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COMPOSING AGENCY: USING INQUIRY TO PROMOTE SOCIAL
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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Abstract

In Rhetoric/Composition studies, agency has been a highly contested concept, straightaway invoking the tension between two dominant perspectives. Agency is viewed as either an internal quality possessed by an individual or a construction of external discourses. While such discussions seeking to define agency are important, they tend to focus on interpretation and analysis over the production of agency, which is a key component of social action. People must believe their deliberate actions can cause positive socio-political change. With this dissertation, I propose that thinking of agency as a form of rhetorical invention puts the focus on the production of agency for effective social action. In working towards this goal, I develop the notion of activist inquiry: a non-prescriptive, inquiry-oriented approach to inventing agency for social action based on Jane Addams's rhetorical strategies in *Democracy and Social Ethics*.

Chapter One

Introduction

Agency, n. II. Action, capacity to act; 5. (a) action or intervention producing a particular effect; means, instrumentality, mediation; (b) Such action embodied or personified; a being or thing that acts to produce a particular effect or result.

Inquiry, n. 1. (a) The action of seeking, esp. (now always) for truth, knowledge, or information concerning something; search, research, investigation, examination; (b) A course of inquiry, an investigation.

Social action n. (a) deliberate action that results or is intended to result in a change in the institutions or conditions of social life; an instance of this; (b) (Sociol.) action that takes place in a social context; action involving or oriented towards one or more other individuals; an instance of this.

— Oxford English Dictionary

Agency and social action are intimately connected. People must have some sense that their actions do in fact have the ability to change the conditions of social life ever closer to a more equitable and just world. As Kristie Fleckenstein says, “[Agency is] crucial to social action because without both the belief in one’s ability to act in the world *and* the ability to act, no social action is possible” (2010 p. 42). Social action asks individuals, alone or in conjunction with others, to believe in their ability to act in and upon the world for change — to believe in agency and to be activists, those people whose intentions are to assuage social injustice. However, *agency* can be a dubious term because a cloud of uncertainty

surrounds the capacity of human beings to make (semi)autonomous choices, act upon them, and achieve a particular end. From a posthumanist view, agency can even be attributed to technologies, such as the algorithms that automatically function to present Facebook users with product advertisements that appeal to their individual interests. In Rhetoric and Composition studies, as in many other fields, the definition of agency is continuously being renegotiated in large part because of the tension between humanist, postmodernist, and more recently posthumanist philosophical perspectives (Accardi, 2015 pp.1-5). The humanist perspective holds that individuals *have* agency. In other words, they have the ability, power, and authority to act as people say, “of their own free will.” Although most rhetoric scholars reject this, what Lundberg and Gunn call the “possession metaphor,” a significant portion of the literature on agency still implies “a rational individual capable of inventing ideas autonomously and pursuing an intention to engage or provoke an audience” (Accardi, 2015 p.2). The humanist view contradicts postmodernist theories, which refute it on the grounds that power, authority, and other socio-cultural factors such as race and gender for example constrain people’s agency. As Herndl and Licona argue, agency cannot be located in the subject (2007 p.141). It quickly becomes uncertain to what extent or degree a person's actions are encouraged or limited by these factors and where agency, for lack of a better word,

“resides.” A posthumanist orientation, according to Herndl and Licona’s conception of it, posits that agency possesses the subject, which:

Refocuses our attention on the ways that the subject is an effect of structures, forces, and modes of enjoyment that might precede or produce it. This reversal of agent’s relation to agency directs attention to quintessentially rhetorical concerns: to the constitutive function of trope, to modes of address, to the dialectics of identification and difference, and even to the power of concealing exercise of *techne* under the veil of natural. (2005 p.97)

While an individual may either claim agency or others claim it for them, posthumanism can help rhetoric scholars examine what brought a desired effect to fruition. However, for all these humanist, postmodernist, and posthumanist perspectives, a big question remains: How can someone, anyone, help another person or people to believe they have the ability to alter an unjust situation and then act upon that belief?

This dissertation explores a method of inquiry that aims to direct attention away from the immediate invocation of the predominate dichotomy - humanist versus postmodernist - and focus on the production of agency for social action. In this context, social action refers to any deliberate action that has the goal of effecting positive social and political change. I argue that agency is a form of rhetorical invention that I call *activist inquiry*. One of the underlying features of activist inquiry is that it approaches the task of generating social action in a non-prescriptive way and to help describe this I use Jane Addams’s *Democracy and Social Ethics*(1902).¹ It is ideal for explicating agency as a form of rhetorical invention because Addams approached her own rhetorical task non-

prescriptively, believing that people will only be motivated to assuage social problems if they come to recognize and understand injustices from a personal point of view. “She never said specifically what people should do,” biographer Louise Knight says. Addams “want[ed] readers to make their own discoveries” (2010 p.107). Being non-prescriptive in this context means facilitating, leading, and encouraging instead of telling someone exactly what they should or must do, think, or believe. Attempting to impose ideas, beliefs, and values on others is generally met with resistance and interpreted as agonistic, which can hinder people with different socio-political and cultural views from being open to engaging with each other, having experiences with them, and reflecting and learning from those interactions. Experience, in the context of Addams’ work and activist inquiry, calls for practical interactions, contact, association, and cooperation across difference. It asks people to engage with the unfamiliar daily, lived realities and understandings of the marginalized and oppressed, who are typically living in poverty. Reflecting upon such experiences can prompt knowledge-building and through the intersections of these – experience, reflection, and learning – possibilities for right social action and agency can be imagined, put into practice, and evaluated for their efficacy. Activist inquiry emphasizes this process of experiential knowledge-building in an attempt to move past the reluctance and defensiveness prescriptive attempts of persuasion can often prompt in resistant audiences.

At its core, activist inquiry is both motivated by and nurtures a social, democratic ethic such as that forwarded by Addams. This ethic values equality, diversity, tolerance, justice, the common good, and an openness to difference and change. Practicing this ethic, from Addams perspective, entails being socially responsible by engaging with different others and taking action to assuage injustice. Naturally, there are obstacles to practicing such a social ethic and activist inquiry attempts to overcome some of them. In *Vision, Rhetoric and Social Action in the Composition Classroom*, Kristie Fleckenstein shares similar concerns about the challenges to social action. She identifies “Three central challenges [that] confound social action. First, how does an individual (or a group) perceive the need for change?”; second, “do outlets or means for enacting agency exist?”; and third, “...if agency is possible, are venues available within which to alter rather than reinforce the unjust situation?” (2010 p.17). I complicate Fleckenstein’s challenges first by exploring more closely how a rhetor may encourage others to perceive, or put another way, *acknowledge* their social responsibility. Second, I examine the challenge of *motivating* others to social action. Recognizing one’s duty to help others in need does not guarantee someone will be motivated to take social action. Finally, I consider how insights from these experiences can help activists imagine new avenues for effective, ethical social change: to develop a theory to approach a problem, act upon it, and reflect upon its efficacy. For brevity, I abridge these challenges to

recognition, motivation, and avenues. In summation, the underlying goal of activist inquiry is to encourage people to recognize their social responsibility (perception and motivation), better understand the reality of an unjust situation (motivation and avenues), and accept their agentive role in making decisions that push for a more just society (avenues and motivation).

Agency: Possession, Resource, Activity

The humanist possession metaphor attached to agency persists in much of Rhetoric and Composition studies. To be clear, agency as a term evokes its dictionary definitions, but agency as a metaphor is housed within attempts to explicate what its denotation implies. Agency as autonomous, individual possession remains the central metaphor, even as the scholarship below shows rhetoricians' attempts to steer the discussion towards more materially, environmentally, culturally, and socially inclusive conceptualizations of agency. This dissertation makes no claim to dismiss the possession metaphor or present a definitive way to steer clear of it, only to offer an inquiry-based method that emphasizes the production or generation of agency over humanist and postmodernist arguments surrounding its meaning. Nonetheless, those arguments are still important because they strive to consider the plethora of factors that contribute to agency, something activist inquiry also considers. In 2004, the Alliance of Rhetoric Societies' (ARS) conference focused on agency, and subsequent

publications remain a touch point for discussing the term and its metaphor. In Cheryl Geisler's report on the meeting, she defines rhetoric as an interpretive theory that "describes a variety of rhetorical positions, some with more and some with less rhetorical agency" (2004 p.16). Here, "with" stands in for "have" and assumes a person "has" or "owns" agency. People *exercise* their agency as if it were an innate possession or an attribute of themselves that can be used whenever they feel like calling upon it – an essentialist claim wherein a person more or less has within them the potential for agency at all times. This calls attention to the difficulty of separating the term from the metaphor. Although she was attempting to define rhetoric in such a way that would not invoke the possession metaphor for agency, it was still implied.

To emphasize the pervasiveness of the metaphor, another example from the ARS meeting arose when participants discussed the conditions of agency: the descriptions of the circumstances under which rhetors are able to act. Specifically, they looked at agency in terms of its often taken-for-granted status among hegemonically dominant groups, such as "white male," and discussed whether marginalized or subaltern groups can make a pre-determined socio-political impact given limited access to that discourse. Close examinations of the conditions under which marginalized groups manage to speak and affect change, they claimed, "recovers" agency for minority populations (Geisler, 2004 p.10-11). This also implies a humanist leaning. Groups of people wrest agency from the

dominant discourse, possess it, and affect change. *Agency in the Margins: Stories of Outsider Rhetoric* represents a similar example of collective agency as possession. Editor Anne Meade Stockdell-Giesler, describes the compilation of articles as attempts to answer the question, “How do people who are defined as outsiders create agency – how do they become agents of change...?” (2010 p.9). The dominant group “has” agency and the marginalized group wants to have it and to affect change because of having it. In “Working Boundaries: From Student Resistance to Student Agency,” Gwen Gorzelsky reiterates the possession metaphor, defining student agency as “the ownership of their developing ideas and texts” (2009 p.64) and the need to value “students’ agency as interpreters of texts and ideas” (2009 p.65). Here, students’ agency is blatantly tied to “ownership.” In *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Public Engagement*, Linda Flower acknowledges “the grand narrative of American individualism, [where] agency belongs to the actor, the hero, or the heroine” (2008 p.193) and that in everyday use agency “depends on one’s power to control or at least influence external realities” (2008 p.55). Flower reveals a humanist position by describing agency as exercising one’s willed choice, taking agency, acting to dominate, and controlling or altering a situation. Quite obviously, it is difficult not to invoke the possession metaphor and consider the postmodernist perspective on how agency can be the product of discourses and power relations.

The postmodern view defines agency in response to the death of the autonomous subject - interpellated, fragmented, constructed individuals whose actions cannot necessarily be attributed to them alone. Many factors limit the idea that a subject possesses agency. Overlapping and competing discourses, of which they cannot be entirely conscious, fragment a cohesive sense of self. In his book *Fragments of Rationality: Postmodernity and the Subject of Composition*, Faigley describes this fragmentation:

What a person does, thinks, says, and writes cannot be interpreted unambiguously because any human action does not rise out of a unified consciousness but rather from a momentary identity that is always multiple and in some respects incoherent. If consciousness is not fully present to one's own self, then it cannot be made transparent to another. (1992 p.9)

Constrained by both external and internal conditions of which he cannot be fully aware or entirely able to manipulate, individuals (and groups) cannot act with full intentionality to achieve a specific, desired effect. Therefore, they cannot "have" agency. "This critique of agency," Susan Wells observes, "has become so potent that it has left very little of the concept intact" (Leff and Lunsford, 2004 p.62). So while the humanist possession metaphor may be ubiquitous, the postmodern critique of agency, if taken too far, can render it useless. If Addams and her readers cannot act to achieve a goal because social, economic, and political influences constrain them in ways they are not aware of, then there is little need to try to convince them to take social action. The outcome would just be too unpredictable.

Some postmodern scholars try to rescue the term from the postmodern critique by reversing the possession metaphor – agency possesses the subject instead of the subject possessing agency. In “Shifting Agency: Agency, Kairos, and the Possibilities of Social Action,” Herndl and Licona confront this issue by theorizing agency as “the conjunction of a set of social and subjective relations that constitute the possibility of action” (2007 p.135). Herndl and Licona use agency to explore issues of power and authority and also criticize the idea that agency can be had or attributed to someone. Through a close examination of how agency and authority interact, they argue that, “Agency is a social/semiotic intersection that offers only a potential for action, an opportunity” (Herndl and Licona, 2007 p.141). Authority acts as a constraint and a potential resource to agency (Herndl and Licona 2007, p.135). They forward the notion of “the agent function”: “the conjunction of the subject’s dispositions and the temporary and contingent conditions of possibility for rhetorical action” (Herndl and Licona, 2007 p.138). Agency works in a particular way that depends on the ambiguous interplay between subjects and spaces where power and authority affects social action. The example Herndl and Licona use is the introduction of womens’ studies programs in the university. The initial backlash to these programs signifies an agentive intervention, they argue, but an agency constrained by a necessity to conform to academic expectations and institutional authority in order to “consolidate their symbolic capital” (Herndl and

Licona, 2007, p.145). This example demonstrates a postmodern perspective and shows how the relationship between agency and authority does not necessarily prohibit agency but neither does it grant subjects free access to it. Agency exists, but it is inhibited; here, by power and authority, which are unarguably factors that must be considered for activist inquiry.

The tension between humanist and postmodernist orientations on agency form a seemingly intractable dichotomy. A major theme at the ARS convention, as Geisler summarizes it, was critiquing this tension on the grounds that what they called “the ideology of agency” is one reason it persists. The ideology of agency “concerns the link between rhetorical action and social change – in what sense can the actions of a rhetor be linked to consequences in the world” (Geisler, 2004 p.12). Citing Dilip Gaonkar’s, rhetoric’s preoccupation with the postmodern critique of agency has resulted in an unnecessary and problematic ideology of agency. Rhetoricians who hold this ideology insist on defining agency as the activity of a subject pursuing an intention: “the speaker as origin rather than articulation, strategy as intentional, discourse as constitutive of character and community, [and] ends that bind in common purpose” (Geisler, 2004 p.263). These rhetoricians are aware of the problems with this view, but insist upon because, as Gaonkar claims, it has become a necessary illusion for linking rhetorical action and social change to causal agents. The illusion rests in the rhetorician’s need to believe that an

agent's intentional actions can be causally linked to effects. Gunn suggests that debates constrained by the postmodern critique of agency are a fantasy that "both frames our exercise of agency and protects us from the 'abject horror of contingency'" (qtd. in Geisler p.12). Condit also calls it a necessary illusion central to rhetorician's sense of purpose: "Without the concept of agency, [Condit] suggests, we do not have the necessary rationale for our efforts with our students and readers" (Geisler, 2004 p.12). We would rather believe that our actions have specific, intended effects than face the possibility that we cannot with any degree of certainty know what effects our actions will have in and on the world.

In response to this, other rhetoricians have noted a similar issue that unnecessarily maintains the humanist versus postmodernist tension at the forefront of discussions surrounding agency. Lundberg and Gunn argue that often rhetoricians misrepresent postmodernism in making their arguments against the autonomous individual of humanist thought. They agree that agency is a social construction; however, in their article "'Ouija Board, Are There Any Communications?': Agency, Ontotheology, and the Death of the Humanist Subject, or, Continuing the ARS Conversation" they criticize Geisler for framing most of the participants' positions on agency as responses to the post-modern critique of the autonomous agent and for advancing "a strawperson argument about 'postmodernism'" (2005 p.83). Lundberg and Gunn note that key postmodernist thinkers' such as Derrida, Lacan, and Foucault, "produced accounts of the human subject that

specify its radical contingency, its fragmentary qualities, and/or its dependence on generative systems beyond the seat of an insular individual consciousness” (2005 p.86). However, they also point out that none of them “deny that the subject or representations of the subject exert significant effects, nor do they deny the subject a kind of social effectivity or agency” (2005 p.87). In other words, Lundberg and Gunn argue that Geisler (and others), oversimplify the postmodern critique and essentially make a straw man argument by characterizing it as the utter inability of an individual to prompt socio-political change and then attack this position. Lundberg and Gunn compare agency to playing the game Ouija. The planchette moves around the Ouija board seemingly of its own accord and no one can determine who moved it. According to Lundberg and Gunn, those who oversimplify postmodernism as Giesler and others do adopt an attitude of being “mindlessly moved around by the agency of the planchette (the Symbolic, ideology, discourse, History, and so on)...” (2005 p.92). Instead, Lundberg and Gunn propose an “agnostic disposition” towards agency, meaning that “players [of the Ouija game] should pay attention to the movements of the game without prefiguring the meaning of the movements, reducing them to an absolutist causal account” (2005 p. 85). Paying attention to the movements of the game emphasizes how agency functions because this paying attention does not seek to definitively locate who or what is doing the moving, opening us up to the unconditional “what if.” This, they argue, describes the postmodern

take on agency that presumes agency possesses the subject instead of the subject possessing agency. In terms of inquiry, “what if” maintains an attitude of willingness to discover that Addams would have appreciated, given her emphasis on being open to new and varied experiences. However, even with the Ouija board situation, people, not rhetoricians, generally persist in trying to definitively locate the source of the action, compelled to know the cause.

Other ways of thinking about agency were posited at the ARS convention. One was that perhaps agency, “can be understood as a resource constructed in particular contexts and in particular ways” (Geisler, 2004 p. 2). Thinking of agency as a constructed resource is more compatible with agency as a form of rhetorical invention – with activist inquiry. Activist inquiry implies that agency can be generated through an inventional approach. A resource denotes a supply of agency from which someone can draw. Presumably, once it has been constructed, it is then available to people. A resource can also be an action or strategy adopted in adverse circumstances, which coincides with marginalized and oppressed people having to adopt coping strategies for the unjust situations they often find themselves forced into. Yet, if agency is a constructed resource from which people may draw, how is it constructed? How do people know that it has been constructed and is now available to them in some way?

Conceptions of agency through a postmodernist lens are often bound to relationships and interactions. In “Agency as Emergent and Enacted,” Marilyn Cooper defines agency as “the process through which organisms create meanings through acting into the world and changing their structure in response to the perceived consequences of their actions” (2011 p.420). People intentionally and voluntarily take action and then learn and change based on their interpretation of the situation. She advances the notion that rhetorical agency emerges as subjects respond to environmental as well as internal perturbations that then lead to further disturbances in the environment *and* the subject. In addition, Cooper re-defines the notion of the subject as a responsible agent whose ability to effect changes in the world is a property resulting from the dynamic relationship between internal meaning-making processes, conscious and unconscious, and external stimuli. In her model, action, intention, and effect may or may not occur as conscious pre-meditated decisions, but the subject remains responsible: “Rhetors – and audiences – are agents in their actions, and they are responsible for those actions, but they are not the sole cause of what happens” (Cooper, 2011 p.439). The subject is not an autonomous agent in the conventional sense but a node in a network of forces: subjects’ short and long-term goals, emotions, intentions, actions, interpretation of external stimuli, learning, and continued introspection and circumspection. “Agency is a matter of action,” Cooper contends, “it involves doing things intentionally and voluntarily, but is not a

matter of causing whatever happened” (2011 p.439). This action was as important as taking social action. While Cooper extends a definition of agency that incorporates external, environmental pressures among other things, there remains an emphasis, as Accardi mentions as well, on individual agency as something possessed, even if only at a given moment (2015 pp.1-5). Also, unlike many other orientations and definitions of agency, Cooper ignores politics, omitting socio-economic constraints to agency such as those surrounding race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and class. In terms of activist inquiry and Addams, considering these things is important, especially since class conflict was much of her focus.

We can neither be completely aware of who or what has influenced us to make a decision and take action nor who or what ultimately caused an effect. While activist inquiry respects the varying perspectives on agency, the insistent focus on pinning down a definition has resulted more or less in a floating signifier – no universal agreed upon meaning. Nor, and this is key to my argument, do most theories of agency adequately take up generating agency for social action. How does an activist or a rhetorician facilitate, encourage, or even construct agency as a resource “in particular contexts and in particular ways” (Geisler, 2004 p.12)?

A Social Problem: Individualism and Democracy

Addams did not use the word agency specifically; however, in *Democracy and Social Ethics* she is clearly concerned with the agentive role individuals (can and should) play in assuaging injustice and inequity. Addams forwarded the claim that if Americans value the democratic ideals of equality, diversity, tolerance, justice, and the common good, then the way in which an individual lives must be organized by socially-oriented inquiry, convictions, and actions. “To follow the path of social morality” Addams claims, “results perforce in the temper if not the practice of the democratic spirit” (1902 p.6). She wanted her readers to practice a social ethic, or what I refer to as simply being socially responsible. This ethic begins with experience and aims for social action. Her book argues for not only why they should enact it but also demonstrates putting it into practice, which helps to reinforce the importance of social action for a democracy. Reciprocally, the more a person practices a social ethic, the more they understand its importance. Essentially, she facilitates or encourages their sense of agency (as possession) and constructs it by showing readers how wide and varied experience affects knowledge and understanding. Such experience, which future chapters explain in greater detail, also necessitates considering factors external to an individual or group that influence agency – the more postmodern view of agency where discourses and power relations come into play.

The challenge Addams felt she faced in convincing her readers to adopt a social ethic, and one that resonates with 21st century issues, pertains to individualism. She observed that many people in her time, particularly the prosperous wealthy elites, practiced an individual rather than social ethic. For Addams, this meant that they focused on securing financial and social stability for oneself and family, but generally ignored people from lower socio-economic neighborhoods such as the impoverished tenements of Chicago's Halsted Street, where Hull House was situated. This physical distancing between wealthier people and poorer people persists today, with the wealthiest segregating themselves away from the poorest. Addams felt such people had either not felt the "social compunction," or had "exhausted their moral energy in attaining the current standard of individual and family righteousness" (1902 p.25). This is not to suggest that any kind of charity, aid, or assistance did or does not exist. Rather, when compelled to aid others, a self-serving benevolence prevailed: "The superior [prosperous, upper-class] person ought to take care of the inferior [poor, working-class] person and the inferior person ought to be grateful" (Knight, 2010 p.96). The wealthy benefactor of the poor expected immediate and unfettered gratitude from the poor they aided and most of Addams's readers, "prosperous people who could afford to buy books..., [were] comfortable in their superiority" (Knight, 2010 p. 106), unlikely and unwilling to change their view of the less fortunate and learn how best to aid them. Addams contends, however, that "to

attain individual morality in an age demanding social morality, to pride one's self on the results of personal effort when the time demands social adjustment, is utterly to fail to apprehend the situation" (1902 p.3). Individual morality and social morality are not mutually exclusive; but, as Addams argues, privileging individualism can result in a willed ignorance of what the situation demands and misguided action, escalating the problem, silencing the lower-class, and reifying social injustice and inequality. In other words, even if the upper class knew problems existed, their attempts to ameliorate them were often misguided and tended to be unsuccessful – at best not changing the situation and at worst aggravating it.

