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RHETORIC AND REVISION:
WOMEN'S ARGUMENTS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

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ABSTRACT

How did women advocate for social justice and civil rights during the Progressive Era? How were their interventions received? How did experiences of rhetorical failure shape their rhetorical strategies and practices? To address such questions, *Rhetoric and Revision* takes up case studies of activists Ida B. Wells, Sui Sin Far, and Jane Addams, who each engaged issues central to democratic citizenship. Wells worked to galvanize the American public to end lynching, Sui Sin Far argued for Chinese American civil rights and a progressive conception of Eurasian identity, and Addams advocated for pacifism and international mediation as an alternative to World War I. Using archival sources and rare newspaper and periodical items, I demonstrate that while each of these rhetors is known for her communicative savvy, courage, and diplomacy, each experienced significant moments of rhetorical failure. By situating such experiences in historical and sociocultural context, I analyze their compositional choices and their texts' reception, demonstrating how each rhetor was constrained by her positioning and resources. I also examine the strategic revisions each employed to continue her rhetorical advocacy. My study reveals how diverse and significant Progressive Era women argued for social justice and used their understandings of the privileges of nationality, race, and gender to complicate the binary between speaker and audience. *Rhetoric and Revision* centralizes issues of power, access, and resources and broadens our understanding of the "typical" rhetorical exigencies of the Progressive Era.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

> The rhetorical tradition's focus on success in communicating with and persuading others is longstanding and enduring, discernible in the western emphasis on efficiency, "getting the job done," and clarity, as well as in traditional theories and definitions of rhetoric….This focus on successful communicative negotiation inevitably, albeit silently, casts misunderstanding, miscommunication, disagreement, resistance, and dissent as failure and, as such, as that which is to be avoided or "cured."
>
> –Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede, "Representing Audiences"

> Feminist history writing defines itself as adding what has been left out to present more complete and fair truths of the past than traditional historical accounts.
>
> –Hui Wu, "Historical Studies of Rhetorical Women"

In 2003, Natalie Maines, lead singer of the Dixie Chicks, the best-selling, highest grossing women's music group in the United States, made a few remarks on stage expressing her disapproval of the United States' preparations for war in Iraq. "Just so you know," she said, "we're on the good side with y'all. We do not want this war, this violence." Maines was speaking before a sold-out crowd in London on the eve of the US invasion of Iraq. A member of a country band well-known for their Texas roots, Maines

added, “And we’re ashamed that the President of the United State is from Texas” (Kopple and Peck). Though this last remark drew applause and cheers from her London audience, Maines’s words provoked a firestorm of media criticism across the United States. Within days, country stations across the US banned their music, newspapers and talk shows denounced the three women in the band as unpatriotic traitors, bimbos, and “dixie sluts” (among other things), and angry fans publicly destroyed their music (Stokes 6).[1] The women, who apologized in a public statement but continued to support Maines’s right to free speech, received hate mail and even death threats. Their number one song disappeared from the music charts and album sales declined significantly. Clearly, the controversy damaged their reputations, and, ultimately, it significantly altered the musicians’ audience and the trajectory of their careers (Sachs).[2]

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[1] Maines’s remark was first reprinted in a *London Guardian* review March 12, 2003. In the review (and all subsequent coverage based on this article), Maines was quoted as saying only: “Just so you know, we’re ashamed the President of the United States is from Texas.” The women of the Dixie Chicks were criticized in highly gendered terms from the beginning of the controversy. Conservative political pundit Bill O’Reilly, for example, referred to band members Natalie Maines, Martie Maguire, and Emily Robison as “callow, foolish women who deserve to be slapped around.” Southern radio stations staged “chick tosses” encouraging people to throw away Dixie Chick CDs and television crews in Missouri filmed angry fans running over their albums with a tractor (Koppel and Peck).

[2] Justine Stokes, who published a master’s thesis in Mass Communication on the Dixie Chicks’s experience, gender, and the country music industry, documents that there is still an unofficial boycott against playing the band’s music in many major Southern and Southwestern country radio markets (1). For their next album, the women reframed their ethos to draw upon their authority as both mothers and iconoclasts in the tradition of Johnny Cash and marketed and distributed their next album without the support of country radio or television stations as a work of mainstream popular music (Stokes 77-84).

Maines's comments were received by many in the US as an attack on the honor of the presidency and the United States, an offense that was considered particularly egregious because it was made just before the outbreak of war (when a nation should be united) and on foreign soil. By speaking out on politics and war, Maines transgressed unspoken norms of public female behavior for the country music scene and genre. Two years later, a major metropolitan radio producer noted that Southern audiences still loathed the band: "It's not the music. It's something visceral. I've never seen anything like it" (Sachs). Approaching the Dixie Chicks' dramatic fall from grace as a rhetorical situation raises interesting questions about experiences of rhetorical failure with a given audience, the dynamics of women's rhetorical authority, and the role of ethos and authority in reception. Why was the audience reaction among many country music fans so negative, visceral and longstanding? How did the Dixie Chicks' positioning as white Southern women and their popular country audience's values influence their hostile reception? What was the impact of this experience on their subsequent rhetorical strategies and tactics as musicians and public figures? In losing a public platform, support, money, and a large portion of their audience, the women of the Dixie Chicks paid for their perceived rhetorical transgression. As a result, they changed many of their communicative strategies as public figures and musicians, and even influenced public conversations on war and gender.[3]

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[3] In the last six years, there have been many magazine, newspaper, and Internet articles and editorials about this "Dixie Chicks incident." Many focus, with varying degrees of depth and analysis, on the ways in which Maines's remarks and the women's defense of their right to dissent afterwards challenge traditional gender roles for white Southern women and the patriarchal business and publicity arrangements of the country music industry (Stokes).

This brief contemporary example also points to an important if often overlooked area of research on women's rhetorical practices: experiences of rhetorical failure that provoke public hostility, rejection, and silencing. Though scholars of rhetoric and composition have long recognized that rhetoric, as a practical art, is concerned with effects and with persuasion, conceptualizations of what it means to fail (or succeed) rhetorically have been under-theorized in the field. Moreover, despite tremendous gains in the recovery and recuperation of women's participation in histories of rhetoric, an achievement enabled in large part by feminist scholars' articulation and analysis of the constraints on women's discourse, no systematic study of experiences of rhetorical failure have yet been made. Yet, such experiences are a constituent part of rhetorical intervention, particularly those aimed at challenging mainstream norms to achieve social change. Their study, I contend, has relevance for rhetoric and composition scholars' understandings of rhetorical agency, ethos, and authority—all important concerns for feminist histories and theories of rhetoric (Campbell "Consciousness Raising: Linking Theory, Criticism, and Practice" 60, 48; Glenn *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity to the Renaissance* 4).

In this dissertation, I conceptualize rhetorical failure as an area of study important to histories of women's rhetorical practice. More specifically, I examine case studies of experiences of rhetorical failure in the careers of three significant turn of the twentieth-century social justice activists, Ida B. Wells, Sui Sin Far, and Jane Addams. My study also takes up Ede and Lunsford's insight that "[the rhetorical tradition's] dual moves toward exclusion and successful persuasion tend to hide from view any value that misunderstanding, resistance, or similar 'failures' might have" and seeks to conceptualize

rhetorical failure as an experience and a confluence of events with heuristic value and by examining case studies of rhetorical failure in Progressive Era women's rhetorical activism (174).

Analyzing experiences of rhetorical failure directs us to ask questions such as the following: How did a rhetor fail in a given rhetorical situation or with a particular approach? On what subject(s)? How amenable to rhetorical appeals and action were the obstacles to their persuasive success? What happened—to the rhetor personally as well as to the particular historical context and rhetorical moment—as a result of this experience? How did this experience affect the rhetor's style, strategic choices, and subsequent rhetorical performance? Scholarship currently focused on histories of rhetoric has largely skirted such questions. If histories of rhetoric and composition primarily select what seem to be rhetorical successes as objects of study then important historical lessons, rhetors, and dynamics of the rhetorical situation remain unexamined. What do we do, for instance, with rhetoric that "seem[s] to fail to take into account the sensibilities of an audience" because it is angry, confrontational, or defies expectation? What about rhetoric which resists traditional standards and plays with form or blurs genre boundaries? These questions point to rhetorical failure as a rich site for research in rhetoric and composition.

As Jane Greer argues in "'No Smiling Madonna' Marian Wharton and the Struggle to Construct a Critical Pedagogy for the Working Class, 1914-1917," histories of rhetoric and composition must recognize that "the rhetorical activities of women and other marginalized peoples are a complex interweaving of alliance and antagonism, of free choice and restricted options, of accomplishment and failure" (249). Expanding historical inquiry in this fashion also enables scholars to examine the rhetorical strategies

of rhetors and rhetorical situations often overlooked in histories of rhetoric and composition. This is particularly important in the case of rhetors marginalized by gender and race who encounter and negotiate with rhetorical failure whenever they challenge powerful mainstream discourses.

Defining "Rhetorical Failure"

In this dissertation, I define "rhetorical failure" as an *experience*. I do so in part because I want to emphasize rhetorical failure as a confluence of events experienced by a human rhetor rather than only an "effect" or a "result" of discourse. Conceiving of rhetorical failure as a simply a "result" of rhetorical action implies that rhetoric is discourse separate from and introduced into a sociocultural context. On the other hand, I want to emphasize rhetorical failure as an experience bound up with situated, historically contingent audiences, sociocultural contexts, material resources, and discourse as constitutive of *and* in response to situations.

Thus, I define "rhetorical failure" as an experience and a confluence of events in which rhetorical performance: 1) is rejected, ignored, or excluded by a significant audience, 2) causes the rhetor acute hardship and pain, 3) damages (or suppresses) the rhetor's reputation, 4) constrains the rhetor's ability to continue their rhetorical activism, and 5) impacts the rhetor's subsequent discursive and material rhetorical strategies. I also intend my definition to be attentive to the transactive, relational, and emotional nature of experiences of rhetorical failure.

In addition, I argue that experiences of rhetorical failure may constitute social change, particularly for rhetorical activists whose advocacy poses a challenge to

dominant sociocultural values and power structures. Analyzing a rhetor's experience of rhetorical failure is thus also a way of examining the bumpy, recursive process of social change. Historically, women's public activism has required a double challenge to the status quo in that women have had to claim both the right to public rhetorical advocacy, a reform in itself, as well as the right to advocate for their particular cause. Thus, histories of women's rhetorical practices have been necessarily marked (if not in some ways defined by) experiences of rhetorical failure, revision, and recovery.

It is, therefore, necessary to examine moments of rhetorical failure to develop a more complete understanding of the ways that women sought to intervene in mainstream discourses and policies to achieve social change. Analysis of these experiences offers important lessons about power and positioning and about the influence of discursive and material resources on a rhetor's career and on their rhetorical strategies. In this dissertation, I examine the rhetoric of Progressive Era women activists who resisted dominant discourses and challenged significant elements of the status quo. More specifically, I consider particular experiences of rhetorical failure in the careers of Ida B. Wells, Sui Sin Far, and Jane Addams.

Yet each of these women managed to continue her advocacy by finding new outlets, strategies and approaches to the exigencies motivating her rhetoric. Their experiences of rhetorical failure, while devastating, unwelcome, and costly, were also therefore generative of important revisions and strategies for these rhetors. Thus, in my case studies, I also consider some of the steps these rhetors made in order to recover from their experiences of rhetorical failure and to revise their rhetorical strategies to gain a public platform and to continue their activism. My hope is that these chapters offer a

better understanding of the sociocultural, material, and discursive dynamics of rhetorical failure as well as new insights into the rhetorical revisions and innovations employed by each of the women to enable their activism.

Why Study Rhetorical Failure?

I argue that expanding the scope of inquiry to investigate experiences of rhetorical failure as well as success allows scholars 1) to engage important, often overlooked questions that can help to enrich historiographic practice, 2) to critically examine the criteria by which rhetorical performances are judged and rhetors are excluded from or included in rhetorical traditions, 3) to examine the impact of these experiences on the subsequent rhetorical strategies of a rhetor, and thus 4) to learn from not only the successes but also the failures, adjustments, and recalibrations that are clearly a part of the historical record of human communication and persuasive practice.

The historiographic contributions I see as ensuing from analyses of experiences of rhetorical failure merit some additional development. First, examining significant experiences of failure can point scholars to productive sites of historical inquiry. Since it is somewhat unusual to undertake an analysis of rhetorical failure, such case studies, I assert, tend to raise "testing" questions in the mind of the scholar: Did the rhetor really experience rhetorical failure? Why? How? In what context? With what audiences? Engaging these questions can lead to approaches to the rhetorical situation that are

particularly attentive to context, overlapping audiences, and the historiographic responsibilities of judgment.[4]

Second, focusing on key experiences of rhetorical failure in the history of rhetoric can help to centralize issues of power, resources, and positioning if we consciously attend to the influence of these factors in the experiences constituting a rhetor's career. As with the proverbial miner's canary, historical moments of backlash, suppression, and failure should lead scholars to examine problems with the mine (the rhetorical situation) as well as with the canary itself (the individual rhetor in question).[5] In centralizing these pragmatic components of a rhetor's situation from the beginning, historical research in rhetoric and composition can attempt to avoid, as Lani Guinier put it, "pathologiz[ing] the canary" by highlighting the dialectical relationships between rhetor and situation, audience, resources and constraints (Guinier). Yet, such "pathologizing," what I call "personalizing" experiences of rhetorical failure, has occurred more often than we might like to admit in the scholarship on nineteenth and twentieth century women's rhetorics. For instance, in concluding his analysis of the rhetoric of Frances Wright, the "first

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[4] At times, it is possible that an investigation into "rhetorical failure" will lead a scholar to conclude that a rhetor did not, in fact, experience a rhetorical failure—that she was satisfied with the results of her performance, enhanced or maintained her reputation, was not hindered in her continued activism, and not compelled to revise her practice in response—but rather that subsequent critics/respondents have unjustly pronounced an experience of rhetorical failure due to their own misreading or misunderstanding of the situation. See, for instance, Randall A. Lake, "Enacting Red Power: The Consummatory Function in Native American Protest Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69.2 (1983).

[5] One of the overall arguments of this study is the latter has happened much more often than we like to admit. See, for instance, the trajectory of scholarship concerned with Sui Sin Far's writings.

woman who was a true civic rhetor," Robert Connors argues that, "rather than preparing the way for the slightly later group of abolitionists and feminist speakers, Frances Wright's legacy to them was a poisoned distrust of women speakers that proved an obstacle to female rhetors" (32-3).[6]

Third, writing historiographies of experiences of rhetorical failure can also contribute to feminist historical goals of "remapping" our histories of rhetoric by insisting that these experiences, too, are part of the story that complicate our histories and our understandings of the nature and practice of rhetoric.[7] Historical studies of women's rhetoric have demonstrated the myriad, often innovative ways that women have

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[6] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, in applying feminist methods of analysis to histories of women's rhetoric, argues rather that Frances Wright's flouting of prohibitions against women's speaking to mixed audiences of men and women, her short hair and unusual dress, and her views (among them antislavery, religious freedom, strict equality for women, and criticism of marriage) resulted in the "poisonous legacy" Connors attributes to Wright's compositional practice and style. The label "Fanny Wrightists," was created in response as "an epithet intended to frighten away any woman with aspirations to the platform" and to reinforce the status quo (vol. 1 17). More recently, scholars have examined the gendered backlash against Wright's performances. See Lindal Buchanan, "Forging and Firing Thunderbolts," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32.1 (2003), Carol Mattingly, *Appropriate[Ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America*, Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms, ed. Cheryl Glenn and Shirley Wilson Logan (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2002).

[7] For example, many of the women Glenn examined in *Rhetoric Retold* were excluded from "the" history of rhetoric because they did not meet the appropriate class or gender criteria for public rhetorical display (as, for instance, the unlettered mystic Margery Kempe or the skilled Renaissance translator Margaret More Roper) for previous historians of the rhetorical tradition. Hence my conceptualization, in the grammar that follows, of a "failure of reception" to name such exclusion.

discovered available means of rhetorical performance.[8] An important contribution of this work has also been to reveal and to analyze the sociocultural constraints arrayed against women's attainment of rhetorical education and public rhetorical advocacy (Glenn "Locating Aspasia on the Rhetorical Map").[9] I contend that analyzing experiences of rhetorical failure 1) contributes to our understandings of such constraints by examining hostile and silencing audience responses, the sociocultural context, and the rhetor's prior ethos as component parts of an experience of rhetorical failure and 2) contributes to our appreciation of women's strategic innovation and development of persuasive means by examining their subsequent revisions and rhetorical strategies after an experience of rhetorical failure.

Fourth, analyzing the steps women took to recover and continue their rhetorical advocacy after an experience of rhetorical failure also demonstrates that such experiences

[8] See, for instance Campbell *Man Cannot Speak for Her*; Glenn *Rhetoric Retold,* Royster *Traces of a Stream,* Mattingly *Appropriate[ing] Dress*. I will also comment on this contribution in greater detail, below, in my review of feminist recovery work on the Progressive Era.

[9] Feminist historiography has analyzed ways that mainstream conservative audiences and individuals denounced and restricted women's rhetorical advocacy by attacking their character. For instance, antebellum nineteenth century audiences responded to women's transgression of dominant norms in speaking publicly to "promiscuous" audiences by charging that such women "unsexed" themselves, had loose morals, or were viragos and "old hens" (Lindal Buchanan, *Regendering Delivery: The Fifth Canon and Antebellum Women Writers*, Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms, ed. Cheryl Glenn and Shirley Wilson Logan (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2005) 110. In the early twentieth century, when women's public rhetoric had begun more commonplace, rhetors were attacked not for speaking publicly but for transgressing dominant conceptions of the appropriate topics, delivery, and fora for women's rhetoric. This is an argument I will develop in Ch. 4 with respect to Jane Addams.

can be a catalyst to a change of strategy, language, place or tactics for a rhetor or rhetors. For instance, Ida B. Wells developed a rhetorical strategy of arranging copious evidence from the white press to show that consensual relationships between black men and white women existed and were falsely construed as “rape” by lynch mobs partly in response to being driven out of Memphis for even hinting at the truth of whites’ allegations of rape as a cover for such relationships. It is crucial to include and analyze such experiences to appreciate the development of an individual or group’s rhetorical action.

Scholarly Approaches to Rhetorical Criticism and Practice

This dissertation project joins an energetic series of conversations centering on historiography, feminist historiography, and rhetorical criticism. By historiography, I mean scholarship that presupposes and seeks to admit its interestedness and situated character rather than any alleged objectivity. Historiographies are partial stories that admit bias and scholarly positioning rather than grand narratives or closed sets of conclusions derived from historical investigation. Feminist historiography, as scholars such as Cheryl Glenn, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and Carol Mattingly have defined it, is particularly attentive to gender as a power differential present in all rhetorical action. It seeks to recover and recuperate the works of rhetorical women alongside those of men by redefining what counts as evidence, drawing theory from women’s rhetorical practice, and expanding the range of communicative activity and situations defined as rhetorical (Mattingly "Telling Evidence: Rethinking What Counts in Rhetoric" 105).

Historiographic research published in the last decade, especially feminist historiographic work, has challenged and expanded traditional histories of rhetoric that

focus on instrumental assessment of the artifacts of successful, well-received, and unusually persuasive rhetorical action. Texts such as Andrea Lunsford's collection *Reclaiming Rhetorica*, Cheryl Glenn's *Rhetoric Retold*, Jacqueline Jones Royster's *Traces of a Stream*, Nan Johnson's *Gender and Rhetorical Space*, and Roxanne Mountford's *The Gendered Pulpit* are just a few of the foundational studies that have driven scholarship committed to recovering and recuperating women's rhetorical practices while simultaneously interrogating the sociocultural contexts which powerfully constrained and directed that same rhetorical action(*The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces*). Because a foundational goal of feminist rhetorical criticism and historiography has been to examine and determine reasons for the loss, silencing, and lack of status of women's rhetorical action, such work interrogates "who may speak, who may listen or who will agree to listen, and what can be said" and the subjective, always already political and situational bases for rhetorical judgment (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity to the Renaissance* 1-2). My dissertation follows in the footsteps of this historiographic scholarship.

Rhetoric and Recovery will also contribute to conversations centering on rhetorical criticism, an area of scholarly inquiry that has a long history in the field of Communications (speech communication and public address in particular) but has not traditionally been a focus of rhetoric and composition scholarship.[10] In recent decades,

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[10] Roxanne Mountford argues that just as many literary scholars in English interested in writing pedagogy are not familiar with composition studies, rhetoric and composition scholars interested in the critical interpretation of rhetorical practices are often not familiar with work on rhetorical criticism in Speech Communications (Roxanne Mountford, "A Century after the Divorce: Challenges to a Rapprochement between Speech Communication and English," *The Sage Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*, ed. Kirt H.

the practice of rhetorical criticism has multiplied into a rich variety of inquiries less focused on assessing the immediate effects of rhetorical performance than traditional rhetorical criticism has been historically. Social movement studies, analysis of the psychological and addressed dynamics of rhetoric, and critical analysis of rhetorical performances within specific historical moments of social activism have helped to dramatically extend the aims and purposes of rhetorical criticism. Communications scholars such as Edwin Black, Herbert Simons, Richard Greggs, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Randall Lake, and Karen and Sonja Foss are just some of those who have enriched the scope of rhetorical criticism in this manner. Just as historiographers have challenged the professed objectivity and empirical basis of traditional history writing, scholars in rhetorical criticism have engaged in ongoing efforts to move rhetorical criticism away from an effects-driven assessment of rhetorical performance.

Doing Rhetorical Criticism

Rhetorical criticism is concerned with judgments about varied aspects of the rhetorical situation and with communication as situated practice.[11] Yet, many scholars of

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Wilson Andrea A. Lunsford, and Rosa A. Eberly (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008) 417-18.

[11] By “rhetorical situation,” I refer here to the heuristic tool typically used to invoke components of situated discourse such as rhetor, context (including constraints and resources), message, and audience. There is a rich history of scholarly debate over the meanings and uses of this term, coined by Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1.1 (1968). For extensions of this discussion see scholars including (in chronological order) Richard Larson, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Richard Vatz, Scott Consigny,

rhetoric and composition located in departments of English do not think of themselves as rhetorical critics or as practicing criticism per se. Rhetoric and composition scholars often, for instance, define themselves as historians of rhetoric, experts in particular rhetorical traditions, compositionists, and rhetoricians (rhetorical theorists). Similarly, explicit critical assessment of a given rhetor or rhetorical performance, particularly in terms of artistic and persuasive failure or success, has not been a common component of rhetoric and composition studies. This is at least partly due to the fact that rhetoric and composition studies in departments of English has roots in the teaching of writing rather than the evaluation of public oratory, the impetus for rhetorical studies in departments of Communication. As Mountford argues in her review of the history of rhetorical studies in English and Communication departments, "Much of the work of rhetoricians in English in the first two decades of the field [the 1970s-1990s] was historical in nature and focused on concepts that would be useful to composition instruction" ("A Century After the Divorce" 410). Many strands of rhetorical studies in English have tended to shy away from the evaluative function, furthering instead other critical goals.

For instance, an important element of discipline building for rhetoricians in English in recent decades has been the recovery and recuperation of a more diverse array of rhetors than had traditionally been accounted for in rhetoric and public address criticism. In recent decades, rhetoric and composition scholars have pursued detailed historiographic research and thick description to contextualize rhetorical artifacts so that

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David Hunsaker and Craig Smith, Barbara Biesecker, Mary Garret and Xiaosui Xiao, and Donna Gorrell among others.

they might become more visible in our traditions;[12] pursued refinements to traditional elements of rhetorical theory;[13] and published examinations of historical sites that have been under-explored and not well explained by classical rhetorical schemas.[14] Such scholarship is essential to making the subjects, topics, and sites of rhetorical activity studied in the academy and taught in the classroom representative of the diversity of human communicative experience. It has also been of paramount importance to generating new theoretical insights and methodologies for rhetoric and composition.[15]

However, I think that criticism is an inextricable part of scholarship in composition and rhetorical theory, histories of rhetoric, and the teaching of writing. Each of these areas necessarily involves assessment, negotiating criteria, and judging discourse in sociocultural contexts. Judging the good or successful, aesthetically or otherwise, is a task that always includes ideological and moral criteria as well as other so-called objective and scholarly terms. As rhetorical critic Michael Cahn argues, "a certain ambiguity…is liable to appear in any discussion of quality or artistic skill. The meaning

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[12] See, for instance, Cheryl Glenn's *Rhetoric Retold* and Jacqueline Jones Royster's *Traces of a Stream*, Anne Gere's *Intimate Practices*, Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronalds' anthology *Available Means,* and Wendy Sharer's *Vote and Voice*.

[13] See Krista Ratcliffe's extension of Burke's concept of "identification" in *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, and Whiteness*, Kathleen Welch's *Electric Rhetoric: Classical Rhetoric, Oralism, and a New Literacy*, and Roxanne Mountford's *The Gendered Pulpit*.

[14] Such as Vorris Nunley's work on African American Hush Harbor rhetoric and Nan Johnson's *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life*.

[15] Roxanne Mountford has noted that feminist studies in rhetoric and composition have produced many of the methodological innovations in recent decades and that literacy studies and those with feminist methods tend to use the widest variety of methods and approaches to rhetorical study.

of the ‘good’ comprises both a technical and a moral sense” (65). Rhetorical criticism, like theory-building and history writing, is not a critical practice magically free from political, institutional, and sociocultural values. As rhetorical critic Edwin Black reminds scholars of rhetoric, “there is, then, no criticism without appraisal; there is no ‘neutral’ criticism. One critic’s judgment may be absolute and dogmatic, another’s tentative and barely commit[t]al; but however faint the judicial element in criticism may become, it abides” (Black "Moral Values and Rhetorical Criticism"). This does not change even as a scholar might seek to narrow or specify her purposes in examining a rhetorical performance or composition as simply close textual analysis or understanding a text as a response to a rhetorical situation.

As the comments by scholars Cahn and Black indicate, unlike rhetoric and composition, scholarship in public address and rhetorical studies in Communications departments has historically assessed rhetorical performance in terms of “success” and “failure” and, particularly since the 1970s, debated the purposes and criteria for rhetorical assessment. Herbert A. Wichelns is credited with setting a direction for rhetorical criticism in communications that defined the field until the 1960s and 70s.[16] Wichelns’s argument that “rhetorical criticism is not concerned with beauty. It is concerned with effect. It regards a speech as a communication to a specific audience, and holds its business to be the analysis and appreciation of the orator’s method of imparting his ideas

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[16] For instance, Sonja K. Foss, in *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*, supports Donald C. Bryant’s argument that Wichelns’s work “set the pattern and determined the direction of rhetorical criticism for more than a quarter of a century and has had a greater and more continuous influence upon the development of the scholarship of rhetoric and public address than any other single work published in this century” (*The Rhetorical Idiom* (1958) 5, qtd. in Foss 25).

to his hearers" was particularly influential. His work helped rhetorical critics to define their efforts as distinctive from literary criticism in departments of English and inspired decades of scholarship that emphasized the instrumental, persuasive nature of rhetorical discourse and focused on analyzing what we scholars in English would call the constituent elements of the rhetorical situation: speaker, audience, message, and context (Wichelns 26).[17]

However, this primarily neo-Aristotelian paradigm has also been challenged in recent decades, first by rhetorical critic Edwin Black and then by critics using feminist methods of inquiry into rhetorical practice. This work raises important considerations and definitions of method and purpose for rhetorical criticism useful for historians of rhetoric located in departments of English. Black's *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (1965), shifted the paradigm for rhetorical criticisms in communications by documenting the field's traditional focus on the "immediate effects" of discourse and assessment of rhetorical performances based on their achievement (or lack thereof) of particular goals with a given audience. He argues that such a "neo-Aristotelian" paradigm prevents critics from considering important dynamics of the rhetorical situation, such as the ways in which rhetorical performance shapes perception of a historical event (*Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* 65), "dispos[es] an audience to expect certain ways of

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[17] See the essays in Medhurst's *Landmark Essays on American Public Address*. Scholars who have examined the disciplinary historians of Communications and public address, such as Mountford, Martin Medhurst, Thomas Benson, and Andrew King, document how this work contributed to discipline-building in departments of Speech Communication. See, for instance, "The Academic Study of Public Address, A Tradition in Transition" in Medhurst's *Landmark Essays on American Public Address* for a useful overview.

arguing and certain kinds of justifications," and affects the rhetor's "future commitments" and "public image" (33). Without disavowing rhetoric's pragmatic concerns with persuasion and the results of discourse, Black helped to introduce concerns beyond immediate effects and to insist that critics consider, in particular, compositional artistry, genre, and the long-term effects of a rhetorical performance on discourse communities.

Beginning in the late-1970s and into the early 1980s, feminist communications scholars like Karlyn Kohrs Campbell complicated and enriched Black's critique. Campbell's scholarship interrogates the history of women's lack of access to the education and authority necessary to assume the public role of rhetor. In her groundbreaking study of the early women's rights movement, *Man Cannot Speak for Her* (1989), she challenges the achievement of particular effects as the key criteria for rhetorical success and proposes instead that invention and rhetorical artistry are more appropriate criteria for assessment.

> The potential to engage another is the aesthetic or symbolic power of a piece of persuasive discourse. Such assessments are related to a work's actual effects. However, many rhetorical works fail to achieve their ends for reasons that have little to do with their style or content. In a social movement advocating controversial changes, failure to achieve specific goals will be common, no matter how able and creative the advocates…As a result, critics must judge whether the choices made by rhetors were skillful responses to the problems they confronted, not whether the changes they urged were enacted. (2-3)

Such an expansion of the criteria for rhetorical criticism insists that significant material and sociocultural dynamics of the rhetorical situation, particularly the historical constraints on women's speech, are an essential part of rhetorical analysis.

In recent decades, feminist rhetorical scholarship in histories of rhetoric and composition in English has also built on such arguments to capitalize on the liberatory potential of rhetoric as a rhetor's ability to discover and deploy the available means of her situation to explore and recover women's and non-canonical rhetors' innovative, artistic, and skillful use of traditional components of rhetorical composition (the figures, topoi, forms, or arrangement that constitute "means"). Feminist criticism of rhetoric in English has explored the ways rhetors claim, as Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald note of women's rhetorics, alternative and "oppositional identities, providing a new set of discourses, making available a new set of 'means' on which women can draw in order to continue to define women's subjectivity" (xxv). The fact that, historically, women and people of color must first argue for the right to speak and justify their qualifications for bearing witness on social and political issues has led scholars such as Keith Gilyard, Cheryl Glenn, David Howard-Pitney, Krista Ratcliffe, and Elaine Richardson and Ronald Jackson (just to name a few) to bring criteria other than that of immediate results to rhetorical analysis.[18] Such work implicitly challenges definitions of rhetorical success as

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[18] Howard-Pitney's study of the Afro-American jeremiad, for instance, explores the historical interplay between the constraints and resources of this rhetorical form and the varied rhetorical situations inhabited by figures like Fredrick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and Ida B. Wells. He analyzes the language and motivation for rhetors' strategic deployment and adaptation of the jeremiad, acknowledging as a given that factors which have nothing to do with a rhetor's talent and rhetorical skill can result in rhetorical failure as defined instrumentally. As Howard-Pitney argues, the sociocultural dynamics of the post-Reconstruction

persuading an audience to accomplish specific reforms or goals and forms a basis, I contend, for conceptualizing rhetorical failure as an important area of inquiry to rhetorical criticism and practice.

Why Write About Women and the Progressive Era?

I have selected to write about rhetorical activism during the time period popularly known as the "Progressive Era" (1890-1920) because it is a particularly rich historical moment for rhetorical study. In 1955, Richard Hofstadter famously labeled this era "the age of reform" in reference to the wide-spread agitation for political, social, economic, and legislative change that swept the United States.[19] Since Hofstadter's time there has been significant historical debate as to the periodization, unifying concerns, and central figures of the Progressive Era. Perhaps the only thing historians have agreed about this time period since is that "a strong reform ethos certainly dominated the period" (Chambers xii).[20] As Michael Hogan observes in his introduction to *Rhetoric and Reform in the Progressive Era*, "the Progressive Era is, in some sense, a historical fiction," but it

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United States resulted in a loss of audience and decrease in the public effectiveness of Douglass' rhetoric, while cultural expectations of womanhood limited Ida B. Wells' ability to consistently employ an aggressive, jeremiadic rhetoric as did her friend and colleague Douglass.

[19] Hofstadter's study *The Age of Reform* traces historical events organized by the Populist Movement, Progressive Era, and New Deal and advanced the argument that progressive reform was driven by the "status anxiety" of disaffected professionals and an alienated middle class.

[20] The periodization, unifying concerns, and key figures of the Progressive Era have been the subject of ongoing historical debate. See, for instance, Daniel Rodgers' "In Search of Progressivism" and Elizabeth Israel Perry "Men are From the Gilded Age, Women are from the Progressive Era."

is one that is useful in capturing the proliferation of rhetorical advocacy and public debate, much of which was characterized by rhetors' belief "in the power of words—especially *their* words—to effect positive change" (xvii).

The Progressive Era has also often been identified as "the beginning of contemporary America," a pivotal series of decades in which "we can trace the roots of institutions, policies, and values that still define the United States as a nation nearly a century later" (Frankel and Dye 9).[21] During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, issues that have long been of interest to rhetorical scholars—such as citizenship, democracy, and education—were redefined and hotly debated in the decades of reform (and retrenchment) after the end of political Reconstruction and the beginning of industrialization and immigration booms. The 14th, 15th, and 19th Amendments to the Constitution legally extended citizenship to all people born in the United States, the franchise to African American men, and the franchise to all women. More than fifteen million immigrants entered the country over these decades—via both coasts of the country—and millions of people moved from the agricultural South to developing urban areas in the Midwest, territories in the West, and cities in the Northeast (Diner 77). In addition, access to education was increasingly democratized through the dramatic expansion of public school systems (particularly in cities), teacher's education through normal schools and seminaries (primarily serving women), the first historically black colleges and universities, and new University "extension" programs. All of these

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[21] That the Progressive Era "marked the birth of modern America" is an argument made by many historians of this time, including John Whiteclay Chambers in *Tyranny of Change*, Steven J. Diner in *A Very Different Age*, and Hogan.

sweeping changes were accompanied by a prolific outpouring of persuasive speech in support of a diverse array of what we would consider today both progressive and disturbingly reactionary social movements (Hogan xii-xiii; Diner 13; Painter 385-90).

I have selected to focus on women's rhetorical activism in the Progressive Era because, for the first time in American history, large numbers of women experienced public prominence as leaders and members of voluntary associations, clubs, and social reform movements, particularly woman suffrage and temperance. Indeed, Frances Watkins Harper, in speaking at the World's Congress of Representative Women in 1893 (held during the Chicago World's Fair), proclaimed "we stand on the threshold of woman's era, and woman's work is grandly constructive" (S. W. Logan 43).[22] The public prominence of women's rhetorical activism during this time period has been the basis of many academic studies of women's public rhetorical advocacy.

