town, city and "community"
1890-1920's

park dixon goist

> From this window
> the long naked fingers
> of the winter trees
> stretch forth to slate gray skies.
> Below, a foamflecked lake.
> Beyond, far to the west,
> the white heads of the Olympic range.
> Somewhere in the midst: the city,
> long, pencil thin, drawing
> its shape along
> the sound of the Pacific,
> casting an irrelevant shadow
> over this beautiful land.
>> Tom Meschery, "Seattle," in
>> *Over The Rim*

These lines, penned by a professional basketball player, convey to this writer memories of home, childhood and a sense of belonging. But the "irrelevant shadow" of a city the size of Seattle does not provide such memories for his parents and grandparents. Their images of childhood community are derived from different sources: American small towns and semi-rural areas. For a youngster growing up in Seattle in the 1940's and 1950's the city was a way of life. But not so for countless members of those older generations: they were confronted with the problem of coping with rapidly changing urban and industrial conditions on the basis of experiences and values gained in more traditional surroundings. A good part of their struggle was to find "community" in a new urban environment.

Recent scholarship indicates that whatever else we Americans discuss in our national cultural conversations, we have shown a persistent concern for community. A decade-and-a-half ago R. W. B. Lewis, in *The*

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American Adam, located one of the key identifying myths of our culture —the self-reliant individual facing reality alone, dependent only on his own inherent resources. More recently the "quest for community" has appeared as a leading theme in works by Robert Weibe, R. Jackson Wilson, E. Digby Baltzell, David Noble and Jean Quandt.[1] What emerges from their reflections is the suggestion that the search for community may be as central to experience in America as the dialogue over an American Adam.

For countless Americans a small town childhood helped shape their ideas of community. In memory the town was a secure world of familiar landscapes and friendly people, where one experienced a coherent world and gained confidence amidst manageable surroundings. Although not shared by all Americans, similar memories express the images of many who left their villages in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to make their way in the city. The following paragraphs deal with a few of those who experienced this town-to-city transition, and who attempted through various means—literature, social work, sociology—to come to terms with their new environment.

The lives and work of individuals as diverse in achievement as Malcolm Cowley, Robert Park, Jane Addams and Sherwood Anderson offer an interesting range of experience for analyzing the ways in which a small town background was related to various responses to industrial urbanization. To what extent did the images and memories of a pre-industrial life determine their views of the city? Did those whose early roots were in small town America uniformly attempt to recreate and impose village ways upon the city? In answering these questions, I will compare the reflections of Cowley, Anderson, Addams and Park one to another. Beyond this, I will analyze their views in light of the thesis of Page Smith, a contemporary intellectual who has raised an important question about community in both town and city, using Smith's work as a bench mark against which the thought of the four earlier intellectuals will be measured.

Since its appearance in 1966 Page Smith's *As A City Upon A Hill* has established itself as the starting point for any discussion of the American town. Smith maintains that until the early decades of the twentieth century the town, as one of the basic forms of social organization experienced by a majority of Americans, created values for the larger society. With the increasing dominance of cities came the demise of the town and the community values which it embodied. Smith distinguishes between the "cumulative" town which is merely an agglomeration of random individuals, and the "covenanted community" based on a central purpose— initially often religious—which overrides merely individual considerations. The small town in its covenanted form was built by those whose values "were oriented toward the community rather than toward the individual." This town did not initially provide an environment hospitable to

economic individualism. Such individualism is, rather, the product of "depersonalized" urban life. Nor did the modern concept of pluralistic democracy originate in New England town meetings or along the western frontier. According to Smith, "It was the city which created classes, which divided neighbors along social and economic lines, which destroyed the simple equality of community life, and which nourished the principles of political democracy." From these and other examples it is clear that as the town stands for community in Smith's view, he sees the city as antithetical to the traditional stability of homogenous small town life.[2]

