

Love Outside the Walls: Richard Rorty, Jane Addams, and James Baldwin on the Dangers and Vulnerabilities of Right Relation

Bethel L. Eddy

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

ABSTRACT

Richard Rorty, in *Achieving Our Country* (1998), predicted the rise of a Donald Trump-like figure. Rorty's humanistic allegiance to James Baldwin's vision of love as a cure for the current political ills of the United States clears the way for an alternative genealogy of socially-engaged pragmatism that runs from William James to John Dewey, Jane Addams, Walter Rauschenbusch, Robert Park, Winifred Raushenbush and ultimately to her son, Rorty himself. Love, in this version, entails taking off the masks of identity that justify morally irresponsible hierarchical relationships.

Russia's secret weapon is the bewilderment and despair and hunger of millions of people of whose existence we are scarcely aware. James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

In 1997, Richard Rorty made some astounding predictions about the future of American democracy in his Massey Lectures, *Achieving Our Country* (1998). I was inspired to reread *Achieving Our Country* after watching Raoul Peck's documentary *I Am Not Your Negro*, drawn from texts by James Baldwin. This recent rereading of this little book, so uncharacteristic of Rorty's philosophical style, left me floored at the prescience of Rorty's words. Twenty-two years ago, he wrote, "While the Left's back was turned, the bourgeoisification of the white proletariat which began in World War II and continued through the Vietnam War has been halted, and the process has gone into reverse. America is now proletarianizing its

bourgeoisie, and this process is likely to culminate in a bottom-up populist revolt...”¹ Continuing, Rorty predicts that “democracies are heading into a Weimar-like period, one in which populist movements are likely to overturn constitutional governments.”² Rorty admits that “fascism may be the American future.” He predicts that those voters struggling with making ends meet financially “will decide that the system has failed and start looking around for a *strongman to vote for*—someone willing to assure them that, *once he is elected...postmodernist professors will no longer be calling the shots*” [emphasis added]. The warning (perhaps a prophecy?) continues: “One thing that is very likely to happen is that the gains made in the past forty years by black and brown Americans, and by homosexuals, will be wiped out. Jocular contempt for women will come back into fashion...”³ The events of the 2016 election played out much as Rorty predicted: “After my imagined strongman takes charge,” he writes, “he will quickly *make his peace with the international super-rich*, just as Hitler made his with the German industrialists... He will be a *disaster for the country and the world*” [emphasis added].⁴

Enter Donald Trump and the new global kleptocracy. Rorty’s predictions – ones I barely noticed on my first reading in 1998 – support his basic claim in *Achieving Our Country*. The inheritors of the democratic tradition of Lincoln and Whitman, he argues in his book, have failed to carry forward a vision of American democracy sublime enough to motivate the full participation and agency of the American citizenry, leaving behind a deadened culture vulnerable to the forces of globalization, tribalistic nationalism, and those who would liquidate and plunder its value for cash.

In this essay, I want to examine and compare the writings of three Christian *religious* thinkers – some may challenge my use of the descriptor “religious,” since none of the three has a traditional relationship to Christian faith, yet, I argue, all three write and think, with some degree of self-consciousness, from a religious core informed by the Christian tradition. All three prefer socially-engaged and religiously motivated social justice activity over putting on the identifying uniform of a particular religion; in other words, to all three, acting justly is more important than being Christian. All three chose to perform their religious lives rather than to find secure comfort in a being identified as a member of a particular religion-defined group. Together, they offer the best diagnostic tools and medicaments for a social cure from the current failures of democracy in this age of Trump. I will draw on the humanism of neo-pragmatist Richard Rorty, highlighting this prescient diagnosis of the coming, and now current, state of democratic traditions. Then, tracing a tradition of socially-engaged American pragmatism, that I embrace, I will turn to Jane Addams’s public work of clarifying and creating right relationships within that democratic tradition and end up by explaining James Baldwin’s claim that religion is not about safety, but rather about human vulnerability. I hope to show how these three thinkers might help us to find a religiously-motivated path toward an arduous and enacted love of our neighbor. To achieve this kind of love will cost us every bit as much as we imagine it might in our horrified nightmares about retaliation and reparations. It will require sacrifices we may not be willing to make. Yet, embraced, it might yet heal our democratic cancer and help us toward achieving our country – the country that retained the words “all men are created equal” in our Declaration of Independence, words written by slaveholders while they counted slaves as 3/5ths of a person for voting representation.