In rhetorical studies, much of the scholarship on women's rhetorical practice during the Progressive Era has been focused on higher education and woman suffrage, two key areas enabling and supporting women's greater involvement in public and professional life.[23] In addition, scholars have also broadened the scholarship on women's education to encompass their "rhetorical education," the means by which women learned to organize, to participate in civic discourse, and to teach others how to claim the right to

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[22] Anna Julia Cooper also dubbed the 1890s a "woman's era" in *A Voice From the South* (1892), and in the early twentieth century suffrage supporters discussed the vote in terms of achieving the "woman's era."

[23] See, for instance, Lynn Gordon *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920*; Kathryn Conway "Woman Suffrage and the History of the Seven Sisters Colleges, 1865-1919"; Susan Kates *Activist Rhetorics in American Higher Education, 1885-1937;* Martha Watson *A Voice of Their Own: The Woman Suffrage Press, 1845-1910*; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell *Man Cannot Speak for Her*.

speak out.[24] Other recovery work on women's rhetorical practice from this time period includes studies of the rhetoric of women involved in the temperance movement (the Women's Christian Temperance Union was the largest women's reform organization in the U.S. at this time), and in the parlor rhetoric and elocutionary movements.[25] This recovery work has been essential to enriching our understanding of the history of women's rhetorical practice as well as the kinds of cultural constraints facing women who sought to gain rhetorical literacy, to practice rhetoric, and to engage in public deliberation.

In this dissertation, I aim to build upon the growing tradition of feminist recovery and recuperation work in the history of Progressive Era women's rhetorical practices. My study engages topics and sites of rhetorical activism that have not received much examination in rhetoric and composition, but which were of defining significance to the sociocultural context of the decades between 1890 and 1920. By examining women's rhetorical advocacy on issues of social justice, such as civil rights, immigration, war, and international relations, *Rhetoric and Revision* will also contribute to a broader

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[24] See, for instance, Anne Ruggles Gere *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880-1920*; Jane Donawerth's "Textbooks for New Audiences: Women's Revisions of Rhetorical Theory at the Turn of the Century"; Jacqueline Jones Royster *Traces of a Stream, Literacy and Social Change Among African Americans*; Wendy Sharer, *Vote and Voice: Women's Organizations & Political Literacy, 1915-1930*; and Jessica Enoch *Refiguring Rhetorical Education: Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/a Students, 1865-1911*.

[25] See Johnson *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life* and Carol Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1998). Though Mattingly's study does not extend into the twentieth century, the Women's Christian Temperance Union remained a force through the advent of Prohibition in 1919 with the eighteenth amendment.

understanding of the scenes and exigencies for women's rhetorical activism outside of some of the most well-known social reform movements.

To enrich our understanding and appreciation of the rhetorical practices of women during this time period, I have chosen case studies of female rhetoricians whose work engages exigent and enduring social issues emerging from these important topics. More specifically, my study will examine experiences of rhetorical failure in the rhetorical careers of three significant Progressive Era rhetorical activists: Ida B. Wells, Sui Sin Far, and Jane Addams. These women used their pens and voices to engage social causes that were important to their communities and controversial in their times. Ida B. Wells pursued journalistic investigation of the underlying causes and public justification for lynching in the post-Reconstruction South; Chinese American writer Sui Sin Far published essays and short stories that critiqued and exposed racism and discrimination against Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans in the turn of the twentieth-century; and Jane Addams composed speeches and essays in support of pacifism and a radical vision of multiethnic international democracy in the years leading to WWI. As part of their rhetorical activism, each rhetor sought to effect change in the views and behaviors of the white American mainstream on behalf of the groups for which she advocated.

Although each woman's rhetorical performance and communicative savvy has been recovered to some degree (Sui Sin Far least of all) by scholars in the humanities (rhetoric and composition, history, communications, and political science in particular), significant experiences of rhetorical failure in the rhetorical careers of each of these rhetors have been noted but not always historically contextualized and analyzed. Rhetorical analysis of such moments in the careers of Addams, Wells, and Far will help

to enrich our understanding of these women's rhetorical situations and historical context as well as the rhetorical strategies they used to respond to the complex social, cultural, and political situations in which they sought to intervene.

Some Methodological Considerations

My overarching methodology is influenced by feminist historiography and by gender studies. By historiography, I mean scholarship that presupposes and seeks to admit its interestedness and situated character rather than any alleged objectivity. Historiographies are partial stories that admit bias and scholarly positioning rather than grand narratives or closed sets of conclusions derived from historical investigation.[26] Feminist historiography challenges scholars to, as Hui Wu has recently argued, "become research agents who bring transformations to dominant research practices and interpretive frameworks. It must not only emphasize women as an additional historical subject but also pose methodological challenges to predominant theoretical models" (85-6). Thus, one of the goals of this project is to contribute to rhetorical methodology by conceptualizing rhetorical failure as an area of inquiry and to histories of women's rhetorical practices by expanding rhetorical performances that, as I have defined it above, failed for a given audience and resulted in negative material effects as well as important revisions in practice.

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[26] Because a foundational goal of feminist rhetorical criticism and historiography has been to examine and determine reasons for the loss, silencing, and lack of status of women's rhetorical action, such work also interrogates "who may speak, who may listen or who will agree to listen, and what can be said" (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 1-2).

Accordingly, to trace and to better understand the experiences of rhetorical failure of each of the women in this dissertation, I investigate each woman's rhetorical act and situation with three tiers of questions in mind: First, Who was this woman? What were the resources of her early background and education? What were the resources, concerns, and writings of her rhetorical career? What sociocultural contexts was she responding to and resisting? Second, What rhetorical acts were involved in her experience of rhetorical failure? What particular discursive or material constraints were most important to this experience? What was the nature of the response? What were the effects on the rhetor's reputation and subsequent rhetorical practice? Third, What can current scholars of women's rhetorical practices learn from these experiences? What do these experiences reveal about the role of rhetoric role in social change? What can they teach us about women's rhetorical strategies for gaining authority and a public platform for her rhetoric?

To answer these questions, my research methods have involved both traditional library and archival research. I use primary historical materials to reconstruct the writings and rhetorical careers of the women in this study, particularly in order to shed light on the concerns, exigencies, and prior ethos of each rhetor before her experiences of rhetorical failure and to provide a more detailed view of the revisions and steps each took to continue their advocacy. This historical grounding has been made possible in part by my archival research in the Jane Addams Papers (a microfilm project), the papers of Ida B. Wells (held at the University of Chicago), and by my tracing individual essays and ephemeral newspaper items through microfilm editions of late nineteenth and early twentieth century periodicals. I also use secondary historical, biographical, and

intellectual studies to support my reconstruction of the historical and sociocultural context and their historical careers.

Mapping Chapters

I have organized the case studies in this project chronologically, so that Ida B. Wells, whose experiences of rhetorical failure during her early antilynching activism occurred in 1890s, comes first, followed by Sui Sin Far, who experienced significant silencing and an inability to break into mainstream media outlets to critique Chinese-Caucasian relations in the first decade of the twentieth century. I then turn to Jane Addams, who was denounced for her attempts to propose international mediation off World War I in 1915. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction of the significant experience of rhetorical failure important to the case study. I situate each woman within her cultural context and describe the contours of her rhetorical career, including her education and biographical background. I then analyze the specific sociocultural and historical context of her experience of rhetorical failure, including the situation, texts, and audience responses. Finally, I consider the impact of such experiences on each woman's rhetorical activism by examining revisions each made to their rhetorical strategies and tactics.

In chapter two, "'*Free Speech* was the disturbing element': Ida B. Wells's Antilynching Rhetoric for a Revolution in Public Sentiment," I explore Wells's first decade of rhetorical activism in Memphis and New York between 1881-1893 and her experience being driven out of Memphis as a result of her antilynching activism as a newspaper journalist and as an editor of the paper *Free Speech and Headlight*. Drawing

in part on newly discovered archival evidence, I analyze revisions Wells made to her ethos, resources as a newspaper editor, and positioning that Wells made to recover a public platform for her activism.

In chapter three, "Sui Sin Far and the 'Connecting Link': Strategies for Chinese American Advocacy, Resistance, and (De)Familiarization," I analyze Sui Sin Far's work to critique patterns of Caucasian American discrimination against Chinese immigrants and attempts to break into mainstream media channels as a writer as an experience of rhetorical failure based on access and positioning. Because Sui Sin Far is a rhetor whose work is still being recuperated, I draw on both the history of criticism of her writings and her extant early writings. I also consider her move to New York and her autobiographical essay "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian" as rhetorical revisions of her positioning and approach to Asian American identity.

In chapter four, "A 'Revolt Against War': Jane Addams Disturbs Conventions and Deploys Memory," I examine Addams's activism for peace and mediation of World War I, particularly the address "A Revolt Against War," delivered at Carnegie Hall in 1915. I trace the ripple effect of the negative public and personal reactions to this address and examine Addams's subsequent rhetoric in *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* as an important example of rhetorical revision in which Addams approached women's activism for peace indirectly by examining the process of social change and women's involvement in a variety of social reforms in this experimental book.

The final chapter reflects on the different ways that these Progressive Era women activists experienced rhetorical failure and revised their rhetorical practices to enable continued rhetorical activism. I draw out the conclusions, implications, and inferences of

my study for scholarship in feminist histories of rhetoric and composition, rhetorical criticism, and the Progressive Era. One of the implications of this study is a “grammar of rhetorical failure” that I offer as a heuristic for rhetorical analysis.

Given that the U.S. continues to struggle with similar debates over immigration, civil rights, peace, and international relations, there is much that contemporary rhetoricians can learn from analysis of the experiences of these Progressive Era activist foremothers. Ultimately, this study contributes to histories of rhetoric and composition, rhetorical criticism, and Progressive Era historiography by demonstrating the centrality of experiences of rhetorical failure to women’s activist rhetorics for social change, by identifying specific dynamics that contribute to experiences of rhetorical failure, and by identifying significant revision of rhetorical strategy and technique women have made to recovery the necessary platform and resources necessary for contributed rhetorical activism.

CHAPTER TWO

"*Free Speech was the disturbing element*":

Ida B. Wells and Antilynching Rhetoric for a Revolution in Public Sentiment

> Strong in her devotion to race, strong in the affections of her people, and strong in the estimation of influential men, co-workers with her in the cause, with all the future hers, if she fails to impress her personality upon the time in which she lives, whose fault will it be?
>
> –T. Thomas Fortune, 1893

In late May of 1892, Ida B. Wells (1862-1931), a prominent African American journalist, editor, and co-owner of the Memphis *Free Speech*, traveled from Memphis to Philadelphia for the African Methodist Episcopal general conference. It was her first visit to a general conference and the city where the church was founded, and the trip represented an important opportunity to meet, as she put it later in her autobiography, "all the big guns of the African Methodist Episcopal church, who made a lot of fuss over our only woman editor" (Duster 59). Wells stayed with her friend and mentor Frances Watkins Harper, the Philadelphia poet and temperance leader; met with spiritual and secular leaders Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, Bishop Daniel A. Payne, and Fannie Jackson Coppin; and continued on to New York to discuss newspaper business with *New York Age* editor-owner T. Thomas Fortune. The spring of 1892 had been a devastating turning point in Wells's life; three of her friends in Memphis had been lynched by white men with complete impunity, plunging the Queen City of the "New South" into turmoil. By May, thousands of African Americans had left the region in protest and in search of

opportunities in Western territories. Wells, too, was considering moving her paper, and she may also have been scouting potential locations in Philadelphia and New York during this trip (Giddings *Ida* 207-9).

At the Jersey City train station Wells learned she could not return home to Memphis again. Fortune, her host in New York, explained that in the weeks Wells had been away from Memphis, threats were made against her life, the *Free Speech* was destroyed, and Memphis trains and Wells's home were being "watched by white men who promised to kill [her] on site" (Duster 76). The reason? The leading white men of Memphis cited Wells's rhetoric. More specifically, a short editorial she had published in the May 21, 1892 issue of *Free Speech* that was purported to have unforgivably defamed white southern womanhood. Forced into exile, Wells stayed in New York and launched a multi-pronged campaign to mobilize the support and funds necessary to create the public sentiment "which is the first step toward revolution of every kind" ("Requirements of Southern Journalism" 190). She eventually settled in Chicago and did not return to the South for thirty years (Duster 62-63; Thompson 29-30; Wells-Barnett 18).

The story above is the most well-known one there is about Ida B. Wells. Her brief May 21, 1892 editorial has become known as "the famous editorial that got her thrown out of the South," and nearly every study of Wells's activism and writing includes an excerpt and the story of her forced exile from Memphis (Bederman 55).[27] Scholars have long noted that this watershed moment in Wells's rhetorical career "transformed her from

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[27] Significant anthologies, like the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature* and John Edgar Wideman's *My Soul Has Grown Deep: Classics of Early African-American Literature*, also include both the "threadbare lie" lines and the story of Wells's exile from Memphis.

a journalist to a public figure and launched her lifelong struggle to put an end to lynching" (Bay 109). Biographer Linda O. McMurry even argues that, "Ironically, if Wells had not been run out of Memphis, she would never have become the recognized leader of the antilynching movement" (167). Yet most scholarship and rhetorical analysis of Wells's writing has focused on her antilynching pamphlets and her 1893 and 1894 speaking tours in England rather than her journalism. The texts of Wells's early rhetorical career (between 1883 and 1892) in particular have received relatively little rhetorical analysis, though new biographical studies have begun to resist this trend.[28]

In this chapter, I focus on Wells's early career and newspaper rhetoric, contextualizing her experience of rhetorical failure in being driven out of Memphis. More specifically, I argue that she experienced a rhetorical failure of positioning and situation as an African American woman who protested the terrorism of lynching through her own paper in what historian McMurry calls "the paradox of Memphis in the late nineteenth century" (18). I also demonstrate how this experience significantly informed and shaped Wells's subsequent rhetorical strategies in New York in terms of her discursive creation of ethos, her focus on the issue of libel and lynching, and the material strategies she employed to organize and mobilize public support. Wells's experience of rhetorical failure with mainstream audiences in Memphis was thus generative and constitutive of social change because she transformed the altered available means of her situation in New York into the basis for continued activism.

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[28] Rhetoric scholars Campbell, Logan, and Royster have not focused on the content and rhetorical situation for Wells's rhetoric before her 1892 *Southern Horrors* address and pamphlet. Similarly, historians and Wells scholars Mildred Thompson, Paula Giddings (in *When and Where I Enter*), and Patricia Schechter have focused on Wells's antilynching speaking tours in England.

In this chapter, I review the critical scholarship on Wells's rhetoric and the sociocultural context of the post-Reconstruction South. I then analyze Well's early rhetorical career and prior ethos to show that, as a young, militant, and female African American journalist and new editor, Wells's rhetorical positioning was both supported by an active African American press network and highly unusual and precarious for her time and geographic location. I then examine the texts and contexts of Wells's May 21, 1892 editorial and the violent white public response in Memphis to argue that Wells experienced significant rhetorical failures of positioning and situation in this turning point of her rhetorical career. Finally, I consider some of the rhetorical strategies and innovations Wells made in the construction of her ethos, use of evidence, and advocacy for direct political action to recover a public platform and to continue her antilynching activism from New York. More specifically, I analyze her rhetorical action in the immediate aftermath of her exile as a correspondent for the *New York Age* and in an address entitled "The Requirements of Southern Journalism." By tracing textual and historical references, I have identified this archival document (which had previously been misidentified in the scholarly record) as a speech Ida B. Wells delivered to the National Colored Press Association in September, 1892. The address complicates our understandings of Wells's antilynching activism and highlights the importance of exposing and attacking libel as a rhetorical strategy in her antilynching campaign.

The Scholarly Conversation

Ida B. Wells is an essential figure in U.S. history and scholarship concerned with social justice and civil rights. A wide variety of scholarly work in history, sociology,

African American studies, and journalism has documented and celebrated her international renown as a writer, activist, and founder of the American antilynching movement. There are six scholarly book-length studies devoted to Wells's life and activism—including three major biographical studies—as well as her own autobiography *Crusade for Justice* (published posthumously in 1970 by her daughter Alfreda Duster). Edged out of the historical record after her death in 1931, Wells's historical and academic legacy is a testament to two generations of recovery work and scholarship on African American rhetoric and history.

Initially, seminal histories of the African American experience, such as Carter G. Woodson's *The Negro in Our History* (1928) and Rayford Logan's *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (1969), did not discuss Wells's activism and writings.[29] However, after decades of effort, Wells's daughter Alfreda Duster succeeded in publishing her autobiography *Crusade for Justice* in 1970. This text is an invaluable record of Well's life and activism, which Duster complemented by donating Wells's papers to the University of Chicago in 1975.[30] Due in no small part to the impact of the civil rights and feminist movements on academic scholarship, during the 1970s and '80s historians and scholars of black women's studies drew on these materials and published the first scholarly examinations of Wells's antilynching activism. David M. Tucker's "Miss Ida B. Wells and Memphis Lynching" (1971); Bettina Aptheker's "Lynching and Rape: and Exchange of Views" (1977); Paula Giddings's

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[29] Woodson makes no mention of Wells, and Logan, despite extensive reviews of lynching and late nineteenth-century print representation of African Americans, notes only that Wells signed the call for the NAACP.

[30] Many of Wells' personal papers and clippings were destroyed in a house fire before her death (Bay 12).

When and Where I Enter (1984); Hazel Carby's "On the Threshold of the Woman's Era: Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory" (1985); and Dorothy Sterling's *Black Foremothers: Three Lives* (1988) analyzed Wells's antilynching pamphlets and documented her reputation as a militant, feminist activist. Tucker and Giddings in particular argued for recognition of Wells's radical style and argued that her rhetorical activism in England (in 1893 and 1894) were the first successes of her antilynching campaign. Aptheker and Carby demonstrated Wells's contribution to late nineteenth-century African American feminist theory and exposure of white supremacy's dependence on patriarchy and racist oppression.[31]

By 1994, Melba Joyce Boyd could argue in a review essay of Mildred Thompson's *Ida B. Wells-Barnett: An Exploratory Study of an American Black Woman, 1893-1930* (1990) that, "Ida B. Wells-Barnett, who endured political and gender discrimination from within and from outside the Afroamerican community, has, to a large extent been vindicated by the advent of black women's studies" (8). Thompson's study was a combination of biographical analysis the sourcing of important primary and secondary materials to promote further scholarship.[32] She documented Wells's importance to all of the significant movements for social justice and civil rights from the late nineteenth century to her death and argued that Wells's legacy had been suppressed by her differences with the mostly male leaders of the NAACP and Urban League, and the rise in patterns of male leadership in the civil rights movement. The same year,

[31] See also Higginbotham "African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race" (*Signs* 1992) for more on the development of African American women's history and theory.

[32] The study included an extensive bibliography, images, and reprinted all ten known (at the time) examples of Wells's contributions to periodicals from scattered archival sources (163).

historian Linda O. McMurry published, *To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life of Ida B. Wells* (1990), a biography which drew extensively on Wells's papers and her unpublished diary to complete, in particular, the picture of her early life in Mississippi and Tennessee.[33] However, Thompson and McMurry, like Giddings, contrast Wells's first decade of activism in the United States with the successes she achieved after the speaking tours in England and focus their textual analysis on Wells's antilynching pamphlets and speeches (92-93; 91-93).

For contemporary scholars of the history of rhetoric, the name Ida B. Wells is a familiar one. Due in particular to the work of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Shirley Wilson Logan, and Jacqueline Jones Royster, Wells has become well-known as a rhetor of impressive ability, insight, and courage. All three scholars have increased students' and scholars' access to Wells's antilynching pamphlets *Southern Horrors* (1892), *A Red Record* (1895), and *Mob Rule in New Orleans* (1900) as well as the only extant full-length speech Wells made to a white audience "Lynch Law in All Its Phases" (1893). Campbell included Wells's *Southern Horrors* in a chapter of her landmark anthology *Man Cannot Speak for Her* (1989), and examined her use of an apparently "masculine" rhetorical style and evidence to amplify her analysis of the power dynamics of race and gender in lynching. In "To Call a Thing By Its True Name: The Rhetoric of Ida B. Wells" (1995), Royster argued for Ida B. Wells's legacy as a rhetor (in addition to an activist) and examines her work in the context of her cognitive model for African American women's use of rhetoric for social change. Royster also situates Wells as an important figure in African American women's essayist tradition in *Traces of a Stream* (2000). In

[33] Wells's diary was subsequently edited and published by Miriam Decosta-Willis in 1995.

"*We are Coming": The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women* (1999), Logan complicates Campbell's assessment of Wells's "masculine" style by analyzing Wells's use of vivid detail to create "presence" as a rhetorical strategy in "Southern Horrors" and "Lynch Law in all Its Phases." Scholarship in rhetoric and composition has also focused on Wells's antilynching addresses and her pamphlets, all published after October, 1892.

In the past few years, three studies indicate a renaissance in Wells scholarship may be underway. Patricia Schechter's intellectual history, *Ida B. Wells-Barnett & American Reform 1880-1930* (2001), recovers Wells's career as a journalist in Memphis between 1883-1892 and pays particular attention to frequent disapproval and censure she received from male African American male leaders of the press and pulpit. Two scholarly biographies, *Ida: A Sword Among Lions* by Paula Giddings (2008) and *To Tell the Truth Freely* by Mia Bay (2009), make extensive use of archival materials and turn of the twentieth-century secondary sources to fill in scholars' knowledge of Wells's early years and final years in Chicago. These studies have aided me immeasurably in reconstructing the texts and contexts of Wells's early rhetorical career.

Post-Reconstruction: Context for Wells's Early Rhetoric

An understanding of the context for Wells's rhetorical activity is particularly important given that Wells's antilynching rhetoric analyzed the sociocultural and economic dynamics of lynching. The last two decades of the nineteenth century have been famously labeled "the nadir of black American life" by historian Rayford W. Logan (9). From the official end of political Reconstruction in 1877 through the turn of the

century, African Americans in the South lived in a climate of violent retrenchment. Gains made after the Civil War in work, land ownership, education, voting rights, and governmental representation were repealed and then eliminated through a combination of white-led lawsuits, legislation, violence, and discrimination (Mullings). In 1883, the Supreme Court negated the 1875 federal Civil Rights Act, opening the way for corporations and communities to impose legalized separation and usher in the era of Jim Crow.[34] The situation only grew worse as the turn of the century approached and the white South's backlash against reconstruction hardened into a region-wide "reclamation" of white supremacy via a total assault on African American rights, livelihood and safety by the 1890s.

Even still, African American prosperity and independence continued to increase slowly while their public deference to and dependence on whites decreased. Whites in the South increasingly feared the loss of their political and economic control—particularly in the face of thriving African American towns and business ownership. For example, in an 1893 article in the current affairs magazine *Forum*, Georgian Charles A. Smith observed, "they [African Americans] have ceased to show proper respect to the white people, and

[34] Other segregation landmarks quickly followed: the famous Plessy v. Ferguson case ruled against Plessy and in favor of transportation and public facilities segregation in 1896. In Cumming v. County Board of Education in 1899, the court ruled that separate schools were constitutional even if comparable school conditions were not available for Afro-American students. The federal government failed to address the disastrous and discriminatory results of this repeal for seventy-one years. Not until 1954 in Brown v. The Board of Education did the Supreme Court finally rule that separate conditions dictated by race could never be equal, ending legal segregation. See Thomson Publishing's Findlaw database of Supreme Court decisions for additional information on these court cases: http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html.

they will not work for them…the white man is losing his sympathy and the negro his feeling of dependence" (176). Just as importantly, as periodicals and literature at this time demonstrate, many southern whites dreaded the end of a cultural hierarchy that ensured white supremacy.[35] By the late 1880s, the white-owned press regularly featured articles concerned with the purportedly growing insolence and violence of African Americans, men in particular. The rape of white women by African American men also began to be cited in papers throughout the country as a rising epidemic and threat to embattled white southern womanhood.[36]

To ensure white sociocultural and economic supremacy, lynchings were used with increasing frequency to control and intimidate African Americans. Based on statistics collected by the Tuskegee Institute, between 1882 and 1900, 1,751 African Americans

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[35] Smith continues, for example, "Wherever the negroes dominate in numbers, they are arrogant and insolent…They are a menace wherever they are densely settled. Where they are in a helpless minority they are respectful and give no trouble" (176). To give just one example from imaginative literature, Thomas Neil Page, a late-nineteenth century white novelist, published a "Reconstruction" novel entitled *Red Rock* in 1898 about Moses, a sinister Afro-American politician who is lynched for raping a white woman.

[36] As historians Linda O. McMurray, Dorothy Sterling, Gail Bederman, Joel Williamson, and Nell Irvin Painter (among others) have documented, the rise in the use of the rape charge against African American males can be traced to the late 1880s. Though this rise has been tied to a variety of sociocultural forces and events, there is scholarly consensus that "this myth of the black rapist was relatively new" and deployed with increasing frequency to drive and justify the increase in lynching (Bederman 46). Despite the apparent ease with which this myth was given enough validity for popular circulation the press, a number of contemporary activists and intellectuals did publish counter arguments and challenges as well. Signifying on the white Northern, Fredrick Douglass wrote an article addressing the "new negro crime" for *The North American Review* in 1892 challenging readers' passive acceptance of the myth (17).

were lynched. 1892 (the same year as the lynching at the Curve in Memphis) marked the peak of recorded lynchings, with 161 African Americans murdered by mobs (Browner).[37] As Ida B. Wells's campaign so powerfully documents, the post-Reconstruction myth of the African American rapist gained currency among a majority of American whites during this time and was used as a public rationale for lynching. Though tremendous African American achievements in literacy, higher education, and political, cultural, and religious leadership were made during the post-Reconstruction era, the dominant trend for southern African Americans was one of retributive oppression and violence by white Americans.

Memphis, the city Wells called home from 1881-1892, was a city of opportunity as well as a place consistently plagued by white racist violence. After the 1878 yellow fever epidemic that killed Wells's parents and more than 5,000 Memphis residents, the city was slowly rebuilt as an emblem of the "New South." Attracted by work and social opportunities, white and African American rural southerners began moving to the city, resulting in a "sometimes raucous blend of rural and urban" culture. By the mid-1880s, Memphis again had a base of African American professionals and a network of churches, social institutions, and benevolent organizations (McMurray 21; Schechter 39-41). Memphis also supported a lively newspaper circuit, including five major white-owned newspapers and at least three African American weeklies (Baker *The Memphis Commercial Appeal* 115, 64; Baker *The Memphis Commerical Appeal* 115, 64; Schechter

[37] The Tuskegee statistics document that white Americans were also lynched during this time, though their numbers were always under 50%. Most importantly, as lynchings continued through the turn of the century, the number of white lynchings declined markedly in proportion to Afro-American lynchings as white racist backlash intensified.

41). However, an increase in the overall number, prosperity, and independence of African American residents during this time disturbed Memphis whites determined to enforce white supremacy and to prevent interracial social equality. Thus, lynchings and outbreaks of racist violence (including other forms of murder) occurred consistently and with increasing frequency in the years after Reconstruction in Wells's home city as well as the region (DeCosta-Willis 6-7; McMurray 22).

Rhetorical Career: From "Iola" to "Exiled"

Ida B. Wells was a skillful, courageous, and ethically committed rhetorician who became internationally known for her efforts to expose the race and class-based power dynamics of lynch law and to put an end to mob-murder in the U.S. Yet there has been little analysis of the rhetorical resources and constraints of her early journalism and no analysis of this work as persuasive language. This chapter thus makes a unique and important contribution to scholarship on Wells, antilynching, and Progressive Era activism.

In this section, I will briefly review Wells's biographical background, the development of her rhetorical career, and her early journalism. Study reveals that Wells developed an incisive, socially committed style of journalism, and that she brought a critical edge to subjects as varied as true womanhood, temperance, railroad segregation, and the obligations of race leadership. A greater understanding of the context of Wells's development also help us to understand how Wells built upon her "novel" status a female press agent, editor, and National Colored Press Association officer in establishing her reputation as "The Princess of the Press" (Duster 31-2). Reconstructing the texts of

Wells's early rhetorical career also sheds light on the prior ethos and rhetorical resources she brought to the *Free Speech* and the May 21, 1892 editorial that proved to be the last she published from Memphis.

Biographical Background

Ida Bell Wells's biographical background demonstrates her tremendous persistence in the face of significant loss and hardship as well as her successful attainment of a privileged level of education and professional opportunity for an African American woman of her generation. Wells, the first of eight children, was born a slave in 1862 in prosperous cotton town of Holly Springs, Mississippi to Jim and Elizabeth Wells. Her father was a skilled carpenter, the son of his owner and a slave woman, Peggy. Ida's mother was a cook who had endured much under slavery before being sold to the Boling household (where Jim was apprenticed) (McMurry 4-11).

After Emancipation, Wells's parents modeled resistance and self-sufficiency for their children. During Reconstruction, Jim Wells was expelled from his carpentry apprenticeship for refusing to vote the Democratic ticket, and he immediately established his own business. He was a Master Mason and trustee of Holly Springs's first school for newly freed slaves. Elizabeth Wells was a deeply religious woman who established a reputation as "a famous cook" in the region. She inspired Ida's "voracious reading" as a child as well as a stern sense of discipline and Christian duty. The Wells's secured education for all of their children first through a local school and later at Shaw University (later Rust College), a new institution supported by former slaves and the Freedman's Aid Society that initially offered education at all levels. Elizabeth attended classes at

Shaw with her children until she could read and write. (Thompson 11-12; Duster 9-11, 21-22; Giddings *Ida* 10, 18-29).

By the mid-1870s, Wells began attending Shaw, now under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North. Its students were required to attend daily chapel and weekly prayer meetings in addition to Sunday services. Its curriculum was influenced by evangelical Christianity and, initially, offered education from an elementary level through a four-year normal school course. Ida did not continue, though she may have begun, the normal course, and she supplemented the "practical training" required for girls (including domestic skills) by reading in the church's and Shaw's libraries (McMurry 12-14; Giddings *Ida* 30-31). Wells noted in her autobiography that she spent as many hours as possible reading, and that she finished "all of the fiction in the library," including Louisa May Alcott, Charlotte Bronte, Charles Dickens, and "the Bible and Shakespeare through" (Duster 21-22). Indeed, references to both scripture and Shakespeare animate her writings throughout her life.

In 1878, when Ida was sixteen, her world was forever changed by a yellow fever epidemic in Holly Springs that killed both of her parents and two of her siblings. Ida, who had been visiting her grandmother in the country, returned to five surviving siblings. She was determined to keep the family together in her parents' house and even stood up to Mason members (who wanted to find separate homes for the children) to do so (Duster 16-7). With the assistance of her guardians and funds left by her parents, she began teaching in a rural school in Mississippi. Supporting the family on this salary proved untenable, and in 1882 Wells moved to Memphis with her two youngest sisters to board with an aunt, and her extended family took in her remaining siblings. In Memphis, Wells

taught in a primary school outside the city and studied for the Memphis municipal teacher's exam, where the salaries were significantly higher. Wells noted in her autobiography that she pursued "hard study" in her early years as a teacher to supplement her lack of normal school or collegiate training, and that she was often self-conscious of her lack of education in comparison to her fellow teachers (Duster 32). Biographer Mia Bay argues that Wells's enduring advocacy for the masses of African Americans and her insistence that intellectual leaders attend to the material conditions of ordinary people's struggle stems from such life experiences (12).

Teaching in Memphis brought Wells into the social and political circles of the city's African American middle class and provided opportunities that became the basis of her writing and editing experience. "School teaching," Patricia Schechter argues, "made African American women like Wells visible and political in the civic life of Memphis" (45). Not only were teachers elected by the School Board, but they also had professional status and organizations like the Memphis Lyceum. The lyceum was "a breath of life" to the intellectual Wells and a forum for her rhetorical education (Duster 23). Through the lyceum, she discussed current literature, participated in recitations, and took elocution lessons from Hallie Quinn Brown. In 1883 she was elected editor of the lyceum weekly, the *Evening Star*. Wells's editorship increased attendance at the weekly meetings, and she soon received her first assignment as a journalist from a lyceum visitor, Baptist Rev. R. N. Countee, publisher of the *Living Way* weekly. Wells first established her reputation as a journalist and gained access to a publishing platform through religious weeklies, and the active exchange between these papers and wholly secular newspapers like the *New York Freeman* and the *Detroit Plaindealer* testifies to the deep interconnections between

these fora for African American readers in the late nineteenth century (Schechter 40-45; Duster 15-18).

Becoming "Iola"

The 1880s was an auspicious time for Wells to enter journalism. During this first decade of the Progressive Era, almost two hundred black weeklies were published nationally. Paula Giddings expresses the double-edged nature of the opportunity: "if technological advances that increased printing speed, lowered the cost of paper, and facilitated circulation helped to popularize poisonous perceptions about race, they also facilitated the rise of the black press" (*Ida* 76). Wells's first journalistic assignment for the *Living Way* was to "write up," as she put it, the story of her first public act of civil rights resistance: her successful lawsuit for damages against the Chesapeake, Ohio & Southwestern Railroad for being forced into a smoking car by two white conductors, despite having a first-class ticket (47).[38] Her essay was a hit, and Wells began writing a column under the name "Iola" for the paper. Her articles were soon picked up by the African American press, and by 1886 she began to received requests for writing from "the most prestigious papers—the *Age*, the Detroit *Plaindealer*, the Indianapolis *Freeman*" (Sterling 73). The active exchange between African American papers

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[38] The article is not extant. Wells's case and victory was significant as the first case in the South tried after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the 1875 Civil Rights Act (Giddings *When and Where* 64). The case was later overturned by the Tennessee Supreme Court in a precedent-setting decision later cited in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).

nationwide meant that "Iola's" name spread quickly.[39] She built up her newspaper network through correspondence and through important mentors like the Baptist ministers and publishers Rev. Countee and Dr. William Simmons of the *American Baptist* magazine (Wells-Barnett 16; Schechter 65-66; McMurray 94-96).

In her autobiography, Wells says almost nothing about her early journalism, but a review of the evidence makes clear that "Iola" was a journalist who championed "race improvement" and civil rights and frequently examined the socioeconomic position of African American women. She was independent in her politics, attended a number of different churches in the city, and reserved the right to "defend the cause of right and fight wrong wherever [I] see it" (Duster 48). For example, in February, 1885, as a correspondent for the *Living Way*, Wells praised an article T. Thomas Fortune had written protesting "the unjust treatment of the railroads" that some Southern editors had apparently resented:

> Such illogical deductions as they make! Such sorry shams as they are anyway! They excite the contempt and anger of every fair-minded person. One good result of the late political revolution [the end of Reconstruction and repeal of the Civil Rights Act] is already apparent; it has aroused the mass of colored people as never before since the war. Every paper contains a protest, a gem of its kind from someone who voices the sentiment of a long-suffering people. From all over the land comes this

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[39] As an example of this exchange network, one 1885 article McMurray attributes to Wells was published in the *Gate City Press*, reprinted in the *Indianapolis Freeman*, and commented upon by the *Cleveland Gazette* and *Washington Bee*.