As an example, in *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Addams describes a situation not unfamiliar to welfare and food stamp applicants today. A poor woman needs a pair of shoes so that she "may go decently to mass, or to work" (1902 p.13). A charity worker investigates the family, its income and expenses, not only to determine need but also to guard against fraud, fearful that a poor family may (or is likely to) hide income or exaggerate expenses and take advantage of the charity's benevolence. The charity worker intimates that she and her husband ought to work more and does not provide what the visitor clearly has the resources to give: "Her most generous gift is considered niggardly, compared to what she might do. She ought to get new shoes for the family all round, 'she sees well enough that they need them'" (1902 p.13). The charity visitor failed to

understand the situation and what it demanded: the family's needs were not heard, silenced by unfeeling calculations. If the poor woman needs the shoes for work and has no other pair, she may lose wages or be fired, exacerbating the family's poverty. The suspicion of deceit, a selfish wariness not to be deceived or to "waste" resources, overshadowed the charity worker's ability to understand the situation more comprehensively. Selfish means to social action did not give way to efficacious, ethical outcomes - ones that identifiably affect *helpful, beneficial* changes and do not reinforce unjust situations.

Similar problems exist in the 21st century. Commitments to self, family, job, community, and nation compete with one another for attention and while individualism is not wholly a bad thing, it can hinder a broader, more inclusive view of a person's social responsibility. This is because it leans heavily on the autonomous self of the humanist view of agency: if a person chooses to work long, hard hours, they will succeed. An individual's choices, as limited by poverty, race, ethnicity and more, may not be considered. What constitutes "hard work" is rarely defined, and success is generally thought of in terms of financial wealth. Intermittent tides of political activism, various movements, and volunteerism indicate that many strive to uphold and strengthen social democratic values, but we are also still challenged by the Western proclivity towards individualism (coupled with Capitalist materialism) and its attendant selfishness, alienation, and divisiveness. The poor are often denigrated and there is a

general consensus among the middle to upper classes that their efforts and hard-earned money should not go towards aiding the less fortunate or reducing poverty. This is a common belief that, just as in Addams's time, the poor are in their position because of vice and laziness (1902 p.81).² The more fortunate feel superior to the less fortunate and arguments emerge against what has pejoratively been coined "Entitlement Programs" such as Welfare, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or what was previously known as "Food Stamps"), and Medicaid. Intractable, unwavering socio-political positions on these social assistance programs as well as on gun control, women's reproductive rights, immigration and more exclude other perspectives. This can result in a refusal to communicate, recognize, or understand disparate realities and make it difficult to sympathize and empathize with people who have different worldviews, contributing to a lack of understanding *and* ineffective social action.

The Black Lives Matter Movement, begun in 2012, provides a good example of misunderstanding in the context of social action. According to their website, "Black Lives Matter" means "broadening the conversation around state violence to include all of the ways in which Black people are intentionally left powerless at the hands of the state. We are talking about the ways in which Black lives are deprived of our basic human rights and dignity." The Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum in 2015, but generated a host of misunderstandings. Probably the biggest one is

with the name. For many people, “Black Lives Matter” implied that other lives matter less: white lives and the lives of police officers in particular. The underlying sentiment, however, is that black lives matter just as much as other lives — black lives matter *too*. A long history of systemic racism and discrimination in America shows that black lives have not mattered. The Movement’s power is diminished because of the misleading name, and in their confusion, many people who misconstrued the name called for “All Lives Matter,” which compounds the problem by “enshrining their misunderstanding” (Simon 2015). Are those calling for “All Lives Matter” racist? Undoubtedly, many people’s ideologies are entrenched in racism and bigotry but in this situation many are probably not racist, but have been remiss, or at the very least insensitive, in failing to consider the impact of different racial histories and cultural experiences: white and black. In spite of efforts to clarify the name, many people still maintain that it should be “All Lives Matter” because “Black Lives Matter” is divisive and exclusionary. As a result, the Movement “...finds itself preaching to the choir. Those who get it - the ones who understand the name - are not part of the problem” (Simon 2015). For those who do not understand, an unyielding position, reinforced by like-minded family, friends and communities (on and offline), supersedes a more socially-oriented ethic such as what Addams urges.

The many parallels between the social issues Addams identifies in *Democracy and Social Ethics* and contemporary American society

suggests that this work warrants revisiting, and more specifically in terms of the strategies she employed to persuade others to agency and social action. In their recent anthology on Addams continued relevance in the 21st, Fischer, Nackenoff, and Chmielewski note that “scholars are finding startlingly fresh resources in Addams’s life and thought, applicable to contemporary challenges of war and peace, social and economic inequalities, and the responsibilities of citizenship” (2009 p.1). Also according to Nackenoff, “[Addams] had and expanded and deeper conception of citizenship and a wider definition of the political than we routinely encounter in American politics,” which have not yet been fully engaged with by recent scholarship (2009 p.119). Much of this scholarship is in history, philosophy, and education however, and little work in Rhetoric and Composition specifically has focused on Addams³. Her social democratic philosophy, her push for a social ethic, is a fresh resource for discussions surrounding agency and social action. More effective social change necessitates a more encompassing socially-oriented worldview, which entails openness to experience, reflection, learning, and imagining ways to assuage and not reinforce unjust situations. Being open to these, the idea then is to think of agency not as a term or as a metaphor but as an inventive process that draws upon inquiry: questioning and curiosity.

Agency as Rhetorical Invention: Activist Inquiry

What does it mean to say agency is a form of rhetorical invention? Invention is one of the five canons of rhetoric – invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery – and it is the only one, Lauer argues, “that directly addresses the content of the communication as well as the process of creation” (2004 p.1-2). Paying close attention to how the process and the product interact in the context of encouraging people to engage in social action is important. The goal of social action, the product, is to assuage an unjust situation, or as Fleckenstein defines social action: “any symbolic act aimed at redressing inequities” (2010 p.5). This goal represents a desire to have the intended effect of redressing inequities. However, by what means or process may a social action goal be achieved? Fleckenstein, I believe, rightly argues that “ends and means,” or product and process, “exist in a feedback loop, the one affecting the other” (2010 p.6). Therefore, the process leading to a social action affects the outcome and if the process is not motivated by compassion and empathy for others, the outcome risks reinforcing the problem. Addams would have agreed with Fleckenstein since she emphasizes the importance of experiential knowledge-building from a stance of sympathy and care. Invention, in the context of social action, highlights this relationship between the process (approach or means) and the product (goal or outcome) of agency.

The nature, purpose, and epistemology of invention has a long, dense history in rhetoric; however, an explication of activist inquiry does not necessitate understanding all the issues in invention studies. In fact, much of it would unnecessarily complicate the notion of agency as a form of rhetorical invention in the context of social action. In her comprehensive review of invention in *Rhetoric and Composition*, Janice Lauer begins by describing invention as “historically encompass[ing] strategic acts that provide the discourser with direction, multiple ideas, subject matter, arguments, insights or probable judgments, and understandings of the rhetorical situation” (2004 p.2). From a Platonic view, these things are “accessible by purely individual efforts” and “introspective self-examination” (LeFevre, 1987 p.11). As LeFevre notes though in her seminal book *Invention as a Social Act*:

This view does not allow for the individual’s interaction with and response to a world of people and things and symbolic forms; nor does it note how social and cultural features are embedded in each individual; nor does it show individual and culture are interdependent. (1987 p.25)

In addition, “individual efforts” recalls those very same issues with individualism and the humanist view of agency mentioned earlier by encapsulating agency within a person. Unlike the Platonic perspective though, contemporary theorists of invention look at an enormously vast array of things, arguing:

...over what acts comprise invention (e.g initiating discourse, exploring subjects and situations, constructing texts or arguments, and interpreting texts)...over the purposes of these inventional acts, positing goals such as raising questions; reaching self-

actualization; constructing new understanding, meaning, or judgments; finding subject matter; supporting theses; critiquing cultural codes; learning and creating disciplinary knowledge; interpreting texts and playing. They have also argued over the types of strategies, tactics, heuristics, or guides that best facilitate invention, including the Pentad, the tagmemic guide, freewriting, the classical topics, [and more]. (Lauer, 2004 p.118-199)

Activist inquiry does not claim to be comprehensive; however, many of these things are part of the process of inventing agency. Following in the footsteps of Berlin and other scholars that argue for a social-epistemic rhetoric, activist inquiry finds:

The real [as] located in a relationship that involves the dialectical interaction of the observer, the discourse community (social group) in which the observers is functioning, and the material conditions of existence. Knowledge is never found in any one of these but can only be posited as a product of the dialectic in which all three come together. (1988 p.490).

The questioning and curiosity of inquiry amidst these interactions ground the discovery and knowledge-building aspects of the invention of agency.

However, “locating” and “finding knowledge” have been criticized for defining invention more narrowly as something that already exists and has yet to be discovered. According to a more recent article by Yameng Liu, in classical rhetoric two definitions of invention have become so standard that scholars distinguish between them. Invention is either the discovery of something or the creation of it:

Semantically speaking, to “discover” is to make visible or known something that, though hidden and unknown previously, has always been “out there” ... To “create,” on the other hand, suggest bringing into being something that has never before existed, some strange entity snatched ex nihilo... (2002 p.54)

Discovery aligns well with a more interpretive or hermeneutical sense of invention: discovering underlying meanings and motivations that already exist. Creation coincides with a production sense of invention. Liu argues for a way to think about invention from another, less dichotomous perspective: what he calls “inventiveness” (2002 p.60). Lui defines inventiveness as “striv[ing] for the new without attempting a clean severance with the old and to search for the unique through an identification with the common” (2002 p.60). Activist inquiry, in some ways then, also aims to emphasize inventiveness in addition to social-epistemic roots. It resummons the old, Addams’s knowledge and rhetorical strategies, in search of a different of thinking about and generating agency for social action.

I offer the following working definition of activist inquiry: a non-prescriptive, discovery-based approach to the invention of agency for social action. At no point does a rhetor or activist demand that anyone take a specific social action. Invention points to the generation and creation of ideas and possible actions. Inquiry emphasizes the open, questioning, compassionate, and democratic stance needed for this generation. Activist inquiry values Addams’s social ethic and recognizing the importance of wide experience among and with marginalized communities and people. This experience is key to the knowledge-building of activist inquiry, advancing understanding of the complex and often systemic causes of unjust situations. This knowledge and

understanding can then be used to imagine the “what and where” of social action. What actions could be taken to assuage an unjust situation? Where could and/or should this action take place for maximum effectiveness?

Embedded in this definition is activist inquiry’s aim to overcome some of the challenges to agency and social action mentioned earlier: recognition of injustice, motivation to take action, and knowledge of the available avenues for effective social action. How can an activist convince a resistant or merely indifferent audience to recognize their social responsibility? How can they come to understand what it means to be socially responsible? How can they be motivated to take social action? How can they know what action to take and where to take it? As an activist, Addams had come to and answered similar questions on her own. She used what she learned and how she learned it (through particular experiences) to demonstrate why her readers, people of wealth and power, should become involved, possibly even become activists themselves. Therefore, at points the act of inquiry rests on the shoulders of the activist and at other times upon the audience themselves.

Research Questions

1. How can thinking of agency as a form of rhetorical invention (activist inquiry) overcome some of the obstacles to social action?

2. What can Jane Addams's *Democracy and Social Ethics* tell Rhetoric/Composition scholars about the invention of agency for positive, effective social action?

Overview of Chapters

Tracing a theoretical arc, the next three chapters explore how activist inquiry can overcome the challenges to social action: recognition, motivation, and avenues. Chapter two begins with the challenge of convincing others, particularly the socially and economically privileged, to *recognize* their social responsibility. Recognizing social responsibility is a process of becoming aware that requires work on the part of the activist trying to convince her audience as well as on the part of audience. The audience is encouraged to work towards a kind of self-actualization or realization: acknowledging and understanding the import of being more socially responsible. How Jane Addams approached this rhetorical task exemplifies the first part of activist inquiry. Addams used specific, well-informed knowledge of her readers, her upper-class peers, to create a socially responsible role for them within the text. In rhetorical terms, she “addressed” and “invoked” her audience (Ede and Lunsford 1984). Although she already knew her audience well – their values, beliefs, and attitudes towards the lower-class – concerted, concentrated inquiry into audience is critical for convincing and/or persuading people, which are

neither synonyms nor mutually exclusive. Some rhetoricians perceive persuasion as agonistically prescribing a stance that the audience must adopt. Convincing, as I use it, strives for a less agonistic, non-prescriptive approach similar to Addams's. While Addams would not have been familiar with the terminology, she employs identification through the rhetorical "we" as a key strategy for convincing her readers. First, it prompts identification with her as a peer, an insider, as well as with the socially responsible role she creates. Second, she uses "we" in conjunction with her extensive audience awareness to gently critique her readers for their hypocrisy, professing to value a social ethic while failing to act upon it. This, I contend, can stimulate self-reflection and contribute to the recognition of social responsibility, which calls for engaged experience as the next part of activist inquiry.

Chapter 3 takes on the next challenge to social action: motivation. I argue that engaged experience can encourage motivation for agency and social action. Engaged experience entails deliberate and purposeful interactions with marginalized peoples and communities and it is a key condition to inventing agency. For activist inquiry, first, *deliberate* and *purposeful* interactions imply a rhetorical stance for interacting with others. I draw upon Fleckenstein, Ratcliffe, and Hamington's feminist rhetorical methods of compassionate living, rhetorical listening, and embodied care as characterizing this stance. Addams's descriptions of her engaged experiences and what she learned from them demonstrate this stance and

how motivation work functions. Furthermore, these feminist methods contribute to experiential inquiry and imagine ways of knowing and engaging with others that encourage a deeper understanding and identification with people enduring unjust conditions. Such engaged experience reveals contradictions between preconceived notions and the reality marginalized, impoverished people face everyday. These contradictions, I argue, can build knowledge and empathy for people from less privileged backgrounds and can motivate others to action. As Lee Artz puts it in his reflection “Speaking Truth to Power: Observations from Experience,” “social action arises in response to rhetorical appeals that address the life experiences of those affected” (2011 p.48). The discovery and knowledge-building of engaged experience can motivate a person to engage even more and eventually perhaps, take on the agency needed for social action.

In the fourth chapter, the challenge is devising appropriate and effective social action. What actions are possible and are there places to take those actions? I refer to this as imagining (a)venues for social action. These (a)venues are approaches, both idea and location, to assuaging an unjust situation without reinforcing it. Engaged experience increases understanding of the situation, building useful knowledge for imagining what could be done (avenues) and in what place (venue) it can be done for maximum effectiveness, achieving the imagined goal. I look to Royster and Kirsch’s notion of critical imagination and at how critical materialism

can contribute to imagining (a)venues for social action. No one approach can be successful for all circumstances: however, continuous engaged experiences over an ever longer period of time increase the odds that an imagined (a)venue will successfully achieve its goal. As in the previous chapter, I use Addams's work as a prime example of this kind of engaged experience with the addition of noting how she used it to imagine (a)venues.

In the final chapter, I sum up the process and characteristics of activist inquiry. Activist inquiry attempts to tackle three challenges to social action: 1) recognizing social responsibility 2) knowledge-building and understanding for motivation and 3) imagining efficacious social action and where to take it. While no methodology can encompass all aspects of a rhetorical situation, each step contemplates a few carefully and how various factors in the situation may be influenced in ways that can invent agency. Also in this chapter, I consider the limitations of activist inquiry as I have theorized it. A top-down model of activism assuredly has its problems; namely, the issue of power dynamics and the risk of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Finally, I briefly explore how activist inquiry might be implemented in the 21st century.

Chapter Two

Challenging Recognitions

Many people are conscious of the need for social action that will assuage unjust situations. Although they may not be well-versed in the theoretical underpinnings of systemic racism, most African American communities, for instance, are aware that racism perpetuates a vast array of inequalities and prejudices. Many others however, particularly those who occupy positions of privilege such as “white male” or “upper-class,” may not recognize an unjust situation, neither seeing nor understanding the issues marginalized and oppressed peoples face. This is a challenging recognition. More than a century ago, Addams made a similar observation: “There are many people in every community who have not felt the ‘social compunction,’ who do not share the effort toward a higher social morality, who are even unable to sympathetically interpret it” (1902 p.25). In other words, these people do not sense the need to be (more) socially responsible. Perhaps they do not understand what being a socially responsible citizen of a democracy entails. Their sympathies – their feelings for others’ suffering – have not been awakened to the need for it. Some may simply believe that there are other groups or organizations already addressing the issue. They may not (fully) recognize, acknowledge and understand, their responsibility to others,

especially those in marginalized and disempowered groups, as a an ethical or moral imperative.

This chapter explores the starting point for activist inquiry and how it begins to invent agency. First, activist inquiry must overcome the challenge of convincing others to recognize their social responsibility, or what Addams refers to as “the social ethic.” By social responsibility I mean sympathizing with others enough to value a democratic ethic of association, interaction, and engagement across ideological and worldview differences. In particular, this is critical for sympathizing with others from different cultural, economic, and social positions, which construct these varying ideologies and worldviews. Without a sense of social responsibility, an individual is less likely to feel compelled to understand and aid others in need. Addams’s rhetorical approach in *Democracy and Social Ethics* demonstrates how to convince an audience to acknowledge the import of being socially responsible – why they should be (more) socially responsible – and what it entails. Specifically, Addams uses detailed knowledge of her readers’ perceptions, misconceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and values to textually represent them in a way that encourages the recognition of an ethical obligation to the marginalized and oppressed. Activist inquiry begins then with inquiring into a specific audience for the purpose of convincing them to acknowledge and enact an ethic of social responsibility. As with any attempt at persuasion, audience awareness plays a crucial role in contributing to the effectiveness of an

argument. Addams considered her intended readers, upper-class elites like herself carefully, and deployed what she knew to fictionalize them in a way that invites them to discover for themselves their social responsibility to others. As I will show in this chapter, Addams used sympathetic descriptions that alternated between gently criticizing her readers and attentively positioning them as already having adopted a socially responsible role. Addams hoped her readers would perceive their hypocrisy and adopt this role by becoming involved with lower-class communities: engaging with their people and learning how they could help lessen the injustices suffered by the marginalized and oppressed. However, she did not demand they take on this responsibility. She merely reiterated the importance of this social ethic and suggested ways to begin enacting it. Such a non-prescriptive approach stresses what could be called facilitating, encouraging, and/or inviting acknowledgment of one's social responsibility. This approach is in contradiction to aggressive or agonistic rhetorical strategies that call for a person to accept the rhetor's premise to be considered successful. This non-prescriptive, less agonistic strategy is important for activist inquiry's discovery-based approach to inventing agency.

For the enactment of social responsibility, which will be the focus of the last part of this chapter, activist inquiry involves recognizing that it requires sympathetically learning about others' ideologies, worldviews, and lived experiences, especially those of marginalized, oppressed

peoples.⁴ This kind of inquiry necessitates personal, embodied experience, which Addams strongly urged; however, again, she did not want her readers to necessarily or blindly adopt her point of view (Knight, 2010 p.107). Instead, she focused on using her writing to help them discover and learn for themselves that “social perspective and sanity of judgment come only from contact with social experiences; that social contact is the surest corrective of opinions concerning the social order, and conceding effort, however humble for its improvement” (1902 p.6). Embodied experience is the most likely thing to result in understanding others and knowing what social actions to take for assuaging unjust situations. Ironically, Knight points out, this means *Democracy and Social Ethics* is a book that “endors[es] the need to put down her book, or any book, and learn from life” (2010 p.107). Nonetheless, she enacts a socially responsible ethic through the text, emphasizing the knowledge gleaned from the wide experience of being among and engaging with marginalized, impoverished communities and people. Her textual enactment helps explicate activist inquiry, but before anyone engages upon such experiences, people “must recognize and acknowledge the validity of the social obligation” (1902 p.27), the primary focus of this chapter.

What is Recognition?: Acknowledgment

Perception, identification, understanding, awareness, and seeing, among other concepts, surround definitions of “recognition” and “recognizing.” Recognition in the context of activist inquiry references all of these at one juncture or another, but specific to this chapter, recognition refers to the work required by an activist/rhetor to convince another to consciously acknowledge their social responsibility. To acknowledge this requires convincing in the sense that Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz use it: “Convincing leads audiences to accept a claim or idea as true or reasonable,” which can lead to a sense of conviction. This is in opposition, as they conceive it, to “persuading,” which moves people to action (2016 p. 159-160). Convincing then is apt here as a first step to activist inquiry. An individual acknowledges or accepts the general truth or reasonability of being socially responsible. They are convinced, which requires what I call “recognition work.” Gee employs these terms as well in his linguistic analysis of identity. Gee’s idea of “recognition work” is people engaging in a mental effort “to recognize others for who [identity] they are and what [activity] they are doing” (2006 p.29). This notion of recognition work, he argues, encompasses “ways with words, actions, beliefs, emotions, values, interactions, people, objects, tools and technologies that come to constitute ‘being and doing’” (2006 p.29). Identity and activity come together for recognition. Activist inquiry takes

into consideration actions, beliefs, emotions, values, interactions, and people; however, Gee was primarily concerned with social and cultural identities whereas recognition work here leans towards identification for acknowledgment of social responsibility. This identification is an act of becoming, a process of identifying with the rhetor/activist and identifying with the socially responsible role she creates for them, as discussed later in the chapter.

Interactions, emotions, values and beliefs are all important to a notion of understanding what recognition work requires. All these and more influence whether someone recognizes their social responsibility and so it becomes important to attempt to understand those values and beliefs, as Addams exemplifies. Activist inquiry aims to convince others to recognize the obligation to be socially responsible and this begins by carefully considering a specific audience's beliefs, attitudes, and values surrounding their relationship (or lack thereof) with marginalized, impoverished, and oppressed people.

Audience Addressed: Inquiring about the Reader

Taking cues from Addams's work, recognizing social responsibility in the context of activist inquiry requires the activist to have a particularly nuanced understanding of their target audience. With *Democracy and Social Ethics* Addams anticipated, without doubt, a primary, ideal

audience of prosperous elites like herself, who could afford to buy books (Knight 2010). Assuredly, others outside of this group read her book, but the focus here is her ideal audience. In their well-known article “Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy,” Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford’s audience groupings describe two traditional perspectives that help to tease out strategies for recognition work and clarify this first step. They are “audience addressed” and “audience invoked” (1984 p.156). These two concepts are reviewed in greater detail below, but for now, put simply, audience addressed is about what the writer/rhetor knows or can know about their audience. With audience invoked the writer/rhetor creates who they want their audience to be – readers become a fiction the writer has made up. She invents them. Ede and Lunsford’s interest lies in critiquing audience addressed and audience invoked as too narrowly and dichotomously conceiving of the relationship between writer and audience. They argue instead for the dynamic relationship between writer and reader: “A fully elaborated view of audience, then, must balance the creativity of the writer with the different, but equally important, creativity of the reader. It must account for a wide and shifting range of roles for both addressed and invoked audience” (Ede and Lunsford, 1984 p.169-170). It is questionable to what degree “a fully elaborated view of the audience” is possible. It depends on the rhetorical situation but Addams was certainly in a position to know her readers well and have such an elaborated view

of her readers. Activist inquiry agrees with this conceptualization of audience and writer, first noting the importance of understanding the audience's beliefs, attitudes, and values as much as is possible. This, audience addressed, informs audience invoked, and vice versa, and together activist inquiry uses them to non-prescriptively convince others to recognize (acknowledge and understand) their social responsibility. In other words, by knowing a specific audience in enough detail, they may be invoked – created or invented in ways that convince and persuade but are not especially prescriptive, coercive, or antagonistic.

