice H. Cook* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1998); International Women's History Archives, *Herstory: Women's History Collection from the International Women's History Archives* (Berkeley, CA: Micro Photo Div., Bell & Howell, 1972); Berenice A. Carroll, *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1976); Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1984, Feminist Press edition, 1996); Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997). See also Rupp, "From Rosie the Riveter to the Global Assembly Line: American Women on the World Stage," in *America on the World Stage: a Global Approach to U.S. History*, ed. Gary Reichard and Ted Dickson (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

11. Global history is the subject of an increasing number of books and articles. For a comprehensive overview of recent work in global women's history, see Bonnie G. Smith, ed., *Women's History in Global Perspective*, Volumes 1-3 (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004, 2005); and Bonnie G. Smith, ed., *Global Feminisms Since 1945* (New York: Routledge, 2000). Two essays in these works that focus specifically on U.S. history are: Kathleen Brown, "The History of Women in the U.S. to 1865," in *Global Perspective*, Vol. 2, 238-280; and Eileen DuBois, "Women's and Gender History in Global Perspective: North America After 1865," in *Global Perspective*, Vol. 3, 222-252.

12. Louise A. Tilly, "Gender, Women's History, and Social History," *Social Science History* 12, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 439-462.

13. Martha Chen, "Engendering World Conferences: The International Women's Movement and the United Nations," *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1995): 477-491; J. Friedman, "Gendering the Agenda: The Impact of the Transnational Women's Rights Movement at the UN Conferences of the 1990s," *Women's Studies International Forum* 26, no. 4 (July 2004): 313-331. Information on the U.N. Conferences on women available at: <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>>. For an excellent analysis of the U.N. Decade for Women, see Judith P. Zinsser, "From Mexico to Copenhagen to Nairobi: The United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985," *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 139-168. "Women Go Global: The United Nations and The International Women's Movement 1945-2000," by Nuchhi R. Currier is a new CD-ROM produced by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women that provides a graphic account of the legitimization process of the global feminist movement by the United Nations. Available at <[http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2003/webArticles/011703\\_women\\_go\\_global.html](http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2003/webArticles/011703_women_go_global.html)>.

14. For detailed information about CEDAW, see the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women at <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>>; on the IFRWH/FIRHF, see <<http://www.ifrwh.com/>>. See also the The First Center for Memories, Biographies and Testimonies of Women at <<http://www.internationalcenterofwomen.org/>>. Karen Offen, founder and past secretary-treasurer of the IFRWH/FIRHF, has edited the first survey of the development of women's history in twenty-two countries on five continents; see *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives*, co-edited with Ruth Roach Pierson and Jane Rendall, on behalf of the International Federation for Research in Women's History (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991). Offen has spear-



headed the organization of the International Museum of Women, a groundbreaking social change museum that inspires global action and connects people across borders, amplifying the voices of women worldwide through global online exhibitions, international history, the arts, and cultural programs that educate, create dialogue, and build community. See <<http://www.imow.org/home/index>>.

15. See "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," 1440-1464. Patricia Seed referred to transnational history as a new field that offers a "world of comparative possibility."

16. Excellent anthologies that exemplify this new work include Nancy A. Hewitt, *A Companion to American Women's History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002); and Thomas Bender, *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002). Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), successfully disrupts "well-known categories and paradigms" as it genders women's history. Patricia Hill's work on missionary women broke new ground in the 1980s, see Patricia Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1985). See also Catherine Clay, Chandrika Paul, and Christine Senecal, *Envisioning Women in World History, Prehistory-1500*, Vol. 1 (New York: McGraw-Hill 2009); and Pamela McVay, *Envisioning Women in World History, 1500-Present*, Vol. 2 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009).

17. The remarkable web-based project *Women and Social Movements in the United States*, created by Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, brings together primary documents, books, images, scholarly essays, book reviews, web site reviews, and teaching tools, all documenting the multiplicity of women's activism in public life. One of the most heavily visited resources for U.S. women's history on the Internet, the site is well-designed for international work and is regularly accessed by scholars and students from around the world. Information about the basic and scholarly editions of *Women and Social Movements* is available through college and university libraries or at <<http://www.alexanderstreet.com/products/wasm.htm>>. Approximately one-fourth of the projects are available without subscription at <<http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/projectmap.htm>>.

18. See Eve Laplante, *American Jezebel: The Uncommon Life of Anne Hutchinson, the Woman Who Defied the Puritans* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004); and Cheryl C. Smith, "Out of Her Place: Anne Hutchinson and the Dislocation of Power in New World Politics," *Journal of American and Comparative Cultures* 29, no. 4 (December 2006): 437-453; Kate Chedzoy, "The Cultural Geographies of Early Modern Women's Writing: Journeys Across Spaces and Times," *Literature Compass* 3, no. 4 (July 2006): 884-895. On Mary Dyer, see Ruth Plimpton, *Mary Dyer: Biography of a Rebel Quaker* (Boston, MA: Branden Publishing Company, 1994); Carla Gardina Pestana, *Quakers and Baptists in Colonial Massachusetts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and "The Quaker Executions as Myth and History," *Journal of American History* 80 (1993): 441-469; and Anne G. Myles, "From Monster to Martyr: Re-Presenting Mary Dyer," *Early American Literature* 36, no. 1 (2001): 1-30.