> cry, the ranks of which are being swelled by the voices of other nations. May it continue to swell until public opinion, like Banquo's ghost, will not down a Southern editor's (caterers to a minority's will) bidding. ("A Word Concerning Southern Editors" col. B)[40]

The editorial demonstrates essential themes Wells continued to develop as a rhetor over the next decade. Primary among them are her appeals to "public opinion" as a constitutive force in social change and the responsibilities of the press, Southern representatives in particular, in forming public sentiment for respect, resistance and civil rights.

Throughout the late 1880s, "Iola's" editorials for papers like the *Living Way*, *American Baptist*, and *New York Freeman* continued to demonstrate her independence in commenting on right and wrong "wherever she saw it." An article picked up from the *Living Way* by the *Freeman*, for instance, was aptly sub-titled "'Iola' States some Facts about Leadership which may Make Somebody Wince."[41] A short piece for the *American Baptist* demonstrates the energetic parallel construction, concrete detail, and exhortation typical of Wells's journalistic voice. Wells challenges her readers to recognize that

> the spirit that makes colored men run excursions with "a separate car for our white friends," etc., provides separate seats for them when they visit our concerts, exhibitions, etc., is the same that sends the Negro to theatres and church galleries and second class waiting rooms; the feeling

[40] Reprinted in *The New York Freeman*, February 7, 1885.

[41] The article appeared in the *Freeman*, column A, August 8, 1885 Ida B. Wells, "Functions of Leadership: 'Iola' States Some Facts About Leadership Which May Make Somebody Wince," The New York Freeman 1885.

> that prompts colored barbers, hotel keepers and the like to refuse accommodation to their own color is the momentum that sends a Negro right about when he presents himself at any similar first-class establishment run by white men…the man or men who deliberately yield or barter the birthright of the race for money, position, self-aggrandizement in any form, deserve and will receive the contumely of a race made wise by experience. ("'Iola' on Discrimination" col. D)[42]

In her journalism, Wells consistently elevates social justice over “self-aggrandizement” (a phrase she uses consistently) and demonstrates her belief that the press can best mold public opinion through a combination of exhortation and concrete detail pertaining to the local situation.

Perhaps the best example of Wells’s journalistic stance and style from this period, one that makes clear her political involvement, is a long letter to the editor of the *Freeman* (her colleague T. Thomas Fortune). Wells first satirizes press partisanship: “According to their logic the side they espouse is all good, the opposite—all bad; the one, the Republican party, can do no wrong—however often they use colored men for tools; the other, the Democratic side, can do no good—whatever the profession—because of past history.” She then states her own position:

> I am not a Democrat, because the Democrats considered me a chattel and possibly might have always so considered me, because their record from the beginning has been inimical to my interests; because they had become

[42] The article is bylined “From the American Baptist” and signed Iola, Memphis, Tenn., Dec. 28, 1886. Published in the *New York Freeman* January 15, 1887.

> notorious in their hatred of the Negro as a man, have refused him the ballot, have murdered, beaten and outraged him and refused him his rights. I am not a Republican, because, after they—as a party measure and an inevitable result of the war—had "given the Negro his freedom" and the ballot box following, all through their reign—while advocating the doctrine of the Federal Government's right of protecting her citizens—they suffered the crimes against the Negro, that have made the South notorious, to go unpunished and almost unnoticed, and turned them over to the tender mercies of the South entirely, as a matter of barter in '76 to secure the Presidency; because after securing the Negro vote in full—a Republican Supreme Court revoked a law of a Republican Congress [the Civil Rights Act] and sent the Negro back home for justice to those whom the Republican party had taught the Negro to fear and hate" ("Freedom of Political Action, a Woman's Magnificent Definition of the Political Situation" col. D)

Wells's militant political voice in such moments also supports Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's observation about her rhetoric in "Southern Horrors": "in contrast to the rhetorical acts of some other women, this speech contained no apparent indications of attempts by a woman speaker to appear 'womanly' in what was perceived as a male role" ("Ch. 10: The Heavy Burdens of Afro-American Women: Sex, Race, and Class" vol. 1 146-47). Her writing from this time also demonstrates that Wells began her journalistic practice of sociopolitical analysis years before her powerful analyses in *Southern Horrors*.

At other times, however, Wells wrote about exclusively "feminine" topics, such as "Woman's Mission," a short Christmas parable of true womanhood extolling uplift and women's moral influence. In "The Model Woman, A Pen Picture of the Typical Southern Girl," despite the title, Wells blends the sentimentality of "true womanhood" with doses of reality. For instance, she notes that,

> A typical girl's only wealth, in most cases, is her character; and her first consideration is to preserve that character in spotless purity. As a miser hoards and guards his gold, so does she guard her virtue and good name. For the sake of the noble womanhood to which she aspires, and the race whose name bears the stigma of immorality—her soul scorns each temptation to sin and guilt" (col. E)

Despite the sentimentality of the language, a serious social purpose and feminist aim underlay Wells's message. In defending the reputation of African American women here, and in other editorials like "Our Women," Wells makes explicit the link between the racist vitriol against black women expressed in southern politics and the reputation and potential of African Americans in total. Wells's early journalism thus also adds to the emerging discourses of black women's feminist thought exemplified by writers like Anna Julia Cooper in *A Voice From the South* (1892) and Francis Harper *Iola Leroy: or Shadows Uplifted* (189).

Wells's journalism earned her respect and admiration in African Americans communities across the South and a role in African American press leadership. In 1887, the National Colored Press Association, for instance, elected her secretary, and the *Indianapolis Freeman* included her portrait in an illustration of prominent African

Americans in Memphis. Wells's many years of active participation in the National Colored Press Association have often been overlooked by scholars as an important resource in her rhetorical career. The Association elected her three times to national office and enabled her connection to important publishers, editors, and journalists from the South as well as Midwestern and Northern cities. She first attended the annual convention in 1887, a year when a cohort of black women attended, as a voting delegate for William Simmons's *American Baptist*. At this convention, for instance, Wells was invited to write for the *Chicago Conservator*, the city's first African American weekly (later owned by her future husband Ferdinand Barnett), and, with the support of Association President Simmons, she was elected secretary and received a significant amount of national notice in the attendees' papers (Giddings *Ida* 142-44). As I will demonstrate, below, in 1892 from her exile in New York, Wells turned again to the National Colored Press Association to connection the "power of the press" to direct action and antilynching activism.

Wells's "Iola" column developed a devoted following, and 1883-1891 saw the establishment of her reputation among African American audiences of various classes in the South. In 1888, Fortune asserted that Wells "has become famous as one of the few of our women who handles a goose-quill pen, with diamond point, as easily as any of us men" (qtd. in McMurry 111).[43] Her work at this time provided her with a profession, opportunities to travel, and the chance to hone her persuasive skill in urging African

[43] Of course, Wells was not immune to criticism from other African American writers. As Schechter documents, Wells's "evolving political interests and literary ambition took other editors aback" and earned her at least one caricature in an 1890 *Indianapolis Freeman* editorial cartoon (61-62).

Americans to resist assaults to their rights and safety. In addition, Well's early journalism gave her access to editors like T. Thomas Fortune, William J. Simmons of the *American Baptist*, and J. A. Arneaux from the *New York Enterprise* (DeCosta-Willis 8)—men who would later prove important to her continued rhetorical practice. In her transition to an owner-editor of her own secular paper, however, Wells's continued challenges to segregation, racism, and the right of African Americans to assert themselves against white violence brought her to the attention of the white press and public in Memphis as never before (McMurray 128).

Practicing Free Speech as a Professional Journalist

Based on her growing reputation, in the summer of 1889 Wells was asked by Reverend Taylor Nightingale, of the Beale Street Baptist Church, to become the editor of her very own paper: the *Free Speech & Headlight*, published in the basement of the great Beale Street church, and one of three African American weeklies in Memphis. The paper had been formed when Nightingale joined the new *Free Speech*, printed on the church's press, with J. L. Fleming's *Headlight*. The *Headlight* was a small paper Fleming brought from Marion, Arkansas after he was driven out of town by "an armed committee" of whites who, in an attempt to destroy the influence of the African American community in that city, had forced fifteen prominent black men, among them four newly elected state officials, a physician, and schoolteacher, to leave the city (Giddings *Ida* 158). When Wells accepted the position, she insisted on becoming an equal partner and one-third owner of the paper with Nightingale as printer and Fleming as business manager (Duster 35; Giddings *Ida* 154). Wells likely had the leverage to negotiate co-ownership in part

because of her recent election as secretary of the National Colored Press Association at the national meeting in Washington, D.C. in 1889. For the next two years, Wells continued to teach primary school, to write a weekly column, and contribute to African American periodicals in the South and Midwest (Duster xviii-xix; Thompson 15-20).

After an article critical of Memphis's African American school conditions caused the then all-white Memphis school board to deny Wells's reappointment as a teacher in the summer of 1891, she became a full-time journalist. Wells increased the paper's circulation dramatically by canvassing for subscriptions throughout the South and managed to make the paper self sufficient and replaced her teacher's salary (Thompson 8). She made innovations like printing the *Free Speech* on pink paper so that even those who could not read could still request the paper by its color to bring back to someone who could (Duster 41). Her editorials commented on national events of significance to the African American community and, as should be clear from her writings as "Iola," she did not shy away from "challenges to white racism and to local and regional black leadership" (Schechter 74).[44]

Though Wells herself dates her protest against lynching to the March, 1892 lynching of her three friends in Memphis, she in fact commented on Southern "lynch

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[44] A note on evidence: no extant copies of the *Free Speech* survive. However, Wells's autobiography reprints some examples of her early journalism, and the active network of circulation and editorial commentary among African American papers at this time meant that Wells's *Free Speech* journalism was frequently quoted and reprinted. In addition, white Southern papers also reprinted Wells's editorials, though, of course, typically framed with negative commentary. In reconstructing this brief examination of Wells's journalism, I am indebted to Thompson, McMurray, Schechter, and Giddings in particular for directing me to archival materials and for citations of those to which I could not gain access.

law" as early as 1887 and protested it the *Free Speech* at least as early as 1891. Patricia Schechter documents that, "with Fleming and Wells on the staff of the *Free Speech*, the paper began criticizing creeping racism in Memphis, especially lynching and disfranchisement, and earned [publisher] Rev. Nightingale a reputation as an 'incendiary'" (69). In the fall of 1891, an incident in Georgetown, Kentucky provoked "the most provocative editorial in the *Free Speech* to date" (Giddings *Ida* 172). An African American man had been lynched in retaliation for killing a white man who had had "intimate retaliations" (the implication is rape) with the black man's wife. Outraged black citizens set fire to a number of buildings in the city. Wells's editorial supported the community's resistance to lynching and provoked criticism and threats from the white Memphis press:

> Of one thing we may be assured, so long as we permit ourselves to be trampled upon, so long we will have to endure it. Not until the Negro rises in his might and takes a hand in resenting such cold-blooded murders, if he has to burn up whole towns, will a halt be called in wholesale lynching. (qtd. in Thompson 23)

By emphasizing the *retaliatory* nature of the events in Kentucky and the need for decisive action to show whites that African Americans would not tolerate subjugation or oppression, the *Free Speech* struck the militant stance that was the hallmark of Wells's editorship. Giddings documents that the *Memphis Commercial* asserted "whites should obey the law but could be provoked to 'exterminate' blacks if the latter insisted on" retaliation, while the *Memphis Avalanche-Appeal* "deplored" lynching but warned Rev.

Nightingale (the assumed author of the piece) that "there are bounds beyond which it is unsafe for him to venture" (*Ida* 173).

Despite the fact that southern papers at this time were all shaped by critical, strongly worded editorials, white editors in Memphis responded to Wells's rhetorical transgression of what they deemed her rhetorical positioning in the city. Fortune noted in the *New York Age* (the *Freeman's* successor) that southern papers were furious at the outspoken tone of this editorial and threatened to subdue the paper. "The Jackson (Miss.) *Tribune and Sun* and the Memphis (Tenn.) *Daily Commercial,*" Fortune wrote, "are squirming in great shape over the outspoken sentiments of the Memphis *Free Speech* commending the retaliatory measures adopted by the Afro-Americans of Georgetown, Kentucky, in revenge for the lynching of one of their number. The *Sun* insists that the people of Memphis should proceed to muzzle the *Free Speech*" (September 19, 1891 col. B). The Georgetown lynching evidenced two power dynamics Wells would later elaborate in her antilynching rhetoric in New York: first, that lynching further negated African American's civil right to a trial and second, that white men were widely known to engage in both forced and consensual affairs with black women. Six months later, a lynching occurred in Wells's own city, which devastated her and demonstrated again that socioeconomic motives rather than retaliatory or morally "chivalrous" ones drove whites' lynching of African American men.

Civil Action & Investigation After the "Curve" Lynching

While Wells's major anti-lynching pamphlets have received significant attention, scholars of the history of rhetoric have not examined her rhetorical activity in the months

after the March 9th lynching of three of her friends and respected community members Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell, and Will Stewart. However, this spring of 1892 was a watershed moment of rhetorical development that both devastated and focused Wells's activism and writing about lynching. Before the publication of her incendiary challenge to "the old threadbare lie," Wells worked tirelessly to turn the anger of Memphis's African American community into economic and political action. This activity, combined with her already established reputation for agitation, is the reason Wells was driven out of Memphis (Duster 47; Wells-Barnett 3). In the context of the violent retrenchment of civil rights and a reassertion of white supremacy, Wells experienced rhetorical failures of positioning and situation.

The details of the triple lynching in Memphis in March, 1892 have been extensively examined by Wells scholars and by Wells herself in *Southern Horrors*. The evidence makes clear that the murders of the three men, owners of a cooperative business called The People's Grocery, were linked to white grocer W. H. Barrett's attempts to break up the cooperative. Barrett had previously enjoyed a monopoly on the grocery business in the area, and in a pattern evidenced in incidents across the South, he used the police force and city courts to destroy his competition. Barrett managed to get McDowell arrested and the People's Grocery charged for "maintaining a public nuisance" and spread rumors a white mob would be coming to arrest the proprietors of the Grocery. The owners consulted an attorney who confirmed that they had the right to arm themselves in self-defense as the neighborhood was outside of the city limits and police protection. A shoot out resulted when nine white men, deputized for the occasion but dressed in plain clothes, entered the back of the store. Three white deputies were wounded. In response,

"hundreds of white civilians were deputized" and armed while African Americans were forcibly disarmed and prevented from accessing the black Tennessee Rifles' armory. White citizens searched more than one hundred houses in the area and arrested forty African Americans. Four days later, some thirty of the men remained in jail when a group of white citizens (initially reported to be seventy-five but later proved to be no more than ten) removed Moss, McDowell, and Stuart. They were taken to a remote railroad track and shot to death. The white Memphis dailies were able to report the details of the lynching in such precise detail, as Wells later pointed out, that it was clear "reporters had been called in advance to witness the lynching" (McMurry 130-132; Giddings *Ida* 177-82).

The triple lynching, the first violence of its kind in the city in almost thirty years, shocked the African American residents of Memphis. Wells was canvassing in Mississippi when the murders occurred, and she returned to the city a few days later. Wells, who was godmother of McDowell's daughter, knew all of the murdered men to be law-abiding business men "of good character." She immediately recognized the white press's efforts to slander the men as "negro toughs" who kept a "den of thieves" in a bad area even before the lynching, and afterwards, she observed with outrage that the Associated Press reports had carried these characterizations to papers as far away as the *New York Times*. Upon her return, she wrote in the *Free Speech*,

> The City of Memphis has demonstrated that neither character nor standing avails the Negro if he dares to protect himself against the white man or becomes his rival. There is nothing we can do about the lynching now, as we are without arms…There is therefore only one thing left that we can

> do; save our money and leave a town which will neither protect our lives and property, nor give us a fair trial in the courts, but takes us out and murders us in cold blood when accused by white persons. (Duster 52)

Wells continued her calls for African Americans to emigrate and boycott white businesses for months afterwards in the *Free Speech*. Encouraged by her writing, thousands of African American people left Memphis for Oklahoma and points West that spring. The *Weekly Appeal-Avalanche*, a white-owned paper that had particularly strident in its racist assertions that Memphis's African American residents must defer to white southerners' superiority, was so alarmed at the emigration that they began discouraging articles about the territories with titles like "The New Promised Land, Unlike Old Caanan. It Doesn't Flow with Milk and Honey." But the boycotts endured and some 4,000 African American residents left Memphis and the surrounding area during this time (Duster 56-57; Schechter 77-78).

In April and May, for instance, Wells highlighted a streetcar boycott begun in the AME church and pushed readers to continue their efforts. In this context, Wells also pressured white residents to recognize their complicity in allowing (not to mention defending) the lynching of the proprietors of the People's Grocery. For example, six weeks after the lynching, she talked with the white superintendent and treasurer of the City Railway Company and published a report of this interview in the *Free Speech*. In it, she challenges the railway managers to admit that the real "cause for the falling off" of African American streetcar patronage was a boycott in response to the lynchings, not because (as they surmised) African Americans feared the electricity that now powered the streetcars. In this article, Wells exposes the absurdity of the managers' electricity theory

and challenges them to be accountable: “We have learned that every white man of any standing in town knew of the plan and consented to the lynching of our boys.” When they protested that “the streetcar company has nothing to do with the lynchings,” Wells explains that “the colored people feel that every white man in Memphis who consented to his death is as guilty as those who fired the guns which took his life and they want to get away from this town” (Duster 54-55). Wells’s rhetoric reveals both the institutional nature of white racism as well as the individual rationalizations that allowed white Memphis residents to insulate themselves from the anger and protest emanating from their city’s African American residents. It is important to recognize that in the 1890s, the *Free Speech*’s “daring protest editorials” were often reprinted in white southern papers. The white-owned *Avalanche-Appeal*, *Public Ledger*, and *Evening Scimitar* excerpted her articles in order to criticize their audacity and to provoke white reaction to what they perceived to be unacceptably insolent rhetoric. They were also well aware of the paper’s evident power in supporting a mass black protest in the city that was rapidly destabilizing the economy.

Overall, Wells’s early rhetorical career demonstrates that her rhetorical practice developed from a base of social justice journalism addressed and read by a primarily southern African American audience to civil rights advocacy and agitation read by both African Americans and white audiences in the North and South. The sociocultural constraints and resources of her rhetorical situation also changed over time, resulting in the asymmetrical reception of her rhetoric among different audiences. Wells directly challenged white racism and the post-Reconstruction repeal of African American civil rights, and her rhetoric was often circulated in a distorted context in the white southern

press, earning her the enmity of many Southern whites and all white newspapers. At the same time, there is clear evidence of Wells's rhetorical effectiveness with audiences for the African American press in the South and North as well with elite northern African American activists. I argue that a careful contextualization of Wells's rhetorical advocacy reveals that her experience as rhetorician must be judged in the context of power and positioning. As an African American woman directly confronting deeply embedded tenets of white supremacy in the post-Reconstruction South, Wells experienced failures of positioning and resources. But she also simultaneously laid the rhetorical and material foundations for her work with *The Age* in New York and her better-known antilynching pamphlet rhetoric. The story of how she negotiated, adapted to, and often overcame these challenges in response to her experiences in Memphis is crucial to any evaluation of her rhetorical advocacy and appreciation of her strategic choices.

Revealing the "Threadbare Lie" in Memphis

During the spring of 1892, the triple lynching in Memphis made clear to Wells not only the socioeconomic motivations for lynching but also the smoke screen that was the charge of rape most frequently cited to justify lynching. Wells also recognized the distorting role of racist Associated Press (AP) reports of lynchings, and thus she began to investigate the printed details of hundreds of lynchings. In following up on one AP report of a lynching in Tunica, Mississippi, for instance, Wells discovered that the seven-year-old daughter reported to have been brutally raped by a black man was in fact *seventeen* and had been "discovered in the black man's cabin." The young woman's father had led a lynch mob "to save the reputation of his daughter" Wells determined (Giddings *Ida* 207).

Her investigations that spring revealed, as she later reported in her autobiography, “the amazing record that every case of rape reported in that three months became such only when it became public” (Duster 65).

It was to this end that Wells published her brief May 21st, 1892 editorial that “got her thrown out of the South” in response to a string of lynchings the previous week in the South. The full text of her brief editorial, a leader that ran on the front page of her paper, is as follows:

> Eight Negroes lynched since last issue of *Free Speech*—one at Little Rock, Ark., last Saturday morning where the citizens broke (?) into the penitentiary and got their man; three near Anniston, Ala., one in New Orleans—[making five] on the same old racket, the new alarm about raping white women; and three at Clarksville, Ga., for killing a white man. The same program of hanging, then shooting bullets into the lifeless bodies, was carried out to the letter. Nobody in this section of the country believes the old thread-bare lie that negro men rape white women. If Southern white men are not careful, they will over-reach themselves and public sentiment will have a reaction; and a conclusion will be reached which will be very damaging to the moral reputation of their women. ("Miss Ida B. Wells: The Brave Young Woman Tells Her Many Friends" 1)

The compact editorial, though she did not cite evidence or specifics, evinces Wells’s understanding of the systematic, patterned use of lynching to terrorize African Americans and the central role of the rape charge to undermine public censure of such killings.

Citing this "atrocious paragraph" on May 25, 1892, the *Memphis Commercial* denounced the "black scoundrel" who wrote it with a thinly veiled threat. The evening edition of the *Memphis Scimitar* that same day went further and asserted with chilling specificity,

> If the negroes themselves do not apply the remedy without delay it will be the duty of those whom he has attacked to tie the wretch who utters these calumnies to a stake at the intersection of Main and Madison Sts., brand him in the forehead with a hot iron and perform upon him a surgical operation with a pair of tailor's shears. (qtd. in Wells-Barnett 52)[45]

Within days, the editorial had provoked a firestorm of outraged reactions in the white-owned Memphis press, one of which called for the editorial's author to be burned at the stake (Duster 66). Outraged white citizens gathered in Memphis's Cotton Exchange Building, and "the only reason the open threats of lynching that were made were not carried out was because [the *Free Speech* editors] could not be found" (Wells-Barnett 51).[46] Shortly afterwards, white men broke into the *Free Speech* offices, destroyed the type and furnishings and left a note threatening death to anyone who attempted to publish the paper again (Duster 66). The *Free Speech* was seized by creditors, and the "numberless sacrifices…some of the hardest work and best efforts of our lives" made by

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[45] The writer mistakenly thought the author of the *Free Speech* editorial was male (probably Wells's co-owner and business manager, Mr. J. L. Fleming).

[46] J. L. Fleming, the co-owner and editor of the *Free Speech*, had been warned just in time to leave the city. A committee of men from the Exchange gathering did find Reverend Taylor Nightingale, who had once owned a share of the paper. They assaulted him and forced him at gun point to sign a letter retracting the May 21st editorial.

Wells and Fleming were destroyed "in a few days." Wells was forced to remain in New York, initially the guest of T. Thomas Fortune and his wife, where she lived for the next three years.

As a consideration of the Memphis-based context for Wells's rhetoric makes clear, the straight-forward causal relationship that has sometimes been drawn between the "threadbare lie" editorial and Wells's exile is an oversimplification of a complex rhetorical situation. Indeed, Wells's autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*, offers a more complex explanation for her exile. In telling the story of the spring of 1892, Wells notes that white Memphis city leaders had long wanted to put her paper out of business. Wells explains that the leaders had had to wait months before "the opportunity came in which they appeared to be 'defending the honor of their women' and therefore justified in destroying the paper which attacked that honor" (64). With this explanation, Wells ridicules the most publicly cited reason for lynching—that of defending the honor of white women against African American aggression—and asserts instead that her paper was itself the victim of a politically and economically motivated "lynching." Though Wells's implied slight to the purity of white womanhood was provocative, this one assertion did not alone create the organized threat to her life that kept her out of Memphis, rather white Memphians responded to the *Free Speech*'s role as a "disturbing factor," particularly to her transgressive rhetorical authority in supporting economic pressure and African American exodus. The truth and forcefulness of her insights about lynching were not engaged on their own terms and her rhetoric was met instead with outrage and mob violence. Wells did not yet have the evidence, leverage or power to force white southerners to consider her arguments against lynching or to bring sufficient

public pressure on the South to deter lynching. From New York, Wells revised her journalistic ethos and her strategies to address these constraints.

Recovery in Exile: The Age and Organization in New York

Despite the destruction of her newspaper and the horror of nearly losing her life in Memphis, Ida B. Wells advocated for African American civil rights and against lynching for the rest of her life. Wells made American lynching crimes national and international news, and she is credited with founding the national antilynching movement that eventually brought the Progressive Era "reign of terror" of white lynching to an end. Propelling both a reduction in the number of American lynchings and "a revolutionized cultural ethos," as Royster phrased it, "one can easily conclude, as Du Bois did, that the anti-lynching campaign of Ida B. Wells was successful" (Wells-Barnett 41). However, in the aftermath of her forced exile from Memphis, Wells had to assert significant courage and rhetorical skill to regain a public platform for her rhetoric and to continue her antilynching advocacy. To overcome her experience of rhetorical failures of positioning and situation in Memphis, Wells capitalized on her location in New York, both discursively and materially, to fashion a new rhetorical positioning to authorize her continued activism.

A number of scholars have remarked upon the central role of statistics and documentary evidence in Wells's antilynching rhetoric. For scholars in rhetorical studies, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's insight that Wells's "use of examples, often one of the characteristics of the 'feminine' style, was quite the opposite [in "Southern Horrors"]—a quiet but fierce recitation of horror piled upon horror" (150) became a springboard for

examinations of Wells's "masculine" style and her use of secondary evidence, most notably lynching statistics published by the *Chicago Tribune*.[47] Wells biographer Patricia Schechter similarly asserts that Wells's "Exiled" persona "testified to what Wells herself saw in the South while insisting that the details documented by others were the best evidence for her arguments" (23). Mindful of the precariousness of her own credibility (particularly with white audiences) as an African American women challenging white supremacy and transgressing social norms by speaking publicly about violence and sex, Wells also used secondary evidence strategically to inoculate against charges that she was biased, misinformed, or deluded.[48]

For instance, in the preface to *Southern Horrors*, Wells framed her rhetoric as "an array of facts, the perusal of which it is hoped will stimulate this great American

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[47] See also, Sterling *Black Foremothers* Chapter 2; Campbell *Man Cannot Speak for Her* v.1 Chapter 10; Logan *"We Are Coming"* Chapter 4. See also literary scholar Simone W. Davis's "The 'Weak Race' and the Winchester: Political Voices in the Pamphlets of Ida B. Wells-Barnett" for an analysis of Wells's "dialogic" methodology and use of evidence Simone W. Davis, "The 'Weak Race' and the Winchester: Political Voices in the Pamphlets of Ida B. Wells-Barnett," Legacy 12.2 (1995): 77..

[48] That did not mean Wells's character and credibility were not attacked all the same. The *Memphis Commercial* spear-headed a smear campaign beginning in the winter of 1892 and continuing until early spring of 1893, calling her "this Wells wench" and asserting "that she was a 'black harlot' seeking a white husband" Linda O. McMurray, To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life of Ida B. Wells (New York: Oxford UP, 1998) 117.. Recognizing that her ethos was critical to the dissemination of her message (and that the libel was part of the white supremacist degradation that justified racist violence) Wells even considered a libel suit, but did not pursue it on the counsel of Judge Albion Tourgee, who concluded that the burden of proof would be on her in a racist justice system, making the risk too great to justify the additional libel sure to follow (McMurry 118-19; Sterling 86).

Republic to demand that justice be done though the heavens fall" (50). This focus on facts and evidence was not simply the result of Wells's wish to be empirical or to appear logical, though this is important to her case, it was also a way of reinforcing her ethos and shifting the burden of proof so that "out of their own mouths they will be condemned" (*Red Record* 150). In the next few years, Wells would refine this strategy into an art form, stated most powerfully in the 1895 *A Red Record*.[49]

Such a use of evidence was also, I assert, one of the best available means for protecting herself against the charges of libel that were used to drive her out of Memphis and represented an important revision to her rhetorical strategy. In Memphis, Wells had published no evidence for her editorial implication that white women willingly "consorted" with African American men to protect her from charges of outrageous and unfounded slander. Accordingly, she took as her first task in "Exiled," as she later phrased it in her autobiography, the need to give "names, dates, and places of many lynchings for alleged rape. This article showed conclusively that my editorial in the *Free Speech* was based on facts of illicit association between black men and white women"

[49] The full relevant statement from the 1895 preface of A Red Record is: "The purpose of the pages which follow shall be to give the record which has been made, not by colored men, but that which is the result of compilations made by white men, of reports sent over the civilized world by white men in the South. Out of their own mouths shall the murderers be condemned. For a number of years the Chicago Tribune, admittedly one of the leading journals of America, has made a specialty of the compilation of statistics touching upon lynching…[which] has not been disputed. In order to be safe from the charge of exaggeration, the incidents hereinafter reported have been confined to those vouched for by the Tribune" (Wells-Barnett 82).

(69).[50] Thus, as I will argue in the sections that follow, an essential feature of Wells's rhetorical action in New York was her calculated assault on two of the primary warrants for libel: that a statement was untruthful and that it was not based in fact.

The New York Age: Access, Ethos and Libel

Wells first attended to the material underpinnings of her altered rhetorical positioning in New York by gaining access to a public platform. Well aware of the importance of "a fearlessly edited press" in creating "the first step toward revolution of every kind—the creation of a healthy public sentiment," as she phrased it a few months later to the National Colored Press Association, Wells negotiated a one-fourth ownership of the *New York Age* in exchange for her subscription list to the *Free Speech* ("The Requirements of Southern Journalism; Duster 62). There is also evidence that Wells planned, with the *Age*, a public relations war in Memphis, in New York, and nationally through the African American press network to counteract the suppression of the *Free Speech* and to transform her forced exile from the South into a powerful, exilic ethos. Much of this rhetorical action has not been examined by rhetoric and composition scholars, but I argue that Wells's rhetorical strategies in New York deserve consideration as important rhetorical revisions Wells pursued to enable and to authorize her continued activism.[51]

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[50] The third warrant for libel is that a statement harms a person or group's livelihood, standing in the community etc.

[51] Scholars have not always given Wells credit for her agency in regaining a public platform and some measure of editorial power in New York. In *To Tell the Truth Freely*, for instance, Bay states simply:

An article issued to her readership the week of June 18, 1892, demonstrates Wells's strategic action and her agency and urgency in contracting with the *New York Age*:

> I had hoped to continue South or West the work only a fearlessly edited Negro journal can do for the race. Circumstances having decreed otherwise, I have arranged with the *New York Age* to fill out unexpired subscriptions. This week's *Age* will go into 2,000 Southern homes that welcomed and supported the *Free Speech*. The *Age* is considered as our leading organ and is so recognized and quoted by the white press. From this day I shall be connected with its staff, and shall have the Southern field specially in charge. I earnestly bespeak the support of my friends everywhere in this new venture. I have not space to deal with the cause of our exile, but an exhaustive statement of the case will appear next week. ("Miss Ida B. Wells: The Brave Young Woman Tells Her Many Friends" 1)[52]

This paragraph demonstrates Wells's rhetorical savvy in providing an explanation for the suspension of her paper that also creates an exigency and an audience for her subsequent rhetoric in Memphis and beyond. The "southern field" she refers to above is the twice-weekly column, "Iola's Southern Field," Wells negotiated with the *Age*, which ensured

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"Offered a one-quarter interest in *The New York Age* in return for her *Free Speech* subscription list, Wells accepted" (107).

[52] This article was printed in the July 1, 1892 issue of the black-owned Kansas City *American Citizen*. However, as this last paragraph indicates, it was issued *before* Wells's famous article "Exiled" in the June 25th, 1892 issue of the *New York Age*, making it the first known piece of Wells's journalism for the *Age*.

her a steady correspondent's salary and an editorial forum for continuing activism (Giddings *Ida* 232). This paragraph is the final one in an article that begins in nearly the same way as her later pamphlet *Southern Horrors*: it provides the full text of Wells's May 21, 1892 editorial, excerpts from two editorials in the white press calling for retribution and violence, and outlines the destruction of the *Free Speech* and the threats that enforcing her residence in New York.

The "exhaustive statement of the case [that] will appear next week" Wells promised was the front page, seven-column article she published the following week in the *New York Age* under the name of "Exiled" (Duster 69). Her article, no longer extant, sold 10,000 copies of the June 25, 1892 issue in which it appeared; "one thousand copies were sold in the streets of Memphis alone" Wells documents in her autobiography (71). Wells was able to publish "Exiled" in part because *Age* editor T. Thomas Fortune, with whom Wells had built a long-standing working relationship, wanted to support her in telling the truth about lynching.[53] However, I contend that a critical part of Wells's ability to claim front-page space "emblazoning the story to the world" and launching her antilynching campaign was also her business deal with the paper's owner-editors that ensured she had editorial control over her content (as she had as editor of the *Free Speech* in Memphis) and an ownership stake in the paper.

"Exiled" resulted in a ripple effect of significant opportunities for Wells to claim public space for her controversial and challenging antilynching rhetoric. For instance, newspapers in the African American press network like the *Kansas American Citizen* and

[53] Judging from the presentation, number of copies, and distribution of the article, Wells and Fortune also knew "Exiled" would sell papers.

periodicals like the New York *Independent* drew attention to her article and helped to reinforce her ethos as a courageous and unjustly exiled editor seeking a public forum for the truth not allowed in the racist South. The July 14, 1892 *Independent*, for instance, advised readers “to obtain” Wells’s June 25, 1892 article, “a very long statement of the condition of things [in the South,] and of the facts bearing upon the usual apology for lynching—a statement exceedingly interesting and instructive” ("Comment" 20). Moreover, the following week, the *Independent* published an article by Wells entitled “Bishop Tanner’s ‘Ray of Light’,” a stinging denunciation of an apologia for the South and for lynching as justified and directed against “only men of disreputable character” that Tanner published in the *Independent* a few weeks before ("Bishop Tanner's "Ray of Light"" 5).

Wells also drew the attention of two well-positioned local African American writers and leaders, Maritcha Lyons and Victoria Earle Matthews, who arranged an October, 1892 testimonial dinner gathering some two hundred and fifty African American women before which Wells delivered her first public lecture.[54] The event, as Wells notes in her autobiography, galvanized the nascent African American women’s club movement and provided a crucial network of support and lecturing contacts for her activism (Duster 81; Royster 23-24; Giddings *Ida* 232-238). Through her association with prominent women such as New York’s Sarah Garnet, Boston’s Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, and Philadelphia’s Gertrude Mossell, Wells was invited to speak in churches and

[54] See Logan *We Are Coming* and Royster’s Introduction to *Southern Horrors and Other Writings* for analyses of the organization and significance of this testimonial dinner.

lecture halls throughout these cities between November 1892 and March 1893 (Giddings 30; Wells-Barnett 23-24).