Knowing the target audience well represents one of the first steps to recognition of social responsibility. It contributes to the writer's understanding of how readers' beliefs and values as well as their rhetorical situation informs their actions. Audience addressed "emphasiz[es] the concrete reality of the writer's audience" and holds that "knowledge of this audience's attitudes, beliefs and expectations is not only possible but essential" (Ede and Lunsford, 1984 p. 156). This conception of audience aligns primarily with traditional rhetorical theory drawn from antiquity to the 18th century (Covino and Jolliffe, 1995 p.13). In this view, a text's audience is conceived as "some individual or collective 'other' whom the rhetor must identify, analyze in psychological and emotional terms, and then, by means of the text, 'change' in some way so that they will adhere to the rhetor's central idea or thesis" (1995 p. 13). However, according to Covino and Jolliffe, many

Rhetoric/Compositionists criticize this view on at least three grounds:

- 1) it limits attention to the primary audience, ignoring subsidiary and mediated audiences;
- 2) it ignores the “shared, dialectical nature of communication by characterizing the rhetorical interaction as moving in one direction” from writer to reader and;
- 3) it tends to “assume an antagonistic relation between the rhetor and the audience.” (Covino and Joliffe, 1995 p. 13)

To address the first point, audience addressed (and invoked as well) depends on the readers the writer/rhetor consciously privileges during invention. Addams appears to have largely ignored audiences beyond her target one: the upper-class. Writers may attempt to take into consideration and appeal to secondary or tertiary audiences, but they are still likely to privilege their primary audience – those they feel are most likely to be convinced and/or persuaded by their argument. Clearly, there is a power dynamic possible here. If a writer approaches their task predominately from the audience addressed perspective, they may conceive of the interaction between writer and audience as moving primarily in one direction: from the writer to reader. This one-way transmission calls to mind Freire’s banking model: the teacher fills his students with knowledge while they sit passively and absorb it all in (1970). In this case, the writer sits in for the teacher as sender and the reader as receiver. “The shared, dialectical nature of communication” is ignored.

By ignoring the nature of communication, a writer could more readily slip into an agonistic tone, something activist inquiry aims to largely avoid if possible. Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin are particularly critical of the agonistic issue – the third critique in the list. They argue that it relies on defining rhetoric as persuasion, which they believe is problematic because it largely functions through a lens of patriarchal bias: dominance and power that attempts to change others (1995). They see persuasion in this traditional sense to be coercively forcing the rhetor’s opinion on the audience. For the writer’s argument to be considered effective or good, it must change readers in line with their persuasive goals and thereby the writer “gain[s] control and power over them” (Foss and Griffin, 1995).⁵ By this reasoning, if it “must change” readers, then it is oppressive and agonistic. However, this implies that all persuasion is violent, coercive, and antagonistic. In “Beyond Traditional Conceptualizations of Rhetoric and a Move Toward Civility,” Bone, Griffin, and Scholz address this, contending that “under certain circumstances, to attempt to persuade is inappropriate, but [Foss and Griffin] do not say that persuasion, by its very nature, is always and only violent” (2008 p.438). As an alternative, Foss and Griffin posit an invitational rhetoric, whose purpose is to “offer an invitation to understanding” (1995 p. 2). In invitational rhetoric, perspectives are offered in a safe space that values equality and self-determination. It is somewhat unclear what such an ideal safe space would look like or how this would pertain to a speaker or a writer though.

Furthermore, power relations cannot be entirely neutralized in any situation.

Convincing readers like Addams's upper-classmen to value being socially responsible would be difficult if she adopted a more agonistic tone. Admittedly, an antagonistic tone may be persuasive for a certain target audience, rallying them to support and action for a pre-existing belief, but it is not considered particularly effective for convincing a skeptical or resistant audience that a value claim is true or even reasonable. In other words, people are not likely to change their beliefs or perceptions if the tone of the argument becomes antagonistic and aggressive. Certainly Addams hoped she could alter her readers' perceptions, but she was "aware [they] would balk at the idea of violating the conventions of their social class" (Knight 2010 p.107) should they merely be asked to engage with poor communities. Nonetheless, for Addams and for recognition work, there is value to be gleaned from both invitational rhetoric and the traditionally conceived notion of persuasion. Like audience addressed and audience invoked, rather than being mutually exclusive or diametrically opposed, they represent rhetorical options that together can be useful contributors to making an effective argument. In their response to a variety of critiques to invitational rhetoric⁶, "Beyond Traditional Conceptualizations of Rhetoric: Invitational Rhetoric and a Move Toward Civility," Bone, Griffin, and Scholz note what invitational rhetoric does well:

The theory of invitational rhetoric speaks to the complexity of rhetoric and choices rhetors make as they use symbols to create and respond to messages. It calls attention to the nature of change and the role of humans in creating change and asks scholars to consider the ethics of change; to ask ourselves, “At what point do I know what is best for another?” At times, that answer is clear – what is best is to prevent a racist, classist, sexist, homophobic act... (2008 p.457).

Invitational rhetoric fills the gap when “knowing what is best” is not clear because inherent in its invitation to understand is giving people the chance to explain their perspective and their needs (Bone, Griffin, and Scholz 2008 p.457). Activist inquiry aims to foster understanding; therefore, giving people the opportunity to explain themselves to different others is important.

While the next chapter will go into more depth on this subject, activist inquiry requires people to listen and try to understand other perspectives. However, who listens to whom depends on the relationship between those engaged in an interaction, whether in-person or between writer/speaker and reader/audience. Class, race, ethnicity and more are factors that influence whether one person listens to another and those with power and authority are less likely to truly listen to what the disempowered and impoverished have to say. According to Addams’s accounts, her readers were not listening to them. Nina Lozano-Reich and Dana Cloud look at “the complexity of rhetoric and the choices rhetors make” in such power relations (2008 p.457). In their article “The Uncivil Tongue: Invitational Rhetoric and the Problem of Inequality,” their critique of invitational rhetoric is that it “presupposes conditions of economic,

political, and social equality between and among interlocutors; however, such conditions of actual equality are rare in political controversy and interpersonal relationships” (2009 p.220). Those in most need of being heard have neither power nor authority. Therefore, in all, invitational rhetoric like traditional persuasion has its drawbacks and its advantages.

Addams’s argument can be viewed as both traditionally persuasive and invitational, which could be of use to activist inquiry. In as much as Addams aims to convince her readers to live by the new democracy she defines, she is being persuasive. Her readers should understand and act upon an ethic that values others as equals. They should adopt a social ethic, but because Addams and her readers were of relative economic and social equality she had “listened” to their perspectives. Therefore, the issue of equality Lozano-Reich and Cloud raise does not precisely apply to Addams. She was part of the same social, economic, and political class as her target audience. She employs more of an invitational rhetoric in the sense that she “never said specifically what people should do, wanting readers to make their own discoveries” (Knight, 2010 p.107). In the context of recognition work, Addams’s knowledge of her readers (audience addressed), as will be explained more clearly in the next section on audience invoked, helped her incorporate invitational and persuasive moments in her argument. Invitational rhetoric is furthermore appropriate for recognition work because it not only denotes a less prescriptive approach and therefore less agonistic, but also aligns well with Addams’s

positionality in relation to her audience. Of course, relations in discourse communities are “in part defined by differences in knowledge, experience, and status – differences in power that endlessly shift within and across social contexts” (Mortensen and Kirsch, 1999 p.322-323). Therefore, even within the discourse community of Addams’s fellow upper-classmen, there would have been shifting power relations. Setting aside the issue of power differences related to gender⁷, having been raised in that community, Addams would have known how to more effectively convince and persuade someone who had relatively equal social and economic standing as herself.

Addams’s position aided her understanding of their existing beliefs and attitudes, visual and rhetorical habits, and how to use this information to urge social responsibility. Addams’s position was what Louise Knight recently referred to as the “insider” position. An insider is someone that belongs to and understands a dominant group and its privileged ideology (RSA Keynote, 2016). They are “inside” or belong to a group while an outsider does not. Of course, as Knight notes, “everyone feels like both an insider and an outsider, depending on whom they are with and where they are at a given moment in a given day” (2016 p.2), but for Knight, and activist inquiry, the term “refer[s] to people’s relative social and political status, especially in regard to the dominant society” (2016 p.9). Insiders are those who hold wealth and power. “Outsiders” can mean someone who does not belong to a group or particular discourse community, say

“scholars” or “bikers,” but taking a cue from Stockdell-Giesler, “outsider” can also refer to marginalized groups who lack power (2016 p.7). Addams was an insider-outsider in the sense that Knight and Stockdell-Giesler use it: someone “who advocates for the causes of [marginalized] outsiders, regardless of whether they were born outsiders or insiders” (2016 p.8). An outsider can proffer new, useful ideas, “mak[ing] them natural forces for change” Knight contends, and the insider, by virtue of their power, can take social action that marginalized outsiders may not have access to (2016 p.2).

As an insider, Addams knew her readers well enough to urge them towards feeling socially responsible for the well-being of the less fortunate. As an example of one key thing she knew about her audience and used to invoke them, as the next section details, she knew they believed themselves to be superior to the poor. In *Democracy and Social Ethics*, she writes:

Formerly, when it was believed that poverty was synonymous with vice and laziness, and that the prosperous man was the righteous man, charity was administered harshly with a good conscience; for the charitable agent really blamed the individual for his poverty, and the very fact of [the charity worker’s] own superior prosperity gave him a certain consciousness of superior morality. (1902 p. 9)

Although she says “formerly,” her argument against the exaggerated individualism of her time and for an ethic of social responsibility suggests that this actually describes the beliefs her audience held. Because her readers were not poor, then they must be morally superior as well. Even now in the 21st century this way of thinking, these

visual-rhetorical habits persist. If a person is financially prosperous they must have worked hard and therefore deserve their success. Going as far back as colonial times, a strong work ethic is seen as a moral and civic duty (2003 p.8). If someone is not doing well financially, they must have failed to work hard enough because they chose vice, laziness, drinking, and a life crime. This perspective has been called various names. In Cara Finnegan's overview of early American rhetorics of poverty, she cites William Ryan, calling it "blaming the victim" –"if one were poor, one had somehow caused that poverty, and Neil Betten, who identifies it as "the hostile view" (2003 p.10) Geoffrey Bateman refers to something similar in his exploration of writing center work at a homeless shelter. He calls it "the homeless:" a discursive regime that "forever ties [a homeless person's] sense of self to its cultural and material displacement" (2014 p.62). The hostile view treats poverty as a moral failing and "the homeless" describes a pervasive rhetorical habit that links a person's identity to their lack of housing instead of to their humanness. They are "the homeless" instead of, as one woman puts it, "Who I am is not homeless. I'm a human being named Jessie" (Batemen 2014 p.61). As previously mentioned, Addams had learned that poverty was not always the fault of the individual. Citing socioeconomic and environmental factors as significant contributors to poverty throughout *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Addams hoped to convince her readers to recognize their

misconceptions and reframe their perceptions of the poor. Addams used her insider knowledge to help affect this persuasion.

Addams also knew her readers tended to think mostly of themselves and their limited spheres of interaction:

We can recall among the selfish people of our acquaintance at least one common characteristic, – the conviction that they are different from other men and women, that they need peculiar consideration because they are more sensitive or more refined. Such people “refuse to be bound by any relation save the personally luxurious ones of love and admiration, or the identity of political opinion, or religious creed.” We have learned to recognize them as selfish...[and] a narrowness of interest which deliberately selects its experience within a limited sphere... (7)

This delves into inventing her readers, which is the subject of the next section, but this also exhibits her audience awareness: explicitly, her readers recognize selfishness in others and tacitly they are asked to acknowledge it in themselves. Much like our class-segregated neighborhoods today, most of Addams’s upper class readers were content to remain safely segregated within “a limited sphere,” physically distanced from impoverished areas of the city and selfishly refusing to recognize their social responsibility. Addams contends that eventually this makes the people “contemptuous of [their] fellows” and “limit(s) the scope of [their] ethics” (1902 p.7). Considering physical space in the city and how it affects people, David Fleming concurs: “Physical marginalization is both cause and effect of social, economic, and political marginalization” (2008 p.189). Addams’s readers were entrenched in what Barthes calls “the mythologies of (their) culture, its taken-for-granted realities.” Addams

concedes that they “[have] become hardened into customs and habits” that are difficult to change (1902 p.9). These mythologies, such as stories of individual vice and wickedness causing poverty, inhibited the ways in which the upper class perceived those in much less fortunate circumstances and inhibited their ability to recognize their social responsibility. Knowing the audience well can disrupt and destabilize such habits.

Bringing the contemporary rhetoric of Fleckenstein to bear on recognition work helps to explain the depth of Addams’s audience awareness, how well she employed her knowledge, and how that helps to explain activist inquiry. First, recognizing social responsibility necessitates that people become aware of injustice and the need for change. Fleckenstein claims that one of the central challenges to agency as it pertains to social action, and therefore to the recognition work of activist inquiry as well, is “perceiving the need for change” (2010 p.17). As a kind of recognition, Fleckenstein focuses on ways of seeing as habitualized interpretation. She calls these “visual habits,” which can “work to prevent people from seeing the need for change” she argues (2010 p.26). Visual habits are shaped by the interplay of the body (sight as a physiological act) with cultural conventions, which often “sink below the level of conscious awareness” (2010 p.23). To use Fleckenstein’s example of a visual habit, her daughter unconsciously perceives images on a computer screen as opportunities to dismantle, mismatch, and de/re-contextualize

them. They are unstable, meaning they can be changed to reflect other meanings. Fleckenstein, on the other hand, sees images as invitations to interpret and critique (2010 p.24). They are stable, unchanging artifacts. These are two ways in which images are interpreted and interacted with differently.

While this example does not refer to social action, it demonstrates a habitual way of seeing and interpreting something: recognizing images as “stable” or “unstable.” In the context of social action and activist inquiry, such visual habits can hinder recognition of social responsibility. Visual habits represent obstacles to recognition because they are ways of thinking about what is seen that are hard to change. Such habits have to first be consciously acknowledged; otherwise, the visual habit is automatically triggered. Regularly, a homeless man slumped down on the sidewalk is mentally dismissed and ignored, perhaps on the grounds that he is just one more lazy drug addict. The posters a homeless youth advocacy group positioned on the street give an example of disrupting such a visual habit. One poster reads, “If this poster were a homeless youth, most people wouldn’t even bother to look down” (Figure 1.1).



Figure 2.1 Homeless Youth Advocacy poster

Unlike a homeless person, the poster is hard to ignore, being in a strange position, halfway up the wall and halfway on the street, and standing out white against the grey sidewalk. It appeals to the person seeing and reading it to reconsider their usual willingness, their visual habit, to simply ignore homelessness. Visual habits then offer a way of thinking about how recognition of social responsibility could occur or could be encouraged by disrupting them and making people more aware of their role in perpetuating injustice.

For Addams's readers, the upper-class neighborhoods and business districts – these physical places – impacted how they saw and spoke about the lower-class, their visual and rhetorical habits. They could be segregated from them, as mentioned before, interpreting the

lower-class through the lens of privilege, as in the case of Addams's charity worker. At first, she expects those she is aiding to have the same frugal and industrial values with which she was raised. She soon learns that these don't transfer well to people whose worries are not saving money or not working enough, but simply focused on day-to-day survival (1902 p.12-19). Addams writes, "there is a narrowness of interest which deliberately selects its experience within a limited sphere," and "consciously limiting our intercourse to certain kinds of people whom we have previously decided to respect...limit[s] the scope of our ethics" (1902 p.6-7). As she puts it more succinctly, "Social ethics is not attained by traveling a sequestered byway" (1902 p.6). The implication here is that her upper-class audience has done just this and their conduct "has become hardened into customs and habits" (1902 p.9). Their lack of a wider experience has informed their values and actions. Visual and rhetorical habits, as Fleckenstein argues, construct individual and collective normative perceptions and interpretations, in this case of the less socially and economically fortunate. They are lazy and immoral for example. Discourses and cultural structures have constructed their identities. Visual and rhetorical habits having been set by cultural discourses contributed to Addams's readers not acknowledging and understanding their social responsibility. This hindered their belief in agency, their willingness to take social action, and their knowledge about what best to do to alleviate recognized social injustices. Visually they did

not see, in person, bodily the lower-class because rhetorically the growing contempt for the poor and their own sense of superiority diminished their willingness to leave their neighborhoods, experience difference, discover, and learn: precisely what Addams hoped they would do.

Knowing her readers, audience addressed, forms an adaptive base for creating the role she hoped to convince her readers to adopt. This means she adapted what she knew about her audience and chose more effective rhetorical strategies for constructing or creating, what is referred to as audience evoked, her readers in the text itself. The concrete reality of an audience will always be incomplete, gathered as it is through the lens of the rhetor's experiences, the dominant ideology, and to recall the postmodernist perspective, their fragmented self. In other words, the rhetor can never know everything there is know or everything they should know about their audience. However, through inquiry into the audience and the knowledge it gleans, a rhetor can construct them in more specific ways to more specific ends. In the case of activist inquiry, audience addressed and audience invoked can be integrated for the purposes of convincing those who are more economically, socially, and culturally fortunate to acknowledge and eventually understand their social obligation to the marginalized and oppressed.

Audience Invoked: Composing the Reader

Audience addressed provides critical information for invoking an audience, which describes the other perspective on invention and audience important to the next step to acknowledging social responsibility. Audience invoked does not deny the reality of the audience but stresses that the audience is a construction of the writer - a created fiction. Walter Ong goes so far as to say "The writer's audience is always a fiction." In the purest sense of audience invoked, the writer's task is not to know the audience or to analyze it. From their knowledge of visual and rhetorical habits, of the cultural discourses that dominate their audience, a rhetor invents, composes, creates, fictionalizes the reader. However, as Ede and Lunsford argue, audience addressed and audience invoked are neither dichotomous nor contradictory, as they are often positioned in traditional rhetoric:

The addressed audience, the actual or intended readers of a discourse, exists outside of the text. Writers may analyze these readers' needs, anticipate biases, even defer to their wishes. But it is only through the text, through language that writers embody or give life to their conception of the reader. In so doing, they do not so much create a role for the reader – a phrase which implies that the writer somehow creates a mold to which the reader adapts, as invoke it. (1984 p.167)

The writer, in having investigated their audience, appeals to them, or as Ede and Lunsford put it: "writers conjure their vision – a vision which they hope readers will actively come to share as they read the text" (1984 p.167). In a similar vein that may help to clarify the relationship between a

writer's integrated use of audience addressed and audience invoked, in his work on narrative theory, James Phelan describes "the recursive relationship (or feedback loop) among authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertextual relations) and reader response" (2007 p.4). More concisely put, there is a "feedback loop among author, text, and reader" that includes how well an author knows their audience and how they use that information to invoke, or fictionalize, them (2007 p.5).

As already well detailed above, Addams understood the existing beliefs, attitudes, expectations, and entrenched habits of her readers quite well, having lived and socialized among them since birth. She knew their visual and rhetorical habits and their cultural discourses, considering them carefully as she composed her readers. With her knowledge, Addams could more accurately depict her readers and therefore invite acknowledgement and better understanding of social responsibility: why it is important and what it means to be socially responsible. As a result, and strategically using the rhetorical "we," she sympathetically describes/constructs them, convincing them of their social responsibility by inviting them to discover themselves in her descriptions: both critical and kind. Her critiques are implicit, however, and point out some of their misconceptions about what it means to live democratically. In all, Addams's use of "we" to invoke her audience prompts identification between writer and reader and of commonalities that inspire acknowledgment specifically of social responsibility.

The rhetorical “we” may seem insignificant, but it can foster identifications that when used in conjunction with creating a fictional audience promotes acknowledgment of social responsibility. Of course “we” is always an invitation for the reader to identify with the writer/rhetor and her views: a Burkean perspective on identification where “A” identifies with “B” based on a shared commonality(ies) (1969 p.21). In general, Addams’s readers could identify with her as an insider, among the upper-class like themselves. This identification creates a more credible, trustworthy ethos for Addams but with “we” she also constructs readers who already share her point of view. “We know, at last,” she says, “that we can only discover truth by a rational and democratic interest in life and to give truth complete social expression is the endeavor upon which we are entering” (1902 p. 7). Through the “we,” she claims that her readers know and believe that discovering truth (knowing reality) requires sensible thinking and the desire to learn about others’ lives. “A rational and democratic interest in life,” which means identifying with all sorts of people represents a truth Addams and her readers have in common and encourages them to identify with a socially responsible role (1902 p. 7). The fictional audience Addams creates recognizes their responsibility to others and by using “we,” Addams avoids positioning herself as removed from her upper-class audience. She does not “talk down” to them as though they are the problem and she (has) the answer. The “we” encourages readers to consider adopting the ethos she hopes they will - a

person who practices democracy as social ethics: “We are thus brought to a conception of democracy not merely as a sentiment which desires the well-being of all men, nor yet as a creed which believes in the essential dignity and equality of all men, but as that which affords a rule of living...” (1902 p. 6). By claiming that they are already moving towards a more social ethic, she is not describing reality but speaking more as a prophet Knight says, “painting a vision in order to inspire those listening to make it manifest” (2010 p.112). In the context of convincing readers to acknowledge their social responsibility as part of living Democratically, creating an audience as if it already exists with “we” advances identification between the writer and the reader. This can unite the rhetor’s recognition goal and the audience’s sense of who they are and who they want to be(come).

A problem from this Burkean perspective of identification, finding commonalities, is that the rhetorical “we” can also be seen as coercing identification, obliging a reader to adopt the writer’s position and the role she has shaped for them. This recalls the critique of audience addressed as antagonistic persuasion mentioned earlier. Krista Ratcliffe, in particular, finds Burke’s conception of identification coercive and limiting: “As a place of common ground, Burke’s identification demands that differences be bridged. The danger of such a move is that differences and their possibilities, when bridged, may be displaced and mystified” (2005 p.47, 53). In searching for common ground, Ratcliffe believes that

compromises are made and potentially productive differences thrust aside. However, finding commonalities remains important. Addams's "we" creates common ground and does presuppose unity of experience in this specific case, which can be problematic and coercive, but it also emboldens the emotional appeal of solidarity and togetherness that can motivate change and social action. Furthermore, Addams thought of diversity as one of the central values of democracy and did not aim to exclude difference. In fact, that is precisely what she wanted her readers to do for the new democracy: adopt a rhetorical stance of sympathetic openness, which will be described in detail in the next chapter, to difference in general and to the marginalized and impoverished more specifically.

