THE PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

SAMARITANS AND SAVIORS IN MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN'S SOCIAL

SETTLEMENT WRITINGS, 1895-1914

by

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Introduction

"Father, I was talking to a classmate of mine that's working for the Associated Charities—oh, Dad, there's the sweetest little babies that come to the milk-station there!—and I feel as though I ought to be doing something worth while like that."

"What do you mean 'worth while'? If you get to be Gruensberg's secretary—and maybe you would, if you kept up your shorthand and didn't go sneaking off to concerts and talkfests every evening—I guess you'll find thirty-five or forty bones a week worth while!"

"I know, but—oh, I want to—contribute— I wish I were working in a settlement house."

--Verona Babbitt, Sinclair Lewis's Babbitt (1922), page 17

My introduction to Jane Addams began with a children's book read to me a quarter of a century ago by my aunt. Laying in my cousin's pink-canopied bed as a seven-year-old, I listened attentively to a story of a woman who, even as a girl like me, shared my incipient feminism and my already-overactive concern for the underprivileged. The book, The Value of Friendship: The Story of Jane Addams, was part of the Valuetales Series of the 1970s and '80s, which aimed to teach moral and ethical values to children through the illustration of a major figure whom the authors believed embodied that virtue. This series, published in the wake of second-wave feminism and the Civil Rights movement, is notable for its inclusion of such lesser-known and diverse historical figures as Nellie Bly, Albert Schweitzer, and Jackie Robinson. Members (like myself) of Generation X or later may class the incorporation of Jane Addams's biography in the series as a similar attempt at multicultural inclusion, but for many U.S. readers born in the first half of the twentieth century, Jane Addams's name (though not always her reputation) is better known. Even so, most Americans today are unfamiliar with the social settlement reform movement that Addams helped initiate and that in turn initiated her celebrity.

This dissertation examines the construction of the identity of the Woman Reformer in texts by women engaged in and writing about the problems of the urban poor during the

Progressive Era. In my project, I analyze women's fictional and nonfiction writings from the turn-of-the-twentieth-century settlement movement, which negotiated questions of class, race, and gender as its leaders sought to redress both industrial ills and middle-class ennui. Starting in the late 1880s, middle-class U.S. reformers founded social settlements in working-class neighborhoods in an effort to bridge class differences while providing educational and cultural opportunities to their neighbors. Though mostly forgotten today, the settlement movement was one of the most visible of urban reform efforts from the 1890s to the start of the First World War, and Jane Addams was a titanic figure who dominated discussions not only of settlement work, but also of reform efforts in general.

Addams's memoir Twenty Years at Hull-House, with Autobiographical Notes (1910) is the best-known example of settlement literature, but hers was not the only textual discussion of social settlement work. Countless writers and reformers of the era wrote about the movement—in nonfiction narratives such as Addams's memoirs; in the press, popular and professional; and in fiction, written by both settlement workers and professional writers. Today, references to the literature appear occasionally in discussions of women's reform literature and frequently in histories of Chicago letters, but as this project shows, the movement and its texts transcended that city. Though Clarence Andrews in Chicago in Story lists approximately fifteen novels under his section "The Social Service and Settlement Novel," and Guy Szuberla revises that number to "some twenty or more novels," the reality is that authors outside of Chicago also engaged the topic of settlement reform, and the inclusion of nonfiction essays and other periodical literature pushes those numbers considerably higher (Andrews 109-10; Szuberla 60). Jane Addams—and occasionally her peers—is studied by historians, sociologists, philosophers, cultural critics, and scholars of

religion (to name just a few of the disciplines that discuss the settlement movement), but literary critics have only recently begun to examine Addams as a writer. And though scholars such as Sidney Bremer have devoted occasional articles to the literature and Bremer recovered one settlement novel republished in 1989,[1] there is currently no book-length work focusing on settlement writing. The settlement movement had a significant cultural presence that is virtually unknown to literary scholars today; this project aims to address that gap in our knowledge.

Jane Addams clearly stands as the foremost representative of settlement work and settlement writing. She sets up a model of settlement work, and her memoir creates a carefully crafted persona. But the other writers in this study demonstrate that Addams's conception of settlement work was not the only vision of such reform in her era. Taken together, this literature offers insight into Progressive-Era debates about the causes and cures of social ills, and it reveals the intricacies of constructing identities through texts—whether those of the writers or the reformers or both. I argue that in writing about the settlement movement, each middle-class author in this study offers her own vision of what a Woman Reformer is and should be. Though Addams's memoir identifies the female activist as a singular, individualistic, and somewhat masculine figure along the lines of Abraham Lincoln and Leo Tolstoy, other writers challenge this identity even as they refer and defer to Addams and her dominance. Most of the writers emphasize the importance of factors such as community, religion, and partnership through their texts, but ultimately, the literature as a whole largely relies on an image of a strong middle-class heroine who will help save industrial America, and except in the articles by African American women in chapter two, that figure is also white. "The People in the Neighborhood" illuminates the extent to which

[1] Elia Peattie's The Precipice, discussed in chapter four of this project.

Progressive-Era reform movements are embedded in literature, and it furthers scholars' understanding of the raced and classed gender negotiations performed by women in the public eye. I argue that though Addams's celebrity has dominated the movement since the 1890s, the broader body of settlement literature—only part of which is included in this study—demonstrates that the social settlement movement transcended Addams and Hull-House. The cultural work of this widespread movement and its literature is vital to an understanding of gender, race, religion, and class in the Progressive Era. Ultimately, studying settlement literature also gives us a deeper understanding of the legacy of white, middle-class activism on the feminist movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Today's feminist landscape is directly related to who these reformers were a century ago.

Brief History of the Settlement Movement

Based on a British model, social settlements began to appear in America in the late 1880s as part of a simultaneous effort to combat growing problems associated with urban poverty while offering a philanthropic outlet for primarily young, college-educated, middle-class whites who desired to live according to liberal principles (Carson 27). Middle-class "residents" opened (and usually resided in) settlements in working-class communities, offering social and educational services for the settlement's "neighbors."[2] Though Hull-House is the best known social settlement, it was not the first in the United States; that title belongs to The Neighborhood Guild, founded in 1886 by Stanton Coit in New York City (Carson 36). In 1889, within a few months of each other, three other settlements opened their doors. The College Settlement in New York, Andover House in Boston, and Addams's Hull-

[2] The terms "resident" and "neighbor," as used here and throughout this study, are taken from the settlement lexicon.

House all opened with the idea of improving the lives of the poor while giving college-educated American youth an outlet for meaningful, socially conscious work (Carson 53). Addams writes in Twenty Years, "Hull House was soberly opened on the theory that the dependence of classes on each other is reciprocal" (55); she envisioned the settlements as an opportunity for middle-class women to "learn of life from life itself" while attempting to ameliorate the living conditions of the (mostly immigrant) poor around them (51). Though men were integrally involved in settlement work from the beginning, the movement was especially attractive to women, perhaps, as Kathryn Kish Sklar argues, "because [it] gave women leaders the means to control their own lives as they developed programs to implement their vision of social justice" (180). As several recent scholars have pointed out, settlement reform was also popular with women because working in a settlement "house" could be framed as an extension of domestic duties and therefore fit into a Victorian ideology that assigned women to the domestic realm.[3] In fact, Progressive-Era women reformers often couched their work as "civic housekeeping" (Jackson 83-93).

The popularity of social settlements mushroomed from the 1890s to World War I, and their legacy continues today in such organizations as the Boys' and Girls' Clubs, extended education classes, and the YMCA.[4] At first, settlements were founded by white, college-educated, middle- and upper-class youths in working-class neighborhoods of urban centers. The settlement project was, in part, modeled after the ideals of the British aestheticism movement promoted by William Morris and John Ruskin, and therefore a large percentage of early activities at Hull-House consisted of art appreciation and artistic production (Davis 68).

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[3] See, for example, Sawaya, Chura, and Jackson.

[4] The YMCA and YWCA were also in existence in the Progressive Era. Their functions were similar to those of the social settlements, and the clubs offer a familiar example of settlement-type work to readers today for whom the concept of a settlement is unclear.

Since many of the settlements' neighbors were factory workers removed, under industrialism, from the products of their labor, the residents promoted artisanship and sought to honor the Old-World talents possessed by many immigrant craftsmen and -women. The settlements also offered more practical services such as sewing classes, daycare programs, physical recreation, and meeting space (which was usually open to independent organizations). Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn categorizes the settlements' activities as including "social welfare services, vocational training, liberal education, cultural programs, recreation, and entertainment" (2). As the popularity of settlements grew and the social problems of the Progressive Era continued, settlements spread throughout the country, to regions in the south and west and into rural areas. As early as the 1890s, some reformers also founded settlements specifically targeted at unique populations such as African Americans, many of whom were migrating to cities—especially those in the north—in search of employment and opportunity for social advancement.[5]

Exigency for Social Settlements

Influenced by the growing attention to biological evolution, the end of the nineteenth century witnessed a pervasive cultural anxiety: the specter of societal "degeneration," a threat discussed in Max Nordau's text of the same name.[6] Many public figures and private citizens—including scientists, philosophers, educators, sociologists, politicians and preachers—feared that society was on the decline and that if measures were not taken to stem such degeneration or degeneracy, the future of civilization was in jeopardy. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the U.S. experienced booming industrialization, urbanization,

[5] See Lasch-Quinn.
[6] "Degeneration" is the title of the 1895 English translation of Nordau's text, whose original German title was Entartung (1893); see Maik for a thorough discussion of Nordau's text and its reception in America.

immigration, and northern migration (the latter especially true among black Americans seeking a new start after the Civil War). Industrial centers quickly outgrew themselves, resulting in squalid living and working conditions, gross overcrowding, and inadequate civic oversight of health and sanitation services. While the Columbian World Fair in 1893 in Chicago displayed the optimism and progressiveness of the age, the economic Panic that followed closely on its heels raised doubts about the nation's upward climb. Adding to a sense of unrest in the period were labor conflicts such as the Haymarket riot in 1886, the Pullman strike in 1894 (in which railroad magnate George Pullman's workers stopped work in protest of the prices at his company store), and the growing Populist movement. Race relations grew continuously uneasy during the period, as African Americans suffered legal segregation and the terror of the incipient Ku Klux Klan, and the United States increased its imperialist encroachments on Cuba and the Philippines. At the turn of the twentieth century, Theodore Roosevelt also cautioned against White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant "race suicide" as WASP women produced fewer children as compared to their non-WASP, often immigrant, sisters (Paterfamilias). In short, many middle- and upper-class white Americans feared that the country was in grave social danger. Others, like Jane Addams, not only feared the problems associated with the indigent but feared for those middle- and upper-class youth who felt a sense of inadequacy and uselessness as they contemplated futures with no clear social purpose. This confluence of factors gave rise to the settlement movement, though, of course, individual reformers and the various houses they worked at operated under diverse ideologies and stressed different aspects of settlement reform.

Evolution and Progressive-Era Thought

The theories of Charles Darwin, offered almost a half century earlier, pervaded Progressive-Era thought and thus played a significant role in settlement ideology. As Bert Bender notes, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, "virtually every respectable scientist or social thinker was an evolutionist," and "nearly everyone was to some extent a Darwinist" (5). Indeed, the ubiquitous influence of science is woven throughout the fin de siècle discourse of social problems. In his classic text, Social Darwinism in American Thought, Richard Hofstadter argues that "[i]n some respects the United States during the last three decades of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century was the Darwinian country" (4-5; emphasis in original). Darwin's influence, of course, spread far beyond the realm of biology; social scientists of the late nineteenth century fiercely debated the implications of evolutionary theory for their own disciplines (Hofstadter 4). In fact, both social and biological science took the study of racial difference as a major focus. Throughout this era, scientific theories were employed in the dispute over whether humanity were constantly improving, as the Progressives held, or whether some cultures were degenerating, as other fin de siècle critics maintained. Darwinian evolutionary theory was employed by multiple sides to this debate, so assigning theorists and activists to a "nature" or "nurture" camp is not a clear-cut proposition. Mike Hawkins points out that though many Social Darwinists adhered to "a belief in social progress" during the late nineteenth century, there was at the same time "a widespread fear of moral and physical degeneration, and a sense of decadence and the imminent demise of Western civilization," especially in Europe (5). Some thinkers, such as Francis Galton and Karl Pearson, argued that degeneracy was a biological,

irremediable condition that could only gradually be phased out through selective breeding, or eugenics.[7]

In America, the pseudo-science of eugenics was promoted heavily by researcher Charles Davenport and others. Since the U.S as a nation has always been heavily invested in the idea of "progress," late-nineteenth-century advances in evolutionary and genetic thought provided yet another avenue for achieving such supposed advancement; "[g]enetic advances were as desirable as artistic, commercial, or territorial progress" (Cuddy and Roche 16). The influx of 25 million (mostly non-Western-European) immigrants into the U.S. during the period from 1860 to 1920 heightened the concerns of the dominant culture over the "purity" of the nation and, along with emancipation, Darwinism, Freudianism, and the veneration of science, contributed to the popularity of eugenicism among the intellectual, cultural, and capitalist elite (Cuddy and Roche 14-17). Late-nineteenth-century updates to the theories of French Enlightenment biologist Jean Lamarck added another wrinkle to the question of evolution. Whereas Charles Darwin attributed genetic variation to random mutations, Lamarck believed that acquired traits could become heritable, which led to evolutionary progress. Such a theory accorded with the Progressive-Era belief in improvement; Cathy Boeckmann notes that "the evolution that most concerned [late-nineteenth-century] commentators, both scientific and political, was the Spencerian evolution of the human race toward eventual perfection," so neo-Lamarckianism dominated racial discourse at the turn of the twentieth century (20). A major concern for cultural critics at the time, however, was not just the adding of positive traits to the gene pool, but the unfortunate acquisition of undesirable traits that would then be passed on to the nation's offspring. This fear enabled the

[7] See Hawkins, chapter 9, "The Eugenic Conscience," for a fuller discussion of Social Darwinism, eugenics, and degeneracy.

flourishing of the pseudo-science of eugenics as it sought to eradicate the "worst" traits (read: those held by nonwhite, non-middle-class, non-Protestants) and promote the "best" elements (read: white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, and middle-class norms) of the nation's people through selective breeding programs.

For those interested in the possibility of reform, issues of biological and social change were of central importance, and Addams was no exception. Her first memoir, with its focus on social reform, certainly reflects the ubiquity of Darwinist thought at the turn of the twentieth century, both in its actual references to Darwin and Spencer, as well as in the author's choice of words (such as "evolution," "traits," and "progress") and metaphors. Other reformers argued that moral or spiritual deficiencies were responsible for problems such as poverty and crime, and still others blamed the injustice of social institutions. Settlement literature reveals the tension in Progressive-Era discourse of reform over what factors social problems should be attributed to—an important issue since identifying a cause affects the type of remedies suggested to ameliorate social problems. Most of the authors in this study argue implicitly and explicitly for environmental explanations of social ills. While they acknowledge the importance of evolution, they carefully demonstrate that poverty and its accompanying maladies are due to environmental and social factors rather than biological and/or racial inferiority. For example, biographer Allen Davis asserts that Addams "became convinced that environment was more important than heredity" in determining behavior (102).

Such an ideology fits with Addams's project as a reformer. Since Hull-House functioned precisely to effect social change in its immigrant neighborhood and beyond, Addams was heavily invested in whether reform were possible. Claiming environmental

influences over biological ones in character development implicitly argues that settlements and other social projects are worthwhile ventures, that genetics alone is not responsible for social ills. Similarly, the African American writers in chapter two clearly argue for the significance of "nurture" over "nature"; after all, they more than any other group of authors in this study faced accusations of racial and hereditary inferiority, and they were laboring for racial "uplift," a project without merit if the targets of their reform were biologically doomed to sub-human status. Lamarckian ideology, though, leads to the conflation of biological and environmental causes of human behavior since the influence of "nurture" was assumed to become "nature," so most settlement literature cannot fall cleanly into either camp. Elia Peattie's The Precipice, the last novel I examine in this project, also shows that turn-of-the-century concerns with national "progress" could lead to outright eugenicism. As a whole, the literature exposes just how fluid ideologies of race and human behavior were during the Progressive Era.

Through his 1901 address to the Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, sociology professor Edward A. Ross provides insight into social scientists' contradictory views of the relationship between biological and cultural factors in determining ethnic or racial characteristics. Ross begins his speech by arguing that "[t]he superiorities that, at a given time, one people may display over other peoples, are not necessarily racial" since some "inferiorities . . . are due not to blood but to surrounding" (67). Ross believes that there are "two opposite errors into which [social scientists] may fall" as they cite causes of apparent racial differences, namely an overweening belief that education may "lift a backward folk to the level of the best" and the contrary idea that "regards the actual differences of peoples as hereditary and fixed." He believes, however, that "the latter

error is, perhaps, the more besetting" at the turn of the twentieth century. In other words, Ross sees in his contemporaries a mistaken view that apparent differences between cultures or racial or ethnic groups are due to biological causes (67). He argues for a consideration of environmental factors in determining behavior. In particular, he argues for the need for groups of people to have a "ladder" before they can climb upwards, since "it is hope not need that animates men. Set ladders before them and they will climb until their heart-strings snap" (72). However, Ross betrays an underlying racism and a belief that, in fact, certain races are endowed with singular characteristics. Boeckmann points out that this was a prevalent though changing point of view at the time: "the inheritability of [racial] character was insisted upon with vehemence at the same time that the concept of character itself was being expanded and molded to fit a growing interest in environmental forces" (6).[8] Ross's address to the conference ultimately becomes a celebration of "American" (read: white Anglo-Saxon Protestant male) ambition and energy, as well as a caution against "race suicide" as European Americans are having fewer children in order to maintain a higher standard of living (in contrast to, e.g., the Chinese) (88). Ross mentions "negroes" only a couple of times, and not always by name, but a black presence—similar to the one Toni Morrison calls attention to in Playing in the Dark—inhabits the shadows of his speech. For example, in his exultation of white American virtues, he concedes that "[i]t is true that our average of energy and character is lowered by the presence in the South of several millions of an inferior race" (as well as by immigrants from "the hovels of far Lombardy and Galicia") (88-89). Ross, a professor of sociology and a speaker at a national social science conference, proclaims to voice a view of

[8] In the Introduction to her monograph A Question of Character, Boeckmann proposes that as the meaning of "race" shifted in the late nineteenth century and Americans realized that physical features and race were not coterminous, "character" became a ubiquitous concept, and ethnic groups were assumed to have a national character, also referred to as "race." Therefore, as I use them here, "race" and "character" are interchangeable terms. Ross's address reflects his views of national character, including an (Anglo-Saxon) "American" variety.

the potential of peoples to "improve" their cultural standing, but he actually argues, instead, for the superiority of white American men, stating, "I believe there is at the present moment no people in the world that is, man for man, equal to the [white] Americans in capacity and efficiency . . . . He is now probably at the climax of his energy and everything promises that in the centuries to come he is destined to play a brilliant and leading role on the stage of history" (89). Ross calls attention to the importance of environmental factors in determining the characteristics of ethnic groups, but neither he nor the settlement reformers examined in this study transcend the concept of a racial or cultural hierarchy, whether they view the hierarchy as a function of biological or of cultural evolution. "The People in the Neighborhood" explores how settlement literature participates in the maintenance of that hierarchy.

Theoretical Debts

In my examination of settlement literature, I draw from the fields of autobiography, feminist, and whiteness studies. Settlement workers and their writings have historically been studied by scholars from diverse fields, including sociology, philosophy, history, religion, and cultural studies. More recently, literary scholars are investigating this type of reform literature, but much work remains to be performed. I aim to give an overall view of women's settlement literature, noting its prevalence in Progressive-Era discourse. Because the literature was so pervasive, by overlooking it, scholars remain unaware of a key piece of turn-of-the-century culture. Beyond merely recovering the literature, however, I argue for its importance in revealing contemporary attitudes about reform and in exposing the gender and racial identity construction that is facilitated by texts from the period.

The project as a whole is indebted to the work of many scholars from wide-ranging fields, but its argument has been especially influenced by historian Louise Newman and her exploration of the intersections of feminism and race in White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States. Newman argues that much of first-wave feminism was predicated on its leaders' positions as white women; they gained cultural authority in part through positioning themselves as "civilizers" of the white race and of nonwhite peoples. At a time when biological and social evolutionary theory rested on a hierarchy that held "white" (Anglo-Saxon) men to be the most advanced creatures on earth, white women were often assumed to be less evolved and closer to the "lower," nonwhite races. At the same time, the white race was assumed by the dominant culture to be superior in large part because of the statues of white women; contemporary theory argued that more advanced cultures and races exalted their women while "savage" or "primitive" cultures derogated them.[9] In the late nineteenth century, women were believed to mark the evolutionary status of a race and to serve as civilizing agents, and white women in particular were deemed responsible for uplifting not only their own race but the supposedly less evolved ones, as well.[10] In my examination of settlement literature, I note that indeed most of the texts—including those by African American women—rest on conventional racist and classist hierarchical assumptions about the needs of settlement neighbors, and the literature as a whole presupposes that a middle-class white heroine will lead the way in reforming U.S. society.

My work has also been influenced by the work of literary scholar Patrick Chura, author of Vital Contact. In his monograph, he discusses the Progressive-Era trend of middle-

[9] Of course, the supposed exaltation of women was largely rhetorical, since, as women's rights activists of the time pointed out, women still lacked the vote and were largely legally subsumed under their husbands and fathers.
[10] See Newman, Seitler, "Unnatural Selection."

and upper-class scholars and writers voluntarily placing themselves among the underclasses for purposes of investigation—whether for social study or literary fodder or both. Chura observes of this phenomenon, which he terms "downclassing," that "[n]umerous nonfictive downclassing experiments suggest a high level of historical concern with both experimentally-motivated [sic] and reform-driven contact with the lower classes beginning around the 1880s and peaking . . . in the decade and a half preceding World War I" (1-2). Chura maintains that despite efforts to understand and represent the working classes, middle-class writers nevertheless retain authority as they narrate their experiences with voluntary downclassing (8). Since they have the option to move in either direction within the class hierarchy, and since they designate themselves interpreters of working-class experiences, the middle-class writers never transcend their own privilege, though, Chura argues, in the cases of some fictional treatments of downclassing, the protagonists recognize the limits of their own class transcendence and therefore paradoxically expose the hegemony of a capitalist system (8-9, 18). Chura references some of the authors in this dissertation; he makes brief mention of Jane Addams, and one of his chapters discusses the settlement novels of Elia Peattie and Clara Laughlin, whom I discuss in chapter four. For much social settlement literature, the conclusions of Chura hold true. Settlement writing, like other "downclassing" narratives, largely relies on a middle-class heroine who promises to redeem industrialized U.S. society. Chura also argues, however, that "Addams-inspired and reform-oriented settlement work seems to have represented only a middle stage among increasingly radical and increasingly adventurous female downclassing efforts" (5). Chura's description of settlement literature as "only a middle stage" suggests that the texts of real value appear in the more radical time period during and after World War I, but to conclude that settlement

literature is therefore unimportant would be a mistake. As I argue in chapter one, a literature's perceived conservatism or radicalism should not be the criterion by which scholars judge its relevance. Exploring the ways in which settlement texts participate in and challenge class, gender, and racial constructions informs our understanding not only of the Progressive Era but also of identity construction in and through social movements today. Chura's characterization of settlement writing continues to marginalize it by suggesting that it is not quite radical enough and that it is merely transitional literature. I argue, though, that the settlement movement and its literature operated at the nexus of Progressive-Era reform and therefore deserve renewed attention from literary and cultural scholars.

Chapter One

"The Foremost Woman in the United States": Jane Addams as Model Settlement Reformer

Introduction

By the time Jane Addams (1860-1935) came of age in the 1880s, the country was facing a multitude of social changes. The decades around the turn of the twentieth century encompassed the end of Reconstruction, the advent of Jim Crow racial tension, the growth of industrial cities, the ongoing renegotiation of gender roles, the wide dissemination of Darwinian theories, the influx of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, and the political turmoil (including assassinations and widespread corruption) brought on by these and other factors. This social turbulence and its accompanying angst grew even more intense during the fin de siècle; historian Shannon Jackson says of this period, "the United States was in transition, occupying a liminal zone that struggled to understand itself" (4). Such social unrest fostered numerous reform movements that defined the Progressive Era, usually defined as the period from 1890 to World War I.[11]

One of the best-known figures of the Progressive Era, Jane Addams was the foremost writer-activist of the social settlement movement. By her own account, Addams was troubled by the ill effects of industrialization—especially economic and cultural poverty—well before the end of the century. As a recent college graduate in the 1880s, she regarded the English social settlement experiment as a hopeful solution not only to the problems associated with urbanization and industrialization, but also to the increasing phenomenon of middle-class youth whose higher education seemed to have rendered them socially impotent. In her first

[11] The Progressive Era is variously cited as terminating at the beginning of World War I, the end of the War, or in 1920; this project covers literature up to 1914.

(and most famous) autobiography, Twenty Years at Hull House, with Autobiographical Notes (1910), Addams offers readers an account of her life and her life's work to that point—laboring and lobbying for improvement in the lives of the urban poor, and, by extension, the lives of every member of the human race. Addams claims in her Preface that her purpose in writing Twenty Years is to defend her reputation and to demonstrate a model for other settlement workers. An additional purpose of the carefully crafted text, as I argue in this chapter, is to suggest a remedy to the social problems that were the concern of Progressive-Era reformers. I also argue that though she claims to value community and connection, as Addams negotiates issues of gender, race, and class in the construction of her identity, her actual textual persona reveals an investment in a masculine, individualistic, and heroic ideal.

Addams the Writer

Jane Addams is, today, the figure most often identified—even synonymous—with the social settlement movement. She is famous for her work among the urban poor in Chicago, partly through her status as the founder of the first social settlement in Chicago, and partly through her first memoir of the settlement, Twenty Years. She was equally identified with the movement in her own era,[12] even though Hull-House (est. 1889) was not the first social settlement in the United States.[13] Addams's writings, lectures, and presence helped shape the settlement movement as well as the very identity of the Woman Activist during the Progressive Era. Addams gained such a reputation as to be deemed by one contemporary as

[12] Addams's persona dominates the settlement movement; see texts by her contemporaries Anna Julia Cooper, Fannie Barrier Williams, Clara Laughlin, and Elia Peattie in this dissertation for fiction and non-fiction references to her.

[13] The first settlement in the United States is generally believed to be the Neighborhood Guild in New York City, founded by Stanton Coit in 1886; three other settlements, including Hull-House, were founded in U.S. cities in the late 1880s. (Carson 36, 53).

"the foremost woman in the United States" ("Jane Addams" 119). Biographer Allen Davis reports that "[p]robably no other woman in any period of American history has been venerated and worshipped the way Jane Addams was in the period just before World War I" (200).[14] Jackson remarks that Addams and her social settlement, Hull-House, shared a "mutually constitutive relationship," adding to each other's fame (5). I would add that Twenty Years, the best-known description of Addams's settlement work, shares a similar relationship with its author. The text reveals Addams's centrality to turn-of-the-twentieth-century reform, and it has also significantly contributed to the longevity of her reputation. An understanding of the text is crucial to any examination of the phenomenon of the settlement movement, since it single-handedly comprises the canon of settlement literature.

Addams herself has only recently begun to be examined as a literary figure. A survey of scholarship on Addams reveals that she is studied by critics from multiple disciplines, including sociology, social work, religion, philosophy, education, history, political science, rhetoric, women's studies, and now literature. Much of the scholarship surrounding Addams discusses her as a historical figure and interrogates her connection to the many reform, political, and philosophical movements of which she partook (and/ or led). While this scholarship has yielded bountiful and fascinating information about a formidable woman, and while debates over her relationships with women, races, and organizations offer valuable insight into Progressive-Era culture, I agree with Katherine Joslin that Addams deserves to be studied as a writer (5). Though Addams certainly was a rhetor, philosopher, and historical icon, we know her today primarily through her own writings, which are voluminous. A few previous Addams scholars have called attention to her as a writer; for example, in his 1973

[14] Davis's text was published in 1973, before the era of Oprah, who makes an interesting comparison to Addams in possessing renown and influence that, though based in Chicago, extend to the rest of the country and beyond.

biography, Allen Davis points out that "[h]er writing, even more than her speaking, led to her reputation as the most famous woman in America," aided greatly by the presence of early-twentieth-century "mass-circulation magazines" such as Ladies' Home Journal and McClure's (198-99).[15] And in his 1967 introduction to John C. Farrell's biography, Beloved Lady, Charles A. Barker argues that scholarship on Addams during the 1960s demonstrates that her "writings were fully as important a part of her achievement as were her better recognized deeds of administering a famous settlement house and of organizing and leading international peace organizations" (9). Yet these "better recognized deeds" continue to dominate Addams scholarship, and the literary scholarly community has yet to embrace her fully as a writer.

I argue that Addams ought to be classed equally as a writer and a reformer. Always written in service of a cause—which, under modernist aesthetics, has likely contributed to undervaluing Addams as a writer—her texts are numerous and are engaged in the cultural matrix of her time. Farrell lists over five hundred of Addams's publications (journal articles, speeches, essays, and books) in his biography.[16] She published in a variety of popular and scholarly journals, including Rockford Seminary Magazine (of which she also served as editor during her tenure at the seminary), Forum, American Journal of Sociology, Atlantic Monthly, Current Literature, Independent, Chautauqua Assembly Herald, Charities, Good Housekeeping, North American Review, McClure's, Woman's Journal, Unity, Ladies' Home Journal, and many more. Contemporary reviews of Addams's texts appeared in A Monthly Review of Current Literature, Political Science Quarterly, and A Review of Books and Life,

[15] See chapter 11 of Davis, "Practical Saint and the Most Useful American," for more on Addams's celebrity.
[16] Farrell notes that Addams "frequently reworked similar material for various occasions," so many of the works duplicate each other (221). See Farrell's bibliography for a complete listing of Addams's publications.

among other journals. Addams was also a sometime columnist for the Ladies' Home Journal, offering to readers her thoughts under the title "The Jane Addams Page" (Davis 208).

It is not the mere volume of texts that necessitates Addams's classification as a literary figure, however. In her recent literary biography, Joslin calls much-needed attention to the reformer's "writer's life," and calls Addams's texts "imaginative autobiographical arguments" (2). She notes the mixture in Addams's writings of the personal and the political, a staple of feminist writing, and she claims that Addams should be considered a literary writer because she melded creativity with her moral purpose; she was "a public intellectual with a well-tuned moral imagination" (2-3). Joslin describes Addams's writings thus: "She was a synthetic and intuitive thinker, writing at a time when the academic disciplines emerging around her valorized rational, empirical, logical thinking with its philosophical roots in the Enlightenment" (2), and Joslin continues to argue that while Addams's reform work was performed in a social scientific realm, her social and historical influence extends to the literary world. According to Joslin, as Addams related the stories of Hull-House's residents and neighbors,[17] the author "shed the garments of her gender and class in favor of a variety of costumes, a rhetorical cross-dressing, crossing the boundaries of gender, class, ethnicity, and race," and Addams's "literary goal was to establish her identity and the authenticity of her voice by writing an autobiography, in a sense, of the collective community" (16). For Joslin, then, Addams is a complex writer who used her texts to suit her rhetorical purposes and shape an identity. I agree with Joslin on this score; Addams's autobiography deserves to be considered for the identity that it presents. I disagree, however, with Joslin's interpretation of that identity. Though Addams purports to offer a description of

[17] The terms "resident" and "neighbor" in the context of settlement work signify, respectively, the middle-class reformers and the working-class targets of settlement reform.

"the collective" that was Hull-House, the actual impact of her autobiography, especially when compared to other settlement literature examined in this project, reveals the narrative of a singular, heroic individual whose pluck, dedication, and wise administration alter her neighborhood—and, by extension, her society. Joslin argues that it is in her later writings that Addams doubts "her ability to speak for the group" and thus "shifted emphasis from the street to the terrain of her own mind, her memory, and her consciousness" (16), but I argue that even when Addams seems to be offering a collective narrative in Twenty Years, that narrative relies on the personality and leadership of the independent figure of Addams herself.

Addams's writings reflect the cultural milieu in which they were created, and they help us understand Jane Addams, The Public Figure; the construction of racial, gendered, and classed identities; and the Progressive Era itself. I read Twenty Years as a memoir, using the term not merely as a synonym for autobiography, but employing it as defined by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson in Reading Autobiography: "a mode of life narrative that historically situates the subject in a social environment, as either observant or participant; the memoir directs attention more toward the lives and actions of others than to the narrator" (198). In this chapter I demonstrate, however, that as Addams "directs attention more toward the lives and actions of others," she continues to privilege the construction of her own identity as a white, middle-class, independent-spirited hero(ine).

Twenty Years at Hull-House

In the Preface to Twenty Years, Addams outlines the two goals she has in writing the text: a "worthy" one—to offer a "simple statement" of early settlement house work as a

guide to others working in the increasingly-popular movement, and an "unworthy" one—to correct misinformed published accounts of her and her work that "made life in a Settlement all too smooth and charming" (2). In her own eyes, then, as well as in the culture at large, Addams's text serves as a model for settlement workers, and she herself serves as exemplar for the Woman Activist. Offering her text as a corrective to other versions of her life allows her to suggest that Twenty Years reveals the "real" version of Jane Addams and her work, including, apparently, the less than "smooth and charming" aspects. It is therefore important to examine closely the persona that Addams crafts through Twenty Years, as that persona greatly affected other women's contributions to the settlement movement and its literature. It is also crucial to explore Addams's textual engagement with various ideological and practical approaches to reform; as this iconic figure alternately considers, rejects, and proposes various reform tactics, she implicitly argues for a particular manifestation of the Woman Activist.

Twenty Years at Hull-House is a rich text for the insight it offers into turn-of-the-twentieth-century culture. Addams shows herself to be engaged with countless thinkers of her day in fields ranging from economics to theology to evolutionary science, and Twenty Years reveals that Addams's social philosophies arise out of a diverse matrix of nineteenth-century thought. Within a few pages in her second chapter, Addams refers to her intellectual and personal interactions with thinkers and activists Arnold Toynbee (English reformer after whom the first British social settlement was named), Thomas Hill Green (Oxford professor of moral philosophy), John Ruskin (English writer, artist, and critic), Frederick D. Maurice (English founder of the Christian Socialist movement), Edward Caird (author of The Evolution of Religion [1893]), Benjamin Jowett (classical scholar at Oxford), and Abraham Lincoln (23-26). Later chapters relate her engagement with philosophers from William

James to Leo Tolstoy, and Addams offhandedly drops the names of other public figures throughout the text.

As Addams explains the history of her involvement with Hull-House and settlement reform, she demonstrates to her readers that she is well versed in social philosophy. She pays special attention to the ideas of connection and community since the settlement idea is one grounded in the idea that the middle classes lack activity and the working classes lack culture, so the settlement brings the classes together to meet the needs of the other. Addams's Progressive-Era philosophy is heavily indebted to, among other thinkers, Charles Darwin.

The idea of "progress," the basis of Progressivism, was a legacy of Darwinian evolutionary theory. Many Social Darwinists, such as Herbert Spencer, held that "evolution meant progress and thus assured that the whole process of life was tending toward some very remote but altogether glorious consummation," but Spencer's philosophy was based on the "fatalism" and "determinism" of a protracted, "impersonal process" (Hofstadter 7, 125). Pragmatists, of whom William James, John Dewey, and Jane Addams were most prominent, took a more optimistic view of the role of humans in affecting evolutionary progress. They saw "the environment as something that could be manipulated" to effect change (Hofstadter 124). Addams and Dewey held a belief in social evolution that was heavily indebted to the Positivist Auguste Comte (Fischer 279), who was more interested in sociological than biological evolution (Hawkins 52). Addams describes her intellectual debt when she writes in Twenty Years, "I was enormously interested in the Positivists during these European years; I imagined that their philosophical conception of man's religious development might include all expressions of that for which so many ages of men have struggled and aspired" (50). She further notes her interest in social—rather than biological—development when she claims,

"Edward Caird's 'Evolution of Religion' . . . had been of unspeakable comfort to me in the labyrinth of differing ethical teachings and religious creeds which the many immigrant colonies of our neighborhood presented" (24). As a writer, Addams is both acknowledging her intellectual debts and setting the stage for subsequent chapters of her narrative that discuss her perceptions of the propensities and idiosyncrasies of various ethnic groups and her own challenges in interacting with them. Later in her memoir, describing a post-college tour of Europe, she reminisces, "I recall that in planning my first European journey I had soberly hoped in two years to trace the entire pattern of human excellence as we passed from one country to another," further emphasizing her belief that variously evolved cultures existed simultaneously—a theory that, in her mind, could help account for social and cultural inequities (247).

Addams's version of Comte relied upon the belief that cultures went through evolutionary stages, with societies that were based on "individual ethics" occupying a lower position on the scale than those invested in "social ethics or social democracy" (Fischer 280). Addams's work in the settlement was based on the belief that evolution offered hope for social change: "Life in the Settlement discovers above all what has been called 'the extraordinary pliability of human nature,' and it seems impossible to set any bounds to the moral capabilities which might unfold under ideal civic and educational conditions. But in order to obtain these conditions, the Settlement recognizes the need of cooperation" (258).[18] For Addams, the highest order of social evolution would be manifested through democracy, though democracy with a social rather than political basis. That is, social democracy would not be achieved merely by granting political rights to everyone but by assuring equality in

[18] This quote suggests that Addams subscribes to the belief that "nurture" triumphs over "nature" in determining human behavior, though, as I demonstrate below, Addams's stance in this debate is complex.

"all aspects of life: in industry, community, and family, as well as in government" (Fischer 282).

This belief in social democracy and the central position of community highlights a key irony of Addams's text and her persona: even as she claims the importance of a collective identity, Addams bases her autobiographical self on a protagonist model. Joslin argues that Addams the "character," as opposed to Addams the writer, disappears after the first few chapters of the memoir (which detail Addams's childhood, adolescence, and the germ of the settlement idea in her twenties) and that the narrative focus then shifts to the neighbors of Hull-House (106-07). For Joslin, Addams revises the tale of "upward mobility of the individual," a staple of American autobiography, to one of "moral" and "communal" ascension (107). While Addams's narrative is one largely focused on the community of Hull-House "with autobiographical notes," however, Joslin's reading of the text as a "communal" "upward struggle" overlooks Addams's depiction of her own role in effecting social progress. Addams is the implicit heroine of her narrative, and she is the interpreter of the settlement experiment. The tension between community and individual is interestingly rendered in Twenty Years, and Addams's belief in social democracy as the highest state of social evolution a) reveals Addams's ideological contributions to her era; b) explains her vexed relationship to Darwinism, race, and gender; and c) makes curious her individualistic textual persona.