RORTY'S SECULAR HUMANISM

The intent, title and theme of Rorty's book cannot be understood correctly outside of the context he borrows from James Baldwin. The phrase "achieving our country," borrowed by Rorty, alludes to Baldwin's essay "Down at the Cross" from the larger essay "The Fire Next Time," in which Baldwin hopes against hope: "If we – and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others – do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare and achieve our country."⁵ Knowing this context, a reader would have to realize that Rorty's hope to achieve America's best potential is not *at all* the hope that America will provide the world with all the answers. Rather, on the contrary, any Baldwin reader would understand the broader context into which Baldwin is writing. In *Achieving Our Country*, Rorty provides sufficient evidence that his own religious heritage is far from irrelevant to his social ethics.⁶

Rorty attributes these frightening turns of fate, in part, to a failure of a divided political left to make common cause. He writes of a split between a cultural left and a politically engaged left. The cultural left, he proffers, exhibits its activism by writing from a deconstructive point of view that shies away from difficult confrontational engagement in favor of showing why all ideologies can be shown to contain hypocrisies they never quite successfully elide, by their tone of despair, and by their retreat into identity politics and theory as safe havens for those like themselves. He also blames old-school Marxists who defer engaged action to the inevitability of what Hegel, then Rorty elsewhere, disdainfully, called the Slaughter Bench of History.⁷ They preach to the academic choir, because it is much easier, and takes far less courage to do so than to engage with social abusers or else because they falsely believe that these things will work themselves out automatically over time.⁸

However, I would add, a younger Rorty was partly responsible as well, for he too retreated into a private spirituality as a philosopher-atheist, whose private nature communion with wild orchids provided restoration to his soul.⁹ That sort of religious life has its own socially disengaged quietism and ignores the particular religious sources of Rorty's own being; drawn from the Baptist Social Gospel enacted by his minister grandfather, Walter Rauschenbusch. The previous essay I allude to is not Rorty's reading on religion. Elsewhere he offers a much richer religiously intoned description of engaged action that also holds onto the idea of a momentary retreat as the process and performance of retreat could generate the necessary required for a later confrontation. Describing this kind of "atheist's religion," Rorty articulates his religious orientation as, "the kind of religious faith in the future possibilities of moral humans, a fate which is *hard to distinguish from love* for, and hope for, the human community [emphasis added].¹⁰ He continues, citing the eloquent words of novelist Dorothy Allison, "literature and my own dream of writing has shaped my own system of belief – a kind of atheist's religion...the backbone of my convictions has been a belief in the progress of human society as demonstrated in its fiction."¹¹ Allison ends her own essay as follows:

There is a place where we are always alone with our own mortality. Where we must

simply have something greater than ourselves to hold onto—God or history or politics or literature or a belief in the healing power of love, or even righteous anger. Sometimes I think they are all the same. A reason to believe, a way to take the world by the throat and insist that there is more to this life than we have ever imagined.¹²

If Rorty did indeed embrace this sort of atheist's religion – he quoted this passage from Allison in his own work—then he was very close to what James Baldwin offers on the subject, going so far as to echo phrases from Baldwin's essay. This love, articulated by Rorty, enacted by Jane Addams (as I will show), and epitomized in Baldwin's writings, I will ultimately examine and recommend. Rorty's embrace of "atheist humanist faith" was very similar to Baldwin's account of the dangerous but divine power of love.

In *Achieving Our Country*, Rorty also details a history of the American Left that he claims democratic philosophers have ignored to their peril. Here Rorty is right, and his stories of an American left in the twentieth-century in this little book provide much of the relevant history of a period mostly ignored by intellectual historians and seen as a sort of "dark ages" of pragmatism between the founders and the neo-pragmatists. Rorty further sees a historical retreat of labor unions into abstract philosophizing by an academic cultural left, more engaged in diagnosing epistemological sins than social pathologies – hence a left that failed in the care and keeping of democratic traditions of relationship.