"Exiled" was also the basis for Wells's pamphlet *Southern Horrors* (1892), which was published by the *Age* press with funds raised by the women organizing the testimonial dinner.[55] In *Southern Horrors*, Wells again begins by reprinting the text of her May 21, 1892 "threadbare lie" editorial as well as the *Appeal* and *Scimitar's* threatening editorials and narrates the story of her attempted lynching and the destruction of her press. The consistency with which Wells launches her story in the newspaper, in her first public lecture, and her first antilynching pamphlet demonstrates the first-hand, testimonial authority Wells crafted for her rhetoric. Given her potentially precarious situation as an exile who had lost everything, this was both a master stroke and a necessary innovation. In so doing, Wells builds upon her prior ethos as an outspoken and well-known journalist while also claiming a new moral authority to bear witness based on personal experience. Royster describes the function of testimony as a rhetorical strategy that "credits proximate experience, sets in motion the opportunity and obligation to actually give the testimony, or as typically phrased, to bear witness. In African American women's texts, bearing witness …creates a pathway that is knowable, and it makes transformative power available for the writer and for her audiences" (*Traces of a Stream* 67). Thus, I argue, Wells transformed the immediate materials of her rhetorical situation

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[55] Wells notes in the preface to *Southern Horrors* (October 25, 1892) that "The greater part of what is contained in these pages was published in the *New York Age* June 25, 1892, in explanation of the editorial which the Memphis whites considered sufficiently infamous to justify the destruction of my paper, *The Free Speech*" (50). See Campbell's *Man Cannot Speak for Her* Ch. 10 and Logan's Ch. 4 *We Are Coming* for analyses of "Southern Horrors" as a testimonial speech.

into a basis for rhetorical authority necessary to continue her advocacy and to demonstrate a moral exigence for her continued discussion of the controversial topic.

The Requirements of Southern Journalism

In contrast to Wells's use of secondary evidence, which has often been remarked upon by scholars, Wells's extension of her persuasive action through the National Colored Press Association is an important but overlooked feature of her rhetorical strategy to mobilize public sentiment from New York. In late September, 1892, Wells traveled as a delegate for the *New York Age* to the National Colored Press Association convention in Philadelphia. At the convention, she networked with other delegates from prominent African American papers like the *Cleveland Gazette* and the *Indianapolis Freeman*, and she was elected treasurer of the Association. The *Gazette* later proclaimed Wells "the star of the convention" (McMurry 170). The latter praise was probably due to her address, entitled "The Requirements of Southern Journalism," which inspired all seventy-five delegates to pass a resolution to establish a fund to combat lynching. [56] In

[56] An important note on this address: I have identified "The Requirements of Southern Journalism," published in the January, 1893 volume of the *A.M.E. Zion Church Recorder* and preserved on the Library of Congress microfilm of the *Church Recorder*, as the text of an address Wells delivered at the September, 1892 NCPA convention in Philadelphia. The scholarship on Wells's antilynching activism which does note this item lists an incorrect publication date of April, 1892 (see Schechter, Giddings *Ida*, and Bay), and a misprint on the cover of the *Church Recorder* issue lists the date as January, 1892 instead of 1893. However, details from the text make it clear that it was published *after* June 25, 1892. The text is addressed to "Mr. President, Members of the National [Colored] Press Association, Ladies and Gentlemen," includes several references to "speaking" on the subject at hand, and is clearly for an audience of journalists. Wells was a documented attendee who spoke at the September, 1892 NCPA convention. She also is known to

this address, with oratorical, often searing prose, Wells calls her audience to join her in "practical, united work" towards a revolution to end lynching. She exhorts her audience,

> If indeed "the pen is mightier than the sword," the time has come as never before that the wielders of the pen belonging to the race which is so tortured and outraged, should take serious thought and purposeful action. The blood, tears and groans of hundreds of the murdered cry to you for redress; the lamentations, distress and want, of numberless widows and orphans appeal to you to do the only thing which can be done—and which is the first step toward revolution of every kind—the creation of a healthy public sentiment. ("The Requirements of Southern Journalism" 190)

Wells focused on the mobilization of public sentiment against lynching for the majority of her rhetorical career, and in this address she outlines the requirements of a "fearlessly edited press" that would expose the white supremacist violence raging in the South and contribute to the reclamation of African American civil rights.

Overall, Wells appeals to the press to educate and "distur[b] existing conditions," to sensitize their readership "to the power of union," and to raise money to investigate "the facts *as they exist* in each case of outrage" to counteract the "garbled and slanderous" accounts from the Associated Press and white newspapers poisoning public opinion against African Americans (194-6). Wells thus shapes the appeals she makes

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have introduced a resolution to raise funds to combat lynching at this conference, and the end of this published address, she urges the "Gentlemen of the Press" to do just that (see McMurry, 170; Bay 136). All subsequent page references will be to this source.

throughout her antilynching rhetoric to her audience of journalists who control access to a significant platform for antilynching rhetoric.

After "Exiled," Wells addressed her audience as a writer known for her investigative journalism and for own her fearless exposure of Southern whites' false use of rape charges to justify the lynching of African American men. Her message to the convention was certainly all the more effective because she incorporated her newly situated ethos as a Southern journalist exiled for her own courageous use of the press into her appeals. For instance, Wells acknowledges that the Southern journalist in particular "might have to be on the hop, skip and jump" for establishing "the fearlessly edited press" she cites as a requirement of Southern journalism (190-91).[57] Wells thus signifies on her audiences' awareness of her own situation and incorporates her experience of forced exile into her ethos as a sign of her courage and commitment to African American civil rights.

Wells then exemplifies what such editing might look like by relating the detailed actions the *Free Speech* took after the Memphis lynching at the Curve to "counteract[t] the libel of these foully murdered men," including

> exposing the rank injustice and connivance of the authorities with a white grocery keeper whose trade had been absorbed by these young men…Our paper showed the characters of these men to be unblemished, gave the

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[57] Patricia Schechter cites these same lines in support of her argument that Wells might have "plotted and staged her 'exile' from the South by provoking the white mob in Memphis" (35) based on an incorrect dating of this item as published in April, 1892 *before* the Curve lynchings. None of the other scholarship on Wells concurs with Schechter's provocative suggestion. The corrected date I have identified for "The Requirements of Southern Journalism" helps to confirm, I contend, that Wells did not stage her own exile.

> sketches and cuts [pictures] of three as reputable and enterprising young men as the race afforded…published a formal statement from our leading ministers addressed to the public; published 2000 extra copies and mailed them to the leading dailies, public men, and Congressmen of the United States. (191)

These statements reveal additional dimensions of Wells's rhetorical protest strategies in the Memphis *Free Speech* not previously known to scholars. They demonstrate the centrality of the strategy of combating libel to her antilynching rhetoric and give additional evidence of the multi-pronged, multimedia nature of Wells's antilynching activism targeted at mobilizing the public sentiment of the press, pulpit, and state.

Conclusion: Assessing Wells's Early Rhetorical Effectiveness

A carefully contextualized examination of Wells's early rhetorical practice also allows us to appreciate that the reception of her rhetoric was asymmetrical. In other words, she experienced success and failure simultaneously for different audiences and readers of her rhetoric. My analysis in this chapter also demonstrates the realistic variety and necessary development of rhetorical strategies on the part of any rhetor bent on change. Wells had to adapt her strategies over time, and she wasn't necessarily rhetorically effective (with some audiences) right away, given the tremendous post-Reconstruction sociocultural and economic constraints of her rhetorical situation. In addition, Wells's rhetorical practice in Memphis and New York highlights the importance of material resources and leverage for a rhetor bent on social justice and material behavior change.

With her early journalism and *Free Speech* editorship, Wells engaged African American audiences in the North and South in resisting post-Reconstruction racism and the growing tide of white repression. She also honed her persuasive skills during these years and built upon her positive reception in the African American community to develop rhetorical strategies necessary for navigating the elite circles of African American and white northern leadership.

However, as her experience and following as a journalist grew, the white press in Memphis took notice, distorting her arguments in print and encouraging a repressive backlash that ultimately resulted in her exile from the South. Wells persisted from New York and seized the altered available means of her situation, particularly her relative safety from mob assault, the opportunity to negotiate an editorial forum in the *New York Age*, and access to metropolitan Northern publishing networks. In addition, Wells revised her rhetorical strategies to fashion a new ethos that incorporated a moral authority based on her own experience of exile and targeted libel as an essential basis of whites' public defense of the lynching of African Americans. As a result, Wells was able to dramatically multiply the reach and force of her antilynching rhetoric.

This chapter's case study of Wells's early antilynching activism demonstrates that, in the hands of skillful and courageous rhetor, experiences of rhetorical failure can have a generative power to transform changes in geography, positioning, and access into new rhetorical strategies and tactics. In Wells's case, I argue that the rhetorical revisions she began in New York, in conjunction with her growing prestige in the African American press and contact with elites in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago,

eventually enabled Wells to make lynching an international scandal, mobilizing the first wave of public sentiment ever to reduce lynching in the South.

CHAPTER THREE

Sui Sin Far and the "Connecting Link":

Strategies for Chinese American Advocacy, Resistance, and (De)Familiarization

> After all I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality. "You are you and I am I," says Confucius. I give my right hand to the Occidentals and my left to the Orientals, hoping that between them they will not utterly destroy the insignificant "connecting link." And that's all.
>
> --Sui Sin Far, *Independent*, January 21, 1909

In 1903, Sui Sin Far (1865-1914), a journalist, fiction writer, and activist of Chinese and English descent, traveled from Seattle to Los Angeles. This was no easy feat--it involved securing slow, extended transportation by rail and by coach, overnight travel alone, and finding lodging with the new friends and associates she met while forging a writing career in the United States. She had accepted a position as a columnist for the *Los Angeles Express* writing short pieces on Chinatown. Along the way, she stopped in various places in rural California as well as San Francisco and Pasadena, all the while seeking writing opportunities and getting to know people in Chinese immigrant communities in the new Golden state. She met "some literary people," including the *Land of Sunshine* editor, activist, and anthropologist Charles Lummis "the editor of the magazine who took my first Chinese stories" ("Leaves" 132). She also met some "funny people" who, upon learning of her desire to make her mark as a professional writer,

> advise me to "trade" upon my nationality. They tell me that if I wish to succeed in literature in America I should dress in Chinese costume, carry a fan in my hand, wear a pair of scarlet beaded slippers, live in New York and come of high birth. Instead of making myself familiar with the Chinese-Americans around me, I should discourse on my spirit acquaintance with Chinese ancestors and quote in between the "Goodmornings" and "How d'ye dos" of editors, "Confucius, Confucius, how great is Confucius, Before Confucius, there never was Confucius, After Confucius, there never came Confucius," etc., etc., etc., or something like that, both illuminating and obscuring, don't you know. They forget, or perhaps they are not aware that the old Chinese sage taught "The way of sincerity is the way of heaven." ("Leaves" 132)

Resisting such people's attempts to orientalize her, Sui Sin Far acquainted herself with everyday Chinese-Americans to "fight their battles in the papers" whenever the opportunity arose ("Leaves" 128).

Sui Sin Far struggled for a decade to support herself as a writer in the United States and to break into national publishing networks, but she was consistently rejected by most editors who refused to make a place for her sympathetic, ironic, and often challenging rhetoric about the Chinese American experience. Just after the turn of the century, in the midst of renewed anti-Chinese movements that swept the West, she lost her access to the mainstream periodical press, including that of Lummis's *Land of Sunshine*. For the next four years, despite writing continuously and seeking publication of her work, she managed only to secure the part-time position for the *Express* (Ferens 202-

203; White Parks 118). Scholars who have pursued recovery work on Sui Sin Far's writings have long been interested in this silencing, the sustained experience of rhetorical failures of positioning and resources that I will examine in this chapter.

Nevertheless she persisted, eventually moving to the East Coast and garnering renown, placement in prestigious national venues, and two book contracts—though not by "trading upon her nationality" in quite the manner suggested above. Sui Sin Far includes her pointed reflection on the "funny people" who advised her in "Leaves From the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian," an autobiographical essay published in 1909 in the prestigious New York *Independent* that scholars have seen as a turning point in her career.

I argue that "Leaves" also represents significant revisions Sui Sin Far made to her rhetorical strategies in order to recover from her loss of a mainstream public platform during renewed anti-Chinese movements in the West. In response to her experiences of rhetorical failures of positioning and resources, Sui Sin Far turned to the genre of autobiography, and she altered her rhetorical positioning and her access to East Coast publishing networks by moving to Boston. "Leaves" marked the beginning of several years of unprecedented publishing success and access, the high point of Sui Sin Far's career until her untimely death in 1914. During this time she published a collection of short stories, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*, her only book and the dream of a lifetime.

In the last ten years, Sui Sin Far's journalism and autobiographical writings have been examined and her status as an advocate for people of Chinese heritage in the United

States has begun to be recovered and recuperated.[58] However, unlike Ida B. Wells and Jane Addams, Sui Sin Far's writings have received almost no analysis as rhetoric. This chapter seeks to extend the rhetorical analysis and recuperation of her autobiographical writings while clarifying her sociocultural exigence for reform.[59] The latter is particularly important given that the violence, legal discrimination, and sociocultural denigration of Chinese immigrants are not often considered as part of the constitutive *topoi* of Progressive Era reform work. In addition, my goal is for this chapter to respond to LuMing Mao's and Morris Young's call for scholars in rhetoric and composition to specifically examine "how Asian Americans use language and other forms of symbolic action to bring about necessary changes and to advance and complicate our understanding of the self, the other, and the world" (*Representations* 2).

Sui Sin Far's attempts to gain a national platform for her rhetoric were frequently met with silence, resistance, and rejection, and her writing has been judged to be a failure by a number of scholars. In this chapter, I first review the scholarship on Sui Sin Far's writing to reveal the ways in which some scholars have personalized her experiences of rhetorical failure as an indication of her compositional weakness and, building on

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[58] See Dominika Ferens Ch. 2 *Edith and Winnifred Eaton* (2002), Sean Vogel Ch. 5 *Rewriting White* (2004); Bo Wang "Reading Sui Sin Far: a Rhetoric of Defiance" and Linda Buley-Meissner "On the Road with P.T. Barnum's Traveling Circus" in Mao and Young's *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric* (2008).

[59] Given the state of scholarship on Sui Sin Far's rhetoric, my task in this chapter is necessarily more oriented towards the continued recovery and recuperation of Sui Sin Far's activist voice than is necessary in the case studies for Chs. 2 and 4.

feminist recovery work, to push back against these characterizations. I then reconstruct and examined Sui Sin Far's rhetorical career—her biographical background and the constraints, resources, and exigencies motivating her writing. I contend that Sui Sin Far developed nuanced and multi-generic strategies to change the representation of Chinese and Chinese descended peoples in the United States and, ultimately, to theorize identity and nationality in complex and strikingly contemporary terms. I next review the sociocultural context for her rhetoric to clarify the exigencies for and constraints upon her rhetorical action. Finally, I move to an analysis of the steps she took to recover a rhetorical platform. To achieve the kind of national audience and renown she hoped for, I argue that Sui Sin Far made a number of revisions to her rhetorical strategy, including changing her location (and with that her rhetorical positioning), her genre, and some of her Chinese American *topoi*. I read her autobiographical essay "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian" (*Independent* January 21, 1909) as persuasive writing and an attempt to construct a "connecting link" rhetoric that responds to her experiences of rhetorical failure and analyzes the complexities of identity and nationality.

The Scholarly Conversation: From "Failure" to Rhetor(ician)

"If we approach [Sui Sin Far] as a writer who succeeded rather than failed at what she did…what do we see?" --Elizabeth Ammons, *Conflicting Stories* 117

In a recent critical essay, literary scholar Wenxin Li notes that "the most important development in recent Asian American literary studies was perhaps the recovery of Sui Sin Far's work" (121). Though Sui Sin Far's fiction, her collection of short stories *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* in particular, is now often included in collections of twentieth-century American literature, the recovery of her work began just over thirty

years ago in the mid-1970s. As with many writers of color, Sui Sin Far's recovery and reevaluation has a point of origin in the impact of the civil rights movement, the Asian American movement, and the efforts of scholars in the 1960s and 1970s to expand the representation of writers studied in higher education.

Early academic criticism of her writings was undertaken by literary scholars and is marked by contradictory assessments of the quality and political significance of her work and a persistent engagement with a vocabulary of failure and success (see Solberg; McCann; Ferens). Thus, a consistent trend in Sui Sin Far scholarship has been to dispute the charge of failure, provide evidence for the efficacy and importance of her legacy (Ammons; Ling; White-Parks; Yin; Wang), and to explore why her work was lost in American letters (see McCann; Shih; Ling). Since the 1990s, a surge of scholarly articles has multiplied the critical perspectives applied to Sui Sin Far's work, culminating recently in a meta-critical debate over her recovery and the significance of her work and status as an early Asian American writer.[60] In literary studies, close readings of individual short stories using a variety of theoretical lenses, such as queer theory, postmodernism, and sentimentalism, have illustrated the complexity and nuance of Sui Sin Far's short fiction (see Cutter; Roh-Spaulding; Ouyang; Song).

A group of Asian American creative writers and activists, Frank Chin, Jeffrey Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong, were the first to recover Sui Sin Far in the groundbreaking *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers* (1974). They identified her as "one of the first to speak for an Asian American sensibility that was

[60] See Guy Beauregard's essay "Reclaiming Sui Sin Far" and David Shih's "The Seduction of Origins" for two important examples of this aspect of Sui Sin Far criticism.

neither Asian nor white American" (3). [61] They particularly praised her to efforts to invest her male Chinese characters with "a sensibility that was her own" thereby exposing the "comic caricature" that was the "John Chinaman" stereotype of her times (3-4). *Aiiieeeee!* did not include any of Sui Sin Far's primary texts (or any other woman's). However, in 1991, the revised and more inclusive (but no less provocative) *The Big Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Chinese and Japanese American Literature* anthologized "Leaves From the Mental Portfolio of An Eurasian" as well as the sequential stories "The Story of One White Woman Who Married a Chinese" and "Her Chinese Husband." The editors of *The Big Aiiieeeee!* argue that at the turn of the twentieth century, "Amid the Christian missionary cant and social Darwinist scientific rhetoric, the racist science fiction, and the low racist humor that molded the image of the Chinese and Chinamen was one writer, writing from reality instead of prejudice: Sui Sin Far" (111). For Sui Sin Far, to publicly value her Chinese heritage and to write sympathetically about Chinese Americans was to be out of step with the dominant discourses of her times.

[61] *Aiiieeeee!* also touched off a debate between Frank Chin and Maxine Hong Kingston that has generated significant scholarly controversy. See King-Kok Cheung "The Woman Warrior versus The Chinaman Pacific: Must a Chinese American Critic Choose Between Feminism and Heroism?" for an excellent mapping of the terms and implications of this debate; Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong "Autobiography as Guided Chinatown Tour? Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and the Chinese American Autobiography Controversy"; and, for an interpretation that does not try to bring together the poles represented by these scholarly positions, Leslie Bow *Betrayal and Other Acts of Subversion*. See also Min Hyoung Song "Sentimentalism and Sui Sin Far" for her connection of this debate to a related critical debate over women's sentimental writings and the "feminization" of American culture.

As the epigraph for this section indicates, a vocabulary of rhetorical failure has long been a part of scholarly recovery work on Sui Sin Far. Her first academic critic, S. E. Solberg, invoked the discourse of failure and deficit in his foundational article "Sui Sin Far/Edith Eaton: First Chinese-American Fictionist," which set an influential tone for her recovery and recuperation well into the 1990s. His 1981 *MELUS* article recovers historical evidence of Sui Sin Far's life and writing experience in the United States and argues for her recognition as the first Chinese-American fiction writer. Yet, Solberg's overall assessment of her writing is provisionary and condescending: "She was not a great writer; she had only one book (a collection of her stories) to her credit, but her attempts deserve recognition" (27). Solberg finds her work wanting based primarily on a limited aesthetic and generic criteria that remained unexamined in his work.

Ultimately, he concludes that Sui Sin Far was a failure as a writer because she did not create a new literary form to explicate the Chinese experience in the United States:

> Eaton, by choosing to identify with and write about the Chinese, found herself alone in an essentially formless field….Had she been physically stronger or had a more sophisticated literary apprenticeship, she might have been able to create that new form. As it was, she was defeated, for in that "glorious process of exploding old myths and of creating new ones," as Fenn puts it, "the Chinamen were bound to suffer." (32,33)

Solberg's assessment is a classic illustration of the "deficiency" or "deficit model" as applied to the evaluation of marginalized rhetors and rhetoric (Smitherman 89; You

426).[62] Accordingly, Solberg's basic sociocultural contextualization of a Sui Sin Far's rhetoric results in his view of her rhetorical situation as *only* constraining, and he accounts for the shape of her body of work based on his assessment of her compositional shortcomings. Solberg continues, for instance:

> While Eaton wrote well, she never acquired the control of style necessary to deal with her subjects in depth or at length. What she wrote were chiefly sketches, vignettes. The task she had set herself was nearly impossible at that time. Trapped in the stylistic conventions of the time, including dialogue in a forced and artificial dialect, she could only try, by selection of her story material, to tell about the real Chinese Americans that she knew. (35)

While he does attribute part of Sui Sin Far's "defeat" to external constraints, such as the stylistic conventions of her times, it is notable that Solberg personalized his judgment of Sui Sin Far's failure while simultaneously ignoring important elements of her rhetorical situation. For instance, rather than a simple failure to "acquir[e] the control of style necessary," Sui Sin Far's use of the short story form was also based on editors' consistent

[62] See also Geneva Smitherman's "Language Policies, Politics, and Power." In this article, a significant reference for rhetoric and composition studies, Smitherman exposes and historicizes the deficit model" at work in the assessment of minority language practices such that: "the differences are not simply differences, but as in the racist scholarship of biological and social determinism of years past, the differences amount to deficits" (89)

acceptance of her "Chinatown sketches" and the genre's usefulness in generating supplemental income.[63]

Perhaps it is not a surprise, then, that this "deficit model" prevents Solberg from examining, and in some cases recognizing, the subversive and double-voiced innovations and rhetorical moves Sui Sin Far *does* make within the genres she employs. For instance, he ignores stories with searing social critique, such as "The Wisdom of the New," and reads the story "Pat and Pan" as being about identity "choice." Such a reading misses both the central critique of "the [white] mission woman's racist absolutism" (White-Parks 225-6) and Sui Sin Far's ironic reversal positioning Pat, the young white boy in the story, as the ultimate loser forced to renounce his Chinese American family, culture, and sister Pan. Solberg also ignores Sui Sin Far's use of the autobiographical essay for political critique, a subject I will return to in a later section of this chapter.

Recuperating Sui Sin Far

Solberg's dismissive assessment pushed a number of scholars to recuperate Sui Sin Far's writing and to subject her work to more sophisticated critical analyses. Part of this work involved the use of feminist methodologies to foreground the material conditions and powerful dynamics of race, class, and gender in which Sui Sin Far constituted her public voice as a rhetor. Amy Ling's and Annette White-Parks's work have been foundational in this regard. Their detailed recovery work and scholarship

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[63] As she observed pointedly in a letter to the editor of *Century* magazine, Robert Johnson—who accepted only the short "Chinese" story "A Chinese Boy-Girl" despite repeated submissions—"Though I myself prefer to branch out, so many friends prefer to think that the Chinese should be my only theme" (qtd. in White-Parks *Sui* 45).

includes a number of scholarly essays, Ling's monograph *Between Worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry* (1990), a jointly edited collection of Sui Sin Far's works, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Other Writings* (1995), and White-Parks's study *Sui Sin Far/Edith Eaton: a Literary Biography* (1995). Their scholarship has also made Sui Sin Far's primary writings more accessible, enabling the proliferation of Sui Sin Far scholarship in the last fifteen years. These scholarly projects are particularly important as Sui Sin Far, like Ida B. Wells, lost many of her personal papers in a fire in 1907 (White-Parks 47), and her work, like that of many women writers, was often published in ephemeral, periodical venues that can be difficult to access today.

Ling approaches Sui Sin Far and her sister Winnifred, also a writer, as "pioneers and paradigms," commenting upon as well as tracing the experience of conceptualizing a Chinese American women's writing tradition.[64] She approached Sui Sin Far as a writer who courageously exposed and utilized her dual heritage in order to fight for social justice. White-Parks's pivotal biographical study solidifies Sui Sin Far's recovery as a skillful rhetor who published across genres and achieved national prominence. In supporting herself and developing a multifaceted career as a rhetor, White-Parks argue that Sui Sin Far was a trickster author who developed ironic strategies and an innovative combination of strategic topic selection (including oft-ignored aspects of immigration and imperialism such as intermarriage and child theft) and a culturally "pluralistic aesthetic" (144-5). Ultimately, White-Parks argues, "Sui Sin Far's primary writing task…is not to

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[64] She notes, for instance, that "In 1980, when I began my research, there was no listing for 'Chinese American authors'" Amy Ling, Between Worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry, 1 ed. (New York: Pergamon P, 1990) xii..

mediate—stressing the 'samenesses'—but to create a visibility, a voice, and, ultimately, an hegemony for Chinese North Americans in her art that they were denied in their lives" (345). Due to Ling and White-Parks's scholarship, the rhetorically innovative quality of Sui Sin Far's work as well as some of the material conditions enabling and constraining her work have become clear.

Directly engaging the discourse of failure in Sui Sin Far scholarship, Elizabeth Ammons countered Solberg's dismissive critical assessment. Ammons asserts:

> Sui Sin Far did not flounder in a formless field. Instead, like Jewett before her and Anderson after her, she manipulated to her advantage the tradition of regional and sketch fiction that she inherited primarily from women to offer not a long narrative about one individual but a multifaceted, collective narrative about a group of people and a network of issues. (116)

Ammons, like the 1991 editors of *Aiiieeeee!*, Ling, and White-Parks, recognized the need to document the strategic choices Sui Sin Far made in her writing and the ways in which her work was both limited by and resistant to powerful anti-Chinese sociocultural forces. Seeking to reverse Solberg's view of Sui Sin Far as a lone, defeated writer, Ammons situates her in the context of women's resistant regionalist writing at the turn of the century.

Dominika Ferens's recent study, *Edith & Winnifred Eaton*: *Chinatown Missions and Japanese Romances* (2002) offers a somewhat revisionist take on recent criticism. Ferens examines Sui Sin Far's journalism (including recovered writing for *Gall's Daily Letter* in Jamaica) and *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* through the lens of ethnography. She argues that Sui Sin Far may not have (initially) been as close to Chinese American

communities as some scholars—and certainly the white elite readers of her times—have assumed. For Ferens, Sui Sin Far's writing, unlike that of her white contemporaries, reveals her "position between conflicting racial groups, social classes, and cultural and religious systems [that] denied her the comfort of assuming the knowability of other cultures and privileging the gaze" (110). She also documents some important primary source materials (such as the missionary education text *The Social Life of the Chinese*) for Sui Sin Far's writing. Interestingly, Ferens does not trace the influence of another set of primary texts that Sui Sin Far studies later in her career, that of the Chinese classics, including the *Menicus* and *Xiao jing*. Considering the influence of Christian source texts but not classical Chinese works may have contributed to what I see as an overemphasis on the missionary, ethnographic nature of Sui Sin Far's writing. I will touch briefly upon the evidence Sui Sin Far's incorporation of this classical source material, below.

Recuperating Sui Sin Far as a Rhetor

Though scholarly attention has turned to Sui Sin Far's journalism and autobiographical essays, she has not typically been seen as a rhetor and few critics have approached her writing rhetorically by analyzing her audiences and her work as situated in its sociocultural context. When I first conceptualized this chapter, Huining Ouyang's "Rewriting the Butterfly Story, Tricksterism in Onoto Watanna's *A Japanese Nightingale* and Sui Sin Far's 'The Smuggling of Tie Co'" in the collection *Alternative Rhetorics* (2001) was the only work in rhetoric and composition on Sui Sin Far. In November, 2008, however, LuMing Mao and Morris Young published the edited collection *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*, which includes two essays focusing on

Sui Sin Far as a rhetor and a purposeful user of language. Bo Wang argues that Sui Sin Far used her fiction deliberately to overturn stereotypes, such as Chinese anti-individuality, in service to her overall goal of advocating for Chinese immigrants. Mary Louise Buley-Meissner sees Sui Sin Far as deploying "rhetorics of the self in active resistance to others' attempts to deny their individuality, their artistry, and their shared commitment to truthful storytelling" (221) across genres of her writing.

Young's and Mao's recent individual studies on Asian American and Chinese American rhetoric, respectively, also signal the field's growing engagement with the rhetorical practices of Americans of Asian descent. In 2004, Morris Young published *Minor Re/Visions: Asian American Literacy Narratives as a Rhetoric of Citizenship*, a contemporary study of Asian American students' discursive strategies for "claiming America." In 2006, LuMing Mao published *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric*, which defined Chinese American rhetoric as ''a creative, dialectical form of communication that practices togetherness-in-differences without any 'exaggerated notions of uniqueness and incommensurability''' (3). He also identified important constitutive concepts of Chinese American rhetoric, such as *lian* (dignity and respect from good character), *mianzi* (prestige, reputation), and *shu* (reciprocity).

My analysis of Sui Sin Far's work as a rhetor and rhetorician has been enriched by both of these studies. In addition, I believe that Sui Sin Far's writings can historicize some of the Asian American rhetorical practices Young and Mao have conceptualized. By reconstructing her rhetorical career and by analyzing the sociocultural context in which she wrote, I aim not only to contextualize Sui Sin Far's experience of the loss of

her public voice but also the rhetorical strategies she employed to negotiate with her rhetorical situation and to recover a platform for her rhetoric.

Rhetorical Career: The Struggle to "Plant a few Eurasian thoughts" in Print

Sui Sin Far is perhaps best known for her short story collection *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* (1912) and her autobiographical essay "Leaves From the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian" (1909). She published short stories, essays, and editorials in leading regional and national newspapers and periodicals, including *Westerner*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Independent*, *Century*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *New England Magazine*. The first woman of Asian descent to publish fiction in the United States, Sui Sin Far has also been hailed as "the first writer to sympathetically portray immigrant Chinese life in North America" (S. S. a. J. Watson 406). Her work, especially her short fiction, has been recovered by scholars in a variety of disciplines, and Sui Sin Far is recognized as a foremother and foundational figure in Asian American letters (A. White-Parks 6; Ling 21; Li 122). Throughout her adult life, Sui Sin Far highlighted the material difficulties and discrimination facing people of Chinese descent in North America. She reported on the issues and concerns of Chinese communities in Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles; published essays and autobiographical memoirs in prominent periodicals about the Chinese in America; and composed short fiction concerned with Chinese- and Caucasian- American characters and the power dynamics of their interactions (White-Parks 31-32). Sui Sin Far used activist writing to change popular perceptions of Chinese American women and men, to advocate for their civil rights, and to reveal white privilege in the social and economic interactions of Chinese immigrants and white "Americans."

"In all her writing," scholar Amy Ling concludes, "her mission was to right wrongs by writing them" (32).

Biographical Background

Sui Sin Far had a complex racial, national, and cultural heritage. She was born Edith Eaton in 1865 in Macclesfield, England, the oldest daughter of a white English father, Edward, and a British Chinese mother, Grace Trefusis. Her mother was born in China and of Chinese heritage, but she was taken to England as a child and educated at the Home and Colonial School in London (Ferens 192 n.5). She returned to the port of Shanghai for missionary training in her young adulthood where she met Edward Eaton, an artist and silk merchant working to develop his family's business interests. The pair married in Shanghai and returned to live in England. They immigrated to New Jersey to pursue a small business venture, but lost their money and returned again to England. Due to family disapproval, discrimination, and economic opportunity, the Eatons again immigrated to North America in the early 1870s—first to Hudson, New York and then to Montreal where the family settled.[65] As biographer Annette White-Parks reminds contemporary readers, the Eaton family spent a number of years each in England, Canada, and the United States, nations that "while diverse in geography, manners, and mores, the political, legal, and social systems of all three were rooted in England and operated from common racist assumptions about the Chinese" (14; 15-19).

[65] See Annette White-Parks's *Sui Sin Far/Edith Maude Eaton* Ch. 1 for the most comprehensive review of Sui Sin Far's mother's experience. See also White-Parks as well for detailed biographical information on Far's family (based in part on interviews with her descendents and family papers); Dominika Ferens *Edith & Winnifred Eaton* Ch. 2; and Amy Ling *Between Worlds* Ch. 2.

In Montreal, the Eaton family grew to include fourteen children, and their financial situation was frequently precarious. All of the older children left school and began working at a young age to bring in additional income. However, as the children's writings and later achievements make clear, they were also educated at home by their mother, a trained teacher, and gained "a skillful command of the 'King's English'…[and an] acquaintance with Eastern and Western classics and the Bible" (White-Parks 24).

This "culturally integrated and pluralistic" context for Sui Sin Far's education and upbringing has not received enough analysis in the scholarly literature (White-Parks 16). Critics such as S.E. Solberg, James Doyle, and Dominika Ferens have emphasized that Sui Sin Far knew only a little Chinese and that her cultural heritage appeared to be overwhelmingly British. In turn, scholars have typically not considered how the Chinese stories her mother passed on to her as a child, her access to public libraries in Montreal, and her later reading in the Chinese classics, for instance, influenced her work as a writer and rhetor. In my reading of Sui Sin Far's autobiographical essay "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian" later in this chapter, for instance, I am the first to identify and analyze the Chinese classical sources of Sui Sin Far's rhetoric.

Becoming a Journalist

Sui Sin Far's writing interests, *topoi*, and the pressing need to make a living were always interconnected. She wrote from a young age and began her life-long association with journalism at eighteen by working as a typesetter in the offices of the *Montreal Daily Star*. There she learned the shorthand that would enable her work as a stenographer and began publishing her first short pieces in radical United States newspapers such as

Peck's Sun, *Texas Liftings*, and *Detroit Free Press*.[66] Beginning in 1888, when she was twenty-three, Edith published short fiction and essays, "most emphasizing the love adventures of European Canadian women" (White-Parks 27),in the *Dominion Illustrated*, a new magazine designed for the promotion of English Canada. By 1894, she had opened her own office in the city and began work as a free-lance journalist (White-Parks 25-31; Ferens 51-2).

As Sui Sin Far documents in her autobiography, she was soon given "most of the local Chinese reporting" for the *Montreal Daily Star* and other papers and began to know people in the rapidly growing Montreal Chinese community as well as immigrants in the diasporically linked New York Chinatown.[67] For instance, in 1896 she published "A Plea for the Chinaman," an article protesting the imposition of a head tax on the basis of Chinese national origin in the *Montreal Daily Star*. She was beginning to build a readership, for in the late 1890s, as she reflected in "Leaves," "My heart leaps for joy when I read one day an article signed by a New York Chinese in which he declares 'The Chinese in America owe an everlasting debt of gratitude to Sui Sin Far for the bold stand she has taken in their defense" (128). She also published writing in the *Star* advocating for Chinese immigrant rights, such as and columns with inter-cultural titles such as "Half-Chinese Children," "Chinamen with German Wives," and "The Chinese and Christmas" (White-Parks).[68] By 1896, Sui Sin Far began to place her first "Chinese stories" in

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[66] White-Parks, my citation for the existence of these early publications, notes that the originals of these "humorous articles" have not yet been located (26).