Smith's attitudes toward town and city confront him with a dilemma which has concerned other Americans. Before town values were weakened and finally destroyed by metropolitan ways, Smith suggests there was a time of "simple equality" and "primitive innocence." Then a strong "sense of personal involvement," first developed in childhood, was prevalent among the members of the community. Growing up in a small town, Smith believes, instilled in the boy a feeling of confidence and security that comes from belonging to a familiar world. Such a sense of coherence is rarely possible in the city, for the urban child never experiences "a coherent society into which he could graduate." Furthermore, "honest values can only grow out of the shared experience of true communities," and the town is one of the few viable forms of community (others are the family and church) Smith can find in the American experience. But the day of the town is past. He knows that it will never again "create values for the larger society," but—and here is the dilemma—the values which emerge from the city are meaningless. They are not based on the shared experience of a true community. Increasingly "created by the manipulators of our mass media," urban values do not engender the trust and confidence essential to community. Because it is incapable of community in the sense he believes existed in the small town, the city, Smith concludes, is unable to provide values which can hold the larger society together.[3]

One need not agree with Smith's views of either town or city in asking to what extent similar attitudes were shared by those small town intellectuals who experienced the consequences of urbanization in the years following the Civil War.

There is a striking similarity between Smith's preoccupation with the community quality of the town and one of the main themes which emerges from Malcolm Cowley's first hand account of American writers in the post-World War I decade. In *Exile's Return,* his portrait of American literary exiles in the 1920's, Cowley presents an insightful discussion of why Gertrude Stein's designation of those young writers as a "lost generation" has validity. Cowley feels he and his friends underwent a number of experiences—including similar high school and college backgrounds, overseas service in World War I, living in Greenwich Village and Paris— which uprooted or disconnected them from any meaningful ties to either

geographic place or cultural heritage. Their experiences after the war in school, college and the army began what Cowley calls a "long process of deracination," which uprooted them from any region or tradition. It also left them unable to feel part of, or to participate in, either an immediate community or the larger national society.[4] If Cowley is right, what had been lost was a sense of community—Smith's feeling of confidence and security which comes from growing up in a familiar world. In developing this theme of alienation, Cowley indicates what kind of community his generation felt itself separated from.

"Somewhere," Cowley recalls, "the turn of a dirt road or the unexpected crest of a hill reveals your own childhood, the fields where you once played barefoot, the kindly trees, the landscape by which all others are measured and condemned." Perhaps the childhood image is of Schoharie Valley in August, a shadowy Appalachian ridge, a stream in northern Michigan, a farmhouse in Iowa or Wisconsin. No matter where it lay, Cowley asserts that a whole generation of writers who came to literary maturity in the 1920's could think of this remembered country as "our own," for, as Cowley puts it, "its people speak our language, recognize our values." In later years, as the process of deracination intensified it was this "remembered thing"—this lost home to which they couldn't go back—that seemed essential for many writers to somehow recapture.[5]

During the First World War the volunteers and future writers recalled their lost country. "Somewhere behind them was another country, a real country of barns, cornfields, hemlock woods and brooks tumbling across birch logs into pools where the big trout lay. Somewhere, at an incredible distance, was the country of their childhood, where they had once been a part of the landscape and the life. . . ." After the war many of the writers found themselves in the hustle and bustle of the New York publishing world. "They had satisfied a childhood ambition by moving to the metropolis and becoming more or less successful there, yet most of them wanted to be somewhere else: they wanted to leave it all and go back to something, perhaps to their childhoods." Here then, explains Cowley, was the exile:

> He was seeking for something that was no longer there. It wasn't so much his childhood, which of course was irrecapturable; it was rather a quality remembered from childhood, a *sense of belonging* to something, of living in a country whose people spoke his language and shared his interests. Now he had ceased to belong—the country had changed since the new concrete highway was put through; the woods were gone, the thick-growing hemlocks cut down, and there were only stumps, dried tops, branches and fireweed where the woods had been. The people had changed. . . . And he himself had changed, so that wherever he lived he would be a stranger.