Twenty Years at Hull-House reveals that Addams is quite invested in the idea of evolution, though in more of a Positivist than a strictly Darwinist way. In her fourth chapter, "The Snare of Preparation," Addams describes the horror she feels in witnessing the grasping hands of the poor on a tour of East London. She refers to the human hand as "this oldest tool

with which man has dug his way from savagery, and with which he is constantly groping forward" (42), evoking both "man's primitive past" and the progress with which the Progressive Era was so consumed. A few paragraphs after describing the beggars of London, Addams also suggests that society's "progress" has its costs, specifically a uselessness among the over-educated middle and upper classes. She reports feeling "a sense of futility, of misdirected energy, the belief that the pursuit of cultivation would not in the end bring either solace or relief" (44). In this oft-quoted passage, Addams goes on to argue,

> I gradually reached a conviction that the first generation of college women had taken their learning too quickly, had departed too suddenly from the active, emotional life led by their grandmothers and great-grandmothers; that the contemporary education of young women had developed too exclusively the power of acquiring knowledge and of merely receiving impressions; that somewhere in the process of "being educated" they had lost that simple and almost automatic response to the human appeal, that old healthful reaction resulting in activity from the mere presence of suffering or of helplessness. . . . (44)

In her article "Domesticity, Cultivation, and Vocation in Jane Addams and Sarah Orne Jewett," Francesca Sawaya argues that this passage foregrounds Addams's paradoxical use of "an intentionally reactionary rhetoric, inextricably tied to an imagined biological truth, [that] is used in the service of a progressive political agenda" (512). That is, Addams often uses conservative-seeming metaphors to explain progressive reform work performed by women; women are natural "housekeepers" and caretakers, and thus their work in a settlement house is a mere broadening of their gender-specific duties. Addams often uses such a tactic,

couching radical ideas in more traditional language. As Sawaya notes, domesticity gave settlement activists "an acceptable rhetoric with which to describe their activity" (515).

Addams may, in fact, be choosing safer, traditional rhetoric to convey what she realized is revolutionary work for women. Whatever her intention, however, her words shape an ideology, especially since she was an internationally known public figure. And for Addams, in this passage about women's preparation for life, the over-educated woman has become as a vestigial organ, feeling overwhelmed by the "sense of her uselessness" that accompanies the recognition of "the bitter poverty and the social maladjustment which is all about her" (45). Because of the supposed passivity and isolation of intellectual work, the young woman lacks a connection to her fellows and thus loses her sense of purpose.

Addams's solution to both the "uselessness" of the educated woman and the "social maladjustment" of industrial society is the social settlement: "I gradually became convinced that it would be a good thing to rent a house in a part of the city where many primitive and actual needs are found, in which young women who had been given over too exclusively to study, might restore a balance of activity along traditional lines and learn of life from life itself" (51). Through settlement work, educated middle-class youths could revive a sense of connection with and service to their communities and, by extension, to the world as a whole. The settlement idea, then, is based in the belief that different social classes require interaction with each other.

The Social Settlement and Connection

Addams clarifies her vision of the social settlement project in her well-known lecture "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," given in 1892 at the Ethical Culture

Societies' summer school session on social settlements and reprinted both in Philanthropy and Social Progress (1893) and in chapter six of Twenty Years. This essay is particularly useful for its revelation of the social concerns that spawned the movement and for its negotiation of the philosophical and scientific discourses of the 1890s, as well as for its contribution to the construction of Addams's activist identity.

In this essay, Addams outlines three main impetuses for the movement: "first, the desire to interpret democracy in social terms; secondly, the impulse beating at the very source of our lives urging us to aid in the race progress; and thirdly, the Christian movement toward humanitarianism" (75). Addams therefore establishes a social, physio-biological, and religious basis for her work. She then gives her definition of the settlement project: "The Settlement, then, is an experimental effort to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of life in a great city" (75). The "social and industrial problems" she refers to are not just those affecting the working classes. Addams suggests that just as problematic is the "uselessness" of the middle- and upper-class youth: "We have in America a fast-growing number of cultivated young people who have no recognized outlet for their active faculties," and whose "uselessness hangs about them heavily." Addams recognizes this as a severe problem, since "[Thomas] Huxley declares that the sense of uselessness is the severest shock which the human system can sustain, and that if persistently sustained, it results in atrophy of function" (71). The "Subjective Necessity" outlines Addams's beliefs that the social settlements will address the problems brought on by industrialization, and her rationale relies on a Darwinist understanding of human and societal evolution. The "cultivated young people," like the college women cited earlier, are becoming unnecessary social organs, and at the same time, the denial of cultural opportunities to the

lower classes retards the progress of the entire "race." This point is made clear in Addams's discussion of the middle/upper-class yearning for reform:

> There is something primordial about these motives, but I am perhaps overbold in designating them as a great desire to share the race life. We all bear traces of the starvation struggle which for so long made up the life of the race. Our very organism holds memories and glimpses of that long life of our ancestors which still goes on among so many of our contemporaries. Nothing so deadens the sympathies and shrivels the power of enjoyment, as the persistent keeping away from the great opportunities for helpfulness and a continual ignoring of the starvation struggle which makes up the life of at least half the race. [19] (Twenty Years 69)

For Addams, then, the social problems of the industrial age were due in large part to a selfishness that ignored the problems of others; the social settlement remedied this isolation by offering different cultures and classes an opportunity not only to intermingle, but also to assist each other. She concludes:

> I may be forgiven the reminder that the best speculative philosophy sets forth the solidarity of the human race; that the highest moralists have taught that without the advance and improvement of the whole, no man can hope for any lasting improvement in his own moral or material individual condition; and

[19] For the most part in this essay, as in the above passage, Addams uses the term "race" to signify the human race, as she clarifies in the conclusion of her essay: "The Settlement," says Addams, "must be grounded in a philosophy whose foundation is on the solidarity of the human race, a philosophy which will not waver when the race happens to be represented by a drunken woman or an idiot boy" (75-76). However, at one point in this essay, Addams also uses "race" to distinguish among cultural groups: "Their [the residents'] neighbors are held apart by differences of race and language which the residents can more easily overcome" (76). Though in this section I am examining Addams's use of the term "race" to refer to the human race, I explore Addams's negotiation of questions of race and ethnicity below.

> that the subjective necessity for Social Settlements is therefore identical with that necessity, which urges us on toward social and individual salvation. (76)

Not only, then, will social settlements better the lives of their residents and neighbors, they will also facilitate social progress and/or evolution.

Through her description of the settlement project in Twenty Years, Addams highlights the importance of social connectedness as a corrective to perceived societal degeneration. She argues against isolation of any kind, including immigrants' separation from mainstream "American" society, workers' isolation from the fruits of their labor, children's disconnection from their parents' cultures, and social classes' separation from each other. Instead, she advocates recognizing and strengthening the connectedness of all things. She believes, like Darwin, that we are connected to our primitive, "remotest past" (Addams 8), and she also favors social connections between classes, generations, and cultures. Shannon Sullivan notes that Addams's ideology is imbued with the idea of "reciprocity" among individuals and groups, where "each side takes something and benefits from the other" (45). Addams envisioned the social settlement as a tool to facilitate connections, sometimes as mediator between government agencies and the people whom they would serve, other times between diverse groups of people, and still others between people and knowledge.[20]

One example of the ways in which Addams attempted to concretize a sense of connectedness is embodied in the Hull-House Labor Museum. About two-thirds of the way through Twenty Years, in Chapter Eleven, "Immigrants and Their Children," Addams describes her establishment of the museum in an effort to foster respect among the children

[20] Marianne DeKoven also notes that Hull-House allows Addams herself to mediate "between traditional upper-class feminine charity work and radical or progressive feminist and socialist movements for political change" (344).

of immigrants for their parents' artisanship. This chapter follows discussions in the two previous chapters of the ineffectiveness of long-winded discussion in the midst of real human tragedy, the pathos of "pliable human nature [that] is relentlessly pressed upon by its physical environment" (110), and the importance of child labor legislation passed with the aid of Hull-House activists. Addams reveals in Chapter Ten her belief that "the present industrial system thwarts our ethical demands, not only for social righteousness but for social order" (133). Addams sets up her readers to arrive with her at the conclusion that the Progressive-Era youth of her neighborhood—many of whom work in factories, distanced from the products they are making and the cultures from which their parents have come—need a physical representation of their cultural heritage. She also hoped the museum would reveal the relationships among various types of craftsmanship and "build a bridge between European and American experiences in such wise as to give them both more meaning and a sense of relation" (139). The Labor Museum's spinners' exhibit, for example, attempted to show the "evolution" of the craft of spinning among different ethnic groups and cultures: "We found in the immediate neighborhood, at least four varieties of the most primitive methods of spinning and three distinct variations of the same spindle in connection with wheels. It was possible to put the seven into historic sequence and order to connect the whole with the present method of factory spinning," a feat which "enabled even the most casual observer to see that there is no break in orderly evolution if we look at history from the industrial standpoint." In Addams's view, this further allowed a connection between immigrants and their factory-working children, who, "through their own parents and grandparents . . . would find a dramatic representation of the inherited resources of their daily occupation" (139-40). While Addams's professed goal in creating the Labor Museum was to foster appreciation for

immigrants' home cultures, however, her attempts at representing the "orderly evolution" of a craft necessarily cast some peoples as "primitive" and therefore lower on the (cultural) evolutionary scale.[21] In her eyes, though, the spinners' exhibit was yet another manifestation of the importance of recognizing connections—whether between individuals, institutions, cultures, or eras—and the chapter explaining the exhibit provides a concrete example to readers of the kind of work Addams values: based in a theory of interconnectedness, attentive to the particular circumstances of her neighbors, and tangible in its results. She uses the example of the spinners' exhibit to develop a theme she returns to many times in her autobiography.

As revealed throughout the text, it is Addams's hope that establishing a sense of connection, of community both with the past and with other people in the present, will end the dangerous isolation that can lead to tragedy.[22] In the penultimate chapter of the memoir, she describes the witch-hunt that occurred in the wake of President McKinley's assassination by a professed anarchist and suggests that the "anarchist" was really an isolated, angry young man whose energies could have been redirected had he found a sense of community. Addams believes "that there is no method by which any community can be guarded against sporadic efforts on the part of half-crazed, discouraged men, save by a sense of mutual rights and securities which will include the veriest outcast" (233). She further blames the existence of such misguided loners on a failure of society: "Was it not an indictment to all those whose business it is to interpret and solace the wretched, that a boy should have grown up in an American city so uncared for, so untouched by higher issues, his wounds of life so unhealed

[21] This exhibit also highlights a paradox of Progressive philosophy: faith in evolutionary progress that coexists with nostalgia for a pre-industrial/ agrarian past.
[22] In this example, Addams addresses individual isolation, but her belief extends to the peril of national separatism, a theme she explores in her later writings on behalf of the peace movement.

by religion that the first talk he ever heard dealing with life's wrongs, although anarchistic and violent, should yet appear to point a way of relief?" (233) Addams reaffirms her "conviction that a sense of fellowship is the only implement which will break into the locked purpose of a half-crazed creature bent upon destruction in the name of justice" (234).[23] She trusts that the social settlement will offer the opportunities to develop such fellowship.

Such fervid arguments regarding the importance of connection and community pervade Twenty Years. It is ironic, therefore, that Addams's presentation of her self in the text is one that creates a singular, white, middle-class hero(ine) figure for others to emulate. This exceptional self is one rendered as much by absence as by presence. Addams speaks often of the importance of connections, but she declines to write of personal relationships, and she mentions few co-laborers in the movement by name. For instance, she minimizes the role of Hull-House's cofounder, Ellen Gates Starr, and she rarely refers to other residents by name.[24] She also had a personal partnership with Mary Rozet Smith, a wealthy Chicago woman several years her junior who gave financial support to Hull-House. The two bought property together and referred to their relationship as a "marriage" (Joslin 11). That Addams would decline to discuss the personal nature of this relationship is surprising neither then nor now; at the time, lesbianism was recently pathologized and increasingly vilified, and today, the issue of Addams's "lesbianism" still provokes heated controversy (see, for example, Elshtain). Nevertheless, her choice not to discuss the roles of the many women who labored with her in the settlement movement is telling, and one result is that Addams appears in the

[23] Though portions of this chapter put Addams in danger of being labeled an anarchist sympathizer (as, she relates, indeed happened during the "witch-hunt"), she carefully stresses her belief that one should work within the system to effect change: "And yet I held the belief then, as I certainly do now, that when the sense of justice seeks to express itself quite outside the regular channels of established government, it has set forth on a dangerous journey inevitably ending in disaster, and this is true in spite of the fact that the adventure may have been inspired by noble motives" (240).

[24] For more on Starr's role in founding Hull-House, see Carson and Davis.

text to be the very public and exceptional head of an otherwise anonymous group of mostly female reformers. In speaking of her influences, she focuses on male figures such as her father and Abraham Lincoln. The qualities she praises in the men include their valuing of democratic ideals and their commitment to a cause, but she especially highlights their independence of thought as well as their "self-made" status. As she narrates the decade of her life that includes seminary and the subsequent working out of the settlement scheme, Addams does not highlight her interactions with others or the philosophical collaboration that led to the founding of American settlements. She primarily portrays herself as a singular leader among the girls at her school, one "selected as the orator" to represent her school at "the intercollegiate oratorical contest of Illinois"—the only woman competing in the contest, which she reports losing to William Jennings Bryan—providing her an opportunity to link her name with another well-known male standout (Addams 33-34). In detailing the formation of the settlement idea, Addams mentions the London settlement and its founders, but she portrays her search for a social reform outlet as a solitary coming-of-age journey culminating in a sort of conversion experience at a bullfight where she alone among her party was unaffected by the gore of the supposed entertainment, instead feeling awed at witnessing a modern incarnation of an ancient sport—fighting to the death in an amphitheatre. Subsequently reflecting on the intellectual perspective that numbed her to the otherwise "disgusting experience," Addams equates it to her philosophizing of reform while holding herself aloof from the realities of social problems (52). The passage in the memoir where she details this incident offers a particularly apt demonstration of the tension in Twenty Years between Addams's attention to connection and her privileging of herself as the individual, since it embodies both in a few sentences. She writes compellingly of her realization that "so

far from following in the wake of a chariot of philanthropic fire, I had been tied to the tail of the veriest oxcart of self-seeking"— condemning herself for self-centeredness. Yet in the very next sentence she writes a line that could come from any American bootstraps narrative: "I had made up my mind that next day, whatever happened, I would begin to carry out the [settlement] plan, if only by talking about it" (52). And so begins the narrative of Hull-House itself. Addams repeatedly avers the importance of connection, of community, of democracy, yet she constructs a persona in her text of a strong, determined individual who, through insight, trial, error, and perseverance, literally cleans up the streets (by serving—herself—as the neighborhood garbage inspector), fights corrupt politicians and wins, and teaches her neighbors and countrymen how to value each other. Addams did not, of course, begin life poor, and thus hers is not completely a Horatio Alger-type narrative, but her story does show a rise from a homely, physically deformed[25] girl earnestly anxious to do the right thing; to an energetic young person intent on learning about and remedying social ills; to a middle-aged reformer who serves on countless boards and commissions, counsels with Leo Tolstoy, and expands the worlds of her neighbors. This singular, heroic figure certainly drew much attention, then and now, and her complex orientation towards race and ethnicity thus takes on special significance as scholars attempt to parse Progressive-Era reformers' treatment of racial difference and white women's legacy of a perceived "ownership" of reform movements.

Addams and Race/ Ethnicity

Twenty Years at Hull House and its author have garnered much scholarly attention and controversy for Addams's complicated attitude toward race. Indeed, for over two

[25] Addams had a crooked spine (a result of tuberculosis) that eventually necessitated surgery (Davis 6, 30).

decades, critics have waged a heated debate about whether or not Addams was racist. I am using the term "race" broadly here to include what we would today refer to as "ethnicity," since race is a nebulous concept and many of the immigrant groups with which Addams worked would have been considered nonwhite at the turn of the twentieth century (Sullivan 44). Debates such as this one over Addams's "real" attitude towards the racial, ethnic, and classed Other can be both productive and counterproductive to critical examinations of reform movements and their literature. On the one hand, too much effort spent trying to define Addams as "conservative" or "radical" reifies a false dichotomy that has plagued feminist recovery work by privileging certain kinds of activism and writing over less currently popular types of reform. As Carol Mattingly writes regarding her work on women's rhetoric from the temperance movement, academics (feminist and otherwise) tend to discount reform work and writing by women if they view the women and/or the work as "conservative." Such a dismissal discounts the radical element of any nineteenth-century women-led activism as well as "the tremendous organizational and political skills necessary to pass an amendment to the Constitution," and it narrows scholars' view of women's social and political involvement (Mattingly 103). It also ignores the fact that by twenty-first-century standards, essentially all of the Progressives would be considered racist. Though the past one hundred years have not, by any means, brought an end to racism, they have encompassed great advances from legalized segregation and pervasive, overt racial discrimination to civil rights legislation and a more open racial discourse. Thus, though most scholars today certainly find the Progressives' viewpoints to be outmoded, in the context of the turn of the twentieth century, Addams and social activists of her ilk stood out as racially aware among

other white reformers in that they viewed racial differences as largely environmental and they labored for racial justice (Lasch-Quinn 14).

In the case of Addams, though, labeling her person and/or her work as "racist" or "conservative" can have the effect of labeling settlement literature as unimportant because its ideas are unfashionable. Continuing to ignore the settlement movement and its texts robs us of a complete understanding of the complex Progressive-Era social nexus that settlement literature portrays. Likewise, devoting large amounts of scholarly energy to defending Addams also has a deleterious effect on scholarship of women's reform work. Christopher Lasch pointed out four decades ago that "[p]raising her goodness, her saintliness, was a way to avoid answering her questions. The myth of Jane Addams served to render her harmless" (qtd. in Joslin 12). Though Lasch is speaking of Addams's admiring public, the same is true of scholars who make it their mission to point out Addams's radicalism and inclusiveness and offer the icon as a model. In fact, it is the debate itself that can be counterproductive if its result is to create "camps" of Addams defenders and detractors, as is the case with recent biographer Jean Bethke Elshtain (defender) and historian Rivka Lissak (detractor) and therefore distract scholars from examining Addams and her contemporaries in all of their complexities. Nevertheless, a critical examination of Addams's attitudes towards race and of the representation of those attitudes is important in considering the legacy she left on reform work and the Woman Reformer. As I discuss Addams, "race," and the critical reception of the two, I avoid labeling Addams as Racist or Not Racist in an effort to move scholarly discussion of the settlement movement and its literature beyond such dichotomies and towards more complex considerations of the uneasy relationships between race, ethnicity, and gendered social reform.

Many scholars maintain that during her own time, Addams was highly regarded (by both whites and nonwhites) for her racial inclusiveness. Elshtain uses interviews with former neighbors of Hull-House to claim that those immigrants who benefited from Addams's social programs are confounded by modern attacks on the reformer's racial views. Elshtain relates her interview with two Italian women (neighbors) who claim that "Miss Jane Addams never talked down to us" and that "[w]e never heard racist stuff" at Hull-House (Elshtain 13). On the contrary, the women remark, they were in "classes with Mexican and African American children," and they sang "campaign songs in Mexican, French, Bohemian, and German" (13).[26] Elshtain uses her interview to suggest that scholars have unfairly used what the Italian women call "a bunch of terrible words" to malign and distort Addams's reputation (13-14; emphasis in original). Elshtain, like other defenders, cites as evidence of the reformer's inclusiveness her status as a charter member of the NAACP and a frequent complainant on "various petitions having to do with the race problem" (200). Elshtain explains the few numbers of African Americans in Hull-House activities by citing the racial composition of Hull-House's immediate vicinity, a fair analysis since, as Jackson has noted, the settlement was heavily invested in the idea of "locality" (Jackson 6). Elshtain claims, "As demographics shifted and more African Americans moved into the area, Hull-House commissioned a study of black needs in order to better respond" to the neighborhood's changing exigencies (200).

Allen F. Davis, whose 1973 biography of Addams is commonly regarded as authoritative,[27] argues that though Addams "did not entirely avoid the racist attitudes of her day, . . . she came much closer to overcoming them than most of the reformers of her generation" (129). As evidence of Addams's racial magnanimity, Davis cites her

[26] Ironically, the women's use of "Mexican" rather than "Spanish" here suggests their own lack of racial or ethnic sensitivity despite their praise of Addams's racial inclusivity.
[27] Other major biographies of Addams include those by Farrell, Elshtain, DiLiberto, and Joslin.

acquaintance with Booker T. Washington, her support of settlements targeted at African Americans, her involvement in the NAACP, and her (unsuccessful) arguments to include fully African Americans in two national endeavors: Black women's clubs in the National Convention of Women's Clubs in 1902 and African Americans in the Progressive Party's 1912 campaign (Davis 129, 194; Peattie "Women" 1008). But Davis notes that Addams did face criticism, even in her own era, for not leaving the Progressive Party over the issue of racial inclusion (194). Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn, who has written a study of African Americans and/ in the social settlement movement, agrees that many of the white Progressives, including Addams, were radical in their condemnation of biologically based racism, but "their focus on environmental causes still led many of them to accept a portrait of blacks as inferior or maladjusted," largely as a result of slavery's legacies (14).

Other scholars have sharply criticized Addams for what they believe to be her paternalistic and prejudiced ideologies. Rivka Lissak is one of the most frequently cited critics of Addams's negotiation of racial and ethnic difference. In Pluralism and Progressives, Lissak argues that though Addams claimed to value immigrants' home cultures and avoided the blatant racism of the white-supremacist Anglo-Saxonists of the era, the Liberal Progressives' ideal of social evolution held that "the best elements, namely, the more developed Anglo-American civilization, would predominate" (183). For Lissak, Addams's claim to value the contributions of immigrants and their cultures rings false, since Lissak finds "no real effort" on the part of Hull-House residents "to absorb 'new immigrant' cultural contributions that were not already part of the Western-American civilization" (161).

I believe, with Shannon Sullivan, that Addams's racial "legacy is somewhat ambiguous" (43). Sullivan argues that Lissak misinterprets the concepts of "reciprocity" and

"transaction" in Addams and claims that Addams was genuinely invested in a mutual exchange between middle-class white residents and their immigrant neighbors and among various immigrant groups (44). However, Sullivan acknowledges that Addams's view of cultural exchange was nevertheless hierarchical: educated, middle-class, white Americans possessed the "culture" that would enrich the lives of lower-class immigrants, while the immigrants would provide the "vitality and liveliness" that had been leached out of the middle classes (47). Such a belief depends upon a type of savagism in which "immigrants are implicitly posited as being part of the untamed, energetic wilderness" (48). Addams, like many other writers and thinkers of her era, seems to believe that particular ethnic groups have certain qualities or tendencies, though she bases her beliefs on cultural rather than biological factors. For Addams, the ultimate societal goal was radical democracy, but because of cultural evolution, different peoples possessed different qualities, qualities which determined how they got along in the world. Thus, the failure of agricultural "peasants" to adapt to an urban setting was a cultural—not a biological or genetic—problem.

To further complicate this ideology and its relation to the settlement project, Addams did not believe that urban industrialism was superior to agrarianism; it was the triumph of democracy over feudalism that set America apart from less developed nations and gave U.S. citizens a leg up over their Southern and Eastern European counterparts. Addams argued for radical inclusion while maintaining cultural/ racial blind spots. Though her ideal was a "global village" in which diverse peoples cooperate as mutually helpful members of a community, some of the language in Twenty Years nevertheless reveals that her version of inclusiveness also includes a sense of her own superiority. This supposed superiority, though, in Addams's mind is based on the "cultivation" of democratic values rather than on an

inherent biological or racial advantage—again, a strong departure from her contemporaries' biologically based arguments for white supremacy. Addams's work, therefore, should not be classified as benevolent racism, so much as a flawed democracy rooted in her understanding of cultural evolution.

An understanding of Addams's orientation towards classes, races, ethnicities, and cultures other than her own is essential to this project. The issue of race in Twenty Years is key to any study of Addams's identity construction since her attitudes towards race—including her own racial identification—affect the persona she projects to her readers and to the activists who emulate her. The activist's own subject position determined much about her life, just as it does for all of us; obviously, her position as a white, upper-middle class, educated woman who did not have to earn her own income made it possible for her to devote her time to social reform and to be heard by those in power. Addams's view of those she was helping influenced not only her own work but also the legacy of settlement and other types of activism. Ultimately, her inclusivity, her textual omissions, and her maintenance of social hierarchies define her stance on this issue.

At times in her narrative, Addams seems radically inclusive, as when she argues, "in the words of Canon Barnett, that the things which make men alike are finer than the things that keep them apart, and that these basic likenesses, if they are properly accentuated, easily transcend the less essential differences of race, language, creed, and tradition" (66). This shows an emphasis on human likeness rather than sectarian difference. She also declares that recent immigrants are less concerned with skin color than are native-born Americans, and that the latter do not provide a good example to the former in this respect. In her discussion of inter-ethnic rivalries in the neighborhood of Hull-House, Addams writes,

> Doubtless these difficulties would be much minimized in America, if we faced our own race problem with courage and intelligence, and these very Mediterranean immigrants might give us valuable help. Certainly they are less conscious than the Anglo-Saxon of color distinctions, perhaps because of their traditional familiarity with Carthage and Egypt. They listened with respect and enthusiasm to a scholarly address delivered by Professor Du Bois at Hull-House on a Lincoln's birthday, with apparently no consciousness of that race difference which color seems to accentuate so absurdly, and upon my return from various conferences held in the interest of "the advancement of colored people," I have had many illuminating conversations with my cosmopolitan neighbors. (149)

In her view, then, not only should "white" Americans overlook their differences with immigrants (most of whom were considered ethnically and/or racially nonwhite), but the native-born should learn racial tolerance from the more cosmopolitan newcomers to the U.S. She also takes this opportunity to point out her own work on behalf of "colored people" and her intimacy with W. E. B. Du Bois, modeling not only an appreciation for European cultures but attention to the needs of black Americans, as well.

Significantly, though, this is one of only a couple of references in the text to African Americans. Since Twenty Years was written in the midst of Jim-Crow era tensions, such an omission is notable, never mind Addams's historical affiliation with the NAACP. As Toni Morrison points out in Playing in the Dark, the "shadow" of the Africanist presence always lurks in American literature, implicitly when not explicitly (46-47). As Elshtain points out, of course, Addams's constituents in the Hull-House neighborhood were primarily European

immigrants, which can explain the reformer's focus on that population in her memoir. Nevertheless, in excluding African Americans from her manifesto of settlement work (if not from the work itself), Addams reifies the cultural absence of blackness through her text. And her claim that the immigrants lack a consciousness of racial superiority ignores a cultural reality highlighted by whiteness scholars—that "immigrant populations . . . understood their 'Americanness' as an opposition to the resident black population" (Morrison 47), that the Irish and Southern Europeans immigrants became "white" by being "not black." Consciously or unconsciously, Addams contributes to the maintenance of racial and ethnic hierarchies by ignoring a black presence in her text and neglecting to note the relationships between European immigrants and the phenomenon of whiteness.

Addams does portray respect for diversity as she repeatedly stresses the need for immigrants' children to embrace rather than erase their home cultures, even using Abraham Lincoln as an example as she cites his "marvelous power to retain and utilize past experiences." She points out that in Lincoln's rise from humble beginnings, he "never forgot how the plain people in Sangamon County thought and felt when he himself had moved to town" (23). For Addams, then, a prime goal in working with recent immigrants is to encourage the retention of (at least parts of) their cultures of origin. But even as she employs the legacy of Lincoln in her text, she does not link the revered President to African Americans or to slavery, instead appropriating Lincoln for his social ascension. Barry Schwartz notes that in the Progressive Era, Lincoln's reputation soared as many reformers linked his name with social movements from women's suffrage to nationalism to settlement work.[28] Lincoln was hailed as a champion of the oppressed, but changing the "oppressed" of that designation from black slaves to European immigrants or women, while highlighting

[28] See Schwartz, Chapter 3, "Lincoln and the Culture of Progressivism: Democratizing America."

various forms of cultural dominance, again elides the presence and the needs of African Americans, many of whom continued to suffer civic neglect and outright persecution. Addams historically served as an advocate for African Americans, and her memoir certainly argues in favor of multiculturalism, but the text also reveals implicit hierarchies and artful identity construction.

Addams notes that she hesitates to become an "expert" at the expense of her neighbors. She claims, "I never addressed a Chicago audience on the subject of the Settlement and its vicinity without inviting a neighbor[29] to go with me, that I might curb any hasty generalization by the consciousness that I had an auditor who knew the conditions more intimately than I could hope to do" (58). Such a practice demonstrates an awareness of the temptation to appropriate others' experiences in service of her middle-class "cause," as well as her commitment to representing accurately the environment and effects of Hull-House and its projects. Significantly, however, the practice also highlights a persistent problem with Addams's work and with middle- and upper-class philanthropic reform generally: though she has an authentic "auditor" in her audience, it is nevertheless Addams who speaks for the neighborhood. The "auditor" never becomes the "narrator" of his or her own experience. It is Addams and her peers who determine what is worthy of keeping from other cultures, who orchestrate the "lessons" to be taught to neighbors and the country at large, and who pass judgment on how well certain peoples are blending into U. S. culture.

At several points in Twenty Years, Addams blatantly reveals a measure of paternalism and condescension towards her neighbors, especially certain ethnic groups. She calls her immigrant neighbors "simple," as in "A Settlement soon discovers that simple people are interested in large and vital subjects" (247). In discussing early programs

[29] That is, a working-class "neighbor" of the settlement as opposed to a middle-class "resident."

attempted by the residents, Addams claims that the failure of a public kitchen taught her "not to hold preconceived ideas of what the neighborhood ought to have, but to keep ourselves in readiness to modify and adapt our undertakings as we discovered those things which the neighborhood was ready to accept" (79). While the quote displays a degree of sensitivity in recognizing the importance of tailoring reforms to local needs, the phrase "those things which the neighborhood was ready to accept" also reveals a sense of elitism, suggesting that the residents have largely progressed further than their "simple" neighbors.

Addams is particularly condescending towards the "south Italian peasants" she encounters, who, she remarks, "more than any other immigrants represent the pathetic stupidity of agricultural people crowded into city tenements" (137). It should be noted that Addams uses the term "stupid" frequently, including in references to the dominant society and to the residents themselves,[30] and the word has a history of being used with less vitriol than is common today, variously signifying "stupefied," "insensible," "apathetic," and "slow-witted" (OED online). However, Addams's attitude towards "south Italian peasants" consistently reflects a paternalistic pathos. She observes, for instance, that the residents of Hull-House "found it much easier to deal with the first generation of crowded city life than with the second or third, because it [the first generation] is more natural and cast in a simpler mold" (136). Though perhaps intending to be complimentary, Addams presents immigrants, especially "Italian and Bohemian peasants" not as subjects, but as projects to be "dealt with," problems that sometimes prove intractable, at least when they achieve a sense of second-generation-American sophistication (136). In narrating a Hull-House experience of attempting to unite "the prosperous Irish American women" of the neighborhood with their Italian neighbors, Addams also declares "Italian women" to be "almost eastern [read:

[30] For example, see pp. 102, 103.

Muslim] in their habits" of deference to their husbands (206). However, in this same anecdote, she argues that learning about each other's cultures brings a sense of democracy, since one Irish American woman concluded, "I am ashamed of the way I have always talked about 'dagos,' they are quite like other people, only one must take a little more pains with them" (206). Addams comments on the woman's change of heart: "To my mind at that moment the speaker had passed from the region of the uncultivated person into the possibilities of the cultivated person. The former is bounded by a narrow outlook on life . . . ; while the latter constantly tends to be more a citizen of the world because of his growing understanding of all kinds of people with their varying experiences" (206-07).

The Irish American woman has clearly learned the lesson intended by Addams through her settlement project: familiarity breeds not contempt, but understanding (if not, in this case, total acceptance). It is Addams, of course, who retains the right to define cultivation and lead her neighbors (even the upwardly mobile Irish American middle classes) to greater enlightenment, yet she bases "cultivation" in this case not on hereditary factors but on multicultural tolerance. She does, though, link inclusivity with class status, since for her a rise in social status is concomitant with a growing acceptance of cultural difference; "cultured" people are racially and ethnically magnanimous. But as immigrants define themselves as Americans in relation to native-born blacks, so does Addams define herself as narrator or subject in large part because she is not the auditor or object of her study. As she writes the narrative of Twenty Years, she further constructs herself as author and authorizer of her neighbors' experiences. She knows best what they "need" versus what they are "ready to accept," and she knows better than racist American citizens what they may learn from their "simpler" new neighbors. As these passages indicate, Addams's attitudes towards race and

ethnicity are certainly difficult to classify. She expresses respect for cultural difference and tolerance, yet the authorial persona she constructs is that of a white, middle-class, educated, self-reliant reformer—one who possesses the attributes necessary to rescue industrialized America from itself.

Addams and Gender

As Addams constructs her self in this reformer/ savior role, she highlights not only the complexities of racial identification but also the intricacies of gender and its cultural functions, as well. Jane Addams embodied gender contradictions: as perhaps the best-known woman of her era, she was certainly a public figure and therefore transgressive of Victorian expectations of femininity. But as scholars such as Shannon Jackson, Marianne DeKoven, and Francesca Sawaya have noted, Addams's fame was largely attached to Hull-House, an inherently domestic space, and she herself argued that her reform activities were "civic housekeeping" and therefore merely an extension of womanly duties. The tension between Addams's often-conservative words and largely transgressive actions is reflected and refracted in Twenty Years.

Much of the memoir seems to rely on a Victorian gender divide wherein the sexes possess unique but complementary qualities. This essentialism is reflected in Addams's graduation essay, written upon her graduation from Rockford Female Seminary and discussed in Chapter 3 of the memoir. The essay discusses "'Cassandra' and her tragic fate 'always to be in the right, and always to be disbelieved and rejected'" due to "the feminine trait of mind called intuition" (37). As a mature writer reflecting on her essay, Addams doubts some of the younger student's conclusions, an attitude evident in her assertion that

"[t]he essay then proceeds—I am forced to admit, with overmuch conviction—with the statement that woman 'can only grow accurate and intelligible by the thorough study of at least one branch of physical science, for only with eyes thus accustomed to the search for truth can she detect all self-deceit and fancy in herself and learn to express herself without dogmatism'" (37). At the time of her graduation, Addams was planning to enter medical school, and this passage shows her intention to become a scientist, as well as her mistrust of feminine attributes. She did not finish medical school, and she apparently realized that physical science was not the only way for women to develop rationality, since her next sentence in the memoir undermines her girlhood conviction: "So much for the first part of the thesis" (37). As an adult whose life work is based not in physical but in social science, the authorial Addams must interject an evaluation of her teenage gender ideology, gently questioning the theory that "hard" science is imperative for women's intellectual development. Yet Addams still cites the essay in her memoir, using it to remind readers that even at a young age, she was suspicious of "dogmatism," a trait she continually tells readers that she abhors as an adult (37). And importantly, she uses the anecdote of her speech to introduce her attraction to "the theory of evolution, the acceptance of which even thirty years after Darwin's 'Origin of Species' [sic] had about it a touch of intellectual adventure" (37-38). Addams thus is able to remind readers of her longstanding inquisitiveness and adventurousness, and she also highlights her interest in evolution, which influenced much of Progressive-Era reform work. Her youthful essay relies on a belief in inherent gender differences, and this ideology persists in many other passages in the text. These differences, for Addams, often seem to result in different roles or tasks for men and women.

One telling example is in Addams's justification of reform work as an extension of a woman's domestic duties. According to Addams's recitation of the settlement's "Public Activities and Investigations," the title of Chapter 13 of her memoir, many of her neighbors were shocked by her campaign to be appointed garbage inspector for her ward of the city, since the duties involved personally walking the neighborhood streets and arranging for the sanitary removal of refuse. She, however, argues that "this abrupt departure into the ways of men" is actually feminine: "if it were a womanly task to go about in tenement houses in order to nurse the sick, it might be quite as womanly to go through the same district in order to prevent the breeding of so-called 'filth diseases'" (167). Frances Sawaya describes this justification, which Addams called "civic housekeeping," as "[p]art of a new movement to revise the meaning and use of the home, to insert women and their labor into the 'world'" (527). Using such a justification of her public work also provides a less-threatening and therefore expeditious means of presenting her public work to a wide audience, many of whom adhered to a belief in inherent moral differences between the sexes. It is impossible to know to what extent Addams believed in absolute gender equality versus sexual division of attributes, but it is not the historical record with which this project is concerned. No matter what she "actually" believed, her memoir—and by extension her persona—affected her readers and the public at large, as is the case with any iconic figure. And the figure she presents in Twenty Years is one invested in the concept of an inherent gender divide. As Addams argues for women's suitability for settlement work because it is an extension of "housewifely duties" (167), she conventionally marks women as the natural nurturers of society.

Jill Conway points out that such an ideology is tied to Addams's late-nineteenth-century understanding of sexual evolution. Darwinian scientific theory had implications not only for human progress and racial characteristics, but for gender and sex differences as well. Conway notes that Addams was a major "popularizer" of the theories of evolutionary scientist Patrick Geddes (58). Geddes believed in innate sexual differences that held evolutionary significance: men were more intelligent and courageous than women, who in turn were gifted with "social talents" such as altruism (Conway 53-54). Geddes also believed that industrialization negatively impacted fertility, since women were forced to labor in the work force in competition with men rather than to care for their offspring. This heightened turn-of-the century fears about "race suicide" due to other middle class changes, such as an increase in higher education for women and an accompanying drop in the average number of children borne by middle-class white women.[31] As Conway summarizes Geddes, "There must be an angel in the house busy with her brood of children ready to turn the commercial world of everyday economic laws into something finer," or societies would not progress (54-55). Addams subscribed to this "idea of biologically determined masculine and feminine temperaments," and "expected the collectivization of the competitive industrial order of the United States to come about through the moral insights of women" (Conway 58). In other words, women's innate altruism would help society move away from the individualism of industrial capitalism and towards a sense of community or connection, which Addams stresses in her memoir. However, as Addams crafts her persona through the writing of

[31] The prevalence of such a fear is represented in "'Race Suicide' and Common Sense," by "Paterfamilias," in the North American Review from June of 1903. In it, the author takes Theodore Roosevelt to task for the then-President's belief that having larger families would help the country, or, as the writer puts it, "that the nearer Americans approach the physical status of rabbits the more patriotic they become" (893).