19. On the liminal roles played by Indian women, see Karen Kupperman, *Indians and English Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); and Karen Robertson, "Pocahontas at the Masque," *Signs* 21 (Spring 1996): 551-583. Also, Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Clara Sue Kidwell, "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators," *Ethnohistory* 39, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 97-107; and Camilla Townsend, *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2004).

20. Eileen Hunt Botting, "Wollstonecraft's Philosophical Impact on Nineteenth-

Century American Women's Rights Advocates," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (October 2004); Elizabeth Ann Bartlett, *Liberty, Equality, Sorority: The Origins and Interpretation of American Feminist Thought: Frances Wright, Sarah Grimke, and Margaret Fuller* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1994); John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill, *Essays on Sex Equality*, ed. Alice S. Rossi (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

21. David Gollaher, *Voice for the Mad: The Life of Dorothea Dix* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); and Bonnie S. Anderson, *Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

22. Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, "Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement: A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism," *Signs* 24, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 363-386; Margaret Crocco and O. L. Davis, Jr., *"Bending the Future to Their Will": Civic Women, Social Education, and Democracy* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999); James Reed, *From Private Vice to Public Virtue: The Birth Control Movement and American Society Since 1830* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

23. Mollie Ray Carroll, "Women and the International Labor Movement," (Washington, D.C.: Women in Industry Committee of the National League of Women Voters, 1924), 6. This pamphlet is available in the Open Collections Program, "Women Working, 1800-1930," Harvard University Library. See Gladys Boone, *The Women's Trade Union Leagues in Great Britain and the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942); and Nancy Schrom Dye, *As Equals and as Sisters: Feminism, the Labor Movement, and the Women's Trade Union League of New York* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1980), and especially "Rose Schneiderman and the Limits of Women's Trade Unionism," in Alice Kessler-Harris, *Gendering Labor History* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 71-96.

24. See Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds., *Global Woman* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002).

25. Mary E. Frederickson, "A Place to Speak Our Minds: Locating Women's Activism where North Meets South," *Journal of Developing Societies* 23, nos. 1-2 (2007): 59-70. For programs sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), see <<http://www.cluw.org/>>. Information about the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras is available at <<http://www.coalitionforjustice.net/>>; regarding Women on the Border, see <<http://www.womenontheborder.org/>>; for the Association for Women's Rights in Development, see <<http://www.awid.org/>>; and for material on the work done by the *Comite Fronterizo de Obreros* (CFO)-Committee of Women Workers, see <<http://www.cfomaquiladoras.org/english%20site/aboutcfo.en.html>>.

26. Information about the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras is available at <<http://www.coalitionforjustice.net/>>; regarding Women on the Border, see <<http://www.womenontheborder.org/>>; and *La Mujer Obrera's* website at <<http://portal.mujerobrero.com/>>. For the Association for Women's Rights in Development, see <<http://www.awid.org/>>; and for material on the work done by the *Comite Fronterizo de Obreros* (CFO)-Committee of Women Workers, see <<http://www.cfomaquiladoras.org/english%20site/aboutcfo.en.html>>. The Binational Feminist Collective is an independent group organized to promote the human rights of female workers in the maquiladora industry with regard to gender issues. The Binational is associated with the non-governmental organization CITTAC (*Centro de Información para Trabajadoras y Trabajadores A.C.*) in Baja California.

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## Appendix I



Figure 1: Women's Peace Party delegates, including Jane Addams, to the first International Congress of Women. Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ggbain-18848.



Figure 2: First International Congress of Working Women, Washington, D.C., October 28, 1919. Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site.





Figure 3: No More War Demonstration (in Philadelphia?), circa 1920s. Photograph courtesy of the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Records of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Used with permission.



Figure 4: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) staff members at the October 25, 2003 demonstration in Washington, D.C. to end the occupation of Iraq. L-R: Jen Geiger, Grace Baiye, Jovana Ruzicic, and Judy Dodd. Photograph courtesy of WILPF-U.S. Used with permission.



Figure 5: Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) support a national and international agenda of solidarity, involvement, dignity, and justice. Photograph courtesy of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. Used with permission.



Figure 6: A bi-national delegation composed of members of the *Centre International de Solidarité Ouvrière* (CISO) from Québec, Canada and the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE) from the U.S. show their support for workers affiliated with their long time ally, the Authentic Workers Front, or the *Frente Auténtico del Trabajo* (FAT). Photograph courtesy of UE. Used with permission.

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