[67] Sui Sin Far documents in this piece that "In the spring of this year I visited New York's Chinatown" and stayed for two weeks ("A Plea for the Chinaman" 196).

[68] These pieces are no longer extant.

regional periodicals like *Land of Sunshine* (California), *Fly Leaf* (New York), and the *Lotus* (Kansas City). Sui Sin Far wisely leveraged her only periodical publishing connection—that of her brother-in-law editor Walter Blackburne Harte—to place these first stories in *Fly Leaf* and *Lotus*. Her exposure to the new literary and promotional magazine *Land of Sunshine* likely came from ads that editor Charles Lummis placed in *Fly Leaf* (White-Parks 30, 85).[69]

During this time, Sui Sin Far and her mother also taught English in Chinese Sunday school classes. As she noted in an interview for the *Boston Globe*, "from that time I began to go among my mother's people, and it did me a world of good to discover how akin to them I was" ("Sui Sin Far, the Half Chinese Writer, Tells of Her Career"). Dominika Ferens argues that Sui Sin Far's combination of "missionary work and journalistic investigation" shaped her advocacy for Chinese immigrants and her ethnic consciousness. "Through the Sunday school network," Ferens explains, "she met Chinese on a regular basis and secured introductions to other members of the Chinatown community that proved useful in establishing her reputation as a Chinatown reporter" (52). Such networking was essential for a biracial woman of limited means in Eastern Canada who wanted to become a professional writer and to advocate for Chinese immigrants in the press. Sui Sin Far's work to break into prominent publishing fora eventually resulted in her publication in major national venues alongside writers such as Jack London, W.E.B. Du Bois, Edith Wharton, and Mary Austin. However, for more than

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[69] See White-Parks *Sui Sin Far* Ch. 2 and Ferens Ch. 3 for more on the prominent white editor, writer, and progressive activist Charles Lummis. Though biographers have recovered evidence of Sui Sin Far's writing for the *Fly Leaf* and *Lotus*, the pieces themselves are not extant.

ten years she struggled to gain rhetorical and print space for her sympathetic and anti-stereotypical approach to Chinese immigrants and her ironic, challenging view of white Americans.

In response to the hardship of making a living as a writer and achieving a national platform for her work, Sui Sin Far made strategic generic choices between and within popular turn-of-the-twentieth-century forms, including newspaper reportage, sketch profiles, short fiction, and even autobiography. She seized, of necessity, the available means of publication open to her at the time, while consistently building her editorial networks in order "to support herself by her pen" and to find fora to explore the Chinese American experience and to argue for the rights of Chinese immigrants (White-Parks *Sui Sin Far/Edith Eaton* 43, 229). She never abandoned any of these forms; rather, she used them progressively and, often, simultaneously to meet the needs of her rhetorical situation and to find a medium for expression in a Sinophobic sociocultural climate and an era of highly charged immigration debates.

Becoming Sui Sin Far in the United States

In late 1896, Sui Sin Far served a brief stint as a columnist for a local colonial paper, *Gall's Daily Newsletter*, in Jamaica.[70] Sui Sin Far's time in Jamaica was transformative in terms of her experience with and rhetorical approach to race relations and the variability in power dynamics of racially mixed societies dominated by white supremacy (A. White-Parks *Sui* 59-60). Overall, from her first publications in Montreal

[70] White-Parks documents that Sui Sin Far replaced her sister Winnifred in this position, and that she was the latest in a series of women hired from the British Dominion of Canada by *Gall's*.

to her journalism and short stories from the late 1890s, there is an evident "radicalization of her thinking about race and a growing sensitivity to the materials consequences—both for herself and for her subjects—of talking about people of color" (Ferens 78-9). A year after returning from Jamaica (she first had to recover from malaria), Sui Sin Far moved to the United States and took up the rhetorical purposes that drove the rest of her work: to advocate for the Chinese and to "plant a few Eurasian thoughts in western literature" ("Sui Sin Far").[71] For Sui Sin Far, these two aims could not be separated.

In an important sense, this writer's rhetorical advocacy for Chinese immigrants is represented by her pen name, which evidence indicates she used consistently in 1898 after her return from Jamaica. Choosing Sui Sin Far, a transliteration of the Cantonese pronunciation of "narcissus" (the flower), was a deliberate rhetorical strategy that named and claimed the Chinese part of her heritage at a time when anti-Chinese sentiments, legislation, and even violent mob attacks were becoming increasingly common on the West coast of the United States. Sui Sin Far's Chinese name is also significant because "in Chinese culture…narcissus symbolizes dignity, elegance, and love for homeland" (Yin 89). In using this name, Sui Sin Far made public her biracial heritage and used writing to "initiat[e] a dialogue between Chinese and European North Americans and their multicultural, multiracial descendants" (A. L. a. A. White-Parks 6). "Sui Sin Far" is therefore also a metonym for the rhetorical strategies that allowed her both to advocate

[71] See White-Parks Ch. 2, Ferens Ch. 2, and Sean Goudie's article "Toward a Definition of Caribbean American Regionalism: Contesting Anglo-America's Caribbean Designs in Mary Seacole and Sui Sin Far" for more on Sui Sin Far's transformative experiences in and writing from Jamaica.

for the particularity, worth, and civil rights of Chinese immigrants and to use her subject position as a fulcrum to achieve a public voice in print.[72]

In 1898, she moved from Canada to the United States seeking increased opportunities to publish and achieve a nationwide platform for her work but encountered significant limitations as to the form and style of her work as well as her ability to represent the Chinese for white audiences. Her efforts as a rhetor at this time reveal the incredible struggle and persistence she employed to contend with her resource and positioning constraints. She first moved to San Francisco and then Seattle, supporting herself by stenographic work and writing for fledgling western media. During this time she wrote continuously and sought positions in journalism but struggled to place more than a few items or obtain a consistent position in seven years of work--despite writing steadily and seeking publication (White-Parks 117-18).

Her main publishing outlet at the turn of the century was the California literary and promotional magazine *Land of Sunshine* edited by Charles Lummis. Significantly, Lummis hid Sui's journalistic experience in his editorial notes on the contributing authors and encouraged her "to produce short tales about Chinese 'types,' allowing no room for

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[72] Critical commentary on her naming has remained a notable feature of Sui Sin Far scholarship for thirty years. Perhaps more importantly, as detailed recovery work and knowledge of Cantonese language and culture has been brought to bear upon the scholarship, critics have shifted from Solberg's focus on the potential meaning of *sui* in Latin to observations such as Yin's, above, that account for both English and Chinese meanings in her name. This is appropriate given her persuasive goals and often double-voiced writing style. The *English-Cantonese Dictionary* (2000), edited by Caihua Guan and Choi Wah Kwan, lists the phonetic pronunciation of narcissus as "séuisīnfā" (309). See also "narcissus" in the 1907 *English and Cantonese Dictionary*.

character development of psychological depth" (Ferens 87). Biographer Dominika Ferens argues that "to publish at all" it was necessary for Sui Sin Far to "continu[e] to accommodate Lummis's predilection for short romantic tales of Chinese love and death" (88).

Just after the turn of the century, anti-Chinese political sentiments reached a renewed "crisis" in California based on the Western and federal battle over the renewal of the 1892 Geary Act excluding Chinese immigrants. In the context of this backlash against the Chinese, Sui Sin Far could not continue to access the mainstream periodical press with a positive stance towards people of Chinese descent. After publishing at least one story every year since 1896 in the *Land of Sunshine*, for instance, Lummis stopped taking her stories in 1900. He accepted only one story in 1903 (*Land of Sunshine* was by then re-titled *Out West* magazine), and then continued to refuse her work. The evidence indicates that Sui Sin Far continued to write and submit her work to publishers at this time (White-Parks).

Determined to continue seeking work and the ability to support herself as a professional writer, Sui Sin Far made contact with a former editor, Samuel Clover of the *Chicago Evening Post*.[73] He offered her a position writing short pieces for the *Los Angeles Express* about Chinatown and Chinese immigrants in Southern California. The column titles indicate her investigative approach: "Betrothals in Chinatown," "Chinatown

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[73] Indicative of her persistent and politically savvy efforts to build a publishing network with the prominent men who controlled the print outlets of her times, Sui Sin Far connected with Clover by writing to request a copy of the paper's review of a *Land of Sunshine* story. She then maintained correspondence with him, including cultivating his editorial advice and accepting his offer to write to other editors on her behalf (White-Parks 41).

Needs a School," and "Leung Ki Chu and His Wife" (the latter was a Reform leader in China). Annette White-Parks documents that not only was Sui Sin Far's other work at this time consistently rejected but also that the *only* pieces accepted were her seemingly apolitical "Chinese stories." Indeed, the three stories that appear to indicate she had begun to break into the national and well-financed Eastern publishing networks were notably "Chinese stories" ("The Coat of Many Colors" in *Youth's Companion* (1902); "A Chinese Boy-Girl" in *Century* (1904); "Aluteh" in *Chautauquan* (1905)) (45, 117). Sui Sin Far experienced a failure of resources and positioning as well as, editorially speaking, a failure of listening during these years. These rhetorical failures prompted in Sui Sin Far, as with Addams and Wells, to make important revisions to her rhetorical strategies to achieve "the object of my life," which, as she put it in a November 1909 letter to the editor of the *Westerner*, "is not so much to put a Chinese name into American literature, as to break down prejudice, and to cause the American heart to soften and the American mind to broaden toward the Chinese people now living in America" (qtd. in White-Parks 154).

Sociocultural Context: The Age of Exclusion

Before more closely analyzing the rhetorical strategies Sui Sin Far employed to recover a platform and to continue her advocacy for Chinese Americans, it is important to review the discursive and sociocultural context within which she sought to break into publishing venues and achieve a national platform for her work. As I argue that Sui Sin Far often wrote *against* the dominant representations of Chinese Americans in the newspapers, fiction, and periodicals of her times, it is necessary to have a sense of the

mainstream discourse she both acknowledged in her short stories and resisted in her writing. In addition, as the details of the sociopolitical context for the Chinese American experience during the turn of the century have not typically been included in Progressive Era histories and rhetorical studies, this context will contribute to scholars' understanding as well.

The time period from 1882 to 1943 is known as the "Age of Exclusion" by historians of Chinese America. The term comes from a series of legislative acts, known collectively as the Chinese Exclusion Laws, designed to restrict immigration from China and to limit the civil rights of Chinese living in the United States. Before 1882, the federal government did not restrict immigration from any nation. Chinese immigrants had been coming to the United States since the 1840s, primarily for mining, agricultural, and then railroad work. Like most immigrants in the nineteenth century, Chinese people came to the United States to improve their standard of living, and, possibly, to make their fortunes. U.S.-China relations historian Shehong Chen argues that for Chinese immigrants, "widespread economic dislocation, caused mainly by Western expansionism, served as the 'push' factor, and the discovery of gold in California served as the 'pull' factor" (11). Hundreds of thousands of Chinese, mostly men, migrated to and from the Western United States in the thirty years of open immigration permitted before exclusion. Their labor was initially welcomed as essential to the development of Western agricultural markets, fishing industries, and the transcontinental railroad, while politicians

and businessmen extolled the value of trade with China in developing Western economies and U.S. manufacturing (Lau 12; Yin 13-18).[74]

However, anti-Chinese movements and violence against Chinese immigrants spiked in the Western states and territories during the decades after Reconstruction and the emerging "Progressive Era." These years were marked by labor unrest, internal migration, economic downturns and a concomitant public movement to reassert the identity of the United States as "a white man's country" governed by a principle of white supremacy (Bederman; Gilmore; White-Parks 106). In addition, the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 in combination with the economic depressions of the 1870s resulted in rising unemployment throughout the West and "post-boom town" tension between wealthy land and business owners and the working class in California. Protests that began as white labor demonstrations but soon turned to anti-Chinese violence had occurred in every major city in the West by the turn of the century.

The "Chinese Question" gained national prominence in politics and the press during this time, framed both as a "social problem" and as a threat to working class reforms such as the eight hour workday.[75] Moving rapidly from a regional issue to a topic of national concern, the Question's usefulness as a tool for "politicians eager to create a platform which would garner support across the United States" became clear (Lau 15).

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[74] The Burlingame Treaty of 1868, for instance, was passed in part to recognize this latter fact. It granted reciprocal "most favored nation" status between China and the U.S., including praising and encouraging merchant immigration to cement trade relations between the two nations.

[75] Chinese immigrants, in the latter example, were all seen as "coolies," contracted workers brought to the U.S. by leaders of organizations such as the Chinese Six Companies, who would degrade the wages and standard of living possible for white workingmen.

Such politicians, immigration historian Estelle Lau argues further, thus "created and reinforced the distinction between Americans and immigrants—and, in particular, Chinese immigrants—in order to sever class-based commonalities that labor leaders initially felt between workers regardless of nationality" (15).

The most famous example of a form of working class solidarity reinforced by appeals to anti-Chinese sentiments is that of Dennis Kearney and the Workingman's Party. Kearney, a rousing orator and Irish immigrant, opened and closed his speeches to workers with the now infamous slogan "The Chinese Must Go!" In political action that had a ripple effect for decades, the Workingman's Party ensured the addition of exclusionary articles to the new 1879 California constitution and pressed successfully for exclusion at the federal level.[76] By the 1880s, laws prohibiting interracial marriage, ordinances restricting people of Chinese descent to limited areas and occupations, suspension of habeas corpus and the right to testify in court, public school segregation, and the legal prohibition of naturalization for people of Chinese descent were in place in California and other Western regions. When many of the ordinances passed in California were struck down by the Supreme Court, often because of their unconstitutionality under

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[76] Historian Mary Roberts Coolidge, in her detailed study Chinese Immigration (1909), argued that the push for Exclusion developed out of these interrelated factors: "For twelve years, preceding the Exclusion law, California had been in a state of incessant agitation against land and railway monopoly, and—incidental to these—against the Chinese, because of the rise of the Workingmen's party. Since it was much easier and safer for the politicians to fight the Chinese than to make war upon the great monopolies, it became their policy to divert and pacify these discontented workingmen with energetic anti-Chinese measures; and the national political parties represented in Congress [which were struggling to carry California], in their turn pacified the Californians by yielding to their demand for Chinese exclusion" (179-80).

the Fourteenth Amendment or the 1870 Civil Rights Act, anti-Chinese agitators achieved their goal through national Exclusion legislation (Lau 15-17; Tong 50-52; Chan 11-12).[77]

The 1882 Exclusion Act prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers while creating a set of exempt classes of merchants, students, diplomats, and travelers who were allowed entrance. In practice, however, as Lau documents, implementation of these laws "serv[ed] as a general bar to any Chinese immigration during this period" and all Chinese immigrants were presumed to be laborers while residents of Chinese descent were assumed to be in the United States illegally (16; Coolidge 179-80).[78] The Act was further restricted by the 1888 Scott Act, which prohibited the return of thousands of Chinese to their businesses and relatives in the U.S. and prohibited naturalization. In 1892, the Geary Act, which also required residence certificates and permitted the arrest and deportation of those found without their identification papers, renewed Chinese exclusion for an additional decade. Amidst another wave of anti-Chinese arguments and

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[77] Sui Sin Far's parents were married outside the United States and before the spread of official laws against inter-racial marriage. Examples of Californian legislation passed by the state but overturned by the Supreme Court include: an 1862 head tax, 1870 law imposing $1000-5000 fine for Chinese immigrants "without certificate of good character," the "Queue Cutting Ordinance," and laundry ordinances (Hart "The Kearney-Kalloch Epoch"; Lau 13).

[78] Historian Mary Roberts Coolidge argued in her progressive treatise *Chinese Immigration* (1909): "The clamor of an alien class in a single state [the Irish in California]—taken up by politicians in their own state—was sufficient to change the policy of a nation and to commit the United State to a race discrimination at variance with our professed theories of government, and this so irrevocably that it has become an established tradition."

violence, the Geary Act was renewed in 1902.[79] As part of this effort, metropolitan newspapers and periodicals across the country carried items with titles like "Yellow Peril, Congressman Green Says It Is to be Feared" (*Boston Journal* May 16,1902). In 1904, Congress made Chinese exclusion indefinite. Exclusion legislation was not repealed until 1943 when China's alliance with the U.S. in WWII made the Acts a national embarrassment (Chen 11-12; Lau 15-17).[80]

Federal and state legislation as well as local violence and discrimination had a significant impact on the demographics of Chinese American communities in the United States by the early twentieth century during which Sui Sin Far published the majority of her work in the U.S. Chen argues that the Chinese American population in the U.S. after Exclusion was marked by the predominance of a merchant-class bourgeoisie. After eight years of Exclusion, "Chinese businessmen [including employees who owned shares in their laundry, restaurant, grocery, and drug store businesses] and professionals such as medical doctors, translators, and priests, who belonged to 'exempt classes' under the exclusion laws, made up more than 40 percent of the declining Chinese American population by 1910" (12). Sui Sin Far's fiction and journalism from this era, which often focused on merchants and their wives and noted the prominence of the Chinese American businessman over the traditional Confucian scholar class, reflects this composition in

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[79] See Samuel Gompers' 1902 AFL treatise *Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion: Meat vs. Rice, American Manhood against Asiatic Coolieism, Which Shall Survive?* for a statement in favor of exclusion renewal and Rev. Ng Poon Chew "The Chinaman in America" (*Independent* 1902) for a statement against.

[80] At this time, exclusion law was repealed and foreign-born Chinese were granted naturalization rights. However, a tiny quota of 105 Chinese-descended immigrants per year (from any nation in the world) was set. Immigration laws restricting Chinese people were not really changed until the 1965 Immigration Act.

Chinese American communities throughout the West coast. In addition, Chinese women, who had never sought entry into the United States in the same numbers as Chinese men, nevertheless were restricted by the Exclusion Acts, by families' concerns for their safety during interrogation and detention, and by the restrictive implementation of the 1875 Page Law (Lau 17; Tong 28).[81] Thus, the stereotypes of Chinese "sojourners" with no intention of establishing roots in the U.S. as well as early Chinese America as a "bachelor community" were forced and reinforced by legislation and policy in the United States during the Progressive Era.

The sociocultural context during the Progressive Era in which Sui Sin Far wrote and advocated for Chinese Americans was also marked by a virulently Sinophobic discursive representation of Chinese immigrant and residents combined, ironically, with the popularization of *chinoserie*.[82] "Orientals" were typically and repeatedly cast as unassimilable, racially distinct from "Occidentals," and morally degenerate. For instance, prominent Progressive Era muckraker Jacob Riis, in his expose of New York immigrant neighborhoods, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), observed that "in their very

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[81] The 1875 Page Law barred entry to Asian "contract laborers, convicts, and prostitutes" but created a situation in which all Chinese women immigrating could be approached as if they were prostitutes attempting to enter illegally. Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong argues that Exclusion laws were "genocidal immigration policies" because they created a community "unable to reproduce itself" through the break up of families and the exclusion of women (42, 50 n. 19).

[82] As Rachel Lee argues in "Journalistic Representations of Asian Americans and Literary Responses," "magazines felt no sense of incongruity in circulating ads that promoted desire for a commodified Asiatic body yet printing [stories] and editorials that voiced loathing for Asian peoples" (254; qtd. in Buley-Meissner).

exclusiveness and reserve [the Chinese] are a constant and terrible menace to society, wholly regardless of their influence upon the industrial problems which their presence confuses" (102).[83] A 1903 piece in the *Independent* that was reprinted in a wide variety of newspapers made the case for the absolute racial difference of the Chinese:

> Between the white-skinned Caucasian and the yellow-skinned Mongolian there will always be an impassable barrier that nothing can level, there will be intercourse but no close communion; there will be nothing in common either in thought or in language or attitude toward life. The Asiatic is an Oriental, the Anglo-Saxon an Occidental, and when that is said all is said….Between the East and the West is a gulf is so wide and so deep that no bridge can span it. ("Shall Russia Own the Earth?")

Similarly, In 1907, Julius Kahn, a Congressman from California, assumed a clear racial binary in an article decrying the rise of Japan and Japanese immigration, noting "anyone who is at all familiar with the two races, realizes fully, and will state unhesitatingly, that Occidental and Oriental civilizations will never mix" (27). In a series of arguments wholly typical of popular representations of Chinese immigrants and residents, Kahn decried "the yellow hordes" and asserted that the Chinese laborer "was a canker in the heart of our civilization. He indulged in vices which were calculated to pollute our young men and women…more like a machine than a human being, he toiled away in his stuffy quarters…he rapidly drove out the white mechanic from many fields of industry" (27-8). In the Exclusion era, Chinese immigrants were typically discussed in such disparaging,

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[83] See also Arthur Smith's *Chinese Characteristics* (1894) for an example of a book-length evaluation of Chinese culture and people that reflects this negative and deficient view.

collective terms of cheap labor and immoral influence (while their collective court challenges to exclusion laws and unlawful detention were elided) that maintained Asian difference and reinforced sociocultural inferiority as compared to whites and European immigrants (Yin 17; Aarim-Heriot 10-11).

Literary representations were just as consistent in their negative depictions of Chinese immigrants and Chinatowns. One of the more famous of the "yellow peril" novels, Pierton W. Dooner's 1880 *The Last Days of the Republic*, featured a plot that turned on little more than lurid and detailed descriptions of the takeover of the United States by "mongol hordes" from China. Amy Ling argues that the burden of counter-representation was so great that most of the short stories in *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* just "sought to counter the prevailing notions that the Chinese were heathen, unassimilable, hatchet-waving rat eaters and pipe-smoking opium addicts who had no right to live in the United States or Canada" (*Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 13). Well-known stories by Frank Norris and Jack London, for instance, capitalized on white interest in sensational "Chinatown tours" and featured Chinatowns described as "noisome swamps," full of interchangeable and immoral Chinese men intent on "springing traps" for young white women, gambling, and spreading opium dens (White-Parks 114).[84]

When Sui Sin Far observed in 1909 in the *Westerner* that most white "writers seem to be so imbued with the same ideas that you scarcely ever read about a Chinese person who is not a wooden peg," she was putting it mildly and with an irony that

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[84] See, for instance, Frank Norris's "Third Circle" or Jack London's "Martin Eden" and "Chun Ah Chun" for just a few memorable examples of virulently Sinophobic short fiction published in major national periodicals at this time.

becomes clear in the context of the typical representation of Chinese people in literature at this time (24). Sui Sin Far's rhetorical performances in the United States reveal both the development of her skill with rhetorical techniques such as subversion of stereotypes, identification, and irony across genres as well as the constant strain of representation and anti-racist re-presentation of Chinese Americans and Eurasians to the Sinophobic white majority in the United States.

Given the hostile anti-Chinese context at the turn of the twentieth century, Annette White-Parks poses the important question "[H]ow was Sui Sin Far…getting published at all?" (4). White-Parks argues that Sui Sin Far created "dual fictional voices," first by "satisfying the popular formulas that a turn-of-the-century marketplace and reading audience of European descent demanded for public acceptance" and second by "disturbing the stereotypes embedded in those formulas" (4-5). I see a similar pattern of complex language and negotiation in Sui Sin Far's autobiographical writing. By adopting this very American genre and testifying to the hardships she faced as a persecuted minority, Sui Sin Far met, to some degree, dominant white content expectations for the writing of people of color. She also, however, wrote against dominant discourses by unsettling national and racial categories of identity and white privilege while constructing a radical and generative subject position for the Eurasian.

Sui Sin Far thought and wrote about ethnic and national identity, especially as pertained people of Chinese descent, with nuance and insight far ahead of her times. One of her most important rhetorical strategies and contributions as a rhetorician is her conceptualization and deployment of what I call "connecting link" rhetoric, borrowing a phrase from the well-known last lines of her autobiography quoted at the opening of this

chapter. Sui Sin Far's memoirs and later short stories in particular exemplify her use of this nuanced strategy that takes the context-specific power dynamics of ethnic, national, class, and gender status into consideration in order to mediate between these elements of subject position and to resist dominant inscriptions of power relations. Her "connecting link" argues for the importance of individualism balanced with an exploration and exposure of the complex sociocultural factors that create group identity and difference (Buley-Meissner 223). In the next section, I will discuss Sui Sin Far's adoption of the autobiographical essay genre, beginning in 1909, in which she developed her connecting link rhetoric. I will pursue a close reading of passages that exemplify her ironic unsettling of supposedly stable and natural categories of identity and belonging in order to make space for an alternative concept of individuality and her radical imagining of the Eurasian as a connecting link.

Recovering a Public Voice: Autobiography and Resistance

Sui Sin Far's opportunities for publication and rhetorical intervention in the oppression of Chinese immigrants all but disappeared in the first decade of the twentieth century. Caught in the dramatic resurgence of West coast anti-Chinese movements determined to secure the 1902 renewal of the Geary Act, Sui Sin Far found that periodical and newspaper editors, including her most supportive editor Charles Lummis of *Land of Sunshine* and *Overland Monthly*, now turned away from her sympathetic portrayals of the Chinese and concurrent probing of white racism. As biographer White-Parks documents, for the next seven years after 1900, Sui Sin Far managed to publish only four short

"Chinese stories" and to secure two short-term writing positions on the Chinese for the *Los Angeles Express* (118, 245-247).[85]

In keeping with the project of my dissertation, I will focus here on the rhetorical strategies Sui Sin Far adopted to recover from the failures of resources and positioning that nearly silenced her public voice at the turn of the century in the West. The first is her adoption of the autobiographical essay genre with the publication of the powerful "Leaves From the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian" on January 21, 1909 in the *Independent*. The shift to autobiography was pivotal to her entrance into prestigious, mainstream periodicals in the East, and, in the tradition of other writers of color like Zitkala-Ša, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Booker T. Washington, she used it to publicly testify to her experience of racialized oppression and to create a public persona upon which to build as a rhetor. Breaking into the *Independent* with "Leaves," she was able to reach a national audience and was in a position to use the highly personal, referential genre of autobiography to make sharp sociocultural and political critiques of U.S. racial absolutism, prejudice, and whiteness. The second revision was her move East in late 1909. To solidify the achievement signified by the publication of "Leaves," Sui Sin Far moved to Boston to be in close proximity to major publishing networks, bastions of elite progressive reform, and the social networks that enabled her to make additional time for writing (White-Parks 145-6).

[85] Both White-Parks and Ferens have published exhaustive recovery work on Sui Sin Far and document a significant drop in her published writings after 1900 as well as a several year gap between 1905 and 1908 in which her name does not appear in print.

Just as her public reach and opportunities to publish were limited by anti-Chinese movements in the West around the turn of the twentieth century, Sui Sin Far's career flourished between 1910 and 1914 in part because of the U.S.'s changing political relation to China and a timely rise in white Americans' interest in China and the Chinese (Ferens 108-9). As Japanese immigration to the West began to rise to replace excluded Chinese laborers and Japan's win in the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 increased the nation's military clout, Japan began to replace China as the Asian "threat" in public debate. Accordingly, U.S. political attitudes towards China began to shift to a more expedient, imagined "guiding" role of the "awakening giant" in Asia (White-Parks pg). Dominika Ferens argues that "the same political climate that made it possible for Wilson to implement his new [more idealistic, missionary] policy toward China and spurred a wave of writings on China and the Chinese in the American press also made editors and the reading public more receptive to [Sui Sin Far's] vision of the Chinese" (109). Seizing the kairotic moment to publish her autobiographical essay "Leaves" and several longer, more politically engaged stories in the *Independent*, Sui Sin Far's work to "fight their battles in the papers" ("Leaves" 128) and "the intention of publishing a book and planting a few Eurasian thoughts in Western literature" ("Sui Sin Far Tells") coalesced in Boston at this time. With the experience of fifteen years of writing and journalism, Sui Sin Far could turn white editors' and audiences' constraining expectations for "exotic" or "authentic" Chinese subject matter into an opportunity to reach a national audience *and* to reframe the terms of public debate over "the Chinese question."

Relocating East to Boston

In late 1909, Sui Sin Far moved East to Boston. There she was closer to the prestigious center of the publishing industry and metropolitan support networks she had been building for years. In addition, she was able to garner the support of a Montreal lawyer for the Chinese and a wealthy progressive couple in Boston to create sustained time for writing and research (White-Parks 47-8). She was able, in other words, to overcome the significant failure of resources (not just material but also cultural capital and access) that had plagued her until this time. By 1909, she "was enjoying the largest and most far-reaching audience of her writing career." During this time, she published stories in *Good Housekeeping*, a commissioned series in the *Westerner*, essays and stories for the *Independent*, and pieces in *Hampton's, New England Magazine*, and *Delineator.* In 1912, after "a systematic [marketing] campaign by eastern publishers," A.C. McClurg published Sui Sin Far's short story collection *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* and accepted a novel for future publication.[86] *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* was reviewed briefly and favorably (though in notably orientalist terms) by the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Montreal Daily Star*, and the *Independent*" (White-Parks *Sui* 146, 196).[87]

Like Ida B. Wells, Sui Sin Far found that changing her geographic location opened new possibilities in terms of access to social networks and cultural capital that

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[86] A.C. McClurg also published W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*. Sui Sin Far's novel is apparently lost. She notes in the *Boston Globe* in 1912 that "I have also written another book which will appear next year if Providence is kind." White-Parks also cites 1911 and 1912 letters to Charles Lummis documenting that Sui Sin Far was working on, and later revising, her novel for McClurg's (196).

[87] See White-Parks and Shih for more on Sui Sin Far's reviews.

proved useful to her rhetorical advocacy.[88] Indeed, biographer Annette White-Parks explains that after moving to Boston, Sui Sin Far "was enjoying the largest and most far-reaching audience of her writing career" (146). In a short autobiographical piece published in the Boston *Globe* (May 5, 1912), Sui Sin Far shows that she had successfully recovered her public voice: "I came here with the intention of publishing a book and planting a few Eurasian thoughts in Western literature. My collection of Chinese-American stories will be brought out very soon under the title 'Mrs. Spring Fragrance.' I have also written another book which will appear next year if Providence is kind" (SM6).[89] In moving East, she became closer to the center of publishing in the U.S. and had access to a Chinese community with ties to her family and former employers in Montreal. For instance, moving back to the East coast allowed her to obtain financial support for writing from "two of my lawyer friends" and to act on a letter of introduction from a Chinese merchant in Montreal "to his brother in Boston" that connected her to the Boston Chinese community and to white Bostoners with Chinese friends and associates (SM6).

After breaking into the *Independent* with "Leaves," Sui Sin Far continued to cultivate her relationship with the journal from her new residence in Boston. After publishing "Leaves," which was signed from Seattle, the *Independent* published five more of Sui Sin Far's pieces signed from Boston in the next three years. In addition, she publicly credits the managing editor of the *Independent* with encouraging her to write her

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[88] Although, unlike Wells's forced exile to New York, Sui Sin Far's move East was voluntary.

[89] The book in question was not *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*, her collection of short stories, but a lost novel she notes she has completed and that will

first book (a lost novel written after *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*) in the *Globe*. Given that one's rhetorical resources, constraints, and positioning are altered by a cross-country move, it is important to recognize this change as indicative of Sui Sin Far's rhetorical agency *and* as a sociocultural, material revision.

By moving, Sui Sin Far also necessarily altered her subject position in ways that she could capitalize upon to increase her access to mainstream publishing outlets. In Boston, the media was geographically removed from the immediate turbulence and local political machinations of the anti-Chinese movements. Chinese immigrants also had a much smaller presence, granting Sui Sin Far a relatively more unusual status as a biracial author than, for instance, in San Francisco where she was "quite surprised to find that…no one is particularly interested in me" ("Leaves" 130). The traditionally Republican and "free soil" politics of the Northeast, especially as represented in its periodicals and newspapers, may also have helped her find an audience for her sympathetic and vivid portrayals of the oppression of Chinese-Americans. Dominika Ferens concurs, arguing that Sui Sin Far's "writings on the Chinese that had been out of sync with the public sentiment on the West Coast resonated with progressive intellectuals on the East Coast, where even the official political discourse about China acquired religious overtones" (109). This is not to say that Boston was necessarily a less racist part of the country (indeed, her essay "The Persecution and Oppression of Me" documents otherwise) but rather that opportunities for Sui Sin Far to establish a rhetorical persona and to claim space in prestigious print venues may have been greater than they were at that time in the West. Given the amount of correspondence and networking Sui Sin Far pursued to gain any public circulation of her rhetoric, physical proximity and the ability

to call upon editors and other elite associates active in the Chinese community were significant to the recovery of her public voice.

Access and Autobiography

From the point of view of her editorial audience, employing the genre of autobiography allowed *Independent* editor William Hayes Ward to select and circulate a narrative that aligned with progressive reformist impulses by examining an approach to Chinese persecution rarely represented in mainstream press. The *Independent* was a prestigious, progressive magazine that published social reform pieces by leading intellectuals like Jane Addams, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Upton Sinclair during this time. The journal had roots in the Congregational church and became famous as an antislavery periodical with connections to prominent Northeastern poets and intellectuals like former editors Henry Ward Beecher and Washington Gladden (Mott PG). Ward, a Protestant clergyman, was also a prominent "Orientalist" scholar and twice president of the American Oriental Society, which may have guided his interest in Sui Sin Far's Chinese subject matter. After the turn of the century, editor Ward pushed the journal to an increasingly secular and international content, taking "pride in its progressive coverage of current social issues and its attention to quality fiction" (White-Parks 147).[90] Sui Sin Far's sympathetic approach to "The Chinese Question" in her writing and her unusual

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[90] It is not clear from the available evidence how Sui Sin Far first connected with the *Independent's* editor William Hayes Ward—both religious networks among Presbyterian missionaries and educators (Sui Sin Far's family denomination) or Ward's Asian research interests may have formed the basis of their acquaintance.

status as a biracial writer of Chinese heritage would have resonated with the journal's editorial mission.

The highly personal testimony of "Leaves" would also have interested the *Independent's* elite Republican and predominantly white readership for similar reasons. The sense of immediacy and authenticity autobiography provides allowed the reader to engage with the increasing heterogeneity of the United States and to gain a progressive angle of entry into the "Question" without actually having to confront diversity or change themselves (Shih 65).[91] Lynn Bloom argues that the chance to voyeuristically view life "through others' eyes" is one source of the enduring popularity of the autobiographical genre (154-55). I would add that the opportunity for catharsis without crisis autobiography can provide readers is another.[92]

Sui Sin Far's use of autobiography was a rhetorically significant revision to her strategy for social change. She used this new genre to address divisive topics, such as interracial marriage, white racism, and Chinese subjectivity, and she exploits the personal and referential conventions of the autobiographical essay to make very pointed remarks about the hypocrisy of white prejudice. Structured as a series of chronological recollections in the present tense related by their themes of Eurasian identity and racial persecution, "Leaves" represents a new approach to the consistent exigence that drove

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[91] David Shi notes of autobiography that "it remains true that the genre in all its myriad forms—memoir, confession, and the like—has been and still is the genre most closely associated with authenticity" (62).