SOCIALLY ENGAGED PRAGMATISM

What unions did with some degree of effect was *confront* employers and *hold them accountable* for the personal misery of unemployed, sick, and cheated American employees whose plundered lives cried out for remedy and relief. Rorty mourns the retreat of organized labor once supported in its efforts by an American quasi-Marxist vision and criticizes the retreat of those activist labor unions generationally into abstract philosophizing about the dominations and powers causing the suffering of Americans in de-industrialized areas across America. Perhaps those organizers missed an opportunity to divert the country from the disaster it appears to be hurtling towards today by not speaking these truths to the employers who held power over those working people, and thus failed in a responsibility for the care and keeping of democratic traditions. But by focusing so entirely on labor unions and American Marxism, Rorty misses the important work of social engagement done by the immediate inheritors of founding generation pragmatists.

Rorty's prophetic story in *Achieving Our Country* about the newly created American working-class proletariat of the late twentieth-century has a precedent; those earlier historical events occurred when Jane Addams advocated for the working-class immigrant labor population of turn-of-the-century Chicago, where the next generation of socially engaged American pragmatists worked after the Harvard era of William James. This group included John Dewey, who bridges the historical gap a bit, particularly with his work in education in his Laboratory School, aiming to shape the characters and minds of the next generation of democratic citizens, instilling the virtues requisite for maintaining a democracy. But it also

includes the social activist Jane Addams, the sociologist George Herbert Mead and the urbanist Robert Park. The political pathologies of Gilded Age America are relevant now to the solving of our present ones, as Rorty well knew. Of the market and labor woes of late modern capitalism Rorty writes,

Globalization is producing a world economy in which an attempt by any one country to prevent the immiseration of its workers may result only in depriving them of employment. This world economy will soon be owned by a cosmopolitan upper class which has no more sense of community with any workers anywhere than the great American capitalists of the year 1900 had with the immigrants who manned their enterprises.¹³

This early American school of sociology, which employed Mead and Park, rather than analytic philosophy or later American sociology as science, retained its value-laden sense of purpose without apology; its purpose was to diagnose pathologies of societies and heal democratic wounds and cancers.

Jane Addams's social activism at Hull House owes its origins to Arnold Toynbee's settlement movement in England as Addams visited shortly after her college graduation.¹⁴ Addams understood what Dewey – her good friend and supporter¹⁵ – meant about the necessity for a public to grow out of a community.¹⁶ A community, including the immigrant one of 1890s Chicago workers, must find its voice – the political step - to become what Dewey called “a public.” Eddie Glaude writes, “Democracy grows out of our attempt to resolve problematic situations,” interpreting Dewey, “in the context of communal inquiry.”¹⁷ It is to act with intelligence upon what we, as a community of knowers, believe we know.

The settlement movement, allied with the Social Gospel from its very beginning, developed in parallel to the academic field (new to Americans) of sociology, where more of the inheritors of first-generation pragmatism landed, rather than in analytic epistemological philosophy. They ceased being called philosophers and were renamed as sociologists.¹⁸ Sociologists like Mead, Park and Park's student, Winnifred Raushenbush – daughter of Social Gospel minister Walter Rauschenbusch and Richard Rorty's mother—worked in this value-laden discipline; its practitioners saw themselves less as scientists and more as social physicians who hoped to diagnose particular pathologies of social ethics and to help heal the injuries of the democratic community.

Other early American sociologists were busy making social studies congruent with Darwinism, particularly the Darwinism as propounded in the US by Herbert Spencer on his American tour, that is, social Darwinism, much heralded by Gilded Age industrialists and welcomed as proof that it was not their will that workers suffer or their fault that their actions immiserated many. Rather, these unfortunate side effects, industrialists thought, were merely the workings of the providential Invisible Hand of progress. Spencer-admiring industrialists were wrong, however. The market economy was not then, and is not now, the inscrutable hand of God at work, as Spencer had implied - not any more than is reason, or history, or nature - god-terms all. Lives lost to poverty were no more the actions of the evolutionary Slaughter Bench of the Market any more than they were the Marxist Slaughter Bench of History.

ADDAMS' RELIGION OF RIGHT SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

John Dewey's socially-engaged activity with youth at the University of Chicago Lab School would have been more noticeable as part and parcel of his philosophy, if intellectual historians had paired it with Jane Addams's simultaneously coordinated practice of socially engaged activity in the 1890s in her Hull House community clubs for the immigrant tenement residents of Chicago. Her "social work" supplied an important development within a pragmatic tradition of democratic *relational* agency.¹⁹ Democratic relational agency – Jane Addams's work – needs to be seen as the socially-engaged pragmatism it is.

