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Jane Addams and Hans-Georg Gadamer: Learning to Listen with the Other

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LEARNING TO LISTEN WITH THE OTHER: JANE ADDAMS AND HANS-GEORG GADAMER

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This dissertation is an attempt to explain how listening functions in ethical and political contexts. I put forward a three-fold way of listening that begins in selfishness and ends in empathy.

These three ways of listening I refer to as: "listening-for," "listening-to," and "listening-with." I will briefly explain how each of these ways of listening function in lived experience. Listening-for is self-centered, listening-to deals in relations between self and other, and listening-with involves both parties (individuals or groups) working together.

These forms of listening are implicitly situated in both Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jane Addams. The bulk of the dissertation is unpacking this general theory of listening based on Gadamer's and Addams's thought.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is written for my family who have helped me through this process and always supported me even when the prospects of finishing it looked bleak. I am eternally grateful to them.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For too long, political philosophy and ethics have overlooked the role of the lived experience of individuals and groups in describing how we should live. While discussions of justice, ethical theory, and the role of governments in making political decisions are important, they do not fully describe or enliven the concrete and embodied experiences of individuals on the ground level. We only need to think of Rawls' ideal interlocutor on justice clothed behind the "veil of ignorance" and hidden in the "original position" to understand how disembodied political philosophy has come from the body. Instead of focusing on the purely rational individual, I think a more productive method of thinking politically should focus on the embodied experience of politics. We must understand the felt experience of politics on persons. I think focusing on listening is our best option.

In the dissertation, I put forward three ways of listening. These three ways of listening I refer to as: "listening-for," "listening-to," and "listening-with." I will briefly explain how each of these ways of listening function in lived experience.

These forms of listening are implicitly situated in both Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jane Addams. I do not contend that they were aware that they were developing theories of listening, but their work on hermeneutics and interpretation speak of listening in ways that hint at this tri-fold distinction.

Listening-for is always self-relating. "Listening-for one's turn to speak" is the easiest way to understand how people listen in this way. Listening-for always forsakes the other's role in the back-and-forth of conversation and brings the conversation or interpretation back to the

listener. When we listen for moments when we can "one-up" each other in conversation, find ways of interjecting our own lives into the conversation, and only think of how we can use the information we receive to our own advantage, we are listening-for.

Listening-for in ethics and politics is self-centered and not a way of democratic listening where one can truly respect another's position. But it is not the case that listening-for should always be avoided. Sometimes time constraints can force us to listen-for. When an auto mechanic needs to assess a car's problem, he or she knows the customer does not know the information for which the mechanic is asking, so the mechanic must listen-for the problem buried in the conversation. But a conversation amongst friends, lovers, or those deeply engaged in politics should avoid listening-for if trying to understand the other. Listening-for can be extremely useful in many time-sensitive situations, but tragic in relationships and conversations of much depth.

Listening-to fares better in respecting the other, but fails in realizing the relatedness of the self and other. Listening-to is not as self-related as listening-for, but a barrier still remains between self and other when one is listening-to. The best example of listening-to is the way a psychologist or psychiatrist must listen in depth to a patient. This situation calls for listening-to. The self must not get lost in the other and she must be able to separate herself from the other's concerns, fears, and desires to stay objective.

When we listen-to we leave our own comfortable spaces to understand the other in more depth, but we never fully become one with the other. We "listen-to" her story without relating it back to ourselves. We do not take advantage of the dialogue to focus it back upon us, but we also do not put ourselves in the shoes of the other in a meaningful way.

Listening-to clearly has practical use, but it also has its own dangers. If we listen-to when we should be listening-with, we might miss out on experiences, collaborations, and misunderstand the wider scope of the situation. In politics, questions of race, gender, and sexuality tend to fall into listening-for and listening-to, but the history of this country has shown listening-with has not been used nearly enough. Listening-for and listening-to lack the empathy that listening-with has.

Listening-with involves both parties rising to and constructing an ideal. When we listen-with we truly empathize with the other. This way of listening is the most difficult to achieve and seldom happens in the political realm. When we see ourselves caught up in the strife and struggle of others and realize it is our own, we are listening-with.

Addams exemplified listening-with when she interacted with the older women at Hull-House when they thought that she and others had hidden a "Devil Baby" somewhere in the house. The story involved a man who had treated his wife poorly and they had a cursed child who was an incarnation of the devil. Addams was initially upset about the assumptions the locals made, but after listening-to the stories of the older women she realized that the older women were using the story for a purpose. They were attempting to speak the truth of an old myth to expose their own suffering. She eventually came to listen-with these women as she saw herself caught up in the pain and struggle of their plight.

Plenty of people attempt to listen-with but fail. Listening-for and listening-to are always easier modes of listening when compared to listening-with. In the dissertation, I point out numerous times, especially on questions of race relations, where whites have failed to listen-with

and have not heeded the calls to listen-with of Blacks, but the problem can easily expanded into many different political contexts.

I will explore all three forms of listening in more depth, but I am well aware there is much more work to do. I attempt to deal with questions of individuals listening to each other compared with groups, the role of technology and geographical distance when listening, and try to hint at possible directions a philosophy of listening could go, but I know I am only scratching the surface. These categories of listening should only be taken as a shifting continuum and not fixed categories.

The entire history of philosophy, and not just political philosophy, has overlooked the role of listening in embodied experience. In the West, most metaphors and analogies in philosophy after Aristotle focus on the visual and not the auditory. When Aristotle explains early on in his metaphysics that the sense of sight is the greatest sense he biases the eyes.

I begin with Gadamer because his hermeneutics comes closest to developing a theory of listening. Many philosophers discuss speech, communication, and the meaning of words, but few have actually scratched the surface in describing the embodied experience of listening, and hardly any have discussed its normative element.

For Gadamer, listening begins in openness. This openness is not merely an openness to another person, but could be openness to another tradition, culture, history, text, or experience. Openness to anything is a way of taking in the world, but it is always bounded in definite ways.

Gadamerian openness is structured by prejudice, authority, tradition, culture, and history. All of our experiences are both bounded by and created through these phenomena. We are our culture, history, and tradition. We cannot escape their grasp and would not want to do so

because our experiences would be unstructured and unintelligible without their limits. According to Gadamer, we are finite creatures and our finitude both limits and creates for the possibility of any of our experiences, especially our interpretations, and, most importantly for this dissertation, listening.

Gadamer describes listening and interpretation using Martin Buber's notion, of an "I" coming to meet a "Thou." Both the I and the Thou are horizonally bounded, but they are also able to expand their horizons, through experience, to come to meet each other, and ideally fuse these horizons through some sort of interchange.

Gadamer does not emphasize the embodied nature of hermeneutics and fails to account for its significance in listening. His emphasis on the textual nature of interpretation forsakes the lived experience of coming to understand another. To fill in this gap, I attend to the work of Don Ihde and the anthropologist Edward T. Hall. They both show the importance of the embodied nature of listening in depth.

The "fusion of horizons" plays a central role in overcoming the gap between the I and the Thou in Gadamer's hermeneutics. When the two come to meet in this fusion there is always a danger of assimilating one to the other's horizon. Gadamer realizes this possibility and is wary enough to avoid it.

Finally, Gadamer's theory of listening culminates in the role of σύνεσις. He translates this term as "sympathetic understanding" and uses it to show how one should properly listen-with another. It is the highest form of listening-with.

Addams also focuses on "sympathetic understanding" in her own work and it plays a central role in her conception of listening. In the dissertation, I begin the discussion of Addams

with an in depth study of her philosophical method to lay the groundwork for her theory of listening.

Addams' method begins in experience. She never philosophized in an armchair. She saw how experience shaped the lives of those around her and also realized how it shaped her own. She was able to transform herself by keeping close track of her own experiences and knew the necessity to place herself into new experiences so she could grow.

Addams' method also deals with education. She is constantly trying to educate her readers by encouraging them to experience her world. Not all of her readers were able to see that world and Addams knew how important it was to make her world come alive for her readers.

Ideals, as concrete and lived, play an important role in Addams' thought. All of her writings attest to this fact. She experienced ideals in the world and communicated them to her readers. The importance of ideals cannot be overlooked when discussing her thought in general or her ideas on listening. Our lives and goals are shaped by the ideals around us and the ideals we create with others through sympathetic understanding. They make up our lives and guide us, but can also be detrimental to us. We only need to think of broken ideals of justice to realize how they impact our lives. Ideals are extremely important in our everyday lives and in the life of the culture as a whole.

Listening begins in perplexity for Addams. I show how she develops her thought about perplexity along with Dewey and Peirce. In the same way experience generally plays such an important role in her method, perplexing experiences are tantamount in listening.

Like Gadamer, Addams develops listening-for, listening-to, and listening-with in her theory of listening. All three will be discussed in great detail by describing different situations

where Addams had to deal with those who listened-for, to, and with her. I also give examples of when she practiced all three of these forms of listening.

Addams' theory of listening ends in sympathetic understanding, which, I explain, we today refer to as "empathetic." When listening-with we are able to be with the other in such a way that we do not assimilate the other to our own issues, but come to empathize with her fully.

I address three similarities and three differences in Addams and Gadamer to better clarify their theories of listening. The similarities are: the role and importance of tradition, history, and culture in their thought, the conservative nature of experience, and the role of the aesthetic consciousness in listening.

Tradition, history, and culture all play a great role in Addams' and Gadamer's thought. They do not ascribe to the notion that we are atomistic individuals bereft of history, culture, and tradition; instead, they realize the important role these phenomena have in our everyday lives and their importance in listening.

They also both think that experience has a conservative nature to it. Neither of them is radical in his or her thought about how to bring about cultural change. The entrenched nature of culture both makes radical change nearly impossible, and much of the time, unwise.

Aesthetic consciousness also plays a role in their thoughts on listening. Its non-cognitive aspect helps us interpret and empathize with the other. I use the work of Thomas M. Alexander to elaborate on this point.

Gadamer and Addams also have some differences in their conceptions of listening, and they are significant. I discuss the role of perplexity, or lack of it, in listening, the role of tradition

versus traditions in listening, and how one might reconstruct or conserve ideals and their importance for listening.

Gadamer does not have a concept like Addams' "perplexity" in his hermeneutics. Because he has over-textualized the other, he fails to realize that how we choose the others with whom we interact is of the utmost importance in hermeneutics and listening in general. He gives no guide to tell us which books to pick up or with which others we should interact.

Addams' perplexity encourages us to come into contact with others whom we might find alien at first. With perplexity as our guide, we are able to grow through and with the other. We become fuller people through this process, and our ability to listen is heightened.

Because of Addams' notion of perplexity traditions are connected—she sees traditions as interacting with each other—as opposed to seeing traditions as separate. We are always working with and in-between traditions. They shape us, and we also shape them as we interact with them. Tradition is never a singular concept for Addams. It is always pluralistic.

Gadamer's idea of tradition runs into some dangers. Because he bases his notion of tradition on Western conceptions, tradition becomes a monolith. We are not able to see how the Western tradition was formed in and with other traditions. While his hermeneutics has been used by others to deal with traditions pluralistically, he does not describe it in enough detail, and he most certainly does not give it a central place in his thoughts on listening like Addams does.

Gadamer's conceptions of tradition, culture, and history lead him into a more conservative position than Addams. While I note the positive aspects of both of their conservatisms, Gadamer's position can be overly conservative. The difference comes down to how each of them views the role of ideals.

Addams views ideals as both constructed by and constructing our experiences through our interactions with others. They can change through a long and slow process. Gadamer runs the danger, because he sees tradition as so monolithic, of thinking of ideals as too stagnant and difficult to be changed. Ideals construct our lives, but Gadamer is not aware that we also construct them with others in significant ways.

Both Gadamer and Addams have very robust theories of listening and have very insightful comments on the process that complement each other. In what follows, I will discuss all of these points in depth.

CHAPTER 2

GADAMER AND LISTENING

I begin this dissertation with the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer because within the philosophical canon he comes the closest to discussing listening directly. His hermeneutics and some of his references to listening can be used to develop a full-fledged theory of listening, as I will show.

Gadamer's *Truth and Method*[1] is an attempt to ground the *Geisteswissenschaften* (human sciences) in order to show their significance in the age of the so-called "hard" sciences in which we live. His overall project entails the reinvigoration of terms which have been shunned in the Enlightenment, like "tradition," "culture," and "prejudice." He shows how it is only through the structures of experience that knowledge is even possible at all, and he challenges the Enlightenment conception of understanding and knowledge. As opposed to seeing tradition, culture, and prejudice merely as limits to our experience, they are the foundation upon which we are able to build our knowledge. His philosophical hermeneutics is the starting point for understanding how this process works. While his hermeneutics has been used for many different purposes, it is the task of this dissertation to show that there is an unstated theory of listening at play in Gadamer's *magnus opus*.

The clearest place to begin in the construction of this theory of listening is in Gadamer's use of the concept of "openness" in relation to his hermeneutics. Part of the reason why the act of listening has been so overlooked in the philosophical literature has to do with its imprecise nature. Listening seemed to lack the precision of our other senses.

[1]Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London and New York: Continuum Press, 2004)

While Gadamer does not explain listening as the most precise of our experiences, he does open up the possibility for it being a prime example of hermeneutic experience. This point can be seen when one investigates the bounds of openness in regard to listening along with the possible knowledge that can come out of the experience.

The Bounds of Openness and Listening

There are only a few mentions of "openness" in reference to listening in *Truth and Method*, but Gadamer makes clear that one must be open to tradition, history, and culture through our prejudices, so as to let the horizon of the other, or the historical text, come to meet us in the experience. It is only through the historical horizon and a *positive* conception of prejudice that this sort of openness is possible. He explains this idea fairly succinctly:

> Knowing and recognizing this constitutes the third, and highest, type of hermeneutical experience: the openness to tradition characteristic of historically effected consciousness. It too has a real analogue in the I's experience of the Thou. In human relations the important thing is, as we have seen to experience the Thou truly as a Thou- i.e., not to overlook his claim but to let him really say something to us. Here is where openness belongs. But ultimately this openness does not exist only for the person who speaks; rather, anyone who listens is fundamentally open. Without such openness to one another there is no genuine human bond. Belonging together always also means being able to listen to one another… Openness to the other, then, involves recognizing that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so.[2]

Gadamer's "openness" is one wherein one strains to find common ground with another, while still realizing one's own finitude and cultural standpoint, and to rise eventually to a higher ideal that is constituted between the hermeneut and the other. In the background of this conception of openness is the first boundary of the openness of listening. It is a concept involved in interpretation, which Gadamer has taken from Heidegger, known as "fore-having."

In section 32 of *Being and Time*[3] Heidegger introduces "fore-having" as a concept that sets the boundaries of understanding. Experience always involves interpretation. There are three moments in this sort of hermeneutic experience: the fore-having, the fore-sight, and the fore-

[2]Ibid., p. 355.
[3] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (San Francisco: Harper Collins: 1962), 188-195.

conception. He explains how fore-having grounds understanding: "In every case this interpretation is grounded in *something we have in advance*- in a *fore-having*. As the appropriation of understanding, the interpretation operates in Being towards a totality of involvements which is already understood- a Being which understands."[4] Understanding requires this fore-having.

But "fore-having" is only the first moment in the hermeneutic experience. "Fore-sight is also involved: "In every case interpretation is grounded in *something we see in advance*- in a *fore-sight*. This fore-sight 'takes the first cut' out of what has been taken into our fore-having, and it does so with a view to a definite way in which this can be interpreted."[5] At the point of fore-having one has not fully appropriated the experience but has only begun to understand or interpret it. The final moment is the "fore-conception": "… the interpretation can force the entity into concepts to which it is opposed in its manner of Being. In either case, the interpretation has already decided for a definite way of conceiving it, either with finality or with reservations; it is grounded in *something we grasp in advance*- in a *fore-conception*."[6] The grasping of the fore-conception ends the initial experience. The triadic structure of fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception makes possible the experience of a first attempt at understanding. Experience is always interpreting and understanding always follows suit.

This structure of preliminary understanding demonstrates that we are never able to free ourselves fully from our prejudices. Even if we attempt to go beyond our own prejudice, history, tradition, or culture to understand a text or another person, we will not be able to do it immediately. Moreover, there is also a genuine danger that the delusion of total objectivity will close one off to new potential meanings in the experience.

[4] Ibid., 191.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

If one is so sure that one has understood a text or another person so well that one thinks that there is no need to question one's own fore-structure, the text or other will not be able to speak to that person because one's fore-meanings will constantly run ahead and predetermine the possible ways one might take the words of the other as obvious. The history of philosophy is riddled with misinterpretations of authors because their readers' own fore-meanings went ahead of themselves.

Gadamer explains how this process works when one is interpreting a text:

> A person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting. He projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text. Again, the initial meaning emerges only because he is reading the text with particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning. Working out this fore-projection, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he penetrates into the meaning, is understanding what is there.[7]

Hermeneutics always goes ahead of itself. People, as finite interpreters, come to every experience with some sort of framework. We bring our own prejudices to the text initially, no matter what, and as we engage the text or the other, the fore-structure of the understanding keeps going ahead of itself. As the text or other gives us more information, experiences, and meanings, we inevitably change the way we view the other. This experience is most obviously seen when one deals with another or a text for the first time. The heremeneut cannot help but weave a narrative that attempts to ground the meaning of the other in one's current understanding of the world.

But this constant reinvigoration of the process of interpretation does not come easily. It requires the interpreter to constantly step back and assess her own fore-structure that she is bringing to the interpretation. Gadamer describes this unending process: "For the interpreter to let himself be guided by the things themselves is obviously not a matter of a single,

[7]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 269.

'conscientious' decision, but is 'the first, last and constant task.'"[8] It is not possible for one to put all of one's prejudices and fore-meanings in check in order to have an "objective" experience of the text sans humanity, but interpretation is a long and arduous process of keeping oneself on guard for one's own prejudices. The end goal of this "constant task" is not to end up being fully objective and totally free from prejudice, but to be open to the other to the point of letting the other actually speak. Objectivity, in the Enlightenment sense, is an illusion. There is only ever-expanding inter-subjectivity. Gadamer explains, "But this openness always includes our situating the other meaning in relation to the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in relation to it."[9] This constant cluster of meanings and filters through which interpreters engage others cannot be turned off and should not be shunned, but must be examined in order to remain open to the other as the other speaks to us.

Gadamer did have detractors who thought that his philosophical hermemeutics was merely an apology for tradition and prejudice, rooted in conservative principles, which had no possibility of being utilized for productive political purposes. Georgia Warnke discusses the debate in *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition, and Reason*[10] in reference to Karl Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas. She characterizes Apel and Habermas in terms of their defense of "unconstrained communication" and accuses them of enforcing an ideal of enlightenment rationality. She explains their position of "unconstrained communication" in the following way:

> Systematic and ideological distortions in the self-understanding of a society are to be uncovered by moving beyond hermeneutics to a critical theory of society which takes its bearings from a model of communication in which all parties affected are able to examine disputed claims on an equal basis with equal chances to perform all kinds of speech acts and without fear of force or reprisal.[11]

[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 271.
[10] Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987)
[11] Ibid., 129-130.

Warnke goes on to discuss Gadamer's response to this "counterfactual" that Habermas has created. While Gadamer does appreciate that Habermas is attempting to think in terms of counterfactuals he still accuses him of falling into the enlightenment concept of rationality and goes so far as to accuse him of defending the "medieval theory of intelligence represented by the angel 'who has the advantage of seeing God in his essence.'"[12]

Instead of coming from the perspective of an angel, Warnke explains that these problems with Gadamer must be dealt with by keeping in mind a practical context. She says that these problems must be "evaluated instead within a practical context, as that degree of knowledge, enlightenment, and openness of which we are capable at a given time."[13] The experiences we have when engaged in political strife are always within an historical and cultural context, and we, as finite beings, cannot escape the bounds of the fore-structure of the understanding.

Outside of the fore-structure of understanding, we cannot overlook the importance of historically effected consciousness. In much the same way as the fore-structure of the understanding constantly posits fore-meanings which go ahead of us in experience, our historically effected consciousness sets the bounds of our experience of the other in listening and hermeneutics in general.

Interpretation is always a process of the historically effected consciousness. Human beings are expressions of history for Gadamer. Humans are not atomistically constituted outside of history through an ahistorical rationality. Instead, the hermeneut is deeply embedded in a particular history, which sets the boundaries for the experience of meanings. Simply admitting that one is an historical being does not mean that this historically effected consciousness has

[12] Ibid., 130.
[13] Ibid.

been fully understood. Gadamer explains historically effected consciousness in contradistinction to historical objectivism:

> In relying on its critical method, historical objectivism conceals the fact that historical consciousness is itself situated in the web of historical effects. By means of methodical critique it does away with the arbitrariness of 'relevant' appropriations of the past, but it preserves its good conscience by failing to recognize the presuppositions- certainly not arbitrary, but still fundamental- that govern its own understanding and hence falls short of reaching that truth which, despite the finite nature of our understanding, could be reached.[14]

Historical objectivism denies the historical nature of consciousness in its search for objectivity. All contingent aspects of the interpreter must be pushed to the side in historical work. The historical objectivist fails to understand the need for both historical distance and historically effected consciousness for historical study. Gadamer's main issue with the historical objectivist is that she has not realized that the text or other called to her through the question which arose in her own personal engagement with the text or other. She would only undertake the project because of an interest structured by her finitude and history. Overlooking this fact leads one to believe, due to the prejudice against prejudices,[15] that one has entered an omniscient perspective. Gadamer compares it to statistics: "In this respect, historical objectivism resembles statistics, which are such excellent means of propaganda because they let the 'facts' speak and hence simulate an objectivity that in reality depends on the legitimacy of the questions asked."[16] When one is charged with bias, the historical objectivist answers that she merely lets the facts speak, as if the facts were not picked out or the question not guided by some sort of prejudice which might have already stacked the deck in favor of her original belief.

As opposed to historical objectivism, Gadamer argues in favor of historically effected consciousness and its usefulness for hermeneutics and listening. Much like the fore-structure of

[14]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 300.
[15] This is a phrase that James Risser notes.
[16] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 300.

understanding, the historically effected consciousness always goes ahead of the interpreter engaged in the process of understanding. It is inescapable and always already present in consciousness.

Instead of thinking that one has somehow stepped out of one's own historical horizon into a position wherein one is able to forsake all prejudice, history, and culture, the historically effected consciousness is aware of the historically bounded nature of the hermeneutic experience. Gadamer describes it as "consciousness of the hermeneutical *situation*."[17] And that consciousness of the hermeneutical situation is always a realization that one is within a historical horizon.

Gadamer's use of the term "historical horizon" is derived from Heidegger, who borrowed it from Edmund Husserl, who borrowed it from William James' "fringe."[18] The historical horizon limits consciousness, but it also enables one to see beyond what is immediately in front of oneself.[19] We would not be able to understand objects, events, cultures, or anything without historical consciousness. Historical consciousness is the outcome of our culture, education, and personal experience. Someone who does not have a horizon at all would not be able to get beyond the object of interpretation in front of oneself to see beyond it and put it in context. Without an historical horizon, one would not be able to understand anything. Our experience, because it is historically situated, enlivens particular meanings in objects which can lead to novel interpretations.

Gadamer explains the importance of having a historical horizon: "A person who has an horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or

[17] Ibid., 301.
[18] See footnote 148, where Gadamer admits William James is the origin.
[19] Ibid., 301.

far, great or small."[20] Without this aspect the interpreter would not be able to see how a certain turn of phrase might be situated within a thinker's corpus or how one's own prejudices might go ahead of oneself to cloud the interpretation of the text or the other.

The danger in not realizing one's own historical horizon lies in the fact that: "If we fail to transpose ourselves into the historical horizon from which the traditionary text speaks, we will misunderstand the significance of what it has to say to us."[21] Gadamer breaks with the historical objectivist here. The historical objectivist does not realize that the text or other always speaks to us in a way that calls forth a question and that we fail to realize this question when attempting to give up our prejudices and ignore our historical horizon.

One of the reasons that Gadamer's hermeneutics appreciates the danger of historical objectivism is because he realizes all experience has this historical character. He explains in *Truth and Method* that *all* of human experience is hermeneutical. All experience is always already interpreted. This realization is why he alternates between traditional texts and conversations. Hermeneutics applies to every single experience one will ever have. When one reads a book one is interpreting, when one is going to buy groceries one is interpreting, and when one is listening one is always interpreting.

Gadamer compares conversations and texts at great lengths in light of our historical horizons:

> To the extent this seems a legitimate hermeneutical requirement: we must place ourselves in the other situation in order to understand it. We may wonder, however, whether this phrase is adequate to describe the understanding that is required of us. The same is true of a conversation that we have with someone simply in order to get to know him- i.e., to discover where he is coming from and his horizon… In a conversation, when we have discovered the other person's standpoint and horizon, his ideas become intelligible without our necessarily having to agree with him; so also when someone thinks

[20] Ibid., 301-302.
[21] Ibid., 302.

> historically, he comes to understand the meaning of what has been handed down without necessarily agreeing with it or seeing himself in it.[22]

It would be impossible to put oneself in the other's situation without an historical horizon. The horizon creates the possibility of seeing beyond one's own particular situation in the first place. This sort of implied empathy is impossible if one is stuck in one's own particular point of view or bounded in only a negative way when attempting to be open to the other. Gadamer uses the example of coming to know someone better because it is a prime case of setting our own prejudices to the side, which is only possible when one realizes one's historical horizon. While it is not feasible to set all of one's prejudices to the side, the judgment of the other is held in check until one understands the other's horizon. Prejudice, authority, and tradition are constructive elements, for Gadamer.

The Positive Project of Prejudice, Authority, and Tradition

The limits to the openness of the listener, imposed by the fore-structure of understanding, historically effected consciousness, and the historical horizon, and which always structure experience, are not negative boundaries. The limits of historically effected consciousness do not get in the way of one's understanding: they create the very possibility for knowledge and understanding in the first place.

Gadamer approaches this problem through revitalizing the concept of prejudice, which only attained its negative character, in the strongest possible fashion, in the Enlightenment. Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment?" shows the prejudice against prejudice in Enlightenment thinking that carries through to today. The initial skepticism about prejudice, authority, culture, and tradition arose out of a fear of subjectivity as a barrier to truth. Rationality, as the gateway

[22] Ibid.

to truth, had to be wholly free of any possible prejudice in order to gain objectivity and understanding. James Risser describes the "prejudice against prejudice" in the Enlightenment:

> In the Enlightenment the concept of prejudice is given its negative connotation as an unfounded judgment and comes down to us as a blind belief that closes itself off from the domain of reason. But for Gadamer prejudice need not be taken in its pejorative sense as a one-sided distortion of the truth, but is simply that condition in which we at first experience something… That prejudice has a positive value, and more so that there are legitimate prejudices, is the basis on which Gadamer will rehabilitate prejudice, authority and tradition against the claims for the autonomous power of reason that emerges in the enlightenment.[23]

The advent of a disembodied and autonomous concept of reason, bereft of culture, tradition, prejudice, history, and authority brought about the prejudice against prejudice. This notion of universal reason shuns any hint of finitude in the interpreter.

Gadamer grounds his hermeneutics in the reinvigoration of prejudice and shows, not only that it is a productive power in achieving knowledge, but also that even the *possibility* for knowledge, in the first place, must begin with one's prejudices. This realization does not mean that one does not constantly challenge one's own prejudices, as shown in the previous section, but that one admits one's own finitude by acknowledging one's own prejudices. Prejudice is something that the hermeneut cannot escape. In a sense, we should revel in the finitude of our prejudice.

Gadamer also discusses the role of authority in knowledge, which was also shunned by the Enlightenment. But authority does not mean kowtowing to it in any way. He goes so far as to say, "The Enlightenment's distinction between faith in authority and using one's own reason is, in itself, legitimate."[24] Authority, when trusted without question is dangerous, but authority, when questioned properly can lead to understanding. He explains that there was a

[23] James Risser, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*: Re-reading Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 68.
[24]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 280.

mischaracterization of authority in the Enlightenment as some sort of blind following.[25] This slave-like authoritarianism could be seen in the blatant disregard by reason in following the doctrines of the Church or in unreflectively following a political leader. While it is obvious that slavish worship is dangerous, it is not the only possible understanding of authority.

Authority can be seen in relation to knowledge and as a ground for the possibility of gaining it. One might think "authority" as something earned. The history of humanity is riddled with leaders who have been bestowed with power and have not earned the authority of the position. So much of the time, due to reasoned deliberation combined with uprising, the leader is deposed because he or she has not earned his or her position. The most important aspect of authority in these sorts of cases is not the position attained but the content of the person's character. Gadamer explains the nature of this authority:

> Thus, acknowledging authority is always connected with the idea that what the authority says is not irrational and arbitrary but can, in principle, be discovered to be true. This is the essence of the authority claimed by the teacher, the superior, the expert. The prejudices that they implant are legitimized by the person who presents them. But in this way they become prejudices not just in favor of a person but a content, since about in other ways—e.g., by good reasons.[26]

He shows the importance of the distinction between the content of knowledge and the nature of authority in this passage. The authority justifies the claim she has made. Prejudices, in the productive sense, are created through interactions with persons who gain our trust through their character as shown through their practices. We achieve knowledge through this intimate process.