[92] "Catharsis without crisis" is a phrase I coined for naming what I see as a rhetorically significant function of autobiography. The concept has particular relevance for minority rhetors writing about oppression for predominantly white, privileged audiences. I hope to explore this function in later publications.

Sui Sin Far's rhetorical advocacy: the persecution of people of Chinese heritage in the United States. A number of scholars have noted that Sui Sin Far is more frank and direct in her treatment of this topic than she was able to be in her short fiction and more personal than in her journalism (Solberg; Shih; White-Parks; Wang). Unlike these latter forms, the autobiographical essay grants legitimacy to the personal interpretation of experience and requires a detailed recounting of "true incidents" from an individual's life. In addition, the fact that her evidence was presumed to be derived from life experience meant it could not be as easily rejected or countered as could the more explicit arguments of an editorial or newspaper article.

The use of irony and doubled meaning are consistent, politicized features of Sui Sin Far's rhetoric that achieve particular sharpness in "Leaves." For instance, the irony of her stance in narrating her experience as a Eurasian is evident from the first page: "I am only six years of age, but have attended a private school for over a year, and have already learned that China is a heathen country, being civilized by England. However, for the time being, I am a merry romping child" (126). Later, she notes with no less irony and pain that, when reading for herself in the Montreal library, she learns of China's ancient heritage and learned culture, thus, "at eighteen years of age what troubles me is not that I am what I am, but that others are ignorant of my superiority" (128). In commenting on the short story "In the Land of the Free," Bo Wang argues that given the discriminatory sociocultural context of her rhetorical situation, "the irony Sui Sin Far used in her story would have been more effective in debunking racist policies than direct criticism" (254). However, in her autobiographical writing, Sui Sin Far's work is frequently marked by a critique that is both ironic *and* direct.

For example, in reflecting on her experience as a reporter in Jamaica, Sui Sin Far invokes her white audience's shared Christian heritage and Biblical knowledge to deliver an ironic commentary on the behavior of the colonial whites in Jamaica:

> I am under a tropic sky, meeting frequently and conversing with persons who are almost as high up in the world as birth, education and money can set them….I am also surrounded by a race of people, the reputed descendants of Ham, the son of Noah, whose offspring, it was prophesied, should be the servants of the sons of Shem and Japheth. As I am a descendant, according to the Bible, of both Shem and Japheth, I have a perfect right to set my heel upon the Ham people; but tho I see others around me following out the Bible suggestion, it is not in my nature to be arrogant to any but those who seek to impress me with their superiority. ("Leaves" 129-30)

Similarly, in the final column of "Leaves," Sui Sin Far contrasts Western friends, "broad minded people, whose interest in me is sincere and intelligent" with the "funny people who advise me to 'trade' upon my nationality….They forget, or perhaps they are not aware that the old Chinese sage taught "The way of sincerity is the way of heaven." (132). Flipping, with ironic wit, white hypocrisy and the invocation of Confucius, Sui Sin Far cites a Confucian maxim from the *Analects*, indicating both whites' ignorance of Chinese culture and her studied knowledge.

Rhetorically speaking, Sui Sin Far negotiates with the generic conventions of autobiography to make two main arguments in "Leaves." The first is "that prejudice can be eradicated by association" ("Leaves" 131). To make this point, she juxtaposes the

testimony of her experience as a child who, bombarded by popular racist discourse about the Chinese, "shrunk against my brother at the first sight of a Chinaman," to that of her experience as a woman who asserts that "when alone in a strange place…the appearance of even an humble [Chinese] laundry-man has given me a sense of protection and made me feel quite at home" (131). Using "her life both as evidence of the ubiquity of racism in North America and as a demonstration of how an individual could react constructively to that racism," Sui Sin Far constructs a persuasive strategy available because of the expected form and content of the autobiographical essay (Wang 257).

Sui Sin Far's second and most important argument in "Leaves" is that "individuality is more than nationality" (132)[93]:

> After all I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality. "You are you and I am I," says Confucius. I give my right hand to the Occidentals and my left to the Orientals, hoping that between them they will not utterly destroy the insignificant "connecting link." And that's all. (132)

She uses the structure, evidence, and arrangement of the essay to make this concluding argument by showing how her own individuality cannot be defined in terms of nationality and then by extending the argument to the level of U.S. culture through multiplication by example. Her essay illustrates how, for all practical purposes, a person's "nationality" can be a function of audience perception—however temporarily. Eurasians, by virtue of their

[93] A principle Sui Sin Far first put in print in 1896 as the concluding appeal in a letter to the editor of the *Montreal Daily Star* entitled "A Plea for the Chinaman" (White-Parks 82-3): "What does it matter whether a man be a Chinaman, an Irishman, an Englishman or an American? Individuality is more than nationality" (White-Parks and Ling 196).

being neither "one thing or the other" (127), can sometimes be received (and therefore experience reality as) "American" (i.e. white) *or* Chinese.

From the opening lines of the essay, Sui Sin Far demonstrates how her "nationality," which she often used either interchangeably with or as code for "race," changed based on the perception and information of those around her.[94] For instance, a "white haired old man" at a children's party calls her over for "inspection" after speaking with the hostess: "He adjusts his eyeglasses and surveys me critically. 'Ah, indeed!' he exclaims, 'Who would have thought it at first glance. Yet now I see the difference between her and other children. What a peculiar coloring! Her mother's eyes and hair and her father's features, I presume. Very interesting little creature!'" (126). Thus objectified, the essay continues with example after example of the ways that she and her siblings are tormented as she grows up in Hudson, New York and Montreal, Canada.

In Montreal, English and French Canadian children "amuse themselves with speculations as to whether, we being Chinese, are susceptible to pinches and hair pulling, while older persons pause and gaze upon us, very much in the same way that I have seen people gaze upon strange animals in a menagerie" (127).[95] In the first example, Sui Sin

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[94] "Nationality," as Sui Sin Far used it, was a term invested with a sense of cultural affiliation and origin. In addition, it is also a term she invoked for race and to refer to racial assignment—with all the phenotypic and audience-based connotations of the assignment process.

[95] Ironically, it is a crisis of nationality and group identity that precipitates the French Canadian Quebecois separatist movement later in the century (as rhetoric and composition scholars know from Maurice Charland's seminal article on constitutive rhetorical "The Case of the Peuple Quebecois"). French Canadians are often referred to at this time as the "Chinese of Canada" because of their poverty and

Far demonstrates how others informed of her parentage suddenly “see” her differently, implicitly putting her “true” nationality in question. In the second, she shows how being “Chinese” made her family subject to abuse at the hands of Canadian children while white adults felt compelled to “fix” their nationality based on visual clues. Both examples destabilize the concept of nationality and race as inherent and natural bases of identity, implicating the white supremacist discourses of the times that consistently argued just the opposite in print

The personal examples and central arguments of “Leaves” illustrate a key insight into the function of race and nationality in Sui Sin Far’s time (and our own): people “belong [to a race] because others *perceive* and *evaluate* them to be part of a race” and, I would add, because others treat them according to their own racial perceptions (qtd. in Beauregard 344).[96] To truly intervene in racist white discourses of nationality and race, the variability in the perception of both categories must be exposed and the attendant negative evaluations denaturalized and challenged. Sui Sin Far draws again on her Jamaican experience to demonstrate additional ways that such perception and evaluation of nationality-coded-as-race are context dependent.

Hired from Montreal as the next in a line of female Canadian reporters employed inexpensively to write for the paper, Sui Sin Far’s ability to travel and her job at the colonial paper are dependent on her perception as white (White-Parks 33). She notes accordingly that “the planters and businessmen of the island take me as a matter of course

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reputation for taking work at very low wages (White-Parks PG). Sui Sin Far does not comment upon the common experience of oppression between these two ethnic groups.

[96] Sociologists Larry Hajime Shinagawa and Gin Yong Pang make this point as part of their study of pan-Asian identity and intra-ethnic Asian marriage trends in the United States.

and treat me with kindly courtesy," at times offering her advice they would only give to a white woman: "Occasionally an Englishman will warn me against the 'brown boys' of the island, little dreaming that I too am of the 'brown people' of the earth" (130). However, "when it begins to be whispered about the place that I am not all white, some of the 'sporty' people seek my acquaintance" as an exotic social partner. As a result of the change in local perceptions of her race, she is also approached by a blond naval officer who, apparently seeing her as "Chinese" and therefore undeserving of the respect he would show a white woman in similar circumstances, propositions her, telling her of "the sweet little Chinese girls" he met in Hong Kong who "were not so shy!" (130). Thus, the early lesson of her life in Canada and the United States—that there is no clear nationality through which to make sense of her identity—led Sui Sin Far to recognize the very categories of nationality and race as insufficient and socially constructed yet constitutive of oppressive social relations. It is this understanding that backs her declaration "I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality."

Situated in the context of the Exclusion Era and early twentieth-century white supremacist reactions to widespread immigration to the U.S., Sui Sin Far's argument emerges as sociopolitical critique. First, her contention works directly against prevailing racist discourse that posited Chinese nationality as *precluding* individuality—the basis for democratic citizenship and civil rights. Second, it challenges the logic of the overarching racial project of assigning immigrants to the white or "non-white" side of the color line based on nationality in order to rationalize the unequal distribution of civil rights, labor,

and social justice.[97] As the final stroke in her essay's ultimate argument, Sui Sin Far introduces an alternative subject position for the Eurasian. Rather than be seen as "striped by degeneracy" (as Jack London put it) or accept rejection by the "full-blooded" of both sides of her parents' heritage (129),[98] Sui Sin Far proffers instead the "connecting link" as an embattled, mediating subject position.

This ultimate metaphor gains additional pathos and meaning as a subject position that critiques white orientalism when her intertextual references to classical Chinese texts are taken into consideration.[99] In the essay's final significant paragraph, below, Sui Sin Far makes two references to classics of Confucian philosophy that have not been remarked upon in the existing critical scholarship:

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[97] See Saks *How the Jews Became White Folks* for more on "racial assignment." Omi and Winant define "racial projects" as "simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines." Racial projects connect "what race means in a particular discursive practice and the ways in which both social structures and everyday experiences are racially organized, based upon that meaning" (56).

[98] She notes, for instance, that in addition to her life-long experience with the prejudice of whites against the half-Chinese, "full-blooded Chinese people hav[e] a prejudice against the half white" and muses that "all people are the same. My mother's race is as prejudiced as my father's ("Leaves" 129).

[99] Sui Sin Far studied Chinese, read Chinese language newspapers, and interviewed and exchanged books with well educated Chinese immigrants she met on both coasts of the United States (White-Parks PG; Yin PG). There are also numerous instances in her own writings, including "Leaves," of references to Confucius and to the fact that she researched Chinese language and culture. In "The Persecution and Oppression of Me," (*Independent* 1911), for instance, she notes "I was studying Chinese and was in the habit of giving about half an hour to a Chinese manual every morning" (422). It is not unreasonable to think that she would have familiarity with the two canonical and ubiquitous classics of Chinese learning cited below.

> After all I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality. 'You are you and I am I," says Confucius. I give my right hand to the Occidentals and my left to the Orientals, hoping that between them they will not utterly destroy the insignificant 'connecting link.' And that's all. (132)

The first, "You are you and I am I," identified as a Confucian saying, is from the *Mencius*, one of the Four Books of the classical Confucian tradition. The reference may appear to simply reinforce the importance of individuality in the paragraph's first two sentences. However, considered in context, it gains additional force as both critique and epistemology.

The quotation appears in a section about "regard for others" in which the actions of several sages, including Confucius, are described. It is the story of sage Hwuy of Lew-hea's conduct that includes the saying Sui Sin Far cites:

> Hwuy of Lew-hea was not ashamed to serve an impure ruler, nor did he decline a small office. When advanced to employment, he did not keep his talents and virtues concealed, but made it a point to carry out his principles. When neglected out of office, he did not murmur, and when straitened by poverty, he did not grieve. When in the company of village people, he was quite at ease and could not bear to leave them. [He would say], "You are you, and I am I. Though you stand by my side with bare arms and breast, how can you defile me?" Therefore when men [now] hear the character of Hwuy of Lew-hea, the mean become generous and the niggardly become liberal. (brackets org. Legge 290)

Hwuy of Lew-hea's behavior demonstrates his virtue, while his quoted words show he embraces people from all stations in life and sees virtue as rooted in the self not one's surroundings or the behavior of others. The spirit of this narrative aligns well with Sui Sin Far's rhetorical stance in "Leaves" in that it supports a sense of individualized virtue and ethical responsibility to act well regardless of circumstances. In addition, Hwuy of Lew-hea's rejection of "defilement" by the country ways of villagers becomes an ironic and relevant aspect of this intertextual reference as it follows Sui Sin Far's derisive rejection of some whites' advice that "Instead of making myself familiar with the Chinese-American around me, I should discourse on my spirit acquaintance with Chinese ancestors and quote [Confucius] in between the "Good mornings" and "How d'ye dos" of editors" (132). Finally, like the "accommodating" sage Hwuy of Lew-hea's account, Sui Sin Far's autobiography is meant to work change in the hearts and minds of her hearers. "The object of my life," as she put it in a November, 1909 letter to the editor of the *Westerner*, "is not so much to put a Chinese name into American literature, as to break down prejudice, and to cause the American heart to soften and the American mind to broaden toward the Chinese people now living in America" (qtd. in White-Parks 154).

The second important intertextual reference is that of the "connecting link," a phrase which Sui Sin Far puts in quotation marks in her essay. Though it has often been remarked upon by scholars for its poetic connotations, it has not been identified as another significant Chinese classical reference. The concept of the connecting link is from the *Xiao jing* (Book of Filial Piety), a short but important dialogue between scholar Zeng Zi and Confucius. In numerous English translations, Part V "Filial Piety in Scholars," states that "The connecting link between serving one's father and serving

one's mother is love" (Makra 11). Filial piety is a foundational tenant of Confucian philosophy, the root of moral character, civic virtue, and the model for the ideal relationships governing Chinese society. In addition, as Chinese philosophy scholar Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee explains, "it is important to note that, for Confucius, filial piety is not just a private virtue limited and only applicable to the institution of the family" (124). Seeing the "connecting link" of Sui Sin Far's final lines in the context not only of her role *between* her Chinese mother and her English father but also in terms of an injunction to filial piety and service in the broader society reveals the utterance as a political act and a rhetorical exigence. In a society dominated by sociocultural, political, and material forces that would render equal love and service to her Chinese and Anglo heritage untenable, Sui Sin Far's claiming of individuality and extending a hand to the Occidentals and the Orientals commits her to intervention in the racist discourses of her times that would build instead "a gulf is so wide and so deep that no bridge can span it" ("Shall Russia").

Conclusion

In the anthology *Racial Thinking in the United States: Uncompleted Independence*, editors Paul Spickard and G. Reginald Daniel conclude their introductory essay with brief statements of their beliefs about defeating racism in the U.S. Their statements have a startling similarity and alignment with Sui Sin Far's observations on race and culture:

> [W]e believe that the way out of a racist social structure is not by running away from race. Rather, it is by embracing racial and cultural difference and maximizing racial and cultural contact and knowledge. The way out is

> through….It is in this spirit that we put forward the suggestion that the acknowledgement and embrace of racial multiplicity may be steps toward dismantling the monoracial idea system that was created as a prop to slavery and colonialism. (15)

In persistently engaging the racism of her times and working to integrate a Chinese American voice into American public discourse, Sui Sin Far attempted to enact and to demonstrate the possibilities of racial multiplicity.

By engaging Sui Sin Far's historical experience of a sustained rejection and attempted silencing, I hope to illustrate another side of experiences of rhetorical failure in this chapter. Sui Sin Far's experience was not defined by one identifiable rhetorical performance, rather, as is perhaps characteristic of most failures of resources, her experience was composed by the confluence of events during several years at the turn of the twentieth century. In examining her innovative efforts to change her rhetorical positioning, strategies and resources, my hope is that this chapter also shows Sui Sin Far to be a significant and early theorist of our contemporary concerns with identity, racial multiplicity, and cultural pluralism.

CHAPTER FOUR

A "Revolt Against War": Jane Addams Disturbs Conventions and Deploys Memory

> Wherever she went in the country, the charge that she had called American soldiers drunks and cowards followed her like a determined stalker. She faced humiliation. Some of her speeches were canceled. She was publicly booed for the first time. The press, which for years had been her great ally for the most part, and which had played a key role in lionizing her and turning her into an American hero, now deserted her.
>
> –Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy*

In the summer of 1915, Jane Addams (1860-1935), a sociologist, writer, and one of the most prominent American women of the early twentieth century, traveled for five weeks through six war-torn capitals and two neutral nations in Europe. She undertook the trip as President of an International Congress of Women (ICW) at The Hague and head delegate elected to take the Congress's resolutions for peace and mediation to the heads of warring nations. In her capacity as envoy, she met with presidents, prime ministers, kings, and the Pope. Newspapers across the United States chronicled each move of her tour as they had the progress of the unprecedented women's peace Congress (Linn 306). She and fellow delegates Emily Greene Balch, Chair of Economics & Sociology at Wellesley College; Chrystal McMillan, a lawyer from Great Britain; Dr. Aletta Jacobs, President of the Dutch Association for Woman Suffrage; Rosa Genoni, a writer and lecturer from Italy; and Rosika Schwimmer, President of the Hungarian Woman's

Suffrage Association, also spoke with injured soldiers and civilians on both sides of the conflict.[100] The trip was a courageous and determined attempt to learn more about the situation in Europe and to present a plan for continuous mediation to achieve a negotiated end to the war.

Upon her return to the United States, Addams was greeted by jubilant supporters—more than 3,000 gathered at a reception in Chicago to celebrate her homecoming. There were also critics who were glad she had returned, as an editor for the *New York Times* put it, from “the demonstration of the sad folly of peace-at-any-price” ("Jane Addams Comes Home"). While waiting for an audience with United States President Woodrow Wilson, Addams was invited to report on the delegates’ findings delegate at Carnegie Hall—her first public address since returning from Europe.[101] Scholars have long been interested in this address, a rhetorical performance that resulted in “her vilification by the press and the public” and significant damage to her reputation and the mission of the ICW (Davis 232).

As with Ida B. Wells’s “threadbare lie” editorial, Jane Addams’s experience of rhetorical failure after her July 9, 1915 address at Carnegie Hall has been attributed to a few lines from her address. For Addams, it was the “bayonet story”: a “misstatement,” as

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[100] The envoys did not travel as a group as the Congress created different delegations to reach all of the nations they determined relevant. According to their *1915 Report*, Addams traveled primarily with Dr. Aletta Jacobs and was received by heads of state in the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and France, while other delegates traveled to Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Russia (317-18).

[101] The meeting was convened by the Woman’s Peace Party, Carnegie’s Church Peace Union, and more than a dozen civic organizations.

she later put it, "repeated, usually with scathing comment, from one end of the country to the other" of her testimony that European soldiers were given "stimulants" before making bayonet charges into enemy lines (*Peace and Bread in Time of War* 79). The story has typically been seen as resulting in Addams's rhetorical failure because she "struck at a sacred myth, the myth that the soldier fought and died because of his sense of duty and his love of country" (Davis 226).[102] This myth, as scholars have pointed out, was (and is) pivotal to the power structures of nationalism and patriarchy (Shepler and Mattina) and constructions of patriotism (Snyder, Hansen).[103] While many scholars have also noted that Addams's gender was a factor in the hostile, derisive responses to her rhetoric, there has been little critical analysis of the nature and context of the public outcry, nearly all of which invoked Addams's womanhood in specific ways that were linked to her rhetorical authority, her sphere of public service, to woman suffrage or all three. The nature of the criticism calls for rhetorical analysis of Addams's prior ethos, her text, and the sociocultural context of intertwined debates over women's appropriate role in politics, suffrage, and pacifism as constitutive factors in this watershed moment.

Such an analysis shows that Addams's address instantiates the tensions of her virtually unprecedented and controversial rhetorical situation in complex and, at times,

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[102] See also Carl Burgchardt, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Daniel Levine, Terrance Macmullan, and Anne Wiltsher.

[103]Communication scholars Sherry Shepler and Anne Mattina argue further that critics' focus on Addams's perceived insult to soldiers in 1915 functioned as a "diversionary tactic" such that "the myth of nationalism and its corresponding roots in patriarchy were camouflaged by the incessant harping on Addams' portrayal of the soldier. Critics were able to cloud matters successfully so that the patriarchal system was never once in any real danger" (161, 159).

confusing ways. Her use of the bayonet testimony is constitutive of this tension. In addition, study of the hostile outcry against Addams's rhetoric reveals that the scandal of the "bayonet story" was generated in significant part by the coverage of some newspapers, particularly the *New York Time*s, and taken up by anti-suffragists as a strategy to denounce suffrage and to restrict the sphere of their appropriate rhetorical activism to domestic, non-military concerns. Both newspaper framing and anti-suffrage rhetoric were thus significant factors in the transformation of Addams's "stimulants" testimony from a few controversial lines to the "bayonet story" that haunted her for months, damaging her reputation, obscuring her real message, and suppressing her ability to access public rhetorical platforms. Rhetorical analysis of the texts and contexts of Addams's experience after her Carnegie Hall address shows the constitutive role of mass-media platforms (like newspapers and wire services) and resistance to the extension of women's rhetorical authority (in this case to justify participation in international affairs) to experiences of rhetorical failure. In this case, I argue that the such an experience was ultimately secured by the fact that Addams and the ICW delegates were "unofficial," unauthorized, and legally prohibited from suffrage and military service, essential tenets of patriarchal authority, rather than by the particular discursive choices she made in speaking at Carnegie Hall.

In the years after 1915, Addams's reputation suffered, her opportunities to speak and publish dwindled, and she was forced into an increasingly radical position relative to the mainstream with the country's entrance into the war. As a writer largely shut out of mainstream media outlets, one strategy that helped her to retain some semblance of a popular platform was to capitalize on public and editorial interest in an urban legend

about a “devil baby” at Hull-House. The topic allowed her to examine women’s voices and to speculate on the role of memory in fostering endurance *and* social change in the face of tragedy and injustice. The rhetorical exploration Addams undertook through the devil baby legend in the experimental book *The Long Road of Woman’s Memory* (1916) —Addams’s only major mainstream publication between 1915 and 1922—has not been considered part of her rhetorical activism for pacifism and social justice.

However, I argue that this text should be read as a war-time book that reflects Addams’s strategic revisions to her approach to the topics of war and social justice after her experience of rhetorical failure and censorship. In *The Long Road*, Addams develops a methodology of “interpretive memory” to explore the necessary conditions and process of deep social change initiated by women in keeping with her feminist pragmatist intellectual method of deriving social and ethical principles from concrete examples. In addition, I argue that this approach allows Addams to position herself rhetorically (at least in print) as a social analyst and intellectual, a positioning much more acceptable to editors and her mainstream audience than her work as an activist leader of the International Congress of Women.

In this chapter, I first briefly review a portion of the vast critical literature concerned with Addams and her experience during war. Next, I then examine Addams’s rhetorical career in terms of the resources, appeals, and popular representations constituting her prior ethos. I then analyze her the text of her Carnegie Hall address, “The Revolt Against War,” and the circulation, sociocultural context, and nature of the hostile public responses this address. Finally, I consider some of the strategies Addams employed to revise her rhetoric and to recover a public platform for social justice

advocacy by analyzing her return to an urban legend about the "devil baby at Hull-House" in *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* to argue for a reading of this text as a continuation of Addams's feminist pacifist project and her advocacy for social justice.

The Scholarly Conversation

The critical scholarship concerned with Jane Addams is immense. There are numerous scholarly biographies and biographically informed studies focused on Addams's role in social justice movements.[104] Scholars in sociology, history, political science, gender studies, philosophy, and literature have published detailed studies of her work Hull-House, as a sociologist, writer, democratic theorist and intellectual. This scholarship was made possible by decades of feminist recovery work based in Addams's copious archival materials to complicate and resist earlier critical views of Addams as a popular reformer and organizer but *not* an original thinker, writer or social theorist. In examining Addams's construction of women's rhetorical authority for social reform and arguing for the continuity and importance of *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* to her social thought, this chapter aims to contribute to the continued recuperation of Addams's intellectual legacy.

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[104] Significant biographical studies include that of her nephew James Weber Linn *Jane Addams: A Biography* (1935); Daniel Levine *Jane Addams and the Liberal Tradition* (1972); Allen Davis *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* (1973); Mary Jo Deegan *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School* (1990); Jean Bethke Elshtain *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy* (2002); Katherine Joslin *Jane Addams, a Writers Life* (2004); and Victoria Bissell Brown *The Education of Jane Addams* (2004).

Academic scholarship on Jane Addams was spurred by the centennial of her birth in 1960. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom[105] published *Jane Addams: A Centennial Reader* in 1960 that drew the attention of liberal historians like Merle Curti, Staughton Lynd, Daniel Levine, Allen Davis, and Christopher Lasch who began to review Addams's activism as part of investigations of Progressive Era reform movements and the rise of radicalism in American society. Scholars informed by feminist methods, like Anne Firor Scott and Jill Ker Conway, raised the issue of gender in Addams's activism and fame in the 1960s as well. Conway made the important argument in "Jane Addams: an American Heroine" that Addams's widespread popularity and renown was directly related to her public, "feminine" activism to "redeem the world from the baser masculine passions" (J. K. Conway). In 1965, Christopher Lasch, quite alone in the scholarship for more than a decade, identified Addams as "theorist and intellectual—a thinker of originality and daring" in his edited collection *The Social Thought of Jane Addams* (xv). A few years later, John C. Farrell published *Beloved Lady: A History of Jane Addams's Ideas on Reform and Peace* (1967), a biographically informed review of Addams's social thought that argued Addams's pacifism grew out of her reform work.

Over the next twenty years, scholarship on Addams's life and work continued to forward the argument that she was not an original thinker and writer, while, ironically, long-term archival projects began simultaneously to organize the evidence that would enable the reversal of this claim. Daniel Levine, in *Jane Addams and the Liberal Tradition* (1971), located Addams among radical liberal progressives whose ideas were a

[105] The current name of the organization formed from the Woman's Peace Party and the heir to the International Congress of Women for a Permanent Peace.

bridge between individual laissez-faire liberalism and the social welfare theory of the New Deal era. In 1973, historian Allen F. Davis published *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams*, the most widely cited piece of scholarship on Addams. Particularly interested in the nature and construction of Addams's legend as an American saint and symbol, Davis broke new ground with his detailed use of Addams's primary materials and focused on popular responses to her work. He argues that Addams's "legend" as a "benevolent saint" was a journalistic creation that "she helped to create, or at least acquiesced in," and one which contributed to her downfall during World War I (xi). Both Levine and Davis emphasized Addams's status as a persuasive popularizer of the ideas of others but argued consistently she was not an original thinker.[106]

In 1976, Mary Lynn McCree Bryan and a team of editors began the Jane Addams Papers Project, an endeavor supported by the National Historic Publications and Records Commission, which resulted in an eighty-two-reel microfilm collection in the mid-1980s and a comprehensive print guide (1995). Bryan and Barbara Bair are currently editing letterpress editions of Addams's selected papers from the Project, two of which are now in print (Bryan). Several significant recent studies of Addams's activist and intellectual legacy are testament to the importance of accessible primary evidence for enabling scholarship, particularly recuperative work: Jean Bethke Elshtain's *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy* (2002), Victoria Bissell Brown's *The Education of Jane*

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[106] Davis was so committed to this argument, that he critiqued Farrell's *Beloved Lady* for coming "almost wholly from her point of view" and for not recognizing that "Addams was primarily an activist, organizer, mediator, and spokesman rather than an original and systematic thinker" Allen F. Davis, "Rev. Of Beloved Lady: A History of Jane Addams' Ideas on Reform and Peace," The American Historical Review 73.5 (1968): 1659..

Addams (2004), Katherine Joslin's *Jane Addams: A Writer's Life* (2004), and Louise W. Knight's *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (2005). All challenge previous scholars' view of Addams as a primarily derivative thinker.

Brown's and Knight's studies both demonstrate the life-long development of Addams's ideas of social democracy, and they complicate Davis's contention that Addams was essentially "a compromiser." Joslin's literary biography explores Addams's writing process and argues that her writing is intentionally imaginative, literary, and generically hybrid rather than academic in style or format, despite her close ties to the University of Chicago and her writings for periodicals such as the *Journal of Sociology* and *Survey*.[107] Elshtain's work brought Addams's writing to a wide scholarly and lay audience (she also published *The Jane Addams Reader* 2002). She argues that Addams embraced women's essential difference as maternal and constructive, an approach Elshtain appreciates, causing some scholars to charge that Elshtain has "depoliticized and deradicalized" Addams "for particular contemporary political purposes" (Marilyn Fischer 6).[108] This controversy highlights longstanding feminist concerns over essentialism and embodiment—issues raised by Addams's consistent appeals to and for women in her rhetoric, which become particularly apparent during the war years.

Recently, scholars have also begun more detailed studies of Addams's inquiry method and social theory. These examinations include, for instance, analyses of

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[107] Joslin makes this point partly in response to a trend within Addams scholarship criticizing the style and format of her books.

[108] See Fischer, Nackenoff, and Chmielewski's introduction to *Jane Addams and the Practice of American Democracy* and Shannon Jackson "Towards a Queer Social Welfare Studies: Unsettling Jane Addams" in this volume as well as reviews of Elshtain's study by Daniel Levine and Daniel T. Rodgers.

Addams's method as feminist pragmatist (Charlene Haddock Seigfried), of her theory as a significant contribution to a feminist ethics of care (Maurice Hamington), and her strategic use of maternalist rhetoric in international pacifism (Fischer). Interestingly, none of these studies examine the texts under consideration in this chapter, "The Revolt Against War" and *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, although I think it is quite clear that Addams's feminism, pragmatism, and certainly her maternalist rhetoric is in full effect in both of these works.

However, scholars have long discussed Addams's public vilification and loss of status and reputation during World War I. Nearly all scholars concerned with Addams's wartime rhetoric note that "The Revolt Against War" spawned the scandalous "bayonet story."[109] Historical and rhetorical scholarship has demonstrated the logical, analytic nature of Addams's anti-war rhetoric and the importance of argument by analogy to her rhetoric (Burgchardt), Addams's unpopular exposure of the uniquely destructive nature of an entrenched war (Macmullan), and the fierce rhetorical debates between peace advocates and militarists over definitions of "patriotism" during the war (Snyder). However, there has not been a rhetorical analysis of this address in the context of suffrage debates and her prior ethos.[110] In considering Addams's experience of rhetorical failure

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[109] This may also be because Addams herself was so well aware of the pervasiveness of this story in harming her reputation. She comments upon the misuse of her bayonet testimony in several short pieces from 1915, in *Women at The Hague* (1915), in *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922), and in *The Second Twenty Years at Hull House* (1930).

[110] While Shepler and Mattina do all attention to debates over women's changing roles in politics as part of the context for Addams's, their main purpose is to examine the mythic structures invoked by her address and the audience's response to them.

after Carnegie Hall (and during World War I more generally) as one of situation and positioning, my goal is to contribute to the critical literature by contextualizing this rhetorical performance in terms of her prior ethos and the sociocultural constraints and resources at her disposal during the war years. Such an approach also enables us to read Addams's subsequent rhetorical discourse as a response to her post-Hague conference experience and as consistent with the feminist pacifism and ever-widening definition of social justice that animated her rhetoric.

In the section that follows, I will review Addams's biographical background and examine the establishment of her rhetorical career at Hull-House in order to establish her rhetorical resources, prior ethos, and mainstream perceptions of her rhetorical advocacy. This context reveals that Addams's work from Hull-House was typically "domesticated" as feminine, caring, and ameliorative. However, when her rhetoric shifted to a national political campaign and public commitments to suffrage and international mediation, Addams faced increased public censure for meddling in masculine endeavors and her pacifist rhetoric was implicated in public debates over women's suffrage and political participation.

Rhetorical Career: From the "Symbol of American Democracy" to "Social Opprobrium"

Jane Addams was a privileged and nationally prominent woman with access to some of the most elite men and women of her times. By the first decade of the twentieth century, she enjoyed a national reputation as a founder of Hull-House, pioneer in social work with poor immigrants, and author of more than one hundred articles and speeches

as well as three books—including her acclaimed historical autobiography *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910). In the years before the U.S. entered the war in Europe, Addams was at the peak of her public career and the height of her image as an "American saint" and symbol of the best of American democracy (Davis 211).[111] As Addams scholar Jean Bethke Elshtain asserts, "by 1915 Addams's public reputation seemed virtually unshakable. She had access to all the powerful men of her time, including the president of the United States" ("A Return to Hull House" xxvii). It is important to examine Addams's background and rhetorical career up to this point in order understand the rhetorical resources (both material and discursive) and prior ethos as a public figure she brought to her advocacy for international mediation.

Biographical Background

Jane Addams was born to a striving, white Quaker family in rural Cedarville, Illinois in 1860, the youngest of four surviving children. Her parents, John and Sarah Weber Addams, migrated from Pennsylvania to territory in northwest Illinois in the mid-nineteenth century. They established a mill and later invested in real estate and prospered during the mid-nineteenth century as the border state of Illinois developed rapidly and Midwestern exports were connected to national markets by the railroad. John Addams became a prominent entrepreneur who helped to establish the town of Cedarville, its first local bank, a church, and the area's first railroad. He eventually served as a senator in

[111] Of course, Addams had always her critics as well as her admirers. In Chicago, where she was often sought as a mediator, she clashed with local politicians, including the school board, ward bosses, and city politicians (see Davis 132-34). Militarists like Theodore Roosevelt, for instance, denounced her Tolstoyan book *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907).

Illinois for sixteen years and was a friend of Abraham Lincoln's. He was a public speaker, supporter of women's education and, later, woman suffrage. Jane Addams's mother Sarah died when Jane was just two, and her father was her sole parent until he remarried six years later to Anna Halderman Addams. Anna Addams was an elegant and traditional woman who encouraged Jane to travel, pursue marriage, and taught elite manners and mores to her step-daughter that later made Jane comfortable working with wealthy elites in Chicago (Hansen 43-48; Lasch xvii-xxii; Brown 207-11).