Addams was driven largely by a Social Gospel interpretation of Christianity. She refused to acknowledge her motivations as Christian, in part because the type of Christianity predominant around her in Chicago at the time was coming out of the Moody Bible Institute. That institution's evangelical focus tacitly sanctioned a colonizing frame of mind she rejected, particularly when performed in the name of Christianity. To her, it was no mission. Her guiding metaphor was mothering, rather than evangelizing. Nothing about Hull House condescended to those Addams assisted. She also rejected explicitly naming her motives as Christian, because not all of those she served at Hull House were from Christian cultures; she had no desire to alienate them. Addams was never comfortable being cast in the role of a Christian philanthropist. Pragmatic problem-solving through social criticism belonged on the city streets, not in the academy where most pragmatists were serving as clarification specialists. It took place at Chicago city council meetings, and in her neighbors' homes. The ideas she shared and developed with Dewey found concrete application in the cases of the problems she learned about from her neighbors and friends. Knowledge, for Addams, was a two-way street – a principle she learned from Arnold Toynbee's settlement movement. Addams learned from her neighbors as much as she taught them by bringing her philosopher, politician, and artist friends into the clubs of Hull House. Addams bet her soul and livelihood on living within that community to understand the burdens experienced by her neighbors unlike herself and to muster what energy she could to join forces with them for relief.

It was more important to Addams to live out her Christianity than it was to proclaim it or indoctrinate into it. The settlement movement Addams imported to America from England usually gets relegated to the category of social work rather than social ethics in action. But in starting her own settlement house, Addams took up what she saw as the explicitly Christian call to "bear one another's other's burdens, and fulfill the law of Christ."²⁰ She took on these burdens by assisting the workers of her neighborhood, helping them to find their voice. Addams used her social positional power in the wider community to strategically advocate for those whose voices were drowned out by the factories they labored in for long, injustice-filled hours. If there was any moral compass to go by post-Darwin, Addams found it in adjusting changing relationships in sometimes confrontative, but more often in more intimate, interactions. Right relationship, she implied, was its own moral justification, if only the parties to those relations continued to communicate with each other, antagonistically if need be, but preferably seeking each other's well-being in a changing world.

BALDWIN'S RELIGION OF LOVE AS REFUSAL OF SAFE HAVEN

The failure of the academic left and the severe die-off of labor unions left in its wake a general failure of employees and workers to hold employers and administrators accountable to those who supplied their labor. Baldwin describes this same failure of courage, facilitated by large-scale huddling of academics and employees into their own protective silos in an autobiographical mode in his essay "Down at the Cross" from *The Fire Next Time*. The settlement movement receded from American consciousness, although it still has a vestigial presence to this day; Friendly House in my hometown, Worcester, MA is a latter-day example. The political and confrontational aspects of the settlement movement have largely gone by the wayside in the contemporary scene, though perhaps again there is a vestigial presence in community organizers and IAF groups.²¹

Holding those with power accountable to the people they affect requires solidarity that is lacking in our current global context. I dare say none of us yet have the real answers to prevent the intractable forces of globalization from pauperizing American or any other working people eventually over time. Globalized economic and social processes are probably unstoppable and will become more painful before they get less painful. If there is no stopping the forces of globalization at this point, then an enormous period of reckoning has only just begun to occur. Even allowing for the possible emergence of an eventually stable, moderately stratified class system, the new global economic system will need to equilibrate on a world-wide scale and will cause intolerable miseries before the world reaches some sort of new equilibrium and equals out a bit, to a point where democracies can once more flourish. American workers will have to suffer first-hand the miseries of the same people to whom their jobs are currently being outsourced. Voices advocating quality, excellence, equality, and democratic fairness will be silenced by the dominating forces of quantifiable measures and data used to support the continuing dominance of those at the top. Divine love of neighbor for neighbor resists quantifiable measurement.

We've been hiding these predictable coming realities from ourselves because we do not want to see them: that there is no more moral justification for not paying a living wage to workers in Calcutta than there is to workers in Cleveland. The market doesn't justify it; justice does not depend upon non-human market forces. The "invisible hand" of the market was never an agent of justice or any other kind of morality. It has always been simply an amoral interplay of power and the vicissitudes of chance.