As Addams constructs her readers she tacitly critiques them, a rhetorical strategy that invites personal reflection and possible recognition of social responsibility. The implicit critiques function as a way of letting her readers know she understands their perspective: "we blame them not for the will which chooses to be selfish, but for a narrowness of interest which deliberately selects its experience within a limited sphere" (1902 p.7). With this statement, Addams indicates that she and her readers don't blame people for being selfish and overly individualistic but they do fault them for not broadening the scope of their experiences. Implicitly, though, she is critiquing her audience for their selfishness and for living their lives from an ethic that privileges self, close family and friends over a

social ethic that calls for a broader view of moral obligation to others. This underlying criticism invites a kind of introspection where the reader may ask themselves if this describes them – not necessarily, but possibly. On the other hand, it does not overtly accuse, as in using “you” or “they” would: “You are selfish” for example. These implicit expressions of disapproval are less antagonistic in their attempts to convince an audience to acknowledge social responsibility. In another example, she says, “We have learned since that time to measure by other standards such as social virtues, intellectual aims, and public commitments in addition to business acumen” (1902 p.9). This characterizes her audience as well-intentioned while clearly insinuating that they previously have - and may still have - visual/rhetorical habits about the poor that limit their ability to recognize social responsibility. At one point, Addams faults those who feel good knowing about the poor and various social wrongs through newspaper articles and literature, but do not actually do anything to remedy the problems (1902 p. 7). Again, she only implicitly refers to her readers who may very well do this, but she immediately follows the criticism with an acknowledgement that this “wide reading of human life” has contributed to “find[ing] in ourselves a new affinity for all men” (1902 p.7). In so doing, she softens her allegation.

The recognition work of activist inquiry then attempts to emotionally disrupt her readers’ habituated beliefs, values, and attitudes by pointing out their hypocrisy: “we suffer from the strain and indecision,” she says, “of

believing one hypothesis and acting upon another” outdated set of ideas (1902 p.9). Implicit critiques soften what otherwise might be perceived as more agonistic persuasion, and they non-prescriptively urge reflection on the enactment of personal values.

Social Responsibility and the Need for Engaged Experience

Shaping an audience that acknowledges the value of being socially responsible in a democracy moves them closer to understanding what this role calls for in terms of action. While this will overlap somewhat with the next two chapters, experience is key to recognition work and activist inquiry in general because it can foster discovery, reflection, and knowledge-building. I will just touch on experience here as an extension of acknowledging social responsibility.

Experience was key to Addams’s philosophy and as argued above, experience with her readers helped her to know and construct them in a way that could lead them to acknowledge why they should be socially responsible (i.e. value a social democracy). Experience can also show how to begin enacting that social responsibility - interaction and engagement with the marginalized, oppressed, and impoverished. In his argument for engagement across and about faith and worldview difference, John MacLean develops a distinction between “interaction” and “engagement” useful for defining experience in the context of activist

inquiry. He uses “engagement” to signify “back and forth communication between persons or groups that is intentional and often planned...” while “interaction” is broader, including engagement, but referring more generally to communication that “just happens” (2015 p.5). For Addams, “Those who desire [a social morality] must be brought in contact with the moral experiences of the many in order to procure an adequate social motive” (1902 p.6). Addams does not distinguish between interaction and engagement; however, her work at Hull House, from which she drew some of her descriptions for *Democracy and Social Ethics*, suggests intentional discussions and planned activities were a critical component to understanding the needs of the poor community. The Working People’s Social Science club was formed, for example, where weekly lectures on topics such as strikes, socialism, and even “The Negro Problem,” were planned: one hour for the lecturer, one hour for the audience to question the speaker. Questioners were limited to five minutes and a firm policy of tolerance was enforced (Knight, 2005 p. 205).

Those who want to be socially responsible citizens of a democracy need to engage with the lived experiences of those outside their circles of affluence, comfort, and familiarity. Addams describes her experiences and those of the relationships she analyzes throughout the text, but in the introduction, during the strongest address and invocation of audience, she emphasizes to her readers the importance of practical and engaged contact:

- We are learning that a standard of social ethics is not attained by traveling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the [metaphorical] thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of one another's burdens. (1902 p.6)
- ...experience gives the easy and trustworthy impulse toward right action... (6)
- We have learned as common knowledge that much of the insensibility and hardness of the world is due to the lack of imagination which prevents realization of the experiences of other people. (7)
- ...by our daily experience we have discovered that we cannot mechanically hold up a moral standard, then jump at it in rare moments of exhilaration when we have the strength for it..."(6)

Experience as interaction and deliberate, not merely spontaneous, engagement with people's ordinary experiences across class barriers furthers understanding of the marginalized and impoverished and the wrongs they suffer. For example, my husband Matt works at a major fast food chain. By all accounts, he is however middle-class and financially secure, his income supplementing my own. Many of his coworkers, working for minimum wage, are barely able to provide for basic necessities. While it can be argued that he is spontaneously interacting with his lower-class coworkers, and he certainly improvises, he consciously engages in a mission to understand them and the struggles they face. He wants to help however he can. One young woman he works with, Sam, works two part-time minimum wage jobs and still struggles to support herself and her children. Matt listens, inquires, and learns that she struggles to keep food in the fridge and that they live in an

apartment with barely any furniture, no TV, computers, or tablets, and no toys or books for her 6-year-old daughter. So when we swept through our childrens' bedrooms for unwanted toys, he thought of giving some of it to Sam. She and her daughter were ecstatic, feeling like it was a Christmas. She could otherwise not provide for her daughter and they stayed up till 4am playing with toys and reading books. Through deliberate engagement at his workplace, Matt perceived the direness of their circumstances and a key moment realized he could do a little something to help. He sympathized with her and having been homeless once himself, empathized with her struggles. Experience is so critical to activist inquiry and at this juncture it aims to begin moving the audience beyond the "lack of imagination," beyond sympathy and towards the empathy that engaged experience can foster. Sympathy and empathy can be thought of as different forms of recognition: one more deep and heartfelt than the other. These two terms are often used interchangeably in situations where someone wants to ease another's pain and suffering; however, they are neither exact synonyms nor mutually exclusive. Although working in the social sciences Brene Brown explains the difference between sympathy and empathy in a way that resonates with activist inquiry: "Sympathy drives disconnection" and "empathy fuels connection." Sympathy cannot be entirely divorced from pity, which often has a negative connotation. Even Addams says that "pity is capricious, and not to be depended upon" (1902 p. 120). Sympathy recognizes somebody's

emotional or physical feelings given a particular situation, but it is remote and detached. It looks outward from the self, regarding a situation from a distance either due to lacking a similar experience or because of a desire to distance oneself from the situation, while still being polite and expressing care for another. Brown gives an example to distinguish between the openness of empathy and the more restrictive sympathy. A person literally or figuratively falls into a pit and says, "I'm stuck. It's dark. I'm overwhelmed." An empathic response would be "I know what it's like down here and you're not alone" while a sympathetic response merely acknowledges that a bad thing has happened. Brown says:

Empathy is feeling with people...Empathy is a choice and it's a vulnerable choice because in order to connect with you, I have to connect with something in myself that knows that feeling. Empathy on the other hand connotes sharing and understanding somebody's emotional and physical feelings/situation. Empathy looks inward, drawing upon similar personal experiences for emotional understanding and using it to guide actions that help another person emotionally. (2014)

Empathy requires perspective taking, remaining non-judgmental, and recognizing emotion in another and communicating it. It is important to the recognition of social responsibility because it deals with how we understand and relate to others in ways that try to assuage their pain and suffering - products of injustice - and do so without causing more harm. Fleckenstein mirrors Brown's explanation of empathy with her notion of compassionate living, which entails being "vulnerable and responsive to the undeserved pain of another" (2010 p.13) and "the suffering of another is not separate from self but intimately intertwined with one's own well-

being” (2010 p.5). Imagining community as interconnected asks people to see others and their work as valuable and important. Working from sympathy towards empathy by way of engaged experience supports Fleckenstein’s notion of compassionate living but also aligns with Addams’s push for a socially focused conception of democracy. In her argument for claiming Addams was a feminist pioneer whose philosophy resonates with standpoint epistemology, Hamington contends, “Addams linked social identification, social expression, and democracy together. Members of a vibrant democracy not only recognize diverse standpoints, they must use empathy and effort to understand these diverse standpoints” [emphasis in the original] (2009 p.55). Addams undertook this challenge by living in an impoverished community, establishing Hull House as a base. Activist inquiry too must be grounded in such engaged experience, promoting discovery, reflection, and learning, but that is more the subject of the next chapter.

Conclusion

Once the audience has acknowledged the value of being socially responsible and they understand that it entails interacting and engaging with people from different cultural, economic, and social situations, the audience can begin to learn from their experiences and to recognize that they have misunderstood the situation, whether that misunderstanding is

one of not acknowledging that something is true or not understanding the rhetorical reality of a situation. They may even perceive their own fallibility and humbly decide to make personal changes. For Addams:

Mistakes are opportunities for growth and worth the risk of active engagement. In the process of crossing class and cultural boundaries—moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar—there are bound to be mistakes made, but if they are done in the spirit of care and with humility, then the errors are not insurmountable and have the potential to be great teachers. (Hamington)

Initially, for example, Addams furnished Hull-House in the fashion of the high culture she was familiar with but later recognized that the finery and artwork fostered class alienation so she replaced them with simpler furnishings (Hamington). The Social Science Club mentioned earlier was particularly educational for the House's middle-class guests: "dry abstract social theories were transformed by personal stories and articulate arguments into vital questions" and "In a city whose social life was rigidly structured around class and where many middle-class citizens only knew about socialism and unionism from sketch newspaper reports and magazine article, the club broke barriers" (Knight, 2005 p.205). Through such learning opportunities and others, acknowledging mistakes and making changes means ideas can and should change, evolving with the times to meet the needs of a democratic society. Recall, Addams says that "ideas pass through a course of development."

To sum up this stage of activist inquiry, an audience must acknowledge their responsibility to those less fortunate than themselves as the charge of living in a democracy that values equality, diversity,

tolerance, justice, and the common good. The inquiry in invention is about questioning. For recognition work, it's the questions rhetoricians ask themselves about who the audience is, and the answers they arrive at that work to convince readers to question their values and beliefs. In an attempt to accomplish this acknowledgment, a writer/rhetor needs to undertake an in-depth investigation into a specific audience with the goal of understanding their beliefs, values, and attitudes towards different others: those they hope readers will interact and engage with. What are their visual and rhetorical habits and how are they affected by place? The knowledge gleaned from this inquiry can be used to invent the audience as already inhabiting the role of a socially responsible individual. How can a rhetor encourage them to examine their values and consider whether they are acting upon them or merely professing them? Can implicit critiques accomplish this? "We" pushes for identification with the writer, but as readers resist the coercion to unite with the writer's ideas, there is a chance they will identify with the implicit critiques. Still, such critiques have a chance because they invite instead of demand the reader to examine their values in relation to their actions and to possibly recognize disparities. The inconsistency between their values and actions can cause an emotional disruption and lead to accepting their fallibility and revising their behavior. Admittedly, this will in no way happen to every person, in every instance and perhaps the chance is indeed small. Even Addams knew she certainly could not convince everyone, but just one

person can make a difference, as she herself had. If convinced, the audience/reader (re)creates themselves, adopting the role the writer has created. They take individual agency through this decision but also acknowledge the social, material, economic, and ecological influences on that agency such as their segregation from others of different cultural, economic, and social positions. There is an implicit invitation to be(come) an insider-outsider and an explicit indication of how to be(come) socially responsible, persuading an audience to broaden their experience, including a wider diversity of people and places from which they can discover, learn, empathize and be motivated – invent the agency – to take social action.

Chapter Three

Challenging Motivations

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.

— Paulo Freire (1970)

We are under a moral obligation in choosing our experiences since the result of those experiences must ultimately determine our understanding of life.

— Jane Addams (1902)

In *Democracy and Social Ethics* Addams brought her own experiences among the marginalized, oppressed, and impoverished to her readers, hoping they too would seek out similar engagements. Experience changed her perspective and the knowledge and understanding she garnered thus motivated her to 1) engage closely with poverty-stricken communities and people and 2) take social actions to lessen the injustices the people suffered. In activist inquiry, such motivation is critical to agency and social action and a step between acknowledging social responsibility and taking action to assuage unjust situations. Motivation is the desire or willingness to do something and at this stage in the inventional process represents a challenge because acknowledging social responsibility does not necessarily mean an individual will agentively interact and engage with marginalized communities and people. This is especially true of outsiders to a community, like Addams was initially.

Furthermore, feeling socially responsible does mean an outsider will engage in ways that are beneficial, either for increasing their own understanding of a situation or for the betterment of those affected by unjust situations. Experience plays a key role here as a tool of inquiry, providing opportunities for asking questions, making discoveries, and learning about other people, places, and cultures. Addams emphasized experience throughout all of her work, and in *Democracy and Social Ethics*, she actually enacts her argument for the importance of experience by describing her own and how they “procured [for her] an adequate social motive” (1902 p.6). Experience “gives the easy and trustworthy impulse toward right action” (1902 p.6) and she believed “wide experience carefully interpreted” could do the same for her readers (2010 p. 107). If, as she says, “a lack of imagination prevents...a realization of the experiences of other people,” then one of the goals with her text was to ignite that imaginative capacity (1902 p.7). Experience functioned like an inductive research method that motivated Addams and she felt it could motivate her readers to engage with marginalized communities and people.

This chapter focuses on the motivation component of activist inquiry and how particular types of experience can prompt it for the invention of agency and social action. Embodied and deliberate experience has a greater possibility of inspiring motivation to take social action. Characterizing these experiences as “deliberate” means they are engaged

experiences. A person decides to engage with others from a specific stance, frame of mind, or attitude appropriate for marginalized communities and people. Addams's descriptions of her own experiences and observations as she lived among the impoverished tenements of Halsted street provide examples of not only what engaged experience entails but also what can emerge from it: knowledge building, understanding, and motivation for social action. Therefore, while her descriptions function on one level to inform her readers' understanding of various situations they also endorse putting the book down and broadening their experiences. Ultimately, if engaged experience is practiced with an open, sympathetic rhetorical stance, it has the potential to reveal emotionally disruptive contradictions that can build knowledge of and empathy for people from different social, economic, and cultural situations. This empathy then has the possibility of motivating people to agency and social action. This approach resembles some contemporary feminist rhetorical and epistemological methods such as Ratcliffe's rhetorical listening and Hamington's embodied care. These methods explore sympathetic and empathic ways of knowing and engaging with others that aim to increase understanding, something critical to Addams's approach and, as this chapter argues, to motivating others.

Motivation Work

In the context of activist inquiry, what is referred to as motivation work signifies the physical and/or mental effort to inspire in oneself or in others the will to engage with marginalized communities in ways that generate knowledge and understanding of unjust situations. Therefore, motivation work may be either the activist's efforts, such as those of Addams, or the work of those she is aiming to convince, her readers. Addams's descriptions serve a motivational purpose as do her readers' own engaged experiences. Motivation work should not be confused with agency itself, but they are related. If someone is judged as having exhibited agency through their actions (i.e. caused or contributed to an intended effect) they were motivated by something(s), someone(s), and/or some situation(s). These are not mutually exclusive contributors to an action or to motivation and they tacitly signify a host of other factors specific to the rhetorical situations linked to motivating and enacting agency. In rhetorical studies, one of the most commonly used means of examining what contributes to a person or people's motivation is Kenneth Burke's dramatisic pentad. In his seminal book *A Grammar of Motives*, he opens with the question: "What is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?" (1969 p.xv). For any human action, Burke finds, the attributing of motives requires 1) an act 2) performed by a person (agent) 3) for some purpose 4) within a situation or place (scene)

and 5) by some means (agency) (1969 p.xv). These are then formulated into an analytical tool whereby “Any complete statement about motives,” Burke observes “will offer some kind of answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose)” (1969 p.xv).

At this point in activist inquiry, Burke’s pentad can be used to analyze any resultant social action and its motivation. For example, because of Addams’s (agent) engagement with, say, an impoverished family (act), in their community and home (scene), she better understood (purpose) how poverty (agency) “impacts a family’s souls and minds” (Knight 2010, p.202). Addams writes about a “little Italian boy of six,” who because of the extreme poverty in which he exists views life only from the narrow standpoint of his and his family’s struggle for food, clothing, and shelter (1902 p.17). Or, as another more encompassing example, Addams describes how being poor has contributed to parents “tyrannically establishing habits of obedience” in their children, physically abusing them for disobedience. This abuse stemmed from financial necessity as the parents, having no savings, needed their children to support them when they could no longer work (1902 p.17). The parent expects this control to continue into the child’s adulthood and secure their survival into old age (1902 p.17). Poverty, here, is agency as Burke defines it: a means towards an end, even if that end is not desirable. Admittedly, it can be difficult to conceive of “the state of being extremely poor” as having

agency or as being a motivation, but the various affects on people suggests that it has agentive force in some situations. As an insider-outsider, or someone who was an outsider in poor communities but became an insider, Addams discovered and learned such things as those mentioned above, and recognizing the role poverty plays may motivate a person. Burke's pentad is primarily used as an interpretive or analytical tool to look at situations that have occurred, as demonstrated here, but motivation work needs to be primarily about production and invention. How can someone (agent) be motivated (agency) to (act) for social change (purpose)? How was Addams motivated? How might her readers be motivated to have engaged experiences, to learn, to take action?

Engaged Experience: The Right Rhetorical Stance for Motivation Work

In terms of motivation work, engaged experience signifies more than merely experiencing a moment in time or an event. It is similar to MacLean's idea of engagement as the "back and forth communication between persons or groups that is intentional and often planned..." (2015 p.5). Intention distinguishes engagement from more broad forms of communication that occur by chance. A planned meeting such as a community discussion about trash collection could qualify as engagement, but for motivation work, the planning of the event itself is less important

than the intention coming into an engaged experience. Activist inquiry employs the idea of engagement as intentional communication but with the stipulation of embodied experiences with people from different cultural, social, and economic positions in their communities and from a stance of openness, thoughtfulness, and care. These experiences occur with the conscious intent or choice - the agency - to discover and learn from purposeful interactions in much the same way that Addams herself had (Knight, 2005; 2010). Engaged experience, put simply, calls for an open-minded attitude or rhetorical stance. Notably, Burke later modified the pentad to include attitude: "'Agency' would more strictly designate the 'means' employed in an act. And 'attitude' would designate the manner. To build something with a hammer would involve the instrument, or 'agency'; to build with diligence would involve an 'attitude,' a 'how'" (1969 p.443). For motivation work, engaged experience is defined as an intentional interaction during which an open-minded attitude, a specific rhetorical stance, is consciously and intentionally adopted when engaging with different others. Fleckenstein's compassionate living, Ratcliffe's rhetorical listening, and Hamington's embodied care inform the appropriate rhetorical stance for engaged experience. However, before delving into what this stance means in more detail, I want to stress why it is so critical for engaged experience and the motivation work it does.

First, as a mind-set, rhetorical stance suggests people's visual and rhetorical habits: their unconscious ways of seeing and talking about

others and in the context of activist inquiry, the marginalized, oppressed, and impoverished in particular. Because they are unconscious, these habits can be triggered and pose a problem for the intention behind the rhetorical stance of engaged experience. Given the will, anyone can walk into an impoverished community, interact, and engage with its residents; however, that does not mean they will realize their responsibility to others or be motivated to assuage an unjust situation. In fact, with the wrong mind-set, they may be repulsed or disgusted, falling back into inaccurate visual and rhetorical habits that adopt the hostile view of poverty as a moral flaw, “a sickness freely chosen through laziness, drinking, extravagance, and sexual vices” (qtd. in Finnegan, 2003 p.10). These visual and rhetorical habits, like what was mentioned in the first chapter, inhibit people’s motivation to engage with impoverished communities and people. They perpetuate ways of “seeing” the poor. As an example, in Finnegan’s analysis of the Farm Security Administration’s (FSA) 1938 exhibit, she notes people’s responses to the photographs documenting Depression era poverty.⁸ While the majority of responses implied that poverty “sometimes resulted from structural inequities in the socioeconomic system,” there were more hostile views as well that “drew upon, and indeed recycled, a familiar – if sometimes ambivalent – discourse of poverty” (2003 p.19). Even as some respondents accepted systemic causes of poverty, there remained an “insistence upon maintaining distinctions between the ‘deserving’ and the ‘undeserving’

poor” (2003 p.19). One viewer praised the individuals in the pictures, the deserving poor, while also claiming Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers were the underserving poor even though some of the pictures may have been of WPA workers. Some viewers seemed to be responding to the individual in the picture: “How about practicing Birth Control?” And “They could do better in building homes, etc. It’s partly their own fault” (Finnegan, 2003 p. 19). Although it cannot be confirmed, it seems safe to conclude that viewers identified elements of the photographs that confirmed their preconceived ideas about people living in poverty. They unconsciously approached viewing the photos. In other words, they did not consciously and critically consider their pre-existing biases towards poverty as they went through the exhibit. Such an approach, or what amounts to a rhetorical stance, contributes to inhibiting discovery, learning, and motivation work for social action.

Rhetorical stance is also especially important when a person of power and privilege, an insider like Addams, engages with marginalized and oppressed groups of people. One concern is that asymmetrical power relations can result in misappropriation and/or misrepresentation of someone else’s idea or culture. Many feminist rhetoric and writing scholars similarly echo this concern (Kirsch and Ritchie, 1995; Kirsch 2003; Flower, 2008; Spivak, 2010; and others). In her article “Beside Ourselves: Rhetoric and Representation in Postcolonial Feminist Writing,” Susan Jarratt concurs:

In other words, when someone uses power over others to represent them politically – to act for them – there is an unavoidable, concomitant symbolic process underway: the represented group is sketched, painted, described in a particular way through that process. And this description may or may not “represent” them in ways they themselves would endorse. (1998 p.58)

This may also be described as silencing those being “represented” since they are not speaking for themselves. Their voices have been silenced by the power and authority inadvertently wielded by the very person trying to help them, which reinscribes the injustice. According to Hamington, Addams expressed such a worry. In *Twenty Years at Hull House*, Addams writes, “I never addressed a Chicago audience on the subject of the Settlement and its vicinity without inviting a neighbor to go with me, that I might curb my hasty generalization by the consciousness that I had an auditor who knew the conditions more intimately than I could hope to do” (qtd. in Hamington, 2009 p.55). Approaching stance from a writing researcher’s perspective, Grabill’s position on the importance of stance parallels its role in engaged experience. He argues that “stance is the single most important issue to consider when researching in or with communities” and he considers it an approach or a tool to doing research (2012 p.211). “A stance,” as he defines it, “should be understood as a position or a set of beliefs and obligations that shape how one acts as a researcher” (2012 p.211). This is true not just for a researcher, but also anyone who has acknowledged their social responsibility and wants to act upon it. They have recognized their obligation to others, but must consider their beliefs, values, and sense of how to enact this responsibility

shape their actions in an engaged experience. Stance, if not considered carefully then, can make more accurately understanding a community and its people more challenging, much in the way the un-interrogated visual and rhetorical habits of those with power and privilege can inhibit motivation work.