Twenty Years, the identity she constructs is a largely heroic, singular, and therefore masculine one.

Addams details the social ills that affect women in particular, and she argues for the valuation of womanhood and motherhood, but in becoming the spokesperson for these women, she sets herself apart as a wise model who can speak for the masses—a traditionally masculine approach. For example, a good portion of Chapter 8, "Problems of Poverty," is devoted to the "heroic women" Addams has found amongst the poor (102). Though Addams calls these women heroic, in narrating their stories, in working out a reform philosophy, and in leading the settlement movement, she becomes the hero(ine). She describes some of the neighbor women's problems: abusive or otherwise unhappy marriages, single motherhood, unregulated employment, lack of childcare, the imperilment of the mothers' children in the city streets (their vulnerability to the seduction or seeming inevitability of a life of crime, whether prostitution for girls or theft for boys), and unfamiliarity with city services designed to help them. In the chapter, Addams shows herself to be an advocate for women, though some of her arguments maintain a conservative view of gender divisions. For instance, she argues for labor reform for working women, but employs the contemporary discourse about the importance of motherhood to do so. Addams goes so far as to argue,

> With all the efforts made by modern society to nurture and educate the young, how stupid it is to permit the mothers of young children to spend themselves in the coarser work of the world! It is curiously inconsistent that with the emphasis which this present generation has placed upon the mother and upon the prolongation of infancy, we constantly allow the waste of this precious material. (103)

She is lobbying for help for working mothers—an important issue even in the early twenty-first century. Yet her rhetoric suggests that some work is too "coarse" for women, implying a stereotypical feminine delicacy. Addams illustrates the need for help for working mothers with two poignant examples. The first is a mother whose only request after the accidental death of her young son was for the settlement to purchase from her employer a day off so that she could "stay at home all day and hold the [dead] baby," since the "long hours of factory labor necessary for earning the support of a child leave no time for the tender care and caressing which may enrich the life of the most piteous baby" (103). Her second example of the injustice experienced by working mothers is a nursing mother who leaves her night shift as a cleaning woman dripping with milk and mop water from the chest downward to go home "to feed her screaming child with what remained within her breasts" (103). While Addams is clearly an advocate for working women, such arguments based on motherhood can be profoundly limiting in their emphasis on biological difference. Her textual adherence to gender divisions can be read both as reflecting the author's view of biology and as espousing expeditious arguments that would be palatable to the public upon whom she depended for material and moral support of the settlement, but regardless of its genesis, her ideology affects the readers who look up to her. As this "foremost woman in the United States" stresses the role of motherhood and the injustice of struggling to manage labor and childcare—crucial issues to working-class women, many of whom have no choice in whether to work outside the home—Addams also adds to the body of literature that links womanhood with the home and potentially limits women's opportunities outside it, even as her own life models a different path.

Addams's attitude towards gender roles is complex, particularly in her articulation of the problem of unemployment for male heads of households. She radically argues that unemployment is no reason to get rid of an otherwise acceptable husband, especially since "sometimes this failure was purely economic and the men competent to give the children, whom they were not able to support, the care and guidance and even education which were of the highest value" (102). While this is an early argument in support of the stay-at-home dad, Addams's argument again has a conservative basis, resting on bourgeois notions of the nuclear family. After relating an example of a woman who kicked her unemployed husband out of the house only to experience the subsequent dissolution of her family, she remarks, "I could but wonder in which particular we are most stupid,—to judge a man's worth so solely by his wage-earning capacity that a good wife feels justified in leaving him, or in holding fast to that wretched delusion that a woman can both support and nurture her children" (102). Her attention to the needs of single, working mothers is progressive, but her statement also reifies the idea that women cannot be both mothers and workers.

Addams also suggests a gender division in her discussion of the Labor Museum established at Hull-House, remarking that the museum "has revealed the charm of woman's primitive activities" in its representation of handicrafts (142). The linking of "woman" with "primitive" creates the idea of a longstanding, evolved domain that is the exclusive province of women. For Addams, "culture is an understanding of the long-established occupations and thoughts of men, of the arts with which they have solaced their toil" (141). A recognition of the disconnection of immigrants from their "long-established" home cultures created in Addams a "yearning to recover for the household arts something of their early sanctity and meaning," a yearning that led to the creation of the Labor Museum (141; emphasis added).

The "household arts" that she refers to are, apparently, feminine ones, since the examples she gives of such arts are all of women: "the Jewish mother" preparing a Passover meal for her family, "the Indian women grinding grain," "the Moorish women" gathering water at a well, and "south Italian women" washing clothes in a stream; these are all, for Addams, "direct expressions of the solicitude and affection at the basis of family life," a family life predicated upon the domestic labor (or "art") of the wife/ mother (141-42). In this passage, as in the others, Addams certainly subscribes to a gendered division of labor. We cannot, however, ignore the reality that she herself occupies a transgressive position. Though she calls her work "municipal housekeeping," she is a single woman living amongst other single women. She speaks before government bodies and scholarly gatherings; she writes; she lectures; she walks the streets as a garbage inspector; she serves on official committees such as the Chicago school board; she mediates strikes—these are not the roles of the proper Victorian, or even Progressive-Era, lady. Allen Davis points out that

> [b]y emphasizing woman's special intuitive powers, rather than her capacity to compete with men, and by cooperating with her public image as gentle and benevolent saint, Jane Addams helped to defend the traditional role of woman even as she challenged it every day by managing Hull House, touring the country making speeches, and in other ways acting as a self-possessed and independent woman. (209)

The persona crafted by Addams was in many ways a "womanly" one as the matriarch of a settlement "house" and a "mother" of many reform efforts. Yet she also transgressed gender boundaries even in the creation of a public persona, since "public" and "home" are otherwise oppositional terms. As Davis notes, she was "an expert executive with a shrewd business

sense, an able organizer and fund raiser, [and] a persuasive writer and public speaker who also had a genius for compromise and conciliation" (106). And though in parts of her work Addams justified her apparent gender transgressions as an extension of womanly care taking or "civic housekeeping" (Jackson 87), her status as the leader of Hull-House and the foremost Woman Activist of her day were certainly revisions of the usual conceptions of woman's role. Joslin argues that the use of such domestic terminology was only metaphorical for Addams, that "her talk about civic housekeeping and mother breasts was an imaginative way of cloaking radical ideas in familiar dress" (55). As I have noted repeatedly, she often displays a difference between what she says in her text, how she says it, and how she lives. And despite many references to gender differences and a special moral role for women, she presents herself as a singular figure, a self-made and self-reliant (wo)man, an "American Hero(ine)."

Addams and Her Heroes

A further complication in Addams's negotiation of gender roles lies in her idealization of and grappling with prominent male figures of her era, notably her father, his compatriot Abraham Lincoln, and the radical writer Leo Tolstoy. Three of the chapters in Twenty Years take a male figure as their central focus: Chapter 1, "Earliest Impressions," focuses on Addams's father and his impact on her life, and Chapters 2 and 12, "Influence of Lincoln," and "Tolstoyism," respectively, engage with the men of their titles. Addams uses her father and Lincoln as models for her own activism and for the kinds of democratic ideals that others should have. Her later chapter on Tolstoy also praises the writer's commitment to equality, though she complicates her discussion of Tolstoy more than that of her earlier two

heroes. These three models, however, are notably male; Addams chooses no female heroines to emulate in her autobiography. As I noted in my discussion of Addams and gender, despite her celebrations of feminine roles and characteristics, the settlement worker's conduct often fits a more masculine role. The chapters of Twenty Years that discuss her heroes reveal that she is also male identified in her choice of role models.

Many scholars have noted Addams's veneration of her father, John Addams, to whose memory Twenty Years is dedicated and around whom she centers the narration of her "earliest impressions" in Chapter 1 of her autobiography. She calls her father "the dominant influence" of her early years and offers several anecdotes from her childhood to support the assertion (3). She describes her desire to possess a flattened "miller's thumb" like her father's, as well as her feelings that such an "ugly, pigeon-toed little girl" as herself was unworthy to be known as his daughter (8, 6), suggesting both the need to emulate her parent and the simultaneous fear that she would not measure up to his high stature. Though John Addams was a prominent mill owner in Addams's hometown of Cedarville and served as a state senator (Davis 4-5), it is particularly her father's status as a "self-made man" of democratic values and unimpeachable character that Jane Addams emphasizes (8). He advises an eight-year-old Jane not to flaunt her new cloak at church, since her "old cloak would keep [her] quite as warm, with the added advantage of not making the other girls feel badly" (9). Addams also treasures her father's advice to value "'mental integrity'"— staying true to one's own beliefs despite outside pressure to conform—"'above everything else'" (10). She also claims to have learned from him a sense of "the genuine relationship which may exist between men who share large hopes and like desires, even if they differ in nationality, language, and creed" (13). In this first chapter, then, Addams casts her father as

the person responsible for laying the foundation upon which her future reform work was based. She lauds her father for teaching her not to flaunt wealth before those—like her settlement neighbors—who have none, to hold onto her beliefs even when she feels pressure—whether from donors or political groups—to compromise her ideals, and to adhere to the democratic notion that like-minded individuals may share fellowship despite sectarian differences. All of these, of course, are essential themes in the creation of Hull-House—and Twenty Years.

It is these same qualities of integrity and magnanimity that Addams professes to admire in Abraham Lincoln, of whom she writes in her second chapter. She constructs her father and Lincoln as models for herself as an activist and for Americans in general, and she describes using Lincoln in particular as an example in the course of her settlement work. Addams states, "In our early effort at Hull-House to hand on to our neighbors whatever of help we had found for ourselves, we made much of Lincoln" and "his marvelous power to retain and utilize past experiences" (23). She holds up her father and Lincoln as pioneers—masculine, self-driven, and risk-taking—who, despite their respective social ascensions, never lost their connection to their roots and who embodied the values of honesty, fairness, and concern for the less fortunate. Since Jane Addams was engaged in public reform work among the disenfranchised, and as her participation in that reform was, at times, publicly criticized, these qualities were ones she desired to exhibit. Addams also claims that as an intellectual and social descendant of Lincoln's, the settlement idea was an intuitive one for her, though as "a western American who had been born in a rural community where the early pioneer life had made social distinctions impossible," she initially has difficulty reconciling her childhood conception of helping one's neighbors as a matter of course, with the more

studied and formal British settlement project (24). It is when British theorist Edward Caird remarks on Lincoln's role of "dig[ging] the channels through which the moral life of his countrymen might flow" that Addams is able to merge the scholarly and folksy aspects of her desire to be of service: "The memory of Lincoln, the mention of his name, came like a refreshing breeze from off the prairie, blowing aside all the scholarly implications in which I had become so reluctantly involved" and allowing her "to make a natural connection between this intellectual penetration at Oxford and the moral perception which is always necessary for the discovery of new methods by which to minister to human needs" (25). Here Addams constructs her settlement project as merely an extension of the democratic work practiced by Lincoln.

Though Addams undoubtedly had much respect for Lincoln, using his legacy as a comparison to her own work was a savvy move on her part. During the Progressive Era, Lincoln's persona rose in stature and became a national symbol of democratic ideals. In 1909, the centennial anniversary of Lincoln's birth, the U.S. mint issued the Lincoln penny, and Theodore Roosevelt referred to the Civil War-era President repeatedly in his own letters and speeches (Schwartz 128-30). Lincoln came, for many Americans, to embody the spirit of Progressivism because of their perception of his own dedication to reform (abolitionism). Aligning herself with such a revered national figure lent instant cachet to Addams's reform work and helped neutralize the perceived radicality of the settlement project.

Addams's veneration for Lincoln was embodied in other ways in her settlement work. She describes holding celebrations on the anniversary of his birthday, and Lincoln was one of two "heroes" whom Addams and the Hull-House community chose to have painted on the walls of the settlement's theatre. The men represented were specifically chosen as examples

of "those cosmopolitan heroes who have become great through identification with the common lot, in preference to the heroes of mere achievement" (226). Again, Addams emphasizes her commitment to "the common lot," a phrase suggestive not only of helping the "common" or the disenfranchised, but also sharing in the "common lot," leading without removing oneself from the community. Rebecca Sherrick argues that identifying herself with her father and Lincoln's public spiritedness allowed the female Addams to "justify" her renunciation of "the world of the home for that of the public sphere" and to construct herself as a pioneer of a different sort (43, 46). On the whole, I find Sherrick's Freudian reading of Twenty Years unconvincing, but I agree that using Addams's father and Lincoln as examples allowed the author to lend credence to her own work. It is important, too, to note that though Addams is stressing the dedication of her father and Lincoln to democratic ideals, she is nevertheless privileging the singular individual. The self-made man, as she self-consciously refers to each hero, whether or not he is "of" and "for" the people, is first and foremost an individual. Especially when venerated as a hero, it is not really Lincoln's or John Addams's commonality that Addams praises; rather, she admires each man's noteworthy (because uncommon) achievement—on behalf of, and not necessarily as part of the "common man." Jane Addams praises the civic mindedness of her heroes, but creating and lauding heroes necessarily implies the existence of an unequalled persona, an individual, not a representative member of a group. As she implicitly and explicitly compares her work at Hull-House with the legacy of Abraham Lincoln, she sets herself up as a Lincoln-like figure. The implication in her idolization of the folksy past President is that she, too, is a model champion of civic devotion and democracy (despite the fact that she is not a "self-made" woman but one born into relative wealth). The paradox remains, though, that as she has for her male heroes,

Addams crafts for herself in Twenty Years a singular, individualistic persona. Though she writes repeatedly of the importance of connection and community in her memoir, Addams's descriptions of her own resistance to persuasion—from her seminary years through her settlement interactions with donors, socialists, and politicians—mark her as a unique figure, a leader and, as such, a paragon, a persona that is crystallized in Chapter 12 of the text.

Addams and Tolstoy

Sherrick argues that due to gender constraints, Addams is unable overtly to criticize her own father (51), and indeed her celebration of her first two heroes remains largely unreflective throughout the text of Twenty Years. However, it is her intellectual grappling with another male hero, Leo Tolstoy, that provides Addams a vehicle through which not only to contemplate her own middle-class reform impulses, but also to assert her own ideology over that of her hero and thereby claim a place for herself as a model woman activist.

I have mentioned that Lincoln was one "hero" whose likeness graced the wall of the Hull-House theatre; the other hero portrayed was the Christian radical and writer Leo Tolstoy. In her chapter "Tolstoyism," which comes much later in the text than those centered on John Addams and Abraham Lincoln, she uses a discussion of her visit to the Russian writer as a means to discuss her awareness of her own place of privilege in the midst of a world of want. While her earlier discussions of male heroes helped to establish Addams as part of a pioneering and democratic tradition, engaging with Tolstoy allows her to connect her reform work to that of a contemporary, international figure. She begins this chapter not with an account of her visit to the Russian writer and philosopher—that comes later in the chapter—but with a description of the devastation of the economic depression of 1892-93

and of her own "shame that [she] should be so comfortable in the midst of such distress" (151).

This chapter uses the anecdote of Addams's pilgrimage to Tolstoy to interrogate how middle- and upper-class reformers should deal with the reality of their privilege as they work among the less fortunate or the destitute, a question that we today summarize in the phrase "white liberal guilt." Addams acknowledges that during the winter of the depression, she occasionally evinced a "reaction against all the educational and philanthropic activities in which [she] had been engaged"—a paralysis brought on by the feeling that such efforts were "futile and superficial" amidst "the desperate hunger and need" around her (151). She describes the efforts of some middle-class friends of Hull-House to express solidarity with the poor: one young woman chose to pick rags with the "Polish girls" who worked in her father's warehouse; another "took a place in a sweatshop for a month" (151-52). During this time, she reports, she questions whether "the Settlement, or Hull-House at least, was a mere pretense and travesty of the simple impulse 'to live with the poor,' so long as the residents did not share the common lot of hard labor and scant fare" (152). She expresses feeling kinship "after reading Tolstoy's 'What to Do,'"[32] which she identifies as "a description of his futile efforts to relieve the unspeakable distress and want in the Moscow winter of 1881, and his inevitable conviction that only he who literally shares his own shelter and food with the needy, can claim to have served them" (152). The rest of the "Tolstoyism" chapter details Addams's visit to England and Russia in 1896 and her struggles to work out a resolution between guilt over her privilege and faith that her reform work is effecting social change.

The chapter is significant for Addams's wrestlings with Tolstoy as international sage; she is deferential to him as a famous thinker, yet she differentiates herself from him at the

[32] The title of this work is more commonly translated as What Then Must We Do? (1886).

same time. Though "[t]he prospect of seeing Tolstoy filled [her] with the hope of finding a clew to the tangled affairs of city poverty," Addams reveals that she is not entirely to be classed as one of his disciples: "I was but one of thousands of our contemporaries who were turning towards this Russian, not as to a seer—his message is much too confused and contradictory for that—but as to a man who has had the ability to lift his life to the level of his conscience, to translate his theories into action" (153). Addams wonders "why he [Tolstoy] was so regarded as sage and saint" as to attract curious visitors "each day of the year"; in answer, she surmises that

> we were all attracted by this sermon of the deed, because Tolstoy had made the one supreme personal effort, to put himself in right relations with the humblest people, with the men who tilled his soil, blacked his boots, and cleaned his stables. Doubtless the heaviest burden of our contemporaries is a consciousness of a divergence between our democratic theory on the one hand, that working people have a right to the intellectual resources of society, and the actual fact on the other hand, that thousands of them are so overburdened with toil that there is no leisure nor energy left for the cultivation of the mind. We constantly suffer from the strain and indecision of believing this theory and acting as if we did not believe it. (157)

What Addams admires in Tolstoy, then, is his adherence to the same philosophy on which she claimed in "Subjective Necessity" to base her settlement work: to live out one's convictions, to live, rather than preach, a "sermon of the deed." As Tolstoy works, dresses, and eats as his peasants do, he has renounced the privileges of his noble birth, which Addams herself has not, since she is supported by land and wealth left her by her father. However,

Addams offers her own kind of sermon in Twenty Years, though a more traditionally textual one; it is a recounting of her own sermons of the deed and a litany of settlement reform efforts. Conscious of her own role as a middle-class reformer, she continues, "Doubtless all of the visitors sitting in the Tolstoy garden that evening had excused themselves from laboring with their hands upon the theory that they were doing something more valuable for society in other ways" (158). Given the admiration Addams shows in this passage for Tolstoy and his commitment to radical equality, her wry critique of the persistent chasm between reformer and laborer sharpens as she points out that Tolstoy, if anyone, should be able to claim an exemption "from hard and rough work on the basis of his genius and of his intellectual contributions to the world" (158). This passage demonstrates Addams's awareness of her own approach to reform and the differences between Tolstoy's methods and her own.

The most intriguing part of this chapter on Tolstoy is Addams's modest, gentle disagreements with the internationally renowned thinker. She expresses a difference of opinion in considering his adherence to nonresistance. Tolstoy allows for "moral energy" but not "physical force" in overcoming oppositional ideas. As she points out that moral coercion can be just as destructive in its ability to "override another's differences and scruples" as can physical bullying, Addams suggests that Tolstoy's nonresistance does not extend far enough (159). She offers a deferential disagreement based on her own experience:

> With that inner sense of mortification with which one finds one's self at difference with the great authority, I recalled the conviction of the early Hull-House residents; that whatever of good the Settlement had to offer should be put into positive terms, that we might live with opposition to no man, with

> recognition of the good in every man, even the most wretched . . . . [H]ad we not always found antagonism a foolish and unwarrantable expenditure of energy? (159)

I offer a different reading of this passage than that given by other scholars. In their biographies, Davis and DiLiberto claim that Addams's disagreement with Tolstoy concerned the practicability of nonresistance, that in Addams's view, it was not always the best tactic (Davis 138; DiLiberto 228). I argue that actually Addams is asserting that Tolstoy's physical nonresistance does not go far enough, that physical force is not necessarily the only way to practice domination, and that reconciliation is more important than resistance. Such a reading demonstrates a sharper break with Tolstoy than that revealed in the readings by Davis or DiLiberto. In fact, in her recent biography of Addams, Joslin points out that by the time of the publication of Twenty Years, Addams was a major international figure and Tolstoy was dead (56). Joslin does not offer a close reading of the "Tolstoyism" chapter of Addams's autobiography, but she does argue that though Addams was deferential to Tolstoy in her public speeches and in her memoir, the settlement leader was vexed by Tolstoy's treatment of her on her visit to his home (54).

Addams herself acknowledges in Twenty Years that her pilgrimage to Tolstoy raised a "horde of perplexing questions, concerning those problems of existence" in a world of great need (160). She seemed particularly troubled by Tolstoy's criticism of her as an "absentee landlord," since her work at Hull-House was supported by the profits from her farm (157). Addams reports reading, after her visit, "everything of Tolstoy's that had been translated into English, German, or French," and forming as a result a determination to act on his theories. Her solution—compromise though it was—was to vow "to spend at least two hours every

morning in the little bakery" in Hull-House, baking her own bread. This notion appeases Addams's middle-class guilt sufficiently to enable her to enjoy the rest of her European tour. But she avers that upon returning to Chicago, "suddenly the whole scheme seemed to me as utterly preposterous as it doubtless was. The half dozen people invariably waiting to see me after breakfast, the piles of letters to be opened and answered, the demand of actual and pressing human wants,--were these all to be pushed aside and asked to wait while I saved my soul by two hours' work at baking bread?" (161). At this point, Addams boldly situates her activism in relation to Tolstoyism. Whereas she earlier seemed, with Tolstoy, to question those reformers who saw their own work as "more valuable for society" than manual labor (158), here she bluntly asserts that for her, such a division of labor is a reality that allows her to help more people than by tending solely to her own support. She declares her role in bettering her world to be one of administration rather than manual labor (though writing—a large part of her duties—is literally manual labor). As she affirms her own chosen approach to reform, much of which is public and administrative in nature, Addams solidifies for herself the place of Settlement Leader and Model Reformer. Rather than work, as Tolstoy professes to, as one among many,[33] she claims for herself the visible, singular place of Head Resident at the most famous settlement in the country, and even more, as a woman of fame, importance, and distinction—even from her male hero.

Though Addams establishes her independence from Tolstoy, she does not end her chapter with a critique of the philosopher or his followers. On the contrary, she describes the efforts of "more doughty souls" than she, who establish cooperative communes or "Tolstoy colonies" (161). Addams claims that these colonies revealed "most vividly both the weakness

[33] Of course, Addams's report of the pilgrimage made by countless reformers to Tolstoy's farm reveals that the Russian writer, despite his claims of solidarity with the peasants, remains a singular, messianic figure.

and the strange august dignity of the Tolstoy position" (161). She admired the colonists' radical commitment to live on equal terms with each other, practicing a "literal giving 'to him that asketh'" (161), yet she maintained that in her own work, "in all the practical judgments and decisions of life, we must part company with logical demonstrations; that if we stop for it in each case, we can never go on at all; and yet, in spite of this, when conscience does become the dictator of the daily life of a group of men, it forces our admiration" (162). Even as she praises the efforts of those who maintain the "sermon of the deed," however, Addams undermines that admiration; she casts herself in this statement as a patronizingly wiser and more rational—and therefore more effective—reformer. Finally, she concludes her chapter by reporting that Tolstoy, despite his apparent disapproval at their meeting of Addams's comfortable dress and status as an absentee landlord, donated part of the proceeds of the publication of his novel Resurrection (1899) to Hull-House. Thus, even as she explicates her differences from him, Addams continues to capitalize on Tolstoy's name by implying his endorsement of the settlement and its work.

In this chapter, she offers reformers an example of how she has reconciled one of the key problems in reform, especially among the poor or suffering: how to come to terms with one's own lasting place of privilege when one lives and works among the less fortunate. She also models an independence of thought, an example that the Woman Activist can come to her own conclusions. Finally, she firmly establishes her own sense of importance—she has more important things to do than bake bread, and those things have an actual effect on other people's lives. This certainly reinforces her position as perhaps the leading Woman Activist. Addams manages to perform all of these negotiations while yet maintaining an outwardly feminine demeanor. Her phrasing is deferential to Tolstoy, but the content of the chapter

shows a significant departure from him. By linking herself with still another heroic male figure, Addams also belies her supposedly womanly role and presents herself as a singular, capable, and independent heroic figure.

Conclusion

As Addams writes her narrative, she authors not only the literal text, but also the persona that the text reflects and disseminates, giving her a key role in shaping the settlement movement and its literature. Addams is the star of her own story, as she is also the star of the settlement movement. This spotlight on Addams—whether trained on her by her own memoir or by scholars—highlights an important female reform figure, but her presence also creates a paragon of female activism that, because of its iconic nature, tends to obscure the contributions of other settlement writer-activists, especially those who do not fit the (raced and classed) Addams mold. In the remaining chapters, I explore other women's contributions to the body of settlement literature to reveal how the settlement project was variously envisioned as a way to combat the social ills of the Progressive Era.

Chapter Two

"The Gospel of Clean Backyards":

African American Women's Contributions to Social Settlement Literature

> These black people did not seek to come here [to the U.S.]. We brought them here by force. Every day there are more of them, and they are our neighbors. Sometimes I think that a nation's fitness to live will certainly be judged by its treatment of its dependents . . . We often hear of ingratitude on the part of those whom we are trying to help in the white settlements, but I have yet to hear of the first instance of this on the part of the black man. . . . The only report that comes back to us is that of loyalty, affection, and gratitude.
>
> --Jacob Riis, "The Black Half," pg. 299.

Introduction[34]

In 1897, African-American writer and reformer Fannie Barrier Williams wrote a piece for Godey's Magazine entitled "The Colored Woman of Today: Some Notable Types of the Present Generation in America."[35] Williams's intention was to demonstrate to her mostly white, female audience that black women were not the lascivious, immoral, exotic beings that much of the dominant culture had labeled them over the previous four hundred years. Williams argues,

> A little over a century ago colored women had no social status, and indeed only thirty years ago the term "womanhood" was not large enough in this Christian republic to include any woman of African descent. No one knew her, no one was interested in her. Her birthright was supposed to be all the

[34] My work in this chapter is indebted to the essays in African American Leadership: An Empowerment Tradition in Social Welfare History, edited by Iris B. Carlton-LaNey, from which I learned much about and gleaned references to original works by Sarah Collins Fernandis, Janie Porter Barrett, and other Progressive-Era African American reformers.

[35] Godey's Magazine was published from 1892-1898; under previous ownership, it was published from 1830-1892 under various titles but was most widely known as Godey's Lady's Book. It was perhaps the most popular women's magazine of the nineteenth century; just before the Civil War, it reached its peak circulation of approximately 150,000 readers, though its readership had declined significantly by the end of the century (see Mott, Finley).

> social evils that had been the dismal heritage of her race for two centuries. This is still the popular verdict to an outstanding degree in all parts of our country. (28)

Williams here notes not only the invisibility of black women among the general public but also their exclusion from women's reform movements, since they were not covered by the term "womanhood." As a counter to the prevailing image of African American women, her essay offers several women as shining examples of what black women were and could be a few decades after emancipation.[36] Significantly, Williams taps into the Progressive-Era discourse over America's national character in demonstrating the women's achievements, arguing,

> In a surprisingly brief period of time they have been completely lifted out of the past by the Americanism which transforms and moulds into higher forms all who come under the spell of American free institutions.
>
> It should also be noted that the thousands of cultured and delightfully useful women of the colored race who are worth knowing and who are prepared to co-operate with white women in all good efforts, are simply up-to-date new women in the best sense of that much-abused term. (29)

These excerpts from Williams's essay demonstrate the cultural atmosphere in which African American settlement writer-activists worked and the arguments they used; the excerpts especially highlight the tension between arguing against a racist society while seeming to accept that society's cultural hierarchy, which deems the "American" national

[36] In the essay, Williams catalogs many African American women that she feels are strong representatives of the race. Her list includes two physicians (Harriet Rice and Ida Gray Nelson), a lawyer (Ida Platt), a stenographer in a prominent company (Josephine Bartlett), as well as several teachers and nurses.

character greatest.[37] In this chapter, I consider the settlement writings of Williams, Anna Julia Cooper, Sarah Collins Fernandis, and Janie Porter Barrett and argue that, as these reformers struggle as black women writers both to establish their own credibility and to emphasize the need for settlement work among African Americans, their writings make implicit and explicit arguments about the interrelationships between race, class, and gender in turn-of-the-twentieth-century social reform. Settlement literature by and on behalf of African Americans arises out of a different exigency from those writings that focus on social settlements for European immigrants since, as these writers argue, many African Americans around the turn of the twentieth century were recreating their understanding of the "home" in a post-slavery nation, and since (unlike Jane Addams and her peers) African American writer-activists—even when from the middle or upper classes—shared a heritage with their settlements' "neighbors." These women's texts exhibit, to varying degrees, the difficulty in pinpointing the causes of social problems among blacks in an era of violent racism as well as continued nature versus nurture debates that alternately attributed black Americans' social problems to genetic weaknesses or the after-effects of slavery.[38] As these writers argue for racial inclusiveness in social services and for general "uplift" of the black race, they also reveal an investment in middle-class mores based on domestic values, such as thrift, cleanliness, temperance, and productivity—what Janie Barrett referred to in one case as "the

[37] Such arguments are particularly complex since, as Cathy Boeckmann has argued, national "character" was largely equivalent to "race" at the end of the nineteenth century, a concept I cover in more detail below.

[38] As I note in chapter one, the term "race" in the Progressive-Era carried different connotations as compared to today, but as a concept, it was as prominent in theoretical and social discussions as at any other point in U.S. history. The term was sometimes applied to the "human race," but it also referred to various ethnic groups and nationalities; Jews, Italians, the Irish, Greeks, African Americans, and even (white, Protestant, native-born) "Americans" for example, were all sometimes considered separate races. Much discourse of the day—including settlement literature—focused on uplifting and improving the "race," alternately applying the term to a particular ethnic group or to the people of the U.S. as a whole. When I speak of "racism," I refer to bigotry aimed at peoples based on their assigned "race" at the time, though during a Jim Crow era rife with codified segregation and rampant lynchings, African Americans still occupied the lowest position in the Progressive-Era U.S. racial hierarchy.

gospel of clean backyards" (514)—and the discourse particularly emphasizes the central role of the mother in improving the home and therefore the race.[39] Finally, these writers participate in a tradition, dating back to at least the eighteenth century and particularly booming in the 1890s, of African American women who wrote and spoke for activist purposes to both white and black audiences.[40] While acting as part of this legacy, the women and their texts also add a new twist to scholars' understanding of racial uplift discourse as they argue, in the settlement tradition of mutuality, that whites, in addition to blacks, will be "uplifted" by interracial cooperation in social settlements for African Americans. The authors thus tie their community concerns to national debates over the progress of the nation and its people.

Despite the growing attention to African American women's writings over the past thirty years, literary scholars have yet to explore these women's settlement writings in any depth. "Uplift literature," more generally, has received much deserved attention beginning with scholars such as Hazel Carby and Frances Smith Foster. Black women's reform writings are also studied by rhetoricians such as Shirley Wilson Logan and Jacqueline Jones Royster, and their settlement work has been documented by historian Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn and social work scholar Iris B. Carlton-LaNey. Settlement literature, however, deserves consideration as a subgenre of uplift literature since it explores a prevalent, particular, and practical approach to racial uplift that its authors tied to national, multi-racial social reform efforts.

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[39] This attention to maternity slightly prefigures a similar argument used by white New Women such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman in the first few decades of the twentieth century; I discuss white women's maternalism and eugenics in chapter four.

[40] See Foster and Logan regarding the tradition of African American women's literature and rhetoric, respectively.

The Writers and Their Texts[41]

Williams, Cooper, Fernandis, and Barrett were all well-known women who wrote and spoke about race, gender, and class issues during the Progressive Era. Their settlement essays often reveal common themes, goals, and approaches, containing the following elements (though not necessarily in this order):

1. An explanation of settlement context, sometimes referencing Jane Addams and Hull-House, sometimes citing only other African American settlement work;
2. An emphasis on the particular needs of and for African American-focused settlements;
3. A linkage of the project to racial uplift by way of the instilment of middle-class mores; and
4. An accentuation of mutual benefits to blacks and whites (along with subtle appeals for funds), linking settlement work with African Americans to the nation's "progress."

These women, though all writing about the settlement movement, had different relationships to it. Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964) was an African American writer-activist born into slavery in North Carolina just before the start of the Civil War ("Cooper" 63). As a young woman, she graduated from Oberlin College, which was a crucial stop on the Underground Railroad and is believed to be the first U.S. college to graduate an African American woman (Slater; Cowan and Maguire); in her sixties, she earned a doctorate from the Sorbonne ("Cooper" 64). Cooper is best known as an educator and reformer through her collection of essays and speeches, A Voice from the South, published in 1892, but in 1913 she also wrote an essay in the Oberlin College alumni magazine publicizing the Colored

[41] These writers often wrote multiple articles of a similar style and content, and their writings, though not necessarily voluminous, are yet too numerous to consider singly in this chapter. Thus, I will treat them as a group, citing from particular texts to support my analyses.

Social Settlement in the nation's capital. Though she wrote of the settlement, however, she did not serve as a resident there.[42]

Likewise, Fannie Barrier Williams (1855-1944) was not a resident at the Frederick Douglass Center (FDC) in Chicago, but she was one of its main publicists, writing several similar articles ranging from 1904-1906 that appeared in both white and black periodicals. An African American activist in Chicago and a contemporary of Addams's, Williams is best known for her involvement in the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 on behalf of women of color. Northern born and well educated, she went South during Reconstruction to serve as an educator (Deegan xiii). She later became involved in the Frederick Douglass Center, which—though led by the white, female Unitarian minister Celia Parker Woolley—was designed to attend to the needs of African Americans who were thronging to Chicago from the South to find work. Williams was an outspoken advocate for the Center, stating that settlement work embodied her belief that "in the realm of social ethics to-day the supremest virtue is that deeper and more spiritual impulse to helpfulness that will enable us to find delight in working with, rather than for, the unfortunate all about us" ("The Need" 107).

In contrast to Cooper and Williams, Sarah Collins Fernandis and Janie Porter Barrett both served as head workers and residents at the settlements about which they wrote. In 1902, Fernandis (1863-1951) and her husband began the Colored Social Settlement in Washington, D.C. (Curah 180), which Cooper later publicized without mentioning Fernandis. All but unknown today, Fernandis was a prolific poet, essayist, and social reformer in the early twentieth century. Born in Maryland during the Civil War, she was a respected alumna

[42] In her biographical entry in volume 221 of the Dictionary of Literary Biography, Jennifer A. Kohout says that "in 1906 [Cooper] was appointed supervisor of the [Colored Social Settlement] house" (66), but Kohout does not cite her source for that information, and I found no other reference to Cooper as "supervisor" of the house, including in the essays by Cooper and Fernandis considered in this chapter.

of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute for Negroes and Indians in Virginia (the school that also trained Booker T. Washington) as well as the New York School of Social Work (now New York University) (Curah 179). Fernandis wrote many articles and poems to promote social reform work among the African American poor, particularly in the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore areas. Like Williams, she was a frequent contributor to Hampton's The Southern Workman journal as well as to Charities, and several of her articles focus on settlement work as a means to racial uplift.

Janie Barrett (1865-1948), like Fernandis, was a graduate of Hampton Institute. A Southerner who grew up with unusual access to education provided by her mother's white employers (Peebles-Wilkins 126-27), she founded the Locust Street Settlement in Hampton, Virginia, in 1890 (just one year after the founding of Hull-House), making it the first known settlement for African Americans in the nation (Cash 10; Fernandis, "Hampton's" 204). Barrett continued to expand her social service work, later founding and presiding over the Virginia Industrial School for Colored Girls, a residential facility that served as an alternative to incarceration for "wayward" girls (Peebles-Wilkins 123). Although I examine only one of her articles regarding the settlement movement, Barrett is a key figure in the African American settlement movement, and her essay, published in The Southern Workman more than twenty years after the founding of Locust Street, offers a unique insider's perspective written for a black audience and discussing a mature settlement.

The Home, the Social Settlement, and Racial Uplift

Settlement work, when understood at all by twenty-first-century laypersons, is almost always conceived of as a project undertaken to ameliorate the lives of recent European

immigrants to Northern cities. In this understanding of settlement work, Jane Addams stands out as the representative settlement worker and woman activist. Addams's status as exemplar presents a challenge to scholars studying settlement literature: attention to this model figure has a spotlight effect, highlighting Addams while obscuring other writer-activists, particularly those women whose identities differ from the stereotypical white, middle-class, single, college-educated settlement worker. Addams's persona—and the version of a settlement community she describes in Twenty Years—presented a challenge to marginalized women writers of her time as well, offering an inescapable model with which they had to contend. But around the turn of the twentieth century, social settlements serving African Americans—both in the North and the South, in urban and rural areas—were organized in order to address the postbellum question of how (or, for some people, whether) to integrate former slaves into the American citizenry as well as how to achieve racial equality in the South and the North. Texts by Cooper, Williams, Fernandis, and Barrett offer insight into this discourse concerning the role of settlements in the uplift project and its relation to African American domestic and political life.

During Reconstruction and its aftermath, the "Negro Question" engendered much debate in the United States. Whites and blacks were concerned with the status of formerly enslaved peoples and debated whether integration, segregation, or repatriation to Africa was wisest. Jim Crow statutes enacted after the war restricted black men's right to vote and denied African Americans equal participation in mainstream American society by enforcing racial segregation, the supposed constitutionality of which was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1896 in Plessy v. Ferguson (Gossett 273-74). During the Jim Crow era, the prevalence of lynchings terrorized blacks (as was intended by white perpetrators) and led to vociferous

public arguments against racism and violence by black women such as Ida B. Wells.[43] Of primary concern for whites and blacks arguing about the place of African Americans in U.S. society was whether social differences between the races were due to inherent, irremediable racial "deficiencies" of nonwhite races or to the effects of centuries of enslavement. Various evolutionary theories at the time engendered heated racial debates about whether blacks were assimilable, and, if so, how and to what extent they might be assimilated (Newman 46).