Changing pronouns, Cowley concludes:

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> The sense of uneasiness and isolation that oppressed American writers was not the result of a purely geographical process and could not be cured by retracing their steps. . . . They had been uprooted from something more than a birthplace, a country, or a town. Their real exile was from society itself, from any society to which they could honestly contribute and from which they could draw the strength that lies in *shared conviction*.[6]

Cowley's "sense of belonging" is essentially the same as Smith's "sense of personal involvement." Further, Cowley's idea of the strength that lies in "shared conviction" is analagous to the notion of the "shared experience" which Smith emphasizes. The loss of a sense of community which so troubled Smith in the 1960's certainly concerned at least some members of this earlier generation. But for Cowley it is the *image* of community which is significant. Smith asserts that the town did in fact provide real community for its inhabitants. Cowley wonders if this remembered home ever existed outside of memory. But what if this "quality remembered" from youth never existed? "No matter," remarks Cowley, "the country of our childhood survives, if only in our minds, and retains our loyalty even when casting us into exile; we carry its image from city to city as our most essential baggage."[7] For a large number of Americans confronting the changes brought on by industrial urbanization, the imagery of childhood was similar to that of Cowley and his literary friends. But was it carried by intellectuals as their essential baggage, from city to city? It may have been for some, but not for others. And when it was, the results were sometimes different than implied by Cowley.

Among earlier intellectuals who shared with the lost generation its small town origins were Sherwood Anderson, Jane Addams and Robert Park. Each in his or her own area of endeavor was faced with the task of bridging the gap between a received town heritage and the newer social forces of urbanization.

It is a frequent and accurate observation that one of the motivations behind Sherwood Anderson's life and work was a rejection of the modern machine age.[8] He certainly cast a jaundiced eye on the city and industrialization. These were the harbingers of modern man's emotional paralysis, making it so difficult for him to feel a part of other men's lives, to love, to experience community. Older than the lost generation writers —he was born in 1876, most of them in the 1890's—Anderson and his characters knew the essence of "deracination." But in his best work, to what extent does Anderson find Smith's "true" community in the small town? Does his nostalgia for a pre-industrial past mean he presents the town as a viable alternative to the manufacturing cities which repelled him?

Interestingly, it was in Chicago, not the small Ohio towns of his childhood, that Anderson found both the strength of his story teller's voice and a community in which he could share. The stories of *Winesburg,*

Ohio (1919), based to some extent on Clyde, Ohio where he lived during part of his youth (ages eight to twenty), were written while he was working for a Chicago advertising agency and living in a North Side rooming house.[9] He discovered in the Bohemian world of writers and artists "a feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood with men and women whose interests were my own." Anderson has further noted of writers and artists who make up the "Chicago Renaissance" of the 1890's and early 1900's:

> There was in us, I am sure something of the fervor that must have taken hold of those earlier Americans who had attempted to found communistic communities. We were, in our own minds, a little band of soldiers who were going to free life (first of all, to be sure, our own lives) from certain bonds. . . . I think we wanted to reveal something, bring something back. Later my own observation of life in small Middle-Western towns as boy and young man was to lead to the writing of my *Winesburg*.[10]

Reflecting on this passage Irving Howe concludes that Anderson's Chicago experience "stimulated and released him for Winesburg . . . his flight to Bohemia was a condition for his creative recovery of the town."[11] A closer look at this "recovery of the town" may provide some notion about Anderson's idea of community.

Winesburg[12] is filled with lonely, isolated people who feel cut off from others. They live behind invisible walls and curtains, inarticulate, forever reaching out their hands hoping to touch someone else. They are grotesque, pathetic, as they mumble, jerk, gesture and flail, trying but failing to express the special, "secret something" which, once alive inside, has been crushed. A number of the lonely people turn to George Willard in an effort to explain themselves, hoping he can understand, avoid their mistakes, maybe achieve the dreams they have not realized or somehow speak for them. But George is young and a newspaper reporter, dealing more in surface details than the subtle depths of life, himself baffled by the complexities of the various demands made on him.

At eighteen George too needs understanding, particularly after his mother's death when he decides to leave Winesburg for the city. At that moment he glances back over his life, suddenly realizing he is leaving the security of youth and town to enter the unsure world of manhood. "With all his heart he wants to come close to some other human, touch someone with his hands, be touched by the hand of another. . . He wants most of all, understanding." He is beginning to sense the need which Winesburg's grotesques were unable to articulate. The difference between George and the other obscure people of the town is that for a moment he achieves sympathetic understanding with another person.