While Gadamer only deals with authority in the sense of appealing to the knowledge of a teacher or leader, there is a way to utilize this concept in terms of listening. When one deals with oppressed and subaltern peoples there is a certain authority which has gone unrecognized. One

[25] Ibid., 280-281.
[26] Ibid., 281.

merely needs to glance at the earliest anthropological characterizations of "primitive" peoples to see how this danger has come about.[27] With these dangers in mind, there is a way to utilize Gadamer's concept of authority to reinstitute the authority of those who have gone unheard. Instead of viewing these silenced voices as authorities in their "unscientific" domains, they can be understood as embodied examples of unheard authorities and persons to listen-with. Those in power can be taught by the silenced through descriptions of their lived experiences. This example is only a slight variation from Gadamer's approach. While he characterizes authority in terms of a teacher who is normally in a position of power, there is a way to listen-with those who are not in political or economic power as teachers of those who are. This approach turns Gadamer's concept of authority on its head but still has plenty of productive power.

Gadamer's distinction between authority and prejudice can shed some light on the appeal to the content of authority as opposed to the bestowing of authority through tradition. He explains that tradition has an authority which is "nameless" and has been "handed down to us" in a way that is beyond our control.[28] At the same time tradition is always a constant choice we make in our own lives. We can either accept or react to tradition based on our interactions with it. He explains, "The fact is that in tradition there is always an element of freedom and of history itself. Even the most genuine and pure tradition does not persist because of the inertia of what once existed. It needs to be affirmed, embraced, cultivated."[29] Tradition always comes to meet us in a way that can either be affirming or negating. There can be constant reactions against it or movements to push it forward, but there it is always a choice. Our choice is always in reference to and arises out of our own traditions. The arising itself is not a fully passive experience, but

[27] See Vernon William's for a discussion of the anthropologist Franz Boaz and the danger of viewing peoples as "primitive." *Rethinking Race: Franz Boaz and His Contemporaries* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky), 1996.
[28]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*., 281.
[29] Ibid., 282.

one which is constantly repeated and chosen in a new way.[30] Even in repetition, there is always a choice to repeat the act. The fact that the act is never fully repeatable, due to its place in history, proves his point.

Understanding is impossible without prejudice or tradition, but also the possibility of criticizing our own culture must arise out of our own prejudice. Without prejudice there is not even the possibility of challenging our own tradition in order to induce change. Risser explains how others have misunderstood that Gadamer's appeal to tradition and prejudice has consistently been misconstrued as a philosophy rooted in trenchant conservatism:

> When Gadamer speaks of preserving tradition it must be interpreted in this same context of recognizing the strength of words. Preservation is not to be confused with conservation of a natural reality, as one would undertake to preserve, for example, for ecological reasons our nation's wetlands. Preservation has primarily to do with holding open. In this case what is held open are the possibilities for hearing the extinguished voices of the past! Habermas' criticism of Gadamer, as well as ironically the post-modern criticism of Gadamer – loosely stated here as the criticism that by virtue of the emphasis on the continuity of tradition, one only hears the same voice – fails to see that Gadamer's defense of tradition is done for the sake of an openness to that which has been excluded.[31]

To have even the possibility of hearing the call of the past one must recognize one's own perspective, which is rooted in tradition and prejudice. The point is not to become an apologist for one's own tradition, but instead it is the exact opposite. To challenge tradition one must be able to hear the call of tradition through one's own finitude and deal with it in that fashion. Gadamer's defense of prejudice is clearly not a defense of conservatism, but a holding open of tradition so that one can hear the other through it and thereby ultimately challenge that tradition.

The greatest irony in the debates between Gadamer and Jaques Derrida was that Derrida became a sort of apologist for the enlightenment. In attempting to think outside of tradition in the margins of thought, he did not realize that he, himself, was constituted in his thinking

[30] This is why Risser shows the influence of Kierkegaard on Gadamer through Kierkegaard's concept of "repetition" and explains how even though one might think that repetition must always be self-same, it is always different and chosen. See pages 33-40 in *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*.
[31] Risser, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*, 73.

through his own enlightenment prejudices. The very notion that he could somehow think "in the margins" looked over his own prejudices. The classic enlightenment move is to reject one's tradition and think that one has come out on the other end, having discarded prejudice.

The importance of the productive power of prejudice in listening should be clear. If listening emerges in experience through openness and openness is grounded in our prejudices and tradition, the very possibility of listening for understanding, knowledge, or judgment, is dependent on and arises out of prejudice. Our experience of the other must come out of our own finitude and be structured by those limits. The limits are not mere stopping points but are consistently challenged by and through listening in light of our prejudices.

Listening opens up the possibility of letting the other speak and be heard. It emerges through openness to the other and the call of the other which constantly transforms our own perspective. The call of the past is always, initially, an alien call but is also a call that can be heard. The voice of the other speaks to *us* through its own tradition and bridges the gap between the interpreter and the other. The process of understanding begins when we deal with texts and traditions that upset our own selves and rupture our own prejudices and tradition in the process. Risser explains the point well:

> Tradition is used in a third sense as 'tradition' in the singular, and *can* be taken as an anti-argumentative authority. This use of tradition, tradition linked to authority is what Gadamer defends in his critique of the Enlightenment prejudice against prejudice. In effect, we are always confronted with the voices of the past as *voices of the other* that make a claim upon us. The claim that these voices make upon us is a claim to truth (what we receive from the past is that which is held to be true in the sense that the voices of the past make a claim to be truly articulating their deep experience of the way things are). This is why the voice of tradition that does indeed speak 'truly' can be tied to authority for in the best sense authority is not blind obedience but the recognition of superiority… In conversation the point is not to attack the words of the other for the sake of sophistical persuasion, but to make the words of the other within dialogical exchange so strong such that the truth of what one says becomes evident.[32]

[32] Ibid., 72.

There is a persistent struggle to represent the words of the other correctly while still keeping in mind that the interpreter, herself, is also changing through the interaction with the text. Traditions collide and come together during the hermeneutical process.

The other consistently alters our horizons in Gadamer's hermeneutics. Its role is seen when thinking about a conversation. One of the first things one does in entering into a conversation with another person is "get to know" that other person through sharing things about oneself. This getting to know another is the ground for possible critique of oneself. The other can present herself in a way that challenges one. Gadamer explains, "Openness to the other, then, involves recognizing that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so."[33] If one were merely to be stuck in the historical objectivist mode of thinking these sorts of finite qualities of a person would not enter into the discussion at all and the other would not present herself as a challenge. The concept of reason that the historical objectivist holds, as universal and transcendental, blinds the objectivist to the challenge of the past and the other. As soon as one begins to see oneself outside of tradition, prejudice, and history, one gains the egoism of believing that one is omniscient. The ideal situation would involve a sharing of reasons, which are supposedly disembodied. In the mode of the historical objectivist, one should be apologetic for one's own particular tradition and prejudices because they merely get in the way of communication.

The historical objectivist has a strange approach when trying to know another, but this strangeness also holds true when attempting to understand a text. The text will speak to one in ways that appeal to one's own experiences, traditions, and prejudices. It is the task of the hermeneut to realize that these limits have created the possibility for having an encounter with

[33]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 355.

the text, and if the interpreter is to take the text seriously, or even respect it at all, there must be a deep commitment to understanding the text.

The implication for listening is that one must not attempt to bracket all of one's prejudices or traditions but critically express them through an elenchus with the other. Conversation always begins with prejudices, traditions, and histories. The only possible way to challenge one's own prejudices is through this dialectical process and hopefully rising to truth.[34]

The I-Thou Relation and Listening

The "I-Thou" relation is one of the central concepts Gadamer utilizes in explaining his theory of hermeneutic experience in *Truth and Method*. Gadamer's "I-Thou" relation is similar to Martin Buber's.[35] There is no direct relation between the two uses of the term, but the general approach of Buber and Gadamer is very similar. The major difference, according to Risser, lies in the lack of separation between the I and Thou for Gadamer. Risser states the difference between the two thinkers: "Accordingly, [for Buber] the I-Thou is a true relation as a subject-to-subject relation. In Gadamer's hands, the I-Thou is not a subject-to-subject relation as a 'mysterious communion of souls,' but simply a participating, a sharing in meaning. This sharing is a sharing in tradition."[36] The separation between the I and the Thou, as Risser states it, is not as strong in Gadamer. The I and Thou are caught up in the fusion of horizons in a way that de-emphasizes their separation.

The relation of the I and the Thou will be explained by looking at the three ways that one can experience the Thou. Along with that, I will explain how the three ways whereby the I

[34] By "truth" I mean the Heideggerian sense of truth as "un-concealment" which always both hides and shows itself. Our understanding of truth is always finite.
[35] Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937)
[36] Risser, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*, 92.

experiences the Thou map onto the concepts of listening-for, listening-to, and listening-with that I develop later in the dissertation.

In *Truth and Method*, the relation of the I and Thou stands at the center of Gadamer's theory of hermemeutic experience. While he does not devote a large part of the text to explicating it, the importance of the concept for understanding the hermeneutic experience cannot be overlooked.

In any confrontation with another person or text, there is always a meeting of an I and a Thou, but the key to understanding the relation between the two is that the I and the Thou are not fully separate entities. The Thou is never totally alien to oneself when one comes into contact with it. There always will be some commonality between the I and Thou in any meeting of the two. The I and the Thou are never fully separate from one another. The I always hears a bit of itself in the Thou.

At the heart of the relation between the I and the Thou is the experience of finitude, historicity, and tradition. Gadamer explains the role of finitude in hermeneutic experience: "The truly experienced person is one who has taken this to heart, who knows that he is master neither of time nor the future. The experienced man knows that all foresight is limited and all plans uncertain."[37] There is a lack of certainty in the "experienced person" that brings about the realization of one's own finitude. This attitude toward experience brings about an openness to the Thou and the possibilities that the Thou might have in relation to oneself. We learn human finitude through this process. Gadamer makes the point that this realization is not one which brings about absolute knowledge of oneself, but that "for the first time experience fully and truly

[37]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 351.

is."[38] Awareness of our finitude opens us to the Thou, and our relation to the Thou increases our sense of finitude. The relationship is reciprocal.

Along with finitude, one experiences one's historicity in the meeting of the I and the Thou. When one realizes her own existence in history one sees that the possibilities for the future become closed as time goes on. One who finitely experiences realizes that history does not repeat. There is a sort of freedom in such experience because if one saw all possibilities as realizable one would be so overwhelmed by them that one would have a difficult time acting at all. This difficulty is due to the fact that one's plans would have to take into account all possibilities at once if one is going to prepare for the future. This realization harkens back to finitude in that it creates humility in the hermeneut and an openness to the Thou.[39]

Finally, hermeneutic experience is "concerned" with tradition.[40] Gadamer explains that tradition is what we come to experience. He states, "But tradition is not simply a process that experience teaches us to know and govern; it is language—i.e., it expresses itself like a Thou."[41] For Gadamer, we do not come to pick up texts, instead, texts and traditions call out to us through a question. There is an experience of a Thou in the call of the text. The Thou is not some sort of static object waiting for us to discover it. The Thou is not a lifeless object but helps to create a relation between us and it that capitulates in a full experience of the Thou. Gadamer describes the process: "For tradition is a genuine partner in dialogue, and we belong to it, as does the I with the Thou."[42] Tradition meets us as a Thou and the Thou also has a horizonal tradition which we come to meet. Tradition is a Thou and the Thou has a tradition. There is no possible way to get

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 351-352.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

outside of one's tradition to come to meet the Thou. One is always caught up in one's own finitude, tradition, and history when coming to engage it.

There are three ways by which one comes to meet the Thou, and Gadamer ranks them in order. Not all meetings of the I and Thou are examples of genuine openness to the other. The I experiences the Thou fully in the third level of the hermeneutic experience.

The first of the three experiences of the meeting of I and Thou is one that is totally self-related. This experience is one of meeting the Thou from a God's eye perspective. When we come to meet the Thou as an object which we think we totally understand, we fail in being open to the other. Gadamer describes this failure as a feature of human finitude and states that it forsakes the Kantian maxim that one must always treat the other as an end in himself.[43]

This first experience of the Thou is a reduction of it to an object for one's contemplation. This experience forsakes the fact that one is bound up in one's own finitude, tradition, and history. The hermeneut who is under the delusion that she has attained this perspective is sorely mistaken. According to Gadamer, this brash being is:

> Someone who understands tradition in this way makes it an object—i.e., he confronts it in a free and uninvolved way—and by methodically excluding everything subjective, he discovers what it contains. We saw that he thereby detaches himself from the continuing effect of the tradition in which he himself has his historical reality.[44]

Risser summarizes the experience: "The corresponding hermeneutic experience is characterized by a naïve faith in scientific method that 'flattens out the nature of hermeneutic experience.'"[45] He compares this experience to one obsessed with dominating tradition.

[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 352-353.
[45] Risser, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*, 93.

The Thou is instrumentalized in this first level of hermeneutic experience. The Thou is seen as a tool. Buber describes this phenomenon in addressing Napoleon and the "demonic Thou":

> He [Napoleon] sees the beings around him, indeed, as machines, capable of various achievements, which must be taken into account and utilized for the Cause. In this way, too, he sees himself—except that he must continually ascertain anew by experiment his power of achievement (whose limits he does not experience): he treats himself, too, as an *It*.[46]

Prior to this section Buber analyzes the role of the I in the case of Goethe and Socrates and speaks admiringly of the strength of their "I,"[47] but in the case of Napoleon the I is lost in the cause. Napoleon instrumentalizes the I and Thou. The "Cause" is primal and always comes prior to the I and the Thou.

The second level of hermeneutic experience of the I and Thou is similar to the first, but it entails more awareness. "Self-relatedness" is still at play in this I and Thou meeting, but in this moment the Thou is recognized as a person. Gadamer describes one of the differences between the first and second levels of hermeneutic experience: "The relation is not immediate but reflective. To every claim there is a counterclaim."[48] But the relation is not one of radical openness to the other. He explains that on this second level the Thou is constantly outdone by the I and loses its immediacy. For the I, as in the first case, there is no room to experience the Thou as it is.

Gadamer makes this point clear by describing a welfare worker. There is something within the structure of welfare work that involves a domination of the Thou and a destruction of the relationship between the two. The fault, again, comes down to one thinking that she knows

[46]Buber, *I and Thou*, 68.
[47] Ibid., 66-67.
[48] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 353.

best and what the interests of the charity case are.[49] We will see later that Jane Addams also sees the danger in this sort of relationship, and she attempts to alleviate it through her idea of "sympathetic understanding."[50]

When the welfare worker attempts to help another person the worker can assume that she knows what is best for the other person. This interaction inevitably leads to hostility between the parties because the suffering of the Thou cannot be given full voice. When one attempts to reduce the other to the conception that one has of her, there is no realization of one's own finitude and the ways that one is caught up in one's own historical horizon when assessing the needs of the other in her situation.

Within the second level of hermeneutic experience, the I recognizes the Thou as a person but does not refrain from dominating the other due to the I's lack of humility. Gadamer notes that utilizing another as a tool that can be fully known is a myth.[51] We cannot know the other fully if we merely see the person as an instrument. He calls this second level of hermeneutic experience the experience of "historical consciousness."[52] The historical consciousness always thinks it fully knows the past and intends to use the past as a tool for the present, without realizing its own finite perspective. History becomes a brute tool in the historical consciousness. And the other is reduced to a tool in this mode of thinking.

The third level of hermeneutic experience is the highest form and also the ideal that the hermeneut should attempt to attain in her experience. This level is a deep openness to the Thou

[49] Ibid., 354.
[50] This will be discussed in further detail later. Jane Addams' *Democracy and Social Ethics* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 2002)
[51] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 353.
[52] Ibid., 354.

and lays the groundwork for the "fusion of horizons."[53] The immediacy of the Thou is realized in this experience. This "highest" form of hermeneutic experience, as Gadamer describes it, necessitates listening. Listening creates the openness he describes. He states, "In human relations the important thing is, as we have seen, to experience the Thou truly as a Thou—i.e., not to overlook his claim but to let him really say something to us."[54] Listening is not mentioned in the first two levels of hermeneutic experience for a reason. The hermeneut in the first two levels always assumes that she fully understands the other so no genuine dialogue can occur. The lack of awareness of one's own finitude always gets in the way of the "genuine" experience of the other. One experiences no real need to hear the other because one presumes to know the other already.

The path to opening oneself to the other in the highest form of hermeneutic experience is through listening. Gadamer explains, "Here is where openness belongs. But ultimately this openness does not exist only for the person who speaks; rather, anyone who listens is fundamentally open. Without such openness to one another there is no genuine human bond."[55] Both sides must be represented and respected in the third level of experience.

Vulnerability is required in this level of hermeneutic experience. There was a problem in the first two levels of hermeneutic experience in creating a "genuine bond" between oneself and the text or other. This problem came about because there was an assumption that one fully understood the other's nature and historical situatedness but did not realize her own. Vulnerability requires a deep openness to self-development and change *with* the other to foster this bond. When one denies one's own subjectivity and finitude self-development is impossible.

[53] This concept will be explained shortly.
[54] Ibid., 355.
[55] Ibid.

Gadamer does not use the term "vulnerability" to describe this experience, but he makes statements that seem to hint at something close to the term: "Openness to the other, then involves recognizing that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so."[56] Risser describes well what Gadamer is up to in this section: "But openness, in view of its characterization in the analysis of experience, means something other than liberal mindedness. The openness to experience itself is an openness to what is alien and other."[57] If one is of the "liberal" persuasion the openness is also partially closed, as in the case of the welfare worker. The person might be of good intentions but is not ready to change herself in relation to the other.

In the genuine human bond we first must realize our own finitude, historical situatedness, and place in tradition. Second, we must be open enough to change ourselves in relation to the Thou in a way that is not forced upon us, but comes about as a result of the situation in which we are involved.

Listening-For, Listening-To, and Listening-With: An Analogue to Gadamer's Levels

My construction of a theory of listening along Gadamerian lines is heavily reliant on distinctions he makes between the different levels of hermeneutic experience. In what follows I will attempt to outline what I think are the three normative constraints of a Gadamerian-influenced notion of listening. Gadamer goes to great pains to leave normativity out of the picture of his hermeneutics, but my theory of listening depends upon the normative elements involved in the process. This approach should not turn Gadamer's hermeneutics into something which it is not. Instead, this project should be seen as a difference in emphasis and development

[56] Ibid.
[57] Risser, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*, 94.

of his hermeneutics in a new direction. This development is not wholly without support in Gadamer's own work. As I will show, he does characterize hermeneutic experience in moral terms at different points, and this characterization can be seen as support for this new direction in Gadamerian hermeneutics.

As noted in the introduction, I will discuss three modes of listening: listening-for, listening-to, and listening-with. They resemble the three levels of hermeneutic experience just described very closely, but there are some differences, and specifically, I will emphasize the bodily experience of listening in Addams' work. This drawing out of a theory of listening attempts to fill out some overlooked differences between listening and hermeneutic experience. There is the danger within Gadamer's work that the Thou turns into a character in a text, and that experience itself becomes textualized. Thomas Alexander, in his essay in the *Library of Living Philosophers, Volume 24* on Gadamer, "Eros and Understanding: Gadamer's Aesthetic Ontology of the Community," discusses this danger in Gadamer's hermeneutics: "In particular, it seems at times as though Gadamer makes both the self and other disappear into the text when there is a genuine fusion of horizons and the claim of the truth of the beautiful shines forth."[58] On this account, Gadamer's hermeneutics overlooks the role of the body and "textualizes" it in interpretation and listening.

The most base form of listening is listening-for. One who is engaged in listening-for is stuck in a narcissistic mode of existence where the Thou does not even enter the thoughts of the I. Its analogue in Gadamer's theory of hermeneutic experience is the "knowledge of human nature."

[58]Thomas M. Alexander, "Eros and Understanding: Gadamer's Aesthetic Ontology of the Community," in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, Ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court,1997), 323.

A version of listening-for could be termed "listening-for-one's-turn-to speak" and is totally self-absorbed. Contemporary political debate tends to take this lowest form of listening in most of the venues in which it engages. Listening-for tends to be a form of rhetoric which is rooted in its attempts to win the debate or destroy the other through the exchange.

Since no self-transformation takes place, discussions with an interlocutor who is merely listening-for tend to take the form of repetition.[59] This lack of self-transformation is due to the fact that the one who is listening-for is under the dubious impression that she has fully understood the other. The assumption on the part of one who is merely listening-for is always that the failure is in the other and never in oneself. One who is listening-for also assumes that the words she uses must be more important and closer to the truth than the words of the Thou.

The relation between openness and listening-for is of tantamount importance. The lack of openness does not bode well for what Gadamer calls the "fusion of horizons."[60] When one is listening-for, the closedness to self-transformation makes such a fusion impossible. In the realm of hermeneutics this plays out when one purposely misreads a text to suit one's own interests. Openness itself becomes something for which one does not even strive when one is listening-for.

In this way listening-for is even a bit more extreme than the first level of hermeneutic experience that Gadamer describes. He explains that the experience of the Thou in the first level consists in an I under the dubious impression that she fully understands the nature of the other person. The faith that this person has in method comes out of the obsession with objectivity in the enlightenment. This faith in objectivity leads one to think that she has entered a realm whereby she can fully assess the core meaning of the other better than the other can herself. This

[59] Repetition in this sense is not the same sort of Kierkegaardian repetition that Risser speaks of in *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*. Please see ch. 1 part 2. pp. 33-40

[60] The exact meaning of this will be explained in the next section.

failure is not just on the theoretical level: one has too hastily employed the scientific method without realizing one's finitude. The failure is in the realm of normativity.

Both the first level of hermeneutic experience and listening-for are moral transgressions against the other. But one who listens-for makes even less of a good faith gesture toward the other. In the case of listening-for one haphazardly thinks that one understands the other. In what Gadamer describes as the first level of hermeneutic experience there is an attempt at objectivity, but in the case of listening-for there is no such attempt.

Gadamer explains that in the first level of hermeneutical experience there is a moral failure: "From the moral point of view this orientation toward the Thou is purely self-regarding and contradicts the moral definition of man."[61] This level violates the categorical imperative in that the Thou is treated only instrumentally.

Similarly the danger of listening-for can be seen in the instrumentalization of the other. In the other two relations of listening the Thou is, at least in some sense, seen as part of the world of the I and the I is dependent on the Thou. The I realizes this dependence in listening-for, but it does not experience the depth or vulnerability that the other two modes of listening do. When the Thou is seen merely as a player on the stage of the narcissist there is only the possibility for one actor in the production: all others are mere stage-hands and props. The cold and calculating process of listening-for shuts down the humanity of the other in that the sense of the other, even in herself, becomes lost. Nothing new can come out of the relation between the I and the Thou when the I is listening-for. Ideally, when one is engaged in open dialogue with another person the I attempts to be open to self-transformation through the discussion with the other. But since

[61] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 352.

this is not the case the Thou is generally reduced to silence when engaging with the I. Due to her dismay at the situation the Thou fails to hear even her own voice when in dialogue with one who is listening-for.

The social worker, especially when dealing with issues of race, can quickly fall into listening-for. The civil rights leader, author, and comedian, Dick Gregory tells a story in his book *Nigger: An Autobiography* of a confrontation that his mother had with a social worker who came by the house to make sure that his mother was not "cheating" the system. The worker suspected that his mother was working and still getting assistance from the Government.

At the time Gregory's mother was working across town as a servant in a white household, but the pay was not enough to afford expenses and it was not predictable when she would be needed. In the story, Gregory describes the encounter, and it is a perfect example of someone listening-for:

> [Describing his mother] I wonder how she kept from teaching us hate when the social worker came around. She was a nasty bitch with a pinched face who said: 'We have reason to suspect you are working, Miss Gregory, and you can be sure I'm going to check on you. We don't stand for welfare cheaters.'
>
> Momma, a welfare cheater. A criminal who couldn't stand to see her kids go hungry, or grow up in slums and end up mugging people in dark corners… I remember how the social worker would poke around the house, wrinkling her nose at the coal dust on the chilly linoleum floor, shaking her head at the bugs crawling over the dirty dishes in the sink. My Momma would have to stand there and make like she was too lazy to keep her own house clean. She could never let on that she spent all day cleaning another woman's house for two dollars and carfare. [62]

The welfare worker seems to think that she fully understands the predicament of the Gregorys, or at least that she knows what the interests of the state are in this case. If it is the former she clearly is under the delusion that she fully knows the nature of Gregory's mother. The social worker is clearly delusional because she falls for the ploy that Gregory's mother is too lazy to

[62] Dick Gregory and Robert Lipsyte, *Nigger: An Autobiography* (New York, New York: Pocket Books. Simon and Schuster:1964), 28.

clean her own house. And if it is the latter she basely reduces Gregory's mother to an instrument of her work. There is an intense callousness in the case of listening-for and an unjustified authority at play in the case of this social worker. The case of the social worker can also be applied to the second mode of listening, but this case would have to include a social worker with a bit more compassion than in Gregory's case.

The second mode of listening is "listening-to". This way of listening also has an analogue in Gadamer's theory of hermeneutic experience. In his second level of hermeneutic experience the Thou is actually considered as a person and garners some amount of recognition. He explains, "… the Thou is acknowledged as a person, but despite this acknowledgment the understanding of the Thou is still a form of self-relatedness."[63] So at least in this situation the other is actually recognized, but the I still fails to realize that she too is an historically effected consciousness. This lack of awareness brings about a relation to the Thou that is, again, one-sided and only self-relating.

In the case of listening-for, the other is seen merely as a tool to be utilized by the I in discussion or interpretation. In the case of "listening-to-the-other" there is at least a promise that will afford the Thou an opportunity to speak, but this recognition does not guarantee that the I will respect the Thou. Gadamer uses the example of the social worker as an instance of the second level of hermeneutic experience, but, as has been shown, the welfare worker can still be used as a case in point.

The importance of the example is that when one is in a position of authority over the Thou the I can become over-confident in her supposed understanding of the Thou. The power

[63] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 352.

given to one can quickly turn into a despotic drive to manipulate and control the other, as is the case in listening-for. This is not the case in listening-to. There is enough respect so that one sees the humanity of the Thou but does not realize one's own finitude.

With respect to openness the situation is more promising in the mode of listening-to than listening-for. There is a slightly stronger drive to be open to the other. But that drive is not tempered by the humility of one who realizes her historically effected consciousness. The realization of one's own finitude makes one recognize that the method one is using in coming to understand the other is not as unfaltering as one thinks it is when one is listening-to. Gadamer describes the danger: "A person who does not admit that he is dominated by prejudices will fail to see what manifests itself by their light. It is like the relation between I and Thou. A person who reflects himself out of the mutuality of such a relation changes this relationship and destroys its moral bond."[64] The I who is listening realizes the finitude of the other. This realization of finitude only goes in one direction, but it is also what creates the possibility for treating the other as a person. In the case of listening-for the other is treated merely as a tool and not even a person.

But admittance of another's personhood is not enough when one does not realize that one has a God-complex. Gadamer notes, "Even a slave still has a will to power that turns against his master, as Nietzsche rightly said."[65] The master realizes that the slave has a will but does not regard it as dangerous because the master is certain that he fully understands the slave and can predict what she will do. Even in less extreme examples the same fault still rears its ugly head

[64] Ibid., 354.
[65] Ibid.

when one is listening-to. The problem of self-relatedness and lack of awareness of one's own finitude gets in the way of listening.

When listening-to one is so certain of one's understanding of the Thou that even when the Thou protests the cries are misunderstood. The I who is listening-to is under the delusion that she fully understands the other, and this delusion cashes out in a lack of openness to self-transformation or to the situation at hand. Her image of the other does not change even when the other protests. Her horizon is closed to change.

In the case of listening-for there is no openness to transforming the self or the situation, but in the case of listening-to the hermeneut is open to self-transformation and transformation of the situation. To show the separation between the two I will put in plain words an example from my own life when I was caught up in the mode of listening-to.

When I was seventeen I spent a short time in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico with two Mexican sociologists and their family. They lived outside of town amongst a group of extremely poor campesinos. I was visiting to fulfill a service project requirement and was going to work a week with the sociologists and their poor neighbors.

One of my tasks in working on the service project was to collect large rocks for a series of dams to be built in a spot where the river would flood next to a small mountain every year. The purpose of the dams was to hold onto the water for bathing and other uses. The water was not going to be potable but Luis (one of the sociologists) assured me that it was necessary and if it did not get built the people would be without some necessities in the upcoming year. He assured me that the dams had been built before and that they had been successful in prior years.

I went into the situation assuming that this dam was a pressing requirement and worked in that fashion. I was working with the people from the village and assumed that they would be exceedingly grateful that I was willing to help them, and I also assumed that they would work with the same fervor that I did.

I was surprised to find that as I worked it seemed that the campesinos did not have the same work ethic that had been instilled in me as a young man from the United States. I was on the side of the mountain with a crowbar four feet in length, prying forty to fifty pound boulders from the mountainside day after day. I would dig them up, roll them down, and, with the help of one or two of the men, place the rocks in position. But, for some strange reason the campesinos would just sit at the bottom of the mountain, only helped me when it seemed as though the boulder was going to crush me, and worked at about a third of the pace.