Any examination of African American ideology at the turn of the twentieth century must include some discussion of prominent African Americans Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois and their stances on the question of assimilation. Historians, philosophers, sociologists, and literary and rhetorical scholars have engaged in well-documented debates about the perceived divide between the racial philosophies of these two men, both of whom had connections to the settlement movement and to the authors considered in this chapter. In the traditional dichotomy of the two men's plans for racial uplift, Washington represents accomodationism and subservience of blacks to whites since he favored industrial, practical education for African Americans and encouraged patience among African Americans waiting for equal rights and opportunities, including the right to vote. Du Bois, on the other hand, was more militant than Washington and criticized the latter's exhortations of patience. Washington was a Southerner, educated at the Hampton Institute, a school founded to teach industrial and vocational arts to former slaves; Du Bois was a Northerner who held a Ph.D. from Harvard. Recent scholars, though, have pointed out that the Washington-Du Bois divide has been represented in scholarly literature in an overly absolutist way.[44] In other words, to suggest that the two men and their followers had no areas of agreement, that there were no

[43] See Southern Horrors and Other Writings, ed. Royster.
[44] See McCluskey, Deegan.

persons whose work encompassed both men's philosophies, is far too simplistic. The settlement writings of Williams, Cooper, Fernandis, and Barrett demonstrate the difficulty in assigning settlement writers and their social work exclusively to either the Washington or Du Bois camps.

These women writers had various personal ties to both Washington and Du Bois. Fannie Williams's husband, attorney S. Laing Williams, was a "close friend" of Booker T. Washington and a ghostwriter for Washington's book on Frederick Douglass, though many of her beliefs seemed to accord with those of Du Bois (Deegan xvii, xviii-xxvii, xiii). Cooper was a "staunch all[y]" of Du Bois's and as an educator therefore suffered consequences from school boards who preferred Washington's approach (McCaskill 71; Kohout); several recent articles have examined her writings in their relation to Du Bois.[45] Fernandis and Barrett were, like Washington, graduates of Hampton, and the three knew each other in that context. As Hampton graduates, Fernandis and Barrett also shared with Washington a similar commitment to industrial education. Many observers, especially from a twenty-first-century perspective, are tempted to assign settlement work to the Washingtonian school of thought, since settlement workers (especially those working among African Americans) often stressed the need for practical training in housekeeping and trades. Given the similarities between the four women's settlement writings despite their personal affiliations, however, it is clear that traditional assignations of various race leaders to one camp or the other are inadequate. It is overly simplistic to label settlements as members of the Washington camp, especially under a twenty-first-century perspective that tends to view Washington as "wrong" and Du Bois as "right," yet it is important to acknowledge that the women were aware of and participated in the debates among African American intellectuals during the era. Significantly, as women,

[45] See, for example, Alexander, McCaskill, and Wallinger.

their arguments often employed elements of Washington's and Du Bois's theories in addition to their own claims that black women were crucial to the race's future since they were responsible for the "home," which would be the basis of the larger society (McCluskey 78).

One of the difficulties of parsing the significance of race and class in settlement discourse is that the expected roles for women differed significantly between blacks and whites of all social classes, so what held true for many white women often did not apply to most black women. After the Civil War, former slaves struggled to establish homes of their own, experiencing a domestic autonomy not allowed under slave codes that had disallowed legal marriages between slaves and subjected black slave families to the whims of their owners. So whereas for some middle- and upper-class white women such as Addams and her college-educated peers the idea of the "home" was restricting at the end of the nineteenth century, for black women who had previously been denied the right to create homes of their own, such a social and familial opportunity could be liberating. In fact, the home became central to arguments about African American social settlements. According to Shirley Wilson Logan, a scholar of African American women's rhetoric, for many black women reformers at the turn of the twentieth century, "racial uplift was home uplift" (169). That is, in order for the race to be uplifted, the home would have to be uplifted; the race could rise no farther than the home—and especially no farther than the mother who tended to that home. Janie Barrett argued that "the most valuable social work is done in the home and immediate neighborhood, and is within the reach of every man and woman. If we do no more than make a good, clean home, whose inmates are honorable and upright, it matters not how humble the home, we have done valuable social work in our community" ("Social Settlement" 511). The home, guided by the mother, needed to be "uplifted" for the race to progress. Such a discourse

mirrors traditional historical arguments for Republican Motherhood and the importance of improving the lot of white women (in terms of education, the franchise, and legal rights) because of their role in shaping the minds of their young sons and future citizens.[46] But African American settlement activists, like Addams and other white settlement workers, acknowledged that black and working-class women also went beyond the home to work. Therefore, settlement women's reform discourse did not end at the home's door, as Barrett clearly understands when she argues for social reform "in the home and immediate neighborhood" (511; emphasis added). Such activists often used the discourse of nurturing, but outside the home as well as inside it, proclaiming the need for day nurseries and other support of working mothers. Sarah Fernandis, like Barrett, describes to readers of The Southern Workman the crucial nature of settlement work in the future of the race when she cites the purpose of her Colored Social Settlement in Washington, D.C., as being to help, "along practical lines, the needy people in the neighborhood, specializing in all its offerts [sic] the assistance of neglected childhood and the uplifting of standards in the home," with the reasoning that the uplifting influence will spread, through the children raised in it, beyond the home and into larger black society ("Neighborhood" 46). Extending the previous Republican Motherhood discourse, arguments for the crucial role of the mother in the Progressive Era were both environmental and biological in nature. That is, under the neo-Lamarckian notion that acquired traits could be passed on to future generations for better or worse, the mother's role in encouraging and reproducing (both biologically and socially) "desirable" traits was essential to the future progress or uplifting of the "race" and,

[46] See Linda Kerber for a discussion of Republican motherhood in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

ultimately, the nation.[47] Many women reformers, black and white, claimed cultural primacy on this basis; the notion claimed for black women a crucial role in the uplift project of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.[48]

The concept of "uplift" was, certainly, a key part of African American discourse in the Jim Crow/ Progressive Era. The term was used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to describe efforts by African Americans to ameliorate the social experiences and social standing of former slaves in the wake of Reconstruction—essentially to establish a black middle class. Women played a key role in the project of racial uplift, and women's speeches and articles from the period reveal consciousness of a keen sense of social responsibility to their race. In an era rife with social activism across races and social classes, clubs for black women proliferated (as did those for white women) in an effort "to ameliorate social problems in black communities" (Cash 3). Victoria Earle Matthews—a former slave, outspoken club woman, respected journalist, and founder of the White Rose Mission in New York City (a kind of settlement that offered boarding rooms and gave aid to vulnerable young black women emigrating from the South in search of employment)—played a notable role in helping emphasize the importance of literature to racial uplift. In Boston in 1895, Matthews and other club women gathered at the First Congress of Colored Women of the United States, a convention whose aim was to create a national organization of black women's clubs.[49] A month earlier, Matthews and other speakers had begun to respond in their journal, The Woman's Era, to a letter in which the white male president of the Missouri Press Association attacked the virtue of black women. At the conference, Matthews and her colleagues proclaimed the strong character of black women and outlined their crucial role in

[47] For more on Lamarck and eugenics, see the Introduction and Chapter 4 of this project, as well as Boeckmann.
[48] See Gaines for more on black women's role in the uplift project.
[49] See Logan, Waites for more information on Matthews and the Congress.

the future of the race, and Matthews gave a now well-known speech entitled "The Value of Race Literature," in which she linked textual stereotypes of and a dearth of literature by African Americans with blacks' continued oppression. For Matthews, the key to African Americans taking control of their destiny was taking control of the pen—or the typewriter: "We cannot afford any more than any other people to be indifferent to the fact, that the surest road to real fame is through literature" (177). She urged African Americans to support the black press rather than subscribe to "such journals, published by the dominant [white] class" and therefore "pay for what are not only the vehicles of insult to our manhood and womanhood, but . . . assist in propagating or supporting false impressions of ourselves and our less fortunate brothers" (181). The development of Race Literature—whether periodical writings, prose, poetry, or drama—would, Matthews argued, both offer a counterpart to prevailing caricatures of blacks and help African Americans "to form habits of observation and commence to build a plan for posterity by synthesis, analysis, ourselves aiming and striving after the highest, whether we attain it or not" (182). The creation and interpretation of literature, then, would help achieve the slogan of the soon-to-be-formed National Association of Colored Women: "Lifting As We Climb" (Logan 153).[50]

Partly in response to Matthews's call, and partly through the exigency of Jim Crow racial struggle, the turn of the century saw a rise in uplift literature written by African Americans, particularly black women such as Frances Harper and Pauline Hopkins. Such literature sought to model, through its narratives, a rise in social and moral standing among blacks in the post-slavery era. However, as a project, uplift certainly had its tensions since, as Logan argues, the word "carried with it the assumption that those being lifted occupied inferior positions and that they needed to be elevated to a more socially acceptable level"

[50] For a discussion of the development African American literature, see Gates.

(153). As in Addams's settlement writings, the reformers often demonstrate a view towards their less-fortunate contemporaries that could easily be labeled as paternalism. However, due to the complexities of racial identity and the turn-of-the-century debates over whether biological or social causes have the most influence on human behavior, settlement writings by African Americans are equally as difficult to classify as Addams's own racial views, if not more so. In terms of the pervasive prejudices, blacks were considered by much of the dominant culture to be biologically, genetically inferior to whites. As Thomas Gossett writes in his landmark exploration of the concept of race in the U. S., "Races were thought to represent different stages of the evolutionary scale with the white race— or sometimes a subdivision of the white race— at the top . . . . Heredity was considered immensely more important than environment in conditioning the development of society, and to many of the social theorists heredity meant mainly race" (144). And as Boeckmann has noted, nature and nurture were conflated in Lamarckian genetics, since the proponents of Lamarckianism (of whom there were many in the Progressive Era) believed that "nurture" could lead to "nature" when acquired traits became part of a person's genetic legacy. In the social context of a dominant culture arguing, along with Herbert Spencer and other Social Darwinists, that blacks were essentially and inexorably inferior to whites, African American arguments for racial uplift needed to provide their own interpretations of existing inequalities and propose means for addressing social differences. As is the case with Addams and Twenty Years, settlement writers had to engage in some way contemporary "nature versus nurture" debates.

African American women reformers' use of the discourse of home and racial "uplift" is complex, as Louise Newman has noted, since it requires black women to participate in the racist civilizing discourse of the Progressive Era. In a period when white women were being

claimed (both by themselves and by dominant white males) as civilizing agents to be used in service of Western imperialism, black women "had to demonstrate that they too were 'true women' (pious, virtuous, genteel, refined, soft-spoken, well-dressed) in order to certify that their race already was or could soon become civilized" (Newman 8). Unfortunately, though, this often meant replicating cultural hierarchies that otherwise constricted the women, including using "evolutionist discourses of civilization to justify their own social activism" (Newman 9). For example, Newman quotes Olivia Davidson, second wife to Booker T. Washington, as arguing, "We cannot too seriously consider the question of the moral uplifting of our women, for . . . [i]t is with our women that purity and safety of our families rest, and what the families are, the race will be" (9). Many elite women, white and nonwhite, embraced an emerging evolutionary ideology that cast "woman" as "transmitter of race traits" and therefore assigned her a central role in civilizing her race and the nation as a whole (Newman 50-51).[51] This uplift discourse is reflected in the African American women's settlement literature considered in this chapter.

The women, of course, were writing not only within the discourse of the African American community, but also within the social reform community, which was culturally dominated by whites. The authors in this chapter were responding not only to racist attitudes in the culture at large and Washington-Du Bois debates among African Americans, but also to paternalistic attitudes held by white reformers. In the March 1903 Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, the presumably white Caroline B. Chapin comments on "Settlement Work Among Colored People," and her brief article aptly demonstrates some of the issues involved in an examination of such work, both for Chapin's

[51] See Newman for an explanation of the "gynaecocentric" evolutionary theories of Lester Ward (50-51). White women were viewed (by white dominant culture) as the highest agents of civilization since Anglo-Saxons were believed to occupy the most advanced evolutionary position.

white and black contemporaries as well as for scholars of the settlement movement. Chapin's piece generally exhibits a positive tone towards settlement work among African Americans, such as when she claims that the work "has been found both practicable and profitable" (184). Her praise of the settlements, however—like the quote from Jacob Riis which serves as the epigraph to this chapter—is peppered with racist and patronizing references to the black neighbors served by the settlements. For example, in discussing the benefits of mothers' meetings, Chapin remarks, "A cup of tea served them when work is over ends what is to the women a real social treat, for there is nothing colored people enjoy quite so much as meetings" (184). This statement demonstrates the persistence of the view that certain races or peoples are endowed with particular qualities unique to them.[52] Chapin reveals an ambiguous position in the nature versus nurture debate, though, when she identifies the prevailing social opinion of the "hopelessness" of social reform "among colored people" because of their supposed inherent laziness. She argues:

> This is sometimes true—not always. But if it is true, if the colored boy does lack ambition, is it wholly his fault . . . ? What position in the community may the colored boy aspire to hold? . . . In this city, he may drive a garbage wagon, coal cart, grocery wagon or hack . . . . He may become a day laborer or do cleaning and whitewashing . . . . So, though he has the ability to be a carpenter, plumber, painter, or mechanic, he knows that his learning to use this ability is fruitless . . . . (185)

Chapin here demonstrates a realization that sociocultural factors affect behavior: if young African American men seem to lack ambition, that is because they realize that any occupational aspiration will ultimately be thwarted by a lack of opportunity. Even as she

[52] See Boeckmann's discussion of race and (national) character.

seems to argue in favor of environment over heredity, though, she concludes her report thus: "On the whole, work among these people is most encouraging. They are easily influenced and responsive to any advice or suggestion given by the [settlement] workers, whom they quickly trust and regard as friends, and this friendship once won lasts, with all its possible opportunity of helpfulness" (185; emphasis added). Such language evokes stereotypes of black people as loyal, naïve, and easily influenced, and ultimately more like a faithful canine companion than a person with his or her own agency. Chapin rides the fence between environmental and genetic causes of what she sees as social deficiencies among African Americans, but her article never loses its paternalistic sense of superiority. Nevertheless, she is radical in her ascription of racial difference—at least in part—to environmental influences in an era about which Thomas Gossett has written,

> American thought of the period 1880-1920 generally lacks any perception of the Negro [sic] as a human being with potentialities for improvement. Most of the people who wrote about Negroes were firmly in the grip of the idea that intelligence and temperament are racially determined and unalterable. They concluded, therefore, that the failures of Reconstruction, the low educational status of the Negro, his [sic] high statistics of crime, disease, and poverty, were simply the inevitable results of his heredity. (286)

Compared to most other white Americans at the turn of the twentieth century, then, Chapin and other Progressives were largely supportive of African Americans while maintaining significant cultural blind spots, and her article reveals the complexity and mutability of Progressive-Era racial ideology.

Indeed, as Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn asserts, this kind of ambivalent attitude towards African Americans pervaded Progressive-Era social work. Lasch-Quinn writes that, though Addams and other turn-of-the-century reformers were largely ahead of their time and "sought to overthrow what they considered the racist biological view of racial differences, their focus on environmental causes still led many of them to accept a portrait of blacks as inferior or maladjusted" (14). That is, in attributing African Americans' supposed social problems to slavery and its destruction of the black family, the progressives did move away from a biologically determined racial hierarchy, but the racial/ racist hierarchy itself persisted. The questions of paternalism, race, and social values become even more complex, though, in examining the settlement texts written by African American women who worked in or on behalf of settlements targeted at other blacks. Williams, Cooper, Fernandis, and Barrett all evince a mixture of racial pride and classist paternalism.

Settlement Essays by African American Women

Fannie Williams and Anna Julia Cooper are well known for their participation in racial uplift during the Jim Crow Era; both were speakers at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago on behalf of African American women. Until recently, however, little attention has been paid to their writings in support of the settlement movement. Fernandis—as a reformer and a writer—has largely been lost to twenty-first-century scholars. Barrett is known among scholars of African American history and social work, but she is not commonly known outside of those fields, nor is she studied as a writer. Much of the scholarly work on the involvement of African Americans in the settlement movement has been performed by sociologists (such as Mary Jo Deegan) or historians (such as Elizabeth Lasch-

Quinn and Floris Barnett Cash). I seek to call attention to textual contributions to the settlement movement by these four writers since their texts flesh out scholars' understanding of a movement dominated by white women and add a new dimension to study of the African American uplift project and its literature. As I explore the view of settlement work modeled by their texts, I also consider the ways in which their involvement in the movement alters the prevailing stereotype of the female settlement worker even as their arguments reveal their own reliance on contemporary notions of race and gender.

Scholarly interest in periodical literature has increased over the past several years, especially as interest in nondominant-culture writers has grown. Periodicals were one way for writers to gain access to publishing when more traditional avenues were closed. And for writers interested in reform, the periodical press was a sure means of reaching the targeted audience quickly. Many philanthropic, religious, collegiate, and other reform organizations had their own journals. Certainly, much of Jane Addams's writing appeared first in a magazine or other such publication, and popular journals disseminated Addams's ideas widely. In her call for race literature, Victoria Matthews, herself a journalist, specifically mentioned the need for African Americans in the periodical press.[53] Lauding antebellum black periodicals run by Frederick Douglass (the North Star) and Thomas Hamilton (the Anglo African), Matthews inveighs her listeners in the 1890s to remember that history and to support the black press as a means of racial uplift (180-81). She calls particular attention to the Woman's Era, the organ of the National Association of Colored Women (edited by Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin), which she described as "a journal, a record of Race interests gathered from all parts of the United States, carefully selected, moistened, winnowed and

[53] For a discussion of Freedom's Journal, the first African American periodical in the U.S., as well as the newspaper's significant, lasting influence on African American journalism, see Bacon.

garnered by the ablest intellects of educated colored women, shrinking at no lofty theme, shirking no serious duty, aiming at every possible excellence, and determined to do their part in the future uplifting of the race" (183). The Southern Workman, the journal of Hampton Institute, had a similar mission but was written by and aimed at women and men of color. The journal Charities, in which several of these writers published, was an organ of The New York Charity Organization Society (Finnegan par. 2), and it had a mixed race readership and contributorship.[54] All of these journals sought progressive reform and engaged social questions of the period, and they played a key role in publicizing the settlement movement and affecting its development. Fernandis writes in 1906 that her own settlement work in Washington, D.C., is indebted to the press. She mentions by name the journals Social Service (published by the National Conferences of Charities and Corrections) and Charities, saying that "[t]he recognition of [her] work by such organizations . . . confirms in [settlement workers] the belief that the work has had wide significance. Much of this outside attention was no doubt drawn to the work by the article which appeared in The Southern Workman when [they] were but just beginning." Calling attention to the importance of the press in promoting and supporting her work, Fernandis goes on to cite the many other opportunities she has had to promote and discuss the settlement project—including submitting to "a Western university . . . a report of this work for their department of social science"—due to the help of these organs ("Neighborhood Interpretations" 48). This periodical literature offers invaluable insight into settlement ideology and its dissemination.

[54] Charities is also called Charities and the Commons, and it later merged with the similarly focused Survey (later the Survey Graphic). For more on the history of the journal, see Finnegan.

Identification of Settlement Context

Almost all of the authors, especially those writing in the decade or so around the turn of the century, begin their essays with a general discussion of settlement work, establishing background information for their readers. This move is certainly not an unusual feature of texts intended to publicize a movement or project, but reading these texts alongside each other allows readers to examine how the movement was portrayed by those invested in its growth among African Americans. One of the earliest authors to engage in such publicity was Fannie Williams. Sociologist Mary Jo Deegan has edited a collection of Williams's writings entitled The New Woman of Color (2002), in which appear five essays by Williams detailing the need for and purpose of the Center. The articles were published in three separate periodicals: two each in the African American journals The Southern Workman and Voice of the Negro, and one in the sociologically and philanthropically focused periodical Charities, which contained essays by and for both whites and blacks but presumably had a predominantly white readership.

The earliest of Williams's essays about the Frederick Douglass Center included in Deegan's collection is "The Need of Social Settlement Work for the City Negro," published in The Southern Workman in September 1904. The article, an early promotion of the work of the FDC, reveals the reality of Jane Addams's celebrity, even though Addams would not publish her memoir for another six years. Williams quotes Addams in the second line of her article, calling Addams "the subtle philosopher of Hull House" ("Need" 107). She later writes,

> I certainly need not, in this presence, take time to define what a social settlement is. To define the meaning and influence of Hull House, the Chicago

> Commons, and the University . . . Settlement in Chicago would be to show how there is being worked out a friendlier adjustment of the relations between capital and labor, the rich and the poor, the fortunate and the unfortunate everywhere. ("Need" 108)

She also describes Hull-House as "the finest, the most typical, and the most complete example of socialized kindness to be found in the world" ("Need" 109). Williams's essay, with its national audience, makes clear the renown enjoyed by Addams and Hull-House, and it also shows its author to be a savvy rhetor. In her efforts to publicize and popularize the work of the Frederick Douglass Center, Williams links it with Addams's well-known social project, thereby bolstering the credibility of the FDC.

Like the settlement writings by Williams, Cooper's essay "The Social Settlement: What It Is, and What It Does," first published in 1913 in Oberlin College's alumni journal, praises the work of earlier, white settlement reformers, calling settlement work "an attempt to carry into the city slums the incarnate Word, the idea of better living, the ideal of higher thinking, embodied or energized in earnest and resourceful men and women who LIVE THERE" (216; emphasis in original). Here, Cooper stresses the importance of personal involvement in social justice work, giving praise to those middle-class workers who "LIVE THERE" in the neighborhoods they hope to improve. Cooper next outlines a history of settlement work, including its roots in England, but like Williams, she singles out the work of Jane Addams. Cooper employs Addams's Hull-House as a representative settlement, calling it "probably the most widely known Settlement in America," which would particularly have been true at this time, just a few years after the publication of Addams's first memoir (218). Cooper also defers to Addams when she stresses the need to involve oneself personally in

philanthropy for the sake of democracy. She quotes Addams as saying, "SETTLEMENTS SUCCEED THRU [sic] THE CHARACTER, FORCE, AND INSIGHT OF SANE AND INFORMED RESIDENTS. WORKING PEOPLE ARE QUICK TO DETECT SHAMS; AND MERELY LODGING IN A TENEMENT DISTRICT WILL NOT MAKE ONE USEFUL" (218; emphasis in original). Like Williams, Cooper borrows the cachet of Hull-House and its founder to lend credibility to the settlement project and the particular incarnation of it that she desires to promote. In fact, Cooper spends over half of her essay to her mixed audience detailing the settlement idea and its benefits, even though in 1913, settlement ideology was already broadly disseminated.

Although references and deference to Addams appear in essays by both Williams and Cooper—who did not reside in settlements—they do not appear in articles by Fernandis or Barrett—who did. Though Fernandis published some of her essays at an earlier time period than Cooper's piece, the former does not, apparently, find it necessary to link her work with that of the most famous settlement worker. Most of her essays, even when addressing white or mixed audiences such as that of Charities and the Commons, begin instead with an introduction of her own Colored Social Settlement in D.C. along with a general statement of the need for settlements in working-class African American neighborhoods. Fernandis founds her argument not on the strength of references to Addams, but on the key role of American blacks in the future of the nation, linking the fate of black Americans to the success of the country as a whole. Using Washington, D.C., as an emblem of the nation's progress, she asserts in the first sentence of an essay in Charities, "The national capitol [sic] holding the unique position of being the largest colored city in the world, seems an appropriate place in which to select a distinctly Negro neighborhood presenting any special

phase of the urban life of the Negro" ("In the Making" 703). When she does refer to the broader settlement movement, such as in "Hampton's Relation to the Constructive Needs of the Negro," published in The Southern Workman in 1910, she refers first to her own role in "becoming the first resident worker of the colored settlement in Washington, D. C." and then to the seminal work of Janie Porter Barrett, whom she claims as a personal friend and credits with founding, "in all probability the oldest colored settlement of this country" (202, 204). Instead of praising Addams in the vein of Williams and Cooper, Fernandis effusively describes Barrett as someone she knew in her youth at Hampton as "a lovely, light-hearted young girl, happy in her planning for the beginning of her domestic life, [who] provided for a weekly meeting for the neighborhood girls in her new [marital] home" (204). Like Fernandis, Barrett in her own 1912 essay "Social Settlement for Colored People" in The Southern Workman, makes no mention of Addams or Hull-House. Instead, she begins with a discussion of "social work" in general, linking personal work in one's own home and community with the term she identifies as ordinarily being reserved for "government, public health, punishment of crime, reforming criminals, etc." (511). She stresses the connection between the home and larger society, setting up what she believes to be the greatest justification for settlement work: an improvement in neighborhood homes and, by extension, communities as a whole. She references her own settlement work obliquely, stating that she focuses on her Locust Street Settlement and "the present head worker" because she "know[s] more about [it] . . . than any other" (511). Barrett never states explicitly that she is the head worker in question, but that fact was well-known to her Hampton-affiliated readers, and a caption in small type under the author's name at the head of the article lists her as "Founder and Head Worker" (511). Even in her own modesty, however, Barrett dos not defer to Jane

Addams. Such rhetorical tactics are important to note. One might assume that such differences are due to audience, but Williams praises Addams in her articles in The Southern Workman, and Fernandis ignores Addams in her articles aimed at a predominantly white audience. Likewise, there is no correlation according to date of publication; Cooper's 1913 essay features the most prolonged praise of Addams, while neither Barrett's 1912 essay nor Fernandis's earlier pieces mention the iconic figure.

One explanation for the different context is likely the different roles the authors themselves served in the settlements. Williams and Cooper were both informal publicists for the settlements with which they were concerned, and Williams, in particular, was actively involved in the FDC. Fernandis and Barrett, on the other hand, were more than just supporters and publicists of their ventures; they were head residents, responsible for the daily functioning of their respective projects. Thus, their writings were informed by a different experience of the social settlement. Fernandis and Barrett used the term "settlement" to describe their social reform projects, and they therefore saw themselves as part of the larger U.S. settlement project that Addams represented. They also, though, were immersed in the context of their own settlement work among African Americans in the Mid-Atlantic U.S. Their refusal to defer to Addams as "head" of the movement asserts for themselves a central place in settlement history.

Settlements for African Americans

Though Williams demonstrates general deference to Addams, in the same essay in which she praises the Hull-House founder, she also mounts her own subtle challenge to Addams's work. She certainly yields to Addams as leader of the movement, but she is also

implicitly critical of such institutions as Hull-House in their failure to meet the needs of African Americans, writing of mainstream "white" settlements,

> As a general rule, these settlement institutions are located in districts where the foreign element predominates. Russians, Italians, Greeks, Jews, Hungarians, Poles and other nationalities constitute the strange admixture of life that surrounds these settlements . . . . What this class of newly-made citizens needs in the way of protection, guidance, and sympathy is needed in even greater degree by the throngs of native-born colored people who are swarming into our larger cities. ("Need" 109)

Williams goes on to point out the lack of resources available to African Americans and to highlight the consequences of this disparity. She argues, "[S]ociety . . . is doing everything that heart and brain can devise to save white young men and white young women, while practically nothing is being done for the colored young men and women, except to prosecute and punish them for crimes for which society itself is largely responsible" ("Need" 110). In citing "society" as the true culprit for crimes that she believes are rooted in poverty and inequality, Williams clearly points to environmental—not racial—causes of behavior. Her solution to such problems is the Frederick Douglass Center, which she refers to as the "black Hull House" ("Need" 111). Again, Williams is borrowing the cachet provided by an association with Jane Addams and her settlement, yet she goes beyond Addams as she points out the white settlements' failure to attend to the needs of African Americans.

Like Fannie Williams, Cooper eventually draws special attention to the need for settlement projects for African Americans, though she does not mention race until after she has enumerated the good deeds done by settlement workers, nearly halfway through her

essay. This provides a good example of a strategy that Logan identifies in Williams's speech to white women at the Columbian Exposition, a practice of first identifying with her audience—establishing common ground—and only then applying her arguments specifically to the black race.[55] Cooper begins her discussion of African American settlements by praising the efforts of Charles Weller, a white man whom she cites as first endeavoring to create the Colored Settlement House in Washington, D.C.[56] She recounts, however, the trials of Weller, who butted heads with "public opinion, that psychic force which controls society" and who therefore eventually passed the project on to "willing workers among the colored people themselves" (220). Cooper points out the hypocrisy of whites who objected to Weller's work, exposing what she calls the "paradox" of Progressive Era social concern that coexisted with Jim Crow Era "race prejudice against Negroes" (219). She boldly confronts white supremacy, especially among professed Christians, using the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan. In verse form, Cooper argues that those who overlook their black neighbor are no better than the supposedly pious "Priests" and "Levites" who refused to help the wounded man in the parable:

> Prone in the road he lay,
>
> Wounded and sore bested;
>
> Priests, Levites passed that way
>
> And turned aside the head.
>
> They were not hardened men

[55] See Logan Chapter 5 passim.

[56] Cooper's account of the Colored Settlement House differs from that offered by Fernandis, who is generally regarded as the founder of the settlement. Fernandis identifies Weller and his wife as starting a white settlement near the Bloodfield neighborhood and desiring to reach out to the African Americans in their vicinity. Fernandis says that she and her husband responded to Weller's call for the founding of a settlement for blacks. See below for a further discussion of the settlement from Fernandis's perspective.

In human service slack;

His need was great; but then,

His face, you see, WAS BLACK. (220; emphasis in original)

Cooper could, of course, expect her Oberlin audience to be sympathetic to issues of racial equality, but she was nevertheless a black woman addressing a largely white audience in the Jim Crow era, so her verse is noteworthy for its pointed critique of racial prejudice. Cooper has, presumably, gained the trust of her audience through the use of identification as well as her deference to Addams and the work at Hull-House, factors that likely make her criticism more palatable to readers. Her message is clear, though: African Americans are too often overlooked by supposed philanthropists, and there exists an earnest need for social services targeting blacks.

Fernandis, who does not begin her articles with an explanation of "white" settlement work and therefore does not need to establish her own project in contrast to it, also emphasizes the need for social settlements for African Americans. In one of her earlier pieces, published in The Southern Workman, she points out the disparity of living conditions among blacks in D.C.: "Perhaps there is no other city where Negro life affords so marked a contrast as that presented by the homes of the cultured, well-paid, government employees and the miserable shacks of the ignorant and often vicious alley dwellers" ("Colored" 346). Her contrast, then, is not racial but classed, comparing the lot of the black middle classes with the "vicious alley dwellers." Fernandis cites her work with the Associated Charities of Washington, which itself instigated investigations into the need for social services for African Americans. She goes on to mention Charles Weller's settlement work in a white

neighborhood close to the black "Bloodfield" area,[57] and she describes the meeting of the minds between Weller's workers, her husband, and herself, as the married couple "talked together about it, and finally decided to make [their] home life, with whatever its possibilities for good, an offering to that neglected neighborhood" ("Colored" 346). Fernandis recognizes and states the need for settlement work in black neighborhoods, but in this aspect, Williams and Cooper critique mainstream settlements more strongly, while Fernandis hardly mentions them. Similarly, Barrett, in her article, does not mention the work of Addams or other white settlers, and her article discusses only her own settlement. She stresses, however, the challenges facing her race, writing, "No one can deny that the Negro race is going through the most trying period of its history. Truly these are days when we are <u>being tried as by fire</u>" (517; emphasis in original). Barrett believes that social work, such as that performed as part of settlement houses, will enable African Americans to "live down [these] conditions" as they learn to "set . . . the highest standards, and liv[e] up to them, day by day, it matters not what comes" (517-18). This again demonstrates the different approach the authors take; Williams and Cooper are more complimentary of white settlement work initially and then make a strong critique of its inadequacy in meeting the needs of blacks, while Fernandis and Barrett focus, for the most part, only on black settlement work without mentioning their white counterparts. All of the authors, though, offer social settlements as tools for racial uplift.

[57] As mentioned above, this is a slight difference in the information offered by Cooper about the same settlement.

Emphasis on Uplift and Middle-Class Mores

Though the authors argue for racial equality, they do not escape the elitism and paternalism that is often attributed to white settlement workers. In arguing that the FDC foregoes "slum work" to foster "wholesome influences," for instance, Williams highlights one goal of her settlement work: to develop a middle class of African Americans that values education, "neighborhood improvement," and civic responsibility ("Institutional" 125, 127). Much of the settlement workers' discourse centers on making good citizens of their neighbors. For the authors in this chapter, good citizens are clean, temperate, thrifty, and industrious. At a time when African-descended peoples were viewed by much of the dominant U.S. culture as a primitive race that had not progressed to the same degree that Anglo-Saxons had, becoming "civilized" was key to cultural inclusion. And for much of the nation, "civilization," as a biased term, was marked by middle-class values and a veneration of the home, manifested through protecting, valuing, and caring for women.[58]

Fannie Williams makes clear in her essays the values she deems important for settlements to impart to their neighbors. Though her essays focus on the need for settlements open to African Americans, she claims in an essay published in the planning stages of the FDC that she does not favor "protecting black people just because they are black, but rather as an effort to discover individual worth and fitness, that shall apply to all classes of people, and to help in the creation of newer ideals of citizenship" ("Need" 111). Presumably, those who demonstrate "individual worth and fitness" are those who evince a willingness and an

[58] In one paradox of Progressive-Era social evolution theory, a supposed marker of the white race's superiority was its (males') treatment of women; a race's advancement was believed to be reflected in how differentiated women were from men. Thus, "Oriental" and African races were believed to be less evolved in part because of the Western perception that their women were degraded (Newman 22). This created a conundrum for white women who were arguing, in part, for equality with white men, but they adapted to the discourse by claiming cultural power through their role as civilizing agents for the nation and its diverse peoples.

aptitude to take on the values of self-improvement and civic interest, since Williams celebrates at the end of this same article the planned settlement activities of "check[ing] crime," "effectively us[ing] the ballot," "improving the sanitary conditions of the districts where colored people segregate in their home life," and "increas[ing] the interest of colored people in the means of education" ("Need" 111). In a later article published after the FDC had been in operation for a year, she continues to stress such values, asserting that "the Center is endeavoring to create a feeling of civic pride in maintaining clean streets, clean alleys, and wholesome sanitary conditions," as well as "vacation schools" for children ("Frederick" 127). The author is especially invested in the idea that "the only way that [African Americans] can have a conscious share in the common life of the community is to contribute their proportion of interest in the common good" ("Frederick" 127). Such a statement is certainly aligned with Addams's professed interest in mutuality, and Williams's articles alternately denounce segregation and prejudice as being responsible for proportionally greater crime among African Americans on the one hand (clearly attributing racial differences to environment, not heredity), and stress mainstream, middle-class mores such as cleanliness and industriousness on the other. Thus, while she acknowledges the social consequences that a repressive dominant society has on a racial minority, Williams is simultaneously invested in the class dimensions of that same dominant society.

Like Williams, though Cooper asserts racial equality both explicitly in her essay and through the action of writing the text itself, her arguments for settlement work are based largely on middle-class values, both for reformers and for those they would help. She writes, "The Social Settlement . . . is endeavoring to bring higher ideals of life and character to many who are largely cut off from good influences and opportunities; to stimulate ambition, raise

moral standards, strengthen character and develop capacity for self-help" (222-23). She also describes the efforts of the Colored Settlement to inculcate the values of temperance, cleanliness, and thrift—clearly qualities that align more with Booker T. Washington's industrial program than with W. E. B. Du Bois's liberal education despite scholars' usual pairing of Cooper with Du Bois. Cooper lists some of the activities of the settlement as "a day nursery, a kindergarten, penny saving though the stamp system[,] and friendly visiting," and she lauds the workers for acting as "helpful agencies in promoting civic improvement and supporting law and order" (220-21). Where she seems to differ from Williams and Addams, however, is in personally identifying with settlement neighbors, with putting herself in their shoes. For example, though in championing cleanliness she claims, "Personally, I would struggle to get water if I had to buy it by the pint," she also points out that most of the public washing places available to African Americans are "so palpably pestiferous" that she would rather "endure the dirt and stains" than visit such disgusting bathhouses (222). Even more strikingly, Cooper relates the story of an African American man who works underground in the sewers of Washington, D.C., yet still passes his evenings "fixing up a tiny flower bed in front of his little home, while his wife sings in preparation of the family meal inside." Cooper underscores the challenges that face many such working-class African Americans, remarking, "if I had to breathe the gases of the city's sewerage for my eight-hour working day . . . the good temperance people would have to offer me something better than a 'don't' to keep me from taking the beaten track to the dazzling hospitality that promises a forgetting" (222). Here, Cooper identifies not with her predominantly white readers but with a working-class African American man who is a client of the settlement. In doing so, she complicates the class prejudices that otherwise seem to pervade the settlement writings

considered in this chapter. She also simultaneously provides her readers with an example of a hardworking, self-respecting African American worker helped by the settlement and suggests a reason—horrible working conditions—to explain why many such workers do succumb to intemperance.

In an early article promoting the Colored Social Settlement in The Southern Workman, Sarah Fernandis introduces the project to her African American readers and stresses why settlements for blacks are so important. In "A Colored Social Settlement" (1904), Fernandis describes "the city's delinquent Negro population," which suffers from what she terms "the three I's[:] ignorance, immorality, and intemperance" (346). The Colored Social Settlement, she believes, will help combat these problems and uplift the "delinquent Negro population" to a status more akin to that of their neighbors, "cultured, well-paid, government employees" (346). Detailing the decision she and her husband made to "settle" in the neighborhood of Bloodfield, she sets the couple up as a model family for the community. She describes "[t]he living rooms we furnished so simply that no one in the neighborhood need hesitate to aspire to copy them" and hopes that any female visitor from the neighborhood will "carr[y] away with her some hints about food value or neatness and order that possibly will help in her own home standards" (347). She also offers a portrait of a day in the life of the Colored Social Settlement, complete with mothers dropping their children off at the day nursery, kindergartners arriving "combed and clean in the main, with some pitiful attempts at outfitting," afternoon "domestic training" classes for girls (347, 348), and evening leisure activities for boys. Fernandis clearly possesses cultural ideals akin to those promoted by Williams and Cooper, and she stresses the goals of the settlement in imparting those values to their neighbors.

Fernandis admits that a "daily procession of loud slatternly women and of lazy loafing men passing by" reveals the limits of the settlement's influence, but she hopes that being "in daily touch with the children of like environment" will change her community (348; emphasis added), since "[o]nly as we can raise the standard in the home can we hope to lift the neighborhood and the race, but the lifting of one gives the whole an upward swing" (350). For Fernandis, then, exposing her neighbors to a different, middle-class way of life is intended to alter their environment and therefore their lives; settlement work is thus closely linked with racial uplift. As she details some of the successes of the project, including "a hitherto repulsively dirty baby" who has now been brought to the settlement "fresh from the bath," Fernandis admits, "In my efforts to uplift, I have learned not to expect revolutions swift and wholesale, but to count even trifles like these" (349). She clearly suggests a relationship between settlement work and uplift, and she focuses on children as the key to racial uplift, arguing that they are more pliable than adults, whose ways are more entrenched, and that such "little people" are "men and women in the making" ("Children's"). This argument, though, is underpinned by Lamarckian ideology that suggests that altering the environment of black children will improve the race's future.