In one of the final scenes of *Winesburg*, George sits with his friend Helen White in the darkness of the Winesburg County Fair grand-stand on the evening after the fair. A place recently bustling with people from town and the surrounding country, and now so deserted, causes one to

shudder "at the thought of the meaninglessness of life while at the same instant, and if the people of the town are his people, one loves life so intensely that tears come into the eyes." Sharing this loneliness and sensing another, both Helen and George fulfill a basic human need. "Man or boy, woman or girl, they had for the moment taken hold of the thing that makes mature life of men and women in the modern world possible." It is the quality which makes possible whatever community can be achieved by humans. On the basis of this feeling George is able to think of his fellow townsman "with something like reverence," to understand for the first time the likelihood of "strange, beautiful qualities in obscure men."

While George's sense of others is awakened in Winesburg, it is a rare occurrence in the town. Furthermore, Anderson suggests in George's departure that the awakening can only be fully realized by leaving the town and going to the city. As George rides away from Winesburg he looks out the train window and as the town disappears he knows his life there is but a backdrop for an entirely different future. If *Winesburg* is, as some critics maintain,[13] a novel of nostalgia, it is nostalgia under control. The town is the scene of George's awareness—thus such awareness *is* possible in the town. But Winesburg is anything but a community based on "shared conviction," engendering a widespread sense of either belonging or personal involvement. Whatever Anderson was nostalgic about in *Winesburg*, it was not the loss of a sense of community in the terms developed by Page Smith. The story of Hugh McVey and the town of Bidewell, in Anderson's next novel, *Poor White* (1920),[14] is much closer to that perception, but even here there is more ambiguity about town and city than in Smith.

Hugh McVey is an inventor who plays a major role in the transformation of Bidewell, Ohio, from semi-rural isolation into a manufacturing city with a population of just under one hundred thousand. Like the grotesques of Winesburg, Hugh has "no part in lives of the men and women of the earth." He first lives along the banks of the Mississippi, in a listless stupor, until prodded out of his lethargy by a New Englander who stands for the shrewd practicality and commercial mores of the East. With encouragement and a great effort of will Hugh emerges from his somnolent existence and becomes an inventor, abandoning his daydreams, concentrating instead on the world of mathematics and machines. First, however, he leaves the slothful atmosphere of his Missouri home, seeking "to become acquainted with and be the friend of people whose lives were beautifully lived and who were themselves beautiful and full of significance." He is, according to Irving Howe, "a man yearning for community." But as an inventor he becomes an instrument of the very forces which are making less possible the kind of community he seeks.

The real hero of the novel, as Anderson has noted,[15] is the town, and what happens to Bidewell under the impact of industrialization is the

real story. There was, the novel tells us, a quiet lull just before the storm of industrialism broke over the midwest. "In all the towns of mid-west America it was a time of waiting . . . For the moment mankind seemed about to take the time to try to understand itself." The moment is lost as industrialization shatters this and many other possibilities. In face of disruption and disorganization one remembers what once was, and one seems to sense what has been lost:

> In all the great Mississippi Valley each town came to have a character of its own, and the people who lived in the towns were to each other like members of a great family. . . . A kind of invisible roof beneath which every one lived spread itself over each town. Beneath the roof boys and girls were born, grew up, quarreled, fought, and formed friendships with their fellows, were introduced into the mysteries of love, married, and became the fathers and mothers of children, grew old, sickened, and died. Within the invisible circle and under the great roof every one knew his neighbor and was known to him. (44-45)

Here is the "remembered thing" of the lost generation, the image of community implicit in Anderson's first two novels, which also pervaded his later work.[18] It is not, of course, the image one finds in *Winesburg*, Anderson's outstanding achievement, and even in *Poor White* there is at the end of the story some ambiguity.