What was even more baffling was that it seemed as though they did not even care if the job was going to be finished. Day after day I would show up, work in silence, and stew in my own anger at their lack of work ethic. One of the factors adding to my anger was that during the time I was instructed to use for reflection (two to three hours of discussion about the day's events) I could not attain the answer as to why the campesinos did not want to work.

Luis tried to explain to me, in Socratic fashion, that the schedule that the campesinos utilized was not the same as mine. Most of the conversations we had would turn into me getting upset with Luis and saying, "But if it needs to be built, why aren't they working harder on it? Won't they care if it doesn't get done?" And Luis would respond, "Of course they need it done and it would make their lives much easier, but have you noticed what they do when they're around you?" Luis would go on to explain to me that they were more interested in talking with

me, showing me things of theirs, and me showing them things that I had. For example they were all proud to show off the watches and bracelets that they had bought. And they wanted to look at my shoes, watch, etc. and use these things as a common starting point from which to speak to me.

What Luis kept trying to explain to me was that they did not look at tasks the same way that I did. I was coming into the situation with my own biases, culture, etc. and was not realizing it. I thought that as soon as one was given a task that one should try to get it done as quickly and diligently as possible, especially one as important as building a necessary dam. But the campesinos were not as interested in that. They were more interested in developing a relationship with me.

At the time I was deluded enough to think that they were just ignorant to think the way that they did and that their lives would not be so miserable if they would do things like work on building a dam and getting running water and electrical lines into their village. When I would bring this up to Luis, he would say things like, "Does it seem to you like they are leading miserable lives? Do they seem happy? You're the only one I see who's angry around here. Mike, you want to measure the health of a people by the number of hospitals in the area, the happiness of people by how technologically advanced they are, and the wisdom of a people by how many Universities they have." When Luis would explain this to me I would look at him baffled, blind to my own biases. But the issue was more that I did not realize my own finitude and how the traditions I had grown up with shaped and limited my own perspective. I was most definitely engaged in a form of listening-to these people. I was making the effort to help them, but I did not see that I might not be the one who knew best how to help, or that they needed a different kind of help, or possibly that they did not need help at all.

What this example shows is that I was open to these other people changing but because I did not realize my own situatedness and finitude I was not open to changing myself. It was only years later, upon reflection, that I was actually able to listen-with these people, realize my own historically effected consciousness, and bring about a change in myself. That change was the realization that there are other ways to conceive of time and work than my own culture had instilled in me. I would not have been awakened to these ideas were it not for my experiences with these people and Luis. I was not listening properly at the time.

Like Gadamer's highest form of hermeneutic experience, listening-with is also the ideal mode of listening for this tripartite theory of listening. Listening-with-the-other is a full realization of the relational nature of the experience of listening. The I sees that the Thou makes up and also changes the I and the Thou realizes the same thing, and it is also extremely difficult to achieve.[66]

It is a bit strange to even speak about the I and the Thou when describing listening-with because the boundaries between the two are not nearly as distinct as they are in the case of listening-for and listening-to. The role of openness in listening-with breaks down almost all of the barriers of separation. There is no attempt to utilize the other as a tool, as in the case of listening-for, and the other is recognized as a person, as in listening-to, but the other has a full say when one is listening-with. In listening-with the I can truly experience the Thou because the Thou is able to speak on her own terms. In the other cases there was too little openness. Both listening-for and listening-to lack openness.

[66] When I started the dissertation, I tried to avoid using visual metaphors for understanding, imagination, and knowledge, but quickly found it was impossible because our language is filled with visual metaphors and ways of speaking about them. We, as Westerners, do not have the vocabulary to describe fully a sense of hearing, and much less a directed version of that sense like listening. We can "see" it in the penultimate sentence of the last paragraph.

The I experiences extreme vulnerability in the case of listening-with. This openness does not mean that there are not any borders set up or that the I will always be capable of understanding the Thou. Instead, there is an openness to the Thou that lets the Thou go against the I. This push back on the I does not come only from the Thou but is instead a challenge that is let into the experience of the I. Gadamer explains this form of openness as the I realizing that she must accept some things which are against herself. In the case of listening-to there was a possibility for the Thou to have a counter-claim against one, but the I was not open enough to allow for self-transformation. Our finitude always limits our openness to the other, even in listening-with.

When one is listening-with there is a preparation for transformation of the I through the Thou. This readiness comes out of the realization that one is historically effected consciousness. With the understanding that one is a finite individual one realizes that one cannot fully understand the Thou, as was the case in listening-for and listening-to. Gadamer describes this readiness for transformation:

> The hermeneutical consciousness culminates not in methodological sureness of itself, but in the same readiness for experience that distinguishes the experienced man from the man captivated by dogma. As we can now say more exactly in terms of the concept of experience, this readiness is what distinguishes historically effected consciousness.[67]

It is this form of openness, vulnerability, and readiness that constitutes the nature of listening-with. The culmination of this mode of listening is that the Thou can truly be experienced as a Thou and not reduced to a false appearance in the mind of the I. Listening-with is always a failure and we never see it fully realized. Our finitude always gets in the way. But it is useful as an ideal which we can attempt to reach.

[67] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 355.

Embodiment and Listening

I would like to focus for a bit on the distinction between hermeneutics and listening. Up to this point the division has not been clear enough. The embodied nature of listening sets it apart from hermeneutics.

Gadamer does not emphasize the importance of embodiment in his hermeneutics, and the secondary literature surrounding Gadamer's work has barely touched on the role of embodiment and hermeneutics. Embodiment is essential to listening. We consistently think of the embodied experience of listening as soon as the word "listening" is uttered.

One can see the embodied nature of listening when looking at the case of music. Part IV of Don Ihde's *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*[68] deals with the embodied nature of listening. He discusses the role of technology and the history of music. He goes into detail about how there has always been a perception that the more technological a culture becomes the less pure its music seems. Idhe explains:

> A second step occurs once the playing was 'mechanized' by using keys with mechanical plucks (claviers, harpsichords) or valves (brass and woodwinds). Here something quite interesting happened in music history. Arguments broke out concerning the alienation of 'pure' hand playing as it 'degraded' into 'mechanical' playing. This happened in the transition from the harp to the keyboard instruments, and again from the simplest plucking devices to the more complex ones of the pianoforte… This was a 'Heidegger'-like, response to modern technology now concerning musical technologies.[69]

The same sort of response to these "impure" instruments was given to recorded music when compared with listening to an orchestra live. I am not attempting to take the Heideggerian perspective against which Ihde argues. There are many ways that technology can enhance the embodied experience of an individual who is listening. For example, Ihde describes his own

[68] Don Ihde,*Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2007)
[69] Ibid., 255.

experience of needing to use a hearing aid as he became older.[70] And it is clear that more people have been exposed to music because of recordings.

These sorts of topics with which Ihde deals, pertaining to the embodied character of listening, do not occur in Gadamer's work. The body and its role in hermeneutics is, at the very least, not emphasized. This lack is surprising because Gadamer gave so many interviews and engaged so many different philosophical minds. He was able to speak with philosophers of language, political philosophers (Habermas), those who disagreed with him (Derrida), and the public. Gadamer went so far as to speak in French to Derrida when they had their second encounter. Even though Gadamer clearly was aware of his own bodily comportment in conversation, and was surely aware of philosophers who dealt with embodiment, like Maurice Marleau-Ponty and Max Scheler, he did not include it in his theoretical works.

In an interview Gadamer tells a story of a meeting between Heidegger and José Ortega y Gassett which shows how both he and Heidegger were not attuned to how philosophy engages bodily existence:

> Gadamer: No, I associated myself only with the human side of existence, just as Habermas does, I think. Incidentally, I'm reminded of a story that I often tell—it took place during a philosophy congress in Germany at which Ortega was present. Heidegger was apprehensive about getting into a discussion with Ortega. The open, extroverted, ironic manner in which Ortega spoke and discussed things always embarrassed him. He was quite aware of this himself and asked for my help the evening before. Actually, right after his lecture on the next day, Ortega made this ironic remark: 'But, Herr Heidegger, you have to treat philosophy much more freely, more lightly—one must dance with philosophy.' Heidegger said nothing. He withdrew into himself and murmured, 'I really don't know what philosophy has to do with dancing.'[71]

[70] Ibid., 243-250.
[71] Rod Coltman and Sigrid Koepke, Trans., *A Century of Philosophy: Hans-Georg Gadamer: A Conversation with Riccardo Dottori* (New York and London: Continuum Press, 2006), 126-127.

Gadamer is clearly aware of the importance of the body and its role in philosophy but does not take notice of it in *Truth and Method*, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, or any of his other major works. This absence shows one of the limits of Gadamerian hermeneutics.

In what follows I will sketch a rudimentary outline of some positive aspects of embodied listening. These elements should not be seen as wholly separating listening from hermeneutics but as emphasizing overlooked aspects of hermeneutical experience.

Textual distance is a problem for Gadamer. Hermeneutics is obsessed with closing the gap between the hermeneut and the text (as much as possible) to bring about the fusion of horizons. One does not experience the problem of distance when one is engaged in embodied listening.

When one has a living conversation with another the distance between the two engaging in discussion is a moot point. It is taken for granted. Those embodied individuals might be miles apart in actually understanding each other, but the distance does not seem to be as much. Embodied listening breaks down the distance between the two. Bodily closeness to the other tends to force one to actually confront the other. The force of the other is stronger when the geographical and physical distance is less because concentration is a requirement. It is much more difficult for one to ignore the other when she is directly in front of one.

Part of the difference between listening and hermeneutics is the role of non-verbal communication. When we are engaged in embodied conversations and instances of listening we track the movements of the hands, facial movements, etc. to fully understand what the other is attempting to tell us. The suffering of another is much easier to see when one is engaged in bodily conversation.

The anthropologist Edward T. Hall dealt with these subtle aspects of communication in much of his work. Specifically, in *The Silent Language*[72] and *The Hidden Dimension*,[73] he discusses the non-verbal embodied nature of communication between cultures. The purpose of his work was to make Americans understand why they were so often misunderstood when they were in other cultures. The works attempt to go far beyond the verbal expressions that humans tend to use and into the "silent" modes of communication.

One example Hall gives deals with an interaction between someone from the Middle East and an American:

> In the Middle East, Americans usually have a difficult time with the Arabs. I remember an American agriculturalist who went to Egypt to teach modern agricultural methods to the Egyptian farmers. At one point in his work he asked his interpreter to ask a farmer how much he expected his field to yield that year. The farmer responded by becoming very excited and angry. In an obvious attempt to soften the reply the interpreter said, 'He says he doesn't know.' The American realized something had gone wrong, but he had no way of knowing what. Later I learned that the Arabs regard anyone who tries to look into the future as slightly insane. When the American asked him about his future yield, the Egyptian was highly insulted since he thought the American considered him crazy. To the Arab only God knows the future, and it is presumptuous even to talk about it.[74]

While Hall's language is dated (this was written in 1959) and he comes dangerously close to stereotyping Middle Eastern peoples, one must keep in mind his audience. He was writing in a broad way to the American public of the 1950's and 60's. There is still something important one can take away from this description. Just imagine if the American agriculturalist did not have this embodied experience with the Egyptian farmer. The outcome would most likely have been totally different. Instead of seeing the seething anger in the farmer's face and realizing that the interpreter was glossing over what the farmer was attempting to say, the American would have most likely taken the interpreter on his or her word. The point that Hall makes with this example

[72] Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1959)
[73] Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966)
[74] Hall, *The Silent Language*, 16.

is that there are so many unstated presumptions at work in any communication, and many of these unstated communications are bodily.

Even the tone of one's voice is difficult for another to decipher when the speech is disembodied. One merely needs to think of the *Lotus Sutra* and all of the possible ways that one can interpret the Buddha's silent smile when holding aloft the flower to realize that the unsaid, when experienced bodily, can be much richer than merely reading about the experience. If given the choice one would assume that one would rather have attended the famous sutra as opposed to hearing about it on the road days later or reading about it in a book thousands of years later. Hall discusses the case of a husband coming home and how, just from the nature of his voice, his wife can know how his day went:

> When a husband comes home from the office, takes off his hat, hangs up his coat, and says 'Hi' to his wife, the way in which he says 'Hi,' reinforced by the manner in which he sheds his overcoat, summarizes his feelings about the way things went at the office. If his wife wants the details she may have to listen for a while, yet she grasps in an instant the significant message for her; namely, what kind of evening they are going to spend and how she is going to have to cope with it.[75]

The "Hi" of the spouse could possibly come across with a tone that would instill a feeling of dread in the other. This would be the case if the "Hi" had a low tone or was possibly articulated in a near whisper. Or if the spouse bounds in the door, throws his or her belongings around nonchalantly and greets the other with a vigorous "Hi!" the opposite would be the case. The important point is that hermeneutic experience is essentially embodied. The bodily movements of speech are always caught up in the act. Would "Singin' in the Rain" be the same without the dance?

Hall also discusses the role of the eyes when one is communicating with another. In this example he discusses the difference in eye contact between English and American people:

[75] Ibid., 120-121.

> A study of eye behavior reveals some interesting contrasts between the two cultures. Englishmen in this country have trouble not only when they want to be alone and shut themselves off but also when they want to interact. They never know for sure whether an American is listening. We, on the other hand, are equally unsure as to whether the English have understood us. Many of these ambiguities in communication center on differences in the use of the eyes. The Englishman is taught to pay strict attention, to listen carefully, which he must do if he is polite and there are not protective walls to screen out sound. He doesn't bob his head or grunt to let you know he understands. He blinks his eyes to let you know that he has heard you. Americans, on the other hand, are taught not to stare. We look the other person straight without wavering only when we want to be particularly certain that we are getting through to him.[76]

Hall gives a framework for interpreting the gaze of people from England when he describes the importance of eye behavior in communication. Interpreting the eye movement, body language, posture, tone of voice, facial movements, etc. clearly enriches the embodied experience of listening to another. They clearly seem to be important parts of listening and interpreting another person, but these are not aspects of communication that Gadamer discusses in his hermeneutics.

Disembodied listening can quickly break down. When one is engaged in sending an e-mail to another the intent of the message can be easily misconstrued. Part of this is due to the fact of the lack of tone but it also comes down to the lack of depth in this form of communication.

Something is lost in communication when one attempts to communicate through a technological medium to another person. In e-mail tone is lost because the sound of another's voice is not present. When one has a phone conversation one cannot see the facial and bodily expressions of the other. And even when one video chats or "skypes" with another the physical distance still makes a difference. Since we do not see the other in full form when "skyping" we are not able to follow the movements of the body as a whole. Along with that, the person on the other end cannot react to the sights, smells, noises, etc. which occur outside the screen at which she is looking. One also cannot have an embodied interaction when e-mailing, phoning, or

[76]Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, 134.

"skyping." We merely need to think of the difference between condolences given via "skype" versus an embodied interaction. It is not possible to hug someone or console them bodily in any way if not experiencing with the body. "Skyping" is clearly closer to a fully embodied conversation than using a phone or e-mail, but it is no substitute.

Gadamer does not fully overlook the importance of tone when interpreting, but there is a difference between understanding the tone of a text and the tone of another. There are two different modes of listening. Gadamer is correct to say that context is a necessary part of finding out the tone of the work one is interpreting, but that is not all that occurs when one is listening.

There are two sorts of communication that matter when one discusses tone. There is a sort of "hot" communication that comes out of the embodied nature of listening and includes listening to the other's words, paying attention to the body language of the other, and picking up on her tone.[77] The hermeneutic experience of embodied listening has a quicker pace to it. One is able, due to the influence of culture, history, etc. to do most of this interpreting automatically. Or, to be more precise, one thinks that one can do this automatically. The method of developing oneself into a good listener is one which takes more than just being raised in a culture.

The other form of communication is a "cold" form of communication wherein the listening is not done with a directly experienced other. Examples of this form of listening would be listening that is mediated by technology and interpreting ancient texts. There is not a clear cut distinction at work in these concepts, but the "hotness" and "coldness" of the listening form a continuum.

[77] Here I am making reference to Marshall McCluhan's ideas about "hot" and "cold" forms of communication, but I am flipping the categories on their head. See chapter two of *Understanding Media*, "Media Hot and Cold" by Marshall McCluhan.

On one extreme would be the coldest form of listening that leaves one with very little to work with in terms of knowledge of the author, context of the text, and knowledge of the exact functioning of the language. A prime example of this would be when one is listening to fragments of ancient languages that are not easily translated.

The other extreme would be embodied listening with an intimate other. The knowledge of the other is intense, the possibility for understanding the tone can be found through a direct back-and-forthness of communication, and the bodily expressions can be explored.

Most cases of listening are somewhere in between the extremes. When one listens over the telephone it is clearly a "hot" form of communication because there is the possibility of a back-and-forth in conversation. But listening and understanding the other's body language is not possible.

In embodied listening the play of conversation is different from interpreting a text. The back and forth nature of embodied listening is different from Gadamer's emphasis on play. He is correct to say that the text forces one into a conversation with it, and the text does have ways of correcting one. But the back-and-forth correction when one is in conversation takes on an immediate role. There is a pressing requirement to make sure that one properly understands the other when one is listening properly.

There is a stronger intimacy with the other when one is engaged in embodied listening. We do not feel comfortable treating the other as we might treat one of our favorite books, and most definitely, not our least favorite books. Charles Sanders Peirce how critics have treated Kant: "Kant is now acknowledged everywhere as the master of philosophy. The most opposite of schools of thought appeal to him. But his preeminence has attracted a class of parasites, who

live by tearing him to pieces."[78] Peirce is right to describe many of Kant's detractors in this way. It is hard to imagine that these hagfish would treat Kant the same way if confronted by him personally. And if they did, one hopes that someone would stop them from treating another person that way in conversation.

Intimacy breeds openness to the other. Embodied listening has the possibility of bringing about a deeper sort of openness than one can have with a text. When someone engages in conversation with another who cares about her the pull of openness to the other's perspective is strong.

Outside of openness and intimacy in embodied listening, one's interpretation of silence is much more direct. This is because of the reading of body language and also the realization of the duration of the silence. When one reads about silence it is more difficult to interpret exactly what is meant by it. When we read about the Buddha's silence in the *Lotus Sutra* the possibilities of interpretation are almost endless. Did the Buddha mean *sunyata* (emptiness) was the key to his thought? Did he mean that *sunyata* was inexpressible? Did he just get sick of talking? Was he being sarcastic? What is left after the silence? Was he saying thought was just emptiness?

Embodied listening to silence does not have as many difficulties. If anything, the role of silence in embodied communication plays a primary role in the tone, direction, and back and forth nature of the conversation. One waits for the silence of the other to know when it is one's turn to speak. One can still read the body language of the other when engaged in embodied listening. One can also know when the conversation has finished due to the silence. All of these

[78] Charles Sanders Peirce, "Lecture on Kant," in *The Writings of Charles S. Peirce A Chronological Edition*. Vol. 1, ed. The Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982), 241.

are possible when one is reading a text but the intensity of silence is more deeply felt the more embodied the listening is.

This list of the different aspects of the experience of listening is in no way exhaustive but merely points to some of the differences in emphasis between hermeneutics and listening. They will all be developed further later in the dissertation.

The embodied nature of listening also shows a difference in Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" in hermeneutic experience. The fusion of horizons is best experienced through embodied listening. To listen-with the other we must have a fusion of horizons.

Gadamer's Fusion of Horizons and Listening

Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" is a culmination of the interactions between the I and Thou. Listening is like a fusion of horizons in many ways. The central problem of the fusion of horizons is the danger of assimilating the other into one's own horizon. I hope to show that in the case of "listening-with" this assimilation is always a possibility, but not an inevitability.

The fusion of horizons is the moment when the hermeneut comes to experience fully the other in how she speaks to her. We must listen for the fusion to occur. The fusion is not the starting point of hermeneutic experience but the result of a long process of altering one's horizon to come into harmony with the text or other. The shifting occurs through realizing one's prejudices and thereby opening oneself to the other. The realization of one's prejudices does not mean one has come to the point of enlightenment objectivity and is free from all prejudice, but one has utilized one's prejudices to open oneself to the question of the other and to hear the call of the other. The fusion of horizons is not the end point of the hermeneutic process but merely a

new beginning in which new questions and dialogic interaction with the other occur. We can see the tripartite structure of listening within Gadamer's own description of the fusion of horizons.

First we see how the horizon works in the role of interpreting. All finite individuals have a horizon with which they come to experience anything. We are all wrapped up and bounded by our own finitude. Since we are historically situated beings, the horizon expands with us as we interpret things. Gadamer describes this position as the "historically effected consciousness." We are always in time and our horizon shifts as we experience new things and gain perspective on old ones, and as the culture changes. Horizons do not pertain only to individuals, but there is also a sense in which an entire culture or tradition can have a horizon; indeed, it must.

When we understand that we are historically situated and horizonally bound we can see possible ways that we might be able to broaden our horizon. It was only after a long struggle and an intense process of listening in the public sphere that white America was able to realize how limited its understanding of African Americans was prior to the civil rights movement. Their horizon had to shift to humanize African Americans. While in many ways it was a failed project, or at least one which still requires some major work, there was a dogged shift of the horizon to begin to be open to the Black experience. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in his "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail," tried to expand the horizons of white America:

> But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: 'Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?'; when you take a cross

> county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading 'white' and 'colored'; when your first name becomes 'nigger,' your middle name becomes 'boy' (however old you are) and your last name becomes 'John,' and your wife and mother are never given the respected title 'Mrs.'; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of 'nobodiness'--then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.[79]

King wanted all Americans to realize the everyday situations in which he found himself in the United States. He was attempting to put white Americans "in the shoes" of the other.

Gadamer goes so far as to use this phrase—putting oneself in another's shoes—when describing how the fusion of horizons works:

> We must always already have a horizon in order to be able to transpose ourselves into a situation. For what do we mean by 'transposing ourselves'? Certainly not just disregarding ourselves. This is necessary, of course, insofar as we must imagine the other situation… If we put ourselves in someone else's shoes, for example, then we will understand him—i.e., become aware of the otherness, the indissoluble individuality of the other person—by putting *ourselves* in his position.[80]

The phrase is hackneyed but poignant. It is a familiar concept but one extremely difficult to grasp. This tends to be because people, so much of the time, do not realize that they are horizonally bounded. It takes experience of and with the other to make us realize our own horizon. We cannot just deduce or reflect our way out of our prejudices. We must engage the other deeply in a dialogic process.

This same principle also applies to texts. If one, from the armchair and merely through reflection, attempts to rid herself of her prejudices about ancient Greek culture it becomes impossible if she does not attempt to learn more about the historical setting of the Greece of

[79] Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail," in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*, Ed. James M. Washington (New York, New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 292-293.
[80] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 303-304.

Plato's time. If we are to understand Plato and fuse our horizon with his work, we must learn Greek.

Just as one must read Greek to fuse better one's horizon with Plato's, one must experience the other within her own horizon. One would ideally do this through direct bodily experience of the other but it is clearly not always possible. The transformation of one's horizon when dealing with another person works in much the same way that it does for cultures. The individual must step into the other's shoes. Change like this can only occur if one is aware of one's own horizon and finite position. Sadly, there are many who have no realization of their situatedness.

Du Bois, in *Darkwater*, describes a situation of people who do not realize their horizon. He tells a myth about African Americans stuck behind a piece of glass looking out on the white world. He recounts the myth in grim detail:

> It is difficult to let others see the full psychological meaning of caste segregation. It as though one, looking out from a dark cave in a side of an impending mountain, sees the world passing and speaks to it; speaks courteously and persuasively, showing them how these entombed souls are hindered in their natural movement, expression, and development; and how their loosening from prison would be a matter not of simple courtesy, sympathy, and help to them, but aid to all the world. One talks on evenly and logically in this way, but notices that the passing throng does not even turn its head, or if it does, glances curiously and walks on. It gradually penetrates the minds of the prisoners that the people passing do not hear; that some thick sheet of invisible but horrible tangible plate glass is between them and the world. They get excited; they talk louder; they gesticulate. Some of the passing world stop in curiosity; these gesticulations seem too pointless; they laugh and pass on. They still either do not hear at all, or hear but dimly, and even what they hear, they do not understand. Then the people within may become hysterical. They may scream and hurl themselves against the barriers, hardly realizing in their bewilderment that they are screaming in a vacuum unheard and that their antics may actually seem funny to those outside looking in. They may even, here and there, break through in blood and disfigurement, and find themselves faced by a horrified, implacable and quite overwhelming mob of people frightened for their own very existence.[81]

[81]W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Oxford W.E.B. Du Bois Reader*, ed. Eric J. Sundquist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 95.

In this passage we can see that the closed horizon is, quite literally, the pane of glass separating white America from the Blacks. But when the glass is shattered the white people do not see that they have been thinking within their horizon the entire time they have dealt with those behind the glass. Many times, the forgetfulness we so easily have of our historical situatedness rules over our more humble natures. This failure is one of the assumptions held within enlightenment thinking. Since the whites in Du Bois' example would have seen and described themselves as "normal" and the Blacks as "abnormal" or "insane," when viewed from the perspective of the whites' horizon, their (the whites') status as unmarked would have gone totally unnoticed in their experience. When we do not realize that we have a horizon which separates us from another horizon the task ahead is a herculean one. The task is lessened because this specific horizon is already engaging us, but the problem still remains. The key to realizing our own horizon is through direct engagement—or experience—of the other.

Gadamer speaks of experience using two terms: *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*. The translators of *Truth and Method*, Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, note the differences between the two, "Erlebnis is something you have, and thus is connected with a subject and with the subjectivitization of aesthetics. Erfahrung is something you undergo, so that subjectivity is overcome and drawn into an 'event' (*Geschehen*) of meaning. Gadamer typically uses the term *Erlebnis* with a critical overtone, and the term *Erfahrung* with a positive one."[82] *Erlebnis* has the subject in mind when describing experience. This type of experience is most evident when one personally experiences something and is transformed but does not see that transformation with the thing encountered. *Erlebnis* is always focused on self-transformation and not transformation

[82]Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, introduction to *Truth and Method*, by Hans-Georg Gadamer (New York, New York: Continuum, 2004), xiii.

of the situation. After discussing the history of the word *Erlebnis* and moving onto the development of the concept in Dilthey, Gadamer points to Georg Simmel's apt description:

> 'The objective not only becomes an image and idea, as in knowing, but an element in the life process itself.' He even says that every experience has something of an adventure about it. But what is an adventure? And adventure is by no means just an episode… An adventure, however, interrupts the customary course of events, but is positively and significantly related to the context which it interrupts. Thus an adventure lets life be felt as a whole, in its breadth and its strength. Here lies the fascination of an adventure. It removes the conditions and obligations of everyday life. It ventures out into the uncertain.[83]

The nature of an adventure always ends up with the one who has gone on the adventure retelling the accolades of her adventure. This is a concept of experience which comes dangerously close to viewing an experience without remembering the influence of the past or others in shaping it. When the adventurer retells the story it is always about her experience of it. When Gadamer goes into the history of the term he discusses how it came about with a rejection of culture and history and was tied to the notion of genius.[84] *Erlebnis*, as the concept of experience, comes dangerously close to being self-centered, and it is connected to listening-to.

One who is listening-to merely attempts to transform only herself through the interaction with the other. All of the words of the other are woven into the narrative of the life story of the one who is listening-to. One who is listening-to does not see herself as a part of the on-going experience between the two engaged in dialogue but sees herself at the center of the conversation. When one listens-with another one experiences the other in the form of *Erfahrung*.

Erfahrung is a type of experience which engages the other along with the one who is experiencing and sees itself in a whole experience as opposed to *Erlebnis*. *Erfahrung* makes possible the fusion of horizons. Weinsheimer and Marshall describe it: "This kind of

[83] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 60.
[84] Ibid., 49-60.

'experience' is not the residue of isolated moments, but an ongoing and integrative process in which what we encounter widens our horizon, but only by overturning an existing perspective, which we can then perceive was erroneous or at least narrow."[85]*Erfahrung* is a transformative endeavor which realizes finitude, history, and culture.

Gadamer describes this concept of experience:

> Experience stands in an ineluctable opposition to knowledge and to the kind of instruction that follows from general theoretical or technical knowledge. The truth of experience always implies an orientation toward new experience. That is why a person who is called experienced has become so not only *through* experiences but is also open *to* new experiences.[86]

The hermeneut undergoing *Erfahrung* realizes that the new, "adventurous" experiences are directly connected to her past and a product of them. In this way they can be woven into the narrative of her life and also help her realize her own finitude. These experiences breed an openness to the influence of history and culture in her person. They also provide for the interpretation of new experiences; *Erfahrung* makes us curious. This transformative experience lies at the heart of listening-with.

Experience, as *Erfahrung*, opens the listener to new possibilities not experienced when one is merely listening-for or listening-to. The barriers of the self fall away in *Erfahrung*. The self, in being open to experience, lets in new possibilities for both self-transformation and transformation of the situation at hand.