To the white/mixed audience of **"**A Social Settlement in South Washington," published in Charities (1905), Fernandis sets up a similar line of argument. The introductory anecdote of this article, rendered in dialect, is a statement she reports having overheard from a laborer in her neighborhood: "'See this [dollar bill]? I'm goin' down to Dick Ryan's an' git whoopin' drunk!'" (64). Thus, she begins her essay in a manner that reinforces the view of poor blacks held by much of her more educated audience: ill-spoken, intemperate, and improvident. However, she uses the anecdote to introduce the story of Baby Ben, the

neglected child of a mother that Fernandis describes as "a girl in her teens, ignorant, irresponsible, who had drifted from a life of extreme poverty in the country but with the restraint of her poor home, into a life of extreme poverty in the city with no restraint" (64). After Fernandis's intervention, Ben's mother was provided employment and the baby was brought to the day nursery, where he was given "comforting baths, a soothing salve, . . . clean clothing . . ., and [a] plentiful supply of milk," upon which he "slept and grew and thrived" (64). By juxtaposing these two figures, the grown drunkard and the now-happy Baby Ben, Fernandis suggests that the intervention of settlement workers into the lives of their neighbors will eventually yield dividends as the young Ben's of the slums grow up to be hard working and sober. Such possibilities, she argues, "make uplifting work imperative" (65). For Fernandis, it is also crucial to reach African Americans when they are young, since the chances of effecting change are that much greater. The picture of settlement work offered by Fernandis serves to promote the idea of a total reform in class values, from wasteful, thoughtless, and impulsive living to sober, responsible conduct more in line the with values shared by her middle-class, Progressive readership.

In "Hampton's Relation to the Constructive Needs of the Negro," a speech Fernandis gave at Hampton's Sixteenth Annual Founder's Day Services in 1910 and republished in The Southern Workman later that year, the author offers a more detailed characterization of the Bloodfield neighborhood itself, through which she reveals her views of the differences in social classes and the origins of those differences. She writes of the settlement's environs,

> Such is the story briefly of one needy city neighborhood where the Negro, poor and ignorant, forced back upon his meager spiritual resources, has sinned with more and more frankness in his isolation from moral

> standards that would cry out Shame! In such isolation, the delinquent class is in the making. From this environment he comes, a menace to public well-being and an appreciable retardation to the general upward social trend. In the eight years that I have been actively engaged in settlement work, my effort has been to demonstrate the need and possibilities of a more wide-spread upbuilding for this class through settlements in neglected Negro neighborhoods. (203; emphasis in original)

In this significant passage, Fernandis reveals her beliefs about the origins of social problems: sin, environment, and isolation. She displays a faith in social settlements to redress such problems since settlement workers introduce their neighbors to alternative ways of living; Fernandis believes that through intervention and the modeling of middle-class values, she and her reform colleagues can bring about the "upbuilding" of their community and therefore (white and black) American society as a whole, an argument related to Progressive-Era ideas that all races must improve if the U.S. is to maintain its supposed superiority. Despite her repeated references to environmental causes, however, Fernandis also shows herself to be subject to some of the same biological racial views of many of her contemporaries—at least when discussing a race other than her own. In this address to friends of Hampton, which was founded to help the Native as well as the African American, Fernandis also details her settlement work in the seaside village of East Greenwich, Rhode Island. According to her account, concerned citizens approached Fernandis to request that she administer a settlement in that village. Fernandis described the inhabitants of East Greenwich as "a group of Negroes carrying a marked strain of Indian blood" (203). In discussing the challenges of reform or charity work in the area, she cites the "native aloofness of these people" as a major hurdle to

overcome (203), revealing that she herself subscribes to a certain amount of racializing in her adherence to the stereotype of Native Americans as emotionally distant. Such a characteristic may be "native" to American Indians, but Fernandis does not ascribe such "native" characteristics to African Americans. Also significant is that she offers this characterization to an audience of other blacks ostensibly concerned with racial prejudice. She goes on to cite the story of "Jane," a beautiful "colored" woman who incited numerous fights among the men of East Greenwich; however, the settlement trained her to be a good domestic servant and to keep herself clean and neat, and now she is considered a success story of usefulness, purity, and cleanliness moving to the settlement's "working girls' lodgings" (204). The settlement, then, can serve as a civilizing agent for Native Americans as well as African Americans and Southern and Eastern Europeans.

Not surprisingly, Fernandis's peer Janie Barrett shared a similar view of settlement ideology. Barrett proclaimed that she opened her settlement "with the definite aim of improving the homes, and the moral and social life of [her] community" (511). She emphasizes the establishment of clean and "attractive" homes so "that the children will be contented and happy there" and not succumb to the lures of the streets, and she details the work of the Poultry, Home Garden, Flower, Quilting, Plain Sewing, Cooking, and several other settlement Departments, all of which teach their members to become thrifty and productive home economists (512). Fernandis and Barrett, like Williams and Cooper, consistently demonstrate an investment in middle-class values, subjecting these authors to the same criticisms leveled at their white counterparts, that the settlement system simply served to create good workers to uphold the capitalist system.[59] What makes the position of African

[59] For more on this critique of social settlements in general, see Jackson, Chapter 1.

American settlement activists different, however, is that they shared a common heritage with the settlements' neighbors, that they were subjected to the same kinds of prejudice, and that they were working to overcome the legacy of a completely different social institution—legal slavery. Nevertheless, their discourse reveals an investment in Progressive-Era cultural hierarchies that linked middle-class ("white") culture with civilization and therefore with evolutionary eminence.

Interracial Cooperation and Mutual Uplift

One unique feature of settlement work as compared to other philanthropic endeavors is its emphasis on bidirectional reform. Jane Addams saw the social settlement as a means not just to better the lives of her immigrant neighbors but also as a way of returning middle- and upper-class young adults to a more active way of life; not only would the neighbors benefit from programs offered by the settlements, but the residents would benefit from their service to others, as well. That same sense of mutual betterment is reflected in settlement writings by African Americans, but the texts in this chapter differ from Addams's perspective in that they promote cross-racial in addition to cross-class benefit.

Williams's later essays on social settlements place particular emphasis on the racial understanding fostered by the FDC. She declares,

> The Douglass Center is a settlement plus something else. It is not organized to do slum work in what may be called the black belt of Chicago, but to be a center of wholesome influences to the end that well-disposed white people may learn to know and respect the ever increasing number of colored people

> who have earned the right to be believed in and respected. ("Institutional" 125)

In its contrast of "slum work" with work among people who have "earned" respect, this passage continues to reflect the elitism and bootstraps mentality discussed in the section above, but it also reveals that, for Williams, just as important as providing activities and education to African Americans was the FDC's role in serving as a contact zone in which blacks and whites could intermingle. Williams hoped that this contact would help blacks earn the respect of white workers and reformers at the FDC. She does not claim an automatic right to respect; she implies that only a select class of African Americans—made up of those who fall in line with the "wholesome influence" of the settlement—is worthy of interracial contact.

Within those bounds, though, Williams offers a radical argument that is manifested in various forms in other of the essays in this chapter. In an article in which she reports to readers the activities of the first year of the Center, she asserts that "white and colored people have worked together in a spirit of comradeship and good fellowship, <u>each</u> experiencing a spirit of <u>uplift</u> both helpful and inspiring" ("New Method" 129; emphasis added). She argues that the Frederick Douglass Center, like Hull-House, has a mutual benefit, though one based on race rather than on class; due to the FDC, <u>whites</u> experience "uplift," a term usually reserved for blacks. In making such an argument, even in the midst of her deference to white reformers such as Addams and Woolley, she points out that African Americans, otherwise considered the lowliest members of U.S. society, have qualities and experiences that will help to uplift a white society that itself needs reform. Addams's textual neglect of the social welfare needs of African Americans stands out in stark relief next to Williams's emphasis on

it as well as her magnanimous celebration of the interracial work of the members of the FDC.[60]

Cooper, too, is careful to explain to her mixed readership the national importance of settlement work for blacks, claiming a primacy for work among African Americans in the country's capital. She concludes in her essay, "Washington has the largest colored population of any city in the world. Whatever obtains here will stand as a model of the best or a symptom of the worst in American life" (222). Here Cooper implicitly engages the argument that the nation cannot rise above its most downtrodden citizens, that the fate of the African American will be a reflection of the social health of the country, and she offers the Washington, D.C., Colored Social Settlement—not Hull-House—as model settlement, a subtle but radical claim to stake in the world of settlement reform.

Similarly, Fernandis believes that the efforts put forth by settlement reformers will uplift the nation; she is careful to explain that "we have done our best with the means at hand—a baby bathed, a child placed in school, a class of little ones gathered from the street, small things all, but each a lift to needy childhood towards good citizenship!" ("Neighborhood Interpretations" 47; emphasis added). In a democracy, of course, the well-being of the nation depends upon the state of its citizens, and Fernandis points out that creating good (middle-class) citizens will uplift the country as a whole, again suggesting both environmental and Lamarckian genetic solutions to the nation's social problems. She also, like Williams, references the interracial cooperation that is essential to and a product of the settlement, with settlement reformers participating in cooperative "conferences [that] have come about most naturally and have been remarkably free from race consciousness; the one

[60] Williams's argument also hints at occasional contemporary arguments that racial mixing will actually improve and "strengthen" the races (as hybrids are often stronger than purebreds). See Newman's discussion of Ward (49) and Nickel's discussion of Pauline Hopkins in Cuddy and Roche.

thought on both sides being the common welfare" ("In the Making" 705). Barrett, too, ends her essay by stressing the importance of interracial support and broad communal gain: "With the world-wide awakening of the sense of duty to the man farthest down, conditions must grow better; but there can be no permanent improvement until we learn to move together. The white, the black, the rich, the poor, must work for the end sought" (518). These writers, then, extend the settlement concept of mutual benefit to include interracial, not just cross-class contact, and as they make arguments that situate their work at the center of social welfare reform efforts, they argue implicitly and explicitly that work by and for African Americans in the settlement movement will uplift white society, not just the black Americans who are the supposed targets of settlement institutions.

Conclusion

The works of Fannie Barrier Williams, Anna Julia Cooper, Sarah Collins Fernandis, and Janie Porter Barrett offer scholars an opportunity to rethink women's involvement in the settlement movement and in Progressive-Era reform work generally and to revise our conception of racial uplift as well. Though all four women had to contend with the persona of Jane Addams and the reform work she modeled, they also offer significant revisions of that model in calling for settlements aimed at African Americans, and they serve as alternative models since they are themselves members of a nondominant culture. Their texts also counter the notion that social difference is due to genetic heritage rather than environmental factors, sometimes boldly defying the Spencerian ideology of Social Darwinism and other times using the discourse of civilizing the nation to promote their own significance as black women to the future of the nation. African American settlement literature deserves a place in the

study of uplift literature, since many black colleges, clubs, churches, and social workers saw settlement houses as key vehicles in the development of a black middle class. Their writings, influenced by the settlement concept of mutuality, also demand a revision of the notion of the settlement since these authors—Williams most explicitly—assert that settlements aid in the uplift of whites as well as blacks.

Chapter Three

College, Community, Christ, and Contemplation: The Settlement Novels of Margaret Pollock Sherwood, Vida Dutton Scudder, and Florence Converse

Introduction

In an essay on democracy published in the Atlantic Monthly in 1902, Vida Dutton Scudder addresses "A Hidden Weakness in Our Society."[61] That weakness, for Scudder, is the lack of mutual understanding between social classes under capitalism. Opening her essay with the claim that "[f]aith in democracy has always required a great deal of idealism," she discusses the "social experiment" of democracy and asserts, "If we face homeward, remembering the radiant ideal entertained by our forefathers, of a country that should offer to all its sons one heritage of spiritual opportunity, we are forced to confess that the spectacle disappoints" (638). It disappoints, she explains, because the nation suffers from "intellectual and moral disunion," the "dark-winged spirits of discord" that mark "[r]acial hostility," "religious antipathy," and "class antagonism" (639). Scudder finds this at odds with the country's supposed dedication to "the creation of a universal fellowship," but she does not despair that the problem will persist; in the true Progressive spirit, she writes, "No true American, however, will accept the disappointment as final. When all is said, our air is buoyant and good to breathe" (639, 638). Scudder's solution is for employers and workers to put themselves in the others' shoes and facilitate "the transference of each moral ideal to the mind inhabited by the other" (644). Her essay reflects the anxieties that Jane Addams cited in her need for settlement work—social disharmony resulting from the physical, intellectual,

[61] This was the first in a series of essays on democracy that Scudder published in the journal that year; others were "Democracy and Education" (June), "Democracy and Society" (September), and "Democracy and the Church" (October).

and spiritual separation of peoples from each other—and Scudder further develops those themes in her settlement novel, A Listener in Babel, published the next year. She and her peers in this chapter offer fictional interrogations of how to ameliorate social discord at the turn of the twentieth century, featuring female protagonists acting in nontraditional ways to reform their communities.

Despite Addams's preeminence in the settlement movement, she was not the only reformer inspired by the Toynbee Hall experiment in London. During the 1880s, as Addams was formulating her own settlement scheme, Scudder, a Smith College graduate, also took inspiration from the Toynbee example and helped to establish the College Settlement Association (CSA) in the northeastern U.S. The CSA founded the Rivington Street Settlement in New York in 1889—two weeks before Hull-House opened—and Denison House in Boston in 1891 (Frederick 419; Maglin 17). A professor of literature at Wellesley, Scudder is perhaps best known for her literary criticism and her writings on and practice of Christian Socialism, an ideology that held that socialism was the logical end of Christ's teachings to care for one another.[62] Somewhat less well known is her involvement in settlement work, and her settlement novel, A Listener in Babel (1903), is virtually unknown to literary critics today, though for its insight into Progressive-Era reform discourse and its revision of the marriage plot it deserves scholarly attention. Scudder's novel is one of several turn-of-the-twentieth-century explorations of the settlement movement written by female members of a scholarly and reform community with ties to Wellesley College. As I explore three settlement novels written by members of this community,— An Experiment in Altruism (1895), written by Scudder's colleague Margaret Pollock Sherwood; A Listener in

[62] For a fuller discussion of Scudder's involvement in Christian Socialism, see Scudder's autobiography, On Journey (1937).

Babel (1903), by Scudder; and The Children of Light (1912), written by Scudder's former student and eventual companion, Florence Converse—I argue that these writers' narratives demonstrate a greater investment in community than does Twenty Years, but that even as they offer revisions to the traditional marriage plot, their texts, like Addams's, ultimately rely on white, female savior figures to effect social change.

Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse offer interesting contrasts to Addams's vision of social change through settlement work. First, though Addams was the central figure in the settlement movement, none of the novels in this chapter refers directly to her; that is, the writers are, for the most part, able to explore the settlement movement outside of Addams's shadow.[63] Scudder and her colleagues in the northeast were Addams's contemporaries—not her successors—in settlement work, and as white, middle- and upper-class, college-educated women, they held social standing as reformers; thus, this group of Boston writer-reformers was able to write about settlements from their own experiences without needing to defer to Addams to lend authority to their texts. A second contrast to the Hull-House founder and her work is that, whereas Twenty Years serves as a nonfiction memoir intended to "set straight" the public record of Addams's work and to serve as an example for other reformers, these novels are all fictional considerations of various reform tactics—of which settlement houses are a prominent, but not always dominant, example. These three early literary reflections on the settlement movement by Scudder, Sherwood, and Converse are all coming-of-age/ quest novels featuring young, reform-minded characters who are embarking on searches for the best way to transform society—and themselves. Each novel offers a vehicle through which its author can examine various reform methods. As the novels' characters debate, reject, and ultimately select approaches to social change, each writer implicitly endorses a reform

[63] For settlement novels that do mention Addams, see chapter four.

ideology, much in the way that Addams does in her memoir. However, the members of this Boston-based group offer a foil to Addams through their use of fiction to negotiate reform questions, as well as their more overt depictions of reform communities and their celebration of spirituality through endorsements of the Social Gospel movement and Christian Socialism. Despite a pervasive textual emphasis on community, however, each novel ends with a vision of the future that depends on its young, white, middle-class, female protagonist to enact—leaving readers with the suggestion that such a heroine will correct the ills of industrialism.

None of these novels has been reprinted since the early twentieth century; the three writer-reformers are obscure even to literary critics and social historians other than those who specialize in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Boston. Thus far, these three works have received little scholarly attention, though two recent articles do discuss Scudder and her work. Julia Garbus's 2002 article in College Composition and Communication, "Service-Learning, 1902," mentions Listener, but Garbus, a composition scholar, focuses primarily on Scudder's pedagogy, which combined instruction in literature with service work at the settlement. A slightly more thorough examination of Listener (as well as Converse's Children of Light) can be found in Susan Hill Lindley's "Gender and the Social Gospel Novel," but the article's main purpose is to provide readers with an overview of the Social Gospel novel, and Lindley's field of expertise is religion, not literature. Sherwood's An Experiment in Altruism had been lost to twenty-first-century literary scholars until its recent archival discovery by Sharon M. Harris. And though Converse published several Social Gospel novels,[64] she and her work have largely been lost to the twenty-first century, except for an occasional reference to her as Vida Scudder's companion. But Scudder, Sherwood, and Converse, both through their participation in Progressive-Era social reform and their literary contributions to the

[64] See Lindley.

period, offer complex, self-conscious interrogations of turn-of-the-century urban reform. Their contributions to settlement literature demonstrate the extreme self-consciousness of the reform movement, and an understanding of such texts reveals more fully the philosophies and struggles of Progressive-Era activism. An examination of these three female writer-activists and their community will reveal the interworkings of religion, gender, and reform in novels spawned by the settlement movement in the northeastern U.S. at the turn of the twentieth century. I argue that, in contrast to Addams, the writers offer a more spiritually based version of settlement activism as well as a greater emphasis on reform communities, but that their reform visions retain the ideal of a white, middle- or upper-class, female savior figure. This well-intentioned, self-reflective working out of settlement and other reform ideologies offers a picture of Progressive-Era radicalism and its simultaneous ethnocentrism and classism, and it helps expose a history of white-middle-class-woman-led radicalism that often excludes even as it proposes to help.

"Adamless Eden": The Wellesley Community of the Progressive Era

During the Progressive Era, Wellesley College was home to a tight-knit community of female scholars and reformers. Scudder and Sherwood both taught English literature at the college; Converse was a Wellesley alumna and historian of the college who became Scudder's longtime companion and eventual domestic partner.[65] Other members of the faculty included partners Katharine Lee Bates[66] (English Department) and Katharine Coman (Economics Department), as well as Sherwood's companion, Martha Hale Shackford (English Department). According to Patricia Ann Palmieri, author of Adamless Eden, a

[65] Converse's Story of Wellesley (1915) serves as an insightful history of the college from this period.
[66] Bates is best known as author of "America the Beautiful" (Palmieri xiii).

recent history of the Progressive-Era Wellesley scholarly community, such coupling was common among the female faculty at the time. In fact, these Boston-marriage arrangements were so prevalent at the school at the turn of the century that the term "Wellesley marriage" was coined to describe them (Palmieri xv).

Unions such as these were part of a greater phenomenon of female community-building fostered by women's colleges in general but especially by Wellesley. The school was founded with the intention of relying on female professors and administrators and thus became a particular haven for women intellectuals at the time (Palmieri 7).[67] From the beginning, Wellesley was envisioned, by its founders as well as its faculty and students, as a means of transforming an inequitable and degenerating U.S. society. Founder Henry Durant hoped the school would be "a hothouse of experimentation, a veritable testing ground for the latest schemes to transform women socially and physically" through educational, dietary, and dress reforms (Palmieri 10). The scholars employed by Durant were invested in academic exploration not only for philosophical ends, but also as part of a quest for social reform. In fact, the faculty's radicalism soon outstripped that of Durant, and the 1870's were marked by conflict between the faculty and students on the one hand, and the more morally conservative Durant and his hand-selected president of the school, Ada Howard, on the other. This tension was eventually resolved to a degree by the hiring of Alice Freeman, a young and vibrant graduate of the University of Michigan who eventually replaced Howard as college president in 1881. Under Freeman, faculty members and students enjoyed more personal and scholarly freedoms and fewer prescriptions regarding submissive, "womanly" behavior. And during Freeman's tenure and that of her successor, the school moved towards the status of a liberal

[67] This was truly a "progressive era" for Wellesley, in contrast to the more conservative atmosphere of the 1950s that was recently depicted in the novel and movie Mona Lisa Smile (2003).

arts college and away from the moral regulations more typical of a seminary (Palmieri 15-18).

Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, many of the faculty members, including Vida Scudder (who joined the college in the early 1880s), continued to undertake scholarly investigation with the goal of addressing questions of social concern. Scudder combined an interest in Christian Socialism with her knowledge of British literature to develop a personal philosophy of reform; she believed that social settlements might provide one means of improving the lot of the urban poor in the U.S. At an 1892 conference attended by Addams and William James, among others, Scudder argued that the settlement workers' primary goal was to effect social betterment rather than to professionalize the field of social work; they sought "not improvement in method but regeneration in life[,] and for such regeneration settlements stand" (qtd. in Corcoran 5).[68] A co-founder of the College Settlement Association based in the northeastern U.S., Scudder facilitated a close relationship between the settlement movement and Wellesley College (Garbus 552). This interplay between intellectual endeavor, spirituality, and social reform work—especially as part of a community—is unmistakably reflected in the settlement novels of Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse and is clearly derived from the authors' own experiences as part of such a group. For Scudder and her colleagues, Christianity provided the impetus for social reform; it was Christian concern for one's "neighbor" that would help to regenerate society—spiritually and otherwise—and settlements were one way to care for those neighbors.

[68] As I argue later in the chapter, however, Scudder's novel reveals that she is, in fact, interested in the methods of reform, though not to the extent of ignoring the needs of actual people, as she demonstrates here.

Christianity and Social Reform

In the late nineteenth century, as industrialism grew and social ills multiplied, especially in urban areas, some American and British Christians (mostly Protestants) formulated a religious and social philosophy alternately termed the Social Gospel, Social Christianity, or Christian Socialism.[69] Simply put, proponents of the Social Gospel sought to "apply Christian principles, on a broad front, to social relationships" (Phillips xvii). Thus, Social Christians (or Social Gospelers or Christian Socialists) believed that they had a moral and spiritual obligation to promote social justice as Christ preached in the Gospels. Mina Carson attributes the popularity of the growing Social Gospel movement at the end of the nineteenth century to a variety of factors, including a backlash against the religious and biological determinism of John Calvin and Herbert Spencer, respectively (12-13). That is, social gospel proponents recognized the reality and pervasiveness of human suffering, but rather than attributing it to spiritual and/ or natural law, they viewed it as evidence of a fallen world and argued for a reconsideration of Christ's message as revealed in the Gospels of the New Testament. Specifically, they claimed that social ills were due not to individual sins but to social ones, and following Christ necessarily—inherently—meant that one ought to be committed to furthering social and economic justice for the human race, uniting sociology and social work with Christian theology.

Many settlement workers and writers, including Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse, continually argue for the need to help "the least of these," a phrase taken from the parable of

[69] Though "Social Christianity" and "Social Gospel" are interchangeable terms, "Christian Socialism" usually refers to a stronger affiliation with the political ideals of socialism as it is commonly understood (though the emphasis on spiritual—rather than strictly economic or political—bases of social relationships ordinarily prevails). See Phillips's Introduction for more on terminology. For a thorough discussion of the relationship between Christianity and social reform during the Progressive Era, see Edwards and Gifford's Introduction; Phillips.

the sheep and the goats in the gospel of Matthew, in which Jesus explains to his followers that God will judge a person's righteousness based on what s/he did for the neediest members of society. [70] Of course, as Twenty Years's "Tolstoy" chapter reveals, Jane Addams was concerned with matters of spirituality as well, but her memoir does not carry the spiritual focus that the novels of Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse do. These writers are invested in exploring the connections between Christian faith, reform work, and intellectual and spiritual communities. In contrast to an individual's Christian salvation from eternal damnation, the writers explore the potential for a kind of temporal salvation—both personal and social—that is achieved through walking a spiritual path to the betterment of one's society. Their characters labor and discuss and question as parts of groups, they work out their philosophies among other searchers, and they also affirm, to a large degree, that their work has as its basis a spiritual mandate to care for "the least of these." Through their presentations of collective

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[70] *Matthew 25: 31-46:*

[31]"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. [32]All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. [33]He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

[34]"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. [35]For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, [36]I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

[37]"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? [38]When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? [39]When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

[40]"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

[41]"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. [42]For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, [43]I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

[44]"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

[45]"He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

[46]"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (NIV)

reform work and their self-conscious interrogation of that reform, the novels of Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse express Progressive-Era hopefulness about the possibility of remedying society's ills.

Explorations of Reform

Despite their differences, the three settlement novels discussed in this chapter are primarily concerned with exploring and therefore affecting (and, to varying degrees, effecting) social change. Sherwood's novel is meant to spark thoughtful debate that eventually leads to active reform (though not a reform based in a particular ideology), while Scudder and Converse are more explicitly interested in proposing specific solutions to the questions they ask. But in each novel the questions proposed, rather than any answers, are the key focus. All three authors spend the majority of their texts representing and engaging in the social debates of the Progressive Era. This narrative path allows for a thorough consideration of many different approaches to reform, from socialism to charity to religion to political action to settlement work. As university-educated, reform-minded, contemplative women, the authors are interested in considering all reform options and in detailing the process of arriving at potential social solutions.

Especially important to each novel is the working out of reform questions through community, whether that community is comprised of friends, family members, fellow college alumnae, or settlement workers. Twenty Years at Hull-House, despite its author's representation of the importance of connections between people, ideas, and historical time periods, focuses on Addams herself as a model figure. As I argue in chapter one, Addams presents a persona of a woman who seized upon the example of the "self-made" men before

her and created a reform revolution largely through her own inventiveness and determination. While Addams, too, is heavily invested in exploring the philosophy of reform, and while she certainly established a physical and symbolic community in Hull-House itself, her narrative does not emphasize a community of reformers that is shared by the novels of Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse. Addams's Twenty Years, ironically, devalues community in its privileging of Jane Addams, Heroine. The three Boston-based authors, on the other hand, situate their characters among other women and men so that the protagonists may work out their salvation—and the salvation of their society—through conversation, contemplation, and the trial and error of communal reform work. As each of the three protagonists explores the best means of reform, she and the other characters in the novels use each other as sounding boards in their discussions of reform philosophy and efficacy. Within the context of these communities, the characters reveal the impact of faith, gender, and race in concerted reform work, and their texts show the authors to be less cautious than Addams in affiliating themselves with particular ideologies.

Experiment in Altruism

One of the earliest settlement novels, Sherwood's An Experiment in Altruism was published in 1895, a mere six years after the first social settlements appeared in the U.S.[71] Recently recovered by Sharon Harris, the text was widely praised at the time of its publication. The novel is cast as an allegory and features main characters who are, to varying degrees, concerned with the "experiment" of repairing the rifts—religious, scientific, financial, and social—in their urban world. Though the text explores the institution of the social settlement, it does not focus exclusively on settlement work; rather, it broadly engages

[71] I have not found a settlement novel that precedes Experiment.

the question of how to reform society. Experiment features several characters, almost all of whom are referred to by a title or descriptor and not by name. Each of these characters (e.g., the Doctor, the Altruist, the Lad), approaches the social problems of the day differently and each takes a different tack in arguing for (or against) reform. The unnamed female narrator of the novel interrogates both the causes of and the potential solutions to poverty and degradation in the city, exposing the complexities in debates about the roles of religion, science, and economics in addressing urban ills. Sherwood gently satirizes settlement workers, proponents of the Social Gospel, judgmental philanthropists, socialists, and other reformers, as well as agnostics/ doubters and those who claim not to be concerned with alleviating others' suffering. The text demonstrates problems with philanthropy, but it does not undermine the possibility of reform. It ends with a somewhat uneasy faith in (a) God, and it argues that the most important approach to Progressive-Era life is to act—without losing oneself in over-analysis or despair. Ultimately, the author offers a text that endorses social, spiritual, and scientific approaches to societal regeneration, even as it questions them.

Experiment opens with a debate about the wisdom and efficacy of settlement work. The first chapter features a conversation among the narrator and two of her acquaintances concerning whether the settlement endeavor is quixotic or effective, revealing in 1895 an early fictional consideration of the movement and a general interest in reform questions. The novel's narrator, a thirty-nine-year-old single woman, has recently been freed from rural family obligations and has moved to the city "to render humanity the service [she] had always wanted to give": to work on behalf of an unnamed "Cause" (6).[72] A stranger to city life, she has joined with like-minded reformers who "were all devising ways and means to correct the misdeeds of man and of God" (7). The narrator is stimulated by the intellectual

[72] The novel is apparently set in New York City, though the metropolis is never named.

fellowship she finds among her new community of fellow activists, remarking that "[i]f it had not been for the Cause, [she] should have been very lonely" (8). Fortunately, however, the Cause has acquainted her with the Doctor (a pragmatic woman), the Altruist (a proponent of settlement reform), and Janet (the Altruist's cousin and a genteel agnostic), as well as the Lad and other characters from the narrator's boarding house, all of whom form the nexus of the reform community in Experiment. The narrator's new community is one born of urbanization, since the characters are drawn together in ways similar to but not wholly typical of rural life. The Altruist and Janet are cousins, but theirs is the only family tie in the group; the narrator, the Lad, and the Man of the World are neighbors, but those of a transient, boarding-house type rather than the longstanding communal bond fostered by life in a small town. Thus, the characters are bound to one another by a mix of physical proximity and mutual interest in social and philosophical questions, representing a kind of community unique to urban centers.

In Chapter I, the narrator, the Doctor, and the doubting Janet argue the efficacy of settlement work in effecting social change among the city's poorer residents. As Janet bemoans her own inability to exercise faith in social progress or moral betterment (i.e., the Social Gospel), the self-assured Doctor offers a voice of pragmatism. The Doctor criticizes the brand-new settlement endeavor as one that is "too supercilious" and that "patronize[s] humanity" as well as "the Creator" (2-3). She claims, "The whole thing is artificial . . . . Your cousin goes to live in a tenement, tries to become intimate with its inhabitants, and carries up his own coal. He could never realize that it would be just as lofty a course of action to carry coal in his own house in Endicott Square, and to become intimate with his barber" (3). The Doctor, then, voices the concern that settlements are contrived to keep the middle- and upper-

class reformers busy rather than to foster genuine understanding between the classes or to provide actual help to those who need it. Such a criticism not only betrays a contemporary indictment of the settlement project, it also foreshadows the central concerns of the novel itself: how does one practice faith in light of so many social problems, and if reform is possible, what is the best means of effecting it? Experiment uses various characters and their interactions to pose and examine—though not clearly to answer—these questions, and the narrator's gently ironic observations allow the author to vocalize subtle criticisms of those engaged in social reform.

The narrator introduces the reader to the settlement project first through the efforts of the Altruist, describing him thus:

> The Altruist was terribly in earnest. He considered our social system all wrong, and he wrote and lectured and preached about it constantly.
>
> He lived in one of the city slums. The morning after my arrival I went down to the East End to ask him about his work. I had heard much about him. He had left a home of great beauty to go to that sin-stricken corner of the city, and the fame of his sacrifice had spread abroad. I found him nailing a board to the steps of the tenement-house where he lived. He greeted me cordially, holding out a small, shapely right hand in welcome. (9)

Sherwood's descriptions of the Altruist and the Doctor's criticisms of his work offer insight into the debates over the incipient settlement movement. The Altruist's "small, shapely right hand" suggests a physical weakness and even degeneracy that was, at the time, often attributed to the upper classes. Under decadent theory, due to their extended removal from physical labor, the upper classes had lost the vigor that remained to the working classes; for

Addams and other reformers, settlement work was one way to reconnect the middle and upper classes with that "active life" indicated in this passage by the Altruist's manual repair of his tenement's stairs. For the Doctor, however, such work is artificial; the Altruist would have more of an impact working for change in the social sphere in which he was raised. In just a few pages, Sherwood identifies both the justification for and the major criticism of settlement work, showing an early critical understanding of the movement. This critical reflection, especially when coupled with other settlement novels as well as Twenty Years at Hull-House itself, demonstrates that Progressive-Era settlement work was nothing if not self-conscious.

In her introduction of the Altruist through the narrator's eyes, Sherwood also reveals another key question in Progressive-Era reform work: to what extent does "sin" affect one's living conditions, particularly in the "sin-stricken corner of the city"? Of course, Spencerian Social Darwinism suggested that each person was responsible for his or her own social status; personal poverty was a result of personal weakness (e.g., drunkenness, sexual immorality, sloth). Some Christians, including members of the clergy, also attributed poor economic and social status to personal failings, or "sins," that departed from the Protestant work ethic. The Altruist partly subscribes to such a theory, but his words to the narrator also reveal that he has a more complex view of the relationship between sin and poverty:

> I have come down here because I have seen great misery,---misery of poverty, misery of sin. I have cast in my lot with the victims of our civilization. The awful condition of these people is the result not only of their transgression of the laws of God, but also of our transgression of the law of Christ. Our whole social and industrial systems are built upon the law of

> competition, the law of beasts, by which the greedier and stronger snatch the portion of the weak. (12)

For the Altruist (and others who followed Social Gospel theology), then, the collective social "sin" of ignoring one's neighbor and his or her needs was as responsible for urban ills as were personal sins. The narrator gently mocks the Altruist's fervor, remarking that his actions in the slums are "full of the everlasting irony of zeal; the queer achievement mocked the great design" (11). In other words, the settlers' good intentions are undermined by their dubious successes. She continues to question the Altruist, remarking, "But . . . your being here does not bring these people bread." He concedes her point, yet claims, "[B]ut it brings a little beauty into their lives. I share the work of the residents at Barnet House.[73] We have clubs of all kinds. We have musicales and art exhibitions. There is much that is definite in our effort." Still, the narrator persists in wondering, "Isn't it like trying to feed a hungry lion with rose-leaves?" (13). Again, Sherwood exposes a common criticism of settlement work, the very question that Addams wrestled with in her Tolstoyism chapter,[74] that the settlement workers ridiculously offered cultural sustenance to a population whose basic material needs remained unmet.

Sherwood explores the "Settlement Idea" in more detail in Chapter IX. She introduces the movement to the reader somewhat acerbically, explaining that "[i]ts adherents maintained that the world had not yet seen any self-sacrifice so beautiful as this attempt to share the lives of the poor by living among them" (37). To investigate the scheme for herself, the narrator visits Barnet House, where a (male) resident explains the venture: "'A number of people who wish to help the poor find a house, put it into good sanitary condition, and go to

[73] The name Barnet House is likely an homage to Samuel Barnett, co-founder of London's Toynbee Hall (see Carson).
[74] See chapter one of this dissertation.

live there together, doing some independent work, and some work in common . . . . The Settlement Idea . . . is a station for philanthropic work, and also a centre for social investigation'" (38-39). When asked to explain the meaning of the term "social investigation," the resident laughs at his own "bookishness" and replies, "[S]ocial investigation means drains and foods and that kind of thing . . . [and] immorality and crime and amusements. Also wages and causes of popular discontent" (39-40). He light-heartedly describes the various projects undertaken by the residents, including religious service, social-scientific investigation, and literary endeavor, and he lists the opportunities offered by the settlement to benefit the neighborhood, such as "clubs,---literary, political and scientific"; art exhibits; lectures; baths; music; and social engagements (41). His paternalism is evident, however, in his condescending description of his neighbors' attire at settlement parties: "You ought to see the costumes that the East End can turn out. A Brand Street swell in his evening dress is a sight for gods and men" (41).

Like Jane Addams, however, the resident also shows himself able to poke fun at his own position and presumptuousness. In a manner that the narrator describes as demonstrating a great "sense of humour," the resident replies to her queries of what the groups discuss by saying, "Oh, we talk about dime museums and Tammany and the things that happen in the streets. That's when we are adapting ourselves to our guests. Then we show them pictures, and talk about high art and literature. That's when we are adapting our guests to us. It's immensely elevating for them, immensely, just to talk with us" (42). His ability to joke about the mutuality of the settlement endeavor demonstrates that he is aware of differences in social station as well as the elitism sometimes practiced by settlement workers. The resident, a recent Ph.D. in economics, turns serious when he details his aim to study economic

conditions in real life as opposed to reading about them in books, and he claims lately to have "become a Socialist" (42). After her conversation with the resident and her observation of some settlement activities, including the coming and going of a "Salvation Army captain," a "streetcar driver," a "washerwoman," and "a lady from Endicott Square, in a superb Parisian gown" (43-44), the narrator claims to have gained respect for the settlement endeavor: "I came away quite willing to allow any number of young men with Ph.D. degrees, and honest enthusiasm, and a saving sense of fun, to live in the slums" (45). Subsequently, the narrator also joins in the settlement work undertaken in a new settlement begun by young, college-educated women who "were all political economists of the school of Ruskin" endeavoring to alleviate cultural poverty (47). Despite her seemingly increasing admiration of settlement work and of the women's devotion to "the deliverance of the working-woman," however, the narrator maintains a slightly mocking attitude toward the project, remarking that some of the residents "were collecting statistics with the most engaging ignorance" (49-50). She notes her "feelings of mingled pride and amusement" at the inverted gender roles practiced by the male and female workers in their respective settlements: "These were strong and earnest young women, inspired by no wish for notoriety, but eager to help and to understand. Yet it was a queer world, where the maidens formed trades-unions, and young men were making tea. It was very good tea!" (50). Even as her investigations reveal a measure of sympathy with reform efforts, the narrator's almost universally mocking tone allows her to offer critiques of almost all efforts at social activism, even her own. In poking fun at various philanthropic works, she avoids endorsing any one particular reform ideology, yet her gentle tone also puts her beyond potential criticisms of shrewishness.