Engaged experience calls for an open-minded rhetorical stance for motivation work. Fleckenstein's notion of compassionate living is one feminist approach that begins to address such challenges to motivation work mentioned so far. Fleckenstein emphasizes that whatever process by which social action is produced, that process must be compassionate:

Motivated and guided by this emotion [compassion], community members...alter situations that cause others deep distress. Central to this process is the reciprocity of means and ends...the how affects the what. Therefore, the tools people use to bring about compassionate change must also be compassionate. (2010 p.82)

Experience could be one such tool, but these experiences must be appropriate for the aims of motivation work and activist inquiry as a whole. Experience needs to be approached in a particular way to engender empathy and motivation. For instance, viewers of the FSA exhibit could have benefited from a conscious acknowledgement of their perceptions of poverty or of the available arguments surrounding poverty and the poor: hostile, systemic, ambivalent. "Knowledge or awareness of the available arguments about a subject" is a component of Wayne Booth's definition of rhetorical stance, which also includes "the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character of the speaker" (1963

p.141). Acknowledgement of these perspectives could have altered a person's stance, or to borrow from MacLean, "way of facing" the situation – the exhibit. According to Hamington, "Addams's strongest belief was that no one, including a wealthy woman like her, was condemned to the narrow perspective to which she was born, that she, or anyone, could understand someone from another class by listening carefully and with empathy to his story" (Jane Addams, 2010 p.89). The way Addams "faced" the people and communities surrounding Hull House affected the quality and outcome of her experiences. It helped her to better understand their daily lived experiences and be motivated to take some action to help people. True, at first people in the area were suspicious of this prosperous woman's motives for moving into a house on such a street and living amidst the squalor (Knight, 2005 p. 203). However, Addams persisted in facing the people without judgment, inviting people she met to visit Hull House and in return being invited to visit (Knight, 2005 p.203).

According to Hamington, Addams became an "involved outsider" at Hull House: "time, proximity, and earnest desire to learn and help won the trust and respect of the neighborhood" and arguably, the outsider became an insider (2009 p.55). Addams was what Knight calls an "existential outsider," who "do[es] their advocacy over time, in a sustained way, rather than sporadically, as the circumstance requires" (2016 p.8). Engaged experience prefers such sustained involvement, but emphasizes a

rhetorical stance of compassion, non-judgement, and general open-mindedness as critical for motivation.

Rhetorical stance as a way of facing others, especially people from marginalized and oppressed communities, suggests that a key component to such a stance includes rhetorical practices. These are practices that further the open attitude of rhetorical stance as well as demonstrate its enactment to others. Krista Ratcliffe's notion of rhetorical listening is one such practice. Rhetorical listening "signifies a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture" (2005 p.1, 17). Rhetorical listening, she argues, fosters understanding by "listening to discourses not for intent but with intent" (2005 p.28). In other words, rhetorical listening means a person listens with the conscious intent to understand rather than listening merely for a way to respond. This clearly parallels Addams's belief, as just mentioned: "anyone, could understand someone from another class by listening carefully and with empathy to his story" (Jane Addams, 2010 p.89). Ratcliffe's rhetorical listening is similar to Booth's older idea of listening-rhetoric: "the whole range of communicative arts for reducing misunderstanding by paying full attention to opposing views" (2004 p.10). However, rhetorical listening is more specific. Ratcliffe conceptualizes rhetorical listening as "compris[ing] the following moves":

1. Promoting an understanding of self and other
2. Proceeding with an accountability logic

3. Locating identification across commonalities and differences
4. Analyzing claims as well as the cultural logics within which these claim function (2005 p.26; italics in original)

Notably, these moves coincide with many of the goal and practices of activist inquiry: understanding of self in the acknowledgment of social responsibility for instance. In her first article on rhetorical listening, Ratcliffe originally used “responsibility” instead of “accountability” (2005 p.191). The rhetorical stance needed for engaged experience to generate motivation however does not claim to adhere to these moves per se, but they show how rhetorical listening coincides with rhetorical stance for activist inquiry’s overall goals.

Addams provides a good example of the consequences of not adopting such an open stance as Ratcliffe’s rhetorical listening. She describes a large factory strike where the business owner, George Pullman, had failed to listen to his workers’ concerns. Pullman had built them a town with homes and stores and because of this clear act of benevolence; he felt that it was his right to control various aspects of their lives. He infringed upon their freedoms, dictating no alcohol in the community for example. The workers lived with many such restrictions until Pullman came upon economic hardship and had to reduce their wages. Together the reduced wages and the restrictions moved the workers to strike; however, Pullman blatantly refused to hear their complaints or demands, deciding that they were being disloyal to him after all he had done for them (1902 p.46-49). Business leadership is far from

being democratic and the demands of running a company diminish owners' and employers' ability to understand the difficulties their workers face. "This is sure to happen," Addams writes, "when he is good 'to' people rather than 'with' them, when he allows himself to decide what is best for them instead of consulting them" (1902 p.48). Pullman literally did not listen. For engaged experience to affect motivation for agency and social action, the practice of rhetorical listening contributes a key point to a much-needed rhetorical stance towards understanding others.

Admittedly here, whether someone understands something, someone, or some situation cannot be accurately measured. Ratcliffe herself acknowledges that it is a troubled term: "*Understanding* has a complicated history in narrative studies and in philosophical studies in that it is often coupled with authorial intent" (2005 p.27; italics in original). In such cases, what the author ideally wanted their readers to understand and whether they did or not is debated: the ideal versus the real. Ratcliffe aims to "collapse the real/ideal dichotomy into a strategic third ground where rhetorical negotiation is exposed as always already existing and rhetorical listening is posited as one means of that negotiation" (2005 p.27). She posits strategic idealism as that third ground: an idea somewhat compatible with the idea of understanding that can be generated from an open rhetorical stance and activist inquiry may be on other means for such negotiations. Strategic idealism "implies a conscious identification among people that is based on a desire for an intersubjective receptivity, not

mastery, and on a simultaneous recognition of similarities and differences” (2005 p. 29). As they approach engaged experience, people should knowingly adopt a stance of humility, respect, and generosity, consciously willing themselves to rhetorically listen for understanding. They should be open-minded. Ratcliffe’s primary concern is with cross-cultural exchanges and exploring the “intersecting identifications of gender and whiteness” (2005). The open rhetorical stance needed for engaged experience does not deny these cross-cultural exchanges. It broadens them in the desire to include more than just gender and whiteness. Rather it aims to include as many marginalized, oppressed, and impoverished peoples as possible, listening to their stories and their struggles while acknowledging that in practical terms understanding may be incomplete.

The stance and practice of an open attitude suggests the need to consider other non-aggressive approaches. Foss and Griffin’s invitational rhetoric and Hamington’s embodied care describe two such practices. To review, Foss and Griffin define invitational rhetoric as “an invitation to understanding as a means to create a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination” (1995 p.5). Clearly, the roots of such a relationship are compatible with the values of Addams’s social democracy. “[Invitational rhetoric] constitutes an invitation to the audience to enter the rhetor’s world and see it as the rhetor does” (1995 p.5). Like rhetorical listening, an invitational rhetoric relies on a stance of openness, appreciating and validating perspectives. However, to be clear, one of the

two primary rhetorical forms invitational rhetoric assumes is “creating external conditions that allow and encourage others to present their perspectives” (Foss, 2009 p.570). The stance for engaged experience does not aim to create such external conditions, only to non-prescriptively urge an open-minded attitude during contact with social, cultural, and economic difference.

An open-rhetorical stance for engaged experience also aims to nurture sympathy (feeling for) and foster discovery and learning, with the final hope of engendering empathy (feeling with). This is where Hamington’s notion of embodied care offers some more insight into the appropriate rhetorical stance for engaged experience. Hamington offers this operating definition of care:

Care denotes an approach to personal and social morality that shifts ethical considerations to context, relationships, and affective knowledge in a manner that can be fully understood only if care’s embodied dimension is recognized. Care is committed to the flourishing and growth of individuals yet acknowledges our interconnectedness and interdependence (2004 p.3).

Context, relationships, and knowledge-building, Hamington argues, must be considered in light of not only individual and social ethics but also embodiment in order for care to do its work. Hamington cites Addams as an example of embodied care in practice. In Addams’s argument for wide experience, Hamington notes, “An embodied ethic of care relies on experiences of the other and habits of caring to provide the corporeal resources for the possibility of empathy and action” (2004 p.103). By corporeal resources Hamington means the knowledge gleaned from eye

contact, facial expressions, hand gestures, posture, and touch: “When one is actively attending to someone else face to face, these subtleties can be absorbed consciously and subconsciously through the body” (2004 p.109). Here, Hamington emphasizes the affective component of interactions between people. Engaged experience also forwards the importance of place as equally affective. Being physically present in the body involves rhetorically listening, looking, interpreting, and learning in a physical space and place. Engaged experience, to motivate, must take from the equality and appreciation of invitational rhetoric, the bodily presence of Hamington’s notion of care, and the affective dimension that place can have on people.

Addams’s notion of experience anticipates these contemporary feminist perspectives. While Addams does not use the word “stance,” hints of an open, caring, and listening approach are implied in her call for “wider and more thorough human experience” (1902 p.7). She references the “illuminating and dynamic value” of wide experience and mentions a “new curiosity regarding human life,” suggesting that the desire to learn or know something is important to how experience should be approached. An appropriate rhetorical stance for engaged experience cannot come from a closed mind or a sense of superiority, as Addams’s repeatedly criticized. Feeling superior to others diminishes a person’s capacity to discover, learn, and reach understanding. They are convinced they already know what is happening, why it is happening, and how to change

the situation. From Addams's perspective, rarely is this true. Again, as already discussed, ingrained visual and rhetorical habits create upper-class normative perceptions of the lower classes, specifically as being lazy and immoral. Such habitual ways of perceiving and talking about different, lower socio-economic classes greatly lessen the likelihood of a person being open to how experience with such marginalized communities could inform or change their understanding. They are "entrenched in the mythologies of their culture." Conversely, Addams describes an experience most likely similar to one of her own. An open-minded, middle-class charity visitor ministers to a poor working-class family. The visitor "lay[s] all stress upon the industrial virtues...insist[ing] that they must work and be self-supporting," with the implication that in order to be self-sufficient they need only work more (1902 p. 10). However, she sees that the family has other virtues: they are "kind and considerate of each other, generous to their friends, but it is her business to stick to the industrial side" (1902 p.7). The visitor realizes that to judge this family solely on how much or how hard they work, their industry, is in contradiction with her own upbringing, where one's character was just as or more important than being industrious. Her openness, her listening and then reflecting, resulted in a new understanding.

Finally, respect for diversity and pluralism deserve some attention as a couple of things that characterize the rhetorical stance Addams's essentially endorsed and the one needed for engaged experience.

Addams's own experiences had taught her to respect diversity. She had learned, Knight notes, that "The most 'civilized' or 'cultured' person...understood all sorts of people — poor or middling or rich, Anglo or not, white or not, Christian or not, sober or no, able-bodied or not, healthy or sick, young or old" (2010 p.100). "Cultured" or "civilized," for Addams meant anyone who upheld the morality of a social democracy, valuing different others and demonstrably striving to understand them, no matter who they were. This suggests not only the importance of wide experience but also the adoption of a willing and open stance towards what could be learned from such experiences. In an extension of respect for diversity, Addams was also a proponent of pluralism. She conceived of pluralism as the necessity of including all members in the institution, policies, and practices of social progress (Hamington). In arguing for the import of embodied care, Hamington echoes Addams: "Good citizens in a caring community must develop a habit of interaction, including caring habits, in a way that maintains an understanding and respect for diversity and pluralism" (2004 p.107). Both contribute to an appropriate rhetorical stance for the motivation work engaged experience can do for agency and social action.

Engaged experience necessitates a non-judgmental open stance as well as the "with" instead of "for" mentality. Doing something "for" a marginalized person or group suggests a sense of superiority and risks the likelihood of misrepresentation as discussed earlier. It implies

knowing what must be done, but not consulting or dialoguing with those personally and directly involved in the oppressive situation. To put this in Freirean terms, “Any attempt to ‘soften’ the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity” (2009 p.44). In doing “for” marginalized groups (the oppressed), the oppressors (Addams’s upper-class readers) attempt a show of respect for their unjust situations; however, these attempts betray a generosity that serves the oppressor’s position of power and does not assuage an injustice. In this way, a rhetorical stance of “for” closes or narrows the possibility for discovery and learning. “With” suggests a stance of cooperation, association, dialogue — in other words, engaged experience. In summary, an open rhetorical stance for engaged experience requires a commitment to being open-minded, inviting a person to consciously engage by noting their pre-conceptions, visual and rhetorical habits, and using compassion, rhetorical listening, and embodied care as tools to a fuller understanding of the daily lived experiences of the marginalized and oppressed. This understanding, in turn, can motivate them to not only engage in further experiences but also to a sense of agency for eventual social action.

Motivation: Engaged Experience and Disruption

The following describes both how a text encourages engaged experience (through another's descriptions of their experiences) and how engaged experience can motivate someone to act in ways that assuage social injustices. Activist inquiry and its motivation work rely on engaged experiences in and with marginalized, impoverished communities for the possibility of empathy and subsequent action. "Choosing our experiences," as Addams says, is our ethical duty (1902 p.5). Discovery, learning, and empathy (feeling with), as discussed, result from concertedly assuming an open rhetorical stance during those engaged experiences but there is an additional contributor to motivation work at play here – emotionally disruptive discrepancies and contradictions. These can surface from engaged experience and subsequent reflection. Margaret Urban Walker, a feminist philosopher, claims "moral competence draws on propositional knowledge - 'know that' — but also on perceptive, imagined, and expressive capacities supported by habits of emotional response" (qtd. in Hamington, "Jane Addams' Disruptive Emotional Epistemology" 2002). Walker suggests that emotional knowledge "ignites empathy, draws our attention, and tugs at our heartstrings to act" (qtd. in Hamington, "Jane Addams' Disruptive Emotional Epistemology" 2002). Engaged experiences, thus described, have the potential to reveal inconsistencies between previously held ideas and the realities faced by

marginalized and oppressed groups. Although activist inquiry emphasizes empathy over sympathy in the process of motivation work, Addams's notion of sympathetic knowledge, like Walker, stresses the importance of disruption for knowledge building. "Fundamentally," Hamington explains:

Sympathetic knowledge is the idea that humans can learn about one another in terms that move beyond propositional knowledge, that is rather than merely learning facts, knowledge is gained through openness to disruptive knowledge. Knowledge can be disruptive in the sense that new information potentially transforms one's perceived experience and understanding. (2014)

Perceiving contradictions, especially big ones, can be emotionally disruptive and build knowledge of situations and people. This is similar to Fleckenstein's use of antinomy in her knot of contradictions, which can lead to subversive social action. She conceives of antinomy "As a way of seeing that privileges change," which suits activist inquiry's social action aims (2010 p115). Fleckenstein conceptualizes one aspect of antinomy as disruptiveness, likening it to Burke's process of "'perspective by incongruity' that produces new classifications" (2010 p.115)⁹. This disruptiveness arises, at least in part, from paradoxes and contradictions that make meaning uncomfortably ambiguous. Individuals strive to resolve the disruptive ambiguity and in the process produce new meanings (2010 p.116). For instance, contradictory visual and discursive representations of religious figures such as Jesus make some people very uncomfortable. Depictions of Jesus as a Caucasian male with blonde hair have been culturally and discursively sustained in Western culture;

therefore for some seeing a black Jesus is contradictory to their idea of what he looked like (Figure 3.1). In addition, hearing others “validate the



Figure 3.1 Caucasian Jesus (left); Black Jesus (right)

correctness of [this] representation over [the other] move[s] the perceiver into a visual predicament, the resolution of which can potentially open up a new understanding about race, self, other, and cultural fantasies” (Fleckenstein, 2010 p.119). The contradiction between a white Jesus and a historically more accurate version of him as darker-skinned can emotionally disrupt some people enough to encourage a reflection upon their feelings about racial tensions and their perceptions of race and ethics in general.

Such contradictions must be sufficiently disruptive on an emotional level for such new motivating understandings to even begin to emerge during or after engaged experience. In one of her conference presentations on Addams, Hamington argues that Addams uses

something she calls an “emotionally disruptive epistemology” (2014). This epistemology “exemplifies aspects of modern feminist notions of moral epistemology and social epistemology” while also forwarding a theory that “disruptive knowledge [is] necessary for moral action” (2014). Indeed, Addams contends, “The mass of men seldom move together without an emotional incentive” (1902 p.80). Hamington provides a good example that could equally apply to the engaged experience aspect of activist inquiry:

What makes emotional epistemology disruptive knowledge is that it transforms abstract understanding into a concrete understanding. This concretization takes on a particular form, which can be characterized as human or at least embodied. The embodied connection allows for a felt understanding with a greater potential to shake us from the rhythms of our ongoing lives to take moral action. For example, I could tell you that UNICEF reports that one-third of all children under the age of five in developing countries are malnourished. You may feel this is tragic but few of you would be moved emotionally. However, if I brought in a child who grew up amid such conditions and she described the experience and you saw the expressions on her face, the inflection of her voice, her hand gestures and body movements, you would be more likely to have a felt response than you would from any statistical presentation. The potential for disruption is greater because malnourishment was concretized for you in a way that made an embodied connection. (2002)

There is a foreshadowing here of the embodied care Hamington later contends Addams demonstrates. Hamington emphasizes concrete, embodied experience approached with “care.” Like Min-Zhan Lu argues in his article “Reading and Writing Differences: The Problematic of Experience,” “We need to imagine ways of using experience critically: experience should motivate us to care about another’s differences and

should disrupt the material conditions that have given rise to it (2003 p.436). Emotionally disruptive moments of contradiction and paradox during engaged experience can spur on motivation for agency and social action.

Since engaged experience must happen in marginalized and oppressed communities, the role of place (scene) in engaged experience should not be forgotten. In *Geographies of Writing*, Nedra Reynolds explores geography as a “lived event — including how spaces and places are inscribed upon us — and how our experiences in spaces of the everyday impact upon our identities, our confidence, our senses of self” (2007 p.10). Reynolds explains further:

...conceptions of space tend to ignore the ways in which people move through the world, or the spatial practices that shape lifeworlds. It is not only places and their built-in constraints that determine certain practices, but also the adjustments and compromises, the shifts and turns in the process of accommodating to a place. (14)

Addams moved in and through the tenement neighborhoods surrounding Hull House. Assuredly, place impacted her understanding of the people and their struggles. Initially she would have moved through them as an outsider, most likely a little intimidated. She reports: “[W]hen you go and live in [such] a neighborhood, you feel a little swallowed up” (qtd. in Knight, 2005 p. 203). Engaged experience, as it has been described thus far, would likely put a person in situations they find not just emotionally uncomfortable and disruptive but potentially physically as well. Addams also reported, saying in her customary third person narration:

“The first settlers [at Hull House] felt as if they were going into a strange country, [where they would]...encounter people more or less unlike themselves” (qtd. in Knight, 2005 p.203). Place then, as Reynolds says, can “...position the learner as an outsider, a foreigner, an other – a positioning that, in its discomfort, often stimulates reflection” (2004 p.113). Thinking about place as a lived experience that shapes people highlights how engaged experience in impoverished communities can be emotionally disruptive.

For the motivation work of activist inquiry, *Democracy and Social Ethics* provides a few good examples of knowledge-building via emotionally disruptive engaged experience. They are disruptive in large part because they reveal contradictions, inconsistencies, and discrepancies between what was believed about a situation and the social, economic, and material reality of it. In an attempt to avoid confusion if possible, remember that Addams describes her experiences to show her readers how they can change their understanding of the situations and people involved. However, she wants her readers to have embodied, engaged experiences themselves because that is how, she argues, they will make their own discoveries and understandings. To move on to an example of an emotionally disruptive experience, in the second chapter, “On Charitable Efforts,” Addams describes the experiences of a charity worker. Although she does not in this case identify the worker with herself, it can readily be assumed this was her experience. In a situation

not uncommon even today, a family applies for assistance because one or more of the earners in the household have lost their jobs, whether due to an illness, being laid off, or “for other guiltless and inevitable reasons” (1902 p.10). The charity visitor, who Addams describes as a “young college woman, well-bred and open-minded,” goes to the family and preaches the value of work and self-sufficiency. The worker comes from a middle-class position of relative financial security and material abundance, belonging to the class of people who do not work with their hands as compared to those who do, a socio-culturally derided division of labor that persists to this day. The emotional disruption occurs as a result of the inconsistency between her values and those of the lower class: “Doubtless,” Addams observes, “the clashes and jars which we all feel most keenly are those which occur when two standards of morals both honestly held and believed in, are brought sharply together” (1902 p.33). Her middle-class values stress working more hours so that the family can be self-sufficient, as her own family. It has also been impressed upon her that the poor are lazy and ignorant, and fail to save money like they should. Therefore, part of her job, she feels, is to motivate them and/or help them understand how they should behave and what they should do. That is their “need” and the one to which she must minister. As she visits lower working class families stricken by poverty and often ill-health, she is, as Addams says, “perplexed by recognitions and suggestions which the situation forces upon her” (1902 p.10). Her middle-class upbringing has

impressed upon her an image of the lower class that clashes with the discoveries engaged experience has revealed. She learns that they are not in fact lazy. Instead, many circumstances that are largely out of their control, such as employers paying very little for long hours of work, have led to the situation. Further, she observes the practice of an ethic of neighborly care: “The visitor says, sometimes, that in holding her poor family so hard to a standard of thrift [saving], which seems quite commendable in a comfortable part of town, appears almost criminal in a poorer quarter where the next-door neighbor needs food” (1902 p.13). Emotionally, she is disturbed and perplexed then as to the right course of action; however, this can motivate her, as it did Addams to find alternate approaches to assuaging poverty and injustice. These contradictions of understanding, between what was assumed and what has been observed and learned through engaged experience, coax reflection and knowledge-building for motivation.