When one is only listening-for, the horizon one experiences has a small scope. One who listens-for awaits cues for one's turn to speak next and always anticipates the next interjection. Those who listen-for are so self-absorbed that they do not realize their own perspective is limited

[85] Weinsheimer and Marshall, introduction, xiii.
[86]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 350.

by and also constitutive of their history, tradition, prejudices, and culture. They do not see themselves as part of this process but think of themselves as beyond it. This hubris arises out of the enlightenment obsession with genius as an instance of pure creativity. They do not realize that they even have a horizon. Or they think that they are outside of any horizon.

Those who listen-to are engaged in an *Erlebnis* sort of experience. They see themselves as involved in the process and think that they are open to the experience changing their perspective, but this view is a delusion. When one listens-to she is still involved in appropriating the other's experiences to her own wants and needs. She still sees herself as the objective voice, free from all prejudices and history, in the conversation. She is the adventurer who heads out into the world merely to collect stories to bring back home. Her narcissistic accolades forsake her experiences with others.

Listening-with brings about mutual understanding. It is connected directly to *Erfahrung*. Experience, as *Erfahrung*, carries all of the baggage of the past with it as it unfolds in time. It is focused not solely on individual transformation but sees the individual as related to the whole of experience. Experience is never only "my experience" but an experience which is undergone with another and reveals the back-and-forth nature of experience as a whole. Experience, in this sense, comes about through a process which occurs over time and transforms both the experiencer and the thing experienced. *Erfahrung* transforms an overall state of affairs and not just the mind of one individual.

Experience, as *Erfahrung*, brings about the fusion of horizons in the hermeneutic experience. One's horizon merges with the other's horizon but it is never a perfect fusion. There are always breaks in the merger that come about because of the finitude of the hermeneut

and the other. The other is never fully subsumed within the horizon. The fusion of horizons is an ideal for which to strive when one is engaged in the hermeneutic experience. The fusion of horizons is a goal never fully reached.

Horizons are never wholly separate. To enter another's horizon there must be some commonality between one's present horizon and the other horizon. The past always has a stake in the present. The present always emerges from a past and always portends a future. This phenomena also changes the other when one is experiencing another horizon. There is always something which speaks to us as we openly experience the other. Risser speaks of the connection of horizons:

> The fusion of horizons then is not that there are two horizons that meet, namely the horizon of the past and the horizon of the present. The horizon of the present cannot itself be formed without the past, as evident by the fact that we test our prejudices… But if there are not two horizons, why speak about a fusion of horizons and not simply the formation of one horizon?[87]

Gadamer describes the hermeneutic experience in terms of two horizons because of the tension between them. The heremeneut is in an "intermediate" position. Risser continues, "The encounter with the tradition involves the experience of the tension between the (historical) text and the present. The tension is not to be assimilated—the continuity of tradition is not simply the unity of discourse."[88] The fusion is also not a transformation of only the horizon with which one comes to the experience. The fusion is a transformation of the whole experience changing both horizons in the process. We see the past in light of the present and are also changed by the view of history that we have now attained.

[87] Risser, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other*, 81.
[88] Ibid.

The fusion of horizons carries the danger of assimilation. Do the horizons fuse to the point of forsaking the other? Is the other subsumed in the fusion? Gadamer attempts to answer these questions, specifically Derrida's claim that Gadamer's hermeneutics is one of "logocentrism," by giving an example:

> Here [in discussing the role of *différance* in hermeneutics] the German word '*Verstehen*' can be very helpful. Admittedly, given its place in German intellectual history, finding a parallel to it in other languages is no easy task. What is the literal meaning of *Verstehen*? It means to 'stand in for someone.' In its original sense, this word is applied to someone who stands in for another before a judge: a lawyer. He understands his party well enough so that, as we would say today, he is able to 'hold a brief' for him. He acts on behalf of his client and stands in for him. He does not just repeat what has been told or dictated to him in advance; rather, he speaks for whom he represents. But this means that he speaks from himself as another and is turned toward others. Obviously, this implies *différance*.[89]

Gadamer uses the example of the lawyer standing in for another to illustrate this point because legal hermeneutics is an ideal way of showing how the hermeneutical process is supposed to work.[90] The lawyer, in representing her client, must not speak for the client in a way that overtakes the client's words. The lawyer, like the hermeneut, must stand in for the other while also tracking the reactions of others around her and also paying attention to the client's meaning. Gadamer explains that Derrida is actually the one who comes closer to logocentrism: "His starting point in the Platonic-static sense of an ideal meaning has, it seems, led him into this misunderstanding. But the art of nailing someone down to something he or she said is not hermeneutics. Rather, hermeneutics is the art of grasping what someone has really wanted to say."[91]

[89]Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hermeneutics and Logocentrism," in *Dialogue and Deconstruction*, ed. Diane P. Michelfelder and Richard E. Palmer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 118.
[90] See "The Exemplary Significance of Legal Hermeneutics" 321-336 in *Truth and Method*.
[91]Gadamer, "Hermeneutics and Logocentrism," 118.

Heidegger's "Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking," from the *Discourse on Thinking*,[92] can settle the fears of assimilation and better show how Gadamer's fusion of horizons is not assimilation but a rising to a higher understanding between the parties involved in the hermeneutical process. The conversation is one among a scientist, a scholar, and a teacher about the nature of thinking. The dialogue begins in a wandering, involves a few ellipses, and ends in all three dialogic partners realizing that in their discussion of "thinking" they have "moved into nearness" with each other and also risen to a higher understanding through the process.

The conversation begins with the three unlikely companions out on a nighttime walk and discussing the "nature of man." Initially, the interlocutors realize that they must look away from the nature of man to understand what it is to be a person. There is a discussion about how looking away from the functions and actions of people might lead the way to understand what a person really is. They settle upon discussing what separates humans from animals and come upon the question of what thinking is.

The interlocutors propose that thinking is a sort of willing and that willing is a sort of "re-presentation" in the Kantian sense, at least according to the scholar. Then they come to the idea that thinking must be a sort of non-willing because willing does not come close enough to the spontaneity of thinking, also a Kantian concept. They realize that non-willing is too focused on the drive of seeking out a goal and that whenever one does not will to have a thought or anything she is not engaged in spontaneity or openness. She is still focused on one goal—non-willing—and because of that she is not truly open.

[92] Martin Heidegger, "Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking," in *Discourse on Thinking*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 58-90.

From the discussion of thinking as non-willing, the group decides that thinking is "releasement." But again, this "releasement" is too engaged in thinking as a focused project. Any focused goal cannot be true releasement or non-willing. Instead, thinking is a sort of "waiting." For what they are waiting they are not sure. Waiting for anything specific would betray the fundamental nature of thinking.

The clan of inquirers moves onto a long discussion of the nature of horizons. Horizons house and also create the possibilities of thought. Through the conversation Heidegger shows how the interlocutors are transformed through the discussion and come closer to the nature of man, which is thinking.

The discussion of horizons begins in investigating what a region is. A region is too closed of a concept. Instead, they propose that the region is *Gegnet*, which, according to the interlocutors, is an older form of *Gegend* and closer to "That which regions" or "regioning." They push the concept farther into the region, not as something stable or stagnant, but a living space which has the power of giving place and space to things.

During this portion of the dialogue the scientist only asks questions and does not offer any of his own insights. But the scholar and the teacher begin to fuse their horizons through this process. This interchange occurs at the end of the discussion of horizons:

> Scientist: I must confess that I can't quite re-present in my mind all that you say about region, expanse and abiding, and about return and resting.
>
> Scholar: Probably it can't be re-presented at all, in so far as in re-presenting everything has become an object that stands opposite us within a horizon.
>
> Scientist: Then we can't really describe what we have named?
>
> Teacher: No. Any description would reify it.

> Scholar: Neverthless [sic] it lets itself be named, and being named it can be thought about…
>
> Teacher: … only if thinking is no longer re-presenting.
>
> Scientist: But then what else should it be?
>
> Teacher: Perhaps we now are close to being released into the nature of thinking…
>
> Scholar:… through waiting for its nature.[93]

Heidegger, literally, has the discussants finishing each others' statements at this point in the dialogue. Their horizons fuse through the process, but the scientist is left out. The scientist had only been qualifying definitions up to this point, and now he begins to think.

It is only when the listening is brought into the dialogue that the scientist begins to fuse his own horizon into the horizons of the other two. The scholar, in discussing releasement and the namelessness of thinking explains:

> Scholar: For us it remains only to listen to the answer proper to the word.
>
> Teacher: That is enough; even when our telling is only a retelling of the answer heard…
>
> Scientist: … and when it doesn't matter in this if there is a first retelling or who does it; all the more since one often doesn't know whose tale he retells.[94]

As the scientist realizes the push of history he begins to fuse into the horizons of the teacher and scholar as they discuss thinking. They are coming closer and closer to the *concept* of thinking through the *process* of thinking.

It should be noted that the scholar brings up thinking as listening when he converts the scientist over to their (the teacher and scholar's) form of thought. The prior discussion of thinking as a sort of waiting should have made this clear to the scientist, but his horizon is limited. When he realizes his horizon is structured by history, he begins to realize what thought

[93]Ibid., 67.
[94]Ibid., 72.

is and how it is structured by *Gegnet*. At this point in the conversation the scientist enters into the horizon of the scholar and teacher:

> Teacher: What are we then to call the relation of that-which-regions to the thing, if that-which- regions lets the thing abide in itself?
>
> Scientist: It determines the thing, as thing.
>
> Scholar: Therefore, it is best called the determining.
>
> Scientist: But determining is not making and effecting; nor is it rendering possible in the sense of the transcendental…
>
> Teacher:... but only the determining.
>
> Scientist: We must first learn to think what determining is…
>
> Teacher:… by learning to become aware of the nature of thinking…
>
> Scholar: … that is by waiting upon determining and regioning with respect to man.[95]

All three of the interlocutors begin to fold in upon each other at this point in the dialogue. The scientist, scholar, and teacher move ever closer to the same horizon. In the rest of their thinking about thinking they come to the conclusion that thinking is a "moving into nearness"[96] They are becoming one.

It is a long process to get to this point but the unified voice of all three interlocutors can be seen in the back-and-forth when they discuss Heraclitus' 122nd fragment. The scholar is initially reticent about sharing his definition of what thinking is but eventually shares it as his translation of ἀγχιβασίην. He initially translates it as "going-towards," but as the discussion continues the teacher suggests that "moving-into-nearness" is probably a better translation for the term. All of them, teacher, scholar, and scientist, come to realize what they were seeking and also what they were doing:

> Scholar: Then this word might be the name, and perhaps the best name, for what we have found.

[95] Ibid., 77.
[96] Ibid., 89.

Teacher: Which, in its nature, nevertheless, we are still seeking.

Scholar: ἀγχιβασίην: 'moving-into-nearness.' The word could rather, so it seems to me now, be the name for our walk today along this country path.

Teacher: Which guided us deep into the night…

Scientist: … that gleams ever more splendidly…

Scholar:… and overwhelms the stars…

Teacher: …because it nears their distances in the heavens…

Scientist:… at least for the naïve observer, although not for the exact scientist.

The interlocutors indulge in each other and see that thinking is a process and a thanking for what might come to be. We are left with a still vague notion of thinking at the end of the "Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking" but the interaction among the interlocutors is extremely interesting in illustrating what Gadamer describes as the "fusion of horizons."

In the beginning of the dialogue, the three interlocutors are separated from each other in their methods. The scientist is speaking in terms of his horizon, the teacher and scholar in terms of theirs. The teacher and scholar start out in an instructor-pupil relationship initially, and they move into positions of mutual recognition by the end of the piece. The scholar's offering of the term ἀγχιβασίην melds his horizon with the teacher's and the scientist's.

The scientist is only able to grasp fully what thinking is when he begins to listen attentively to the teacher and the scholar. When he does this he is listening-with. The scientist is able to fuse horizons through the guiding hand of the teacher and the scholar's coming into his own. All three of them end up in the same place. They are experiencing, through thinking, as man's nature, and thinking about thinking through *Erfahrung*.

They are not experiencing in the sense of *Erlebnis*. They are not on separate adventures as they go on their journey. As they traverse through the night they take on an adventure

together, but they are not seeking self-transformation. Their experiences become woven together through the process. The interlocutors never listen-for in this piece because they have already had these sorts of transforming conversations with each other before.

Heidegger's dialogue relieves the assimilationist worries. None of the parties has been subsumed by the other. No one has been forced into a position. All three of them have come closer to oneness through their discussion and process of listening-with each other. Their horizons are fusing, or "moving-into-nearnness." But the dialogue did come from one mind and the world in which people deal with each other on a daily basis is much more complex.

Gadamer's appropriation of Aristotle's σύνεσις quells the fears of those who worry that the fusion of horizons is a sublimation of the other while giving a method for beginning to listen-with. Σύνεσις is not the end point for the fusion of horizons but the best way to get to the fusion. It sets out the path upon which one must go if one is to listen-with.

Listening-with through the Practice of σύνεσις

Gadamer's interpretation of Aristotle's σύνεσις is the culmination of his hermeneutic project when it comes to listening. His explanation of the Aristotelian concept lays the groundwork for listening-with. In what follows I will explain how Gadamer views Aristotle, give a survey of Aristotle's use for hermeneutics—and listening in general—and show how Gadamer's process works out in practice.

Gadamer translates σύνεσις as "sympathetic understanding" as opposed to φρόνησις:

> Beside phronesis, the virtue of thoughtful reflection, stands 'sympathetic understanding.' 'Being understanding' is introduced as a modification of the virtue of moral knowledge since in this case it is not I who must act. Accordingly synesis means simply the capacity for moral judgment. Someone's sympathetic understanding is praised, of course, when in

> order to judge he transposes himself fully into the concrete situation of the person who has to act.[97][98]

Sympathetic understanding comes out of one's caring for the other and also a fusing of horizons with the other. This coming together of oneself and the other, at least in this specific case has to do with judging the other. One who sympathetically understands can stand in the place of the other, see how she is feeling, and help her make a decision about what she has been worried.

These sorts of relationships between people leave the one asking for advice extremely vulnerable, and the relation to the one giving advice must always be friendly and trustworthy. The role of friendship in this relationship cannot be overlooked. Gadamer explains:

> The concrete example of this is the phenomenon of advice in 'questions of conscience.' Both the person asking for advice and the person giving it assume that they are bound together in friendship. Only friends can advise each other or, to put it another way, only a piece of advice that is meant in a friendly way has meaning for the person advised.[99]

The one who is called in the question of conscience to seek advice will not take the advice of an unfriendly advisor. She must feel open to the advisor and treated as part of the advisor's experience.

Sartre shows us how to advise poorly. Sartre fails to attain σύνεσις. In "Existentialsim is a Humanism" he recounts a situation when a student came to him with a moral dilemma:

> His father had broken off with his mother and, moreover, was inclined to be a 'collaborator.' His older brother had been killed in the German offensive of 1940, and this young man, with primitive but noble feelings, wanted to avenge him. His mother, living alone with him and deeply hurt by the partial betrayal of his father and the death of her oldest son, found her only comfort in him. At the time, the young man had the choice

[97] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 319-320.
[98] Gadamer ambiguously translates *sunesis.* In *Truth and Method* he gives a footnote at the end of the sentence just quoted. That footnote refers to *sunesis* (footnote 78, page 378). Most translators of Aristotle translate s*ungnome* as "sympathetic understanding". This is the normal translation of the term in book 6, chapter 11 of the *Nichomachean Ethics*. It is possible that Gadamer has overtranslated the term *sunesis* as "sympathetic understanding." It is also possible that the footnote is ambiguous and Gadamer never meant to translate *sunesis* as "sympathetic understanding." Regardless, Gadamer does use an Aristotelian concept which he translates as "sympathetic understanding" be it *sunesis* or *sungnome*.
[99] Ibid., 320.

> of going to England to join the Free French Forces—which would mean abandoning his mother—or remaining by her side to help her go on with her life. He realized that his mother lived only for him and that his absence—perhaps his death—would plunge her into utter despair. H also realized that, ultimately, any action he might take on her behalf would provide the concrete benefit of helping her to live, while any action he might take to leave and fight would be of uncertain outcome and could disappear pointlessly like water in sand.[100]

Sartre thinks of different ways to answer the young man's question. He discusses Kantian and Christian possibilities, and talks about the man's relations with his family. Sartre's analysis is cold and calculated. He is speaking directly with the young man, in his presence, supposedly listening, but only attempting sympathetic understanding. Sartre clearly understands what is going on with the young man's situation, but he does not *sympathetically* understand. Sartre expunges himself from concrete human interactions to float off into a realm of philosophical possibilities.

It would be one thing if Sartre had discussed these possibilities with the young man, but he did not. Sartre gave a stock answer to the pupil. He told him, "You are free, so choose; in other words, invent. No general code of ethics can tell you what to do; there are no signs in this world."[101] Sartre thinks this response is what the pupil would have expected, or at least, the young man somehow knew the answer Sartre would give him upon his asking of the question. One wonders if this assessment is correct. It seems possible that Sartre might have cut off his own sympathetic understanding and closed his horizon off to this other person. The coldness seems to suggest it.

Sartre's own philosophy might be at the heart of the problem. His atomistic conception of the self seems to go against fundamental assumptions that both Gadamer and Heidegger make. It is strange that Sartre uses this example to discuss Heidegger's "abandonment" and thinks that

[100]Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University press, 2007), 30.
[101] Ibid., 33.

the example proves the point. Sartre might be the one who is confused. It is telling that Heidegger's *Mitsein* is not brought up at any point in the essay. Sartre chooses only the terms which emphasize alienation when discussing Heidegger's work. He also fails to realize that he is caught up in the dilemma of the young man and that they are having an experience together, not apart.

Sartre, at least in dealing with this poor soul, might be as bad at the one who fails at σύνεσις for Gadamer and Aristotle. Gadamer explains:

> Finally, Aristotle makes the special nature of moral knowledge and the virtue of possessing it particularly clear by describing a naturally debased version of this moral knowledge. He says that the deinos is a man who has all the natural prerequisites and gifts for this moral knowledge, a man who is able, with remarkable skill, to get the most out of any situation, who is able to turn everything to his advantage and finds a way out of every situation. But this natural counterpart to phronesis is characterized by the fact that the deinos is 'capable of anything'; he uses his skills to any purpose and is without inhibition. He is aneu arêtes. And it is more than accidental that such a person is given a name that also means 'terrible.' Nothing is so terrible, so uncanny, so appalling, as the exercise of brilliant talents for evil.[102]

Sartre might not be doing evil but he is clearly a moral failure in human relations when it comes to this interaction. He had the opportunity to have a full discussion with the young man, discuss possibilities, and offer advice, but he refused that option. Sartre was so obsessed with his own conviction that humans are utterly alone in their choices that he forced this young man to be alone in his. The opportunity was there for a transformative experience, if Sartre had been open to the young man, but he was not.

Sartre was engaged in listening-for when discussing with this young man. He had already decided as soon as the words came out of the pupil's mouth how he was going to react and he made a calculated reaction to the boy's query. Sartre had his stock answers ready to go. When this conversation actually happened he possibly started off the discussion, "Man is

[102] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 320.

condemned to be free…" and moved on from there. He went so far as to call his pupil "primitive." When one does this she is not open to the experience of the other or sees herself as dialogically entwined with the other. Sartre had the intellectual capability to counsel this young man but was sympathetically bankrupt.

One who sympathetically understands must come from a caring perspective to lend a sympathetic ear. Immediate judgments of the other are absent when one is involved in σύνεσις. Sympathetic understanding is a process of openness and fusing of horizons between oneself and the other. We must be on constant guard not to fall back into an absolute perspective or a self-absorbed interpretation of the other.

We have to see ourselves engaged in the same task as the other even though we are not the one acting. This perspective is akin to stepping into another's shoes. Gadamer states, "Once again we discover the person who is understanding does not know and judge as one who stands apart and unaffected but rather he thinks along with the other from the perspective of a specific bond of belonging as if he too were affected."[103] The interlocutors in Heidegger's dialogue were in this same process. They trusted each other, opened up to each other, and thought with each other. It was a long process but we can see in the dialogue how their horizons begin to fuse through sympathetic understanding.

As the interlocutors listen-with each other in a trusting way their horizons begin to come closer. This was not their first walk. There are numerous references in the dialogue to prior walks which they had taken and how their friendship had developed over time. Building upon

[103] Ibid.

their prior friendship, they were able to listen fully with each other and ultimately speak as one. Heidegger goes so far as to have them finish each other's sentences to make this point.

We can see the trusting nature of their relationship because none of the three attempts to outdo or one up any of the others. These are three individuals who come from different backgrounds. The teacher does not try to correct the scholar but coaxes the truth out of him. The teacher shows the scholar the way. The scientist does not fall into jargon-laden speech to confuse the scholar or the teacher. He listens attentively, and when he has been listened to by the others they are able to bring him into their horizons. The scholar also avoids terminology and references to prior knowledge when dealing with the scientist. Instead, he listens-with the scientist, and guides him, in Socratic fashion to the truth about thinking.

At the end of the dialogue they all end up with a better understanding of thinking, and it was only through listening-with each other that they were able to get to this endpoint. At the end of the dialogue they have sympathetically understood each other by listening-with each other. This process required openness, trust, vulnerability, and friendship.

Gadamer discusses the relevance of Aristotle to show the structure of hermeneutical phenomena in general but one can also see how hermeneutics can be applied normatively. Gadamer explains why he chose Aristotle:

> To summarize, if we relate Aristotle's description of the ethical phenomenon and especially the virtue of moral knowledge to our own investigation, we find that his analysis in fact offers a kind of model of the problems of hermeneutics… The interpreter dealing with a traditionary text tries to apply it to himself… In order to understand that, he must not try to disregard himself and his particular hermeneutical situation. He must relate the text to this situation if he wants to understand at all.[104]

[104]Ibid., 320-321.

Gadamer goes to great pains to emphasize that his hermeneutics is a philosophical hermeneutics, not a phenomenological hermeneutics, and not an ethical hermeneutics, but his delving into Aristotelian ethics belies his initial qualifications. There is clearly an ethical component to Gadamerian hermeneutics and listening. If we fail to listen-with the other we have fallen into a grave mistake. Our own selves and the others who surround us are at stake.

It is telling that Gadamer goes to the social worker in describing how his hermeneutics functions. Jane Addams spent a lifetime creating what we call today social work and also training social workers. Strangely enough, her central concept in her ethics was also sympathetic understanding.

CHAPTER 3

ADDAMS AND LISTENING

Most professional philosophers do not think Jane Addams was a philosopher or even engaged philosophy. One of the purposes of this dissertation is to show that she was a philosopher and also to show the depth of her philosophy. Her method of philosophy, while different from the mainstream, was still just that: a philosophy. Her philosophy can be explained in three concepts which build upon each other: Experience, Education, and Ideals.

Because Addams was engaged directly with voices she did not understand, her own ideas about listening were made more robust and helped her develop a distinct theory of listening. Listening begins in experience, and her experiences shaped her ideals about listening.

Addams' Method and Experience

For Addams, philosophy begins in experience and is developed by experience. She constantly appeals to it throughout her writing. We will be able to see what she means by it if we look away from it to see what she does not mean by it. Because she was living amongst people whom she did not understand, she was forced to listen-to and listen-with them. These experiences informed her philosophy of listening. Her philosophical method arose out of her experiences instead of only influencing her ideas as an afterthought.

Experience is not merely sense-data or just personal experience. Her conception of it is much more dynamic and inclusive. For Addams, the sense-data model and experience as personal experience are too thin of accounts. Both of these overlook the vast excitement and flurry of even our everyday experiences. Experience is experience of others. We are always amongst others in our experiences and others experience us as much as we experience them.

Experience, for Addams, is not reducible to chemical compounds in interaction with each other as we experience the world. It is true that these are part of experience, but this process is not *all* that experience is and falls short of a full description.

Moreover, the sense-data theorist or reductionist, when it comes to experience, commits the "philosophical fallacy." Dewey describes the fallacy: "The commonest of all philosophical fallacies is the fallacy of converting eventual outcomes into antecedent conditions thereby escaping the need (and salutary effect) of taking into account the operations and processes that condition the eventual subject-matter."[105] Gregory Pappas explains, in *John Dewey's Ethics*,[106] that Dewey developed four versions of this fallacy. The most important of these versions, in regards to Addams, is the "analytic fallacy," which Pappas describes: "Philosophers commit the analytic fallacy when the results of an analysis are interpreted as complete in themselves apart from any context."[107] This mistake is made when one attempts to apply a method which is not suited for the analysis.

Addams hinted at her own version of this fallacy, or at least tracked the issue, in *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*.[108] When she was at Hull House she had to deal with an incident involving a "Devil Baby" which the locals thought was harbored at Hull House. The child was said to have horns, curse, and to be born as a punishment for the father of the child. When this story began to spread around Chicago many locals wanted to see the child. Addams and her

[105] I will cite Dewey's works based on the standard edition. From here on in the dissertation I will cite the Southern Illinois University Press editions of Dewey's work. These citations will have an abbreviation (EW for Early Works, MW for Middle Works, or LW for Later Works) followed by the volume and page number. LW 1:352
[106] Gregory Fernando Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008)
[107] Ibid., 26.
[108] Jane Addams, *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* (Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2001)

fellow settlement workers found themselves surrounded by a flurry of people. Addams was initially upset with the reaction of the immigrants:

> We had doubtless struck a case of what the psychologists call the 'contagion of emotion' added to that 'aesthetic sociability' which impels any one of us to drag the entire household to the window when a procession comes into the street or a rainbow appears in the sky. The Devil Baby of course was worth many processions and rainbows, and I will confess that, as the empty show went on day after day, I quite revolted against such a vapid manifestation of even an admirable human trait.[109]

It was far too easy for Addams to write off the experiences of the people with whom she dealt in Hull House and say that they had merely come under a psychological disorder or fugue. She was too on her guard to be open to their experiences and the way that they communicated them, even if they might have been considered "primitive" by outsiders. This blindness is what Pappas calls the "analytic fallacy." Addams was attempting to apply a psychological explanation of the experience instead of being open to its transforming quality. But she did eventually realize that the myth of the "Devil Baby" had a purpose:

> There was always one exception, however; whenever I heard the high eager voices of old women, I was irrestibly interested and left anything I might be doing in order to listen to them. As I came down the stairs, long before I could hear what they were saying, implicit in their solemn and portentous old voices came the admonition: 'Wilt thou reject the past/ Big with deep warnings?' It was a very serious and genuine matter with the old women, this story so ancient and yet so contemporaneous, and they flocked to Hull-House from every direction; those I had known for many years, others I had never known and some whom I had supposed to be long dead. But they were all alive and eager; something in the story or in its mysterious sequences had aroused one of those active forces in human nature which does not take orders, but insists only upon giving them. We had abruptly come in contact with a living and self-assertive human quality![110]

Addams was able to overcome her version of the "philosophical fallacy" through listening and experiencing these women in close proximity. The experience transformed both Addams and the women.

[109] Ibid., 9.
[110] Ibid., 9-10.

But this transformation with the other is not a separate transformation of each party. Her conception of experience is not merely personal. The transformation with the other occurs between the both of them. They are both transformed and the situation in which both are engaged also transforms. We are always connected with others, our culture, our history, the history of others, and the clash of all of them.

For Addams, because of her interactions with so many disparate groups of people while working at Hull House, saw experience of others as a very messy and complicated affair. She was engaged with immigrants from many different backgrounds. One can see from the surveys she did of the residents and surrounding neighbors of Hull House in *Hull House Maps and Papers* how wildly diverse these clashes of experiences must have been. There were 18 nationalities within a few blocks of Hull House.[111] To say that this was a diverse neighborhood would be a great understatement.

But Addams always found a way to appeal to the experiences of all parties. She was one of the first activists always to make sure to include someone involved in the concrete situation when she would go to speak to officials. She also worked as an interpreter when groups would get upset with each other.[112]

Addams attempted to enlarge the experiences of her readers through her writings. After she wrote *Newer Ideals of Peace*[113] and *Democracy and Social Ethics*[114] it might seem like she left theorizing to others. This is not the case. She meant for the reader to come to empathize

[111]Jane Addams and Residents of Hull House, *Hull House Maps and Papers* (Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007) 58-61.
[112] Jane Addams, "The Chicago Settlements and Social Unrest," in *The Jane Addams Reader*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain (New York, New York: Basic Books, 2002), 205-223.
[113] Jane Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace* (Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2007)
[114] Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*.

with the individuals in her stories and build "sympathetic understanding" with them. They were not merely interesting parts of a vignette but were always meant to be seen as others whom one might come to know better.

Addams' readers tended to come from many different social classes but her main audience was always the upper and upper-middle class. She would make references that they would be able to understand. For example, Marilyn Fischer notes, in "Trojan Women and Devil Baby Tales" in *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams*, that Addams' made many references to Charles Murray's version of Euripides' *The Trojan Women*. Fischer explains:

> Before the 1880s knowledge of both Greek and Latin were required for college admission in the United States. As those requirements were dropped, the humanities courses that replaced them contained heavy doses of classical literature, philosophy, and art… Murray's translations of Euripides were widely known and enthusiastically received by audiences and readers on both sides of the Atlantic.[115]

Addams filled *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* with references to Murray's translation of *The Trojan Women* to widen the appeal of the book. She was also trying to show continuity between the experiences of the women in the play and the women of Hull House. But the references to Euripides would have been lost on many of the residents. These references were meant to awaken the upper and upper-middle classes.