Addams was unusually well-educated for a woman of her times, and a member of the "pioneer" generation of college educated women in the United States (Gordon 4). As a teenager, her father encouraged her to read classical Western literature, such as Plutarch's *Lives*, and to study and practice Latin translation. Discussion in the Addams household often revolved around politics and civic service, and Jane was encouraged to correspond with her father (who was often away at the state capital) about her opinions on the social and political questions of her day. Addams completed high school at sixteen and attended the nearby Rockford Seminary, "a school conflicted about how to reconcile its liberal curriculum with its mandate to train missionaries and housewives," receiving its first BA in 1882 (Hansen 59; Knight "An Authoritative Voice" 229-30).[112] At Rockford, Addams received a Christian, liberal arts education, edited the seminary magazine, practiced public speaking in literary societies, and served as President of her class three out of four years. She was well read in traditional Western classics of

[112] Rockford offered a "collegiate diploma" not a BA when Addams first attended. She wanted to take a BA at Smith College in Massachusetts but did not have her family's encouragement nor enough education in Greek and geometry to pass the difficult entrance examinations (Brown 60-61; Knight 229-30).

literature, history, and philosophy—including Emerson, Cicero and other Roman orators—and she drew from such sources throughout her writing career.[113] Her valedictory address, for instance, used the ancient story of Cassandra to argue that the women of her generation, while able to form "an accurate perception of Truth and Justice…will make no effort to confirm [it], or to organize through existing knowledge." Like Cassandra, they lack "what the ancients called *auethoritas* [sic], right of speakers to make themselves heard, and prove to the world that an intuition is a force in the universe" (Elshtain *The Jane Addams Reader* 10-11). Women could gain the "accuracy" needed for *auethoritas* through scientific study, but if "woman would bring this force to bear throughout morals and justice, then she must take the active, busy world as a test" (12).

Apparently taking her own advice, Addams completed her first year of studies at the Women's Medical School in Philadelphia, but she did not continue, due to illness and family claims resulting from her father's sudden death earlier in the school year (Knight 251).[114] Addams returned home and helped her family, eventually traveling to Europe as part of the "finishing" of her education. For the remainder of the 1880s, she lived with and assisted her extended family, primarily her older sister Mary and her family in

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[113] See Knight "An Authoritative Voice" for the best overview of Addams's college studies. Addams' writing is full of citations from classical Western literature, interwoven with her arguments and often cited as reminders or lessons about human nature in history. For instance, in *The Long Road of Women's Memory*, she cites Gilbert Murray's life of Euripides as inspiring her to consider the importance of memory in the process of making sense of experience Jane Addams, The Long Road of Woman's Memory, 1 ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1916) 7..

[114] Though she lived to be seventy-five, like Sui Sin Far, Addams was plagued by returning bouts of chronic illness that interrupted her rhetorical career.

Cedarville and her stepmother Anna in Baltimore.[115] As the unmarried daughter of an upper-middle-class family, this is exactly what she was expected to do, but it is clear that Addams wanted instead to apply her education to civic engagement and a public career (Davis 29-37; Brown 115-17).

Like many women of her class and social position, she searched for a way to reconcile the competing demands of what she later theorized as "the family claim" (of one's immediate family) and the "social claim" (of the wider human family and need for basic social justice) in *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902). Many scholars have explored this time in Addams's life to understand the genesis of the famous social settlement Hull-House, which Addams often described as her own "solution" to these competing claims.[116] What I think is important to emphasize here is that Addams had significant material and cultural resources—a sizable inheritance, extended family in Illinois, a college education and network—upon which to draw as she launched Hull-House and as she later responded to the needs and opportunities of the settlement as a writer, speaker, and activist. What she had to craft and to fight for, as with all women in

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[115] During this decade, divisions rent the extended Addams family. Jane and Anna clashed, her older brother Weber's family was torn by his mental illness, and tensions persisted between her alcoholic step-brother Harry, who married Jane's sister Alice, and the rest of the family. Brown argues that Addams's ongoing role as family mediator contributed to her negotiation skills in other contexts Victoria Bissell Brown, The Education of Jane Addams, Politics and Culture in Modern America, ed. Glenda Gilmore Michael Kazin, and Thomas J. Sugrue (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2004) 148-61..

[116] See, for instance, the work of biographers Brown, Knight, Davis, and Elshtain as well as scholars interested in the settlement movement like Judith Trolander *Professionalism and Social Change* and progressive pragmatism like Charlene Haddock Seigfried *Feminism and Pragmatism: Reweaving the Social Fabric*.

the nineteenth and early twentieth century, was the credibility and authority necessary to engage with state and federal policy and, increasingly, international affairs.

Becoming Famous: the Resources and Writings of Hull-House

To understand the intellectual project and prior ethos that Addams brought to her work with the International Congress of Women and to Carnegie Hall in 1915, it is important to consider the rhetorical resources, constraints, and authority Addams gathered in the initial decades of her rhetorical career. In addition, scholars cannot, I contend, interpret Addams's experience of rhetorical failure nor appreciate the significance of her subsequent rhetorical action in response to failure without this broader context. In 1889, Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, a close friend from Rockford, founded Hull-House, the first social "settlement" in Chicago, in a West-side neighborhood of crowded immigrant tenements.

Hull-House became the foundation—literally, intellectually, and figuratively—of Addams's rhetorical career and her ethos. Her settlement work eventually made her, as one writer put it in 1934, "greatly beloved because of her kindly intentions toward the poor" (Dilling 51) as well as "the leading proponent of community-based sociology in the United States" (Deegan "W.E.B. Du Bois and the Women of Hull-House, 1895-1899" 303). She became allied with both social radicals and political conservatives, some of the wealthiest elites in the city and the poorest recent immigrants, and these tensions influenced her rhetorical career in complex ways.

In the late nineteenth century, the need for social services (not to mention justice) in Chicago was great, particularly in the nineteenth ward where Hull-House was located.

The second industrial revolution drew tremendous waves of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe to the city to work as laborers in factories and as piece-workers in homes and sweat shops. An enormous divide quickly arose between immigrant workers crowded into terrible living conditions (often owned by their employers) with no representation and little recourse and a small class of elite capitalists who were amassing wealth at an unprecedented rate (Brown 211-12; Hansen 11).[117] Hull-House was a community-based experiment that grew rapidly to meet the needs of the neighborhood, expanding physically into additional buildings and in terms of its wide array of services. The settlement's activities and services included, among other things, a day nursery, Chicago's first kindergarten, a cooperative boarding house for young working women, a labor exchange, language classes, a post office and public library, and meeting space for clubs and community meetings that met from morning until late in the evening.[118]

Addams combined the privileges of her background with talents for fund raising and publicity, and, over time, became positioned as a rhetor able to draw upon the cultural and financial capital of elites in Chicago and beyond (Davis 109). For example, co-founder Starr taught at an exclusive private girl's school whose families provided some of the first contacts in the exclusive Chicago Women's Club. Addams's lifetime companion Mary Rozet Smith also came from a wealthy family who generously and

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[117] The "corporate reconstruction of American capitalism" of the 1870s and 80s resulted in tremendous profits for urban capitalists in the "Gilded Age" 1890s along with the worst of the socioeconomic effects on small-proprietors, laborers, and immigrants in cities during this same times. See, for instance, James T. Kloppenberg *Uncertain Victory* and Martin Sklar *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916*.

[118] See Addams's *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910) for vivid descriptions of the settlement's activities.

consistently gave money to Hull-House projects (Brown 260-61). Through many years of diplomacy, Addams even persuaded Helen Culver, heir to the Hull fortune, to donate the building and land around the settlement and to make numerous improvements and donations. Her personal and professional connections, and the rhetorical resources they provided, were essential to Hull-House's success, which, in turn, formed the basis of her own reputation and career as well as the source of experiences that helped shape her persistent, insightful, and challenging rhetoric.

Despite her connection to many socially and politically conservative elites, like Helen Culver and members of the Chicago Women's Club, Addams maintained an expansive stance towards the use of Hull-House facilities, avoiding formal alliance with religious or political organizations and providing space and shelter to groups from trade unions to anarchists to working women's social clubs. The settlement became a gathering place and source of support and information for intellectuals, reformers, and community activists. From the 1890s on, Hull-House boarded more than a dozen "residents" who staffed the classes and clubs and worked cooperatively with the University of Chicago extension, the Chicago Board of Education, Juvenile Court, and in city civil service. Addams and these Hull-House residents served as strike arbitrators, union organizers, city inspectors, and lobbyists for child labor laws. A diverse array of activists and intellectuals like John Dewey, W.E.B. Du Bois, William James, Florence Kelley, Henry Demarest Lloyd, George Mead, Ida Tarbell, Lillian Wald, and Ida Wells-Barnett were allied with Hull-House for decades.[119] Through her many years of work with varied

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[119] Sociologist Mary Jo Deegan argues in particular that Hull-House's collaboration with African American leaders like Du Bois and Wells has been marginalized in the critical literature as have the contributions of

constituencies in Chicago, Addams gained concrete political and administrative experience at the municipal and state levels and forged a world view of as an "incorrigible democrat" (as she later styled herself) (Addams *The Second Twenty Years at Hull House* 29; A. F. Davis *American Heroine, the Life and Legend of Jane Addams* 94-106).

Addams's writing allowed her to raise funds and to propagate the settlement's work while articulating the democratic praxis she derived from her activism. Her career as a writer began with the publication of two essays on the settlement in *The Forum* (May and October 1892). As the settlement movement spread, Addams was recognized as a pioneer, and she built a rhetorical and editorial network by speaking at colleges and universities, clergy meetings, service organizations, and women's clubs and by writing for organs like the *American Journal of Sociology* and *Charities*. Hull-House's unsuccessful fight to break the machine of popular ward boss Johnny Powers, outlined in "Why the Ward Boss Rules" (*Outlook* April, 1898), brought Addams and Hull-House to national attention. In the conclusion to this first of many articles drawing in vivid detail upon her experiences in the neighborhood, Addams offers a preview of her democratic social ethics:

> If we hold to our political democracy, some pains must be taken to keep on common ground in our human experiences, and to some solidarity in our ethical conceptions. And if we discover that men of low ideals and

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African American male and white female sociologists more generally Mary Jo Deegan, Race, Hull-House, and the University of Chicago: A New Conscience against Ancient Evils, 1 ed. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002) 39-41..

> corrupt practice are forming popular political standards simply because such men stand by and for and with the people, then nothing remains but to obtain a like sense of identification before we can hope to modify ethical standards. (Elshtain *The Jane Addams Reader* 124)

The ethical standards she refers to were those not only those of the corrupt Alderman but also of the wealthy and aloof elites who derided corruption among the ward bosses without considering that of the businessmen who exploited so many of the immigrant laborers in the nineteenth ward. The article brought opportunities to lecture and to write for other progressive periodicals like the *Forum*, *Independent,* and the *Atlantic Monthly* about the settlement movement, the labor movement, domestic service, municipal politics and the inequities of the philanthropic "charity" model (Davis 103-4, 124-5).

From this material, Addams composed her first book, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), which makes the argument that the new century demands a standard of "social ethics" rooted in experience.

> We are learning that a standard of social ethics is not attained by traveling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of one another's burdens. To follow the path of social morality results perforce in the temper if not the practice of the democratic spirit, for it implies that diversified human experience and resultant sympathy which are the foundation and guarantee of Democracy

In making this moral argument for diversity, Addams draws upon case studies in each chapter that, in keeping with her feminist pragmatism, take women's experiences as central.[120]

Extending Women's Sphere in Social Reform

Over the first decade of the twentieth century Addams became a professional writer and fixture in popular periodicals like *Ladies Home Journal*, *Woman's Home Companion*, *The American Magazine*, and *McClure's*. She used her frequent speaking opportunities to draft and test material she then revised for magazine essays and then, frequently, collected and revised for books. By 1910, she had published two more books, *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907) and *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (1909), as well as more than one hundred essays, book chapters, and addresses. At least four publishers (Doubleday Page, Appleton, Holt, and Macmillan) vied for her autobiography *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (Joslin 104-5). There was always, as Maurice Hamington argues, "a gendered dimension to this popularity" that made Addams a household name and enabled her career as a writer (par. 10). Addams was publicly known primarily for the so-called womanly aspects of her work, and she strategically drew on extensions of "woman's sphere" to authorize women's participation in passing protective legislation, labor reform, civil service and municipal government, and settlement work.

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[120] Addams does not only focus on women's experiences in this book. In her chapter on "Industrial Amelioration" concerned with labor relations, for instance, workingmen and business owners, notably the labor strikes against George Pullman's company (though not mentioned by name).

The rise of the mass periodical, industrialized mass newspaper, and wire system in the early twentieth century had an important impact on Addams's rhetorical career. Evincing both this power and the circulation enabled by the spread of new wire services, Davis argues, "reporters discovered that Jane Addams was good copy; they summarized everything she wrote, and reported everything she did. Even the small town newspapers picked up stories of her books and speeches from the wire services and passed them on to their readers" (199). From her Hull-House network Addams gained "some measure of control" over press coverage of the settlement through relationships with people like Mrs. Joseph Medill, a philanthropist and wife of the publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*; journalist Henry Demarest Lloyd; and Hull-House resident Francis Hackett, an editor at the *Chicago Evening Post* (Davis 97, 149; Brown 228). She was well aware of the power of the press to shape public perception of her work.[121]

The many reporters, civic leaders, and writers who visited Addams at Hull-House portrayed her work as self-sacrificing extensions of women's traditional roles in caring for the sick and vulnerable as well as privileged women's socially approved philanthropic work with the poor (Clapp 53). Most popular portrayals of Addams downplayed the challenging nature of her rhetorical advocacy and blunted the critical edge of her rhetoric. For instance, in a feature article for *Harper's Bazar* (1904), the writer compares Addams to Catherine of Sienna and notes that in founding Hull-House her "patriotism took to itself an exquisite feminine and spiritual form." With patience and courage, the writer

[121] On the other hand, Allen Davis notes that other papers of different management and politics, such as the *Chicago Chronicle*, "a newspaper with vested interest in street railway franchises," appeared to take "particular pleasure in pointing out what a dangerous radical Jane Addams was" (117-8).

opines, "the old questions that men forever ask and cannot answer she asks also, with those questioning eyes. And she never asks in anger. She asks in love" (Peattie 1003). The author does note that Addams's associates cover a wide spectrum of political allegiances and that she even sheltered the "broken old revolutionists" falsely accused of President McKinley's assassination, yet these acts are portrayed as nurturing rather than radical: "her answer to anarchy [is] simple kindness." Such discursive constructions also bear out Nan Johnson's contention that even into the early twentieth century "rhetorical practices remained a highly politicized cultural site where gender identity was defined in conventional terms that reaffirmed the domestic rhetorical influence of women" (Johnson 16-17).

Addams did not publicly dispute this portrayal as she recognized its strategic value in creating identification with middle- and upper-class readers. At times, for instance, she referred to her work in the terms of "municipal housekeeping" discourse.[122] In her articles for the *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1905-6, she details Hull-House's efforts to secure protective legislation, organize relief efforts during the depression of 1893, offer educational opportunities to the neighborhood through extension classes, music and drama. In these pieces there is no mention of suffrage, of peace, or imperialism, for instance, though Addams was also writing and speaking on these subjects in the context of social justice.[123]

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[122] For an overview of this discourse and progressivism, see Anne Firor Scott Ch. 6 *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History*.

[123] Addams addressed these subjects, for instance, at Workingmen's Public Meeting in Boston in 1904 and the National Arbitration and Peace Congress in New York in 1907 (see Fischer and Whipps *Writings on Peace*).

In Chapter 7 of *Newer Ideals of Peace*, for instance, Addams argues that the modern city desperately needs women's political involvement and that the historical connection of suffrage to the military defense of a city is long obsolete. She draws instead upon "housekeeping" to argue for women's involvement in city government and enfranchisement.

> Affairs for the most part are going badly in these great new centres in which the quickly congregated population has not yet learned to arrange its affairs satisfactorily. Insanitary housing, poisonous sewage, contaminated water, infant mortality…To test the elector's fitness to deal with this situation by his ability to bear arms is absurd. A city is in many respects a great business corporation, but in other respects it is enlarged housekeeping. If American cities have failed in the first, partly because office holders have carried with them the predatory instincts learned in competitive business, and cannot help "working a good thing" when they have the opportunity, may we not say that city housekeeping has failed partly because women, the traditional housekeepers, have not been consulted as to its multiform activities? (101)

Lacking the right to vote or hold public office, Addams, like other Progressive Era women reformers, established her rhetorical authority and justified her public activism for social justice in large part through such strategic extensions. In continuing this line of argument from *Newer Ideals of Peace*, Addams asserts that

> the very multifariousness and complexity of a city government demands the help of minds accustomed to detail and variety of work, to a sense of

> obligation for the health and welfare of young children, and to a responsibility for the cleanliness and comfort of others. Because all these things have traditionally been in the hands of women, if they take no part in them now…they are losing what they have always had. (102)

Far from constituting a disturbing social change, Addams argues, the enfranchisement of women and their involvement in municipal affairs is historically and logically consistent. As historians of women's rhetoric have demonstrated, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a woman's ability to lead and to mobilize broad social reform movements hinged on her power to build upon existing discourses concerning women's appropriate social and occupational roles while appearing not to call for a revolution in traditional gender roles.[124] Addams crafted, I contend, arguments authorizing women's broad contribution to public life based on an invocation of their traditional concerns as mothers and nurturers. This was an effective ethos and rhetorical strategy, but one which limited her authority when it came to war and international governance, both of which were still firmly rooted in the masculine realm of soldiering and national defense.

Coming Out for Politics and Peace

Shortly before the United States entered World War I, Addams achieved her greatest prominence in the popular press, and her reputation became increasingly associated with national politics, suffrage, and pacifism. These shifts in Addams's rhetorical career intensified public criticism of her work and made clear her departure

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[124] See, for instance, Wendy Sharer's *Vote & Voice*; Carol Mattingly's *Well-Tempered Rhetoric*; and Shirley Wilson Logan's *We Are Coming*.

from the apparently feminine, domestic social work of Hull-House. For instance, Addams's leading role in the Progressive Party in 1912 earned her enmity from colleagues in social work and pacifism who questioned her allegiance to the militarist Roosevelt as well as public outrage from suffragists (Fitzpatrick 147-48). In addition, politically conservative anti-suffragists opposed the Progressive Party's woman suffrage plank and Addams's highly visible new role as a pro-suffrage political campaigner. Addams traveled the country campaigning for the Progressive Party and wrote series of articles in its favor for newspapers and the NWSA organ *Woman's Journal* (Joslin 137).

When the American movement against the war in Europe began to coalesce in 1914, Addams was quickly sought for a leadership role by European suffrage and peace activists Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence and Rosika Schwimmer as well as American suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt. Addams's influence and networking skills would be necessary to federate the disparate women's groups interested in peace work, and she was soon elected president of the Woman's Peace Party (WPP), formed from a large meeting of suffrage, peace, and other civic reform groups convened in Washington D.C. in January, 1915. Just two months later, the WPP was invited to send delegates to a meeting initiated by European women. A neutral nation had failed to convene the next expected international conference in support of peace and negotiation at The Hague,[125] so European activists began changed their plans for an international suffrage convention into

[125] Two previous Hague Peace Conferences had met in 1899 and 1907 during which international conventions for warfare, arms limits, and arbitration were passed. The next meeting was due in 1915, but by this time it was clear that no group of men would be convening the next Congress.

an unprecedented separate international women's conference for peace (Mayers 42-43; Davis 214-17; Sklar 87-93).

Addams and forty-six other American delegates attended the first International Congress of Women at The Hague from April 28 to May 1, 1915 along with some 1,500 women representing twelve nations, including the warring nations save Russia and France. The first few days of the conference, thousands of people attended the sessions in the city. Press coverage was constant; newspaper correspondents traveled to The Hague from the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and the neutral countries. Apparently, as Emily Greene Balch later noted in *Women at The Hague* (1915), most reporters "had been sent to get an amusing story of an international peace gathering of women—'base and silly' enough to try to meet in war time—breaking up in a quarrel" (8) though they were disappointed. The phrase "base and silly" referred to statements made to the press by Theodore Roosevelt, the Woman's Peace Party's (and later the ICW's) most prominent critic. In a letter to a WPP member published on the front page of the *New York Times* shortly before the Congress, Roosevelt argued the Party's platform "seems to be both silly and base…not one particle of good will be obtained by an such action as that outlined in that paper you sent." Comparing the WPP to the Copperheads during the Civil War, he denounced peace activism and concluded, "Let every wise and upright man and woman refuse to have anything more to do with a movement which is certainly both foolish and noxious, which is accompanied by a peculiarly ignoble abandonment of national duty" ("Roosevelt Calls Peace Clamor Base"). Allen Davis documents that some papers (though never on the front page) reported with pride that Addams had been elected President at the Congress or argued that the women's efforts were at least symbolically

valuable: “They may not succeed in restoring peace, but they will at least have given voice to the humane instincts of the world” (*Charlotte Observer*, April 29, 1915 qtd. 223).

Through the criticism of the Woman’s Peace Party and ICW, Davis argues, “Jane Addams’s reputation as a practical embodiment of the best of American democracy survived” (223). However, she returned to a country already mobilizing for war “preparedness” and a city in which the leading paper editorialized “she has in fact been doing what she could for war, and not only war but for the ultimate downfall of democratic institutions in Europe…for more bloodshed, for more militarism, for the policy of conquest; for new Belgiums, more Serbias, for Lusitanias without end” ("Jane Addams Comes Home"). The latter proved a preview of the *Times’s* generally hostile coverage of Addams’s rhetoric and the International Congress of Women’s advocacy.

“Miss Addams Tells of Quest for Peace”: The Carnegie Hall Address

Addams returned to the U.S. aware that most major newspapers had carried both praise and sharp criticism of the ICW and the delegates’ mission. In gathering internationally with women (including those from the Central Powers) who publicly connected suffrage and peace and had presented a plan for continuous mediation to foreign ministers, Addams and the American WPP attendees had radically transgressed all previous “extensions” of women’s rhetorical authority. Yet, they based their authority for rhetorical activism on their womanhood, which granted them a special interest in preserving life, a particular vulnerability in wartime, and the opportunity to protest war

without being accused of being cowards.[126] Addams's address instantiates some of the tensions of her rhetorical situation and of her own positioning: how to illustrate a rising tide of revolt against war while acknowledging the "fanatical" patriotism and unity in each warring nation; how to speak humanly about Germans while mainstream American sympathies were with the Allies and newspapers covered Germany largely in terms of "atrocities"; and how to speak authoritatively about war and international affairs as an American woman, unable to serve as a soldier, vote, or hold political office. She chose to speak quite little for and about women, overall, and focused rather on presenting a woman's interpretation of the sensibilities and suffering of the men involved in the war.

"The Revolt Against War"

The week she returned from Europe, Addams was honored at a mass meeting gathered to celebrate her service as President and delegate. According to the *Survey*, "Carnegie Hall, filled from platform to roof, rang with three cheers and a tiger for Jane Addams…the mass meeting throughout had a feel like a mustering of forces" (353). Dr. Anna Howard Shaw presided over a full program that included a performance by the famous Quaker baritone David Bispham and speeches by public figures sympathetic to the cause, including Oswald Garrison Villard, grandson of William Lloyd Garrison and founder of the Anti-Imperialist League; philanthropist and progressive George Foster Peabody; George W. Kirchway, Columbia law professor and founder of the New York Peace Society; and New York City Socialist Party Congressman Meyer London ("Miss Addams Tells of Quest for Peace"). Addams delivered the first public report "of the

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[126] See the platform and resolutions of the ICW in the Appendices of *Women at The Hague*.

outcome of the pilgrimage of delegates from The Hague Conference of Women to the capitals of six of the warring nations" ("The Revolt against War" 355).[127] Addams spoke to a packed house for about an hour, speaking both from notes and extemporaneously. The address was intended to begin a speaking tour, but "except in the eyes of a few loyal friends, the tour ended the day it began at New York's Carnegie Hall, in early July" (Hansen 165) following a flood of criticism and derision in the press of Addams's participation in the Congress, her thinking, and even her womanhood.

As a result, Addams's attempts to mobilize broad public support for the International Congress of Women's plan of continuous mediation and to convince Americans "of a great tidal change against war in the hearts and minds of Europe" (353) largely failed.[128] Though I do not think that Addams's address was flawless, I contend that, above all, after Carnegie Hall she experienced a failure of positioning as an "unauthorized" female rhetor and a failure of situation created by savvy militarists and antisuffrage activists. As a woman renowned for domestic, benevolent, social work, Addams had rhetorically (and geographically) transgressed into the masculine territory of

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[127] Future page references will be to the stenographic transcription of the address first reprinted in the July 17, 1915 edition of *The Survey*.

[128] The plan for "continuous mediation without armistice" was a proposed diplomatic innovation and key resolution presented by the International Congress delegates to world leaders (see Appendices 3-5 in *Women at The Hague*). Also known as the Wales Plan, after author Julia Wales, a Wisconsin member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom who gained the Wisconsin legislature's endorsement and its recommendation the Plan be presented to the U.S. Congress Wendy Sharer, Vote & Voice, Women's Organizations and Political Literacy, 1915-1930 Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms, ed. Cheryl Glenn and Shirley Wilson Logan, vol. 6 (Carbondale, IL: Southern IL UP, 2004), see 48-55..

war and foreign policy and, aided by the *New York Times*, her report created an opportunity for social and political conservatives to denounce suffrage, pacifism, and feminism through their representation of her rhetoric.

Appropriately titled "The Revolt Against War" when a transcription was published in *The Survey* the following week, Addams's address relays nine key points the delegates heard "in every nation," recommends that select neutral people be convened to study and offer negotiations to the warring nations, and asserts that "the belief that [militarism] can be crushed by a counter-militarism is…one of the *greatest* illusions which can possibly seize the human mind" (359). Addams begins by explaining that all nations believe they are "fighting under the impulse of self-defense" and all are convinced that "a nation at war cannot make negotiations" or receive them from the enemy. However,

> if neutral people…who would command the respect of the foreign offices…were willing to get together to study the situation seriously and to make propositions…until something were found upon which negotiations might commence, *there is none of the warring nations that would not be glad to receive such service*. Now that came to us unequivocally. (emphasis org. 356)

The continuous mediation proposal was the most concrete of the ICW's outcomes and the key message presented to all governments.[129] Addams elaborates upon this point toward

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[129] In an interview published two days later in the Sunday *New York Times Magazine*, Addams led with this message about a conference of neutrals to begin the process of mediation, making clear it was the primary proposal shared with all governments By Edward Marshall., "Jane Addams Points Way to Peace," New York Times (1857-Current file) Jul 11, 1915: "Jane Addams Points Way to Peace"..

the end of her address to present the Congress's argument that if a neutral "set of people" with international experience could investigate the human and social needs that brought each nation to war, they could facilitate negotiations "from the point of view of the needs of Europe," rather than an individual nation's claims, and thereby lay the civic foundations for a lasting peace (358). Carefully phrasing her surety in terms of her first-hand experience with government leaders, Addams adds, "I am sure, at the least (from my knowledge of dozens of men in all of the countries who talked with me about the situation) that that sort of negotiation would be received" (358). Though Addams is careful to remind her audience that she is speaking as a representative of the Congress, she also lends the weight of her own ethos in this manner throughout the address to reinforce her presentation of the Congress's resolutions and the delegates' findings.

For instance, Addams explains "there was another thing which was impressed upon us all of the time, and in all of the countries which we visited": while each nation "is tremendously united" in the war effort, there are civil leaders in all nations concerned about the increasing dominance of military forces and who "long for some other form of settlement" (356). She concludes this point by asserting,

> Now I am quite aware that in every country we met, broadly speaking, the civil people and not the military people…But because we did meet dozens of them, I am willing to believe that there must be many more of the same type of mind in every country; quite as loyal as the military people, quite as eager for the growth and development of their own ideals and their own standard of living; but believing with all their hears that the military message is a wrong message" (356).

Such a blending of Addams's personal assessment and the delegates' findings was a fitting rhetorical strategy for the occasion. After all, she was President of the Congress and had met with national leaders in person. She was also addressing an audience of supportive listeners, drawn largely from peace and civic groups, who were interested in her take on the situation in Europe. However, such a rhetorical approach may also have contributed to the public perception that Addams's rhetorical activism for international negotiation was a personal campaign and that her statements were primarily (if not merely) individual beliefs.[130] At the very least, Addams's relatively peripheral positioning as an unofficial, non-governmental, female rhetor who entered the scene of war made her vulnerable to individualized attacks representative of a dominant power structure and sociocultural context hostile to women's attempts to authorize participation in foreign politics.

Addams continues with a controversial message posing a direct challenge to the current patriarchal authority: "we heard everywhere that this was an old man's war; that the young men who were dying, the young men who were doing the fighting, were not the men who wanted the war, and were not the men who believed in the war" (357). To neutralize her audience's potentially negative response to this statement, she adds, "This is a terrible indictment, and I admit that I cannot substantiate it. I can only give it to you as an impression, but I should like to bring one or two details before you to back it up" (357). She then supports this contention with detailed testimony that personified with

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[130] Newspaper headlines appeared to reinforce this perception. For instance, the first two *New York Times* articles reporting on her address and the European mission were entitled "Miss Addams Tells of Quest for Peace" and "Jane Addams Points Way to Peace" (July 10 and 11, 1915).

great pathos the young men's "revolt." She reports that the delegates met a dying Swiss soldier who said "never during that three months and a half had he once shot his gun in a way that could possibly hit another man. He said that nothing in the world could make him kill another man." A German hospital leader gave them a list of five German soldiers who committed suicide rather than be forced to kill again, and "we heard stories of that sort from France" as well (357). Addams's "testimony from England" was from a charged letter published in the *Cambridge Magazine* at the "almost depleted" Cambridge University. The author wrote from the front that, "The greatest trial that this war has brought is that it has released the old men from all restraining influences, and has let them loose upon the world" to perpetuate the war "in our name" by "appeals to hate, intolerance and revenge, those very follies which have produced the present conflagration" (357). Through this testimony, Addams offers a view of war as vengeful, foolish, and unwanted by many of those dying in it daily.

The details of her speech indicate that, contrary to the assertion of several scholars, Addams was well aware of the public's emotional investment in the young soldiers and of the potential for rhetorical transgression taking such a tact.[131] In opening her speech, for instance, Addams notes she did not return "with any desire to let loose any more emotion upon the world" but rather strove for "careful understanding" as "you do not know where words may lead the people to whom you are speaking" (355). Before

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[131] Both Wiltsher Anne Wiltsher, Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War (Boston: Pandora Press, 1985) 120-22. and Macmullan Terrance Macmullan, "On War as Waste: Jane Addams's Pragmatic Pacifism," The Journal of Speculative Philosophy 15.2 (2001): 100. claim that Addams "inadvertently" challenged her audience and that she was unaware of the power of the idea of the brave and glorious soldier in the minds of her audience.

introducing the testimonial from peace-oriented soldiers, Addams observes that she had planned not to "mention the word German or the word allies, but perhaps if I give an example from Germany and then an example from the allies, I will not get into trouble" (357). She carefully stages her concern, even reticence, at offering first-hand testimony to pave the way for her potentially controversial assertion that Germans soldiers could be guided by pacifist ideals. Mindful of the intense nationalism and patriotism she encountered in Europe (and frequently celebrated in the American press), Addams also acknowledges,

> I am quite sure that there are thousands of young men in the trenches feeling that they are performing the highest possible duties. I am quite sure that the spirit of righteousness is in the hearts of most of them, at least many of them; but that throughout there are to be found these other men who are doing violence to the highest teachings which they know" (357).

As an incorrigible democrat, Addams urges her audience to see that these "other men," the civil leaders in the warring nations, and the women who "have a sort of pang" and "curious revolt" at the destruction of human life together form, as she put it, "something to work upon" (356).

After relaying the strikingly similar impressions the delegates gained from speaking with citizens and leaders in Europe and reiterating the opportunity for neutral mediation, Addams notes, "There is one more thing I should like to say and I will close; and that is that one feels that the talk against militarism, and the belief that it can be crushed by a counter-militarism" is an illusion that has taken dangerous hold in Europe. She warns, poetically and prophetically, that, "the old notion that you can drive a belief

into a man at the point of a bayonet is in force once more." In keeping with her rhetorical style throughout the address, Addams provides testimony "heard in all the countries" to illustrate this point:

> It is quite as foolish to think that if militarism is an idea and an ideal, it can be changed and crushed by counter-militarism or by a bayonet charge. And the young men in these various countries say of the bayonet charges: "That is what we cannot think of." We heard in all countries similar statements in regard to the necessity for the use of stimulants before men would engage in bayonet charges—that they have a regular formula in Germany, that they give them rum in England and absinthe in France; that they all have to give them the "dope" before the bayonet charge is possible. Well, now, think of that." (359)

This is the testimony that became the infamous "bayonet scandal," the lines from her address Richard Harding Davis used to excoriate Addams's "credulity and ignorance" and the reference *New York Times* editors and correspondents to papers across the country continued to deride for months afterwards. As I will argue in the next section, the fact that Davis, a war correspondent and popular militarist, and antisuffragists like Everett Wheeler immediately connected their scorn for this testimony to harsh judgments of Addams as a *woman* and as a suffragist was not arbitrary, and their rhetorical association soon resulted in gendered strain of criticism that assisted both antisuffrage and antifeminist campaigns.

In the final paragraph of her speech, Addams stresses her overall impression that, despite appearances, there were many in Europe who would welcome mediation of the

war. Perhaps anticipating press coverage dismissive of the Congress's efforts, she begins by cautioning her audience:

> Please do not think we are overestimating a very slight achievement or taking too seriously the kindness with which we were received abroad. We do wish to record ourselves as being quite sure the peoples in these various countries were grateful for the effort, trifling as it was. The people say they do not want this war, they say that the governments are making this war. And the governments say they do not want this war. They say, "We will be grateful to anybody who would help us to stop the war." We did not reach the military, but we did talk to a few military men, some of whom said they were sick to death of the war, and I have no doubt there were many others who, if they spoke freely, would say the same thing. (359)

In this summary, the people, the governments and even some of the military merge together in a broad resistance to the war. Phrased carefully and with respect to "the real quality of your patriotism," Addams concluded, the warring nations "all say that if the right medium can be found, the case will be submitted" (359).

The address is in keeping with Addams's diplomatic rhetorical style, but unusual in its focus on the testimony of men (women are mentioned in just two paragraphs of the address). Only once does Addams actually speak for a woman, when she notes that "the mothers would say to us: 'It was hard to see that boy go because he did not believe in war'" (357). When providing soldiers' and prime ministers' testimony, however, she either directly quotes or speaks for them collectively. Though Addams consistently

maintained that it was important for men and women to work side by side for social change, as I have demonstrated above, she was particularly known for her appeals as a woman to other women on extensions of their "sphere" and "traditional obligations." Testifying about the beliefs, desires, and concerns of men was a departure for Addams, and, in this context, more than her rhetorical positioning could stand.

Contrary to some scholars' assertions, the details of the speech indicate that Addams was quite well aware of the controversial nature of her excursion and the public transgression of socially accepted roles for women's activism. She framed her arguments in terms of "impressions" and used first-hand testimony as warrants for all of her key points in response to her rhetorical positioning. Though she addressed a largely sympathetic audience convened by the Women's Peace Party, the Church Peace Union and other similar groups, she would have known that reporters and conservative political activists in New York would also be attending to her report. While Addams could have expected criticism from militarists and pro-preparedness supporters, she did not anticipate the distortion and rapid circulation of her comment about the use of stimulants before bayonet charges. In the section that follows, I will briefly analyze a number of these negative responses to examine the conservative gender role underpinnings of what I call Addams's rhetorical failure of situation.