In another example of engaged experience for motivation, the charity worker “finds herself still more perplexed” as Addams puts it, by parents’ “lust of dominion” over their children and their “despotism” (1902 p.15). The worker urges parents to base relationships with their children on “love and confidence.” The women she preaches this to are puzzled though: “If you did not keep control over them from the time they were little, you would never get their wages when they are grown up” (Addams, 1902 p.17). Parents expected and needed their child to provide for them

financially when they could no longer work. It was a matter of survival, but the worker “does not in the least,” Addams writes, “understand the industrial foundation for this family tyranny” because her “family relation is lifted quite out of this” (1902 p.17). The charity worker can, as one woman told her, “afford to be lax with [her children, because even if they don’t give money to her, she can get along without it” (Addams, 1902 p.17).

Addams describes these burgeoning understandings as “most harrowing” to the charity worker (1902 p.18). They are emotionally disturbing and because of engaging with these working-class families, the charity worker saw the incongruity between middle-class ideals and lower-class realities. She arrived at a new understanding of the situation and its injustice, which can be motivation for some.

On a broader, more community-based level, the worker also learned how an unemployed man could still have “undoubted social value” (Addams, 1902 p. 18). The worker came across a man who had been blacklisted from working due to a strike. Through “inquiry and a little experience,” she learned that he was a poor worker (Addams, 1902 p.18). She would have called him “lazy and good-for-nothing, and denounce him as worthless as her grandmother might have done” (Addams, 1902 p18). However, she discovered that he benefited the community in other ways: “other workmen c[a]me to him for shrewd advice” and he was “a constant speaker at workingmen’s meetings” and clearly “contributed a certain intellectuality to his friends” (Addams, 1902 p.18). Addams describes the

worker as being deeply perplexed about how to proceed with the family and the community that criticizes the unemployed man because now his wife must support the family (1902 p.18). The hard working wife, however, “does not show for an instant that she thinks he has grown lazy” (1902 p. 18). The worker compares the situation to her own wealthier friends’ working lives. They chose to work so that their husbands could find better positions and they just had to live on less income rather than no income. Thus, the worker comes across another contradiction. Having praised her friends’ actions as noble, she feels wrong in condemning the working wife’s decision to support her husband (1902 p.18). This emotionally disruptive situation gave the worker a new understanding of how socio-economic class affects perceptions of people and the communities in which they live, and although she may not know what to do, she is motivated to learn more and eventually take social action.

An example of the motivation work of engaged experience in the 21st century is a little difficult to imagine and begins to step into the territory of the next chapter. Addams literally lived among the tenements of Chicago’s Halsted Street. She “intended Hull House to be a place where the privileged and educated could live and work among the poor in the community dedicated to the betterment of the neighborhood” (Hamington, 2004 p.97). Hamington calls it an “epistemological portal into urban life” (2004 p.97). Hypothetically, such a place now could serve a similar purpose, providing a location to foster engaged experiences.

Would people come? Would they be able to commit to *living* in the community for an extended period of time?

Conclusion

Engaged experience motivates because it reveals incongruities that can be emotionally disruptive enough to spark and internalize empathic feelings: “the love and patience which ministers to need irrespective of worth” (Addams 1902 p.22). While this will not always necessarily be the case, highlighting internalized unconscious contradictions between pre-conceptions, beliefs, and values and the reality of an unjust situation can be a powerful way of unsettling ingrained habitual rhetorics of poverty. Addams’s sensitive, sympathetic descriptions point out many contradictions, particularly that of valuing democracy but not living democratically. In other words, they point out hypocrisy, valuing equality and diversity for example, but not acting upon that value by say not working towards granting others equal rights and opportunities. Engaged experience heightens a sense of social responsibility and it emphasizes the interpretation or analysis of a situation that gives way to motivation as part of inventing agency. Activist inquiry asks privileged insiders to dominant ideologies and power to engage openly with marginalized and oppressed groups and to practice embodied care and rhetorical listening in the process – a non-judgmental, open-minded rhetorical stance.

Engaged experiences can lead to motivation as emotionally disruptive contradictions arise.

For example, stories of undeserving recipients of food assistance programs abound on the internet¹⁰. The claims are consistent with the hostile view of poverty: these are people who are lazy, don't want to work, are on drugs and therefore do not deserve to be helped by taxpayer dollars. Now, imagine taking a person who held such ideas, someone who may not be wealthy but is privileged enough to have adequate food. First, explain rhetorical listening and embodied care practices and then ask them to follow a food assistance recipient through one day of their lives: to the grocery, to their home and neighborhood. What might they learn in just one day? What if they were engaged with the food stamp recipient for weeks or months? What are their experiences likely to help them discover? It is just speculation, and it would not necessarily apply to every situation, but new understandings of at least this one person's reality can be imagined. The recipient actually works long hours in two part-time jobs; food assistance is not sufficient for the family's nutritional needs; or lack of adequate heating makes it difficult to sleep and then difficult to work the next day. Preconceived notions about marginalized people and their communities meet the realities of these people's daily lived experiences. However, this example falls short because it is surface level knowledge rather than building deeper understandings of the systemic factors contributing to poverty. It also reinforces the "deserving"

versus “undeserving” poor, which does not further the social democracy Addams advocates. Still, it may yet motivate a person to engage more and gradually, perhaps the invention of agency for social action. The power of engaged experience to motivate rests in negotiating meaning and building knowledge by reflecting upon emotionally disruptive contradictions. While this can result in new conceptual understandings, engaged experience also plays a role in knowledge building for the purpose of taking social action – praxis, where theory and practice come together. That is the focus of the next chapter, taking the motivation that can emerge from engaged experience to the next step of imagining possibilities for social action that assuage unjust situations without reinforcing them.

Chapter Four

Challenging (A)venues

We forget that the accumulation of knowledge and the holding of convictions must finally result in the application of that knowledge and those convictions to life itself.

— Jane Addams (1902)

We cannot move to action without deciding what needs to be changed and what can be changed.

— Kristie Fleckenstein (2010)

In the last chapter, I discussed the challenge of motivation — how can someone be motivated to take social action? Activist inquiry highlights an answer focused primarily on rhetorical stance and the practices of engaged experience with marginalized people in their communities. Moving on to the final challenge, this chapter deals with a more general question. What actions are possible and are there places available within which to take those actions? Put another way, how does someone know what to do or what can be done to ameliorate the situation and not exacerbate the injustice? This is a question of taking ethical social action. As Fleckenstein asks, “if agency is possible, are venues available within which to alter rather than reinforce the unjust situation?” (2010 p.17). Fleckenstein’s reference to “if agency is possible” refers more specifically to the disempowered and oppressed who may not have a “safe forum from which to protest [their] mistreatment” (2010 p.17). In no way does activist inquiry mean to ignore the importance of empowering

marginalized groups to social action, however, this dissertation has focused more on carefully considering the privileged insider as a potentiality for agency and social action with the marginalized and oppressed.

If it were to work ideally, activist inquiry would prompt privileged insiders to be what Knight calls voluntary existential outsider-insiders. According to Knight, Addams was a voluntary existential outsider-insider: she was among those “born as social insiders by virtue of their class, race, gender and/or other advantage. Nonetheless, they decide, for moral reasons, to align themselves fully with the less powerful, the oppressed, the disadvantaged, the struggling” (Knight, 2016 p.10). Addams’s insider privilege afforded her a college education and the ability to travel, which meant she learned about different people and cultures. Through her experiences, her perceptions of the poor and disempowered evolved and she came to a better understanding of the complexities surrounding the injustices they suffered. She saw the material conditions of their lives, the quality, and the inequality. Addams’s new understanding moved her to urge others to do as she had and become insider-outsiders — to recognize their social responsibility, to engage with marginalized communities and people, and through it imagine avenues for social action.

Returning then to the question: how does someone know what to do or what can be done to ameliorate an unjust situation and not exacerbate the injustice? There can be no answer that is true and

efficacious for all people in all situations. Going with the idea of avenues, there are no bright fluorescent arrows painted on the road that inexorably lead to “effective social action” where the intended results are always beneficial and never harmful. Anyone can have good intentions with their actions, even believe the outcome was beneficial, but if their actions are ill-informed the results are not as likely to be effective. Ill-informed actions echo the problem of speaking for instead of with those whom an activist is trying to aid. The intended outcome and the means of achieving it (agency and action) needs to come from a place of knowledge, understanding, and empathy. In this sense, activist inquiry as a whole represents one action, an (a)venue, that could be sufficiently effective but it would be naïve to assume that it would work in all circumstances.

In this chapter, I take a look at the idea of (a)venues for social action that may be taken, but in the spirit of rhetorical listening, abstain from making judgments of certainty about their efficaciousness. The effectiveness of a particular action cannot be determined until an intention is announced and the action to achieve it has been formulated. Then the intended action is taken and the effects are observed for their efficacy. So, for example, various organizations, independent workers and volunteers set up food pantries with the intent of reducing hunger among the poor. The action of setting up the food pantry has been taken and its intent is clear, but whether or not it is successful must be determined by collecting data over time. If it is not succeeding, then new theories as to

why it is not and what action should be taken next have to be formulated. This is a pragmatist way of approaching a problem: reflection, theory, action. Remember, Addams was a pragmatist. She believed “mistakes [are] merely a part of the pragmatist cycle of action and reflection,” along the lines of Freirian praxis (Hamington, 2016). Freire argued “human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And praxis requires theory to illuminate it” (1970 p.125). Theories require revision based on the outcome of enacting them or putting them into practice. Those theories pertaining to social action especially require such rethinking because of at least two critical points. For one, as has already been established, the goal of social action is to redress inequities and not reinforce them. Therefore, reflecting upon actions in light of the possibility that they may have reinforced the problem can help with revising the approach. Second, “Social change,” Fleckenstein points out, “does not occur in a neat linear progression that moves logically from desire to language to beneficially changed reality...Nor does social action proceed in a similar linear progression from individual to group to seismic social change...social action results from a circular causality” (2010 p.6). Social action and social change occur as people theorize, act, reflect, re-theorize, act again, reflect, and so on (Figure 4.1).

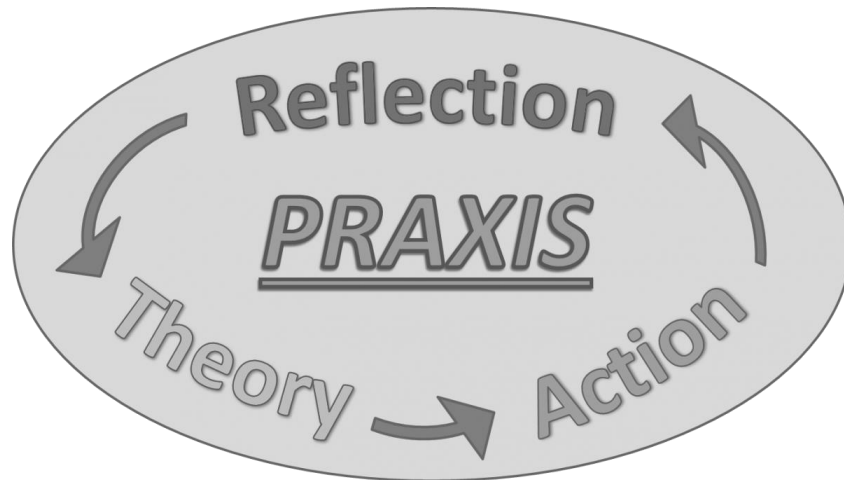


Figure 4.1 Visual representation of praxis

This chapter focuses on the “action” in social action, and for my purposes, I refer to what actions may be taken as (a)venues. Addams method for persuading her own readers to become closely involved with marginalized people suggests, but again does not prescribe, what action might be taken to assuage suffering and injustice. Therefore, to stay true to activist inquiry’s similar goal, I am sometimes purposefully vague. (A)venues need to be thought of as possibilities and how those may be invented rather than certainties or commandments to do a particular thing. (A)venues take advantage of another feminist tool: Royster and Kirsch’s idea of critical imagination, which I will elaborate on in the next section. I also examine how critical materialism might be useful for imagining (a)venues. Imagining (a)venues for social action overlaps somewhat with the last chapter in that those possible (a)venues arise from the discoveries and knowledge building of engaged experience, particularly if a person has committed to it over a long period of time. Engaged experience of this

kind has the best chance of imagining effective (a)venues for social action: ameliorating and not reinforcing unjust situations.

Why (A)venues?

By putting the “a” in parentheses, (a)venues aims to highlight the idea that action is comprised of two parts. One part consists of thoughts, concepts, imagination, and reflection – avenues. The other is material and physical – venues. First, while an “avenue” can be a physical path, it also denotes a way of approaching a problem, like having an idea about what to do. Depending on the nature of the problem, this approach may be easily identified or it may take some time. If there is a water leak under the sink, the first approach you might take is to tighten the connectors or maybe just call a plumber. Either would be a sensible and straightforward approach, but if you cannot afford a plumber, then how you solve this problem may take some imagination: wrap a rag around it, put a bucket underneath the drip, or do an online search on how to repair a leaky pipe. Here, a problem is identified, an idea or avenue considered, and an action implemented.

As part of the formulation of an (a)venue, reflection plays a key role. As I have described it so far, reflection is a stage prior to action and this is somewhat in contradiction to Freire’s contention that “praxis implies

no dichotomy by which this praxis could be divided into a prior state of reflection and a subsequent stage of action” (1970 p.128). Freire argues:

Action and reflection occur simultaneously. A critical analysis of reality may, however, reveal that a particular form of action is impossible or inappropriate at the present time. Those who through reflection perceive the infeasibility or inappropriateness of one or another form of action (which should accordingly be postponed or substituted) cannot thereby be accused of inaction. Critical reflection is also action. (1970 p. 128)

Admitting that action and reflection can occur simultaneously, it remains unclear why they cannot happen separately. Reflection can be considered apart from action, being undertaken before, during as Freire insists, and after. Identifying (a)venues for social action requires a similar route. One of Flower’s examples illustrates this well. Jon and his class had organized a Think Tank aimed at “foreground[ing] the plight and the often-overlooked, situated knowledge of the nursing aides [at a local African American nursing home]” (2008 p.119). Because of his academic expertise, Jon expected that he would be an “advice” giver; however, after talking with the nurses, who had “ten times his experience in adversity,” he found that he had no advice to give (2008 p.119). Jon reflected on his role prior to engaging with the nurses and during their conversations he continued to consider his changing attitude about who he was and what he could do. In a later written reflection, Jon says he found “that the mere act of taking interest in someone’s life can help you break through barriers that block communication, even those created by difference of race and culture” (2008 p.119). From his initial reflection to his final, he now knows

of an action to test: merely taking interest in people's lives, asking them questions, and engaging with them has the potential to bridge boundaries between people. Jon had reflected upon his role prior to engaging with the nursing home community, acted upon what he thought would work, and discovered it did not. So he then reflected again upon how he should change the way in which he engages with the people at the home. He learned through engaged experience the import of rhetorical listening and the impact it can have marginalized people.

Taking Jon's experience into consideration, inquiry – asking questions, dialoguing, and being open learn – creates ways for imagining (a)venues. For instance, at a local community meeting, Sam brings up the problem of food insecurity and pervasive hunger in an area of the town next to his neighborhood. How might he and/or the community assuage this problem? One resident recommends setting up an additional food pantry and another suggests a survey to ascertain the pervasiveness of the problem. Yet another person forwards the idea of a door-to-door food delivery service. All of these are ways of reflecting upon the issue prior to action, but so too are those possibilities or opportunities not yet imagined. Other questions have not been posed, such as, why is food insecurity on the rise? How is “food insecurity” being defined in our community? How do race, gender, and ethnicity factor in with poverty and hunger? And most importantly for (a)venues to social action, has anyone engaged with those affected by food insecurity? Questioning those affected from the

stance of engaged experience results in a better understanding of the situation and what (a)venues might work to ameliorate the problem.

In the context of activist inquiry, avenues, without the “a” in parentheses, are conceptual. In other words, “avenues” emphasizes the role of imagination in devising questions and seeing different ways to approach an issue, always with the goal of assuaging an injustice. Royster defines imagination as “a commitment to making connections and seeing possibilities” (2000 p.83). This is similar to Shor’s definition of critical literacy: “question[ing] the way things are and imagin[ing] alternatives” (1999 pp. 24). In *Traces of a Stream*, Royster describes critical imagination in more detail:

...imagination functions as a critical skill in questioning a viewpoint, an experience, an event, and so on, and in remaking interpretive frameworks based on that questioning...The use of critical imagination does not at all negate the need to do the hard work of engaging systematically in theoretically grounded processes of discovery, analysis, and interpretation. (2000 p.83-84)

Devising alternate questions is one example of such a commitment to critical imagination because different questions make other connections to the problem more visible. Building upon Royster’s definition of critical imagination, Royster and Kirsch together consider critical imagination to be an inquiry tool for “seeing the noticed and the unnoticed, thinking what is there and not there, and speculating about what could be there instead” (2012 p.20). “It is a mechanism,” they argue, “for enabling and energizing within scholarly processes a space for rigorous contemplation” (2010 p.21). Activist inquiry is not necessarily intended to be an endeavor for

scholars alone, but thinking of imagination in terms of a method of inquiry, a tool, builds upon how someone might begin to see and devise avenues. Critical imagination as a process of rigorous contemplation and not merely an endpoint contributes the more rigorous aspects of systematic analysis and interpretation to the ability to conceptualize an avenue for social action.

Seeing what is often left unseen or unnoticed and thinking about what is and is not there hints at critical materialism, which adds a degree of physicality to the idea of critical imagination for avenues. Drawing on McNally, Scott and Welch argue that critical materialism strives to “think about language through the body” in order to “rematerialize networks of labor disappeared by global commodity flows” (2014 p.573). In the technologized, globalized world of the 21st century, the physical, laboring body tends to get forgotten as media outlets and others focus on the material of digital production. The message takes center stage: “the idea of the public conversation becomes the conversation” in a prime example of “how technological innovation ‘introduces into human affairs’ a McLuhanesque enthrallment with the ‘change of scale or pace or pattern’” (2014 p. 564-565). Notably, during the early 1900s, Addams witnessed a similar enthrallment with the speed in which products could be manufactured in the factories of the industrial revolution. Like today, the physical, laboring body tended to be forgotten as consumers cared more about access to goods than who was making them and in what conditions.

Understanding “what is really going on” so to speak, is important for avenues because misunderstanding or ignorance/unawareness can result in ineffective social action.

In continuing to consider what may not be seen and how that can impact whether an avenue for social action is effective, Scott and Welch worry that “Journalists, scholars, and policy advocates,” prioritize “the new technological form of [a] video’s launch, the speed and mass reach of its reception” (2014 p. 564). In the example Scott and Welch give, these journalists and others focus on the idea that “global discussion” is being made a reality. They choose an alternative metaphor for this “global conversation:”

One train can hide another. Just as one train can hide another, when our conceptions of public rhetorical practice prioritize discursive features and digitized form over – and to the exclusion of – historical context and human consequences, we miss how texts may mobilize meaning not to upend but to reinforce relations of power. (2014 p.565)

In the Kony 2012 example Scott and Welch give, the conversation about how this human rights’ video went viral dominated the global conversation, and hid another meaning. Hidden behind its purpose to “galvanize the public into action,” which it failed at, “was how it “marshal[ed] public acceptance of a military campaign already underway” (2014 p.565). By securing people’s allegiance to a U.S. Congressional policy already being pursued, Kony 2012 ultimately reinforced the power of Congress and its Senators to control public opinion for something it was doing. This more controlling motive was revealed through a critical

examination of the content of the video, how it was received, and the history behind human rights' efforts in Uganda (the focus of the film). Imagining (a)venues for social action must keep in mind such close examinations and consider critical materialism as a useful tool. The risk of ignoring the materiality of any situation, as an upcoming example from Addams details, is that something important may be hiding behind the train. Whatever it is may be reinforcing the problem.

Scott and Welch also give an example of critical materialism from a pedagogical perspective that shows its usefulness for imagining (a)venues. In an introductory geography class, the instructor asks students to make a list of everything they had for breakfast and where it came from – its origins. They attempt as complete an inventory as possible of everything “needed to create, transport, and prepare ‘the bread, the sugar, the coffee, the milk; the cups, knives, and forks, toasters and plastic plates – to say nothing of the machinery and equipment needed to produce all these things’” (Scott and Welch, 2014 p.573). Students begin to see what links them to the millions of people in the world laboring to provide these things for their consumption, but Scott and Welch warn, the lesson is not about consumption. This exercise, according to Scott and Welch, promotes students’ “understanding of human geography and political economy along with mutual recognition among people otherwise unaware of their ties to one another” (2014 p. 573). Asking people to see such links can make the material realities of

others, their labor and the injustices often surrounding it, more apparent. This pedagogical exercise represents an (a)venue. The instructor is taking an action, the lesson he imagined, as a step towards alleviating unjust situations. Of course, this is a very small step, but an (a)venue nonetheless. Recognizing the realities revealed by critically examining the material conditions of labor can inform imagining (a)venues. It is important for social action. As Artz claims, for social action the first thing a person needs to do is “recognize the material conditions of our lives, especially the social relations of capitalism and its class contradictions expressed in ...consumerism, individualism...and the quality and inequality of life” (2011 p.54). Such recognition increases the understanding needed to imagine (a)venues for effective social action.

Critical materialism is a good segue between the abstractness of imagined avenues to the material, physical, and literal venues. In a simple sense, venues are where organized events happen: a convention center or other geographical location that can be identified on a map. For social action, venues can be places where activism takes place, be it a soup kitchen feeding the hungry or the streets surrounding a capital building for a protest. Of course, these venues are necessary for social action and in some cases, a venue for action cannot be imagined, as was the case for Fleckenstein’s example: “Magaly has no safe forum from which to protest her mistreatment and to counter the story of her death disseminated through government-supported newspapers.” Magaly had been mistakenly

arrested and reported as dead by the government and “she has no place from which she can speak, only places where she must be silent” (2010 p.17). In order to survive, Magaly must remain in the shadows, “living invisible to the government eye” (Fleckenstein, 2010 p.17). Activist inquiry seeks to counter this with the insider-outsider whose position of power can be used to identify venues from which to work on behalf and with the silenced. Venues emphasize the embodied experience as people move in and through places, intentionally seeing and/or aimlessly scanning. As will be discussed in the next section, Addams’s embodied experience of the neighborhoods surrounding Hull House demonstrate intentionally noticing the unnoticed and what (a)venues those observations suggest.