Addams was not trying to appeal to them merely to sell books, though. She was inviting them to empathize with others with whom they might not normally come into contact. Addams was able to make an appeal to them through the references to Greek culture. This appeal would awaken their experiences and also breed empathy with the residents at Hull House.

[115]Marilyn Fischer, "Trojan Women and Devil Baby Tales: Addams on Domestic Violence," in *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams*, ed. Maurice Hamington (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 84.

Before Addams began writing about the plight of the residents who came to Hull House many of their stories had not been told. Immigrants at the time were thought of as ignorant, uneducated, and ill-mannered, and seen—by those in the upper and middle-class—as less than full citizens. Addams wanted to give a voice to the experiences of the immigrants and others who would come to live and work around Hull House.

Since the wealthier citizens of Chicago and the rest of the country would not live amongst the poor and destitute, Addams would bring their experiences to them. But she was clear that it was not only through the reading of her books that her readers should come to experience the world democratically. She said that they must be amongst them and live with them:

> We know, at last, that we can only discover truth by a rational and democratic interest in life, and to give truth complete social expression is the endeavour upon which we are entering. Thus the identification with the common lot which is the essential idea of Democracy becomes the source and expression of social ethics. It is as though we thirsted to drink at the great wells of human experience, because we knew that a daintier or less potent draught would not carry us to the end of the journey, going forward as we must in the heat and jostle of the crowd.[116]

For Addams, the nature of moral experience is one which must be enlarged through the direct experience of the other. These sorts of moral experiences should not be seen as moral "adventures," as Gadamer's *Erlebnis* would describe it, in which one might partake over a weekend. One cannot drive her car from the safe confines of suburbia, volunteer at a soup kitchen, and then think she has truly experienced the plight of subaltern people. The experience must be much deeper than that.

Addams encouraged people to live amongst and with the poor if they were truly to experience democracy. The empathetic and democratic impulse must be constantly shaped and

[116] Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 9.

formed by experiences with others. These experiences can initially begin with reading about the plight of the poor but must extend to building up the ideal of democracy amongst and with others. This project cannot be pursued separately but must be undertaken with a dogged determination with others. If a democracy is to be a living ideal it requires constant engagement and cannot be a mere hobby. A consistent commitment to listening creates democratic ideals.

Addams was not naïve enough to think that all of her readers would put down her book, pick up their belongings, and move to a "blighted" part of the city, but she did hope that their daughters might think about it. In *Democracy and Social Ethics* she devotes an entire chapter to the dilemmas that a new charity worker would face when trying to explain her decision to her family to leave the home and pursue—what we call today—social work.

In the chapter "Filial Relations" Addams discusses the dilemma of a family whose daughter decided to pursue charity work. They would be torn because the daughter would most likely not marry and the family ties would be cut. They felt betrayed. Addams describes the problem:

> The family logically consented to give her up at her marriage, when she was enlarging the family tie by founding another family. It was easy to understand that they permitted and even promoted her going to college, travelling in Europe, or any other means of self-improvement, because these merely meant the development and cultivation of one of its own members. When, however, she responded to her impulse to fulfill the social or democratic claim, she violated every tradition.[117]

Addams knew many families were going through these same experiences. She did not try to shame them into giving their daughters up to the greater good; instead she appealed to their most empathic drives. She likened the plight of the daughter who chose charity work to St. Francis of Assisi. When St. Francis threw his robes at his father's feet in the middle of the town square and

[117] Ibid., 36.

swore off all earthly possessions Addams wished the father could have seen the higher ideal which had taken over St. Francis:

> The elements of tragedy lay in the narrowness of the father's mind; in his lack of comprehension and his lack of sympathy with the power which was moving his son, and which was but part of the religious revival which swept Europe from end to end in the early part of the thirteenth century; the same power which built the cathedrals of the North, and produced the saints and sages of the South. But the father's situation was nevertheless genuine; he felt his heart sore and angry, and his dignity covered with disrespect. He could not, indeed, have felt otherwise, unless he had been touched by the fire of the same revival, and lifted out of and away from the contemplation of himself and his narrower claim. It is another proof that the notion of a larger obligation can only come through the response to an enlarged interest in life and in the social movements around us.[118]

Addams made her appeal through myth. She tried to liken the daughter to St. Francis because she knew her audience would know the story and could possibly see the ideals which were influencing their own daughters to choose charity work. In the same way she was able to become open to the experiences of the old women at Hull House, she was able to use myth to open up the experience of her readers when thinking about their own children.[119]

Addams described the situation of the charity worker to make an appeal to her audience on an experiental level. She wanted them to empathize with the young college-educated woman and realize that their own daughters might be involved in the same predicament. She also explained to families whose daughters had chosen charity work the experiences through which their daughters might be going. Along with that, she gave possible suggestions to some of the daughters in these families that charity work might be a feasible option in their future.

Addams did not proselytize, though. She would only give encouragement to those she thought might be able to commit themselves to the democratic project. She did not make appeals

[118] Ibid., 39.
[119] Myth plays an important role in Addams' philosophy and it will be explained in greater detail later in the chapter.

to abstract ideals merely to ruminate on them. She always made sure to make those ideals concrete by showing their relevance for their experiences.

But this appeal to concrete experience was not meant to forsake the ideals. Addams wanted to show how the ideals lived in and through the experiences of those involved in the situations she described. For example, when she discussed war and ideals of peace she would talk about the difficulties and instinctual nature of making bread, specifically during war.[120] She did this to show how the most abstract concepts came to life and lived through the plight of others. She also wanted to make an appeal to her reader who might not have or know anyone who had these sorts of experiences. For Addams, ideals are living and concrete. Ideals are shaped by and shape our experience.

At one moment she would try to change the ideals of her time through reference to the direct experiences of others and also to get others to empathize with those about whom they were reading. When the middle class in the United States would read about the baking of bread in Europe during a war they could see commonality, tethered to an abstract ideal of motherhood by remembering their own experiences of baking bread and feeding loved ones. It was an ideal of caring for others through food which all cultures shared. Experience made the ideal live through baking and breaking bread.

Experience, for Addams, is not merely something of present concern. Experience entails the past as a guide toward a possible future. We are the ideals we live out. We are shaped by past experience and also are shaping future ideals and experience at all times. We change ideals through education.

[120] See the chapter "A Review of Bread Rations and Woman's Traditions" in Jane Addams, *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2002)

Addams' Method and Education

Addams cared deeply about education. Education is rooted in experience and she wanted to make her readers aware of the plight of industrial workers and their importance for making a democracy function. Education is the formative force for democracy.

Education comes out of experience, for Addams. It also serves a two-fold purpose in her philosophical method. She educates her readers by engaging their sympathetic understanding and enlightens them about the plight of the people she describes in her work. It is central to her overall work.

Addams did not think that education was best achieved through rote memorization or even in the schoolroom. She explains how some forms of education do not build up democracy:

> We are impatient with the schools which lay all stress on reading and writing, suspecting them to rest upon the assumption that the ordinary experience is worth little, and that all knowledge and interest must be brought to the children through the medium of books. Such an assumption fails to give the child any clew to the life about him, or any power to usefully or intelligently connect himself with it. This may be illustrated by observations made in a large Italian colony situated in Chicago, the children from which are, for the most part, sent to the public schools.[121]

She goes on to describe school's disconnection from everyday life. She also laments the ideals which have been lost in a curriculum heavy with book learning. Many of the immigrants have not even had the experience of making bread or seen anyone do it:

> The entire family has been upheaved, and is striving to adjust itself to its new surroundings… The domestic arts are gone, with their absorbing interests for the children, their educational value, and incentive to activity. A household in a tenement receives almost no raw material. For the hundreds of children who have never seen wheat grow, there are dozens who have never seen bread baked. The occasional washings and scrubbings are associated only with discomfort. The child of such a family receives constant stimulus of most exciting sort from his city street life, but he has little or no opportunity to use his energies in domestic manufacture, or, indeed, constructively in any direction. No activity is supplied to take the place of that which, in Italy, he would

[121] Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 81.

> naturally have found in his own surroundings, and no new union with wholesome life is made for him.[122]

The children of these new immigrants are left in a difficult predicament. The push of the past is constantly moving against them, and they are also met with all of the exciting possibilities of industrialization. She worries that the older ideals of the past might be totally lost on the young and replaced with new habits that cannot be constructively shaped. The educational system at that time did not have any understanding of the dilemma in which these children found themselves.

Addams goes so far as to say that the real education of the child begins on the streets where the older traditions in which the child was engaged are manifest. This process makes sense because education is directly connected to the experiences of the child: "If we admit that in education it is necessary to begin with the experiences which the child already has and to use his spontaneous and social activity, then the city streets begin this education for him in a more natural way than does the school."[123] Education, for Addams, does not come down from on high to deposit knowledge into the empty mind of the child but begins in experience with all of its difficulties.

The emphasis on daily experiences of the child does not always yield positive results. The older traditions, which used to be useful, are now transformed into dangerous enterprises. Addams explains, "The South Italian peasant comes from a life of picking olives and oranges, and he easily sends his children out to pick up coal from railroad tracks, or wood from buildings which have been burned down. Unfortunately, this process leads by easy transition to petty

[122] Ibid., 82.
[123] Ibid., 83.

thieving."[124] What used to be a worthwhile habit has changed into one that results in an undemocratic ideal.

Addams learned from those who came to visit Hull House that older ideals did not disappear once the immigrants came to the United States but that they turned into something new when put into a new environment. She saw that habits and ideals, when placed in the right environment and if appreciated, could be constructively rebuilt. The past is not stagnant for Addams: it always pushes on the present and shapes a possible future.

One of the factors shaping the future of the people with whom Addams dealt was the city life they would come to experience. She did not see this as a distraction but as misdirected energy. The bustling life of the city would work as a panacea to the doldrums of the schoolhouse or the industrial warehouses in which most immigrants worked.[125] After spending a short bit of their lives reveling in the excitement of their city they started to see how boring their work was: "If a boy is once thoroughly caught in these excitements, nothing can save him from over-stimulation and consequent debility and worthlessness; he arrives at maturity with no habits of regular work and with a distaste for its dullness."[126]

The danger of this process was most clearly seen in the dislike for industrial work many immigrants and their children showed. They saw their work as "provisional" and not meaningful.[127] Industrial work had lost its connection with the greater social whole. An older ideal was lost when this happened.[128]

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[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., 84.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid., 82.
[128] Ibid.

Prior to the industrial revolution, many workers could see the fruits of their labor in the buying and selling of their products. Addams makes the point that in the modern industrial age this direct connection between one's labor and the products it produced was not obvious. Many workers felt like their work was disconnected from their lives.

Education was also part of the devaluation of industrial work. When work, for many people, moved from handmade items to industrialized goods the work of the laborer was devalued. Addams points out that business schools and schools which promoted specialized skills started to flourish.[129]

As this happened an old ideal began to show itself. The notion of the purveyor of goods making her product, heading out into the market to test the results, and the market deciding efficiency was an all too simplified theory, but it still survived. Addams explains:

> The early ideal of a city that it was a market-place in which to exchange produce, and a mere trading-post for merchants, apparently still survives in our minds and is constantly reflected in our schools. We have either failed to realize that cities have become great centres of production and manufacture in which a huge population is engaged, or we have lacked sufficient presences of mind to adjust ourselves to the change.[130]

This idealized version of capitalism had infiltrated the minds of the business class into thinking and promoting the ideal of the self-made capitalist. Those who worked in the factories were seen as beneath the idyllic individual held up by business ideals.

Work, which was the way by which so many young men and women were educated and given a lot in life, became a quest for making money. They had lost the ideal of work being connected to the place one holds in a social whole. Addams explains:

> The schools do so little really to interest the child in the life of production, or to excite his ambition in the line of industrial occupation, and the ideal of life, almost from the very

[129] Ibid., 85.
[130] Ibid., 86.

> beginning, becomes not an absorbing interest in one's work and a consciousness of its value and social relation, but a desire for money with which unmeaning purchases may be made and an unmeaning social standing obtained.[131]

Addams does not want to lose the connection between working with one's hands and the social whole. She thinks that work gives meaning to one's life and is as worthy a pursuit as engaging in a business venture. She wants workers to realize that their lives are still meaningful when they are seen in relation to the broader picture. Meaning in one's life is at the heart of her thoughts on education.

Addams also thinks that the scholar has lost her own feeling of meaning and the over-specialization which has occurred in the workplace—with engineers who do not understand how machines work or do not see their place in the overall production of material[132]—has also occurred in the ivory tower:

> … the same tendency to division of labor has also produced over-specialization in scholarship, with the sad result that when the scholar attempts to minister to a worker, he gives him the result of more specialization rather than an offset from it. He cannot bring healing and solace because he himself is suffering from the same disease. There is indeed a deplorable lack of perception and adaption on the part of educators all along the line.[133]

The "diseased" scholar cannot connect to the people who come to ask for advice. The scholar's work, because of its narrow-mindedness and lack of experience, cannot speak to the industrial worker. Education in general and much management theory still suffers from this lack.

The last thing Addams wanted in education, social work, or any institution was a top-down method which placed "experts" in the role of telling everyone underneath them how to work. She had to deal with these problems when she started up social work and was nearly taken

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[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid., 90. When discussing schools that educate specialists in industry Addams explains, "They are polytechnics of a high order, but do not even pretend to admit the workingman with his meager intellectual equipment. They graduate machine builders, but not educated machine builders."
[133] Ibid., 91

over by the Sociology Department at the University of Chicago, when she involved Henry Ford in peace talks before the First World War, and when dealing with bureaucrats and trash pickup in her ward in Chicago. She had many issues with top-down management, and they all centered on the idea that change and policy must arise out of felt experiences in concert with theorists. The rules cannot come down from on high. The road of theory is not a one-way street. If anything, it runs in the opposite direction.

The industrial workers Addams described knew this and spent portions of their lives pursuing "hobbies" which had an appeal to the democratic impulse at the heart of them. She explains:

> Workingmen themselves have made attempts in both directions, which it would be well for moralists and educators to study. It is a striking fact that when workingmen formulate their own moral code, and try to inspire and encourage each other, it is always a large and general doctrine which they preach… Courses of study arranged by a group of working men are most naïve in their breadth and generality. They will select the history of the world in preference to that of any period or nation. The 'wonders of science' or 'the story of evolution' will attract workingmen to a lecture when zoology or chemistry will drive them away… The untrained mind, wearied with meaningless detail, when it gets an opportunity to make its demand heard, asks for general philosophy and background.[134]

Even though the workers Addams described were weary from work they still had a thirst for broader thought. They wanted to understand their place in the social whole. They did not want to see themselves as cogs in a machine which they could not understand. She speaks about this thirst in lieu of democratic participation. Democracy is not merely voting but a way of life. Democracy and education, which form the foundation upon which the entire artifice settles, depends on meaning.

[134] Ibid., 94-95.

The loss of meaning is at the heart of the problem with education and its preparation for an industrial life, for Addams. She describes the plight of the worker who has succumbed to meaningless toil:

> If a workingman is to have a conception of his value at all, he must see industry in its unity and entirety; he must have a conception that will include not only himself and his immediate family and community, but the industrial organization as a whole. It is doubtless true that dexterity of hand becomes less and less imperative as the invention of machinery and subdivision of labor proceeds; bit it becomes all the more necessary, if the workman is to save his life at all, that he should get a sense of his individual relation to the system.[135]

If one is to see one's life as meaningful she must see her work in light of the social whole. Piddling around and turning switches, pulling bars, and shifting one piece of equipment from one place to another has no meaning if it is not seen in the larger ideal involved. Addams goes so far as to say that it can *save* her life if she can see meaning in her work.

Meaning is connected directly to art, for Addams. She sees art as a bridge between life and meaning; it gives meaning to life, and industrial work can be an art. Education can bring about a larger meaning to one's life by showing how one is involved in the larger social whole through her work. She succinctly describes it:

> As the poet bathes the outer world for us in the hues of human feeling, so the workman needs someone to bathe his surroundings with a human significance—some one who shall teach him to find that which will give a potency to his life. His education, however simple, should tend to make him widely at home in the world, and give to him a sense of simplicity and peace in the midst of the triviality and noise to which he is constantly subjected. He, like other men, can learn to be content to see but a part, although it must be a part of something.[136]

Industrial work, just like the work of the mind, should be seen in a continuum with the social whole. Work should ideally bring about meaning and place one's life in relation to the social whole.

[135] Ibid., 94.
[136] Ibid., 96.

Addams thinks that education is a fundamental part of any democracy, and while she does not think that it should merely be training for work she does see the usefulness in that approach. The purpose of education in any democracy is to enlarge the experiences of those involved so they can see themselves in light of a larger context. The ideal of democracy changed the way that we educate people. She explains, "As democracy modifies our conception of life, it constantly raises the value and function of each member of the community, however humble he may be… We are gradually requiring of the educator that he shall free the powers of each man and connect him with the rest of life."[137] We are not distinct separate individuals guided by our own personal interests but part of larger whole. This realization does not mean that we are subsumed into the whole but we are a creative part of it.

Addams connects ideals with her conception of education and sees idealism as a freeing power:

> We believe that man's moral idealism is the constructive force of progress, as it has always been; but because every human being is a creative agent and a possible generator of fine enthusiasm, we are skeptical of the moral idealism of the few and demand the education of the many, that there may be greater freedom, strength, and subtilty of intercourse and hence an increase in dynamic power.[138]

The belief in the power of democracy, which was strong in Addams' lifetime, influenced her ideas on education. She went so far as to say that education was the saving grace and the only possible option for many children of immigrants who would become industrial workers:

> Perhaps never before have young people been expected to work from motives so detached from direct emotional incentive. Never has the age of marriage been so long delayed; never has the work of youth been so separated from the family life and the public opinion of the community. Education alone can repair these losses. It alone has the power of organizing a child's activities with some reference to the life he will later

[137] Ibid., 80.
[138] Ibid.

> lead and of giving him a clue as to what to select and what to eliminate when he comes into contact with contemporary social and industrial conditions.[139]

She was trying to move education away from memorization and connect it with ideals. But these were the ideals of all and not just a few. Ideals are created with and among all of us, and it is through education that this becomes possible. Ideals are tied to emotions, personal goals, and a recognition of the social whole. Education plows the fertile soil in which these ideals can grow.

Addams attempted to engage her readers, influence educators, and also share her own reflections on her experiences. The purpose of sharing her reflections was not merely to expunge her soul of her memories—although it sometimes was—but to reshape the experiences of her readers constructively. Addams' philosophy was intrinsically tied to her understanding of education. Philosophy is education, for Addams.

Education mediates between experience and ideals. Its purpose is to enliven the democratic impulse through the living experience—which is not merely the experience of the student and teacher but the larger experience of the whole of culture—and it results in the transformation of an ideal which lives in and through all parties involved. Ideals are constructed and reconstructed through experience and education. New ideals can be created but they always arise out of past ideals. Experience is bounded by the past, transformed through education, and hopefully results in "newer" ideals.

Addams' Method and the Role of Ideals

Jane Addams believed in the importance of ideals. She saw them as structuring and illuminating our experience. She did not think ideals could be changed through singular efforts but must be dealt with collectively. Ideals are real but they are not beyond human influence.

[139]Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 109-110.

Her ideals were concrete and constructed in and through the experiences she had with others. She used a number of terms to describe ideals in her thought—power, habit, and myth—but all of them are part of her theory of what ideals are and how they function.

Ideals are not solely future-oriented, as many people speak of them. Ideals are possibilities arising out of the past. They are always directed at something beyond the direct experience of the people involved and are constructed through that experience. Movements tend to have ideals which they think of as unrealized. The ideals of the civil rights movement, at least some of the time, tended to take this form. When people thought of "equality" as an ideal they saw it as insufficiently present. "Equality" was always seen as a possibility of a hopeful future. Ideals, in this sense, are almost always unrealized.

Ideals are also not fixed goals like Plato's forms. Forms do not change for Plato and are attainable only through the highest form of reasoning. His forms are goals which can only be fully grasped when one has left the fleshy experience of the body. For Plato we cannot change forms. They are always beyond us. We can take part in them but we can never influence them.

Ideals for Addams are also not beyond human interests and activities. Many times philosophers describe ideals as overwhelming human experience. Hegel's idealism fits this mold. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* loses the individual in the pulses of the history of spirit, generalized human experience, and the Absolute. He has no place for the puny individual in his thought. Ideals rule the system and their master is the Absolute.

Luce Irigaray spent great effort in trying to explain how Antigone, for Hegel, was lost in her relationship to her gender and the world. She says that Antigone is left buried in the side of a hill:

> The division of roles Hegel thus establishes seems very odd in a world where the divine has already been taken away from the female and is now the province of the male gender, even in respect to the guardianship of the family, of living being, of the gods. In place of a fully realized dialectic between the spiritual duties of both genders, Hegel presents us with a *doubly locked closing*… The female gender, in its singularity has been lost in this character who resists but nonetheless submits, out of womanly—or maternal?—fidelity to the male gods and to war among men. Antigone is no longer a *goddess*. She keeps faith with the gods of the shadows of men, and she dies as a result. In order to wipe a stain away once more. What stain? Fundamentally, the stain of her consciousness, of belonging to the female race, of having a maternal filiation. Eliminated because of this doubly clandestine membership of the female gender, Antigone is also annihilated because she keeps faith with the lost roots of man.[140]

Hegel's Antigone is lost in the mire of broken ideals and has no place as an individual because of membersip in the female gender. The same can be said for the individual in general in Hegel's thought. It is overtaken by forces outside of her control.

These ideals are very different from the common conception of what an ideal is in everyday speech. Ideals, in this sense, are rooted in the past. They tend to rule the present with an iron fist and shape all future possibilities. This conception of ideals is wholly different from the notion of ideals as future goals. In common speech, people tend to describe ideals as if they do not shape anything in history and are merely something one can pick or choose as a guiding goal for one's life. Evangelical Christians are the prime purveyors of this phenomenon.

Addams' notion of ideals takes something from all of these idealistic philosophies. Ideals for her arise out of the past, influence present experience, and shape the future. But ideals can also reshape the future through human action. Ideals are living, dynamic, and concrete. While ideals do have a considerable influence on one's direct experience they do not fully determine future possibilities. One can reject the ideals foisted upon oneself, try to reconstruct them, or attempt to create new ideals. Addams does all of these when working with the ideal of peace in *Newer Ideals of Peace*.

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[140] Luce Irigaray, "The Female Gender," in *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 110-111.

Ideals arise out of the past. They are created out of interactions among people. Groups form ideals through their common experiences. This process is not only consciously executed. Ideals do not come from deliberate planning. They organically come from human discussions, activities, art, and all forms of experience. They can be shaped by those in power, but if they are not organic, ideals cannot live for long.

Addams sees how the ideal of peace as we have it today is rooted in pity and prudence. The former has a more positive quality to it:

> The first has been the appeal to the higher imaginative pity, as it is found in the modern, moralized man. This line has been most effectively followed by two Russians, Count Tolstoy in his earlier writings and Verestchagin in his paintings. With his relentless power of reducing all life to personal experience Count Tolstoy drags us through the campaign of the common soldier in its sordidness and meanness and constant sense of perplexity.[141]

Our current conception of peace, in the twenty-first century, still contains this aspect of pity. We strive for peace because we pity those who are killed: soldiers and civilians. Peace, in this respect, has been shaped by past experiences of the horrors of war and is an ideal based on fear of violence and death. There is great appeal in this aspect of the ideal of peace.

Peace as prudence, on the other hand, appeals to baser instincts. Addams describes this sort of peace as an economic appeal. The costs of war are too great for a sustainable economy. The lives lost are not the key to understanding peace; the national economy is. She describes this sort of "peace":

> The second line followed by the advocates of peace in all countries has been the appeal to the sense of prudence, and this again has found its ablest exponent in a Russian subject, the economist and banker, Jean de Bloch. He sets forth the cost of warfare with pitiless accuracy, and demonstrates that even the present armed peace is so costly that the burdens of it threaten social revolution in almost every country in Europe.[142]

[141] Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace*, 5.
[142] Ibid., 6.

These ideals of peace are rooted in the past and have been with humanity for thousands of years. Addams is well aware that they arose out of a real and felt experience. Peace as prudence is a sensible reaction when one lives in a perpetual state of war. Fear of economic calamity or death of one's soldiers can easily conquer any positive conception of peace. She wrote *Newer Ideals of Peace* with this in mind. She did not merely state her ideal of peace and be done with it. She knew she had to appeal to the past to change the future ideal. Her ideal of peace was birthed out of the past.

There are many places in Addams' work where she speaks of ideals in similar ways. In *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* she knows she must respect the past ideals of the family and motherhood if she is to understand the older women from Hull House.[143] *Democracy and Social Ethics* makes an appeal to the older ideals of the family to change the role of the daughter in it.[144] *Peace and Bread in Time of War* uses older ideals of femininity and motherhood to reconstruct the present.[145] And in *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* she makes an analogy between slavery and the sex trade to make us realize that the older ideal was not fully vanquished. Ideals are rooted in the past but they do not fully determine the present or future.

Ideals shape and influence the present but they do not control it. We experience and are embodying ideals all of the time. When she described the women at Hull House during the Devil Baby crisis she described them in terms of their traditional ideals: "As the old women talked with the new volubility which the story of the Devil Baby had released in them, going back to their long memories and urging its credibility upon me, the story seemed to condense that mystical

[143] See chapters 1 and 2 for the appeal to past ideals.
[144] See the chapter on "Filial Relations" for this discussion.
[145] Addams clearly makes the appeal to the older ideal (which she calls an "instinct"): "Could not the earlier instinct and training in connection with food be aroused and would it be strong enough to overwhelm and quench the later tendency to war." 44.

wisdom which becomes deposited in the heart of man by unnoticed innumerable experiences."[146] These memories and their wisdom are the embodiment of older ideals of motherhood. But the women were not controlled by these past ideals. She saw that the women were set free by their ideals of femininity, but the ideals changed because of that process. The ideal they embodied of motherhood conflicted with the older ideal, and the process brought about a change in both. Even though she and the older women were influenced by their past ideals, they could still change through openness to new experiences of different ideals.

For Addams, ideals are directly experienced in everyday life and are concrete. They are not beyond the grasp and reach of human experience. There are also plenty of moments when ideals go awry and one experiences the horrors of an ideal gone wrong. The ideal of justice is constantly manipulated and when one feels the hot poke of a mangled ideal one does not forget it. The recent case of Trayvon Martin[147] is an example of the ideal of justice as directly experienced. George Zimmerman was guided by a whole host of ideals. Possibly some of them were ideals of white supremacy, including: justice, safety, paternalism, etc. Many of these ideals, when expressed in the proper setting are wonderful. But when they go wrong they can go horribly wrong.

When George Zimmerman saw Trayvon Martin walking down the street he was guided by a historical myth which Angela Davis describes in *Are Prisons Obsolete?*:

> Particularly in the United States, race has always played a central role in constructing presumptions of criminality. After the abolition of slavery, former slave states passed new legislation revising the Slave Codes in order to regulate the behavior of free blacks in ways very similar to those that had existed during slavery. The new Black Codes proscribed a range of actions—such as vagrancy, absence from work, breach of job

[146]Addams, *Long Road of Woman's Memory*, 10.
[147] The cases of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and Tamir Rice would also apply.

> contracts, the possession of firearms, and insulting gestures or acts—that were criminalized only when the person charged was black.[148]

These laws resulted in the general notion that black men were lazy, thieving, violent, and rapacious people. Since they were being imprisoned for any hint of these things it was easy to frame them. Davis notes that this was not an infrequent occurrence.[149] The history of this myth of black men could have been in the mind of George Zimmerman when he followed the "suspicious" Trayvon Martin. Martin was only *walking* down the street. Just imagine the thoughts which would have been running through Zimmerman's mind if Martin had decided to jog or even run.

This example shows an unconscious influence that this myth has on all people in American culture. Because of the history of slavery and the persecution of Black men—specifically through whites playing on the fear of Black sexuality—there is a deep paranoia surrounding the actions of lone Black men. They cannot even walk down the street without attracting attention and suspicion. The ideal which killed Trayvon Martin was a decrepit form of justice—justice as a form of vigilantism.

Addamsian ideals can also bring about struggle and result in a positive outcome. She gives the case of St. Francis' dealing with his father to prove this point. When Francis went to the town square, dropped his clothes at his father's feet and decried all that he had given him, Addams sees that there is a failure on the part of his father to realize the ideal pushing his son:

> The elements of tragedy lay in the narrowness of the father's mind; in his lack of comprehension and his lack of sympathy with the power which was moving his son, and which was but part of the religious revival which swept through Europe from end to end in the early part of the thirteenth century; the same power which built the cathedrals of the North, and produced the saints and sages of the South. But the father's situation was nevertheless genuine; he felt his heart sore and angry, and his dignity covered with

[148] Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York, New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 28.
[149] Ibid., 33-34.