In the closing scenes of the tale, Hugh is viciously attacked by Bidewell's harness maker, a skilled craftsman who is literally driven insane by the changes brought on by industrialization. This event forces Hugh to face for the first time the consequences of his acts as an agent of the machine age. He can no longer cling to the idea that his inventions have merely lightened men's load, but must make a broader effort to "relate himself with the life about him." "In the past he had seen towns and factories grow and had accepted without question men's word that growth was invariably good." He now realizes otherwise, and the bright colors reflected amidst some stones he holds in his hand suggests what is needed —but how? Critics are correct in pointing to the confused ending of the novel, but in that confusion Anderson's own ambiguous feelings toward the industrial present and future are reflected. The story closes with the announcement of the forthcoming birth of Hugh's first child. In the background two sounds are heard, one representing the pastoral but vanishing past, and above that the "whistling and screaming" of Bidewell's factories. In these passages Anderson suggests, hesitantly, that the future is with the machine and the chore of generations to come will be to bring light, color and community to the urban industrial world.

Two somewhat older intellectuals who shared with Anderson a small town background as a basis for dealing with the city were Jane Addams and Robert Park. Like Anderson they came to Chicago from distinctively non-urban areas. Both differed from him, however, in making the city

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their home and finding in Chicago the challenges which gave form to their respective contributions, one in social work, the other in sociology. Addams and Park were both struck by what they took to be the various urban class and ethnic divisions and by the resulting lack of communication and community within the city. Their response to what they perceived as social disruption in the metropolis did not, however, constitute the kind of nostalgia which Cowley sees as characteristic of the lost generation writers. They did express some ambiguity similar to that in Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* and *Poor White,* but theirs was even less an effort to recapture somehow a pre-industrial mode of life. It is inaccurate to equate their responses too closely to those of either the lost generation writers or Anderson. Furthermore, an examination of their work reveals at least one significant distinction between Addams and Park in their understanding of the city.

Jane Addams, like the exiles of the 1920's was alienated from the education and culture of her middle class background. In writing of the educated young women of her generation she remarked that, "Somewhere in the process of 'being educated' they had lost that simple and almost automatic response to human appeal." Like the plodding and inarticulate Hugh McVey, Addams and her cultivated friends had great difficulty in "making real connection with the life about them." The social settlement, as Christopher Lasch observes, was the means by which she made that connection. For her social work "combined good works with the analysis not only of the conditions underlying urban poverty but also of one's relation to the poor." Hull House, the settlement which Addams founded on Chicago's Halsted street in 1889 was, of course, also her effort to deal with the problems of an industrial metropolis.[17]

Jane Addams was born in Ceaderville, Illinois, in 1860, and writing half-a-century later remembered herself in childhood as a country girl. In a neighboring town of 10,000, which at the age of seven "seemed to me a veritable whirlpool of society and commerce," she contrasted, at least in memory, the "ruddy poverty of the country" to the squalor of small city shabbiness. After "twenty years at Hull-House," she also recalled the closeness to nature and "free-ranging" experience of country children, again in contrast to the restrictions of the urban environment. Sounding like Page Smith over fifty years later, she noted, "One of the most piteous aspects in the life of city children . . . is the constant interruption to their play which is inevitable on the streets, so that it can never have any continuity—the most elaborate 'plan or chart' or 'fragment from their dream of human life' is sure to be rudely destroyed by the passing traffic." But for Jane Addams in Chicago at the turn of the century, this led to an emphasis on recreational needs in the city. Thus she sought to provide immigrant youngsters of the Halsted neighborhood with a day in the country or a chance to attend the Hull House-sponsored summer school in Rockford, Illinois. It is somewhat strained to suggest that in such

efforts she was trying to impose village ways on the city, though it may be correct to conclude that the need she felt for children to have fresh air, recreation, and contact with nature reflects the values of her Ceaderville childhood.[18]

In dealing with Jane Addams's response to the city it is important to understand her conception of the social settlement. One of the disturbing aspects of city life for her was "the sharp division of the community into classes with its inevitable hostility and misunderstanding." According to her perception:

> The social organism has broken down through large districts of our great cities. Many of the people living there are very poor, the majority of them without leisure or energy for anything but the gain of subsistence. They move often from one wretched lodging to another. They live for the moment side by side, many of them without knowledge of each other, without fellowships, without local tradition or public spirit, without social organization of any kind. Practically nothing is done to remedy this. . . . Men of ability and refinement, of social power and university cultivation, stay away from them.[19]