Despite the title's reference to the settlement worker character, An Experiment in Altruism does not focus its criticism solely on the social settlement movement. The narrator, the Doctor, and others also interact with and comment upon the works of anarchists, socialists, unionists, philanthropists, etc., and they do not reserve criticism of any of them. Early in her observations, the narrator remarks, "Something at last became real to me: that was the misery of the poor. It seemed sadder than anything else in the world, except the misery of their benefactors. I could hardly tell whether, in this great tragedy of poverty, it was actor or spectator who suffered most" (21). She continues,

> I saw on one side hunger, sin, ignorance, and they weighed down upon me like a nightmare . . . . On the other side, I saw brave attempts to help, that were yet half futile. There were charities, religious and secular; relief-giving societies, working into the hands of general organizations; there were settlements among the poor. But they all fought against frightful odds. The lot of many who were trying to help was to look and suffer, impotently. (21-22)

Published two years after the distressing economic depression of 1893,[75] the novel evokes the anguish of many social reformers during those desperate times. The narrator is tempted to lapse into despair, much as Addams reportedly did during the same era. The only factor that helps alleviate her feelings of sadness and impotence is the appearance of a new character, the Lad, a "positivist" scientist who chooses to practice a "gospel of action" rather than suffer a paralysis of over-analysis (179).

[75] In 1893, the U.S. suffered "the biggest economic crisis in the country's history" up to that point; approximately twenty percent of the workforce was unemployed (Zinn 277).

Though the novel does not feature a clear protagonist, Janet is the character who comes closest to filling that role. The narrator serves as an observer in the narrative, but it is Janet who undergoes a psychic transformation that is facilitated by her love for the Lad. Janet develops from self-centered and despairing agnostic (when unattached) to cautiously hopeful proponent of social action (when being courted by the Lad) to bravely resolute mourner (when the Lad dies unexpectedly) who eventually comes to a realization of the inevitability of faith and the necessity of social action. This transformation is aided by interactions among all the characters: the Doctor, a practical, nontraditional figure, who criticizes idealistic approaches to reform but shows genuine compassion for those who suffer; the Altruist, Janet's cousin, the idealistic and well-known reformer who is overly self-assured in his settlement work; and especially the Lad, a devoted scientist who does not worry about reform or philosophy, choosing to work rather than to question life beyond the immediacy of his own endeavors. Through his influence, Janet comes to realize and to enumerate to the narrator the importance of "'[a]ction, . . . determination toward good, even when we cannot understand the whole scheme of things,'" causing the narrator to note with amusement that the girl had "translated her lover's personality into ethics." Janet continues, "We keep asking questions . . . and thinking that there will be an answer. I suppose that God wishes us to answer our own questions in deeds and not words" (178).

The narrator, too, eventually learns the importance of action:

> The sound of much talking had grown fainter in my ears. Between our long discussions I had found time to stretch out my hands, and to help, in definite ways, a few of my fellow-beings. The touch of need brought strength to me, and clearer sight.

> The city no longer looked like a visionary background for a fantastic play. Janet and the Lad and my poor people had made it real to me. It was sacred now with human interest.
>
> I had learned to take refuge from abstract questions in the details of my work. It was impossible to speculate while entering the record of one day's proceedings, or making memoranda for the next. (196)

Like Addams, the narrator argues for the value of active activism rather than passive theorizing, since the former produces tangible results and lessens her self-absorption. But Experiment also shows, in its very exploration of various reform endeavors, that critical investigation is an integral part of Progressive-Era reform—as long as it eventually leads to reform work and not to social paralysis. Through the novel's representation of both primary and peripheral characters' self-centered and poorly planned attempts at social reform, Sherwood suggests that in arriving at a means of social change, it is more important to act than to give up out of despair over the inevitability of suffering. Ironically, Janet and the narrator arrive at such a conclusion only through discussion and observation as part of a group of seekers; it is the very act of questioning—and debating with their fellows—that leads the women to eschew questions for actions.

An Experiment in Altruism self-consciously interrogates questions of reform work in urban centers, but it addresses the issue of race—a crucial part of debates over degeneracy and social decline—only implicitly, occasionally suggesting references to the "human race" yet also suggesting eugenic ideology. The novel focuses on its white characters and their intellectual and moral dilemmas, with the city's immigrant population serving mostly as peripheral entities, shadow characters who serve as scenery in the text. When the narrative

does mention "race," it does so in broad terms. For instance, the Altruist claims, in a speech to the narrator justifying settlement work, that his actions (living in the East End), "'have inestimable value, not in our petty achievement, but as a declaration of the right of our fellow-man to our sympathy and love'" (13-14). The narrator paraphrases him: "The race fell short of its grandest possibilities, he said, in losing its hold on abstract truths. Devotion to an ideal was forgotten in the adjustment of human lives to one another, rather than to something above and beyond them" (14). The Altruist also suggests, when the narrator questions his claim that families could live in the slums and perform settlement work, "'Perhaps, in order to be free for this great work, it is the duty of the race to abstain for a generation from bringing children into the world,---for a generation or two'" (16). Ironically noting the reformer's impracticality, the narrator observes, "'That,' I assented mentally, as I rose to go, 'would certainly be effectual'" (16). In these examples, Sherwood and her characters seem to be referring to the "human race," since they mention no specific peoples, but as is the case with Jane Addams, the term is ambiguous. "Race" sometimes seems to refer to the human race and sometimes to the white race, merely assuming that readers share the author's (white) perspective. This is especially true of the latter example, where the Altruist's plan evokes eugenic programs, which necessarily imply Anglo-Saxonist perspectives of "race progress."

In other instances in the text, attitudes of paternalism and outright racism are more explicit. The narrator shows her paternalism in her references to the city's "foreign quarters," for which she claims a "morbid fascination" (22). In exoticized terms, she describes the "picturesqueness of the crowded streets, where women in gay head-dresses chatted," where "Russians, Italians, Germans, Jews, congregated" and "quaint children in old-world garments interested" her. Unable to see the immigrants as real people, the narrator instead describes

them in a manner suggesting that they are like characters or scenery from literature; she claims that the peoples "roused often a feeling of remembrance, as if I had known them somewhere, in book or picture" (22). The narrative reserves its most blatant prejudice, though, for the Chinese. In a passage disturbing for its casual, matter-of-course racism, the narrator describes entering "the Chinese quarter" hoping to save Polly, a transplanted Vermont farm girl, from a life on the streets. The narrator sets the scene in a stereotypical way: "The odour of incense floating from joss-houses, the fumes from opium joints, made us faint and sick. But we went on, searching through thin-walled, white-washed houses, and climbing narrow ladders to rooms . . . We heard the pattering feet of Chinamen, who swarmed around us like rats; we saw their sneering faces, and heard their chuckling laughter" (190). In her focus on Janet and her circle, Sherwood focuses on philosophical questions of social change, but such passages as those concerning immigrants demonstrate that she is unable to consider such questions beyond their implications for white, middle-class reformers. Though she has her characters express an adherence to ideas of fellowship and democracy, Sherwood cannot escape her own views of immigrant peoples as exotic, primitive, and even dangerous. Experiment celebrates Janet's change of heart, her growing faith, but it never recognizes the humanity of those peripheral figures the narrator claims to be interested in helping. Janet is implicitly posited, then, as a type of New Woman who will help regenerate the (white) race through her newfound commitment to hopeful action.

A Listener in Babel

Vida Scudder's A Listener in Babel (1903) similarly explores possible avenues of reform through the eyes of a female narrator, but in comparison to Sherwood's text,

Scudder's novel offers better-developed characters who arrive at more concrete solutions. Thus far, literary scholars have paid little attention to Listener or to the questions it raises about a young woman's quest to reform her society. At the time of its publication, as well as in the scant literary interest given to it since, Listener has been dismissed as a flawed text that is "more intent on the ideas than on plot or character," a "thinly veiled autobiographical account" that fails to replicate the intensity of the "animated discussions in which [the author] had been involved" in her own life (Corcoran 28-29). The only existing book-length critical exploration of Scudder was written by Teresa Corcoran, a historian who attempts to explore the three major aspects of Scudder's life: teaching, writing, and reform. But Corcoran's characterization of Scudder's writing as "more journalistic than belles-lettres," her complaint that "[t]he conversations [in Listener] do not become an integral part of the progress of the novel," and her assessment that "the characters . . . fail to develop" suggest—erroneously—that the novel has little literary merit (Preface 29-30). Though Corcoran does acknowledge that Listener, "[f]or all its faults, . . . is important for what it reveals of Vida Scudder as the emerging social critic" (30), her evaluation of the text echoes hundreds of years of critical dismissal of women's writings for not being "literary" enough. But as is the case with Experiment, the novel is important—as a literary text and a social document—because it offers a thorough investigation of Progressive-Era social problems as well as potential solutions, and its autobiographical bent lends insight into Scudder's own wrestlings with philosophical issues, offering a text akin to an early, fictionalized version of Addams's Twenty Years. As Sharon Harris has argued, "Recovery in and of itself holds little value"; what is significant about any recovered text is how it "force[s] us to rethink what we thought we knew about the nineteenth century" (604, 605). Scudder's novel, like the others discussed

in this chapter, reveals that Addams was certainly not the only American interested in the settlement project, and the texts also expose the interior and communal struggles present in Progressive-Era reformers: what they viewed as the major social problems in need of remedy, how they decided which reform approaches were most effective, and what conclusions they drew, if any, about their efforts. In fact, Scudder writes in her Foreword that the goal of her novel is to transcend action or plot in an attempt to represent "man thinking."[76] Scudder's hope is to represent "those matters which we falsely call impersonal,---with our relations to race, to nation, to spiritual realities, to the social whole." "May not art," she asks, "abandon the attempt at formal plot in quest of a wider suggestiveness? May it not at the same time, refusing to retreat on the abstract and completed, seek to present the stir and play of the inner life through scenes taken full size, as it were, from that larger drama of the common thought which involves us all?" (viii-ix). The novel, then, is a self-conscious examination of the factors at play in the social fabric: race, class, nation, spirit, and society; for Scudder, these elements are best explored through the interactions of a community, part of "that larger drama of the common thought" so important in the working out of an ideology. Scudder therefore presents protagonist and "listener," Hilda Lathrop, in a series of philosophical and practical conversations with other social thinkers and activists so that the author "may present, with a truthfulness possible in hardly any other way, certain phases in the experience of a modern seeker" (ix).

The main character of Listener is a restless but grounded young woman who wants to share in the common suffering (and joy) of humanity rather than focus self-centeredly on the individual, personal details of her own life. An artist, Hilda elects to live in the fictional

[76] This is a reference to Emerson's "Man Thinking" as delineated in his address "The American Scholar" (1837). Many intellectual connections exist between the antebellum American Transcendentalists and Progressive-Era proponents of settlement reform.

Boston social settlement of Langley House after college rather than accept a chair in art at her alma mater. Her journey is both spiritual and philosophical; a self-proclaimed "agnostic," she is searching for a spiritually fulfilling—yet practical—way to integrate her artistic giftedness with social betterment, much like British artists and socialists John Ruskin and William Morris. Like Scudder and other early settlement workers, Hilda envisions settlement work as a means to investigate and alter social relationships. In fact, the novel gains cachet through its relationship to what was, in the years just after the turn of the century, an increasingly popular movement. Several of Scudder's character and place names are significant for their evocation of actual people and events significant to the movement. For example, in a reference that simultaneously benefits from Addams's popularity and suggests the religious underpinnings of Hilda's settlement work, the head resident is named Miss Abbott. The name Abbott suggests both a reference to an "abbot," or head of a monastery (a comparison intensified when the protagonist visits an actual spiritual center later in the text), and also offers the only (albeit indefinite) allusion in these three novels to Jane Addams, the otherwise recognized Grande Dame of settlement work. Other significant names in the text include "Lincoln Street," on which Langley house is located,[77] and Hilda's surname of Lathrop, a nod to early Hull-House resident and Progressive-Era reformer Julia Lathrop.

A Listener in Babel, like An Experiment in Altruism, features a searching female protagonist who works out her reform ideals through conversations while she participates in reform work as part of a community. Hilda Lathrop depends on the characters she encounters in Boston, and particularly at the Langley House social settlement, to aid her in the development of a thoughtful approach to social betterment. The characters in Listener are not only important for the various reform perspectives they provide, they also serve as foils for

[77] See Chapter One for a discussion of Addams's valorization of Abraham Lincoln.

Hilda. Key to Hilda's development and the evolution of her approach to reform are Miss Abbott, the head resident; Miss Saltonstall, a conservative New England philanthropist who favors assimilation of the "worthy" foreigners into U.S. society (at cost of their home cultures); Philip Mervyn, a radical attorney; Dr. Wilkinson, a conservative clergyman who caters to the Boston elite while ignoring the spiritual needs of the underclass; Hilda's cousin Howard, a well-respected Boston capitalist; Father Phillips, the Anglican clergyman who demonstrates a concern for the poor; and Katie, the young Irish laundress with whom Hilda chooses to live at the end of the novel. This list of characters, though lengthy, is nevertheless partial; several other college women, clergypersons, and members of the working class likewise interact with Hilda and facilitate her social and spiritual growth. The characters are so numerous in—and their roles so important to—the text that Scudder includes a list of "Principal Speakers" (like a play's cast of characters) at the beginning of her text. Scudder's listing of "Principal Speakers" and their function in the text suggests that she sees the role of each character as more important than the character him/herself. In anticipation of criticisms like those of Corcoran, who laments the lack of character development in Listener, Scudder's character list establishes that the figures in the novel are meant to be representative of various types of reformers rather than finely drawn psychological portraits. (The novel does, however, strike a balance between type and character, especially in comparison to Sherwood's Experiment.) The list of characters also points out the nature of a settlement house as a place where many people congregate—so many, in fact, that a guide is furnished to help the reader keep track of them all.

Throughout the novel, the settlement house repeatedly functions as a site of debate amongst these characters. Like Sherwood's Janet, though, Hilda ends her intense period of

questioning with a resolution to participate (even more) actively in promoting social progress. After consulting socialists, journalists, fellow settlement workers, elite clergymen, upper-class philanthropists, and top-level capitalists, she undergoes a spiritual transformation at an Anglican abbey to which she has retreated for a short time of self-examination. Rather than join an Anglican sisterhood or remain at the settlement, however, Hilda ultimately chooses to unite her art and her politics by entering into a cross-class, almost familial, living arrangement with two working-class women. She plans to observe and labor at factory trades in an effort to discover "what adjustments would be necessary to make them educational, and delightful to the worker, and in what way the creative art impulse could be fostered in them" (317).

The various characters and their opinions provide a foil for Hilda and the path she chooses, and they help her to refine her views as she develops her own approach to social change. Scudder contrasts her main character with single and married women and men, with characters from diverse economic, political, and religious affiliations. Through her encounters with countless characters whose paths and choices differ from hers, Scudder suggests that many options are open to Hilda but that she is responsible for selecting one that accurately reflects her personal, social, and spiritual convictions, many of which are in process throughout the course of the novel.

Of course, as Hilda resides at Langley House, one of the most prominent means of reform is the social settlement itself, but Scudder—even though she herself was invested in settlement work—does not hold the institution above interrogation nor ultimately proffer it as the best means of reform. Various characters in Listener (including some of its own residents) criticize the settlement project as ineffective. A nonresident character faults the

institution for being "as snobbish as it is artificial" in working "against the natural tastes of the populace" (129). One resident bemoans the difficulty of offering cultural services in the midst of material want; echoing the questions of Addams and of Scudder's narrator, she claims, "they want work,---and we give them lectures on Hegel, or invite them to amateur dramatics" (130). Scudder reveals through her characters that she is conscious of, and sensitive to, the criticisms of social settlements. Janet Frothingham, also a resident of Langley House, complains that settlement work mollifies the working classes and therefore delays the coming socialist revolution:

> Every time that we teach a working-woman to make her wages or her husband's go a little farther we set in motion a force of suction which tends to lower the universal wage. Every time we give one of these boys moral and industrial training, make him quick, competent, virtuous, we are teaching him to rise to success upon the necks of his fellows, pushed lower than they were. Could all women be trained to live on less, could all men be raised to a higher point of economic efficiency, the grudging sum which the world allows them for a livelihood would sink in proportion, and the process of demoralization be repeated. So much for sentimental philanthropy! (135)

Janet, though she is certainly more radical than many of the other characters, is taken seriously in the text, and her views are therefore given consideration by Hilda. Despite such criticisms of settlement work, the text acknowledges the key role the settlement has played in shaping Hilda's choices; when she chooses to leave Langley House in favor of a private but cooperative residence at the end of the text, she tells the head resident that she values the institution as one that "revealed us all to ourselves . . . a kind of watch-tower from which one

sees the pathways leading to the Land of Hope" (319). The settlement, that is, functions as a sight of investigation and preparation for reformers. But true to the brand of socialism Scudder admired and taught in the context of British literature—a socialism rooted in Christian faith and Ruskinian artisanship—Hilda ultimately arrives at a solution that combines her artistic gifts with opportunities to effect social change. Her proposal to live with two working-class women and to labor at factory work with an eye towards its eventual improvement allows her to mix the settlement ideal of cross-class community with a more practical, and perhaps more authentic, version of personal activism than that of the institutional variety. Hilda's plan echoes Tolstoy's criticism of Addams, that the Hull-House resident's work was too far removed from, yet too dependent upon, working people. Whereas Addams claims that pragmatics takes precedence over philosophy, Scudder's Hilda advocates a more idealistic—and personally authentic—view of social reform.

True to the remarks in her Foreword, Scudder's characters discuss several key factors that affect social relationships. One of those factors, "spiritual realities," is key to the novel and its message of hope. Like Janet in Sherwood's Experiment, Hilda begins the text as an agnostic, feeling a "religious sadness, and agnosticism which [she] could not escape" (13). Nevertheless, she is drawn to religious imagery and art and manifests a longing for spiritual kinship; "it seemed to her in brooding hours that all which men had suffered and achieved from the dawn of history was gathered within her spirit" (8-9). Hilda admires St. Francis for his work on behalf of his less fortunate fellows, and she makes a pilgrimage to his hometown of Assisi, "communing with her own mind alone, and with the spirit of men long vanished" (23). It is in Assisi that she makes the decision to live at the settlement rather than take a position to teach art at her alma mater, though the text makes it clear that Hilda's agnosticism

makes it "all but impossible" to recognize or admit that "her decision to live among the poor was affected by Christian motives" (41). Her religious mother laments her daughter's "lack of faith," but Hilda retorts, "'If I am ever to find it, . . . it will be . . . by serving the democracy which is trying to translate the will of Christ into the terms of social life" (42). From the beginning of her quest, then, she allies social service with a spiritual imperative to help the downtrodden, as modeled by Christ and St. Francis.

As is evidenced in Listener, which critics agree is "partly autobiographical" (Lindley 190), Scudder valued spiritual seeking as part of a community. She herself was a member of the Society for the Companions of the Holy Cross, an Episcopalian women's religious society founded to promote "spiritual companionship" (Scudder, Foreword); this spiritual community is reflected in various parts of the text. For example, it is only through her interactions with others that Hilda is able to clarify her beliefs. Troubled by the disparity she sees between Christianity as preached by Christ and as practiced by those around her, she bemoans her wealthy cousin Howard's view that "Christ became uncomfortable that we might be comfortable" (43). Instead, Hilda views true Christianity as inherently democratic and classless, and her faith, at the beginning of the text, lies in democracy above all else. She tells her mother, "Democracy . . . inspires me with unspeakable loyalty. It is cleanly, wholesome, invigorating, and unfulfilled" (44). The settlement, for Hilda, is a chance to practice the social democracy advocated by Addams and other settlement workers, since she will be living and working among many people from all classes of society.

As Hilda moves to the settlement and encounters various views of social reform, she seeks input from religious and spiritual figures at the settlement and in her Boston community. One of the most significant exchanges concerning the role of Christianity and

social reform occurs when Hilda visits the esteemed pastor of "The First Church" of Boston, Rev. Dr. Wilkinson. The reverend wonders whether the settlements can actually be effective in "uplifting many of those degraded people" or "bringing souls to Christ." Hilda responds, "I sometimes think Christ would find himself more at home with 'those degraded people' than with us," again emphasizing the disparity between professed Christianity and Christ-like concern for the downtrodden (143). Dr. Wilkinson believes that settlement work is a waste, since "[o]nly by spiritual regeneration can poor sin-stained humanity be uplifted." To him, "modern methods simply multiply agencies for cleansing the outside of the cup and platter" rather than the soul (144). He attributes poverty to "[d]runkenness and thriftlessness" that will only be remedied by a "change of heart" (145), and claims that the "classes of privilege, so-called . . . are where they are through honesty, energy, and intelligence," offering a warped sense of the Protestant ethic and Spencerian ideology (147). Regeneration, to the pastor, requires a religious, moral change that will inspire the previously degenerate poor to improve their lives. But to Hilda, such a view runs counter to the message of the Gospels: "When Christ found people hungry," she points out, "whether the fault was theirs or not, he fed them first and preached to them afterward" (148). Her exchange with the pastor leaves Hilda frustrated with religion, particularly when she attempts to find solace in a church, only to find the door "severely locked, as behooved a Puritan edifice" (155). Nevertheless, Hilda finds her way to an Anglican church, where she muses on the possible outcomes if "Christ came into this church" (157).[78] Concluding that Jesus, with his lack of fancy clothing and his "workman's hands," would be ostracized by the upper-class women of the church, she cries, "What refuge from the Church,---save Christ Himself? . . . Come and save us from Thy

[78] This evokes the title of a Social Gospel report by W. T. Stead, If Christ Came to Chicago! (1894), which called for social reform based on Christ's commandments in the Gospels. See Phillips for more on Stead.

Church, O Carpenter of Nazareth!" (157). The narrator notes that despite "turning in scorn and loathing from organized Christianity, [Hilda's spirit] found itself suddenly at rest in a holy presence" (157), setting up a distinction between "religious" churchgoers and true followers of Christ.

Though her visit with Dr. Wilkinson has left her with distrust for organized religion, and though she is loath to ally herself fully with an ideology, Hilda travels through the narrative haunted by a "flitting dream" that "had at times visited her of [social] salvation to be wrought through the Church" (212). However, her "Christian sentiment" has "no basis in Christian conviction" (214); that is, though drawn to the teachings of Christianity, she lacks a personal faith. Through her interactions with various figures in the narrative, however, she eventually undergoes a spiritual and moral transformation at an Anglican abbey. Mildred Ellis, a devoted Christian and fellow resident at Langley House, suggests that she retreat to the abbey for reflection when Hilda is experiencing deep despair over her inability to cure the oppression she witnesses in the city. The spiritual journey that Hilda traverses throughout the narrative is always undertaken as part of a community; it is not an individual effort. She defines her faith in part against the foil of Dr. Wilkinson, and her conversations with Mildred and others help her to clarify her own beliefs. It is also significant that her eventual spiritual conversion is facilitated by the other congregants and clergy at the abbey, who, like the protagonist, have gathered for a silent retreat to pray for social justice in the temporal realm. As she encounters the sincere faith and compassion of the Anglican Father Phillips at the abbey, Hilda experiences a "Church [that] through these days had seemed indeed the representative of a humanity redeemed and liberated, claiming once more for all men a harmony with the whole" (246). In Listener, then, true Christianity is truly democratic,

rejecting class difference, embracing and uniting "all men," and bringing them "into the democracy that is in Christ" (247).[79] For Hilda, what sets Father Phillips's brand of Anglican Christianity apart from that of the staid churches of Boston is the priest's concern for the underclasses of society.

Despite her personal spiritual renewal, Hilda continues to resist Christianity as a faith, telling Father Phillips, "I am no Christian. Christianity, to me, is a mythology" (250). Eventually, the priest and Hilda echo Emerson in agreeing that faith is found through fellowship with like-minded people, whether "[t]hose who are visibly here in the flesh" or "a greater company, free from time or from decay. The prophets of love and freedom in every age . . . from Isaiah to St. Francis, from Sir Thomas More to Mazzini" (253-54). Hilda expresses a hope for a "Church invisible, the mother of the oppressed, the protector of the poor, the home of redeeming love" (254). This wish accords with the Anglican Father Phillips's Social Gospel belief that "in the unseen, no impulse of compassion, no cry of the heart for justice, is ever lost. The prayers of the ages, slowly gathering, liberate a mighty force . . . [that] brings the Holy City that lies in the mind of God down to earth to dwell among men" (255). Though the priest does not wholly endorse Progressivism, remarking, "I do not think it is revealed whether society as a whole is to grow better or worse" (256), he claims that his only concern is to "love and labor" at the task given him: "trying to break down [the] prison bars" of poverty and injustice (257). As for Hilda, who maintains her agnosticism yet pleads for something to believe in, Father Phillips advises her to "Live in the strength of hope . . . If you do not believe in Christ, you can follow Him; that is more

[79] At least as discussed in Listener, Scudder evinced no recognition of a church hierarchy that excluded women, among others, from full participation. The author's personal embracing of Anglicanism included membership in the all-female Society for the Companions of the Holy Cross, which likely colored her view of Anglicanism's relationship to gender. This passage in Listener, in any case, suggests that Scudder's definition of democratic inclusion relied more on class concerns than those of gender.

important" (263). In other words, Father Phillips values a hopeful concern for both spiritual and earthly realms and stresses a commitment to alleviating social injustice over a personal faith in Christ. Hilda's moment of spiritual crisis results in a new faith, though not in God as much as in the potential for progress, similar to the transformation of Janet in Sherwood's Experiment. A Listener in Babel, then, calls attention to the disparity between professed Christianity and a Christ-like life, arguing that it is more important to live according to Christ's principles than to focus on individual spiritual salvation, inexorably linking social reform work with spiritual motivation.

The issue of race is another frequent subject of debate in Listener, and one that undergirds the text. From the beginning, Hilda casts her quest for personal connection and social reform in terms of the needs of the "race." She feels sympathy for the "craving for joy of a whole race sorrowing and dispossessed" in the cities (4), and the author describes her as one of those "natures so enlarged in consciousness that they live first and most intensely in the movement of the race, of the times, of some special cause seeking its victory on earth" (5). As with Addams and Sherwood, then, Scudder sometimes uses the term "race" to imply the human race as a whole, as she does here in identifying Hilda's Progressivist impulse to improve the lives of all of her fellows. But Scudder also engages the issue of race in the way to which she alludes in her Foreword, as a concern equal to nation, spirituality, and social relations.[80] This discussion of race, which is not found in Sherwood's Experiment, is akin to our more modern usage of the term to identify subgroups of people joined by common ancestry, color, and ethnicity; implicit in Listener's textual debates over the causes of poverty

[80] Race was a nebulous concept at the turn of the twentieth century; it sometimes applied to the human race, and it was frequently applied to what we, today, would consider ethnic groups or nationalities, such as Jews, Celts, and Southern and Eastern Europeans.

and the worthiness of the poor to receive help are questions of race and biological evolution (though these debates are held among "white" characters, exclusively).

Chapter Four of the novel, entitled "The New Cosmopolis," contains one of the most lengthy and significant considerations of race in the text, a discussion prompted by one reformer's meditation on the irony of the name—Lincoln Street—of the avenue on which the settlement is located. In the ensuing discussion, the residents catalog the ethnicities in their midst: Irish, Russian Jews, Syrians, Hungarians, Italians, Chinese, "all under the patronage of President Lincoln," of whom Miss Abbott asks, "What better patron saint of the new democracy?" (69). For many of the residents, including Miss Abbot, America is to be a democratic gathering place, welcoming all who choose the nation as their home. She argues for spiritual unity, claiming that "our next duty . . . is to connect [the America of the future] with the America of the past," since "we are the gathering-ground of the peoples: on our soil they meet. But in whatever direction one looks one sees dividing abysses. Cleavage of classes, cleavage of races, cleavage of faiths! an inextricable confusion. And the voice of democracy, crying aloud in our streets: 'Out of all this achieve brotherhood! achieve the race to be'" (73-74). Miss Abbott, then, acknowledges the existence of racial differences, but she hopes that social democracy will overcome all divisions, including those of the racial variety, and will result in one new race—"the race to be."

Several characters in Listener offer racial viewpoints that differ from Miss Abbott's. Philip Mervyn, the radical attorney who raised the racial issue in the text, favors racial separatism or pluralism. He notes an alternative to Miss Abbott's united race: "[W]hy not an Italian city here,---a Hungarian colony there,---a Swedish, a German,---all preserving their racial autonomy, as they certainly seem inclined to do so far, but held together by political

union?" (74). The Rev. Dr. Talbot, a Unitarian minister, adds the voice of Anglo-Saxonist racism when he wonders, "Would the Americans---by that, I mean 'we'---remain the governing race, do you think?" He is rebuffed, however, by Mervyn's query, "Are we that now . . . ? How about the politics of this ward?" (74). Such an interchange reveals some of the complexities of the treatment of race in the text. For one thing, Scudder recognizes various positions on the issue. The mere fact that she exposes Dr. Talbot's argument, that she calls textual attention to the word "we"—instead of assuming that "we" the readers and author also agree in an Anglo-Saxon American "we"—shows a certain sensitivity to questions of American inclusiveness. And her serious treatment of both the opinions of Mervyn and of Miss Abbott reveals her genuine consideration of the issue of race in the evolving United States. Scudder also offers, through various settlement workers, counterarguments to the views of Miss Saltonstall, the conservative, philanthropic New Englander who favors assimilation of "worthy" foreigners into "American" culture at the cost of their home cultures. When Miss Saltonstall argues that the schools will "indoctrinate all these foreigners in time—all the worthy ones, at least—with the great American tradition," Mervyn points out that "[t]he Indians are the only true Americans if you come to that. All the rest of us are immigrants" (75). The debate continues with a consideration of whether the Pilgrim Fathers were inclusive or intolerant, and results in Miss Abbott's statement that "we must not only make these later comers free of our traditions; we must also honor theirs" (77). In her visions of spiritually based racial unity, then, the head resident does not seem to favor white dominance; like Addams and other proponents of settlement work, Miss Abbott seems to hope that the races will have a mutual impact on one another. She envisions a new "American hymn" that "must gather up the enthusiasms of all the races," but she does not

recognize the reality of power relations that usually result in minority races giving up more than dominant ones when cultures meld.

Though Miss Abbott seems to offer an idealistic, authoritative vision of the racial future of America, the chapter does not end with her words. It shifts instead to the pessimism of one of the more radical residents, Janet Frothingham. As Miss Abbott reveals her desire to be able to say, "where freedom is, there is America," Janet points out that in their era, such a statement rings false. She recognizes that most of the working poor in the U.S. do not benefit from the "freedoms" of the country since they "have entered into a life-long bondage" of menial labor (78). Janet elaborates her viewpoint and brings the issue of societal and biological regeneration to the fore of the discussion. She argues that while the underclasses tend to the physical wants of the dominant castes,

> we intellectual people try to lead the higher life, free from material cares . . . Yet often these slaves to our bodies hold treasures needed by our souls. The compelling power of ancient faiths is in their hearts; they bring to our shores the imaginative wisdom gathered from the experience of the ages . . . . The English stock needs enrichment. It has developed on our soil a civilization with strong, fine traits, but arid, hardened, materialized, nervous. Wouldn't that civilization profit by the gifts of other races, less competent in action, it may be, but with more aptitude for emotion and dream? (80-81)

While Janet is more accepting of racial otherness than, for instance, Miss Saltonstall, her philosophy of race is nevertheless grounded in an inherent racialism that attributes particular qualities to the various nationalities or ethnicities. She uses stereotypical character traits to explain what immigrants can add to a depleted American society: "warm Irish hearts and

quick imaginations," Italians' "instinct for the arts," Germans' "musical powers," Jews' "idealism," and Slavs' "capacity for martyrdom" will all contribute to the regeneration of the race (81-82). Janet's philosophy amounts to an inverted type of eugenicism when she muses, "If we helped to develop [immigrants'] finest gifts, and gave them free play, we might in three or four generations have a nation the most wonderfully equipped that the world has seen" (82). Janet, like Miss Abbott, sees value in non-Anglo-Saxon peoples and cultures, but she seems to value them most for their potential contributions to (human) racial progress rather than accept them on their own merits. And while at the time several of the racial/ ethnic groups she lists would not have been considered "white," the list is significant in that it contains few "visible minorities" such as those from Asia or Africa; the Irish, Italians, Jews, Germans, and Slavs have all become "white" over the course of American history.

This chapter, which so thoroughly investigates the issue of race, ends with Hilda's longing for spiritual connectedness, feeling "a distant summons to wider experience from the waiting, calling world," emphasizing the value Scudder ascribes to community or communion. Scudder's view of race, though, seems similar to that held by Addams; by the end of the novel, Hilda seems to have adopted Janet's belief in the need for the regeneration of U.S. society in part through the contributions of supposedly more primitive European immigrants. Claiming to be inspired by the previous discussions of race at the settlement house, Hilda argues, "Our immigrants, except the Hebrews, are weakest in the qualities of business efficiency on which America puts a premium; they are the strongest in the human and aesthetic powers that too often betray them to economic disaster" (315). Hilda envisions herself as a prime candidate to rectify this seeming imbalance; she will study factory trades with other (immigrant) workers, and she will unite her artistic gifts and new training with her

innate sense of American business efficiency to reform industrial America, bringing art to industry while continuing to keep industry productive (318).

Despite its obvious and overriding focus on spirituality, then, Listener is also implicitly dependent on issues of race—in the Progressive-Era sense of the word—as it argues for a certain view of reform. Hilda's spiritual transformation is key to her ultimate plan; through her spiritual surrender at the abbey, she has gained the hope needed to persevere in reform work. But her ideology is also reliant on a belief in herself—Anglo-Saxon, American woman and Southern-European-trained artist—to facilitate the revitalization of U.S. urban society. Scudder's treatment of race is as complicated as that of Sherwood and Addams. The same ideology that supports interracial, interclass, and intercultural reciprocation also binds a person to the supposed biological and cultural traits of the group of which she is a member. And, as the twentieth century was to bear out in horrific ways, this incipient eugenicism has potentially dangerous implications for social relations.[81]

The Children of Light

Though published almost a decade after Scudder's Listener, Florence Converse's Children of Light (1912) explores many of the same issues as those discussed in the novels of Sherwood and Scudder. Converse, Scudder's domestic partner and a Wellesley alumna, dedicated her settlement novel "To Vida D. Scudder[,] who gave me her book, 'Socialism and Character,' this, for a thank-offering." Like Scudder, Converse features a young female protagonist concerned with the social problems of her era. And like the characters in Experiment and Listener, in her quest to formulate a viable and ethical reform philosophy,

[81] For a further exploration of eugenicism in settlement movement literature, see chapter four of this dissertation.

Converse's Clara Emery encounters a host of diverse characters who advocate—and in fact represent—various approaches to reform. Several key elements separate Converse's novel from its predecessors, however. First, her heroine is not only upper-middle class, she is one of the wealthiest women in the U.S.; thus, her relationship to questions of poverty and socialism is even more complicated than those of the characters in Experiment and Listener. Second, Converse's text was published in 1912—two years after Addams's Twenty Years at Hull-House—at the pinnacle of settlements' popularity, yet her protagonist is not primarily a settlement worker, and Converse addresses and explores contemporary critiques of the institutions' efficacy. Finally, Converse's novel ultimately proposes a version of reform that is more explicitly socialist, and therefore more radical, than either of the other settlement novels considered in this chapter.

The Children of Light, like the novels by Sherwood and Scudder, focuses on the philosophical development of its protagonist, Clara Emery. At the novel's outset, Clara is an orphaned eleven-year old resident of New Hope, a Southern cooperative community that serves as a retreat for Clara's socially radical father after the death of her similarly reform-minded mother. After her father's passing, Clara is cared for by "Uncle" Llewellyn and "Aunt" Camilla, founders of the co-op. As a child, she reads the autobiography of Robert Owen[82] and is a wholehearted Christian Socialist, committed to the elimination of competition. She dreams that one day, the cooperative colony "would no longer be an experiment. Perhaps the whole world would be the colony. And no one would be working for wages anymore. And competition would be abolished.---" (7). The settlement project makes an early appearance in the novel, when Clara remarks that most subscribers to the colony's

[82] Owen was a utopian socialist from the U.K. who founded the cooperative community of New Harmony, Indiana, in the 1830s.

newsletter were "college professors and settlement workers" or "maiden women" (5-6). Such a reference attests to the popularity of the movement as well as its alliance with other reform efforts, though Clara notes that most of the "professors and settlement workers" disagreed with the cooperative colony idea since it removes the reformers from the rest of society (a goal counter to the settlement aim of immersing oneself in it).

Early in the novel, it is revealed that Clara is an heir to a large fortune; shortly after her father's death, her great-uncle Jesse, a copper magnate, dies, leaving Clara a portion of his estate. When her identity is discovered, Clara's foster parents send her back to the North to live with her Cousin Pauline and Pauline's young sons (Clara's co-heirs), Lucian and Cyrus, who, after spending their early childhood years living in Italy, return to the northeastern U.S. upon their grandfather's death to become Americanized. Despite (or perhaps because of) their large fortune and considerable social standing, Clara and her cousins—even as youths—are fervently concerned with social and economic justice. Chapter Two, which focuses on Clara's transition to life with her cousins, is titled "A Franciscan Revival," stressing the children's affiliation with St. Francis of Assisi, who was a favorite figure of Progressive-Era social reformers. While Pauline is theoretically committed to the teachings of St. Francis and Tolstoy, she loves her good life; her sons and Clara seem more serious than she about their desire for spiritual fulfillment through devotion to others. Clara notes that it is through discussions of St. Francis and his ministrations to the poor, a story with which she was unfamiliar until learning it from her European-raised cousins, that the children find a "common language" (35). The children often "play" San Francesco (i.e., Saint Francis), wearing an old cloak as a "cassock" and pretending to minister to the poor (36). Though the text suggests that their play, which reveals an idealistic concern for social justice,

is admirable, particularly in children, the playacting also suggests a subtle critique of settlement workers, since both are really privileged but volunteer to go through ironic and contrived trials. In fact, the novel, like Sherwood's and Scudder's, expresses both admiration for and critiques of various types of social reform work. For example, Clara's description of the utopian cooperative community to her cousins, while it seriously sets forth the goal of eliminating competition, also ironically comments on the impracticability of the endeavor through Clara's childish narration: "Uncle Llewellyn decided to try if the Bible would really work . . . And the only thing [people] had to do, to belong to the colony, was to co-operate. Anybody could belong. Nicholas said it was a premium for dead beats, but he is not really a Christian; and the dead beats always went away after awhile because they had to work" (41). Clara's version of events, while sincere, nevertheless humorously exposes some of the problems with enacting utopian schemes in an imperfect world. The three cousins continue to fantasize childishly about their future as reformers, claiming that when they turn twenty-one and have control of their fortunes, they will return to New Hope together. Lucian romantically speculates,

> We will give away all our goods to feed the poor, and we will wear three cassocks and sandals and we will walk there all the way [to the colony]; and it will be the vintage time, and we will help to gather the grapes, and they will give us bread to eat, and we will sleep out of doors until we arrive at New Hope. And your Uncle Lew will come out to meet us like San Domenico who greets San Francesco in the piazza of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. (42)

To the young Lucian, Cyrus, and Clara, social reform work is inevitable and adventurous, poverty is romantic, and their deeds will make for interesting narratives like those concerning St. Francis. At the beginning of the text, in particular, Converse portrays the cousins' immature but admirable vision of social reform. The characters' naïveté is analogous to the criticisms leveled at many settlement and other reform workers from the upper classes, that their philanthropy is a lark, a means of occupying themselves to stave off ennui. The rest of the novel follows the characters as their ideologies come of age, however, and Converse reveals that idealism can endure through the hardships of arduous, adult reform work.