> disrespect. He could not, indeed, felt otherwise, unless he had been touched by the fire of the same revival, and lifted out of and away from the contemplation of himself and his narrower claim. It is another proof that the notion of a larger obligation can only come through the response to an enlarged interest in life and in the social movements around us.[150]

Addams gives no simple solution to the struggle between Francis and his father, but it is clear that ideals, in this case described as a "power," shape and influence present experience. The ideals influencing Francis and his father crash into each other through their direct bodily experiences, but Addams does seem to hope that there might be a resolution if they enlarge their experiences.

Ideals also shape future possibilities. They do this through the influence of the past. The future is not a vastly open space. It is structured by ideals, which shape the thoughts and possibilities of individuals, which in turn shape culture as a whole. Since ideals arise out of the past, there is a conservative element to Addams' ideals. She does not think it is possible to start anew and create *all* of one's ideals *ex nihilo*. Of course it is possible to create a new ideal, but this process will almost always result in failure because the influence of the past will be so strong.

Instead, one must create "newer" ideals. These ideals are reconstructions of past ideals and not new creations. Reconstructed ideals, when analyzed in terms of future possibilities, act as goals which can change as the process changes. When Addams reconstructed the ideal of "peace" in her work she did not think her new conception would go unchanged. Since ideals are fluid and concrete they are changed through human interaction, and in turn the ideal, as a goal, is changed. In *Newer Ideals of Peace* one can see Addams' critique of older ideals of peace, a hint at the problems these old ideals have created in the present situation, and a positing of a newer

[150]Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 39. I am sorry to quote this again, but I think that looking at her words again in a new light can be useful.

ideal as a preliminary goal. Addams' newer ideal of peace was not *the* ideal of peace which all should follow, but *an* ideal of peace which was pregnant with possibilities for the present. She explains the dynamic aspect of the ideal:

> It is difficult to formulate the newer dynamic peace, embodying the later humanism, as over against the old dogmatic peace. The word 'non-resistance' is misleading, because it is much too feeble and inadequate. It suggests passivity, the goody-goody attitude of ineffectiveness. The words 'overcoming,' 'substituting,' 're-creating,' 'readjusting moral values,' 'forming new centres of spiritual energy' carry much more of the meaning implied.[151]

These ideals are experimental and the process of changing these ideals works in an experimental fashion.

Ideals shape all of our experiences but our experiences are not wholly of ideals. Ideals influence us and we directly experience them much of the time, but they are not all we experience. Since ideals are manifested through individuals, there is always a remainder: a concrete, embodied, person who is more than the ideal she embodies. When Addams listened to the old women during the "Devil Baby" crisis she clearly experienced embodied, individual people and also mythic ideals. She sees the mythic ideal of motherhood as embodied in these women with whom she dealt. And she also recalls the individuals who came to visit her:

> One old woman actually came from the poorhouse, having heard of the Devil Baby 'through a lady from Polk Street visiting an old friend who has a bed in our ward.' It was no slight achievement for the penniless and crippled old inmate to make her escape… As she cheerfully rambled on, we weakly postponed telling her there was no Devil Baby, first that she might have a cup of tea and rest, and then through a sheer desire to withhold a blow from a poor old body who had received so many throughout a long, hard life. As I recall those unreal weeks, it was in her presence that I found myself for the first time vaguely wishing that I could administer comfort by the simple device of not asserting too dogmatically that the Devil Baby had never been at Hull House.[152]

The descriptions Addams gives of these women makes it clear that she did not see them as mere conduits for ideals. These were real, fleshy, and living women. She gets excited about her

[151]Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace*, 7-8.
[152]Addams, *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, 12.

encounters: “But they were alive and eager; something in the story or in its mysterious sequences had aroused one of those active forces in human nature which does not take orders but insists on giving them. We had abruptly come in contact with a living and self-assertive human quality!”[153] These women were embodiments of ideals, but they were not reduced to them. Addams saw them as individuals who were subject to the powers pushing and pulling all of them.

For Addams, ideals arise from experience and can be changed through education. Again, she does not mean formal education, or that education should be formalized. Interactions amongst people can change ideals through listening to each other, and deliberating with each other. But most importantly, experiencing the other is at the heart of changing ideals. She believed that direct contact with others could breed “sympathetic understanding” between people. This belief is a major vein which runs through the body of her work. Ideals change through experiential education which brings about an openness to the other that will hopefully result in mutual “sympathetic understanding.” The ideals change through this back-and-forth process. Global change of ideals must begin on the individual level. They cannot be changed through a top down process or indoctrination.

An obvious way to change ideals on a local level would be through education of the youth. Addams is clear about the process of how to change ideals in *Spirit of Youth in City Streets*. She thinks that change must begin in the schoolroom, the streets, the playgrounds, the government, and the families themselves. She obviously sees the influence of older ideals but hopes that the youthful energies can be better redirected to more meaningful use. This meaning comes from ideals and their reconstruction. It is not enough that older ideals of the past live in a new home. They must be reconstructed.

[153] Ibid., 9-10

When one reconstructs ideals , especially through the educational system, they can change on a global scale. The change is much slower than indoctrination or the forced following of ideals, but it has a more lasting result. We merely need to look at the way marriage has changed throughout the last century, at least when race is considered, to see how the ideal has shifted. People's ideas about what a marriage is and which sorts of marriage are acceptable has made gigantic strides in a fairly short time (when thinking in terms of human history). Most Americans do not take issue with interracial marriages. This change came about because there were shifts in education (desegregation which opened up the experiences of children to people of different races), government (legalizing interracial marriages), and on the personal level (conversations people had with each other, family members engaging in these relationships, etc.). The ideal of marriage has changed because of individual's own self-transformation and their efforts to change others' minds, and social policy. The shackles have been lifted for many because of their experiences of the old ideal, which changed through education, both formal and informal, and reconstructed the old ideal into a "newer" one. The ideal changed through the interactions of individuals, and resulting in a nationwide shift in consciousness.

Addams' philosophical method begins in experience and is shaped by ideals which are continuously reconstructed through education. Without experience, ideals are empty. Without ideals, experiences are blind. Without education, ideals are stagnant and experience is vulgar. Without experiential education, education becomes meaningless. Without ideals, education is left to wander listlessly. When all three of these aspects of Addams' method work in concert ideals are able to change, their influence can be appreciated, experiences, through education, can bring about growth, and progress is a possibility.

While these three aspects of Addams' method do not exhaust the possible interpretations of her philosophy, they do set the groundwork for her theory of listening. Listening begins in perplexity, which is an unstructured experience, is shaped through education with others, which she calls "sympathetic understanding," and hopefully facilitates the creation of newer ideals shared by the parties or groups who are listening to each other. One listens to the embodied other while also realizing that she is embodying ideals (as is the listener) in an attempt to educate oneself and the other in the process, so that a newer ideal can be reconstructed.

Listening and Perplexity

Throughout most of our waking hours, and even our sleep-filled ones, we are led by our enculturated habits. These habits come from education and experience and are shaped by the ideals at play in our everyday lives. When we trot about, running errands, discussing with others, reading the paper, and attending mass, we act without the intervention of much reflective thought.[154] There are some moments, though, when our experience is interrupted, shaken up, and disrupted. Sometimes this can come about, at least in moments of moral confusion, through engagements with other people. These moments, especially in the right setting, are what Addams calls "perplexities."

Listening begins in perplexity. Perplexity is not a random occurrence or driven by one's own personal confusion. It begins in personal experience but arises out of an experience which is larger than that. Experience, for Addams, is not just experience of one person but involves the entire surrounding and setting. So perplexity is not merely a personal problem but comes out of a situation.

[154] Dewey explains this point well, "To indicate the full scope of cultural determination of the conduct of living one would have to follow the behavior of an individual throughout at least a day;… For the result would show how thoroughly saturated behavior is with conditions and factors that are of cultural origin and import." LW 12: 48.

Charlene Haddock Seigfried goes into great detail about how perplexity functions in Addams' philosophy. Seigfried explains that perplexity is at the heart of Addams' ethics and is the starting point for critical reflection about moral situations. Perplexity has subjective and objective aspects to it, according to Seigfried:

> She [Addams] says that 'a perplexity' refers to someone's personal involvement in a situation that baffles and confuses her, because her usual understanding and responses are inadequate to explain or transform a troubling situation. She can either continue to hold onto her assumptions or begin to call them into question. But in order to resolve the problematic situation in fact and not just subjectively, she must first undergo a painful process of rethinking her presuppositions and values.[155]

While perplexity begins in a personal experience, it does not resolve when the emotional toil is over. It is possible that the feeling of perplexity's abatement would occur with the resolution of the problem, but this is not always the case. The full resolution of the perplexing situation ends in the resolution of the situation itself and its perplexity. Perplexity is not merely in the mind of the charity worker but in the situation itself. Perplexing situations resolve themselves when both the perplexed and the situation are resolved. The situation itself is perplexing and not merely in the mind of the charity worker. The resolution can only come from amelioration of all involved.

Seigfried points out that the case of the charity worker shows a prime example of how perplexity functions.[156] In her chapter from *Democracy and Social Ethics*, "Charitable Effort," Addams gives an analysis of the charity worker and her confusion. The perplexity arises because there is a clash of ideals between the charity worker and the people she is trying to help. Addams discusses many of these in depth, but let us focus on just a couple: health and thriftiness. The charity worker and the neighborhood to which she is attending come from very different experiences which have created divergent ideals. The ideals of the charity worker coming to

[155]Charlene Haddock Seigfried, introduction to *Democracy and Social Ethics*, by Jane Addams (Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2002), xxv-xxvi.
[156] Ibid., xxvi-xxvii.

work with the poor and the ideals of the neighborhood are at odds. Addams describes how the neighborhood holds up ideals at odds with those of the charity worker. At their core both groups care about people in general, but the ideals, when applied in specific situations, are not always the best solutions.

The neighborhood finds it hard to believe that the charity worker or nurse actually cares about the health of the children of the poor. Addams explains the neighborhood's perplexity:

> The most serious effect upon the poor comes when dependence upon the charitable society is substituted for the natural outgoing of human love and sympathy, which, happily, we all possess in some degree. The spontaneous impulse to sit up all night with the neighbor's sick child is turned into righteous indignation against the district nurse, because she goes home at six o' clock and doesn't do it herself.[157]

The person from the neighborhood assumes that an ideal of care or kindness would include giving more than would be expected in the more affluent part of town, or that sacrificing one's own health and welfare is part of caring for another person. When the charity worker, as nurse, explains that she must go back home to attend to her own family she comes across as cold-hearted. But the nurse is still trying to live out an ideal of kindness. Most likely, she decided to work amongst the poor because she cares about them, but she is also aware that there are many other sick children in the area and if she does not go home and get some rest she will not be able to attend to them in the morning. The people from the neighborhood find this to be cold. Both parties involved are committed to the same ideal, but they deal with it in different ways. This is what makes the situation so "perplexing" and why listening is necessary. Addams began realizing this when she had conversations with the folks from the neighborhood. She started out in perplexity, listened to them, and through that process was able to deal with the issue at hand.

[157] Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 17.

The clash of ideals over thriftiness, or saving money in general, is another perplexing situation for the charity worker and the poor she is trying to help. The charity worker tries to emphasize the necessity for saving money, but in this specific situation it seems foolish or evil to those she is trying to help. Addams describes how the ideal of thriftiness can be dangerous when applied in the wrong situation:

> The visitor says, sometimes, that in holding her poor family so hard to a standard of thrift she is really breaking down a rule of higher living which they formerly possessed; that 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, even if the children of the family do not.[158]

The charity worker can, again, appear cold or uncaring when she emphasizes the necessity for saving money so one will be able to afford care in old age, etc. When the next door neighbor needs food, it seems evil not to use one's savings, and in the poorer area of town this is part of an ideal of kindness and care. The charity worker is under the spell of an ideal held in the richer part of town. Addams realizes that thriftiness is a good thing in some situations; and she describes it in terms of an out of place ideal in this part of town.

The charity worker realizes the foolishness of this approach. Addams describes her perplexity:

> She [the charity worker] feels the sordidness of constantly being obliged to urge the industrial view of life. The benevolent individual of fifty years ago honestly believed that industry and self-denial in youth would result in comfortable possessions for old age. It was, indeed, the method he had practiced in his own youth, and by which he had probably obtained whatever fortune he possessed. He therefore reproved the poor family for indulging their children, urged them to work long hours, and was utterly untouched by many scruples which afflict the contemporary charity visitor. She says sometimes, 'Why must I talk always of getting work and saving money, the things I know nothing about? If it were anything else I had to urge, I could do it; anything like Latin prose, which I had worried through myself, it would not be so hard.' But she finds it difficult to connect the experiences of her youth with the experiences of the visited family.[159]

[158] Ibid., 18.
[159] Ibid.

It is hard to see how working on "Latin prose" would help the plight of the poor, but at least the charity worker realizes that the emphasis on thriftiness, in this specific case, makes no sense. Here the ideal of kindness, which the neighborhood holds dear, and now foisted upon the charity worker, conflicted with the ideal of thriftiness. This experience is a spectacular time for both parties to listen to each other. The perplexity is a sign that it is necessary.

Addams did not merely talk about how others would find themselves in perplexing situations, but she also addressed her own perplexities. In *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* she connects her own perplexity with listening. She listened to the older women at Hull House because she felt a perplexity surrounding the Devil Baby:

> We had doubtless struck a case of what the psychologists call the 'contagion of emotion' added to that 'aesthetic sociability' which impels any one of us to drag the entire household to the window when a procession comes into the street or a rainbow appears in the sky. The Devil Baby of course was worth many processions and rainbows, and I will confess that, as the empty show went on day after day, I quite revolted against such a vapid manifestation of even an admirable human trait. There was always one exception, however; whenever I heard the high eager voices of old women, I was irrestibly interested and left anything I might be doing in order to listen to them.[160]

In this case, Addams' perplexity arose out of an initial listening and prompted her to listen deeply to these old women. She heard them as voices from a past she had never experienced, and this perplexity drew her to listen to them.

Addams sees these women connected with the past and arising out of it. She saw these women as mythic and as an expression and embodiment of older customs and ideals. Her perplexity arose because she was driven by the more contemporary ideal of scientific reduction to psychological processes. When the perplexity occurred, she was wise enough to listen-with these women. In this specific case, Addams is educating us about how to listen to the elderly and

[160] Addams, *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, 9. I apologize for using this paragraph again, but it helps bring clarity to the idea.

appreciate their memories and myths. Her writing of the book explains her own perplexity and should also perplex the reader.

Addams' development of the concept of perplexity did not occur in a vacuum. Her concept is very similar to both Dewey's "problematic situation" and Charles Sanders Peirce's "irritation of doubt." While direct influence from Peirce on Addams seems unlikely, it is possible she had an impact on Dewey. Seigfried points out that Addams began using the term before Dewey used his.[161] At the very least, the similarities show that Addams is cut from the same cloth as both of these philosophers, but she does emphasize different aspects of perplexity than either of these thinkers.

Peirce's "irritation of doubt" is very similar to Addams' perplexity. The irritation of doubt is the starting point of inquiry, for Peirce. It is what drives the process forward. In "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" he explains his ideas about doubt:

> The principles set forth in the first part of this essay lead, at once, to a method of reaching a clearness of thought of higher grade than the 'distinctness' of the logicians. It was there noticed that the action of thought is excited by the irritation of doubt, and ceases when belief is attained; so that the production of belief is the sole function of thought.[162]

The irritation of doubt begins the process of inquiry which can lead to new beliefs. When we go about our everyday experience with our old beliefs we run into things which cause us to have some sort of doubt which disrupts our normally habituated experience. This irritation begins a string of reasoning which can sometimes bring us to new belief, action, and habit. The irritation of doubt occurs not only in important decisions but also in the most mundane of our activities.[163]

[161]Seigfried, introduction to *Democracy and Social Ethics*,xxv.
[162]Charles Sanders Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," in Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition, vol. 3, ed. The Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 261.
[163] Ibid., 262.

For Peirce doubt can be disingenuous or, at the very least, not focused on anything of importance. He explains:

> Most frequently doubts arise in some indecision, however momentary, in our action. Sometimes it is not so. I have, for example, to wait in a railway-station, and to pass the time I read the advertisements on the walls. I compare the advantages of different trains and different routes which I never expect to take, merely fancying myself to be in a state of hesitancy, because I am bored with having nothing to trouble me. Feigned hesitancy, whether feigned for mere amusement or with a lofty purpose, plays a great part in the production of scientific inquiry.[164]

The doubt Peirce describes is still productive and can lead to a new belief which leads to action, but these sorts of doubts are not the same as Addams' "perplexity," which has a moral import.

For Addams perplexity is a starting point for moral inquiry, and it cannot be something which is "feigned." Perplexity must be genuine and arise from a moral dilemma if it is to bring about sympathetic understanding and address a moral problem. Since Peirce is describing all experience and the beginnings of inquiry, he does not add the moral element. He does not require a type of action when one is hit with the irritation of doubt.

Peirce goes so far as to say that he envies one who can react against the irritation of doubt without a reasoned response: "It is impossible not to envy the man who can dismiss reason, although we know how it must turn out at last."[165] He clearly thinks it will turn out in the negative, if one dismisses reason; but it is interesting that he says one cannot help but envy one who does it. Logic is normative for Peirce, because it is not only descriptive, but it is not tied directly to ethics. One is not a moral failure if one avoids the irritation of doubt or dismisses it. If one avoids Addams' perplexity, one is. She adds a moral requirement to Peirce's "irritation of

[164] Ibid.
[165] Charles Sanders Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," in Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition, vol. 3, ed. The Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 256.

doubt" through "perplexity." We must strive to be moral people through perplexity for Addams, and for Peirce, the requirement is only nominally philosophical.

"Perplexity" for Addams is also similar to Dewey's "problematic situation." In *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* Dewey explores the generic traits of inquiry. In the work he tracks the structures of human thought in their most basic form. The first stage of inquiry (intelligent human thought) is the indeterminate situation:

> … it is of the very nature of the indeterminate situation which evokes inquiry to be *questionable*; or, in terms of actuality instead of potentiality, to be uncertain, unsettled, disturbed. The peculiar quality of what pervades the given materials, constituting them a situation, is not just uncertainty at large; it is a unique doubtfulness which makes that situation to be just and only the situation it is.[166]

According to Dewey there are many possible reactions to the indeterminate situation. One can violently react without any understanding of what the problem might be, or one can try to deny that an indeterminate situation is at hand.[167] If one is to act intelligently, one must realize that there is an indeterminate situation, see if there actually is a problem, determine what the problem is (this is the most important step), come up with possible solutions, reason about them (this is done individually and collectively), realize and account for the operational and functional "facts-meanings" involved in the situation, and try to utilize past knowledge, as common sense, along with scientific inquiry to ameliorate the situation.[168] The process seems simple but is very difficult to apply properly.

Inquiry begins in the indeterminate situation. One must see that there is an issue at stake (not necessarily a fully formed problem) for there to be an inquiry. This initial moment in inquiry is similar in Dewey and Addams because in both instances it calls for intelligence.

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[166] LW 12: 109.
[167] Ibid., 109-110.
[168] Ibid., 109-122.

Perplexity comes out of a difficult dilemma just like many indeterminate situations. Since Dewey is describing human experience in general and not just moral situations, his focus differs from Addams. She sees perplexity as calling for moral reflection which must deal with the historical and cultural ideals at play in social issues.

Addams also strongly emphasizes the emotional character of perplexity. "Perplexity" entails affectivity, while "inquiry" can be easily understood as missing this quality. When moral occasions arise, one must be sympathetically open to genuine dialogue with the other. The emphasis on the role of emotions in the process of inquiry is not absent in Dewey's pattern of inquiry but it is not greatly emphasized. Seigfried notes that in *How We Think*, Dewey comes closer to Addams' concept of perplexity when he uses the same term:

> The earlier usage [of perplexity in *How We Think*] is closer to Addams's in that it focuses attention on personal, emotional involvement, without which indeterminate situations would be restricted to those that arise like Descartes's from purely intellectual puzzlement. It is not enough that an experience be indeterminant; it also must affect one sufficiently to motivate further action to resolve it.[169]

Perplexity for Addams is not a problem-based method. Of course it considers problems but the pull of perplexity is not a cold and calculating one. When we find ourselves in a perplexing situation we must not merely react; we have to interact. The perplexity lies in our failure to understand the other and, most of the time, the other to understand us. These situations run through almost all of Addams' work and perplexity is a large part of her method. She explains these perplexing situations in order to initiate perplexity in her readers. When she describes the social worker's confusion she wants her reader to be confused.

Addams' "perplexity" also differs from Dewey's problematic situation. She requires us to put ourselves in perplexing situations. In Dewey's pattern of inquiry, we find ourselves in

[169]Seigfried, introduction *Democracy and Social Ethics*, xxiv.

indeterminate situations. When engaging perplexity, we must put ourselves in different contexts to enlarge our experience. We cannot fully live as social creatures if we refuse to interact with those who might be geographically and culturally separate from us.

> We know, at last, that we can only discover truth by a rational and democratic interest in life, and to give truth complete social expression is the endeavour upon which we are entering. Thus the identification with the common lot which is the essential idea of Democracy becomes the source and expression of social ethics. It is as though we thirsted to drink at the great wells of human experience, because we knew that a daintier or less potent draught would not carry us to the end of the journey, going forward as we must in the heat and jostle of the crowd.[170]

If we are to live democratically, we must enlarge our experience and this expansion will bring about perplexities. This paragraph from *Democracy and Social Ethics* is something with which Dewey would wholeheartedly agree; "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us"[171] rings forth all of the same themes. It is no fault of Dewey's that he did not plug morality directly into his logic; it would be strange if he did, since he had written on ethics prior. However, there is a difference between Addams' "perplexity" and Dewey's "indeterminate situation." Incorrectly dealing with the "indeterminate situation" is not a moral failure for Dewey, it is for Addams' "perplexity."

Perplexity begins the process of listening because one who is perplexed has failed to listen in the first place. If listening, as a form of sympathetic understanding, had been exercised to its utmost, perplexity would not have occurred. This does not mean one should try never to be perplexed—far from it. If one is never perplexed, one is most likely not putting oneself in the right moral situations which can call forth sympathetic understanding.

One can avoid perplexity and listening if one merely absconds from a difficult situation or refuses to be open to transforming oneself through the situation. If one stalwartly refuses to

[170]Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 9.
[171] LW: 14, 224-230.

listen to the other the perplexity might disappear for a moment, but it will likely appear again in a different form. For example, the charity worker who did not want to emphasize thriftiness but felt obligated to do so, forced it upon the people of the neighborhood. If she was successful and convinced the locals to set aside money for later use, she would come upon another perplexity. If one of the immigrants from the neighborhood had died due to starvation because none of her neighbors were willing to share money or food and if they did this because of the new savings plan, they would be extremely upset with the charity worker. When she came back to see how things were progressing in the neighborhood, she would be met with righteous anger, which would create a new perplexity. It would have been much simpler if she had just listened in the beginning.

Perplexity is the initial cue that one should listen to another. In the proper context, when one is attempting to understand another sympathetically, it is a clue that one should inquire further into the problem. It is only a starting point and many people fail at the first step in listening: they avoid the perplexity or are not emotionally attuned enough to realize that they ought to be perplexed. Addams' life was filled with situations where she dealt with people who did not lend a sympathetic ear or feel much perplexity. These people were perfect examples of listening-for.

Addams and Listening-For

Addams experienced many cases of listening-for in her career as a resident. She also failed at listening plenty of times and spoke about it in her work. And she had to deal with many

who would only listen-for. By the end of her life she had a deep understanding of what Maurice Hamington terms "active listening."[172]

Listening-for is always a failure on the part of one of the listening parties or the situation itself. Sometimes it is the fault of one in power who thinks she knows better than her interlocutor; sometimes it is the fault of one who might not be in power and there is a lack of empathy, and sometimes the hermeneutical situation is not friendly to dialogue. The first is a failure to empathize with the other; the second, a failure of the other to deal with those in power; and the third comes about through no fault of either party but is just a failure of the situation.

Addams failed to listen many times throughout her life. When she started out as a resident and running Hull House she came to the neighborhood with a perspective from her upbringing. She had an immediate want to be amongst the poor: "I remember launching at my father the pertinent inquiry why people lived in such horrid little houses so close together, and that after receiving his explanation I declared with much firmness when I grew up I should, of course, have a large house, but it would not be built among the other large houses, but right in the midst of horrid little houses like these."[173] Addams shifted out of this benevolence as she got older and came to realize that if one is to help others she must not come down from on high to save them.[174]

When Addams interacted with the Devil Baby's onlookers, who included immigrants, physicians, trained nurses, and educated people of all classes, she was aggravated by the trouble

[172] Maurice Hamington, *Embodied Care: Jane Addams, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Feminist Ethics*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004) Hamington's main discussion of "active listening" and Addams occurs on pages 108-112.
[173]Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 4-5.
[174] Louise W. Knight notes this transformation on her movement from her father's concept of Christian benevolence to something more equal. See pages 96 and 105 in *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action*, (New York, New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2010)

they were giving her. She was trying to run a working settlement house, and the many people coming to see the child were getting in the way. She explains the sorts of conversations she was forced to have with the unwelcome visitors:

> For six weeks as I went about the house, I would hear a voice at the telephone repeating for the hundredth time that day, 'No, there is no such baby'; 'No we never had it here'; 'No, he couldn't have seen it for fifty cents'; 'We didn't send it anywhere because we never had it'; 'I don't mean your sister-in-law lied, but there must be some mistake';…[175]

This mess went on for six weeks, and it is understandable that she was upset. But she, at least at that time, failed to listen properly. In this case, she needed to listen to the women as individuals. She came from the perspective of someone who denied the existence of the Devil Baby outright and could not see why anyone would be open to its existence. Even in the face of so many, Addams failed to listen.

For the first six weeks, Addams thought the visitors and gawkers must have gone a bit insane. She explains:

> We had doubtless struck a case of what the psychologists call the 'contagion of emotion' added to that 'aesthetic sociability' which impels any one of us to drag the entire household to the window when a procession comes into the street or a rainbow appears in the sky. The Devil Baby of course was worth many processions and rainbows, and I will confess that, as the empty show went on day after day, I quite revolted against such a vapid manifestation of even an admirable human trait.[176]

She interpreted the actions of the visitors, those telling the story, and the physicians who would come interested in "scientific research," in the form of a psychological reductionism. She thought these people had gone a bit mad. While she did see something exciting about the possibility of experiencing the child of Satan, she did not think of their curiosity in glowing terms. Her initial reaction was a failure of listening, and she listened-for when she only looked for a psychological explanation, in this case a disorder, to explain their actions.

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[175]Addams, *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, 9.
[176] Ibid.

This sort of reaction constantly occurs when one is dealing with a group who has a set of beliefs to which one is not open. It is always easy for one to listen-for when one can assess the situation from an "objective" vantage point. Addams was right to say that the psychological explanation was right; one thousand people showed up before it was covered in the newspaper. The event was certainly an example of a "contagion of emotion." But the psychological explanation does not fully describe what happened at Hull House during that period of time. Addams was listening-for the cues of psychosis in the words of those who would come to visit or call on the phone. She did not listen deeply enough.

Addams was wise enough, after only a matter of weeks, finally to listen-with the women and get past her own biases. She was able to overcome the blockage to her openness, realize the importance the story played in the lives of these women, and write a book about it to interpret these women to the wider world. She was only able to listen-with these women after deeply immersing herself in the community for decades. She summarizes this process in a few short paragraphs, but it is important to note that she mentions her own failure at listening. Most would not have been so humble.

Addams also had to deal with those who only listened-for. Henry Ford was a prime example of one who consistently failed to listen in the buildup to the First World War. In this situation, Addams was not the one in power, and the way she dealt with those merely listening-for shows how difficult it is for one who is not heard.

In 1915 Addams attempted to organize a conference of countries that had entered the First World War, neutral countries, and the United States. She, and the Woman's Peace Party, thought it would bring attention to the peace movement and possibly stop the turn toward war

that the United States was making. At the time, she notes, the American people had not been fully talked into going to war by President Woodrow Wilson.[177] The initial plan was to include the "belligerent nations" (Great Britain, France, Russia, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Austria, and Hungary) and the neutral nations (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, and the United States), so they could engage in open dialogue with each other.[178] Addams did not think this would assuredly bring about peace, but she hoped it would help.

At the time, Wilson refused to participate in the conference and Addams knew she had to find a way to get public opinion on her side. Since the people of the United States were still leaning towards neutrality, she thought this was a possibility. Addams was able to raise money from Henry Ford's wife and mailed telegrams to organize the conference—sent to 1,000 organizers—and also to encourage activists to send telegrams to President Wilson.[179]

The conference needed private funds to continue, and Madame Rosika Schwimmer, a journalist, appealed to Henry Ford during an interview to get involved. He agreed to finance it and met in New York with the Womens' Peace Party. The meeting went well and Ford went to Washington D.C. to meet with President Wilson and get his approval for the conference. Wilson agreed and then, as Addams explains, difficulties began to emerge:

> The difficulties, however began the very evening when Mr. Ford asked his business agent to show us the papers which chartered the Norwegian boat *Oscar II* for her next trans-Atlantic voyage. Some of the people attending the committee meeting evidently knew of this plan, but I was at once alarmed, insisting that it would be easy enough for the members of the conference to travel to Stockholm or The Hague by various steamship lines, paying their own expenses; that we needed Mr. Ford's help primarily in organizing a conference but not in transporting the people. Mr. Ford's response was to the effect that the more publicity the better and that the sailing of the ship itself would make known the conference more effectively than any other method possibly could do.[180]

[177] Addams, *Peace and Bread in Time of War*, 19-20.
[178] Ibid., 17.
[179] Ibid., 18.
[180] Ibid., 21.