Moral justification depends upon right relationships, as Addams argued in her guide to pursuing democratic social ethics. Without right relationship, there is no possibility of love. James Baldwin's account of the power of love is the crucial one necessary to the task ahead for American lovers of democracy. The theme of his essay "Down at the Cross" details the many failures of courage – the courage to confront and hold accountable – the courage to reject co-optation by proffered power in the name of love - so that right democratic relationships do not perish from the earth. We can geographically distance ourselves from those we abuse to make money for a while, but sooner or later the chickens will come home to roost. This fear needs to be looked at directly and fully in its awful face. We can't go around it or skip over it without loss of humanity. The vast majority of Americans are frightened, many too ready to seek refuge in the leadership of a strongman's promises to turn back the hands of time and gate the national community

behind a wall.²² We are living out America's racial pathology writ global.

Baldwin shines a light upon an aspect of the American psyche that seeks security at steep human cost. He writes that people find it "difficult to act on what they know. To act is to be committed and to be committed is to be in danger...the danger in the minds and hearts of most white Americans is the loss of their identity."²³ Identity is a mask to hide behind – or a silo in which to herd ourselves together for tribal safety.

What contemporary philosophers and social critics may have overlooked or underestimated is how the *fear* of ruin and the *threat* of insecurity can drive people "to band together in accordance to a principle that has nothing to do with love, a principle that instead releases them from personal responsibility."²⁴ Rorty poignantly asks "Why could not the Left channel the mounting rage of the newly dispossessed?"²⁵ Part of the answer lies in the difference between Rorty's and the labor unions' model of *confrontation* and Baldwin's model of *antagonistic cooperation*. Lost culturally is any sense of "a loyal opposition" available to work out – sometimes in righteous anger – right relationships with those who hold power over them. Lost is the sense of the common good which sacrifices no one to the forces of power for a profit.

Precisely these sorts of fears sap all the grace and loveliness provided by a finite life, Baldwin proposes in his essay "Down at the Cross." When I assign this essay to my students, I ask them what connects the two parts of the essay – Baldwin's religious autobiography about growing up Christian in Harlem with the second part about his flirtation with and temptation to join the Nation of Islam. Baldwin first writes about his adolescent conversion experience. Driven by the fears he felt that one must oneself resort to violence or else perish from it, Baldwin sought refuge in a church. Not, however, in the church of his stepfather who was a store-front Pentecostal minister in Harlem, but rather in another church led by a female pastor. Baldwin writes that he went to talk with the minister and when she saw him, she asked "Whose little boy are you?" "Why, yours," thought Baldwin, seeing safety in the refuge the minister offered from the violence of the streets.²⁶

Later in "Down at the Cross" Baldwin writes of his first meeting with the Nation of Islam. Elijah Muhammad was interested in the young influential writer and invited him to dinner, presumably hoping to enlist him in the Nation. Baldwin describes the seduction of the experience. He saw what the Nation of Islam offered to its members. It offered safety in a shared identity led by a "strong man" with a shared identity to which everyone belonged. It offered the authoritative protection of Elijah Muhammad backed by his 'Fruit of Islam' security forces. It was again, for Baldwin, a tempting safety that he intuited as morally and spiritually necessary to resist and avoid.

Baldwin questions whether religion is all about safety. As an adolescent he had fled into the church for protection from Harlem's streets and hell's gates—seeking the comfort of becoming his minister's "little boy."²⁷ As an adult, he was tempted by the Nation of Islam. Both held forth an offer of safety behind a closed-off, morally purified identity.

Per Baldwin, democracy is the practice of vulnerability in community. Evasion of responsibility will not work. No strongman can protect us from the things we fear. As a country, we fear for our safety and security, knowing that a hard rain is likely to fall if we acknowledge our true history. We white Americans balk from acknowledgements of debts to African Americans that can never be repaid. We seek release from

the awful responsibility for the blood and livelihood of our neighbors. We white Americans are, as Baldwin put it, “trapped in a history which [we] do not understand.” Until we understand it, he explains to his nephew—until we look into its abyss, we “cannot be released from it.”²⁸