Clara calls the first-person Children an "autobiography" and self-consciously debates what to include in "her" narrative. Along the way, Clara and her peers explore various remedies to the social problems that surround them, but Children is less obvious a quest novel than either Experiment or Listener since its characters are more developed and function as more than mere "types" representing various reform ideologies in the text. Also, as is true for Experiment, settlement houses are a prominent but not the focal means of reform in the text; that designation more properly belongs to Christian Socialism. Like the other novels, though, Children of Light does investigate the benefits and criticisms of social settlements, and though the main character ultimately chooses another avenue of reform, she does not indict the settlement project. Clara does criticize "endowed settlements" as "snare[s]" since they are dependent upon the will of their benefactors (46), but she also explains why she believes in settlements despite another character's Marxist critique that the institution "aims to improve the conditions of the working people and tends to make them contented under the present system," thereby delaying the Socialist revolution (194). Clara explains that she knows from living in the settlement that it does not ameliorate workers' conditions, that if

anything, it makes the yoke harder. She compares the settlement to a new "patch" on a piece of old clothing, explaining that the workers eventually become more dissatisfied "with the economic system fraying and puckering around the patch" through the contrast (195).

As in the novels by Sherwood and Scudder, Children establishes Clara's character in part through contrasting it with the characters around her, and the protagonist herself sifts through other people's choices as she grows to determine her own philosophy and life's work. Helen, Clara's slightly older best friend from New Hope, is both more practical and more cynical than Clara. She has ambitions to go to college and resents her friend's fortune, saying bitterly that Clara will "never have to give up anything for anybody" and will "never have to do any real work" (77, 78), though Clara herself plans to give her money away when she comes of age. Clara and her cousins eventually go to college, and she finances the education of Helen, who insists the money is a loan to be repaid. During college, Helen subscribes to the College Settlement Association (the name of the actual settlement organization that Scudder helped to found), and despite her stated cynicism that things will never really change, she chooses to live and work at a settlement after college. Though Clara and her cousins also work at the settlement, leading clubs and organizing classes, Clara cannot decide quite what she endorses. For the Emery cousins, the settlement provides their "first contact with the realities of want, and industrial suffering"; Clara remarks that this era was "full of excitement and anguish for all of us" (118). Though she had previously experienced the poverty of a commune, Clara is horrified by "the sordid, malodorous, tenement house glut of filthy deprivation" she finds in the city (118). Her settlement work comprises an awakening for Clara, and a chance to mature her view of social ills and their remedies. While at working at the settlement, Clara tries to "follow Ruskin," which, she says,

involves "[t]rying to clothe and feed and rightly please people; having my clothes made by needy seamstresses who could not cut and fit; wearing union label shoes that blistered my feet; experimenting in self-denials in order to probe the limits of my efficiency and formulate a definition of luxury" (118-19). At this point, Clara's ideals encounter a harsh reality; though her modest lifestyle is voluntary and therefore a type of play, it is no longer merely the romantic self-denial of her cousins' childhood games. Rather, as with Scudder's Hilda, settlement work is one stop along Clara's path of maturation as a social thinker and actor.

From the beginning of the narrative, Clara has based her reform ideology in Christian ideals, but she does not exhibit the single-minded faith of her cousin, Cyrus. Where she tests Ruskin, he "turned to the New Testament" (119). Though he finds inspiration in Tolstoy's withdrawal from society and contemplates joining a monastery, Cyrus determines that he must try to work for change in the world rather than remove himself from it. He vows to continue his work at the settlement, but in contrast to Clara's being "a Socialist, of a sort," Cyrus claims that "no amount of external system will change the world unless men's hearts be changed" (141). On the surface, his stance seems to echo the esteemed Rev. Dr. Wilkinson from Listener, but Cyrus's faith is actually far more radical than the clergyman's—and, in fact, more radical than most of the characters in the novels—in its embracing of all peoples. He writes to Clara,

> Christianity is enough. Can you call yourself a Christian and say that anything else is needed?
>
> But it must be Christ's Christianity, not the Roman kind that broke the heart of St. Francis, nor the Greek kind that has excommunicated Tolstoy, nor

> the Anglican kind that is established, nor the Protestant kind that is anybody's vagary. (141)

For Cyrus, true Christianity is socialist, eschewing division and hierarchy in favor of humble work on behalf of one's fellows.

Though Clara's faith is not identical to Cyrus's, neither is her socialism equal to Lucian's. Lucian claims he is "outgrowing settlements" towards the end of his college career, calling the institutions "a sort of dope" that fails to "remove the cause of the industrial disease" (127). He chooses a more radical stance, wholly adopting Socialism. He writes to Clara, "Dear Comrade!---Hark to the epithet!---Yes, I've gone and done it. Done it brown! I've joined the Party" (142), and he even chooses to give up composing poetry—creating arte por l'arte—in favor of writing "Propaganda" for the Socialist cause (146). Clara believes in the "economic determinism" of socialism, that it will inevitably triumph as capitalism becomes intolerable for the workers, but she is not a member of the Socialist party. As one Socialist in the novel notes, "On the economic programme, she is as sound as you or me. Our American methods she don't [sic] find herself always to agree with, that's all" (152); specifically, Clara takes issue with the corruption in party politics and local elections. She is oriented somewhere between Cyrus and Lucian, embracing both Christian and Socialist ideals while also drawing similarities between the two ideologies. She consistently points out Cyrus's Christ-like Socialist principles and Lucian's spirituality, which she maintains is Christian in deed if not in word.

As the narrative progresses, it develops more clearly into an exploration of different methods of reform, especially interrogating the relationship between Christianity and Socialism. Cyrus becomes an important and charismatic figure in the community as he

doggedly works to eradicate suffering, and Lucian becomes ever more devoted to Socialism and his Socialist newspaper, while Clara debates whether to stand on principles or to try to effect the most practical changes possible. She laments, "The small people, the limited people, the narrow people—like Napoleon—get results. Tolstoy doesn't get any. Nor St. Francis . . . Napoleon made a new map of Europe. Something definite, that, if superficial" (169). She continues, "I wish I knew how it felt to desire the Co-operative Commonwealth so passionately that I did not have to stop to think whether or not I was true to myself in joining the Socialist Party. The really great never need to question their own motives; they are not aware of greater and lesser desires; they are the one desire" (169-70). This passage highlights the dichotomy between worldly, Napoleonic (and therefore violent) means of effecting social change, and peaceful reform efforts based on spiritual principles, a difference emphasized by the violent events of the text's climax. Despite Clara's moments of doubt, Children's social gospel message shows the folly of violent attempts to remedy society's ills.

The novel chronicles Clara's maturation as a reformer, giving insight into her struggles over how best to change her world. As it reveals her inner debates as well as her exchanges with her cousins and friends, the narrative shows the various paths open to Progressive-Era activists and thinkers. And like the heroines of Sherwood's and Scudder's novels, Clara is dependent upon her interactions with other characters in her community to help her define her beliefs. In fact, she is perhaps the protagonist who is most enduringly engaged with a community: from the commune of her youth, to childhood philanthropic playacting with her cousins, to adult reform work with her cousins and friends, Clara never approaches her activism as an individual but always as a member of a reform collective. Clara's relatives and peers support, guide, inspire, and partner with her in her reform work,

and the text's heavy emphasis on community—even for a settlement novel—models social activism undertaken collectively.

Children eventually becomes a secular conversion narrative; it is the tale of Clara's conversion to the Socialist party rather than to the religious faith with which she begins the text. As Lucian and Clara grow more attracted to each other, their somewhat divergent paths are highlighted. Though both hold strongly to socialist ideals, Lucian's religion is the Socialist party while Clara continues to resist party affiliation and to cling to a Social Gospel-type belief that social reform is an inherent part of following Christ. She is, as Lucian says, "of the party but not in it" (267). Clara does come to believe in "the futility of settlements" to effect real change (249), and her conversion to political Socialism, which has been building throughout her textual philosophical seeking, is eventually spurred by the narrative's climax. As political and social tensions come to a head in the novel, Cyrus becomes a Christ-like martyr, dying at the hands of a mob as he physically shields a corrupt Reform Party mayoral candidate from a mass attack. Lucian, as editor and financier of the paper responsible for inciting the mob that killed Cyrus, is arrested, convicted of libel, and sentenced to one year in jail and a $5000 fine.

Just before he is attacked, Cyrus gives an inspirational speech, explaining to his listeners that, though Christ advised his followers to offer up a second cheek when the first had been struck, he did not say, "If any one smite thy brother on his right cheek, do thou stand by and hold thy hand while thy brother is beaten to death" (276). He calls for everyone to join in a general strike as a manifestation of Christian brotherhood, laying down their own lives for the sake of others. Cyrus claims, "This, brothers, some of you call Socialism. Allow me to differ with you—it is Christianity. It was Christianity before Socialism was born"

(278). To him, Socialism is simply Christianity with a different name. Cyrus's death produces pathos in the novel, but it also serves as a catalyst for Clara's conversion to the Party. As she reflects on her cousin's life, Clara finds an answer to his questions and doubts in Socialist Party affiliation. Apostrophizing to Cyrus's memory, she explains,

> You said to me once—"Christianity is enough. Can you call yourself a Christian and say that anything else is needed?"—Cyrus, do you remember?—But the leaven of Christianity has made this ferment we call Socialism. Before Christianity came into the historical process, Socialism would not have been possible. It isn't a choice between Socialism and Christianity that I make. It isn't leaving Christ's party to join the Socialists'. Christianity is the road we travel to the kingdom of heaven, and for me, one of the sign-posts on the way is Socialism. I cannot help it, dear, it is so. I am going to join the Socialist Party. (291)

Having witnessed and experienced various approaches to reform, from communal living to Tolstoyism to settlement work to political and Christian Socialism, Clara eventually arrives at her own view of how best to change the world. Linking Cyrus's Christianity with Lucian's Socialism, she makes a case for Christian Socialism, and her conversion to the Party is complete. Clara eschews the violent tactics and temporal gains of Napoleon for what she believes to be the enduring, spiritually significant, and peaceful reform methods of Christ, St. Francis, and Tolstoy. As Clara and Lucian acknowledge their love for each other at the end of the text, they dedicate their lives to the Socialist cause; Lucian devotes his jail time to catching up on his literary and activist work, while Clara spends the year in Italy with Pauline writing this text, the "autobiography" of their experiences.

In setting up a vision of an idealized future working to further Christian Socialism, Children, like Experiment and Listener, portrays its protagonist in a way that sets her up as an ideal woman. Like those texts, the novel also establishes its heroine partly through contrasting her with other characters, including—especially—racial Others. The issue of race is largely absent in the first part of the novel (which chronicles Clara and her cousins' childhood), except for a brief discussion among the children of the horrors of slavery, both legal and economic. As the characters mature and move to the city, however, their reform work brings them into contact with racially and ethnically diverse peoples. In referring to his settlement work, Cyrus tells Clara, "I shall stick to my Italian Circolo and my immigrants" (141), and he and Clara work with the "Young Leonardos," presumably a group of Italian boys interested in art (153). In fact, though the text features minor Russian, Jewish, Greek, and Irish characters, Converse's novel, like Addams's Twenty Years, is particularly racist in its portrayal of Italian immigrant workers. In a pivotal scene, Clara and Lucian visit an Italian family hurt by the strike. As the family's neighbors gather to mourn the loss of its starved baby, Clara sets a scene of high emotion and religious ritual: "In the three rooms of the Balderoni tenement there were gathered some forty or fifty people, . . . all Italians" (238). The women are "weeping aloud, gesticulating, all together" as they explain the Socialist husband's refusal to send for a priest to bury the child (238). Clara and Lucian realize their love for each other "in that little garlic-reeking tenement room with the dead baby and the soap-box [coffin] and the four red, unblessed candles and the weeping father and mother" (241), but their tender moment is interrupted by the gathered Italians' ire over a potential trainload of strikebreakers headed for the city. Lucian attempts to reason with the crowd, but Clara, fearing for his safety, cautions him, "They are so ignorant. And these Italian Socialists

are so violent, so anarchistic" (242). Indeed, the novel suggests that the "ignorant" and primitive Italians, as well as their fellow Southern and Eastern European immigrants, are to be feared, as when Converse describes the crowd at the labor gathering at which Cyrus is martyred. Clara takes note of the crowd, especially the Italians with their "faces that flashed and lowered, restless shoulders, restless hands"; the "smouldering eyes" of the Slavs; the "ferret looks of watchful Jews"; and "[h]eavy Irish trade unionists [who] elbowed and shoved their way through the crowd" (267-68). These apparently threatening ethnic minorities are contrasted with "those other faces, mingled of intensest curiosity and secret apprehension—the faces of the American upper class" (268; emphasis added).

For Converse and her narrator, then, "American" here signifies "Anglo-Saxon Protestants," and the eventual mob violence that results in Cyrus's death is clearly due to the lack of restraint shown by the mass of immigrants in attendance at the meeting. Though the Socialism of the novel identifies capitalist greed and corruption as the main causes of social unrest, Converse uses seemingly savage, uncontrollable, non-"white" immigrants to enact the violent scene that facilitates Clara's conversion to Socialism. And in the aftermath of Cyrus's death, the corrupt candidate whom he died to save tries to explain his own actions to Clara. Seeking her understanding, he writes, "Life is made up of a succession of choices between two evils. You will contradict me here, because you are a woman, and the idealism of woman deals with absolutes; the relatively good has no existence for them. For the sake of the integrity of the race, it is well that this should be so" (296). This character echoes the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century ideal of women as gatekeepers of morality, but he also draws attention to the Progressive-Era belief that women, particularly as mothers, play a

pivotal evolutionary role in the future of the "race," whether "human" or "white."[83] Though this character is far from sympathetic, he does point to Clara's status as occupying a premier position from which to effect social change. In detailing and idealizing Clara's journey, Converse offers her heroine as a type of New Woman whose choices can model a hopeful future, but whose identity must be created in part through contrasting her with the less-developed peoples around her.

Uneasy Endings

Though each of the three novels discussed in this chapter focuses on questions of reform as they are debated throughout the texts, the narratives' endings are also important in considering the works' purposes and messages. Unlike the marriage plot employed by many of their contemporary novelists, Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse each subvert traditional narrative expectations as they envision unusual futures for their female protagonists. In her study of social gospel novels and their treatment of gender issues, Susan Hill Lindley argues that such novels written by women differ from those written by men in several important ways. Examining Listener and Children alongside similar novels written by male authors, Lindley notes that Scudder and Converse are more likely than other (mostly male) Social Gospel novelists to portray female characters who "show concern for the plight of the urban poor, for a world beyond the immediate domestic circle" and to "challenge conventional roles and expectations for women in that period through portrayals of strong single women who choose a socially conscious career over marriage" (198).[84] They are also, according to Lindley, more likely to portray women as central to the social settlement project, while many

[83] For a discussion of women and eugenic arguments in settlement literature, see chapter four.
[84] Lindley's study does not include a consideration of Sherwood's text. This may be because Experiment has been virtually unknown to scholars until recently or because the novel is less clearly a Social Gospel text.

male social gospel authors imply that "it is men who do or should lead the settlements" (199). Lindley argues that because of limited options for women in the formal, official religious or business worlds, "[s]ettlement work remained as the most viable, concrete, and significant option . . . for a woman seeking a 'career' in the social gospel movement," and reform literature similarly gave women, who were excluded from most Christian pulpits, a more acceptable outlet for "proclaiming [the gospel] message in a form that was agreeable and accessible to the general public" (199; emphasis in original). As Lindley notes, the social gospel novel "was one powerful, socially acceptable means for women to exercise far-reaching didactic influence in the communication of the social gospel at the popular level" (199). What Lindley argues for social gospel texts by women is also true for settlement literature, which overlaps the former but is not synonymous with it. In the case of Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse, such texts provide a space in which to explore the philosophical bases of settlement and other reform work, demonstrating the active role women took in debating and undertaking social change and modeling a variety of options open to them in lives defined by social reform. They reveal that women self-consciously theorized about and acted to effect change.

At the end of Sherwood's Experiment, Janet ultimately realizes that "trying to reason out the meaning of things" is futile, since "it is only what cannot be said that makes life worth while" (212). Finally, despite a continued uncertainty about the existence of God, in her sorrow, Janet cries, "O my God!" which the narrator observes is "the cry that has ever been the one irrefutable witness to His presence" (213). In the final chapter of the text, the narrator claims that "the world is not [yet] saved," and though it is not always clear what action is to be taken to better earthly life, "[t]he one command in regard to our neighbor [i.e.,

to love him/her as oneself] is not obscure. And our foreboding lest our faith in God shall escape us seems futile, inasmuch as we cannot escape from our faith" (215). With its dry critique of the Altruist's settlement work, Experiment does not offer an endorsement of the project, but its discussion of settlements is no more critical than other methods of reform, such as trade unionism or charity. In fact, rather than authorizing or promoting a particular kind of reform, the novel's ending suggests that authentic, lived experience—whether explicitly activist or not—is the key to personal fulfillment and social betterment.

In A Listener in Babel, the main characters' ultimate life choices are intended to be instructive. After carefully considering the many options available to her in her quest to reform society, Hilda chooses to leave the settlement for a private home with two other (working-class) women. She will work in a factory trade for ten years, learning the trade from the inside out so that she might determine how to bring her artistic gifts to bear on modern industry. She has learned through her searches that "[t]he beautiful only exists as found in use, as it springs from the common life of all and ministers to the common life of all. That is the kind of beauty for the lack of which America perishes" (318-19). Her Arts and Crafts approach is reminiscent of William Morris's desire to make the useful beautiful, and its attention to the factory worker combines socialist sympathies with an artistic impulse. In Scudder's text, Hilda's ultimate decision is important since the character has so thoroughly investigated reform avenues. Though Scudder represents several diverse options, including companionate marriage, radical devotion to anarchy, cooperative living arrangements, and continued work in the settlement, and though she is not overtly critical of these alternative options, the fact that she has her protagonist join with women of a different social class, in a private home, while continuing to work both for one's own material support as well as for

long-term social gains suggests an implicit endorsement of such a plan. However, though Hilda chooses a particular path, she (and Scudder) eschews easy answers: Hilda's "old fervid desire to form one creed, and cling to it as a finality, had died away" in the face of "the unspeakable complexity of life" (295). She has, however, "dared at last to take the great word Socialism with confidence upon her lips,---not as a dogma of the end to be achieved, but as a description of the process to be furthered." And though she found hope at the religious retreat, Scudder implies that Hilda has yet to identify herself as a Christian: "If toward the greater word, Christianity, she remained silent, through profound distrust of the Church in history and in the modern world, nevertheless the image of a Leader of men dwelt in the secret places of her soul" (296). Thus, even if she does not put that name to her practice, Hilda practices Christian Socialism by embodying what Scudder sees as the spirit of the gospels. This seems to be Scudder's main message: it is not absolutely critical which path towards reform one chooses, so long as one is committed to bettering the world as one travels that path. For Hilda, the most important result of her investigations at the settlement have been her entry into "the Land of Reality and the City of Brotherhood" (313); as one of the main characters argues, "To remain the observer . . . involves a tragedy of conscience" in a world that requires action (303). Hilda is no longer a mere "listener"; she is now a philosopher of her own, and she will soon be an actor, as she puts her plan in motion.

Hilda's familial arrangement with the other women in her new household continues the focus on female community that was begun at the women's colleges and continued at the social settlement. Her choice to go into a trade rather than academic or artistic life suggests a commitment to work among "the people" rather than staying among the social elite, and her eventual plan to combine her artistic talents with experience in factory shows continued

devotion to "real-life" experiences, both of which continue the work of the social settlement (cross-class relationships and lived—rather than merely read about—experience), but in a different arena. For her, the settlement is a "halfway house," a place to learn about causes of and potential solutions to social problems before one strikes out on one's own (294). Hilda has taken the settlement idea and applied it to her life on a personal level in an attempt to continue the reforming of society.

One interesting factor in all three novels is the seeming absence of Boston marriages, though all three authors were themselves part of such personal relationships. Sherwood's text, though it focuses primarily on the heterosexual, romantic relationship between Janet and the Lad, also includes figures such as the narrator and the Doctor, women who are single and "of a certain age," ones who would be considered spinsters by their contemporaries. The narrator and the Doctor are close friends, but there is no suggestion that they have a more particular relationship than any of the other friendships in the text. Scudder's novel comes the closest of any of the three actually to representing a Boston marriage, since Hilda and Katie will live together, but the author also includes another female member of the household, Maggie Murphy. Hilda says of her future plans, "I am going seriously to learn various trades . . . . Katie is going with me, ... She will study the trades with me, and Maggie Murphy will take care of us in the little home we mean to have, now here, now there" (315-16). The close friendship between Hilda and Katie, as well as Scudder's description of the scene in which the future plans are discussed do suggest a companionate, Boston-marriage type relationship. Katie knows of Hilda's plans before her official announcement of them to the other settlers, and Katie's "dreamy face kindled" as Hilda explained the scheme to her friends (313). But at a time when sexologists began to

pathologize such coupling, Scudder does provide enough ambiguity in the living arrangements for readers to see what they wish to see. Maggie has been a part of previous recreational outings with Hilda, Katie, and another working woman in a chapter entitled "The Consolers," and her presence allows for the interpretation of a cooperative living arrangement among the three women, especially as Hilda's "us" is ambiguous: will Maggie keep house for Hilda and Katie, or for all three women, including herself? After all, she is of the same ethnicity and social class as Katie, though Katie is held to be "the smartest girl in the laundry," and is therefore a more suitable companion for Hilda (219).

In Converse's Children of Light, the protagonist is passionately devoted to her cousin, Lucian, though she has a close friendship with Helen, who admires Cyrus but chooses to remain single and continue working for social betterment. A thorough discussion of same-sex relationships is outside the scope of this chapter, but one reason that Boston marriages and homosocial relationships may be absent from this text is the increasing pathologizing of women's same-sex relationships in the 1890s and afterwards. As Kate McCullough notes, "starting in the 1870s and coming into full force by the 1890s, the sexologists, most notably Havelock Ellis and Richard von Kraft-Ebing, were articulating an alternate cultural narrative that would eventually pathologize the spectrum of erotically charged female-female relationships, resulting in the categories of the invert and the homosexual" (60). Though Converse wrote explicitly of Boston marriages in the late 1890s,[85] towards the turn of the century, sexological and psychoanalytical discourse grew increasingly critical of the female "invert." Thus, Scudder's and Converse's settlement novels, in particular, were published at a

[85] For a discussion of Diana Victrix (1897), Converse's novel that more explicitly engages issues of homosociality and Boston marriage, as well as turn-of-the-century representations of female-female relationships, see McCullough, chapter two.

time when attention to same-sex female relationships was more dangerous and likely to attract criticism from those on the lookout for sexual "degeneracy" in literature.

However, though in Children Converse depicts a heterosexual, romantic relationship, her novel does not have a traditional marriage plot. True, it ends with the promise of a marriage between the protagonist and her lover, but rather than moving towards domesticity, the narrative moves even further towards radical social action. Clara has finally become a card-carrying member of the Socialist party, and she and her soon-to-be-husband, Lucian, will work together to advance the socialist cause upon his release from jail (where he continues to write for the Cause while she constructs the metatext of Children). Clara ends her narrative with the promise that she and Lucian "are pledged to keep The Torch [their Socialist newspaper] alight. And Lucian will inevitably go into politics" (308). But the most telling line of the narrative is the first sentence of the last paragraph, where Clara writes, "Settle down? No . . . One doesn't settle down with a dawn-song on one's lips" (308). For Clara, then, the class conflicts, Cyrus's death, and Lucian's imprisonment have been but the commencement, the "dawn-song" of a life of social(ist) activism. She and her husband will not "settle down" into a private, domestic arrangement but will continue their very public work to eradicate social injustice. Clara has been supportive of the settlement project throughout the novel, even in the face of criticism from other activists, but her refusal to "settle down" indicates, as in Scudder's narrative, that the settlement is not, for her, a final stopping place, but rather a place to work and learn for a time before applying reformist principles to a life lived in the world—and not in an institution.

Though each novel's ending is important, and though the endings become progressively more radically Socialist, it is also the questions considered, the paths not taken,

the choices of the other characters, that are important in the texts as well. As is appropriate for their status as Progressive-Era novels, each of the texts considered here ends with hope for the future. Janet, Hilda, and Clara have all undergone conversion experiences, though their conversions are less to Christian faiths and more to secular faiths that social improvement is possible. Through love for the Lad, Janet has come to believe in the possibility of love and beauty in a fallen world; for her, the simple fact of life is that it brings both joy and pain, but "the hurt is life, and life is good . . . . When you are really living, the hurt is very glorious" (212). Scudder ends her novel with a statement by the most religious character, whose words echo Janet's: "Over our ravaged civilizations the light from heaven forever shines. That is because joy is a larger fact than pain, and love than sin" (322). And Converse concludes her text with the promise of a "dawn-song" of Socialist activism (308). Thus, all of the authors affirm the possibility for reform through spiritually inspired social action.

Conclusion

These three novelists offer a contrast to Jane Addams through their emphasis on the social gospel and the importance of reform communities. Though their protagonists are not iconic figures as Addams is, they make a strong argument for the need for collective, rather than individualistic, reform work, especially in social settlements. Though Addams did articulate the importance of connectedness, her memoir demonstrates an "American" investment in personal pluck and an independence of spirit, whereas in their texts, Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse emphasize the necessity of communal reform theorizing and labor. These three settlement novels also reveal an increasingly overt investment in socialism, an

ideology that Addams was loath to endorse. Sherwood, Scudder, and Converse are important to the history of the settlement movement not only for their personal familiarity with and work in it, but also for their literary contributions to it. Their novels attest to the importance of the movement at the turn of the twentieth century and, by contrast with the texts considered in chapters one and four in this dissertation, reveal the diversity of affiliations, philosophies, and goals associated with social settlements in the U.S. Like the authors in chapter two, these writers demonstrate a close affiliation with Christian ideals, but their philosophies depart from other authors in this dissertation as they endorse socialism.

Another crucial component of these texts is their discussion of the future of the "race," including women's roles in affecting that future. Of course, the discourse surrounding the fate of the race has been important to all texts in this dissertation. But as in Addams, the question is when the authors in this chapter mean to refer to the human race, when to the white or other races, and when they reveal a belief that the former necessarily and exclusively implies the latter. Concomitantly, the novels also show an investment in questions of nationalism. There is a suggestion that the strong young women portrayed—Janet, Hilda, and Clara—will help regenerate society not necessarily through maternity, since Janet and Hilda are unmarried and Clara claims she and her soon-to-be-husband will never "settle down," but through their reform work. It is not merely the U.S. or "America" that will benefit from the social changes brought about by these New Women; the novels, especially Children of Light, suggest that the reforms will have a worldwide impact. Scudder and Converse, particularly, imply the regeneration of the race through the living of Christian, Socialist principles.[86] Though the novels strive to represent inclusiveness in considering

[86] I intend the ambiguity of the word "race" here, since the authors use the term to mean both "human" and "white."

myriad perspectives on social problems and demonstrating a need for input from members of the working class itself, they all nevertheless proffer to readers the figure of a young, white, female, middle/upper-class heroine, and they each reveal blind spots of racist and ethnocentric condescension in their portrayals of the Chinese, Italians, Irish, and others. Finally, their inattention to the needs of African Americans replicates the omission of this group in Addams's text and offers further evidence in support of Fannie Williams's and Anna Cooper's claims that white settlement workers ignore the needs of black Americans.

Ultimately, these texts (particularly those by Scudder and Converse) propose that the purpose of the settlement is to serve as a resting place rather than an ultimate destination. For Hilda and Clara, the institution is a place to learn, to meet other reform-minded people, and to debate social reform tactics. Comparing it to the unreal and "peaceful academic world," Hilda describes it as a stopping point, a semi-haven in the "Land of Reality and the City of Brotherhood" (313). Langley House is "a kind of watch-tower from which one sees the pathways leading to the land of hope" (319), but it is not itself that Land of Hope. The "real" Land of Hope, for these writers, is the "real" world—the "Land of Reality" in which one experiences joy and pain, love and loss, want and fulfillment, and above all, community. While in many ways offering a thoughtful, expansive, and inclusive vision, however, the novels ultimately perpetuate the image of a white female heroine who will lead the needy masses to this promised Land of Hope, an idea that has percolated through the history of feminism, contributing to contemporary debates over representation in/and reform.

Chapter Four

A New (White) Husband for a New (White) Woman:

The Settlement Novels of Clara Laughlin and Elia Peattie

In the first chapter of Elia Wilkinson Peattie's The Precipice (1914), heroine Kate Barrington is returning to her parents' rural Illinois home after graduating from the University of Chicago. Her friend Lena, who escorts her to the train, embodies one of the text's several undesirable feminine types—in this case, the overworked intellectual:

> Kate Barrington turned understanding and compassionate eyes upon her friend. She had seen her growing a little thinner and more tense every day; had seen her putting on spectacles, and fighting anaemia with tonics, and yielding unresistingly to shabbiness. Would she always be speeding breathlessly from one classroom to another, palpitantly yet sadly seeking for the knowledge with which she knew so little what to do? (4)

Thus Peattie fictionalizes one of the anxieties that inspired Jane Addams to found Hull-House: the specter of a young woman whose vitality was stripped by the acquisition of knowledge that had no meaningful social application. Lena and various other female characters offer foils to Kate in Peattie's version of what a strong, vital Progressive-Era (white) woman should be. Likewise, in Clara E. Laughlin's "Just Folks" (1910), the protagonist, Beth Tully, is praised for her strength and femininity from the opening paragraph: "Little Beth, with all her appealing femininity had certain boyish graces and sundry boyish gifts, could have thrown a stone through that archway [of Hull-House] and hit a clattering wagon . . . passing on Halstead Street" (1). From the first pages of these two

settlement novels, the authors align themselves with Jane Addams's settlement ideals even as they promote lively, independent, yet still feminine characters as ideal New Women.

These texts reveal that as the reform movement grew more popular, fiction featuring social settlements became more prevalent. In addition to the Boston authors discussed in chapter three, other writers—even those who were not personally affiliated with settlement work—described the movement in their novels. Clara Laughlin and Elia Peattie both published novels featuring settlement reform. Peattie's novel was reprinted in the late 1980s, but Laughlin's text has never been republished; the works receive occasional attention from scholars who study women's and/ or Midwestern literature, but they also merit consideration for their contributions to the larger discourse surrounding broad, Progressive-Era social reform, which—in different ways—they link to an increasingly radical women's rights movement. These middle-class, white women authors further the rewriting of the marriage plot seen in the Boston settlement novelists, but they largely avoid discussions of religious communities, instead concentrating on unions between equally matched New Women and New Men as a means of countering urban degeneration. Laughlin explores the choices of a female juvenile probation officer and reformer in Chicago who eschews residency at Hull-House in favor of renting a room from a working-class woman, ultimately partnering with her middle-class male suitor with the promise that the two will continue to reside in and reform the "Ghetto," a focus that emphasizes cross-class connection as much as gender equality. Peattie's text demonstrates a turn to biological and scientific approaches to societal regeneration, similar to themes found in better-known women's fiction from the era, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland and The Crux. Peattie's Kate Barrington is a fictional settlement worker supervised by Jane Addams. Like Laughlin's protagonist, she also unites

with a New Man at the end of the text, but unlike Laughlin, Peattie promotes an institutionalized eugenicism, proposing a Bureau of Children responsible for institutional rearing and schooling of the nation's children. I explore how these novels demonstrate the dissemination and revision of the reform ideals promulgated by Addams, and I argue that though their reworking of the marriage plot envisions new possibilities for women, the eugenic arguments in Peattie's text betoken a dangerous re/turn to biological racism and classism similar to that witnessed in other Progressive-Era and Modernist literature.[87]

Peattie and Laughlin, as Midwestern writers, are often discussed jointly in literary criticism. Both women were prolific professional writers who worked in multiple genres of literature from muckraking journalism to travel guides to novels[88]; both lived at least part of their adult lives in Chicago, where (along with Jane Addams) they were members of the renowned literary club, the Little Room[89]; and both include references to Addams and Hull-House in their settlement novels. Peattie also wrote a positive review of Laughlin's novel "Just Folks" at the time of its publication (Szuberla 71). These women writers were part of the Chicago literary scene during the height of the settlement movement, and as they used their pens to support themselves and their families,[90] they also used their literature to theorize

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[87] See Cuddy and Roche, English, and Boeckmann for in-depth discussions of race and eugenics in Progressive-Era and Modernist fiction.

[88] For example, in addition to authoring many other texts, including their social reform novels considered in this chapter, Elia Peattie chronicled Progressive-Era issues for the Omaha World-Herald and served as a literary critic for the Chicago Tribune (Bloomfield xv, xvii). Clara Laughlin worked as a journalist and editor for the Presbyterian weekly Interior, authored the popular So You're Going To travel series (e.g., So You're Going to Paris! and So You're Going to Italy!), and penned her autobiography, Traveling through Life (Bremer, "Laughlin").

[89] The Little Room was established in 1898 with the goal of furthering Chicago's arts; the city was a hotbed for artistic production at this time, particularly in the literary schools of naturalism and realism. Members of the Little Room ranged from novelists to journalists to sculptors to civic reformers; some of its more famous participants included Henry Blake Fuller, Hamlin Garland, Robert Herrick, and Jane Addams. (Bremer, Urban 104-05)

[90] Laughlin's father died when she was a teenager, so she began a journalistic and literary career to help support her newly impoverished family (Ebest 29-30). Peattie was married to Robert Burns Peattie, also a writer, whose ill health made Elia's publications essential to the family's economic viability (Bremer, Introduction xix).

the best means of coping with social changes, such as overwhelming industrialization and increasingly fluid gender roles.[91] Laughlin's "Just Folks" and Peattie's The Precipice both feature white, middle-class heroines who work in social services in Chicago in roles that Patrick Chura has labeled "downclassing" experiences. That is, the college-educated, moderately privileged young women elect to live among people of the working classes as they perform social work. And as the authors narrate the choices of their heroines, Laughlin and Peattie envision new social roles for (middle-class, white) women: as partners with New Men and as social leaders in their communities, whether that community is a city, as in Laughlin's case, or the entire nation, as in Peattie's vision.

Clara Laughlin's "Just Folks"

Laughlin's novel, like the Boston settlement narratives Experiment in Altruism, A Listener in Babel, and Children of Light, follows a young, white protagonist as she attempts to effect reforms in an urban setting. Beth Tully is the daughter of a deceased rural judge, but she is not wealthy; she must work to earn her living, and she cannot afford to rent a room as a resident of Hull-House. In addition to monetary inducements to live outside of the settlement, however, Beth chooses to live in the "Ghetto" in order to be closer to the working-class people she is trying to help first in her role as a juvenile probation officer and then through personal relationships and advocacy. Though Beth admires Hull-House (which is introduced in the first paragraph of the text), she compares the institution to a "cloister" where "gathered the brotherhood consecrate to the succor of perishing mankind" (1, 2). As the narrator's ironically romantic language suggests, Beth reports that the neighbors look on Hull-House and its occupants as operating at a remove from its environs. Judith Raftery surmises that

[91] See earlier chapters for a discussion of the social problems of the Progressive Era.

Beth "would have liked to live at Hull-House, but that was not possible" because of a lack of space at the residence as well as Beth's own lack of funds (48). But Laughlin's novel actually gives a much more significant reason for Beth's decision to live in the "Ghetto." Rather than exacerbate the separation from the community engendered by her role as "'de p'leece lady,'" she eschews associating with the "professional benevolence of the Settlement" and seeks instead closer communion with the people of the Nineteenth Ward (Laughlin 4). Therefore, she takes a room with a white-haired, never-married seamstress and involves herself in the lives of the tenement's other residents, including a Russian Jewish family whose daughter Dinah, a dwarf, shows artistic promise. From the beginning of the novel, then, Laughlin argues that despite their collective raison d'etre, even settlement houses do not transcend the social gap between residents and neighbors. If a middle-class reformer really wants to reach those presumed to be in need of her help, she must go even further than Addams's ideal and live outside the "cloister" of a social settlement. This demonstrates a critique of the maturing settlement movement from a writer well acquainted with—indeed living at the heart of—the movement. Beyond merely living among and observing her working-class neighbors, Laughlin's Beth also befriends the Irish-American family of her former nanny, Mary Casey, whose troubles provide much of the conflict in the text. The novel highlights several couples and follows the traditional marriage plot to the extent that Beth decides to marry Hart Ferris at the end of the novel, but Laughlin revises that convention when Beth and Hart, a muckraking newspaper reporter, agree to continue living in the Ghetto after they marry so that they may maintain their efforts to reform Chicago.

Laughlin's novel is significant to this study because it demonstrates the dissemination of Hull-House's reputation as well as the settlement project's ideals, and it highlights the

ways Progressive-Era writers were re-envisioning domestic and public roles for women. Published in the same year as Addams's Twenty Years at Hull-House, it shows the maturity of the settlement movement. The settlement ideal had been in the public eye long enough that writers other than those participating directly in it offered a philosophically informed re-envisioning of the movement. Laughlin also exposes one criticism of the settlement ideal, namely, that despite efforts to the contrary, settlement residents remained aloof from the daily lives of their neighbors and that working-class people were intimidated by the settlers. "Just Folks" is also important for the role it envisions for women. Judith Raftery points out that "in her independence, robustness, daring, capability, and gentility, [Beth] embodies the characteristics of the New Woman" (48). I would add to that list of New Woman characteristics her reform-mindedness and her unwillingness to sacrifice her self and her work for domestic cares.[92] Part of her independence is born of economic necessity; though middle class, she is compelled to work to support herself and to send a bit of money back home to her mother. But her interest in her work clearly transcends monetary need. She takes her role as a probation officer extremely seriously, and she demonstrates a pervasive interest in the young children of the neighborhood, whether or not they are her official charges. She looks to the interest of Mary Casey's children, and she intercedes on behalf of a boy in her court lest his parents beat him for causing them the trouble of appearing before the judge (59). Like the protagonists of the Boston novels as well as the historical settlement workers themselves, Beth is highly invested in the practice as well as the theory of social reform.