Reactions to the Address: Feminism, Pacifism, and Suffrage Collide

Like Ida B. Wells's forced exile from Memphis after the printing of her "thread-bare lied" editorial (and unlike Sui Sin Far's experience), the devastating moment of Addams's rhetorical career known as "the bayonet story" is linked to a specific text and

historical moment. Yet, as I argue in my chapter on Wells, the charged and negative reactions and the rhetor's experience of rhetorical failure can only be understood in light of her prior ethos as well as the sociocultural context. In addition, scholars have tended to focus on the negative reaction to "the bayonet story" while failing to contextualize her experience in a broader context of Addams's reputation and the intertwined public debates over suffrage, pacifism, and women's political authority. But what is perhaps most striking about the role of the bayonet story in Addams's experience is that it was not a factor for her immediate audience, and that much of the sensation can be traced to Richard Harding Davis's letter to the editor of the *New York Times*—a piece that caused an editorial battle in the *Times* and that newspapers across the country circulated widely a week or more after her address.

Evidence indicates that Addams's immediate audience was extremely positive about her address, interrupting often to applaud and concluding her speech with a long ovation (Davis, Elshtain, ("An Old Man's War Says Miss Addams"). In the initial news coverage of her address, many papers did not even mention her bayonet testimonial.[132] However, both the *New York Times* and *New York World* gave this testimony a prominent place in reports of the address and scanted coverage of the continuous

[132] See, for instance, articles reporting on Addams's address from areas as diverse as the *Boston Morning Journal*, the *Macon Daily Telegraph*, and the *Miami Herald Record*, the week of July 11, 1915. The Sunday *New York Times Magazine* also contained a very positive interview with Addams by Edward Marshall that also ignored the bayonet testimony. Given that this article was on the front page, included a picture of the delegates, and was uniformly positive, it was probably a interview and article arranged in advance by Addams or well-connected associates of the WPP.

mediation plan.[133] After reading the *Times* report of her address, Richard Harding Davis sent a scathing letter to the editor focusing on this testimonial, asserting that "since the war began, no statement has been so unworthy or so untrue and ridiculous. The contempt it shows for the memory of the dead is appalling; the credulity and ignorance it displays are inconceivable" (10). Styling himself the defender of soldiers' bravery, Davis asserts that,

> In this war the French or English soldier who has been killed in a bayonet charge gave his life to protect home and country. Miss Addams denies him the credit of his sacrifice. She strips him of honor and courage. She tells his children, "Your father did not die for France, or for England, or for you: he died because he was drunk." In my opinion, since the war began, no statement has been so unworthy or so untrue and ridiculous. (10)[134]

Commenting only on this one statement from an hour long speech, Davis transforms Addams's comment from an example meant to illustrate the conflict between "the brutal work of the bayonet, such as disemboweling" and the habits of civilization and humanity into a charge that the soldiers were drunk and lacked courage (*Peace and Bread in Time of War* 78).

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[133]The *New York World*, Joseph Pulitzer's once famously "yellow" journal, knowing a provocative remark when it saw one, actually led the entire article on Addams's address with these words "An Old Man's War Says Miss Addams," *Lexington Herald* 1915: reprinted in the Lexington Herald, July 18, 1915..

[134] Note that Davis also leaves out German and Russian soldiers in this letter, even though Addams carefully provided testimony from Germany a number of times in the address to maintain balance in her presentation.

The story made good copy, and controversy sells papers. For weeks after Davis's inflammatory letter, the *Times* continued to print letters and editorials quoting his letter and echoing his contention that Addams had insulted the dead. Antisuffragists soon also capitalized upon the *kairotic* moment to discredit suffrage and women's involvement in foreign policy. For instance, in a letter to the editor, Everett Wheeler wrote that after reading the report of Addams's speech at Carnegie Hall "as a philanthropist and social worker, I have had great respect" for Jane Addams "but as a politician she seems to me a pitiful failure." Citing *only* the *Times*' paragraph about doping and the bayonet charges from her address, Wheeler asserts

> that statements like this are characteristic of the suffragists. I have been debating with them for two years, have met and heard their principle orators. They mean well, perhaps, but are always making positive statements which show ignorance of the fundamental facts of human nature. No fable is too gross for them to swallow if it reflects on the tyrant man. ("A Gross Fable" 8)

Similar letters and editorials now used the rapidly circulating "bayonet story" in the months that followed as evidence that women are unreasonable, gullible, and emotional and therefore should not "meddle" in international affairs nor receive the vote lest they, in the words of one editorial, "display such charming unreason in their treatment of public questions" (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity to the Renaissance* 8).

For example, one editorialist writing to the *New York Times* in June 1915 during The Hague conference (and before the bayonet story), asserted that women had "softened

the national fiber" by arguing for peace and attempting to "convert" men to pacifism. He concluded his commentary with a telling observation which exemplifies the consistency with which criticism of Addams's peace work was framed in gendered terms of women's transgression of the appropriate sphere for their work.

> Women, as a sex, are essentially impractical; this makes their abnormal ascendancy a source of very real danger to a nation. This is shown at the present time by the ill-advised action of Miss Jane Addams and her peace colleagues. Apparently they would cheerfully condone pillage, rape, and murder, and be satisfied for Germany to retain possession of the territory she has devastated if everyone will only get together and be peaceful. ("Peace-Loving Women" 10)

Women, this writer explains, had stepped outside the appropriate realm of work in pursuing peace activism, and their leadership was not only "abnormal" but their ideas were naïve and ignorant.

This claim was repeated in numerous editorials and articles which noted, for instance, that Addams's tour "has shown to all thinking persons in an objective way the weakness and silliness of those who clamor for an ending of war on any terms" ("Jane Addams" 8). Others pronounced, "for her [Addams], as a philanthropist and social worker, I have had great respect…But as a politician she seems to me a pitiful failure" ("A Gross Fable" 8). That the backlash against Addams's participation in the conference and discussion of her engagement with European diplomats was so often framed in terms of (in)appropriate arenas for women's activity demonstrates the limits of Addams's prior

ethos and positioning as a rhetor renowned for feminine, domestic social work in withstanding such a line of argument.

Anti-suffrage writer, Jane Catulle Mendes, a French woman working in the United States "to interest American women in the cause of the French wounded," also makes clear that Addams has transgressed women's appropriate role in society by involving herself in international politics. She argues that Addams's and other "agitated and useless individuals who love the noise of their own voices" primary motive is self aggrandizement and compares them unfavorably to "charitable and silent American women" who

> allow their fate to be arranged according to the immemorial and superior laws. They have not the presumption to interrupt or to guide these laws by superficial and hackneyed dissertations. In silence and with beautiful toiling hands they spread the balm of goodness, tenderness, and compassion. ("French Poet Chides Miss Jane Addams" 3)

Echoing the Christian language of St. Paul's injunction that women keep silence, Mendes illustrates the traditionalists' backlash against Addams's "presumption" in entering the male realm of political engagement and assuming an authority to speak persuasively against war.[135]

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[135] See Ch. 2 of Nan Johnson's *Gender and Rhetorical Space* for her exploration of the late nineteenth and turn of the century use of the revered silent woman to reduce concerns over some women's visible rhetorical activity (e.g. Anthony, Stanton, Willard). "In this historical moment of uneasiness," Johnson argues, "the icon of the quiet woman, the wine of life, seemed to erase the complexity of the woman question and return the American woman to the home where she belonged" (49).

For many women, including Addams, there was an ideological continuity to their work for social reform, civic justice, and international peace (Whipps "Pragmatist Feminism" par. 19).[136] In addition, peace and suffrage work were explicitly feminist causes for the women who peopled the organizations, demonstrations, and written proclamations for change at this time. "While not all pacifists were feminists and not all feminists were pacifists" historian Joyce Berkman argues, "the two movements overlapped in theory and in membership" (146). It was this association with "the feminist taint," as one outraged letter writer termed it, as well as the divided national stance on both suffrage and pacifism that rendered such work far more controversial than Addams's civic reform work with poor people, immigrants, and children ("Pain Knows Not Sex" 14).

Anti-suffragists, who saw pacifism, feminism, and suffrage as interrelated challenges to "traditional" American culture, formed a core part of the negative reaction to Addams's Carnegie Hall speech and criticism throughout the summer. The platforms of the pacifist organizations with which Addams worked viewed women's suffrage as an essential component of their ability to participate in ending war and influencing international politics. Indeed, the fact that the WPP was a "Woman's" party was explicitly meant to reference the singular designation of the "Woman Question" of

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[136] This commingling of reform-oriented interests is exemplified by the breadth of the International Congress's platform. Among other things, the platform included recommendations concerning the "limitation of armaments and the nationalization of their manufacture; organized opposition to militarism in our country and education of youth in the ideals of peace; democratic control of foreign policies; the further humanizing of Governments by the extension of the franchise to women" ("War's Debasement of Women" SM3).

suffrage discourse. While the women were meeting in Europe, newspapers widely disseminated the WPP and ICWPP platforms as well as the resolution that women's "influence against wars could be effective only with equal political rights" ("Calls Peace Women's Work" 2). Addams's address to Carnegie Hall, though framed in terms of simply "relaying impressions" and testimony communicated by European politicians, unfolded in the context of her broader argument for women's suffrage and its necessary role in reforming international political relations. The link between woman suffrage and women's activism for neutral mediation makes clear the challenge Addams's anti-war discourse posed to white male supremacy in federal and international affairs.

It is important to keep this controversy over women's political work in mind to interpret the negative responses to Addams's address and the overall failure of her rhetorical arguments at Carnegie Hall and in subsequent months. She was not effective in reaching many who heard or read printed accounts of her address and faced criticism and harsh editorials not only because she challenged the myth of the "glorious soldier," as many scholars have asserted, but also because of the constraints on her rhetorical positioning. While her settlement work was embraced as womanly, self-sacrificing, and saintly, Addams's war-time testimony was taken as foolish, impertinent, and uninformed. In the former case, I argue, popular perception had domesticated her work by celebrating it as an unthreatening form of "civic housekeeping."[137] When Addams turned to pacifism and international diplomacy, restrictive notions about women's appropriate arena for

[137] Judy Whipps makes a similar argument: "The nation hailed her early efforts as a charitable caregiver, *but few truly saw how radical her message was*. She was proposing a different way of living together – a radical democracy that made a public/political space for the unheard voices in American culture." ("Pragmatist Feminism" par. 2, emphasis orig.).

work and cultural engagement warped perception of her message and resulted in angry criticism by traditionalists.

Addams may have made herself vulnerable to a gendered critique because she so visibly engaged in strategically essentialist portrayals of women as 1) uniquely concerned and positioned to create alternatives to war and 2) having the most to lose in the war. Thus, she invited people to consider her gender in the context of her arguments and created an opening for attacks based on alternate views of women's duty. In other words, in framing peace work as a woman's issue, Addams also provided the setting for her listeners to see war as a *man's* issue—one where she didn't belong. And yet, it is worth asking, what other means did she have to authorize her participation? Though Addams was a Christian, she was well-known as a secular activist, and Hull-House was not religiously affiliated. So she could not have easily taken up the authorizing mantle of religion that served so many other American women rhetors at this time. By invoking a maternal political duty as an essential part of her pacifist rhetoric, Addams logically and consistently extended the foundation of her prior ethos and audience.

Addams endeavored to participate in political mediation and offered evidence for the need of women's participation in international war and governance for a mainstream, middle to upper-class white audience whose beliefs and values led them to be unable to accept her arguments on their own terms, as prescient and reasonable as so many have found them since. Addams was positioned in relation to her audience such that she was judged to lack the ability, knowledge, experience, or right to advocate on her chosen topic. As a result, she experienced a failure of positioning, and the audience for her rhetoric not only did not consider her credible but they actively resisted and misjudged

her message. Reducing Addams's presentation of The International Congress of Women's work to the "bayonet story" also created a *kairotic* opportunity for anti-suffragists and militarists to denounce woman suffrage and women's political involvement in war and government. In attempting to expand the persuasive frame of her powerful reputation to include international pacifism and mediation, Addams experienced both a failure of situation and of positioning.

In the months after Addams's July address at Carnegie Hall, controversy over the purpose of her pacifism and authority in asserting that European citizens and governments desired mediation continued. Six months later, in a piece for the *Independent* ostensibly reporting on the results of the Congress, Addams devoted half of her two page article to providing evidence for the bayonet testimony and defending herself from charges that she had impugned soldiers' courage ("The Food of War"). She maintained her pacifism through America's entrance into the war in 1917 and became increasingly isolated as friends and former allies like John Dewey and Julia Lathrop rationalized support for the war. Her speaking engagements plummeted, editors rejected her work, and Addams lost her popular, mainstream public platform entirely for many years afterwards (Davis 244-47; Joslin xviii-xx). These experiences changed the trajectory of her rhetorical career and affected the content and style of her subsequent rhetoric. To retain access to lay public outlets for her rhetoric, Addams capitalized on what little popular editorial interest she could generate and approached her analysis of war and resistance from a new angle.

Revision and Recovery: Women's Memories Challenging War

Jane Addams continued her rhetorical advocacy for peace and social justice the remainder of her life, despite the devastation of being denounced, silenced, and isolated for resisting World War I. In fact, Before the United States entered the war, Addams continued to advocate for a conference of neutrals to negotiate a just end to the war and for the United States to take a leading role in negotiations, by networking with like-minded sociologists and social workers, and by testifying in Congress numerous times in the next two years against movements for military build up, drilling in schools, the Sedition Act (Scott 133). Of necessity, the Woman's Peace Party became her primary organizational outlet for this work. While maintaining her opposition to preparedness and to the war even after the U.S. entrance, Addams found herself pushed farther and farther to the left in terms of her public perception and rhetorical positioning as much of the country rallied around the paradoxical "war to end all wars." To continue her rhetorical intervention for peace and to recover some measure of a public platform after the damaging misrepresentations of the "bayonet story," Addams shifted her approach and strategically channeled some of her work into traditionally feminine, domestic *topoi*. She wrote about an experience at Hull-House that caused her to reflect upon memory and cultural legends and to consider her years of experience with women and with the slow process of democratic social change she had witness in American society.

The Devil Baby, Memory, and Pacifism

"The Devil Baby at Hull-House" (October, 1916 *Atlantic Monthly*) is one of Jane Addams's most famous essays. Elshtain notes it "was so much in demand that she

incorporated a version of it into two of her books," *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* (1916) and *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1930) ("Introduction: Culture, Character, and the Power of Memory" 376). It has typically been read as an interesting and unusual, even modernist, examination of the role of urban myth and folk tradition in shaping culture and a "meditation" on memory. For instance, Davis sees Addams's writing on the subject as an example of "another story she told which touched on the supernatural and exposed a primitive side of human nature" (210), and Elshtain argues that "Addams uses this story to evoke woman's remembering heart and the need to interpret its myths and legends"(*Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy* 176).[138] It would seem, therefore, that by writing on the topic of a strange urban legend Addams was retreating from war and pacifism to the supernatural and legendary.

However, I argue that returning to the topic of the devil baby should be considered part of Addams's rhetorical action for feminist pacifism and a strategic response to her experience after the "bayonet story." Developing provocative and insightful conclusions about the role of injustice, memory, and social change from the broad context of her experience with this legend is one way in which Addams revised her rhetorical approach to pacifism and international democracy to gain a hearing at a time when her direct writings on war and peace were being rejected by editors and denounced

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[138] See also Harriet Hyman Alonso "Jane Addams: Acting and Thinking Locally and Globally"; Fischer's "Addams's Internationalist Pacifism and the Rhetoric of Maternalism"; and MacMullan's "On War as Waste: Jane Addams's Pragmatic Pacifism"—the latter two essays treat only Ch. 5 "Women's Memories: Challenging War" of *The Long Road*. Even Seigfried's introduction to the 2002 University of Illinois edition of *The Long Road* doesn't emphasize it as a wartime book or make an interpretive connection between the Devil Baby story and the rest of the book or Addams's feminist pacifism.

in the press. By returning to the context of Hull-House and by speaking for and with women, Addams is also able to evade the controversy engendered by speaking for *soldiers* at Carnegie Hall.

In the winter of 1915-16, Addams was hospitalized for a kidney disease and ordered to seek a better climate for her recovery. After attending the first annual meeting of the Woman's Peace Party in January, she traveled with Mary Smith to Colorado, seeking health as well as an escape from press harassment and "the failures of the peace movement" (Joslin xvi). Her first writing project on this long, recuperative trip was a return to a topic she first wrote about in a brief item for the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1914: the rumor that a "devil baby" had been born at Hull-House—an immigrants' story that brought "streams of visitors from every part of the city and suburbs" to the settlement for six weeks ("A Modern Devil-Baby" 117). Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, expressed interest in an essay on the subject after he made clear he was not interested in controversial writing on war or peace. Sedgwick's response to the writing Addams sent him is indicative of her embattled wartime reputation: "This is the Miss Addams in whom we all believe—militarist, pacifists, progressives, and the rest of us—and I shall take the very great pleasure in publishing the paper" (Joslin xvii). Capitalizing on this lone instance of editorial interest, Addams returns to a story centered in the institution to which she had committed her life's work and with which she had built a national reputation.

A careful reading of the evidence and conclusions Addams draws from this urban legend reveals that she uses the story to explore the connections between experience, memory (particularly women's memories), and social change, the most pressing of which

is the development of broad social consensus against war and international mechanisms to resolve nationalist conflicts. In keeping with Addams's publishing savvy and writing practice, "The Devil Baby at Hull-House" is actually an essay version of material she used to compose *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* (1916).[139] In the latter text, the most experimental of Addams's twelve books, the "devil baby" experience at Hull-House constitutes the first two chapters: Ch. 1 "Women's Memories: Transmuting the Past, as Illustrated by the Story of the Devil Baby" and Ch. 2 "Women's Memories: Reacting on Life, as Illustrated by the Story of the Devil Baby." Structured around five functions of women's memories (the final chapter, "A Personal Experience in Interpretative Memory," is a sort of personal post-script), *The Long Road* is an experimental, unusual, reflective book, filled with anecdotes and the testimony of many different women's stories. I contend that the chapters build a feminist pacifist argument grounded in the function of women's memories in enabling social change.

In the first two chapters, as in the famous *Atlantic* essay, Addams focuses on the effects of the story that a devil baby had come to Hull-House upon the old women of the nineteenth ward. The story, existing in "a hundred variations" among Italian and Jewish immigrants, told of a "devil baby," complete with miniature horns, tail, and cloven hooves, born to an innocent woman whose atheist husband had torn down a holy picture and sworn "he would rather have a devil in the house as such a thing" or to the

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[139] Because *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* was also published in October, 1916 by Macmillan, Addams would have had to negotiate the right to separately publish the contents of Chs. 1 and 2 as "The Devil Baby at Hull-House" in *The Atlantic Monthly* that same month. As Katherine Joslin has documented in *A Writer's Life*, Addams frequently negotiated such "double dipping" with magazine and book publishers.

unfortunate wife of a man with many daughters who “said before the birth of a seventh child that he would rather have a devil in the family than another girl” (*The Long Road of Woman's Memory* 8).[140] Addams argues that “the most significant result of the incident was the reaction of the story” upon the aged immigrant women who “talked with the new volubility which the story of the Devil Baby had released in them” (10). Many of these women “had been forced to face tragic experiences, the powers of brutality and horror had had full scope in their lives,” and they did not shy away from sharing brutal stories of death and disappointment of which the devil baby reminded them (11).

Some “had struggled for weary years with poverty and much childbearing, had known what it was to be bullied and beaten by their husbands, neglected and ignored by their prosperous children, and burdened by the support of the imbecile and the shiftless ones” (12). With vivid detail and moving, often poetic language that does not romanticize nor gloss over the history of brutality, suffering, and endurance these women have known, Addams narrates many examples of just such experiences as told to her by the women who came to see the devil baby and who stayed to talk amongst themselves. Addams concludes that

> tragic experiences gradually become dressed in such trapping in order that their spent agony may prove of some use to a world which learns at the hardest; and that the strivings and sufferings of men and women long since dead, their emotions no longer connected with flesh and blood, are thus transmuted into legendary wisdom. (15)

[140] All subsequent references will be to the 2002 U of Illinois edition.

Such wisdom can make the younger generation take heed and could even provide "a hearing at home" for many of these elder women who had lost all former claims to authority. Addams argues that the "transmuting" of experience is part "of the sifting and reconciling power inherent in Memory itself," which can not only appease the individual but also highlight "the elements of beauty and significance" and "reduce, if not to eliminate, all sense of resentment" (16) thereby enabling wisdom and communication.

In the second chapter, the interpretive connections between the legend, women, and the protection of human life become more clear. Addams links the fact that many of the interested women clearly "prized the [devil baby] story as a valuable instrument in the business of living" (17) to women's use of words "for thousands of years…to arouse the generosity of strength, to secure of measure of pity for themselves and their children, to so protect the life they had produced" (19). Women's phenomenal interest in the devil baby story furthers her argument that "new knowledge derived from concrete experience is continually being made available for the guidance of human life; that humble women are still establishing the rules of conduct as best they may" (19). As Addams makes clear, for the older and immigrant peasant women who come to see the devil baby, this new knowledge remains intimately connected to domestic relationships, caretaking, and women's historical role as the nurturers of human life.

In the subsequent chapters of *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, Addams argues that memory can also serve "as a reproach, even as a social disturber. When these reminiscences, based upon the diverse experiences of many people…point to one inevitable conclusion, they accumulate into a social protest" (29). She illustrates this collective, "disturbing" function of memory in Chapter 3 in the context of the gradual

change in social attitudes towards the so-called "fallen woman" and her illegitimate child, driven by the pity and concern of mothers that had been taken up and pioneered more formally by "the organized Woman's Movement" in many countries. She gives examples of the consequences of abandonment and of the courage of grandmothers who raise the babies of their disgraced children though not forgiving them or others who support their daughters and welcome their babies despite the social ostracism. The examples, Addams concludes, suggest an approach:

> In spite of much obtuseness on the part of those bound by the iron fetters of convention, these individual cases suggest a practical method of procedure…women all over the world have endeavored, through the old bungling method of trial and error, to deal justly with individual situations. (39-40)

This method that Addams unpacks in *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* always remains connected to the framing insights introduced by the first two "devil baby" chapters. It is in this latter statement that the feminist origins of Addams's pacifism (and her refusal to sever the latter from broader questions of social justice) become clear.

In Chapter 4, Addams examines the exploitation of women's labor in urban industry that had led to a new collective awareness of oppression and to the labor movement among working women. Addams narrates her experience with young union women in a Garment Workers' strike, "who, for the first time in the long history of woman's labor, are uniting their efforts in order to obtain opportunities for a fuller and more normal living…having tasted the freedom from economic dependence, so valuable that too heavy a price can scarcely be paid for it" (49-50). These young women "were

sitting in the very chairs occupied so recently by the visitors to the Devil Baby" (48), those "simple, hardworking women who at any given moment compose the bulk of the women in the world" (43), and yet they represented a new development in the face of changing social conditions. Both chapters exemplify Addams's pragmatic contention that women are extracting "new knowledge from concrete experience" to guide human affairs into new arrangements.

The feminist, pragmatic theory and analyses Addams pursues in this text culminate in Chapter 5 "Women's Memories Challenging War," which examines women in warring nations who were engaged in a "struggle, often tragic and bitter, between two conceptions of duty, one of which is antagonistic to the other" (57). The conflicting duties come from "the fundamental human instincts" of "tribal loyalty" (patriotism) and women's instinct "that the child of her body must be made to live" (pacifism). Addams builds upon these stories, quite similar to examples from her "Revolt Against War" address, to suggest "there are indications" that a widespread desire to challenge war based on the clash of women's historical experiences and current conditions—the basis for memory's role in social change—is underway. In a final return to memory and the lessons of the devil baby, Addams ends by connecting the motifs from each of the previous chapters,

> This may be a call to women to defend those at the bottom of society who, irrespective of the victory or defeat of any army, are ever oppressed and overburdened. The suffering mothers of the disinherited feel the stirring of the old impulse to protect and cherish their unfortunate children, and

> women's haunting memories instinctively challenge war as the implacable enemy of their age-long undertaking. (67)

Carefully considering the conclusions Addams reaches through her examination of the devil baby story in *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* reveals that her turn to this subject is not a retreat from the exigent concerns of war and pacifism. Rather it is an examination—in the face of super-patriotism, public vilification, and censorship—of the possible grounds for the kind of widespread, radical social change that make all social change, including a revolt against war, possible. In this text, however, unlike "The Revolt Against War," Addams accomplishes her aims by examining women's memories and experiences, a revision of her approach generated by the vicious criticism of her authority and credibility that resulted when she spoke with and for men in an attempt to influence the international foreign policy controlled by men.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

The history of women's rhetorical performance is necessarily a history of constitutive rhetorical strategies. Women, throughout history, have constituted the audiences they wished to emerge and that they needed; they have constituted the rhetorical authority and ethos necessary for discursive intervention. They have also collected the evidence to make their case, often from unorthodox or surprising sources. At times their very use of certain information as "evidence" is a constitutive move as well: as, for instance, Jane Addams's argument that the testimony she gathered in Europe is evidence for a growing pacifist sentiment; or Sui Sin Far's use of her experiences of Anti-Chinese racism and the hypocrisies of white morality to protest discrimination against Chinese American. In this chapter, I first draw out the conclusions, inferences, and implications I derive from my study of Progressive Era women's activism and experiences of rhetorical failure. I then offer, as an extended part of the implications of this study, a heuristic "grammar of rhetorical failure," broken into "reasons" and "types" as a pedagogical tool for rhetorical analysis.

Conclusions

- Examining a rhetor's subsequent discursive and material attempts to revise aspects of their rhetorical strategy and to regain a rhetorical platform after an experience of rhetorical failure can lead to a better understanding of how the available means of

persuasion (and indeed of continued rhetorical practice) shift with changes in geographic place, access to different audiences, and altered material resources.

- Rhetorical positioning is an essential element of rhetorical effectiveness and experiences of success. Positioning is a confluence of material and discursive factors, most closely associated with a rhetor's relationship to the audience, prior ethos, status, and power.
- Ida B. Wells, who has not been viewed as a "progressive" nor as a constitutive leader of the Progressive Era, should be recognized as such for her rhetorical advocacy. Her rhetoric demonstrates her belief in the important progressive belief that that "People may think and act as they do, not because of irremediable defects in our democratic institutions or culture, but simply because they have not been 'provided with sufficient information and opportunities'" (Hogan 480).
- The Asian American experience, including the Chinese American question so prominent during the Progressive Era, needs to be brought into histories of rhetoric and into histories of the progressive era during this time, and, indeed, into histories of writing in general.
- My rhetorical analysis of the texts and contexts of Addams's experience after her Carnegie Hall address demonstrates the significance of mass-media platforms (such as newspapers and wire services) and mainstream resistance to women's rhetorical authority to experiences of rhetorical failure.

Inferences

- Continued examination of the criteria for rhetorical assessment is needed to shed light on relationships between mainstream perceptions of "difference" and exclusion. Historically, the rhetorical performances of women and people of color have been marginalized for differing from dominant conceptions of the proper development of argument, linguistic correctness, or compositional unity, for instance. Such rhetoric has thus been judged to be nonstandard, lacking in rigor or aesthetic accomplishment by seemingly objective (yet actually historically situated and often discriminatory) criteria, while the criteria themselves are not subject to rhetorical analysis.[141] The initial scholarly recovery work on Sui Sin Far's rhetoric evinces a similar trend. Giving short shrift to the development and innovations of Sui Sin Far's short fiction and autobiographical writing, S.E. Solberg, one of the first to begin academic recovery work on Sui Sin Far, emphasized generic constraint in her work and her failure to meet the prototypical standard of literary greatness by writing a novel.
- A "rhetorical career" is a productive concept that encompasses the material and discursive resources of an individual's rhetorical performance over time. Situating an experience of rhetorical failure in terms of a career means that, in analyzing a given text or address, scholars must account for a relationship to the unfolding of a rhetor's 1)thinking, arguments, forms, and strategies and 2)the material resources for performance over time. Of course, these elements within these two categories drive

[141] For instance, Geneva Smitherman has shown that linguistic scholarship on Black English language practices judged "that the differences [in Black English from Standardized English] amount to deficits" time and again ("Discriminatory Discourse on African American Speech" 89).

each other. For instance, certain kinds of material resources enable certain kinds of rhetorical arguments and forms (as evidenced, for instance in my examinations of Sui Sin Far's rhetoric), and certain kinds of arguments can bring (or dissolve) material support

- In *Rhetoric and Reform in the Progressive Era*, Mike Hogan praises Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson's contribution to a "legacy of presidential speech: a legacy of intelligent, bold, and visionary speech, grounded firmly in moral principle and in a considered philosophy of rhetorical leadership. Neither Roosevelt nor Wilson is remembered for pandering to popular sentiment. Both took unpopular positions, and both refused to compromise their core principles and values" (479-80). As I hope is clear from my case studies, the same could easily be said of Ida B. Wells's and Jane Addams's genuine leadership and rhetorical legacy. Yet, what might be missing from this equation, is both women's very different rhetorical positioning, power, and resources versus the presidents'. Both women experienced devastating setbacks, failures, and attempted silencing partly because of their rhetorical positioning, prior ethos, and the resources and constraints of their rhetorical careers in a way (and to a degree) that neither Roosevelt nor Wilson ever did. Such a difference in experience reveals, among other things, the situatedness of rhetorical legacies and experiences of rhetorical success.
- As is indicated by the very concatenation of the contextual, descriptive term "social" and the ideological, ethically inflected term "justice," the idea of "social justice" is at once broader than but not contradictory to important American rights-based discourses and social movements associated with manhood suffrage, women's rights,

and civil rights. Such work necessarily involves the rhetor in a persistent and difficult rhetorical situation in that by committing to the overarching concept of justice rather than rights and the social rather than a given subset of humanity, a rhetor must attend to fundamental questions of personhood *and* nationhood, universals *and* particulars, individual exceptions *and* larger patterns. Thus, arguments for social justice are a different kind of collective argument for social change than that of arguments for individual rights (or rights-bearing discourse) that warrant further study.

Implications

- It is important to examine how rhetorical positioning and material resources make possible “a legacy of intelligent, bold, and visionary speech” and how they constrain rhetors who desire to forge a legacy of such speech.
- Further research needs to be conducted into women’s strategies for ethos establishment and how and to what extent rhetorical authority is topical.
- Implications of other “successful” in terms of immediate audience and by artistic standards but considered a failure today (or then) by ethical or standards. Such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s racist speeches around franchise amendments as failures?
- Histories of rhetoric and composition should better engage “social justice, ” a concept that emerged in the late nineteenth-century cauldron of post-Civil War and Reconstruction in response to redefinitions of citizenship, industrialization, and increasing class stratification.

- It could also be productive to compare and contrast arguments for social justice versus individual rights in the discourses of significant social movements of the Progressive Era.
- Pedagogy: A grammar of rhetorical failure could have applications to the composition classroom by providing a way for instructors to discuss assessment with students and to complicate notions of "audience accommodation" OR at least to indicate the limits and situate the concept of "audience accommodation" in terms of rhetorical situation and material factors

A Heuristic Grammar of Rhetorical Failure

As part of my conceptualization of "rhetorical failure," I have compiled a spectrum of "reasons" for and "types" of rhetorical failure based on the particular dynamics of my case studies and an application of the concept of rhetorical failure to the constituent parts of the rhetorical situation. This grammar also provides an interpretive connection between my definition and the historical case studies in this dissertation. In each of the case studies in chapters two to four, I have identified and named types of rhetorical failure that appear to be of particular importance to a given experience, and I have included these "types" in the grammar, below. My purpose here is to offer a heuristic that can function as a pedagogical tool for rhetorical analysis and criticism and that supports my conceptualization of "rhetorical failure" as an experience with transactive, relational, and emotional components. As with all grammars, this conceptualization is necessarily a work in progress that has the potential to change and become more complex with subsequent historical studies and additions to the cases I

have considered. As such, neither of the component lists, below, is exhaustive nor confined solely to instrumental, moral, or artistic concerns and, naturally, many of the components I list below overlap and are interrelated. Ultimately, I hope this grammar will also prompt rhetorical critics to consider a variety of historical, sociocultural, material, ethical, and compositional criteria when analyzing rhetorical situations and assessing rhetorical performances.

I. Reasons for Rhetorical Failure:

- The rhetor is not respected by the audience for reasons of prior reputation, appearance, or judgments of inexperience/ignorance/inability
- The rhetor ignores the audiences' deeply held values or forms of identification
- The rhetor accidentally offends the audience
- The rhetor chooses not to follow the conventions, forms, or content of address that the audience expects or desires on this topic, from this individual
- The rhetor does not have the power, leverage, or resources to gain a platform or media channel to be heard
- The rhetorical appeals used are associated with cultural logic(s) that work against the rhetor's intentions
- Conventional forms or terms are not adequate for expressing the necessary message
- The audience's deeply held values or forms of identification are in direct conflict with those of the rhetor
- The audience ignores, rejects, or denies the rhetor
- The audience ignores, rejects, or denies the rhetor's message
- The rhetorical message "activates" certain broader messages that work against the rhetor's purposes or credibility
- The "timing" is not right

II. Types of Rhetorical Failure:

- *Failure to select the appropriate means*: a rhetor misunderstands or misjudges her audience's expectations for rhetorical performance and composes a rhetorical text inappropriate or insufficient for the situation.
- *Failure of situation*: a rhetorical situation in which rhetoric is not enough to affect a desired change or there are no available means (for a given rhetor) sufficient to achieve certain persuasive ends.
- *Failure of resources*: the rhetor does not have and/or is denied access to power, material resources, education, or speech/publication venues to pursue certain kinds of rhetorical action or achieve specific, desired ends.

- *Failure of positioning*: the rhetor is positioned in relation to her audience such that she is judged to lack the ability, knowledge, experience, or right to advocate on her chosen topic. As a result, the audience for a given rhetorical performance often misjudges or cannot "hear" the rhetor's purpose or meaning.
- *Failure of listening*: The audience chooses not to be open to a rhetor's message or is unable to overcome objections, biases, or beliefs that invalidate the rhetor's message and/or credibility.
- *Failure of genre*: The expected generic elements of style, arrangement, or content (for instance) do not allow a rhetor to express important aspects of the truth of their convictions or hybridizing generic conventions results in confusion or misunderstanding for audiences.
- *Failure of reception*: Assessments of rhetorical failure by critics (in the rhetor's own time and current times) based on unfair, inapplicable, insufficient, or biased criteria. Such criteria usually remain veiled and unexamined in the context of the critical analysis.

Considering the reasons and types of the "grammar of rhetorical failure" I have proposed here can be useful to rhetoric and composition scholars' identification and incorporation of a wide array of historical, sociocultural, material, ethical, and compositional considerations for assessing rhetorical performances and analyzing rhetorical situations. Ultimately, I hope that this heuristic grammar, like this dissertation project overall, will prompt additional inquiry into experiences of rhetorical failure and to rhetors' strategic revisions to recover from such experiences.

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