What would it require to make right relationship and love possible in American community? There’s not enough money to pay the debt. We would have to communicate directly with others who are rightfully angry. It might cost us as much as our lives. What would it take to escape the cult of strongman Trump that holds us captive? We would have to face our fears, not the least of which is racial in this country. We would have to communicate directly with the others we have exploited for gain or the “safety” gain seems to provide. America’s 1% are already purchasing their (actual, not metaphorical) missile silos in North Dakota and homesteads in New Zealand to hole up in. For now, most of us lacking the resources for these hideouts, hide behind various masks (American flags, tenure, skin color, church walls, academic doors, riot gear) from protection from these horrors. Like Baldwin who considered the offer of refuge in the church and the Nation of Islam, we are tempted when someone who seems big and strong offers us refuge in an exclusive community of shared identity, be it white skin, American exceptionalism, gender superiority, gated communities, military might, or positional social power. But if, as Baldwin argues, Addams lives out, and Rorty envisions for the future, democracy is the practice of vulnerability in community, to accept these comforts offers only an illusion of safety that provides a temporary and shallow fix to our unease. It is a fix that leaves us prematurely dead behind our masks, silos, and walls, which ultimately cannot be used to shield oneself from the difficulties of antagonistic cooperation in quest for right relationship. There is no skyhook to lift ourselves out of responsible relationship. Even if there were such a device, it would deaden our humanity.

But why unmask if one doesn’t necessarily have to? Why risk the dangers and vulnerabilities of love if you can bluff your way out of them? Why risk, as long as we can buy safety? Baldwin warns, “to defend oneself against a fear is simply to insure that one will, one day, be conquered by it; fears must be faced.”²⁹ “Love,” Baldwin challenges “takes off the masks we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.”³⁰ To take off that mask, white Americans would have to own the fact that African Americans are central to the actual meaning of democratic community and social justice in the United States.³¹

The American pathology is the desire to be safe: from the responsibility, from the burden, from the vulnerability, from the danger of face to face confrontation. Above and underlying it all, we fear death. “What white Americans do not wish to face [is] the fact that life is tragic... One day, for each of us, the sun will go down for the last, last time.”³² To avoid facing this “we will sacrifice all the beauty of our lives,” Baldwin writes; we “will imprison ourselves in totems, taboos, crosses, blood sacrifices, steeples, mosques, races, armies, flags, nations, in order to deny the fact of death.” But life, he continues,

Is the small beacon in that terrifying darkness from which we come and to which we shall return. One must negotiate this passage as nobly as possible, for the sake of those who are coming after us... It is the responsibility of free men to trust and to celebrate what is constant – birth, struggle, and death are constant, and so is love, though we may not always think so... But renewal becomes impossible if one supposes things to be constant that are not – safety, or money, or power.³³

A vulnerable and hence responsible person gradually comes to realize that one cannot undo anything in the past. The only way to live with past complicity is to do combat with it in the future and take responsibility for it in relationship – for a long, long time. Such an atonement tends to be quite messy and more than a little scary. But it seems the only way of avoiding the error of thinking that one can purify oneself from complicity, save oneself from responsibility, and deny the inevitability of death by embracing some all-encompassing change of identity whose militia or skirts we can hide behind.

Global capitalism's masters must confront the slave laborers' calls to accountability if either are to survive to a life worth living. Slaves (and I'll include here any workers who are arbitrarily dominated by employers or administrators or other "masters of the universe") must have the courage to speak truth to power; this is risky business. Masters (be they slave or corporate) must shed the protective mask of superior tribal identity; doing this renders one vulnerable to the other. "You have to be loyal to a dream community rather than to the one you wake up to every morning," writes Rorty.³⁴ Achieving our country will require more love than we have thus far been willing to risk as an American people. It will mean stepping out of the various modes of temporary security we have fashioned for ourselves and into a "no guarantees" risk of relationship, out of refusing to see and into accountability, out of fear of reprisal and into its acceptance as just if it comes. But our ability to move forward in responsible and responsive lives depends upon making that gamble. Only then can we actually see our problems of relationship, the better to address them politically, pedagogically, and interpersonally. Only then can we experience the grace, love and joy our finite lives offer us in democratic community while we are here.

REFERENCES

“American Journal of Sociology (Online).” *American Journal of Sociology (Online)*, 1895.

Baldwin, James. “The Fire Next Time.” in *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948-1985*. New York: St. Martin’s/Marek, 1985.