Addams experienced Halsted street, but to be even more specific, she moved through the space and place of these communities, which presented to her possibilities for both avenues and venues – imagining what might be done and a location for action. First, to clarify the ideas of space and place, in *Geographies of Writing*, Nedra Reynolds offers up this description:

Space is probably the less understood or the more-taken-for-granted. As logic or common sense would indicate, space is “bigger” than place, but the two are intricately related. Places emerge from space with the passage of time...Space is the more conceptual notion...while place is defined by people and events. In one sense, places are fixed position on a map, or you can follow directions to get there. Space, if you will, structures our habitats but cannot be inhabited. Places touch people’s lives and evoke memories and emotions. (2004 p.181)

A place could be a store or a town square, but the latter is often referred to as a public space. A town square may simply be referred to as a “space” because it is an area undefined by walls, where diverse groups of people sometimes meet for events or merely pass through in daily life. Reynolds argues that place is “a lived event” in the sense that there are “ways people move through the world” and places have “built-in constraints that determine certain practices, which then become habitual or taken for granted” (2004 p. 14). Furthermore, ways of moving through the world also encompasses, “the adjustments and compromises, the shifts and turns in the process of accommodating to a place” (2004 p.14). Reynolds gives a good example:

A composition instructor assigned to a tiered lecture hall with bolted-down seats is upset by the room assignment; she must make contortionist changes to the collaborative groups practices of the class. However, at some point in the semester, the configurations become so routine that the room assignment is no longer an issue – everyone adapts. Once constraints become familiar...they become encoded and thus rarely noticed or questioned. The daily routine elides the process of adapting...and the idea that space doesn't matter [takes over]. (2004 p.14).

The whole class had to adjust to the restrictions imposed by the space but it quickly became habitual. The poster on the sidewalk is an apt example: “A poster down here makes you stop. A homeless youth down here makes you walk faster” (Figure 4.2). When people ignore the homeless, they are exhibiting not so much a forced but a culturally learned adjustment to the space that determines the practice of “look forward and keep walking.” The poster also represents a good example of an

imagined (a)venue for social action, although it is uncertain whether it assuaged the issue.



Figure 4.2 Homeless youth advocacy poster

Additionally, Reynolds asserts that space cannot be inhabited; however, I argue that space can indeed be inhabited in the literal sense and that habitus, a concept she draws upon, plays a role in whether a place or space becomes an (a)venue for social action. "Habitus," Reynolds says, "attempts to represent how social behaviors, habits, become so naturalized as to be inscribed onto the body" (2004 p.58). People develop habitual behaviors when moving through a space or place and these can leave visible indications on the body. Reynolds references such examples as "a ballet student whose legs and posture already show

the signs of dance training, or someone abused as a child who often cowers at a raised hand or sudden movement” (2004 p.58). The habitual way someone moves through a space or place can indicate that a person is not open to interacting with their surroundings – the environment and the other people in it. Places are constructed, “Drawing upon hearsay, family stories, ‘common knowledge,’ or media images, notions about a place build up over time, become difficult to undo” (Reynolds, 2004 p.145-146). A person may see a particular place as dangerous because of a story a friend told her about almost being robbed. Someone may hunch their shoulders and/or walk quickly through a place or space they feel is unsafe or a situation they prefer to ignore. Such habits inhibit understanding for effective (a)venues. Recall the visual and rhetorical habits of Addams’s readers from chapter two. They experienced place as the (habitually) taken-for-granted safe space away from lower-class neighborhoods and impoverished people, but should they commit to engaged experiences, such places can afford new understandings and possible (a)venues. Avoidance habits then can often be observed when a privileged insider accidentally or even purposefully drives, walks, or moves through poverty-stricken neighborhoods or a space that has been inhabited by the homeless. The practices and habits of the homeless assuredly get inscribed upon their bodies, which may never recover from exposure, hunger, and thirst. The insider must eventually, through engaged experience, recognize and alter habituated behaviors in places

and spaces of poverty and oppression, opening up to engaged experience. This can facilitate a better understanding of the situation, necessary for (a)venues.

Geographically identifiable places for social action are material venues, but they can never be divorced from the reflection of avenues – the imaginative, reflective, and inventive. In her book on democracy and places of invention, Candice Rai offers an explanation of place but with the addition of an inventive property:

The rhetorical forces that circulate and the resources that manifest within social spaces constitute, then, what I call the places of invention – a simple concept intended to capture the radical complexity of rhetorical situations by evoking multiple and interrelated meanings of “place” as the raw materialities of concrete places, the social narrative and histories we invest in those places; the genre, practices and institutions that emerge and help people act within places; and the rhetorical commonplaces, or topoi, that travel within places. (2016 p.8)

Reynolds mentions such a place of invention in the higher education trend of sending students out of the classroom and into communities they may not otherwise visit. This is done “in order to position the learner as an outsider, a foreigner, an other” (2004 p.113). Such a positioning, Reynolds argues, can cause discomfort, which “often stimulates reflection” (2004 p.113). People experience place in different material as well as metaphorical ways depending on familiarity, rumors about the place or area, and more, but these ways, which have often become habitual may be disrupted and stimulate reflection, increase understanding, and work towards (a)venues for ethical social action.

Identifiable places play an important role for social action venues and imagining (a)venues for social action. As will be looked at in this next section, Addams anticipated these ways of thinking about the material, metaphorical, and place and space, even critical materialism as she uncovered and spread the word about the underlying systemic causes of poverty and inter-class strife. (A)venues are about keeping in mind the shuttling between the effect physical place has on ideation (the formation of concepts), which emerges from engaged embodied experiences, and the influence imagination has on possible social actions as situated in particular places and spaces.

(A)venues for Social Action

Addams's engaged experience suggests (a)venues for effective social action by making use of such tools as critical imagination and materialism as well as the possibilities and restrictions of the lived experience of place. While she does not reference Hull House directly in *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Jane Addams's own understanding of the marginalized — their thoughts, stories, experiences, suffering, and needs — grew largely out of her engaged experiences there and in the surrounding neighborhoods. This place or venue of Hull House was critical. It was Addams's primary avenue (approach) to engaging with such communities was non-judgmental, open, and sympathetic.

Essentially, the intention of this avenue was to help her and others, including members of various communities, to imagine (a)venues for effective social action.

First, a little more needs to be said about Hull House and its mission in order to contextualize Addams's experiences and how those suggest (a)venues. Addams and Ellen Gates Starr co-founded Hull House in 1889. The settlement house stood in Chicago's Near West Side, the Nineteenth Ward on Halsted street, in a neighborhood consisting primarily of working-class Italian immigrants. Addams lived in Hull House for several years and this "immersed her in disempowered communities" (2009 p.54). Knight describes what Addams and Starr must have experienced during those first few days: "Those smells — of rotting food, animal carcasses, spilled beer, and human and animal waste...at night, big black rats scurried about...and then there were the 'dirt and the soot'



Figure 4.3 Halsted Street circa 1900

from the coal smoke of factories” (2005 p.199-200; Figure 4.3). These material conditions undoubtedly disturbed Addams, positioned her as an outsider, and just as Reynolds argues, stimulated reflect. Although from affluence and wealth herself, these conditions did not deter her nor did the neighbors’ initial reluctance to accept invitations to Hull House (Knight, 2005 p.199). It was a place with people’s attendant and habitual ways of conducting their day-to-day business and personal lives, and the people living there were suspicious of prosperous women who wanted to live surrounded by such conditions. Addams and Starr’s conviction eventually paid off though, and the people in the community largely accepted that they genuinely wanted to help (Knight, 2005 p.203-205). It seems

apparent that, as was described in the last chapter, they had adopted an open-minded stance of compassion, listening, and care for engaging with people in the community. They were invited more and more to people's homes, simply to visit with and hear peoples' stories or to minister to their needs in some way (Knight, 2005 p.203-205). Their stance and the people's eventual acceptance of their presence gave them more opportunities to learn about the people and their struggles.

Hull House is an example of an (a)venue: a physical location that facilitated imagining different approaches to social action, which continually evolved through ongoing discovery and knowledge-building. Hull House had a couple of primary missions that coincide with (a)venues for social action: "to provide the women and men of Addams and Starr's generation, over-cultured and isolated in their class, with a way to live up to the high ideals they had been taught," and "to repair the damage done to egalitarian social relations by massive industrialization...and massive immigration" (Knight, 2010 p.66). These missions were to be realized to some degree through the volunteers that came from the upper classes to Hull House and through the social and educational opportunities for the community. Hull House provided a physical venue for both missions, which helped Addams, the volunteers, and the community to imagine possibilities for social action. Addams learned increasingly more about the conditions that perpetuated poverty and injustice and became close to the community. Her and Starr's visits to the derelict houses of the poor to

mind children and nurse the sick “taught them more than anything else they did about the lives of the working-class people among whom they now lived” (Knight, 2005 p.206). What Addams learned over the ensuing years’ experience deepened her understanding of the complex challenges these people faced: “the city’s economy and the practices of employers had produced the scarcity around them [and] city politics influenced the number of jobs in the ward” (Knight, 2005 p.201). She learned about “the grinding nature of industrial work, the reasons for the neighborhood children’s intense material aspirations, and most important, the impact that poverty had on souls and minds” (Knight, 2005 p.202-203). Shortly, Addams used what she learned to help in any way she could, turning her knowledge into many different (a)venues of social action. Hull House provided a venue (place) to test those imagined avenues. She devised all sorts of clubs and educational events at Hull House and with community members, Addams helped to organize an array of services: kindergarten, education classes, college extension courses; relief, loan, burial, and literary societies; Russian, Polish, German Jewish, and Greek organizations (Knight, 2005 p.204). The lectures given at Hull House covered such topics as strikes, socialism, and trade unions (Knight, 2005 p.205). For Addams, other upper-class volunteers, and the people in the various communities surrounding Hull House, these events and services gave them multiple opportunities to engage, listen, and learn about other’s experiences.

Hull House is one example of an (a)venue, but to return to Democracy and Social Ethics, Addams described a variety of experiences that imagine, but do not prescribe, possible (a)venues for social action. In her chapter on political reform, Addams describes what she discovered about political corruption. First, she noticed that the upper-class largely disregarded politics “as something off by itself...recogniz[ing] their duty as part of good citizenship, but political effort [was] not the expression of their moral or social life” (1902 p.66). They focused on how the government functions – the procedures and reforming them. These were elected officials and representatives that pushed for procedural reform, but failed to perceive the needs of lower, working-class people who looked to those “who are part of the entire life of the community” because they “liv[e] near to the masses of voters, knowing them intimately” (1902 p.67, 68). Therefore, how these men were perceived by members of the community depended on place as a physical location. Men in leadership roles living in physical proximity to large concentrations of the working-class were perceived more favorably; unfortunately, even if their actions belied corruption. For example, Addams recalls the situation surrounding a corrupt city council member, an alderman. This alderman managed saloons, accepted bribes from corporations, and bribed his political opposition by offering them and their children jobs (Addams 1902 p.72, 78). Recognizing this corruption and seeing how the alderman used his knowledge of the community to exploit people, the women of Hull House

repeatedly attempted to unseat him (Hamington, 2009 p.73). They were unsuccessful. The key to retaining his power was place-based because he lived near them and knew them. In addition, he would see a need and provide: “pays rent for the hard-pressed tenant,” he “distributes each Christmas many tons of turkeys,” “gives presents at weddings and christenings,” and provides funeral services for those who cannot afford it (Addams, 1902 p.70, 72, 71). Addams recognizes the machinery at work to secure the loyalty of the people to the alderman, one of which was charity. However, she always held firm to the belief that by itself such charity could do little to alleviate the underlying problems stemming from such corruption. So, what (a)venues might she imagine to solve or merely alleviate the problem?

The (a)venues Addams imagines take into consideration the materiality of the situations she has observed, analyzed, and reflected upon. Someone truly capable of rectifying the situation would, according to Addams, be a person:

...who really knew the people and their great human needs, who believed that it was the business of government to serve them, and who further recognized the educative power of a sense of responsibility, would possess a clew (*sic.*) by which he might analyze the situation. He would find out what needs, which the alderman supplies, are legitimate ones which the city itself could undertake. (1902 p. 79)

The imagined avenue then would essentially be a person of good character: someone who acknowledged their social responsibility and how enacting it builds knowledge and an understanding of the needs that might

be supplied for by government relief. Addams describes this person as “a man of high moral culture [and] as one who thinks of himself, not as an isolated individual, but as a part in a social organism” (1902 p.79). In fact, Addams contends that everyone should eventually be convinced that “his individual needs are common needs, that is, public needs, and that they can only be legitimately supplied for him when they are supplied for all” (1902 p. 79). This repeats her call for social ethics and may seem somewhat repetitive and circular. The (a)venue consists of the very components of activist inquiry: acknowledging social responsibility and having engaged experiences. The suggestion of government assistance however is new and more concrete. If some of people’s most pressing needs were met not by an official close to the people but corrupt, then perhaps he could be elected out of office. It indicates at least one (a)venue Addams believed could be successful. Such government assistance programs have since been instituted, but the solution she posits is not as key here as the process of imagining (a)venues being suggestive and not prescriptive.

Addams also made observations about education and its relationship to manual, factory labor that indicate the need to imagine (a)venues for teaching the value of all work. Engaging with community members, Addams saw the extent to which formal, public education was failing the working class: “prepar[ing] children almost exclusively for commercial and professional life” (1902 p.59). One of her primary

concerns was that this education tacitly promised upward mobility when the reality was that most children would begin, as early as 12, working in the factories and likely remain there for a lifetime. It could be assumed from this that Addams endorsed an (a)venue where students learn only that which they need to work in the factories. However, she was actually more concerned about the reproduction of a class relationship: professional careers are better and more valuable than jobs in manual labor. Addams noted the implicit devaluation of manual labor in an education geared towards commercial, clerical, or professional careers:

The children of the working people learn many useful things in the public schools, but the commercial arithmetic, and many other studies, are founded on the tacit assumption that a boy rises in life by getting away from manual labor — that every promising boy goes into business or a profession. (1902 p.59)

Of course, the vast majority did not achieve this goal. In fact, as Addams elaborated, “the one fixed habit which the boy carries away with him from the school to the factory is the feeling that his work is merely provisional” (1902 p.58). Factory work is temporary. The child’s experience at school has taught him that his “present effort is to get ready for something else” - a professional career (1902 p.58). This reinforces the dominant social ideology that business careers are the only or best way to achieve a higher class, socially and financially. It also teaches “the schoolboy within a town” Addams noticed, “[to look] upon work in the factory as an occupation of ignorant and unsuccessful men” (p.59). The message is that the educated man gets a professional or business career

and he does this by going to school. Based on her experiences — her observations of and conversations with the community (i.e. amidst the physical venue of the neighborhoods and their residents) — the avenue Addams imagines is a broadened conception of education that entails teaching the value that all labor is essential for life and therefore worthy of equal regard.

Teaching manual laborers how their work contributes to the social whole is a more specific avenue that branches off from this broader valuing of all labor. From Addams's perspective all people's work should be valued in as much equal measure as can be reasonably attained because:

Theoretically we would all admit that the man at the bottom, who performs the meanest and humblest work, so long as the work is necessary, performs a useful function; but we do not live up to our theories, and in addition to his hard and uninteresting work he is covered with a sort of contempt, and unless he falls into illness or trouble, he receives little sympathy or attention. (1902 p.59)

Manual labor and low-paying jobs are looked down upon even as people profess the value of the work being done by maids, construction and food service workers and so on. Addams argues for giving the average working man “some notion of his social and industrial value” (1902 p.57). Giving a worker “the conception of historic continuity in order to reveal to him the purpose and utility of his work, and he can only be stimulated and dignified as he obtains a conception of his...relation to society” (1902 p.62). People must be able to see themselves as Addams

says, “in connection and cooperation with the whole” (1902 p.66). This represents an avenue, but how might it be achieved and through what venue? In Addams’s experience, “commercialism itself, at least in its larger aspect, tends to educate the workingman better than organized education does” (1902 p.65). Addams is referring to a company out of Dayton, Ohio that held yearly gatherings of all its employees. During these gatherings, such commonplace things as profits and output were reported, but also: “Any man who has made an invention in connection with the machinery of the factory, at this time publicly receives a prize, and suggestions are approved that tend to increase the comfort and social facilities of the employees” (1902 p.65). This is an admittedly idyllic and largely disproven approach since Addams’s time, but she believed that it could help workers to see their single contribution to the company in relation to its overall goal. She says, “at least for the moment there is a complete esprit de corps, and the youngest and least skilled employee sees himself in connection with the interests of the firm, and the spread of an invention” (1902 p.65). She admits though that it is a “crude example of what might be done” (1902 p.65). However, again, this specific (a)venue is not the point, but rather how experience informs understanding and can lead to imagining possible (a)venues for alleviating a social injustice. In this case, it is the social and financial devaluing of manual labor, which leads to increased inequality and class division.

In Addams's criticism of education and its relationship to manual labor lies a persisting issue. Education still largely privileges professional careers as tools of social mobility. This is not in itself a bad thing; however, social mobility is still predominately characterized by a move from manual labor to the "better" non-manual labor. This seems natural to many because professional labor typically comes with higher salaries. However, this may be at least in part due to the poor perception of manual laborers. There is an underlying suggestion of an (a)venue to possibly lessen this problem: educational institutions should incorporate into their curriculum lessons that show respect and appreciation for jobs traditionally looked down upon, such as factory workers in Addams's day and janitors, fast-food workers, retail salesmen, among others in ours.

Conclusion

Formulating ways to alter and not reinforce unjust situations is challenging, but engaged experience of the kind described in this dissertation can foster understanding and knowledge-building. Engaged experiences can result in new understandings of the people and the underlying causes of marginalization, oppression, and poverty. This knowledge can in turn suggest what I have been calling (a)venues. (A)venues represent both (imaginative) approaches or ideas for social action and places or venues in which to act. Addams suggested places,

such as a settlement house. Truly close engagement of the kind Addams endorsed, living and moving through the neighborhoods themselves, immerses an individual in the community, which can disrupt visual and rhetorical habits and motivate people to take action. Addams primarily wanted to foster in her readers the insider-outsider subjectivity and she had a conviction that an insider to wealth and power could and should engage closely and openly with the marginalized and oppressed. Activist inquiry heeds that conviction. Engaged experience provides opportunities for discovery and learning in place and for consciously making use of the tools of critical imagination and critical materialism for (a)venues. These can expose links between people and their labor for example that for the privileged insider were heretofore hidden behind the train. These can lead to yet more (a)venues for social action. The process of activist inquiry and thinking of agency as invention comes full circle. Acknowledging social responsibility can motivate someone to have engaged experiences, which can motivate them to imagine (a)venues for effective social action, to take action, and to reflect upon an action's efficacy.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Taking Activist Inquiry on the Road

Out there things can happen and frequently do to people as brainy and footsy as you. And when things start to happen, don't worry. Don't stew. Just go right along. You'll start happening too. Oh! The places you'll go!
— Dr. Seuss (1990)

As I sat down to write this conclusion, Dr. Seuss's classic *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* popped into my head. Perhaps it is simply because I am on the verge of embarking on the next journey in my own life, but I felt compelled to track the book down. After some rummaging, I found it in my son's room on top of a big stack of books, as if awaiting me. I flipped through it and noticed some surprising parallels between the story of the protagonist and activist inquiry. The protagonist moves through an array of different places and spaces, discovering and experiencing all the good and bad that life brings. The bad things will be disturbing like the disruptive emotional experiences of activist inquiry: "you can get all hung up in a prickly perch," there will be "bang-ups and hang-ups," and sometimes "you'll get mixed up" (1990). Other moments seem to prompt self-reflection, flexibility, and change: "never forget to be dexterous and deft and never mix up your right foot with your left" and "be sure when you step, step with care and great tact and remember that Life's a Great Balancing Act" (1990). As with the caring, compassionate stance needed for engaged experience, remember to act with care and deliberation. The

overall encouraging tone of the tale also seems to urge the reader to go out into the world and discover and learn about all different kinds of people and places. All the while, the reader's agency is affirmed: "You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes, you can steer yourself any direction you choose" (1990 p.2). However, as we know, the idea of agency is not as clear as this suggests.

For Rhetoric/Composition scholars, agency has been a hard concept to clarify. Employing the term "agency" immediately invokes the tension between humanist and postmodernist perspectives. Thinking of agency as a form of invention, activist inquiry, has aimed to shift the conversation's focus from this dichotomy to how social action may be generated. The extreme perspectives of agency have largely been considered unrealistic. People do not have (own) either complete agency nor are their lives entirely pre-determined by their social, political, economic, or cultural experiences - past or present. Scholars also recognize that the rhetorical situation can hinder or promote people's sense that their actions can and will affect positive social change. Therefore, many scholars have turned to analyzing specific situations, looking for and critiquing the factors that hindered or promoted a person's or a group of people's agency. Implicitly, and on occasion explicitly, such work veers towards imagining how the resultant conclusions from such analyses could be used to encourage or kindle agency in others for the purpose of effective social action. Fleckenstein, for example, theorizes

knots of social action and argues that visual and rhetorical habits in place can work in ways that bring about social action.

Activist inquiry has aimed to contribute to a similar theorization by positing a non-prescriptive, inquiry-oriented approach to inventing agency for social action – an approach that Jane Addams presaged in *Democracy and Social Ethics*. Although she was writing this book over a century ago, as many scholars in the fields of philosophy and education have attested, her work and philosophy remains relevant to contemporary social activists. Nackenoff puts it this way, “If would-be reformers were to look to a usable past in order to craft a persuasive model for twenty-first century democratic selves, they would gain a great deal by drawing upon the wisdom, vision, and activism of Jane Addams” (2009 p.120). I looked to Addams and discovered that her methodology in *Democracy and Social Ethics* compellingly demonstrated an approach to encouraging social action that coincided with many of the steps I wanted activist inquiry to take. It also endorsed the characteristics I wanted those steps to include in order to invent agency for effective social action. Thinking about agency as a form of rhetorical invention has attempted to shift scholar-activist’s attention away, even if only a little, from the humanist/postmodernist dichotomy invoked by using the term. Instead, it puts the focus on the production of agency for the purposes of social action: to assuage injustice and enact positive social change that lessens the detrimental effects of discrimination. In this final chapter, I will sum up

the process of activist inquiry and then consider some of its limitations as a top-down model for initiating social action. I will briefly explore and suggest how activist inquiry might function in the context of the 21st century.