In the effort to bridge this gap between the underprivileged poor and the cultivated—to relieve destitution at one end of society and a sense of uselessness at the other—the settlement resident was a key figure. The residents sought to see behind the divisions, to understand the unity of the city, its wholeness. "They are bound to regard the entire life of their city as organic, to make an effort to unify it, and to protest against its overdifferentiation." Though there is no sure way of knowing, it is not fanciful to suggest that this holistic view reflected Addams's own childhood when she had been "an eager participant in the village life."[20]

Of special concern to Jane Addams was the plight of newly arrived peasant immigrants who faced an alien culture and a strange urban environment. Many Hull House programs and activities were aimed at re-establishing a sense of pride among the immigrants, in easing their transition from older ways to the demands of the industrial city. It became obvious to its founder that the settlement could best achieve these goals by serving as a focal point for the immediate neighborhood: first of all, then, by engendering a sense of community. "Even in those early days," she remarked in 1910, "we caught glimpses of the fact that certain social sentiments . . . which like all higher aims live only by communion and fellowship, are cultivated most easily in the fostering soil of community life."[21] To draw the conclusion from this reference to soil that "Hull House was part of an effort to recapture some of the natural, almost biological features of rural community living" misses the point. To be sure, the settlement was an effort to provide greater communication and to instill a sense of community, but this does not mean Jane Addams was reverting nostalgically to a "cozier, warmer form of human association"

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than existed prior to the industrial city.[22] On the contrary, her efforts indicate a clear realization of the limitations to village ways in coping with urban problems.

For example, she was fully aware that voluntary charity organizations, based on assumptions about the welfare demands of smaller communities, were totally inadequate to meet the greater and more complex needs of a city. Furthermore, she realized that "The most vigorous efforts in governmental reform, as well as the most generous experiments in ministering to social needs, have come from the larger cities."[23] Hull House itself played a role in bringing about such urban-based reforms as juvenile courts, public playgrounds, municipal baths, mother's pensions and better public health programs. Some of these programs were prompted by a desire to create a stronger sense of community, but none were nostalgic efforts to recapture a lost rural past. Images of community based on a village childhood thus seem to have played a somewhat different role in the urban experience of Jane Addams than they did for Cowley's writers or in the novels of Sherwood Anderson.

In the settlement work of Jane Addams the basis of community is the neighborhood. Thus in the city, as in any hamlet or town, community is still equated in her mind with a sense of place, with spatial contiguity. A strong sense of place pervaded the nostalgic memories of Cowley's literary exiles, and a similar concern continues to inform current model cities programs and other community-oriented organizations in our cities. But it has also long been recognized by sociologists that in urban areas there are numerous non-spatial or extra-spatial bases for association. In other words, there are in the city various forms of community which are not based on space or the spatial proximity of neighborhoods. One of the earliest American sociologists to grapple with this realization was Robert Park. His reflections on this issue distinguish his thought about cities not only from writers like Sherwood Anderson, but also from Jane Addams and other social workers.

Like Addams, Park was born in the 1860's and grew up in a small town.[24] In contrast to Addams and Anderson, however, he has left only a few pages of reminiscences and nothing about his childhood. He first became interested in the city as a newspaperman working in New York and various midwestern cities. As a reporter he wrote human interest stories for the Sunday papers, often dealing with local urban areas. In this way he became "intimately acquainted with many different aspects of city life" and gained "a conception of the city . . . as a kind of social organism."[25] But before formulating this theory of the city Park discovered what George Willard also sensed—merely reporting the events of the day is an unsatisfactory way of seeing below the surface, of understanding the subtleties of personality or the complexities of social forces. Park thus turned from journalism, first to the study of philosophy, then to the newly emerging field of sociology. He studied under William James

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at Harvard and then in Germany with Wilhelm Windelband. For ten years (1904-1914) he travelled widely in the southern United States as secretary to Booker T. Washington, while studying race relations. From 1914 to 1932 he taught at the University of Chicago, and it was during this period that he made his major contributions to urban sociology.