Eddy, Beth. “Review Science, Democracy, and the American University: From the Civil War to the Cold War Jewett Andrew Cambridge University Press Cambridge.” *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 36, no. 2 (2015): 194–98. <https://doi.org/10.5406/amerjtheophil.36.2.0194>.

Glaude, Eddie S. *In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Jewett, Andrew. *Science, Democracy, and the American University: from the Civil War to the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Rorty, Richard. *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America*. The William E. Massey, Sr. Lectures in the History of American Civilization ; 1997. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Rorty, Richard. *Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Rorty, Richard. “The Inspirational Value of Great Works of Literature.” *Raritan* 16, no. 1 (1996):8. <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.wpi.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=9609241525&site=ehost-live>.

———. *Philosophy and Social Hope*. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.

Stout, Jeffrey. *Blessed Are the Organized: Grassroots Democracy in America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

NOTES

- 1 Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 83.
- 2 Richard Rorty, *AOC*, 89-90.
- 3 Rorty, *AOC*, 90.
- 4 Rorty, *AOC*, 89-90.
- 5 James Baldwin, "The Fire Next Time," in *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction 1948-1985* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 3790.
- 6 Richard Rorty is the grandson of Walter Rauschenbusch, American Baptist Social Gospel minister. See page 59 in *Achieving Our Country*.
- 7 Richard Rorty, "The End of Leninism and History as Comic Frame" in Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger & M. Richard Zinman (eds.), *History and the Idea of Progress* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) 211-26. *Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- 8 This form of de-naturalized fatalism can most easily be traced in culture to Herbert Spencer. See Herbert Spencer, "Religion: A Retrospect and Prospect," in *The Nature and Reality of Religion: a Conflict between Frederic Harrison and Herbert Spencer* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1885), 17.
- 9 Richard Rorty, "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids" in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999).
- 10 Richard Rorty. "Religious Faith, Intellectual Responsibility and Romance" in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 160. (FRR) Rorty's words almost echo Baldwin's about his experiences with his fellow church members where "we sometimes achieved with each other a *freedom that was close to love*." [both emphases mine]
- 11 Dorothy Allison, "Believing in Literature" in Allison, *Skin: Talking about Sex, Class and Literature* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, 2014), 166.
- 12 Allison, "Believing in Literature," 181.
- 13 Rorty, *AOC*, 85.
- 14 Addams met Toynbee in London and toured his settlement house which placed students from Oxford in East London's slums to have both parties teach each other experientially.
- 15 Dewey named his own daughter Jane in Addams's honor.
- 16 John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1927), 35.
- 17 Eddie S. Glaude, *In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 24.

18 A glance at the contributors to the first decade of *The American Journal of Sociology* will show Addams herself as a contributor, as well as her co-workers at Hull House, Social Gospel theologians such as Shailer Mathews and Walter Rauschenbusch, philosophers such as George Herbert Mead and Dewey. See Eddy's review of Andrew Jewett's *Science, Democracy, and the American University: From the Civil War to the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) in *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 36, no. 2 (2015): 194–98. <https://doi.org/10.5406/amerjtheophil.36.2.0194>. See also Rorty, *AOC*, "I doubt that American sociology departments will ever again be the centers of social activism they were in the early decades of the [20th] century." 131. Rorty, *AOC*, 85.

19 See Robert Putnam on this subject in Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 373.

20 Gal. 6:2 [NRSV]

21 Perhaps this is the best place to acknowledge the pervasive influence of Jeffrey Stout's *Blessed Are the Organized: Grassroots Democracy in America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) that shows up in several instances in this paper. See particularly 237-38.

22 Listen to Anais Mitchell's powerful song, "Why We Build the Wall" from her hit Broadway musical *Hadestown* for political philosophy in a different genre.

23 Baldwin, *FNT*, 336.

24 Baldwin, *FNT*, 368.

25 Rorty, *AOC*, 91.

26 Baldwin, *FNT*, 343.

27 Baldwin, *FNT*, 343.

28 Baldwin, *Price*, 336.

29 Baldwin, *Price*, 343.

30 Baldwin, *Price*, 375.

31 Glaude, *In a Shade of Blue*, 4.

32 Baldwin, *Price*, 373.

33 Baldwin, *Price*, 373

34 Rorty, *AOC*, 101. Or, as the recently deceased Elijah Cummings said of his country: "We are better than this."