At this point Ford began to commandeer the conference for his own propaganda campaign. Addams initially hoped the conference would be a meeting of the intellectuals, leaders, and youth of the various countries, but Ford was not interested in this sort of conference. He stated that he did not want the conference to be a merely academic affair, and instead he pushed his slogan, "Get the Boys out of the trenches by Christmas."[181]

Addams could not persuade him to avoid the propaganda campaign, and she worried about the danger of his approach: "I knew that such propaganda would be considered treasonable and put the enterprise in a very dangerous position."[182] And as the ship journeyed across the ocean the entire conference began to fall apart. Delegates refused to meet because of Ford's shenanigans.[183]

Addams' hope of the conference supporting "continuous mediation" fizzled in light of Ford's push for propaganda. He refused to be swayed. But in spite of all of this, Addams was willing to see things from Ford's point of view. She saw how he might have a better grasp of the experience of the soldiers than she:

> I was fifty-five years old in 1915; I had already 'learned from life,' to use Dante's great phrase, that moral results are often obtained through the most unexpected agencies; that it is very easy to misjudge the value of an undertaking by a critical or unfair estimate of the temperament and ability of those undertaking it. It was quite possible that with Mr. Ford's personal knowledge of the rank and file of working men he had shrewdly interpreted the situation, that he understood the soldier who was least responsible for the war and could refuse to continue only if the appeal came simultaneously to both sides.[184]

Addams did not doubt herself in this situation, but she exercised wisdom learned from experience to understand Ford. She was not lucky enough to receive the same treatment from him. He always listened-for when dealing with Addams.

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[181] Ibid., 22.
[182] Ibid., 23.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.

Ford was closed to the educational possibilities of which Addams spoke because he was driven by an ideal of American individualism. He thought, because of his background in business and life experiences, that a direct appeal to "the boys" would be the best way to stop the war. He was closed to the idea that an intellectual or educational approach would have any effect. Instead brute force, via a propaganda campaign, and enlivened by an ideal of rugged individualism, would be the solution.

Ford merely listened-for when he dealt with Addams and the Women's Peace Party, and it destroyed any possibility of the conference having a positive effect. The conference did happen and the initial meeting was productive, but it was not able to last. Ford's own demagoguery had gotten in the way.

When Ford offered to finance the project he already had his plan in mind and was not open to changing his methods. Addams and the women who had planned the conference only got in the way of his brash ideal. Eventually he pulled his money out of the venture and moved on, never realizing what he had destroyed.

It is extremely easy for one to fall into listening-for. We are all driven by our own ideals, of which we are made, and we hold them dear. But if we are to listen openly, actively, or sympathetically we must be ready to shift our ideals and reconstruct them in dialogue with others. Addams was clearly ready to do so; she did not listen-for when she dealt with Ford. She always tried to listen-with. We must be vigilant to avoid listening-for and always be open to self-reconstruction and reconstruction of the situation at hand. Ford did neither of these and it wrecked the conference.

There are also times when listening-for occurs amongst groups. Addams saw this happen when she dealt with the "Averbuch affair." When groups of people have entrenched ideals working within them listening can easily turn into listening-for. All peoples have general ideas and notions about those they consider "other" than themselves, and these ideas can block listening. For productive listening to occur, the proper context must be in place. In the case of the "Averbuch affair" the context made listening extremely difficult.

In "The Chicago Settlements and Social Unrest"[185] Addams discusses the events surrounding the 1908 shooting of Lazerus Averbuch. According to the police, Averbuch, caught up in the hysteria of anarchism sweeping across the country, showed up at the Chicago police chief's house at night and tried to give something to him. The chief thought he was going to be assassinated, and so he shot and killed Averbuch. The ordeal created an uproar in the Russian Jewish community. The police held fast to their story, detained numerous individuals who they thought were involved in the assassination plot, and the entire situation created a tense situation throughout Chicago.

The newspapers portrayed the Russian Jews as anti-American anarchists who housed and cared for sympathizers. They were unfairly portrayed as planners of the assassination attempt, and the rest of the city encouraged the harshest sanctions possible. The police illegally detained relatives and friends of Averbuch and also terrorized the community. Addams describes the harsh treatment the Russian Jews received at the hands of the Chicago police department:

> The Russian Jewish colony was largely made up of such families, only too familiar with the methods of the Russian police. Therefore, when the Chicago police ransacked all the printing offices they could locate in the colony, when they raided a restaurant which they regarded as suspicious because it had been supplying food at cost to the unemployed,

[185] Jane Addams, "The Chicago Settlements and Social Unrest," in *Jane Addams Reader*. ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain, (New York, New York: Basic Books, 2002), 211.

> when they searched through private houses for papers and photographs of revolutionaries, when they seized the library of the Edelstadt group and carried the books away to the city hall…—all these things so poignantly reminded them of the Russian methods that indignation, fed both by old memory and bitter disappointment in American, swept over the entire colony.[186]

After the police engaged in all of these affairs the *actual* anarchists in the community started to come out from the shadows and pushed for protest. They wanted to stage a protest when Averbuch's body was released from the morgue, and Addams found herself between these young people and the older members of the Russian Jewish community. After she had mediated all of these problems, she wrote this article to explain the anger of the Russian Jews to the rest of Chicago, since their voices had not been heard.

Addams had several purposes in writing the piece. One was to discuss and dispute the claims of the Chicago police, specifically the point that Averbuch was somehow connected with others in the Russian Jewish group. She also wanted to work as an interpreter of the Russian Jews to the rest of Chicago and the nation. The latter was her push to open up listening, but the situation was wrought with difficulties.

Addams explains one of the purposes of the settlement house as "interpreter" of the foreign colony to the city at large:

> Whatever other services the settlement may have endeavoured to perform for its community, there is no doubt that it has come to regard that of interpreting foreign colonies to the rest of the city in the light of a professional obligation. This settlement interpretation may be right or wrong, but it is at least based upon years of first hand information and upon an opportunity for free intercourse with the foreign people themselves.[187]

The settlement's role as interpreter puts it in a difficult position. For the members of the settlement house to be successful interpreters they must first listen to the community, figure out

[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid., 205.

how to present that interpretation properly to the rest of the city, and encourage listening without judging.

Addams knew that listening was extremely difficult in these circumstances. She describes the clash of communities:

> The city as a whole is ready to listen to this interpretation in times of peace, but when an even implying 'anarchy' occurs such as the Averbuch incident in Chicago or the Silverstein bomb throwing in New York, it is apparently impossible for the over-wrought community to distinguish between the excitement the settlements are endeavouring to understand and to allay the attitude of the settlement itself.[188]

During peaceful times one is free to speak one's mind, but as soon as an event, especially one connected to "anarchism" occurs, the reaction of the public can be over-zealous, if not violent. When the situation is a friendly one, we all are willing to listen; but as soon as tensions mount, listening easily breaks down into listening-for.

The block to listening, in this case, was a set of misplaced ideals. Addams says that the public simultaneously held up three ideals: heresy, treason, and patriotism. She calls the first: "the old mediaeval confusion—he who feeds or shelters a heretic is upon *prima facie* evidence a heretic himself—he who knows intimately people among whom anarchists arise is therefore an anarchist."[189] She does not focus on or elaborate this point, but it is important to notice that she sees a continuous path back to an historical ideal. We cannot escape history. While the public did not speak directly in these terms, the historical ideal reared its ugly head, once again, in a time of paranoia.

Treason, a contemporary ideal, influenced the public. The people saw anarchism as the antithesis of democratic discourse because some of the anarchists encouraged violence and

[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.

revolution. As soon as the charge of anarchism was made, the public felt a duty to decry, as loudly as possible, the actions of any supposed anarchists as treasonous before the entire story had been told. Addams also saw this ideal as historically rooted: "The anarchist corresponds in civil society to the traitor in military circles, and is the modern representative of the long line of creatures, despised always, reaching back to the tribe itself."[190] The traitor, like the heretic, had awakened the scorn of the community.

A bastardized ideal of patriotism was born of these historical homunculi. Patriotism becomes hatred of the foreign other, which is a curious phenomenon in a country filled with immigrants. Addams explains, "There is, too, no doubt that in the present instance there is added to this old horror the sense of being betrayed by a newcomer… It becomes almost a mark of patriotism in the first excitement to fulminate against the 'foreign anarchist.'"[191] All three of these ideals clouded the minds of Chicago and resulted in listening-for.

The police, newspapers, politicians, and Chicagoans were ready to condemn any defense of Averbuch and expected a vigilant showing of patriotism from the Russian Jews. Instead of openly listening to them, these groups listened-for any hint of anti-democratic sentiment. The police, according to Addams, were so frenzied when performing the autopsy that they said, "'that traces of anarchy had been found in the brain,' as if the words were written across the front lobes."[192] Delirious ideals had taken over the minds of the Chicago police department and were fueled by the vitriol of the newspapers, conniving politicians,[193] and a public all too ready to judge foreigners.

[190] Ibid., 207.
[191] Ibid., 207-208.
[192] Ibid., 212.
[193] Ibid., 215.

The "Averbuch affair" was a complicated situation. It was not easy for anyone involved to listen to each other. Addams sees no party without fault in her descriptions of the events. The issues were so historically entrenched and the ideals so closed that listening-for was inevitable. Ideals could not be reconstructed amongst people when they were so fractured and paranoid. Addams tried to encourage all parties to listen, but the difficulties of the situation were too much.

In situations such as these, there is nothing positive or constructive about listening-for. On the individual level the narcissistic listener is so wrapped up in her own narrative that the only voice she can hear is her own. The other is fully shut out in this case. Listening-for in this case is only slightly better than not listening at all or silencing the other. The individual, just like any group, is influenced by the situation and the ideals at play. These factors can decide whether or not listening can begin and of what type it will be. As we just saw, when the situation is so entrenched and those involved in it so steadfast in their own interpretation, listening-for is the only possibility.

But listening-for is not the only type of listening. What Addams was trying to do, in all three of these examples, was to shift those involved into listening-to and hopefully guide them into listening-with. We will now see how this next level of listening, listening-to, is treated in Addams' philosophy.

Addams and Listening-To

The separation between listening-for and listening-to is not great. One can very easily fall into listening-for from listening-to and the shift from listening-for to listening-to is also a minor step. The key to the separation of the two concepts lies in recognition of the other. In the case of listening-for one might as well be listening to oneself since the other is subsumed under

the listener's narcissistic framework. Self-transformation is not a possibility when one listens-for. In the case of listening-to the relationship between one and another is more difficult. The other is recognized but the listener is not vulnerable to the other's words. Experts tend to fall into this mode of listening when dealing with people. Since the expert sees herself as above the fray when listening to someone, she can easily avoid self-assessment and self-transformation. Not all experts fall into the category of listening-to, though.

Addams, as a sort of expert, had moments when she fell into listening-to. She was working in between so many different groups of people that listening-to was nearly inevitable. Sometimes her sympathies would hold too tight with certain groups to the detriment of others. And sometimes she would neglect the experience of others due to geographical distance. This fault was not major since she accounts for the necessity of experiences of others to bring about sympathetic understanding. When Addams was working against imperialism, she fell into listening-to, in this case, the victims of the Filipino-American War.

The war was an exercise in imperialism under the guise of benevolence. Knight notes, "President McKinley, arguing that the Filipinos were unable to govern themselves, issued the Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation in January 1899. Soon after, an American soldier on patrol at night shot an approaching Filipino Soldier who did not halt upon command, the Filipinos fired back, and the Filipino-American War began."[194] Clearly the soldier had not understood that the forced assimilation was benevolent.

In an address given at the Chicago Liberty Meeting on April 30, 1899, in the midst of the war, Addams faulted the United States for being taken by the ideal of militarism. She explains in

[194]Knight, *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action*, 110.

the speech that militarism is at odds with any democratic interest and imperialism is a symptom of falling for this negative ideal. Militarism breeds violence, not just in the country being attacked, but also at home. In the speech she attempts to shift the tendency of militarism to hold onto its fervor for violence but with more measured action. She explains:

> No one urges peaceful association with more fervor than the workingman. Organization is his only hope, but it must be kept distinct from militarism, which can never be made a democratic instrument… The same strenuous endeavour, the same heroic self-sacrifice, the same fine courage and readiness to meet death, may be displayed without accompaniment of killing our fellow men.[195]

She does not mention the plight of the Filipinos in the speech. Knight states, "Her silence suggests that, despite her ideals, she could not quite see the Filipinos the way she saw Americans."[196] Knight also explains that Addams was silent about the United States invoking benevolence in its treatment of the Filipinos. Since Addams was reconstructing her own ideal of Christian benevolence, which had been given over to her by her father, she should have mentioned something. Knight rightly notes that this lack of "sympathetic imagination" was due to her not taking her own advice about ethics: "Her theory that experience was key to widening one's moral compass was evidently true."[197]

Due to geographical distance, Addams was not able to sympathize with, and subsequently listen-with, the Filipinos. In the speech she clearly explains the fault of the United States and the danger of the ideal of imperialism, but all of the dangers are focused on the blight on the national character: "It is doubtless only during a time of war that the men and women of Chicago could tolerate whipping for children in our city prison, and it is only during such a time that the introduction in the legislature of a bill for the re-establishment of the whipping post could be

[195]Jane Addams, "Democracy or Militarism," in *Jane Addams' Essays and Speeches*, ed. Marilyn Fischer and Judy D. Whipps (London and New York, New York: Continuum, 2005), 2-3.
[196]Knight, *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action*, 113
[197] Ibid.

possible. National events determine our ideals, as much as our ideals determine national events."[198] In the speech, Addams' focus is only on the moral failure of the United States, and not one word is spoken on behalf of, or in sympathy with, the Filipinos. She forgot that ideals are made up of concrete, embodied people. In this case, Addams was only capable of listening-to.

Listening-to separates itself from listening-for by way of sympathy. There is no sympathy in listening-for; there is no recognition of the other. When listening-to, recognition is given and usually comes from a caring place, but it fails to consider the experience of the other. The one who listens-to closes oneself off from experience of the other. Much of the time, the one who listens-to fails to see oneself as caught up in the experience when taken as an experience, and not just personal experience, with the other. This tends to be unconscious. In this case, Addams, since she had not experienced the tribulations of the Filipinos, listened-to them but not with them. Those who are benevolent also fall into this category.

Benevolence was a driving ideal in the mind of nineteenth century women. Women, especially those of the upper class, were encouraged to share their time, because God had favored them, with those who were less fortunate. This ideal was instilled in Addams from an early age. Knight explains the development of this ethic of benevolence:

> The women's wholehearted embrace of the ethic of benevolence was not surprising because it permeated their lives, starting in their families. There, as daughters first, and later as wives and mothers they relied on the kindnesses of men: fathers, husbands, and adult sons. Forbidden to work outside the home, prosperous women depended on men for their material well-being. Instructed to obey fathers and husbands, women learned to be grateful to the men who denied them power. Benevolence defined gender relations in the nineteenth century.[199]

[198]Addams, "Democracy or Militarism."
[199]Louise W. Knight, "Biography's Window on Social Change: Benevolence and Justice in Jane Addams's 'A Modern Lear'," Journal of Women's History, Vol. 9. No. 1(1997): 111.

One engaged in this ethic would practice it only upon the "worthy" poor.[200] These were people who had not fallen into categories not approved by nineteenth century culture and were also grateful for the help. Benevolence, of this kind, always required a top-down giving from one in power to one who had none. At its worst, it was totally dehumanizing and a false righteousness, but at its best it contained a bit of sympathy. It can be a starting point for sympathy, but sympathy, if it is true, cannot end with benevolence.

Benevolence proved to be a barrier to Addams' sympathetic tendencies. Knight notes that it blinded Addams to the experiences of African-Americans.[201] When Addams and Ida Wells-Barnett came to know each other, Addams, within a short period of time, wrote a piece for the *New York Independent*, "Respect for Law," criticizing Southerners' lack of care for law as evidenced by widespread lynching. Both Knight and Hamington describe this piece as a failure to regard the experiences of African-Americans as meaningful.[202] In the publication, Addams takes the perspective of the southerners for granted, as a point of argument, and fails to hear the voices of people like Ida Wells-Barnett: "We would send this message to our fellow citizens of the South who are once more trying to suppress vice by violence: That the bestial in man, that which leads him to pillage and rape, can never be controlled by public cruelty and dramatic punishment, which too often cover fury and revenge."[203] In the statement, Addams falls into the myth of the Black male as rapist and thief without qualification. She had friends with whom she could have spoken about these things; and eventually she did. Wells-Barnett followed up with a rejoinder to Addams' original piece, citing evidence in the *Chicago Tribune* about how many lynched men were even accused of rape. Hamington explains that this eventually resulted in a

[200] Ibid.
[201] Knight, *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action*, 118.
[202] Knight,*Jane Addams: Spirit in Action*, 118. and Maurice Hamington, "Public Pragmatism: Jane Addams and Ida B. Wells on Lynching," Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Vol. 19, N. 2. (2005) 164-174.
[203] Jane Addams, "Respect for Law," The Independent. LIII,Jan. 3 (1901) 19.

perfect example of "public pragmatism" at work.[204] But Knight is right to say that Addams' own benevolence towards southerners impacted her sympathy towards African-Americans.

Addams' publication of the piece came out of a talk she gave to an audience of African Americans in a church. Wells-Barnett had invited her to speak about lynching and the speech, with this specific audience, could not have been taken well. The speech is nearly the same, word for word, as the published article with one exception: Addams, at the end of the talk, decided it would be prudent to tell this group of African-American women not to get so upset about lynching:

> There is much else that might be said, but I can only add one word to this audience, made up as it is largely of the race who are the victims of this false theory of conduct. You, above all, must learn that restraint and self-control and the understanding of the Southern situation, is the only possible way for you to remedy it. That to indulge in furious denunciation, in anger against the race among whom you live, is to exhibit the same spirit which this meeting has been called to deplore.[205]

Because Addams was so focused on her own benevolent stance to the Southern perpetrators of these crimes and saw herself as better than them, she failed to listen-with the African Americans with whom she was face to face. She benevolently listened-to the Southerners because she failed to see that she too was caught up in the race problems of the United States and shared a responsibility for them, and her lack of acknowledgement of the problem forced her into a position where she could not listen-for, to, or with these African Americans. Her arrogant chiding of the audience not to be angry is breathtaking.

Addams manages to make the denunciation worse in the final words of her speech:

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[204]Hamington, "Public Pragmatism: Jane Addams and Ida B. Wells on Lynching," 173.

[205] *The Jane Addams Papers*. Edited by Mary Lynn McCree Bryan et al. Microfilm, 82 Reels. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985-86. In the rest of the dissertation, I will abbreviate the papers as "JAPM," standing for "Jane Addams Papers and Manuscripts," followed by the reel number and slide number. JAPM, 46:960.

> Your race has suffered a great wrong the consequences of which will last for many generations, not only with you but with the race of the wrong-doer, *whose punishment is perhaps always the greater*. [emphasis added] I would beg of you to remember that the situation is filled with perplexities for both races, that only forbearance, mutual understanding and public spirit can help either of us to find the way out.[206]

It is not clear what she means by saying the punishment of the whites is greater. Was she saying that the present suffering of the South was greater? Was she saying that the punishment was to come later? From where would it come? Was she saying that it might be some sort of divine justice? She did not qualify the statement, but the vagueness leaves the meaning of the statement in a precarious place. What is clear is that she made a stupid mistake in crafting this speech and should have engaged her audience in a more democratic fashion. The fact that she decided to publish the piece afterwards makes the failure even greater. In some capacity, she should have listened to them.

Benevolence, as seeing oneself as more righteous than another, can quickly get in the way of listening-with. If we come into a situation with the wrong attitude, or think that we know all of the possible answers to any questions, listening-with is impossible. When listening-to we are outside the struggle of the other. We are arrogant enough to see ourselves as better than the other or not part of their world. Dangers abound when one listens-to. The lack of empathy can overlook the valid claim of another or, much worse, put one in the position of giving help in the wrong way. The former is very dangerous when one is in a position of power. As Addams explains, "If we could only be judged or judge other people by purity of motive, life would be much simplified, but that would be to abandon the contention made in the first chapter, that the processes of life are as important as its aims."[207] This critique of deontology is at the heart of

[206] Ibid.
[207] Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 48.

listening-to. Addams, in the chapter on "Household Adjustment," in *Democracy and Social Ethics*, discusses listening-to in great detail.

Normally, Addams did not fall easily into listening-to. Much of her work is a testament to the ability she had to listen-with others. This ability helped her understand the importance of listening and when it can go wrong. In discussing the relationship between "servant and mistress" at the turn of the century, she explains in depth how one can fall into listening-to.

In the chapter, Addams attempts to awaken the democratic spirit to realize the problems of the household. It has not changed with the same fervor as the industrial world and has failed to democratically adjust. Since the household is ruled by older ideals of femininity, the changing nature of the relationship between mistress and servant is perplexing. She explains the ideals:

> A code of ethics was thus developed in regard to woman's conduct, and her duties were logically and carefully limited to her own family circle. When it became impossible to adequately minister to the needs of this circle without the help of many people who did not strictly belong to the family, although they were part of the household, they were added as aids merely for supplying those needs… Only a few hundred years ago, woman had complete control of the manufacturing of many commodities which now figure so largely in commerce, and it is evident that she let the manufacturing of these commodities go into the hands of men, as soon as organization and a larger conception of their production were required.[208]

The entrance of the servant into the household created a difficult relationship between the woman of the house and her worker; the servant was part of the family, but not quite. Addams notes the pains that the young women go through as they enter into the household to cook, clean, and take care of the children. These women have moved from their family's home and out of their neighborhoods to live with an alien family who many times lived an alien way of life.[209]

The mistress could be sympathetic to the servant. They were both living in the same household and inevitably a bond would be formed. The problems came about when the mistress

[208]Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 49.
[209] Ibid., 52-56.

would step back into the role of employer. In a specific instance, Addams discusses a benevolent gift given to a servant:

> The writer [Addams] knows of an employer in one of the suburbs who built a bay at the back of her house so that her cook might have a pleasant room in which to sleep, and another in which to receive her friends. The employer naturally felt aggrieved when the cook refused to stay in her bay. Viewed in an historic light, this employer might quite as well have added a bay to her house for her shoemaker, and then deemed him ungrateful because he declined to live in it.[210]

The employer failed to listen-with the servant because she was not privy to the historical ideals playing out in their relationship. The servant did not want to stay out in the suburbs away from her family but wanted to go home to her own family, just like the industrial workers of her neighborhood. These women, if they had been listening-with and not listening-to, could have been sympathetic to this feeling.

Addams came to this assessment because of her own ability to listen-with as she heard these women listen-to their servants. The woman was hurt, and understandably so, but she needed to sympathize with the servant. Instead, she focused on her own benevolence to the servant while overlooking her plight. Addams dissects the situation:

> A listener, attentive to a conversation between two employers of household labor,—and we certainly all have opportunity to hear such conversations,—would often discover a tone implying that the employer was abused and put upon; that she was struggling with the problem solely because she was thus serving her family and performing her social duties; that otherwise it would be a great relief to her to abandon the entire situation, and 'never have a servant in her house again.'[211]

The mistress had some sympathy for the servant, but she was too focused on her own situation to be open to the issues of the servant. Building a guest house for someone is clearly an act of kindness, but the reaction of the mistress when the servant rejects it shows how this is a case of listening-to.

[210] Ibid., 51.
[211] Ibid.

Listening-to, as opposed to listening-for, always has a degree of sympathy to it. The other is recognized but kept at a safe distance from the listener. The goal of the listener when listening-to is never to use the other for certain ends. When one is listening-for this tends to be the case; listening-for is almost always a base instrumentalism. Listening-to is open to the voice of the other but not in a transformative way.

Addams goes into great detail about the difficulties of the young women who were servants. They did not have social lives, save when the mistress would allow it; they were working incredible hours and weekends; and they were cut off from their families. If the employer had listened-with her servants she would have heard these cries.

Not all mistresses were as closed to the difficulties of the servant:

> A conscientious employer once remarked to the writer: 'In England it must be much easier; the maid does not look and dress so like your daughter, and you can at least pretend that she doesn't like the same things. But really, my new waitress is quite as pretty and stylish as my daughter is, and her wistful look sometimes when Mary goes off to a frolic quite breaks my heart.[212]

This woman has a degree of sympathy, but the first part of her statement belies it. When she says it must be much easier in England because the young girls are dressed differently, she is only focused on her own issues. The true difficulty comes in the problems of the servant who is cut off from family, friends, and potential mates. The woman Addams quotes would be the sort who would try to fix the situation by building a guest house or playing matchmaker for the servant. Addams' was able to track the pain of these young girls by listening-with them. What she heard shows the differences between listening-to, in which the woman just described was engaged, and listening-with.

[212] Ibid., 53.

Addams, through her physical presence and engaged listening, listened-with the servants. She did not fully understand the place in which they had been put, but she was in an empathetic relationship with them. She goes so far as to describe the sounds of their voices and how they would morph over time:

> The writer has known the voice of a girl to change so much during three weeks of 'service' that she could not recognize it when the girl returned to her home. It alternated between the high falsetto in which a shy child 'speaks a piece' and the husky gulp with which the *globus hystericus*is swallowed. The alertness and *bonhomie* of the voice of the tenement-house child had totally disappeared.[213]

Addams could hear the quavering voice and could track the change in the young woman. Since the mistress did not have any experience with the servant when she lived in the tenement, and did not listen to her voice change over time, she could not hear the shift in timbre and tone. The mistress thought the girl wanted merely to go out dancing with her friends because she was selfish. Addams was able to hear in that voice, and also because of her own experiences in the neighborhoods in which these women lived, why she wanted to socialize. The mistress, as Addams notes, was so self-centered that she could not listen-with the young woman.

Listening-with enlarges our experience and changes us and the situations in which we find ourselves. Listening-to is rooted in sympathy and benevolence but fails to account for the larger situation. When we listen-to we are not merely hearing what matters to us, but we are also not fully aware of our relation with the other. This form of listening is an improvement but has not fully become sympathy or empathy. Listening-with is the culmination of that transformation.

Addams and Listening-With

The difference between listening-to and listening-with is one of degree, not kind. Their separation as concepts obstructs their fluid nature. One can easily move from listening-to to

[213] Ibid., 58.

listening-with in an instant and fall back into listening-to from listening-with just as quickly. In the case of Addams, we see this happen again and again, and it is something of which she is aware in her experience because she was the victim of those who would listen-for and listen-to her throughout her life. There is a difference between the two, though. That difference can be explained by a distinction Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley make between the "inter-actional" and the "trans-actional" in *Knowing and the Known*.[214]

While this is an anachronistic interpretation, it can still shed some light on the difference between listening-to and listening-with. In the work, Bentley and Dewey set up their concepts of "trans-action," "inter-action," and "self-action" when speaking of inquiry:

> *Self-action*: where things are viewed as acting under their own powers.
>
> *Inter-action*: where thing is balanced against thing in causal interconnection.
>
> *Trans-action*: where systems of description and naming are employed to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to 'elements' or other presumptively detachable or independent 'entities,' 'essences,' or 'realities,' and without isolation of presumptively detachable 'relations' from such detachable 'elements.'[215]

They saw these categories as forms that scientific inquiry took throughout history; and, while all three come up in different sciences and times, certain epochs of history used some sparingly and some robustly. Dewey and Bentley thought transactional inquiry was still under-utilized and under-developed in their own time. To put these concepts in scientific terms, they saw Newtonian mechanics as an example of interaction and Einstein's mechanics as transactional, even though, he sometimes fell into interactional formulations of it.[216]

Interactional accounts and transactional accounts differ in the conceptual baggage they bring into the inquiry. Interactional accounts tend to view things as separate from each other, the

[214] LW: 16.
[215] Ibid., 101-102.
[216] Ibid., 103-107.

environment—and most importantly—from the observer. Transactional accounts attempt to describe the situation as a whole and not immediately break it up into easily digestible parts. The interactional form of inquiry has been a major block to scientific understanding of our environment and our place in it. The transactional gives us a deeper understanding of the complexity of ourselves and our surroundings.

Moving out of the abstraction of inquiry, Dewey and Bentley also describe the difference between interaction and transaction in terms of an organism with its environment. They see the dichotomy as a specious one and a dangerous framework to bring to any inquiry:

> If inter-action assumes the organism and its environmental objects to be present as substantially separate existences or forms of existence, prior to their entry into joint investigation, then—*Transaction* assumes no pre-knowledge of either organism or environment alone as adequate, not even as respects the basic nature of the current conventional distinctions between them, but requires their primary acceptance in common system, with full freedom reserved for their developing examination.[217]

Viewing the transactions of an organism with its environment makes it possible for Dewey and Bentley to say: "Organisms do not live without air and water, nor without food ingestion and radiation. They live, that is, as much in processes across and 'through' skins as in processes 'within' skins."[218] In the transactions of these organisms with each other, listening-with is part of a complex event and not just one member changing.