[92]The British and American New Woman had various incarnations, of course, but Ann Heilmann and Margaret Beetham identify a few of her defining features: "her short haircut and her practical dress, her demand for access to higher education, the vote and the right to earn a decent living, [and] her challenge to accepted views of femininity and feminine sexuality" (1). The American New Woman, though, often differed from her British counterpart in that prior to the 1920s, the American incarnation rarely advocated sexual freedom outside of marriage.

Laughlin's novel explores the possibilities of and problems with urban social change. She exposes the ineffectiveness of the middle-class do-gooders who try to force solutions on the working classes from without. In her efforts to find summer employment for a needy boy just under the legal working age of fourteen, Beth encounters a "wave of outraged public sentiment [that] had recently hit the . . . office of the factory inspector very hard"; the "zeal for the saving of little children had mounted on the crest of the wave to frenzy," so "[a]s must happen, doubtless, when any fine reform is to be carried through, a great deal of unnecessary and undiscriminating rigor bore heavily upon many who might well have been spared," and the boy was denied a work permit despite his prospect of an otherwise idle summer (77). Laughlin reveals here that she does not favor absolute reform but a reform that takes into account the particular needs of individuals, an argument that further supports Beth's personal knowledge of those she aims to assist. Since Addams and other Hull-House affiliates were at the forefront of child labor legislation, such a criticism continues to chide settlement reformers for failing to meet their goal of effective personal knowledge of their neighbors (Ladd-Taylor 111-12).

Despite such criticisms, Laughlin assures readers that Beth reveres "the great Jane Addams" for the latter's goal "not, primarily, so much to teach as to learn" and argues that "[i]f Jane Addams had been able to communicate the beauty of her spirit to more of her disciples, there could never have been any discussion [or debate] of what Hull House was worth to the Nineteenth Ward" (107). In other words, Laughlin argues through Beth that the settlement movement has departed from its intended plan of enriching and enlivening the middle classes in addition to the working classes through closer contact between the otherwise disparate groups. Since she believes that many middle- and upper-class

philanthropists are selfish and misguided, Beth awakes, "finally, to what she called 'the claims of Lake Shore Drive'" and personally schools an upper-class and previously dilettantish woman in effective modes of assistance so that she might "share her wealth [of knowledge] with the 'poor rich'" (108). As the wealthy but melancholy Mrs. Brent shares her artistic knowledge with Beth's neighbor Dinah, a young Jewish dwarf whose parents believe her condition to be God's judgment on their lives for some unknown sin, both Mrs. Brent and Dinah blossom, illustrating Beth's belief that mutual enrichment ought to result from interaction between social classes. Laughlin's text, then, argues for Jane Addams's original settlement goal of mutuality while pointing out that, in practice, the settlement has not realized that ideal.

Laughlin presents her heroine as being more "of" the neighborhood than either the Hyde Park Lady Bountifuls or the Hull-House reformers. Beth's residence in the Ghetto and her personal, intimate relationship with the Casey family both render her a more effective agent of social change. However, her middle-class status and her perpetual position as rescuer nevertheless cast her in a role that is pervasive in settlement literature: the middle-class female savior figure. Like the historical Addams—as well as the fictional Jean, Hilda, and Clara—white, middle-class, progressive Beth is the one who will catalyze and mediate social change. Though the critique of Hull-House as being nearly as removed from authentic working-class life as homes in upper-class neighborhoods is a radical move, Laughlin nevertheless gives Beth much of the agency in the novel. In fact, Beth often compares her role to that of God, claiming a sympathy with the deity based on her role as a facilitator of benevolence. In discussing her internal conflict over helping the Casey family despite her resentment of the alcoholic Pa Casey for his neglect of his family's welfare, she tells Hart, "I

think I know how God feels—in a way . . . . [E]ven God can't keep the innocent from suffering with the guilty, or the guilty from enjoying the sun and starshine, same as the pure in heart. Or if He can, He doesn't. Then why should we[?]" (54, emphasis in original). Further, Beth argues at a later point in the text, "You learn a lot of sympathy with God . . . when you try to act as the agent of His Providence for any of His children. You can see, in a feeble way, how hard things must be for Him who holds all the blessings, and life, and death, in His hands" (119). These statements clearly reveal an idea that pervades much of settlement literature: despite claims to the contrary—even from someone as concerned with mutuality as Laughlin's Beth—much of the movement's literature relies on the white, middle-class woman to be savior of the less fortunate. Though Beth learns from her neighbors and her respect for them grows throughout the novel, she clearly sees herself in a role aligned with divine omnipotence, and in her role as mediator between rich and poor, between the law and the citizens of Chicago, she wields the power of one who saves others from themselves as well as from forces beyond their control.

Beth's real reform is not so much enacted among her neighbors through her social work as among her middle-class female peers through the model of her marriage as a companionate partnership where each member works in her or his own occupation to promote change in the midst of those they are hoping to help. Guy Szuberla, in his article "Peattie's Precipice and the 'Settlement House' Novel," argues that except for Peattie's novel, most settlement fiction—Laughlin's text included—follows the traditional marriage plot: "Offering their readers the bland assurances of a happy ending, novelists anchored their plots in conventional tales of courtship, romance, and marriage. However radical the characters' ideological excesses, however exotic their social experiments and living

arrangements, marriage in the final chapter gave promise that basic social institutions and traditional morality would be preserved" (61). I disagree with Szuberla's characterization of Laughlin's narrative, however. Though Beth does agree to marry Hart at the end of the novel, it is clear that theirs will not be a traditional marriage. The narrative offers several different versions of marriage and courtship, and Beth and Hart stand out as the model couple. Laughlin offers as contrasts to Beth and Hart the sympathetic but mockingly humorous portrayal of the courtship of working-class Liza and her suitor Adam (who unite after decades apart during which each has lived a hard life) as well as the reuniting of the wealthy Mrs. Brent with her previously estranged husband. Besides these unions, the novel features several marriages like Mary Casey's, where the husband has "the failin'" (alcoholism) and the wife and children labor to support the family, plus the "fall" of Mary's daughter Angela, who wished for an exciting life on the stage rather than the fate of her mother and like women in her circle. Beth and Hart, though, stand out as the pair who demonstrate mutual respect, friendship, and individual agency as they each work for social change and eventually make a joint decision to wed. Over the course of the text, Hart Ferris comes to appreciate Beth's dedication to her work. Hart is trying to occupy "that 'thou and thou only' place in her life and heart," but "it was such a busy life, such a wide-reaching heart, that it wasn't easy to acquire over it complete sovereignty; it wasn't like the heart of a girl with nothing to think of but love and her lover. But Ferris was beginning to see how much more glorious the conquest of it was [since] he could feel the solid ground of comradeship beneath his feet" (104-05). Beth's dedication to her work, then, makes her a <u>more</u> desirable wife because it demonstrates that she is Hart's intellectual and social equal. Furthering the text's argument for companionate marriage, in the novel's conclusion Laughlin's heroine resolves a

disagreement with Hart and seals the couple's decision to unite by arguing, "I don't suppose I ever thought of loving you less because you couldn't see things just exactly as I do. I believe we see things alike almost as much as is safe in a partnership—don't you? If there's never a bit of difference, two are no better than one—are they? And I—I think two are!" (374-75, emphasis in original). Rather than subsuming her own identity under her husband's, as was still the norm in 1910, Beth will retain her own point of view. Laughlin's narrative certainly argues in favor of marriage—as Beth says, "two" are better than "one"—but their marriage is one based on friendship and equality in a mutual desire to improve social justice. Ultimately, Hart and Beth agree to reside in the Nineteenth Ward after they marry since, as Hart points out, "What's the use of living away from where all your friends live?" (375). This image of two independent yet like-minded people working to improve society by living and laboring among the less fortunate sets up a New Woman-New Man union as the ideal and thereby revises the traditional marriage plot.

Beth as New Woman married to a New Man is more radical than Beth as Juvenile Probation Officer living in the Ghetto. Nevertheless, Laughlin's radical vision is not the only barometer of the text's relevance. "Just Folks" offers a significant revision of the marriage plot and it provides a portrait of the New Woman in American Progressive-Era literature, but its perspective on the settlement movement should be considered no matter where the novel falls on a continuum of radicality because, along with the other texts in this study, it shows the pervasiveness of the settlement movement and its influence on U.S. culture as well as gender, class, and racial negotiations in reform work and its literature.

Elia Peattie's The Precipice

Like Laughlin's text, Elia Peattie's The Precipice is a settlement novel that explores the opportunities and desires of women in the early twentieth century while offering a revision both of Addams's reform model and of the marriage plot. Kate Barrington, the protagonist, is an independent, middle-class, reform-minded, young white woman. After earning a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Chicago, she returns to her childhood home in small-town Illinois to live, but she finds her newly widowed father's "tyranny" unbearable (Peattie, Precipice 14). To escape from the dreariness of her small town as well as the sexist authoritarianism of her father, Kate moves back to the city and finds work as an agent with Hull House-based Children's Protective Association. Like Laughlin's Beth Tully, Kate elects not to live at Hull House, though her choice is based on her desire for a more expansive and entertaining life than that offered by the settlement (as opposed to Beth's desire to live in the "Ghetto" to be nearer the working classes). Instead, Kate chooses to live with the family of her married friend Honora and to board at the Caravansary, a cooperative dining room frequented by a variety of intellectuals and artists. "[B]orn, apparently, to care for others" (49), Kate labors for women's causes, devises a scheme for a national Bureau of Children, and eventually chooses to marry a worthy New Man while continuing her national work on behalf of children.

The major tension in The Precipice is the debate over the best course for a (middle-class, white) woman in the 1910s to follow. The narrative often endorses a "natural," elemental womanliness and proposes maternity as the aspect of a woman's life that "give[s] it its great significance" (103, 18), yet it critiques women such as Kate's mother who, in her efforts to please her tyrannical husband, lives a compromised life and endorses the sacrifice

of "[a]nything for [domestic] peace" (14). As she negotiates her post-college experiences, Kate must determine how to be a useful and fulfilled woman. Along the path of this coming-of-age narrative, Kate is offered many alternative models of womanhood as well as a few options for marriage. She must choose her path according to her own ideals and desires (which sometimes compete), and her personality and fate are contrasted with that of several other women in the text, including her mother, Mrs. Barrington, who prefers domestic peace at all costs, even though it means allowing her husband to rule the home with an iron fist; Marna, a vivacious opera singer reminiscent of Verena from Henry James's The Bostonians, who eventually leaves the stage for a happy marriage and domestic life; Honora, a brilliant scientist who sacrifices her womanliness—and therefore her marriage—for the sake of her husband's scientific contributions; Mary, Honora's cousin, who represents the "eternal feminine" that attracts men, yet whose sex appeal proves empty and undermines "real" womanhood; and Lena, the sexless scholar who gives herself a nervous breakdown by pushing beyond her intellectual limits in earning a Ph.D. Another feminine model even includes Jane Addams herself, whose "genius for inclusiveness" Kate credits with influencing her own approach to reform. Kate, though, is depicted as having more personality than the "sad, kind, patient, quiet" Hull House founder (105, 106). Though the publication of The Precipice coincided with the pinnacle of Addams's renown, the reformer was not above reproach, even from those like Laughlin and Peattie who otherwise accorded her much praise.

With so many negative examples, Kate must wend her way along her own path. In her role as agent for the Children's Protective Association, she is "given an inexhaustible task, police powers, headquarters at Hull House, and a vocation demanding enough to satisfy

even her desire for spiritual adventure" (31). For Kate, then, her work is a spiritual necessity; merely keeping her father's house, by contrast, would have depleted her. And as in much settlement literature, in addition to furthering her own fulfillment, her role allows her to act as a savior to others: "It was her business to adjust the lives of children—which meant that she adjusted their parents' lives also. She arranged the disarranged; played the providential part, exercising the powers of intervention which in past times belonged to the priest, but which, in the days of commercial feudalism, devolve upon the social workers" (31). This repeated characterization of middle-class white women, whether official social workers like Beth and Kate or nonprofessional reformers like those discussed in chapter three, is a motif that cannot be overlooked in settlement fiction. Such a consistent portrayal not only reflects social realities but also affects them, contributing to the legacy of a white, middle-class feminism that assumes responsibility for nonwhite, non-middle classes without recognizing the agency of those classes. Ironically, it is this very question of agency the authors often try to examine. Beth in particular repeatedly debates the best means of effecting reform and criticizes middle-class do-gooders, but the fact remains that she is the person whom other characters come to when they encounter trouble, and as she compares herself to God, Laughlin's text reveals a persistent middle-class bias. Peattie's text, too, assigns most of the agency in the novel to Kate. It is she who removes children from their homes in hopes of finding them better ones, a role she condescendingly likens to a game wherein "I'm moving my pawns here and there, trying to find the best places for them" (32); similar to Beth's comparing herself to God, Kate refers to her role as that of a "traveling bishop" who "authoritatively rearrang[es] the affairs of the disarranged" (127). At one point in the text, Kate swoops in to save a small, "motherless" girl from her abusive father after hearing the

child's cries from the street (178-79). In one of the most vivid scenes of the novel, she brazenly confronts the non-English-speaking "Huniack."[93] Through her would-be suitor Ray's eyes, the five-foot-ten Kate is described thus:

> Kate . . . stood there, amazingly tall among these low-statured beings. Never had she looked to Ray so like an eagle, so keen, so fierce, so fit for braving either sun or tenebrous cavern. She dominated them all; had them, who only partly understood what she said, at her command. She had thrown back her cloak, and the star of the Juvenile Court officer which she wore carried meaning to them. (178)

The Precipice is not, first and foremost, a novel about the problems of the poor; rather, it is a novel about the ideal role of the young, middle-class, white woman in the social fabric of the nation, and the role Peattie proposes is that of mother/protector—not just of her own children, but of the nation's. This passage demonstrates the pathos of the powerless, "motherless" young victim of abuse, and it points out that the father likely wielded the literal lash to his daughter because "he, too, had been castigated by a million invisible thongs held in dead men's hands, and . . . his soul, like his child's body, was hideous with welts" (179; emphasis added). Peattie, then, is sympathetic to the role of environmental factors in urban social problems, but the scene is ultimately sympathetic to Kate, not to the immigrants she encounters. Despite the narrative's assertion of the reciprocity of social work—the main tenet of Addams's social philosophy—the text remains essentially about Kate and her choices as a woman. She is the superhuman savior whose work protects the "motherless" and shames their abusers. Szuberla notes that in this scene Kate acts "as the agent of Americanization and

[93] More often spelled "Hunyak" (or "Honyock" or "Honyocker") this is a pejorative term applied to Central European immigrants ("Huns" or Hungarians), similar to the likewise pejorative "Bohunk" ("Hunyak").

America's superior culture," demonstrating her superiority as compared to the abusive immigrant father and his impotent immigrant neighbors (72). Importantly, this scene also serves to reveal to Kate and to Ray the deep nature of her independence, an independence that unnerves Ray and paves the way for her equal union with the more broad-minded Karl.

Kate's work eventually leads her to propose the formation of a national Bureau of Children.[94] In a speech at a conference of women's clubs, Kate promotes, "by means of impersonal rather than personal arguments," institutional responsibility for rearing the nation's children. Claiming that "parents are no better than other folk," she "touched on eugenics—its advantages and limitations" and described the business of the new Bureau as "the removal of handicaps" due to "any sorry inheritance" (220). Namely, "[a]s the Bureau of Agriculture labors to propagate the best species of trees, fruit, and flowers, so [the Bureau of Children] would labor to propagate the best examples of humanity—the finest, most sturdily reared, best intelligenced boys and girls" (221). Making all "young people under twenty-one remain in a sense the wards of schools," Kate argues for a grand extension of social control over young people's development so that the nation will breed stronger citizens (221); she also argues for women to act as "the mothers of men and women as well as little children—the mothers of communities—the mothers of the state" (222). Peattie, then, though conceding that "[m]ammalia are numerous in this world [while] real mothers are rare" argues for a stronger role for women as the natural caretakers of the nation. Like Addams, she extends woman's purview based on her traditional role as keeper of the domestic realm. Her

[94] In 1912, the date of publication of The Precipice, the U.S. government established an actual Children's Bureau, an idea that had been proposed in 1903 and seriously debated since 1909. The Children's Bureau, housed in the Department of Commerce and Labor, "operated as the women's branch of the federal government in the 1910s and 1920s" since women were, at the time (and as argued in The Precipice), believed to be natural authorities on issues related to children. The bureau's first director was Julia Lathrop, a resident of Hull House; its initial concerns were "infant health" and child labor (Ladd-Taylor 110).

argument, however, reveals a darker side of Progressive ideology: a eugenic plan in which Kate and those like her (white, independent, intelligent, middle class, temperate, and "pure") serve as the ideal representative of the race and will assume authority over the supposedly weaker of the species.

Surprisingly, none of the criticism on The Precipice engages the text's blatant eugenicism. Despite its title, Szuberla's article "Peattie's Precipice and the 'Settlement House' Novel" focuses mainly on a history of the settlement novel. He celebrates Peattie's text as being the lone exception to settlement literature's endorsement of the marriage plot,[95] and he points out the ways Peattie's text supports middle-class Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism (61, 72). But even in his claim that Kate Barrington "represents a feminized future, the new 'civic family,' and the unities of a coming American civilization," he ignores the eugenic basis of that future (73). Focusing only on Kate's union with Karl Wander, Szuberla makes no mention of the novel's Bureau of Children or its goal of weeding out the nation's unacceptable hereditary legacies. Patrick Chura devotes a chapter of his monograph to Peattie and Laughlin, but he really only uses their settlement narratives as foils for Eugene O'Neill's The Hairy Ape, and he does not mention the concept of eugenics. Even Sidney Bremer, who edited Peattie's novel for its 1989 republication and who has written several articles about the novel, fails to discuss the eugenic elements of the text. While she writes at length about Peattie's attention to maternity and inherent womanliness and the vexed nature of such feminist discourse (Introduction xxii-xxiv), Bremer never acknowledges that for Peattie's Kate, the extension of a feminist program based on women's maternal gifts results, in its "propagat[ion] of the best species," in a dangerous eugenicism whose logical conclusion amounts to state-sponsored genocide (221).

[95] I disagree with Szuberla's argument; as I argue above, "Just Folks" also offers a revision of the marriage plot.

For Kate, the nation must take an active role in ensuring the regeneration of its people through the eradication of hereditary "handicaps." She sees herself as having a primary role in promoting a stronger gene pool (or, in the parlance of the day, "germ plasm") in the United States. First, she will play a hand in eugenic development through the Bureau of Children, which the President of the U.S. agreed to establish with Kate as its first director. Second, through her equal marriage to Karl, an independent and intelligent Colorado capitalist who embodies the supposed vigor of the American West, she serves as a model woman who can "have it all." Despite Karl's idea that she will wield influence as his wife, Kate elects to take the directorship of the Bureau of Children and abide in a commuter marriage, with Karl remaining in Denver and she residing in Washington, D.C. The novel's title comes from a key scene wherein Kate and Karl resolve their visions of the future. Hiking in the mountains near Karl's home, Kate stands on a literal and figurative "precipice" where she makes her own "declaration of independence" (209). In the novel's allegorical end, Kate and Karl both go up the mountain, choosing different trails separated by a chasm. Choosing between the dangerous pinnacle of fame, public works, and personal independence versus the safety of Karl's home at the bottom of the mountain, Kate arrives at the conclusion that she and Karl need not be constrained by conventions but may blaze their own parallel paths. Despite being separated by the chasm, the two are on equal footing and choose to remain so, with neither going over to the other's side. Instead, both Kate and Karl progress—independently—back down to the point where the paths converge. Karl calls out to Kate, "Follow your path, and I will follow mine" to meet "a little below this height, [where] the paths converge"; there, the couple will create "a Republic of Souls . . . with equal opportunity" for each partner (242). Clearly, the novel offers a radical vision of

companionate marriage in which each partner can achieve personal success within the context of an equal partnership, with neither party sacrificing his or her self to the marriage. In this way, Peattie offers a model of a New Partnership similar to that put forth by Laughlin in "Just Folks": a New Woman wed to a New Man so that the two may promote their version of social progress. Peattie's narrative, though, raises more than the specter of eugenicism. Not just a model, her New Couple is a genetic ideal, and Kate will play the role of national mother in rearing the next generation. This element of the text clearly links it to the eugenic discourse of the age; Peattie's plan for countering the supposed societal degeneration around her rested on the neo-Lamarckian notion that the acquisition of "positive" traits (temperance, industry, thrift) could be fostered in a new generation by state raising of the children and subsequently passed on genetically to future generations for the supreme health of the body politic. The problem with such a scheme, of course, is that Kate Barrington and her middle- and upper-class white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant contemporaries would determine which traits were desirable and which were not.[96]

The Precipice is not alone in its emphasis on propagating certain qualities; much literature at the time featured eugenic arguments. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Crux (1911) and Herland (1915) are two better-known examples of women writers' promotion of eugenics in the Progressive Era.[97] Recently, cultural critics have been calling attention to eugenic elements in many texts from the turn of the century through at least the Modernist period.[98] It is crucial that scholars pay attention to the eugenicism in The Precipice and other texts; ignoring it, as has been the case in the (admittedly scant) scholarly reception of

[96] One result of eugenicism taken to its ultimate conclusion was Adolph Hitler's Nazi regime and its focus on "the pursuit of the master race" (Cuddy and Roche 12).
[97] See Dana Seitler's "Unnatural Selection" and her introduction to the Duke University Press edition of The Crux.
[98] See Cuddy and Roche for a wide-ranging examination of eugenics in American literature from 1880-1940.

Peattie's text, means overlooking the racist hierarchy on which the text depends and which in turn reflects the racist assumptions of the American middle class. Though the novel is fascinating in its depiction of a woman combining public service with personal romantic fulfillment and adds significantly to critical understanding of women's reform literature, part of that understanding must include the text's uglier elements so that a full grasp of Progressive-Era reform and its legacy can be attained. Eugenicism in the United States (and much of Western Europe) was used to justify the long-assumed superiority of Anglo-Saxons. As Cuddy and Roche point out, with the advent of Darwinism, "[p]resumably white Americans now had scientific support for the long-held belief that African Americans were comparable to the ape species but surely not to the Christian white man's 'higher' intellect." Darwin and his intellectual heirs similarly cast aspersions on "Jews, women, and the poor" (not to mention the Irish) because of the groups' supposed "closer affinity . . . with the animal kingdom from which they apparently evolved more slowly than well-to-do white men" (18-19). Peattie's novel, then—like many of the settlement texts examined in this project and, indeed, like much American literature, period—rests on a cultural and evolutionary hierarchy that, though implicit, greatly affects the message of the literature.[99] Though most settlement writers examined in this project desired to promote cross-class understanding and focused to a great extent on environmental factors that contributed to poverty, The Precipice highlights the cultural presence of a Lamarckian-Darwinist ideology that fostered a boom in eugenicism around the time of the text's publication.

Peattie, like Addams, can sometimes demonstrate ethnic inclusivity, such as her noting that at the national Federation of Women's Clubs conference, "Mrs. Hardin of

[99] See also Robyn Wiegman's American Anatomies for a discussion of the ways gender and race have been conflated.

Kentucky and Mrs. Garcia of California, found no essential differences in each other" (219), but she also offers negative portrayals of the Irish and Italians. When talented Irish-American opera singer Marna Cartan elects to give up her career for marriage, she meets Kate's questioning with the reasoning, "We Irish are a very old people. We always knew that if you loved a man, you had to have him or die, and that if you had him, you'd love to see the look of him coming out in your sons and daughters" (75). Given the text's celebration of Kate's eventual decision to maintain both a career and a marriage, this contrast with Marna reveals a criticism of Irish women's supposed excessive devotion to men and single-minded pursuit of childbearing. Peattie also taps into the WASPs' fear of the Irish Catholics' tendency to produce many offspring.

The author further represents Italians in the text as childlike. In a letter from Kate to her eventual partner, mining entrepreneur Karl Wander, Kate comments on Karl's Italian employees, "Honora says you own a mine; that you have a city of workmen; that you are a father to them. Are they Italians? They're grateful folk, the Italians. I hope they like you. They are so sweet when they do, and so—so sudden—when they don't" (142). Her text demonstrates Boeckmann's argument that in the Progressive Era, nationality was often equated with race, and each nation or "race" was ascribed a national "character" that supposedly distinguished it from others. Part of the Italians' character, apparently, is also a sense of festivity: as she has observed at their christenings, Kate "like[s] their gayety because it contrasts with [her] own disposition, which is gloom" (142). Representing the Italians as childlike and potentially vengeful suggests that they are not as "civilized"—therefore, not as evolved—as Anglo-Saxons. Her suitor's response to the letter also suggests that women are lower on the evolutionary scale than men. Karl contradicts Kate's characterization of herself

as gloomy: "Not the spirit of gloom but of adventure moves you . . . When I buy a horse, I always look at his eye . . . I like a horse that is always pressing forward to see what is around the next turn. Now, we humans are a good deal like horses. Women are, anyway" (142, emphasis added). While Karl is expressing admiration for Kate's inquisitiveness—a stereotypically undesirable trait in a woman—linking her to the animal kingdom also reminds readers of the female sex's apparently lower position on the evolutionary scale.

Kate promotes women's public service through the previously private arena of maternity, and she makes a strong feminist case for women maintaining their own identities instead of subsuming them under their husbands'. She recognizes that though she loves and respects Karl, "independently of him, she was still important" (220). However, in claiming a role as what amounts to the national Mother, and in promoting a studied plan for breeding and rearing the nation's best citizens, she also casts herself and her type—a white, college-educated, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant woman devoted to intellectual study and "the betterment of the world"—as the genetic ideal, with the Irish, Italians, and other undesirables occupying the lower ranks of that hierarchy (221).[100] The feminism of The Precipice, therefore, rests on Kate Barrington's sense of her own superiority. And though middle-class protagonists serve as saviors in most of the texts in this project, Peattie takes cultural hierarchies to a perhaps more dangerous level with the added eugenic focus.

In many ways, The Precipice is like the other texts in this dissertation. Peattie offers a fictional incarnation of the settlement ideal: that middle-class youth will be invigorated and working-class peoples uplifted through contact with each other in the context of a settlement. Her novel also, like the others in this study, envisions a nontraditional path for its heroine and therefore suggests a revision to the marriage plot according to New Woman ideals; yet it

[100] See Seitler for a discussion of similar themes in Gilman's fiction.

departs from the other fiction in its blatant endorsement of eugenic reform for the next generation of U.S. citizens. Peattie's novel, however, really only calls attention to a hierarchy that is implicit in much of settlement literature. As each middle-class, white woman is constructed or constructs herself as savior to the poor, she adds to a racist and classist national image of the Woman Reformer. That is not to say that Laughlin, Converse, Addams, or the others endorse the eugenicism that Peattie does. For example, Laughlin's Beth is concerned with living among and aiding people she considers her friends. But in presuming that she and Hart know best, in offering their relationship as a model for others to follow in contrast to the other, unequal, and even disastrous marriages in the text, Laughlin, too, participates in the privileging of the middle-class WASP woman reformer, a move that in the scientific (and pseudo-scientific) milieu of the day could eventually lead to a eugenic plan such as Peattie's. That is, if most Progressive-Era thinkers conflated genetics and the environment as determinants of behavior, if they, as Mark Pittenger argues, "seldom entirely eluded" Lamarckianism and its "theoretical conflation of the categories of race, class, and culture" (27), then identifying the white, middle-class, reform-minded young woman as the ideal citizen logically leads to eugenic encouragement for these women to take the lead in reproduction of future generations. Settlement literature, then, with its often clearly feminist message, its vexed but usually well-intentioned portrayals of the poor, and its ardent investigation of the theory and practice of Progressive-Era reform, nevertheless reflects the bigotry that permeated conventional American thought at the turn of the twentieth century.

Concluding Thoughts

My childhood interest in Jane Addams—as well as my feminism—wavered over the years. Indeed, I largely forgot about her, though my interest rekindled slightly when I occasionally heard her mentioned in a history class. I retained my image of her as a strong woman who took care of the less fortunate, traits I admired for much of my youth and adolescence. In my twenties, as I reclaimed my feminism and began graduate school, I became fascinated with the Progressive-Era and the New Woman. As a "good girl" with a rebellious streak, I admired women who did not always do what was expected of them, and I was particularly drawn to the turn of the twentieth century, when gender and racial identities were in such flux. I also recognized that these trailblazers made it possible for me, as a woman, to pursue a Ph.D. Along my path, however, I grew to realize that "taking care of the less fortunate" usually involves a great deal of self-importance and paternalism, and so my interest in the settlement movement and its literature has evolved. While I understand the women's missionary zeal for reform and continue to admire the ways they negotiated gender roles, I am more interested today in probing the complexities of their textual arguments, noting the limitations of their ideologies and tracing the legacies they bequeathed to later generations of feminists.

The New Woman—educated, independent, socially concerned—was praised and feared in her day, sometimes by the same writers in almost the same breath, revealing cultural anxieties over her presence. In an 1895 essay entitled "What Becomes of College Women," Charles F. Thwing, president of Western Reserve University, explains that "[t]he fact is that about fifty-five per cent. [sic] of the woman-graduates of our colleges marry. The fact is a happy one—happy for the wives and husbands, and happy also for the homes . . . .

The home is the center of life; it is the source of life's best influences . . . . The college woman, therefore, as embodying the best type of womanhood, is bringing the best offering of herself to the worthiest shrine" (546). Thwing's essay, along with one written ten years later by poet, editor, and literary critic Harriet Monroe, demonstrates the contemporary cultural concern with the College Woman, a term that describes most of the authors in this study.[101] Both writers intend to promote higher education for women, but their rhetorical approaches reveal the sexism and racism persistent in contemporary discourse regarding expanding roles for women. In explaining the types of careers college-educated women are likely to undertake, Thwing's assurances that most of the women marry suggest that readers should not worry about societal degeneration or race suicide resulting from women's higher education—the American home remains the primary domain of most college graduates. Thwing actually links the advance of "American" women to greater degrees of civilization. He begins his essay with a quote from a commencement speaker at Vassar College who claimed, "We have left woman as a slave with Homer and Pericles. We have left her as a foolish goddess with Chivalry and Don Quixote. We have left her as a toy with Chesterfield and the club; and in the enlightened American daughter, wife, and mother, in the free American home, we find the fairest flower and the highest promise of American civilization" (Curtis qtd. in Thwing 546). This is a clear textual example that bears out Louise Newman's argument that in the late nineteenth century, (white) American women were regarded as markers of the progress of civilization; in other words, more "advanced" civilizations exalted their women while "primitive" cultures denigrated them. In most Western ideology, a

[101] Only Elia Peattie and Clara Laughlin did not receive higher education. Addams graduated from Rockford Seminary in Illinois; Williams from the State Normal School in Brockport, New York; Cooper from Oberlin; Fernandis and Barrett from Hampton; Sherwood from Gormly Seminary in Newburgh, New York (she studied at several universities in Europe and America throughout her life); Scudder from Smith; and Converse from Wellesley.

culture's degree of progress was marked by its treatment of women (22). Ten years after Thwing, in 1905, Monroe argues that "[t]he modern girl . . . is free of the degrading old tradition" since she now has much greater access to higher education. And college training, Monroe argues (if undertaken in the liberal mode she advocates), will alter women's brains so that "the race may be expected to take a fresh start in its long climb toward the invisible goal, pushed by an impetus coming not from the minds of men only, impeded as so often in the past by feminine ignorance and emotionalism, but from the sympathetic intelligence of both halves of the human race" (318). Significantly, of the college women both authors cite, all are white, and neither Thwing nor Monroe mentions Oberlin College or institutions devoted to the education of African Americans. The authors therefore link the future progress of the nation to its (white) women and their maternity, education, and work.

This attention to well-schooled middle- and upper-class women as agents of change is also reflected in settlement literature, which reveals a broad manifestation of that idea in texts embedded in contemporary discourse. The texts reveal that suffrage was not the only issue of the day, that women were engaged in philosophical and pragmatic textual debates about public issues (e.g., sanitation, criminal justice, and labor conditions), even when they cast their concern as "civic housekeeping," a mere extension of feminine domestic matters, emphasizing their figurative maternal relationship to the nation. The unfortunate truth of the literature, however, is that even in its progressivism, it largely rests on a foundation of cultural bigotry and implicit racism, demonstrating Louise Newman's argument that, historically, racism underpins feminism. In describing the women's rights activists of the Progressive Era, Newman writes,

> White women in the late nineteenth century were engaged in a struggle for a positive female identity in a deeply misogynistic society: they articulated new arguments about race and gender to assert themselves as the political, social, and racial equals of white men. By offering themselves as the epitome of social evolutionary development, they were also trying, simultaneously, if paradoxically, to articulate an egalitarian vision, one that could be inclusive of women of color and that envisioned "lower races" as their potential equals in the future. They hoped that assimilation would lead eventually to full racial equality, and they believed that nonwhite women would want to follow them down this road. . . . In their minds, assimilation denoted a social vision that encompassed both a melding of peoples and a firm sense of hierarchy—an invitation to Others to participate (as almost-but-not-quite Anglos) in the body politic. (20; emphasis in original)

Women gained cultural power by promoting themselves as literal and figurative mothers of society, expanding their traditional domestic role to include the larger "domicile" of the nation, and white women gained further standing as supposed civilizing agents for nonwhite cultures.

The body of women's settlement literature written in the Progressive Era reveals much about gender, race, and class in reform movements of the time, and it helps illuminate the legacy of those movements for later social relations. While largely radical in terms of imagining nontraditional gender roles for fictional and actual settlement workers, settlement literature reveals the inherent Progressive-Era assumption that (white) women will save America from degeneration. From Addams's singular, individualistic heroine, to African

American women's agents of "uplift," to fictional white characters whose dedication and understanding will transform urban centers, to, ultimately, Elia Peattie's eugenic program, the literature participates in the construction of a (usually white) middle-class female savior.

Unfortunately, the legacy of white supremacy and eugenicism persists even to our own times. Mark Pittenger has noted that eugenic "hereditarian thinking about class difference clearly persists in our own moment" with the present scientific emphasis on genetics (28); one alarming example is the debates in the 1980s and 1990s over whether women on welfare should undergo forced sterilization. Third-Wave Feminism has also borne out some of the issues present in these texts, as nonwhite, non-Western women have identified the ethnocentrism and classism present in much late-twentieth-century feminist activism and scholarship.[102] The implications for this project, then, clearly reach beyond settlement literature. Yet these texts show that—for its pervasiveness, its position at the nexus of Progressive-Era culture, and its discourse over gender, race, and class—the settlement movement and its literature is well deserving of further study, and it provides an avenue for scholars to examine the long and sometimes subtle history of prejudice in radical movements.

This project only covers a portion of settlement literature. Future studies should include considerations of the movement by immigrants themselves, including Hilda Satt Polacheck's memoir, written in the 1950s but not published until 1991, called I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl, as well as novels by Anzia Yezierska and Mary Antin's memoir The Promised Land, which mention settlements from the perspective of immigrant women. Further archival work should also investigate periodical literature by Vida Scudder, Janie Barrett and Sarah Collins Fernandis as well as others who worked in the

[102] See, for example, critiques by Mohanty, Carby, and Moraga and Anzaldúa.

movement. Such research may also uncover writings by other then-well-known settlement workers such as Birdye Henrietta Haynes and Lugenia Burns Hope, both active in founding African American settlements. Feminist scholars might also examine women's characterizations of the settlement movement alongside that of contemporary male writers, both those involved in the movement and those writing from outside the movement, since many comparisons of men's and women's settlement writings still privilege male-authored texts.[103] Though historians have offered many book-length considerations of the settlement movement, literary scholars have yet to plumb the depths of the movement's texts for what they reveal about our cultural and literary history.

Settlement literature reveals the importance of interrogating our national mythologies and their protagonists, since such cultural narratives often obscure ugly realities of sexism, racism, colonialism, classism, and other forms of bigotry. Though Jane Addams did not demonstrate the overt racism that Susan B. Anthony and other white female suffragists displayed in debates over African American male suffrage,[104] settlement reform largely rests on a paternalistic hierarchy, and only by probing the intricacies of the literature can we explore the cultural hierarchies with which it contends—and on which it rests. Part of my initial attraction to Jane Addams and her work was my lifelong hatred of injustice, especially the injustice of prejudice. But I recognize that each of us—including me—must interrogate our own roles in cultural hierarchies if social change is to occur. Studying settlement literature allows me to witness the social fervency of the Progressive Era, even as it makes me cautious lest I, too, fashion myself as the great, white, middle-class heroine.

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[103] See, for example, Chura's chapter five, "Spiritual Adventures of Social Workers in Eugene O'Neill, Elia Peattie, and Clara Laughlin."
[104] See, for example, Newman, pages 3-6.

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ABSTRACT

THE PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD:
SAMARITANS AND SAVIORS IN MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN'S SOCIAL SETTLEMENT WRITINGS, 1895-1914

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My dissertation examines U.S. women's diverse literary contributions to the social settlement movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Beginning with Jane Addams's Twenty Years at Hull-House (1910) and examining other fictional and non-fictional considerations of the settlement project, I explore the ways in which the authors in my study individually and collectively confront a Progressive-Era ideal of societal regeneration. Working with well-known authors such as Addams and Anna Julia Cooper, as well as with rare and archival texts by writers such as African American activist Fannie Barrier Williams, Social Gospel writers like Vida Scudder, and regional novelists such as Elia Peattie, I analyze the writers' use of social, scientific, and religious arguments in service of urban reform work. I consider the interrelationships between text, activism, and identity for these women writers, and I argue that in writing about the settlement movement, each middle-class author in this study offers her own vision of what a Woman Reformer is and should be. Though Addams's memoir identifies the female activist as a singular, individualistic, and somewhat masculine

figure along the lines of Abraham Lincoln and Leo Tolstoy, other writers challenge this identity even as they refer and defer to Addams and her dominance. Most of the writers emphasize the importance of factors such as community, partnership, and religion through their texts, but ultimately, the literature as a whole largely relies on an image of a (usually white) middle-class heroine who will help save industrial America, and the final text I examine, Peattie's The Precipice, extends that idea to a eugenics-based reform program. "The People in the Neighborhood" shows that—for its pervasiveness, its position at the nexus of Progressive-Era culture, and its discourse over gender, race, and class—the settlement movement and its literature is a crucial area of study that provides an avenue for scholars to examine the long and sometimes subtle history of prejudice in radical movements.