Making an observation that summarized not only his own experience, but that of thousands of his countrymen, Park noted that the village community had once formed the background of American life. "But with the growth of great cities . . . the old forms of social control represented by the family, the neighborhood, and the local community have been undermined and their influence greatly diminished. . . ."[26] In trying to fathom the implications of the resulting, widespread "social disorganization"—a social phenomenon somewhat similar to the more personal process of deracination described by Cowley—Park concluded that there were patterns of regularity underlying the apparent chaos of the city.

Among the important sources of stability in the urban environment were the numerous sub-regions or "natural areas," those local communities which he had written about as a city reporter. Like Jane Addams, Park was convinced that such spatially determined phenomena as local neighborhoods, immigrant colonies and functional districts served to integrate urbanites into the larger city organism. Indeed, at one point in his sociological writings he observed that "All forms of association among human beings rest finally upon locality and local association."[27] In this vein he mentioned the community functions of such place-oriented institutions as public schools, settlement houses and, on a different level, such groups as street gangs. But a look at another aspect of his work reveals that Park did not in fact consider local association as the only source of community in the city.

At almost exactly the same time Sherwood Anderson was writing the first stories of *Winesburg, Ohio*, Robert Park published his famous article, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment,"[28] one of the classic essays on city life. It is as though in a single intellectual moment one spokesman for the midwest was bidding a bittersweet farewell to its small town past, while another was struggling to come to terms with the urban future.

In his essay Park pointed out that the modern division of labor altered social and economic organization so that traditional family and local associations were supplemented with ties based on occupational and vocational interests. In this and other essays Park recognized that associations based on a "community of interests" were as viable in the city as spatially defined areas like neighborhoods. Labor unions, political reform groups and newspapers were among the non-spatially based phenomena which he singled out. Park had always been fascinated by the "social function of news," and in the newspaper he saw an example of a community-oriented, yet non-spatially determined service. As Park presents it, news, though

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local in character, also provides the basis for a wider public opinion—so newspapers act to integrate the individual into the concerns of the community and also aid in holding the larger society together.[29] In these reflections Park seems fully aware that the unique conditions of the city demand at least some forms of community which are entirely different from those which sufficed in villages and small towns.

In his efforts to understand the city and to seek out its various possibilities for community, Park reflects an attitude toward rapid social change different from that of Cowley's exiles. In fact, an interesting range of responses to the city is represented in the lives and work of those reviewed here. In their search for community all seem to have been "informed" to some extent by images of their small town childhoods. But clearly not all who faced a new, urban industrial environment were affected in the same way by their town origins. Among those investigated here, responses range from the childhood yearnings depicted by Cowley and the controlled nostalgia of Anderson's two novels, to the social reform efforts of Addams and the urban theory of Park.

Most Americans probably believe with Page Smith that honest values emerge from the shared experience of communities. Also, many American intellectuals agree that cities are destructive of traditional communities and their values. Not all, however, would go on to assert with Smith that the city is therefore antithetical to any meaningful values. In the first place, writers like Anderson and Cowley are not convinced that the "community" achieved by the town was quite as idyllic as Smith supposes. Cowley wonders if the yearned-for world of the lost generation writers existed anywhere except in their memories. Anderson's Winesburg offers little community of any kind to its isolated inhabitants. In *Poor White*, though industrialization disrupts lives and communities in the midwest, the future is presumed to be with urbanization, and the problem is how to humanize the resulting changes. Secondly, intellectuals like Park and Addams do not conclude that because the city does not engender *a small town sense of community* that it is therefore incapable of creating either community or meaningful values for the larger society. They both realized that the town was but one source of community in man's experience.

The search for community may be central to American culture. The town has provided—probably continues to provide—one of the dominant images of community. This does not mean that men and women from small towns *necessarily* responded unfavorably to the city, rejecting it for its inability to recreate a "true" sense of community. Unlike Page Smith, American intellectuals have not all and always equated community with the town. Realizing that the urban world demands new forms of association, some late nineteenth and early twentieth century intellectuals like Jane Addams and Robert Park sought to locate relationships based, as E. Digby Baltzell has recently put it, on a "responsible neighborliness" appropriate to the metropolis.[30] Theirs are the kind of effort which must

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be continued if we are to achieve community in an increasingly crowded urban world.