Activist Inquiry in a Nutshell

Activist inquiry has three overarching components or steps to inventing agency for social action: recognition, motivation, and (a)venues. The first step involves ways to tackle the challenge of convincing others that they have a social obligation to the well-being of the marginalized and oppressed. This sense of social responsibility is what Addams's referred to as a social ethic and the methodology she used in *Democracy and Social Ethics* to try to convince her readers has several features that activist inquiry draws on. These are like components or sub-steps under the broader heading of recognition. First, a rhetor-activist needs to have a very nuanced understanding of their target audience, what in Rhetoric/Composition is called audience addressed (Ede and Lunsford 1984). Addams, for example, knew her readers very well because she had grown up among them – the upper-class elites. While this was Addams's target audience, the middle and upper-middle classes are also among possible target audiences for activist inquiry. The point is Addams was an insider and for activist inquiry, I argue that being an insider is the

most ideal position for knowing and gaining knowledge about an audience. While she would not have used this terminology, Addams knew her readers' visual and rhetorical habits. An outsider, as opposed to an insider, must overcome any number of boundaries: cultural, racial, political, economical, and so on, making it more challenging to glean accurate, useful, and detailed information about an audience. Of course, it must also be admitted that having a target audience does not preclude possible secondary and tertiary audiences. Having a specific target audience, however, can make the task of audience addressed and audience invoked, the next two steps, more straightforward. The rhetor-activist uses their knowledge to create (invoke) the reader. This is a fiction the rhetor-activist constructs that describes the reader as having already adopted a socially responsible role. The construction can be aided with the strategic use of the rhetorical "we," like Addams uses, to promote a sense of solidarity, like-mindedness, and cooperation. "We" urges the reader to identify with the rhetor-activist as an insider – as one of them. It also helps with the more difficult task of gently and implicitly criticizing the reader's individualistic and often selfish perspective on issues pertaining to marginalized and oppressed people. Remember that the goal here is convince an audience to acknowledge their social responsibility, and acknowledging this is a step towards building a sense of agency through the rhetorical situation. Tacit critiques have a chance of revealing the contradictions inherent in hypocrisy: professing to care about

others in general and the oppressed more specifically but failing to act upon that value. I say “have a chance” here because there is no guarantee. Overcoming people’s resistance to consider themselves more critically, realize value-based discrepancies, and make personal changes is very challenging. This is where engaged experience becomes important.

Engaged experience plays a key role in all three parts of activist inquiry. Enacting an ethic of social responsibility necessarily requires the audience to take some kind of action and engaged experience can help them to acknowledge as well as reinforce the social ethic. In other words, as Addams argues, wide experience teaches people why they should be socially responsible because through it they begin to sympathize and even empathize with others. Engaged experience though is more specific than wide experience. It entails deliberate, purposeful interaction with marginalized and oppressed people in their communities. This cannot be a superficial kind of interaction; therefore, a person must discover/uncover, examine, and reflect upon their preconceived notions about these people and their communities – their visual and rhetorical habits. These can hinder, or prompt as Fleckenstein argues, agency for social action. Engaged experience necessitates a particular rhetorical stance that takes us to the next step: motivation.

Motivation represents a particular challenge to inventing agency for social action. For activist inquiry, this means convincing the target

audience to be motivated to engage, in particular ways, with marginalized and oppressed communities. Particular ways of engaging represent a rhetorical stance. Engagement for motivation is not just a question of what to do, but how to do it: how should a person who has acknowledged their social responsibility engage with these communities? An upper-class person cannot (and should not) mindlessly walk into a lower-class African American community and expect to 1) be accepted and 2) know what needs to be done to help them. Eventually being accepted by a community, as Addams eventually was, essentially can give a person insider-knowledge, like that of knowing the target audience because of being an insider. Engaged experience can foster such acceptance, but first a person needs to carefully consider their rhetorical stance: their attitude towards or way of facing different others. For the motivation work of activist inquiry, rhetorical stance must incorporate such feminist practices as compassionate living, rhetorical listening, and embodied care (Fleckenstein, Ratcliffe, and Hamington). These practices come together to describe a stance that is compassionate, caring, and open to hearing others' stories.

Adopting this stance for engaged experience facilitates knowledge-building and understanding of the community and its people. This can motivate would-be activists, giving them a sense of agency for social action because for one, they better understand the reality of the situations faced by marginalized and oppressed people. They perceive some of the

underlying causes of poverty as stemming from a host of socio-political factors. Secondly, engaged experience practiced with an open rhetorical stance may reveal significant emotionally disruptive contradictions similar in some ways to those that occur during recognition work. These contradictions can nurture sympathy and empathy, helping a person to make the transition from feeling for to feeling with others and furthering even more knowledge-building and understanding. As Hamington puts it, Addams believed that “if we know one another better, we will care...if someone who is misunderstood, or made to be ‘other’ can be brought into the light of familiarity, the potential for care is greater” (2009 p.73). For instance, a person may assume for example that a family of five on welfare must be abusing the government support system and doing little work to support themselves. It would be easy for some to look down upon the family. However, by engaging with them from an open rhetorical stance, a contradiction emerges: this is not, as expected, a single-mother raising her four kids, but a couple who work two jobs a piece. They are un-skilled laborers because of a poor education, stemming from the inadequately funded schools of the neighborhoods in which they were born and raised – not a choice of their making. For some, it is emotionally disturbing to discover not only that they were mistaken, but that factors out of the family’s control have led them to being in an unjust situation. As sympathy, empathy, knowledge and understanding increase because of engaged experience and the contradictions it can reveal so too does the

(potential for) motivation and agency to take social action.

Engaged experience segues into the next part of activist inquiry: the challenge of knowing what social action could be effective. Social action in this sense includes both imagining what might work and where it might work, what I have come to call (a)venues. Avenues are the ideas formulated through engaged experience as a person moves through and/or inhabits spaces and places, which could turn into venues for social action. People adopt unconscious and conscious ways of moving through a space or place. Someone may move languidly and peacefully through a park, sensing that it is a safe place in a safe area of the city, or they may move hurriedly through a subway in what they perceive as the dangerous part of town. As Reynolds would argue, both are ways of experiencing the space. Addams initially moved through the neighborhoods around Hull House with some trepidation, but committing to what I would say is engaged experience, she eventually adopted a sense of belonging to the places and spaces. Arriving at such a point, this kind of engaged experience, this moving through and inhabiting, means the outsider has become an insider, and as previously touched upon, an insider knows more about the rhetorical situation. Critical imagination and critical materialism contribute layers to this experience. They provide critique and analysis for seeing the unseen and conceiving of ways of and places for ameliorating unjust situations (Scott and Welch; Kirsch and Royster).

Taken together, each component of activist inquiry contributes to

inventing a sense of agency for social action. At last, agency is invented through activist inquiry as those involved have built, layer by layer through this process, a sense that their actions can have positive, ethical effects that decrease inequities. Recognition, motivation, and (a)venues come

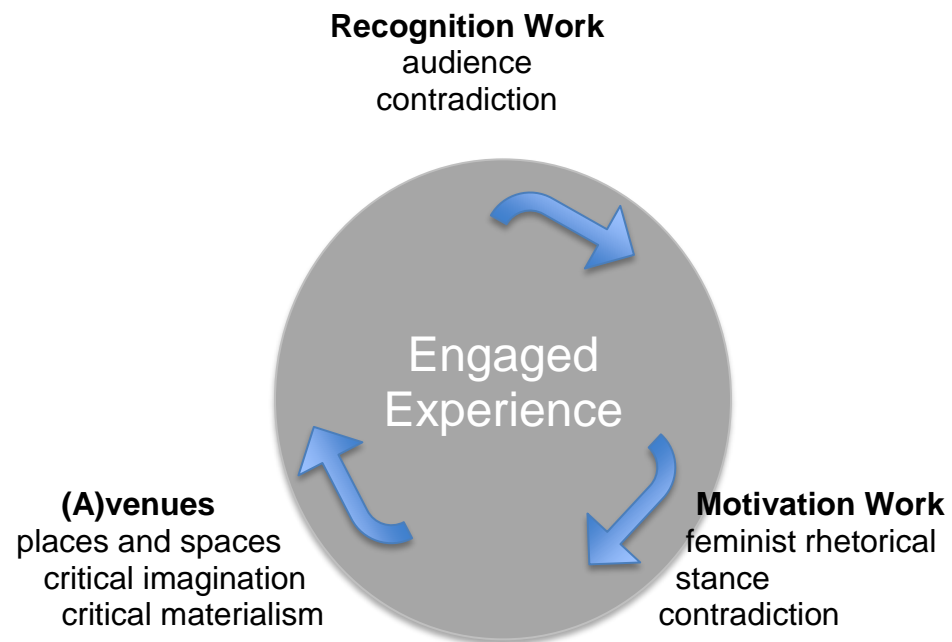


Figure 5.1 Visual representation of activist inquiry

together in a circle of interaction between and among their constituent parts. Each of the three parts attempts to consider various aspects of the rhetorical situation while purposefully remaining open enough to imagined possibilities to be non-prescriptive. Being non-prescriptive eases the impact of some of activist inquiry's limitations, the subject of the next section.

The Limitations of a Top-Down Model for Social Action

As with any theory, process, or heuristic, activist inquiry has its limitations particularly as it pertains to the hoped-for end result of social action. I will briefly look at a couple of them: the impact of power relations on activist inquiry's top-down process for social action, and the risk and drawbacks of it being misinterpreted as a call for charity work. Activist inquiry is not guaranteed to function as readily as it has been laid out in this dissertation, and the power relations between the wealthy and the impoverished exacerbate its chances of working. Activist inquiry is primarily a top-down model for social action, where wealthier people are eventually moved to assuage unjust situations; however, as I mentioned earlier, "wealthier" does not necessarily mean just the top 1%. Although I have referenced Freire, this is in contradiction to his pedagogy, which imagines empowering the poor and oppressed to take control of their education and confront those with social, political, and economic power: a bottom-up model of social action. More recently, Artz makes a compelling argument for the working majority's power and obligation to create social change, "to end and prevent US wars...to reverse global warming, to end race and gender discrimination" (2011 p.54). He takes this as far as believing, "the future of humanity depends on the ability of those who work to speak, to act, to lead" (2011 p.54). I do not disagree with Freire, Artz, or anyone else on this matter, but activist inquiry does not preclude the

agency or empowerment of the oppressed. They may work in conjunction or separately towards the same social action goals. Furthermore, activist inquiry stresses working with the oppressed and it has the potential for the privileged insider to take on the role of facilitating their agency and empowerment without prescribing action. Addams for example encouraged community members, and not just upper-class volunteers, to propose, guide, and teach their own education courses.

Regardless, the power that wealth and authority wield can hinder activist inquiry because, for one, a privileged insider may misunderstand the situation and/or misrepresent the people involved, a concern Addams echoed. Engaged experience involves going into marginalized and oppressed communities, even possibly living in them as she did. A privileged insider may very well remain an outsider to the community, never fully being accepted sufficiently enough for members to feel comfortable voicing their concerns, stories, and ideas. In this case, the privileged insider's knowledge and understanding of the situation is more likely to be incomplete, risking ineffective social action that re-inscribes the injustice. However, as was discussed in chapter three, activist inquiry proposes a specific rhetorical stance whose purpose is to diminish the problems associated with power relations. It asks an insider to reflect upon and adopt a stance characterized by compassion, non-judgment, care, and openness for engaging with people and their communities: compassionate living, rhetorical listening, and embodied care

(Fleckenstein, Ratcliffe, and Hamington). The intention behind these, as mentioned in the above summary of activist inquiry, is that they can encourage sympathy (feeling for), empathy (feeling with), knowledge-building, and understanding, which can pave the way for more effective social action. Power will remain a problem even if a person has good intentions though because it has been argued and generally accepted among scholars that power, like agency, cannot be possessed by a person. In the Foucauldian sense, power is dispersed and diffused through discourse (1995). Nonetheless, I contend that the rhetorical stance for engaged experience holds promise for effective social action and that a top-down model can be effective. Artz believes in the power of the working class majority, but he also feels the second thing that needs to be done for social action is to “identify human agents capable of making fundamental social change – those social classes and their allies who have a vested interest, some predisposition, and the actual power to improve the human condition” (2011 p.14). For such a privileged insider to power, an open, caring, non-judgmental stance like I have attempted to describe, stands a chance of diminishing the possibility of misunderstanding and misrepresentation.

Another limitation to activist inquiry is that at any point in the process it may be misinterpreted as merely calling for charity work. This depends on how such work is defined, but looking to Addams for guidance, she relegated charity to throwing money at a problem and did

not deem it effective. Of course, many of the things she did for the Halsted Street community today would be thought of as charity work: nursing the sick, visiting the poor, and yes, even providing some financial assistance for emergency situations. However, to think of the social action resulting from activist inquiry as charity alone risks addressing Scott and Welch's foremost train and failing to perceive the underlying, systemic reasons of injustice running in the background. Certainly, this is always a risk and the drawbacks, once more, are misunderstanding the situation and possibly reinforcing it; however, activist inquiry calls for the engaged experience with the hope that it will help a person see the train running in the background – those political, social, and economic forces that perpetuate classism, racism, sexism, and homophobia to name just a few.

Activist Inquiry in the 21st Century

In her article on agency, Cooper says that “we need a pedagogy of responsibility” (2011 p.443). The first component of activist inquiry, acknowledging social responsibility, seems apt for such a pedagogy. Activist inquiry has not been formulated for the classroom and in the spirit of being non-prescriptive, I will leave it to others to flesh out the specifics of a composition class pedagogy that utilizes the process. However, I can briefly imagine what it might more generally look like. Activist inquiry lends itself to community service learning, which is sometimes called

community engagement learning. One service-learning instructor aptly describes service learning as:

A form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students ... seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves. In the process, students link personal and social development with academic and cognitive development ... experience enhances understanding; understanding leads to more effective action. (Bandy)

Activist inquiry clearly coincides with the experience, action, reflection, and understanding in service learning, and there is a long history of service learning in Rhetoric/Composition instruction as well. However, I have serious doubts that the kind of deep, engaged experience activist inquiry calls for would be possible in a 16-week course. This is not to say that students could not or would not discover, learn, and come to a better understanding of the communities and people they would engage with, but for inventing agency for effective social action, this would likely be superficial knowledge. Thinking of her on geographical methodology and how to deploy it in an educational setting, Reynolds notes a few of the many limitations to service learning. Many scholars report that students “fall back on ‘How can we help these people?’ instead of the harder question, ‘Why are the conditions this way?’” (2004 p.133). Since activist inquiry, in order to invent agency, aims for action beyond what the first question implies, charity, this would be a severe limitation to its effectiveness in a coursework setting. For the student, there is also the requirement aspect of service learning assignments. They become forced

volunteers working for a grade and this often backfires either for the community or the student and sometimes for both Forbes et. al. argues (1999). The community may not understand why students are being required to volunteer and assume it must be some form of forced restitution, a punishment for bad behavior. Because of this assumption, some students have been treated poorly by the very people they are trying to help (2004). Reynolds goes on to look at some additional drawbacks, however, these few examples of the drawbacks of service learning are enough to not recommend it to the work of activist inquiry.

The following is a quick run-down of what I have imagined activist inquiry might look like. Activist inquiry seems more fitting for rhetor-activists, such as Rhetoric/Composition scholars, but also anyone who has already become Knight's existential outsider-insider. Hypothetically, I imagine a person who may not be particularly wealthy per se, but has some social, political, and/or economic power as part of the dominant culture. Let's say it is a solidly middle-class woman and she begins with some of her close friends or family. She knows them and invokes; she implicitly critiques them and uses the rhetorical "we," appealing to shared values. Gradually, over time, one of them, let us say her brother-law, is encouraged to volunteer or otherwise engage with marginalized communities and people. Our protagonist begins to discuss his experiences, how he feels about them, how he is approaching them. She talks to him about how the way he approaches the people and situations

of his volunteer work, she urges him to be careful. She begins to incorporate discussions about the underlying practices of compassionate living, rhetorical listening, and embodied care. She does not have to use this terminology and in fact, for casual circumstances it would likely be best to avoid it. Gradually, he comes to understand the importance of how he approaches his volunteer work. He begins to listen to their stories as he helps them fill their carts with food from the pantry. He builds knowledge and understanding of some of the underlying systemic causes of poverty and oppression. Finally, he uses that knowledge to imagine (a)venues for social action. During all this time, he has slowly been building agency, inventing it from all the features of the rhetorical situations he has encountered along the way.

Realizing this is quite general, activist inquiry as a practiced process needs to be implemented and analyzed for its efficacy. Also, in the above hypothetical scenario, I used the very general “volunteer;” however, I do believe that for activist inquiry to have the greatest impact, there need to be appropriately designated venues in which more extended, long term engagement can occur. These must be in marginalized and impoverished communities, like Hull House was. Community centers and libraries may serve well in some circumstances, and certainly, they do some of the same work that Hull House did, providing education classes and space for events. However, I am not convinced they function well for activist inquiry. Further research is

needed to make a better judgment, looking at where these centers are situated in communities, who uses them most, what services they provide, what services people take advantage of and who takes advantage of them.

With this dissertation, I have attempted to present a method through which agency may be invented and the dichotomy of humanist/postmodernist perspectives defining agency may be set aside in favor of the non-prescriptive generation of agency for social action. Towards the end of his article, Artz sets one final condition for activism: “present a rhetoric for a new consensual social power that underscores the truth of capitalist inequality, favor the building of participatory communities, and expresses the potential for new democratic social relations” (2011 p.54). While I make no grandiose claim that activist inquiry is such a rhetoric, there is always a chance that it could be. Inquiry is about wonder.

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End Notes

¹ Jane Addams was a prominent American progressive social activist of the early 20th century, contributing to public opinion and social change from political and educational reform to the treatment of women and other marginalized members of society. Her speeches, writings, and activism were far-reaching in their scope and their affects. She fought for women's suffrage and worker's rights, advocated for children and the poor, civil liberties, and peace. She helped to found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1931. Her work contributed to preparing the U.S. for many of the social programs currently in place. For example, the services offered free at the social settlement house Addams established, Chicago's Hull House, such as job skills training, concerts, lectures on current issues, a gymnasium, and day care programs for small children influenced the rise of community enrichment and education programs and government assistance such as Social Security and Medicare. Her many speeches, lectures, and published works espoused a philosophy founded upon democracy as "a form of socially engaged living and as a framework for social morality" (Hamington) and urged her audience to reflect upon the discrepancies between how they perceive a relationship and how different others understand the dynamic; for example, the benefactor to the beneficiary, the union worker to the boss, and the educator to the student. Her approach to social problems called for encouraging, interpreting, and navigating direct experience and engagement with concrete social issues in ways that she believed could help people become more socially responsible for the wellbeing of all Americans. Addams's many contributions to society cannot be definitively measured, but such was her demeanor and influence that biographers and historians repeatedly compare her to another woman greatly admired by the American public: Eleanor Roosevelt. "[Addams] became one of the nation's most effective reform leaders," biographer Louise Knight says, "as influential in her day on both the national and world stages as Eleanor Roosevelt was in hers" (Knight, 2010 p. xiv). Addams was clearly an activist that changed minds and greatly influenced the unfurling of the 20th century.

² See *Nickled and Dimed*, 2011; "Most Republicans think poverty caused by laziness, new poll finds," 2014; "People Have Always Thought the Poor were Lazy Degenerates," 2014; "Editorial: Study proves poor people are lazy fatties," 2015.

³ See William Duffy's "Remembering Is the Remedy: Jane Addams's Response to Conflicted Discourse" (2011); Robert Danish's "Jane Addams, Pragmatism and Rhetorical Citizenship in Multicultural Democracies" (2007); and Gloria McMillan's "Keeping the Conversation Going: Jane Addams' Rhetorical Strategies in 'A Modern Lear' " (2002); Catherine Peaden's "Jane Addams and the Social Rhetoric of Democracy" (1993).

⁴ In the late 1800s, according to Knight, democracy had several hotly contested and ideologically fraught meanings: political, economic, and social (Knight, 2005 p.187-189). Politically, democracy was the right to vote - a power afforded to males, mostly white. Economically, democracy was defined as the complete competitive freedom of the individual to set prices for goods and services and in general do business freely. Socially, democracy was a feeling of equality, one espoused by John Dewey in an 1888 essay Knight cites: "Democracy is a social, that is to say, an ethical conception" (Knight, 2005 p.188). Thus, for Addams to conceive of a socially ethical democracy would not have been an entirely foreign idea to her audience, but social democracy was rarely observed in practice, which was undoubtedly one of the biggest factors that prompted Addams to write *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902). Addams wanted her readers to at least consider that if they do indeed believe in the most basic principles of democracy such as equality, then it must be organized by socially-oriented ideas rather than an over-reliance on individualism and separation from marginalized, disempowered, and frankly just different peoples. She urged them "to break out of their narrow, class-defined family and social rounds and their private trajectories of ambition and come to know a wider range of people socially" (Knight, 2010 p. 107).

⁵ In "Beyond Traditional Conceptualizations of Rhetoric and a Move Toward Civility," Bone, Griffin, and Scholz address the criticism that invitational rhetoric implies that all persuasion is violent, coercive, and antagonistic. They contend "under certain circumstances, to attempt to persuade is inappropriate, but they [Foss and Griffin] do not say that persuasion, by its very nature, is always and only violent" (2008 p.438).

⁶ See Bone, Griffin and Schol: "Critics of the theory of invitational rhetoric responded in several ways, arguing that the association between persuasion and violence is unacceptable (Pollock, Artz, Frey Pearce, and Murphy, Dow "Feminism and Difference"; Dow "Feminism, Power") that Foss and Griffin unrealistically advocate that invitational rhetoric be used in all situations (Cloud, et. al.), that the theory is gender specific (Condit, Mathison, and Bruner), or grounded in essentialist principles (Bruner et. al.), that invitational rhetoric lacks any notion of agency (Fulkerson,

Lozano-Reich, and Mathison), and or that it actually is persuasion in disguise (Cloud and Fulkerson)” (2008 p.435).

⁷ As a Women’s Rights advocate, many of Addams’s texts address gender inequalities. In *Democracy and Social Ethics*, the third chapter, “Filial Relations,” speaks directly to the issue of young educated women being expected to adopt traditional female roles – wife, mother, homemaker – even as many of them desired to lead more public lives by being involved in politics and social issues.

⁸ Some of these same photographs went on to be published in several late 1930s magazines. Finnegan examines how the circulation of these photographs affected their interpretation. Photographs whose original purpose was to document poverty changed meaning depending on what publication they were disseminated in, how the image was edited (cropped and colored), and what the accompanying captions included or excluded. In some cases this meant that the image was taken entirely out of context or became context-less, in which cases its aesthetics as a photograph dominated viewers responses instead of the poverty-stricken circumstances of which it was a record (2003).

⁹ According to Fleckenstein’s explanation, “Burke advocates a deliberated courting of antinomy as a habit of mind necessary for individual and cultural health, preventing us from becoming too committed to or persuaded by one meaning, one value....antinomy carries with it echoes of transformation. For Burke, invention – making something new – arises out of dialectic, a process of negotiating tensions implicit in all meaning. Because words are defined within the context of what they are, paradox is intrinsic to meaning...individuals efforts to resolve ambiguity produce new orders that are then subject to further resolution” (2010 p.116).

¹⁰ Legislation in many states prevents people from receiving food assistance if they do not work at least 20 hours a week. In other states, people must pass a drug test. These two acts of legislation alone are indicators of the persistence of a hostile rhetoric of poverty and the idea of the “deserving poor” versus the “undeserving poor.”