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footnotes

1. R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1955); Robert Weibe, *The Search for Community, 1877-1920* (New York, 1967); R. Jackson Wilson, *In Quest of Community: Social Philosophy in the United States, 1860-1920* (New York, 1968); E. Digby Baltzell, ed., *The Search for Community in America* (New York, 1968); David W. Noble, *The Progressive Mind, 1890-1917* (New York, 1970); Jean B. Quandt, *From the Small Town to the Great Community: The Social Thought of Progressive Intellectuals* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1970).

2. Page Smith, *As a City Upon a Hill: The Town in American History* (New York, 1966), 17-36, 306, 106, 207, 111.

3. *Ibid.*, 174, 233, 304-06, 297-98.

4. Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920's* (New York, 1959 [1934]), 3-47.

5. *Ibid.*, 13-14.

6. *Ibid.*, 43, 209-10, 214. The italics are mine.

7. *Ibid.*, 14.

8. Waldo Frank, "Winesburg, Ohio After Twenty Years," [1940] in *Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio: Text and Criticism*, ed. John H. Ferres (New York, 1966), 369-376; Maxwell Geismar, *The Last of the Provincials: The American Novel, 1915-1925* (New York, 1959 [1947]), 223-84; Brom Weber, *Sherwood Anderson* (Minneapolis, 1964).

9. William L. Phillips, "How Sherwood Anderson Wrote *Winesburg, Ohio*," [1951] in *The Achievement of Sherwood Anderson: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill, 1966), 62-84.

10. *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs*, ed. Paul Rosenfeld (New York, 1942), 245; *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs: A Critical Edition*, ed. Ray Lewis White (Chapel Hill, 1969), 341.

11. Irving Howe, *Sherwood Anderson* (New York, 1951), 61-62.

12. All citations are from the Compass Books ed. (New York, 1960).

13. Malcolm Cowley, "Editor's Introduction," *Winesburg, Ohio* (New York, 1960 [1919]), 15; Geismar, *Last of the Provincials*, 237; Walter B. Rideout, "The Simplicity of *Winesburg, Ohio*," [1962] in Ferres, *Winesburg, Ohio: Text and Criticism*, 292.

14. All citations are from the Compass Books ed. (New York, 1965).

15. Introducing the Modern Library edition of *Poor White*, Anderson remarked, "The town was really the hero of the book. . . . What happened to the town was, I thought, more important than what happened to the people of the town."

16. *Windy McPherson's Son* (New York, 1916); *Marching Men* (New York, 1917); *Hello Towns* (New York, 1929); *Home Town* (New York, 1940).

17. Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York, 1960 [1910]), 64; Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1887-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type* (New York, 1967 [1965]), 12.

18. Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 24, 20, 29.

19. *Newer Ideas of Peace* (New York, 1907), 140; "New Impulse to an Old Gospel," *Forum*, 14 (Nov., 1892), 346-47.

20. *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 100, 19.

21. *Ibid.*, 115.

22. Morton and Lucia White, *The Intellectual Versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York, 1964 [1962]), 154, 159.

23. *Newer Ideas of Peace*, 16.

24. The analysis of Park is based on the author's study, "City and 'Community': The Urban Theory of Robert Park," *American Quarterly*, XXIII (Spring, 1971), pp. 46-59. An outstanding discussion of the impact of small town origins on the social thought of Addams and Park can be found in Quandt, *From the Small Town to the Great Community*.

25. "An Autobiographical Note," in *Race and Culture*, Volume I, Collected Papers of Robert E. Park, ed., E. H. Hughes et al. (Glencoe, Illinois, 1950), viii.

26. "Community Organization and Juvenile Delinquency," in *The City*, ed. Robert E. Park et al. (Chicago, 1967 [1925]), 106-07.

27. "The Mind of the Hobo: Reflections Upon the Relationship Between Mentality and Locomotion," *The City*, 159. On natural areas see *Human Communities: The City and Human Ecology*, Volume II, Collected Papers of Robert E. Park, 165-209.

28. *American Journal of Sociology*, XX (March, 1915), 577-612, revised and reprinted in *The City*, 1-46.

29. On the newspaper see *Society*, Volume III, Collected Papers of Robert E. Park, 71-184.

30. Baltzell, *Search for Community*, 11.

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