When two people listen-with each other they become part of each other's lives for a moment. They hear themselves in the other and the reverse also happens. For a moment, or over a long period of time, they are able to bridge the felt separation between self and other. Listening-with does not mean both parties are ever fully one, though. There is a separation when

[217] Ibid., 114.
[218] Ibid., 119.

one listens-with which is still grounded in empathy. Empathy for Addams is rooted in her concept of "sympathetic understanding."

Sympathetic understanding is the ground of Addams' moral theory and is part and parcel of democratic citizenry. Society cannot function if it is not filled with sympathetic ears that withhold judgment. She explains the difficulty of the commitment to Democracy through sympathy:

> We are learning that a standard of social ethics is not attained by travelling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of another's burdens. To follow the path of social morality results perforce in the temper if not the practice of the democratic spirit, for it implies that diversified human experience and resultant sympathy which are the foundation and guarantee of Democracy.[219]

Sympathetic understanding requires a development of perplexities by widening one's experience. We must follow our perplexities wherever they lead us because they will breed sympathy in us and others. We cannot stay steadfast in our own prejudices about others but must be ready to be surprised and learn to feel with others.

We are not merely to understand the pain of others and recognize it as that. We must take the further step of seeing ourselves as caught up in the same situation as the other when we sympathetically understand the other. There were many moments in Addams' own life where she failed, but she learned from her experimental nature. Seigfried explains Addams' experimental method:

> The experimental method was literally one of learning from mistakes, and Addams points out repeatedly how her attitudes and proposals caused harms that could have been avoided had she listened more carefully to those she was supposedly helping… Addams' experimental method was not just a piecemeal trial-and-error affair. It was the expression of a pragmatist feminist interpretive framework, one informed by her conscious intention to 'retain and utilize past experiences'…This interpretive framework is summed up in a

[219]Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, 7.

> phrase frequently used by both women and men pragmatist: 'sympathetic understanding.' The practice of sympathetic understanding is reciprocity.[220]

Reciprocity is not the assumption that one will receive something for something done, but a realization that one is bound up in the experience of the other at all times. Addams saw herself as part of the lives of the Hull House visitors and knew her fate was tied up in theirs. If she had only felt the pain of those with whom she dealt she would not have been exercising her sympathetic understanding, but merely her sympathy (in the contemporary sense).

"Empathy" was not a widely used term by those of Addams' generation, and the complex way they used "sympathy" can account for what we today call empathy. Michael Slote, a contemporary care ethicist, explains that "empathy" "didn't exist in English until the early twentieth century, when it entered the language as a translation of the German word *Einfuehlung*."[221] He goes on to note that Hume used "sympathy" in the same way we mean empathy today.[222] By empathy, Slote means: "In colloquial terms, we can perhaps do this most easily by considering the difference between (Bill Clinton's) feeling someone's pain and feeling *for* someone who is in pain… Thus empathy involves having the feelings of another (involuntarily) aroused in ourselves, as when we see another person in pain."[223] If she were speaking today she would have used "empathy." Her use of "sympathy" does not always mean "empathy," but in "sympathetic understanding" one always empathetically understands.

Nel Noddings also describes empathy as an important part of her care ethics. She does not think of empathy as a loss of self and other, but as an "engrossment." She explains:

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[220] Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric*, (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 200.
[221] Michael Slote, *The Ethics of Care and Empathy*, (New York, New York: Routledge, 2007), 13.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid., 13.

> Caring involves, for the one-caring, a 'feeling with' the other. We might want to call this relationship 'empathy,' but we should think about what we mean by this term. *The Oxford Universal Dictionary* defines *empathy* as 'The power of projecting one's personality into, and so fully understanding, the object of contemplation.' This is, perhaps, a peculiarly rational, western, masculine way of looking at 'feeling with.' The notion of 'feeling with' that I have outlined does not involve projection but reception. I have called it 'engrossment.'… I set aside my temptation to analyze and to plan. I do not project; I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other, I become a duality.[224]

For Noddings, "feeling with" is rooted in a dualistic experience with the other. This dualism is problematic for Addams' and Dewey's ontologies. Both of them are committed to the idea that we are *always* living outside of ourselves, with and also through others. Some of us refuse to admit it. The dualistic model misses the complexity of human experience.

Noddings and Slote both fail to realize how large the sympathetic scope can go. Addams, partly because of her idealistic tendencies, was able to empathize with others in the broadest of ways. She was able to care about ideals. Slote notes that ideals can *possibly* be cared about, and Noddings has an ideal of the one who is caring, but neither of them begin in concrete ideals, as Addams does.[225] Their reluctance comes from ontological commitments they make.

In the beginning of *Caring*, Noddings explains her concept of relations: "For our purposes, 'relation' may be thought of as a set of ordered pairs generated by some rule that

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[224] Nel Noddings,*Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1984), 30.

[225] Slote explains that one *can* care about ideals: "It is also worth noting that caring (about) can be understood broadly enough to take in not merely animals, fetuses, and people, but also ideas and ideals. It is not at all clear, though, that the latter are appropriate objects of moral concern, and certainly it is difficult to make sense of empathy with abstract objects. So I take it that an ethics of care doesn't have to, or want to, worry about this broader kind of caring." P. 19. But, he has overlooked ideals which are concrete and not Platonic. Experience of others is experience of ideals. Care of the other is care about, and because of, an embodied ideal. Individuals live ideals, are shaped by ideals, and, also, change ideals, even if they do not realize it, Slote included. Noddings explains, "Ethical caring, the relation in which we do meet the other morally, will be described as arising out of natural caring—that relation in which we respond as one-caring out of love or natural inclination… We want to be *moral* in order to remain in the caring relation and to enhance the ideal of ourselves as one-caring." (p. 5, Caring.) She also falls into the same problem Slote does. She thinks ideals are merely forward-looking and not constitutive of our present experience. Addams does not.

describes the affect—or subjective experience—of the members."[226] When she describes relations as between two separate objects and emphasizes their subjective character, she comes dangerously close to committing the philosophical fallacy and not realizing the transactional nature of caring experience. This mistake is surprising because many of Noddings' examples are rife with possible interpretations of events, not as an interaction of two separate things, but as transactions occurring through events: "Mothers quite naturally feel with their infants… Naturally, when an infant cries, we react with the infant and feel that something is wrong. *Something is wrong*. This is the infant's feeling, and it is ours. We receive it and share it."[227] Noddings' description moves too quickly from the actual experience of the infant's crying to her assessment. The "reception" and "sharing" is immediately experienced. What actually occurs in the situation is better described as the fact that there was a looking, drawing-near, or a pull from the other. This explanation is close to how Dewey describes the experience of a child interacting with a flame as a "looking" in "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology."[228] Addams' "sympathetic understanding" also has the same understanding of experience and is different in substantial ways from Slote and Noddings.

Hamington clearly sets out exactly how Addams' sympathetic understanding functions. He distills it into four points:

1. Human experience is ontologically defined by social interconnection funded by an ability to find common cause (but not at the price of eliding diversity).
2. If individuals take the time and effort to obtain a deep understanding of others, that knowledge has the potential to disrupt their lives with the possibility of empathetic caring.
3. Empathy leads to action: people who care enough act in behalf of others so that they may flourish and grow.

[226]Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, 3-4.
[227] Ibid., 31.
[228] EW: 5: 97-99.

4. An effective democratic society depends on caring responses.[229]

These points show us that Addams' "sympathy" is not used in the contemporary sense of "feeling someone else's pain" but in the empathetic sense of being caught up in experiences with the other. Hamington also shows how sympathetic understanding is rooted in a "common cause" which functions between people. Listening, as sympathetic understanding, at its best, comes through the construction of this cause.

When listening-to or listening-for, the other turns into an object. In the case of listening-for, this brute instrumentalism exercises itself. But in the case of listening-with the other is part of the self and, as Hamington notes, was never fully separate. Listening-with merely brings about the realization that the other is deeply connected with the self as both experience the situation in which they are caught up. When listening-with, we feel connected with others because we always have been connected. We do not just "feel their pain" but we empathize with them because of our vulnerability and the risk that we take when sympathetically understanding.

Listening-with and empathy do not require that one lose oneself in the other. Slote discusses the work of Martin Hoffman, a psychologist: "Empathic identification, then, doesn't involve a felt loss of identity but, according to Hoffman, it does involve feelings or thoughts that are in some sense more 'appropriate' to the situation of the person(s) empathized with than to (the situation of) the person empathizing."[230] A total loss in the other would be dangerous for any person and result in a lack of self-development. These cases are seen when one changes oneself into something she is not. Addams did not live as the people surrounding Hull House; that would have been offensive to them. If she had "gone native" she would have been seen as

[229]Maurice Hamington, *The Social Philosophy of Jane Addams* (Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 71-72.
[230] Slote, *Ethics of Care and Empathy*, 14-15.

someone who was not committed to the neighborhood or as a temporary visitor. She was able still to be herself and, due to her commitment to them, help. But this process took time and, more importantly, vulnerability.

Listening-with requires vulnerability. When Addams listened-with the older women during the Devil Baby crisis she had to make herself vulnerable. In the initial moment, Addams listened-for because she thought the women were caught up in a "contagion of emotion." As she listened-with she opened up her own experience to the experiences of others. She was able to see her similarities with these women as they sat around Hull House and told their stories. To see oneself as part of the other takes courage and requires one to be vulnerably open.

Vulnerability also requires experience, in the sense of taking time and practice. During the beginning of her tenure at Hull House and as she would organize events, plays, and educational services, Addams was not open to the experiences of those who came in to participate. She was bringing culture to them and saw herself as above them. Her benevolence closed off her experience. But, over time, she was able to become vulnerable to the experiences of those who were very different from her.

If the Devil Baby situation happened earlier in her life, Addams might not have thought to turn it into a book; and it is possible she would not have even paid attention to the women and just written them off as slightly insane. But, because of her experience, she was able to listen-with the women, take down their stories, and turn them into a transformative experience for herself: an act in memory.

Addams learned from listening-with these women that memory has a stronger influence on the old than the young.[231] The young are obsessed with possibility and driven by their future aspirations, while the old, partly due to negligence and also the stored collection of so much memory, tend to focus on the past and live through myth. When Addams learned these lessons from these women she was able to delve into her own past, through a practice of living memory. In this way, the women constructed the reflections upon their lives along with Addams, thereby illustrating the constructive nature of listening-with.

Addams did not write the book to cleanse her own soul but to garner sympathy and empathy with these women. Her reading audience, mostly upper class whites, would not have had any experiences with these women or at least none of any depth. Addams engaged them on a bodily level by listening to them and was able to empathize with them and their struggles. And while a work like this cannot overcome all of the prejudices the readers of the book would bring with them, it is a start. She explains what she wants the readers to take away from the book:

> I venture to incorporate my personal experience in the last chapter. It may suggest one more of our obligations to Memory, that Protean Mother, who first differentiated primitive man from the brute; who makes possible our complicated modern life so daily dependent on the experiences of the past; and upon whom at the present moment is thrust the sole responsibility of guarding, for future generations, our common heritage of mutual good-will.[232]

Even through all of the differences, Addams hopes that in sharing the experiences of these women both groups can realize a mutual good-will. This realization is the initial work of listening-with.

If Addams did not listen to these women in a close, embodied, and temporally extended setting, she would not have been able to listen-with them. Listening-with does not require

[231]Addams, *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, 5.
[232] Ibid., 6.

embodied listening, but it is aided by it. We merely need to look at the case of Averbuch affair and how little sympathy was garnered through the medium of the newspaper to see how dangerous forsaking the embodied experience of listening is.

When the general citizenry of Chicago, geographically, economically, politically, and spiritually separated as they did from the Russian-Jewish population and read about the "anarchists" in their city, their response was predictable. Instead of listening to the Russian Jewish community, or even offering them a voice through the newspaper, they were content in listening-for. And Addams, as we saw in the case of the Fillipino-American War, fell into some of the same trends because she did not have embodied experiences with some groups of people. But in this case of the Devil Baby embodiment made all of the difference.

Through embodied experience with them, Addams was able to listen-with the women. But listening-with, as opposed to listening-for and listening-to, has a constructive feature to it. As both parties listen-with each other the situation is reconstructed between them. They change the organic whole of the situation through their transactions.

Addams was able to empathize with the older women, realize that the ideal of woman is one deeply tied to memory, and that the ideal of motherhood is directly connected to myth. Together, Addams and these women transformed ideals. Through that process, they were able to enliven the ideals in the public sphere, and the constructive aspect of listening-with comes to its zenith when this occurs.

The other cases of listening lack the reconstructive element. Listening-for has no constructive element to it. It can only result in a one-sided reinforcement of one's beliefs, prejudices, or initial thoughts about how to deal with a situation. Listening-to comes closer to

being constructive than listening-for, but it is still too closed to the other. The other is not realized as constitutive of the self and vice versa.

Sometimes, listening-with does not begin in oral communication of words but through social custom. In *Twenty Years at Hull House,* Addams describes a dance which the Hull-House Women's Club organized and shows how listening-with is dependent on the situation. The organizers of the dance, mostly well-to-do Irish-American women, decided to invite only the local Italian women. Addams describes the social line they were crossing: "The Italian women, who were almost eastern in their habits, all stayed at home and sent their husbands, and the Social Extension Committee entered the drawing-room to find it occupied by rows of Italian workingmen, who seemed to prefer to sit in chairs along the wall."[233] She goes on to explain that the men did not express their disdain for the dance but were not sure what to do. She also notes that it was not the friendliness of the Women's Club, but the willingness of the men to cross the divide that made the party a success. She explains, "Untiring pairs of them danced the tarantella; they sang Neapolitan songs; one of them performed some of those wonderful sleight-of-hand tricks so often seen on the streets of Naples; they explained the coral finger of St. Januarius which they wore…"[234] The men were exceedingly willing to dance, sing, and listen-with the women, but the words of one of the committee members struck Addams after the party:

> …and when the evening was over, one of the committee said to me, 'Do you know I am ashamed of the way I have always talked about 'dagos,' they are quite like other people, only one must take a little more pains with them. I have been nagging my husband to move off M street because they are moving in, but I am going to try staying awhile and see if I can make a real acquaintance with some of them.'[235]

This example shows how both groups were able to listen-with each other for a short amount of time. They were able to come together in a shared experience, which enlivened the experiences

[233] Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House,* 206.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.

and broadened the horizons of all involved. Addams' explanation of the woman's transformation shows listening-with's power:

> To my mind at that moment the speaker had passed from the region of the uncultivated person into the possibilities of the cultivated person. The former is bounded by a narrow outlook on life, unable to overcome differences of dress and habit, and his interests are slowly contracting within a circumscribed area; while the latter constantly tends to be more a citizen of the world because of his growing understanding of all kinds of people with their varying experiences.[236]

The woman had come into touch with a higher call of humanity. She was able to see, if only for a moment, that the "dagos" were not as different as she thought, and it changed her outlook on an entire race of people. The situation itself is what brought about this transformation. If they had met under different circumstances, this experience might have turned out differently.

Listening-with is very difficult to achieve. So much of the time, even when dealing with those closest to us, we quickly fall into listening-for and listening-to; but we hope that, at least in the long run, our dearest relationships are a form of listening-with. Jane Addams' philosophy and practice of listening was the result of decades of experience and a honed wisdom, which under the proper circumstances, brought about transformations of individuals, the culture as a whole, her own life, and the life of her readers. Listening is at the heart of Addams' philosophy and one of the commonest features of her life. In the age we are in, it is sorely needed.

[236] Ibid., 206-207.

CHAPTER 4

ADDAMS AND GADAMER

Similarities between Addams and Gadamer

There are a striking number of similarities between Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jane Addams with respect to their thoughts on interpretation and listening. I will touch on a few of them before moving onto some of their differences. The schools out of which Gadamer and Addams arise care deeply about tradition, history, and culture. Neither places tradition on a pedestal, but both criticize tradition while recognizing its power over us. Because of their emphasis on tradition, both thinkers also emphasize the conservative nature of experience and how our choices and habits are not fully within our control. Second, change should be conservative, in the broad sense, for both of these philosophers. Third, the aesthetic consciousness is also at the heart of both of their ethical theories of listening. As opposed to the enlightenment notion that induction and deduction are the highest modes of thought and should rule our lives if we are to be reasonable, both Addams and Gadamer give accounts of the role of the aesthetic and its place in rational thought. We will first deal with the importance of tradition, history, and culture and see how Gadamer and Addams set them apart from the contemporary philosophical scene.

Tradition, History and Culture in Gadamer and Addams

As we have seen already, tradition, culture, and history play a central role in Gadamer's thought. All three of these concepts both create and structure the possibility for human interpretation and are also the ground of all thought. Tradition both limits our epistemic possibilities and also gives us the freedom to interpret. If we were without history we would

have no palette from which to paint our picture of the world around us, and we would not be able to listen. Tradition, history, and culture limit our thought and interpretation of the world. Any twentieth century American who reads Plato, Nagarjuna, or even writings from someone from another country, runs into this cultural difference difficulty. Cultural limits are glaring when one visits another country or when reading literature from another culture. The experience can be jarring. I had one of these perplexing experiences when reading Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

I remember reading Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*[237] and being shocked by a scene of the killing of twins by a group. The tribe did this because they were wary of the twin's birth as a dangerous omen. Achebe describes the scene:

> Those who were big enough to carry even a few yams in a tiny basket went with grown-ups to the farm. And if they could not help in digging up the yams, they could gather firewood together for roasting the ones that would be eaten there on the farm. This roasted yam soaked in red palm-oil and eaten in the open farm was sweeter than any meal at home. It was after such a day at the farm during the last harvest that Nwoye had felt for the first time a snapping inside him like the one he now felt. They were returning home with baskets of yams from a distant farm across the stream when they heard the voice of an infant crying in the thick forest. A sudden hush had fallen on the women, who had been talking, and they quickened their steps. Nwoye had heard that twins were put in earthenware pots and thrown away in the forest, but he had never yet come across them. A vague chill had descended on him and his head had seemed to swell, like a solitary walker at night who passes an evil spirit on the way. Then something had given way inside him. It descended on him again, this feeling, when his father walked in, that night after killing Ikemefuna.[238]

When I initially read the section I had difficulty grasping why anyone would be able to kill newborns, but after coming to understand cultural differences, I came to realize that the values the people Achebe described were similar to my own, but the actions and rationalizations behind the actions were different. They cared for children just as much as my culture did, and the killing was seen as part of that value, but their actions expressing that value were different.

[237] Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, (New York, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1959)
[238] Ibid., 61-62.

As I came to realize that the same values held between cultures, in this case the value of the health of the community, my horizon was able to engage with Achebe's. And I was able to listen.

Due to geographical distance and cultural limits, I was not even listening to Achebe's story as I initially read *Things Fall Apart*. I was very young when I read it and had all of the cultural biases about African culture any contemporary American would. I was primed to think of them as primitive, simple, and superstitious people who had not progressed like we had in the West. In that way, I was listening-for my own culture's superiority to be confirmed by the text. At the age of thirteen, I was not able to see how my own culture had limited my horizon. I did not intentionally look for confirmation of my own culture's superiority, but the bias was clearly there in my reaction to the scene. It took years and exposure to other people and art to appreciate Achebe's work. I was only able to notice the difference when I had an awareness of my own finitude and how my own thought was structured by my culture, tradition, and history. My interpretation was influenced and also freed by my realization of my enculturated experience. I was able to empathize because of my realization of my finitude.

Gadamer succinctly makes the point:

> In fact history does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. *That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being*.[239]

For Gadamer, we are our history. It shapes our experiences, influences our judgments, and rules many parts of our lives. Many philosophers do not realize the importance of tradition, culture, and history in shaping our experience, and many today still seem to think that it is possible to

[239]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 278.

move totally beyond our own tradition, history, and culture. The most perverse of them think that shunning these is the only way to truth. Jane Addams was not one of these perverts.

Tradition, history, and culture are the foundation of most of Addams' work. And like Gadamer, she sees them as important for any human being's exploration of truth and understanding of others. All of her work can be seen in this light.

Democracy and Social Ethics becomes a discussion of the clashing of traditions, histories, and cultures of the different citizens living around the settlement. There is no one tradition that comes to meet another in this situation but many traditions colliding, clashing, and sometimes coming to meet one another.

Newer Ideals of Peace is a work about transforming older historical ideals of peace, as an absence of war, into a new and re-constructed ideal, as a positive force and not merely a lack of war. The book is about transforming history because we are shaped by history. The book was not called *An Ideal of Peace* or *My Thoughts on Peace*, but the title emphasizes how there is already an ideal of peace impressed upon our minds and it needs to be reconstructed.

Peace and Bread in Time of War is a discussion of the role of food, memory, and the contradictions that war brings to old traditions. There is a point in this work where she even ponders how traditions can be used to change present situations: "Could not the earlier instinct and training in connection with food be aroused and would it be strong enough to overwhelm and quench the later tendency to war?"[240]

And *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* is a series of essays on the collective experience of women as a whole. She did not call the book *The Long Road of Women's Memory*

[240]Addams, *Peace and Bread in Time of War*, 44.

because she thought that there was something similar to the experience of all women while also believing that there were also cultural, traditional, and historical gulfs between different groups of women and all individual women.

Outside of her autobiographical works, which still contain much that discusses tradition, history, and culture, all of her work shows the importance of these forces in her thought. Both she and Gadamer think that truth, experience, and anything of philosophical importance must deal with this most basic fact of our finitude shaped by these forces. To show a bit of contrast to the finitude in Addams and Gadamer, I would like to look into the work of J.L. Austin who too narrowly looks at meaning and exemplifies the dearth of explanations of meaning in contemporary philosophy.

Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (The 1955 William James Lectures)[241] is still considered a classic in the analytic tradition in philosophy today. In that work, Austin sets out to show how one can "do things with words" and discusses the grammar of performatives. Performatives are statements such as, "I now pronounce you man and wife," or "I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*." They are statements that are actions. They do something. One might wonder why a philosopher would be interested in this topic, and he points out: "for too long[242] the assumption of philosophers that the business of a 'statement' can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs, or to 'state some fact', which it must do either truly or falsely."[243] He goes on to explain that grammarians have pointed out that there are many other things that statements do. The rest of the lecture series discusses the structure of performatives.

Austin explains that there are six necessary conditions for the utterance of a performative:

[241] J.L. Austin,*How to do things with Words* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967)
[242] It should be noted that by, "for too long" Austin means roughly forty years.
[243] Ibid., 1.

> (A. 1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by persons in certain circumstances, and further,
>
> (A. 2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
>
> (B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
>
> (B. 2) completely.
>
> (Γ. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts, feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further
>
> (Γ. 2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.[244]

The first points seem to give some appreciation to the fact that one must have persons involved in the situation in which these utterances are uttered, but these do not seem to be historical persons. In fact, Austin does not devote any time explaining that performatives are historically rich, if not *the richest*, utterances we have in the *entire* language. Instead, he demarcates how performatives differ from other utterances.

This discussion would be fine if he were a grammarian. In fact, if Austin were only a grammarian it would be an incredibly robust, interesting, and fulfilling discussion. But language is not merely grammar. And a philosopher should know better. Heidegger describes the danger of the grammatical approach to language and interpretation:

> The dominant approach to individual languages and to language in general is passed on to us through what we call *grammar*. By this we understand the theory of the elements, structures, and rules for structures in a language; separate groups of sentences, individual sentences, and sentence types… The *grammatical* conception of language is taken for granted in the customary notion of language, especially in linguistics and in the so-called philosophy of language. Moreover, this view has taken hold in a centuries-long tradition and can claim for itself a certain semblance of naturalness. For what is more accessible and tangible than just this analysis and ordering of otherwise completely unmanageable amalgam of a living language in sounds, letters, syllables, words, word-constructs, and sentence structures?[245]

[244] Ibid., 14-15.
[245] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Truth* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press), 81.

Heidegger explains that language can be easily interpreted through the most basic signs that we create. It is too easy to relegate meaning to a side-story and footnote to the history of language itself. Language is embodied and felt.

Understanding and philosophizing about language also has a history. And it matters for listening. Heidegger tells us:

> But it is important to recognize the provenance of this reigning *grammatical* representation of language. It derives from the *Greeks*; it developed in the age of Greek sophistry and rhetoric and found its authoritative form in Plato and Aristotle. At the basis of this is the experience that speaking, discourse, is peaking with one another, public transaction, advising, assemblage of the people, judicial proceedings; speaking of this kind is having a public opinion and consulting, deliberating, and *thinking*.[246]

Austin does not realize that he comes from a tradition of sophistry in his analysis of performatives. His lack of a historical horizon blinds him to the fact that he has a history which structures his thought and writings. Heidegger explains how a method like Austin's is a failure if he is trying to robustly describe what language does:

> One easily sees that this is *a monstrous violation of what language accomplishes*; consider a poem or a living conversation between human beings: the tone of voice, the cadence, the melody of the sentences, the rhythm, and so on. It is true that later, as well as in the present day, people have sought to supplement this theory and hold the logical-grammatical conception of language in check; nevertheless, the old grammatical-logical representation has endured.[247]

The grammatical understanding of language is not all there is to language. Language requires speakers, listeners, a history, body language, and all of the subtle reactions people give when speaking. Austin overlooks all of this in his "grammatical" explanation of performatives. Heidegger goes on to describe the "ground" of language as the ability to keep silent:

> Do human beings speak because they want to declare and communicate something, or do human beings speak because they are the entities who can keep silent? In the end, is the originary essences of language the *ability to keep silent*? And what does that mean? Is keeping silent merely something negative, not speaking, and simply the outward

[246] Ibid., 81.
[247] Ibid., 82.

> appearance of noiselessness and quiet? Or is keeping silent something positive and something deeper than all speaking, whereas speaking is not keeping silent and no longer keeping silent and not yet keeping silent?[248]

The silent ground of language is something close to listening, for Heidegger. He is not saying that any sort of silence can be the ground of language, but it must be something more. Animals are silent, but we do not say that they are better language speakers than we.[249] Our silence can be more thoughtful and open to another. Our silence can be listening. And our listening is always structured and happens because of tradition, history, and culture.

If Austin were to truly appreciate the rich history of performatives he would have done what the anthropologist David Graeber did. In *Debt: The First Five Thousand Years*[250] Graeber gives an anthropological account of a few performatives which are extremely meaningful in our everyday lives. His discussion of "please" and "thank you" will make it clear how historically driven these utterances are:

> In fact, the English 'please' is short for 'if you please,' 'if it pleases you to do this'—it is the same in most European languages (French *si il vous plait*, Spanish *por favor*). Its literal meaning is 'you are under no obligation to do this.' 'Hand me the salt. Not that I am saying that you have to!' This is not true; there is a social obligation, and it would be almost impossible not to comply…
>
> In English, 'thank you' derives from 'think.' It originally meant 'I will remember what you did for me'—which is usually not true either—but in other languages (the Portuguese *obrigado* is a good example) the standard term follows the form of the English 'much obliged'—it actually does mean, 'I am in your debt.' The French *merci* is even more graphic: it derives from 'mercy,' as in begging for mercy; by saying it you are symbolically placing yourself in your benefactor's power—since a debtor is, after all, a criminal.[251]

Austin fails to note any of these interesting features of these performatives, or any history behind any of the performatives he mentions, unlike Addams, Gadamer, and Graeber. His grammatical philosophy is bereft of history, tradition, and culture. Again, his method would be

[248] Ibid., 84.
[249] Ibid., 85.
[250] David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (Brooklyn, New York and London: Melville House, 2011)
[251] Ibid., 123.

perfectly acceptable if it was cordoned off to the philosophy of language, and the rest of the discipline was allowed to flourish. As history would have it, Austin's lectures became formative texts for the next sixty years and are still seen as foundational in all analytic philosophy today.

One would be irresponsible to forsake the influence of history, culture, and tradition for a clean-cut philosophy of language as first philosophy. Tradition matters, history matters, and culture matters when attempting to explain almost all phenomena. Describing human experience requires it and the description is left too thin an account without it. Austin took himself as describing parts of the human experience of language. Why would he not talk about listening? With the colonization of American philosophy well underway via the logical positivists, and his British heritage, the outcome was predictable.

Tradition, history, and culture all play an important role in listening. At one moment, they set the limits for the possibilities of listening and also create the possibility for listening. We cannot listen-with, listen-to, or even listen-for without tradition, culture, and history all playing a role in our experience.

If we try to think in terms of statements which many would consider not culturally bound like, "The cat is on the mat,"[252] we start to run into problems when we try to move beyond the most basic sentences and phrases that we use. Even "the cat is on the mat" seems to require some sort of cultural or historical knowledge, or at least some personal understanding of the difference between bobcats, housecats, and lions. Or one can think of the statement, "It is snowing." This phrase can be filled with cultural and historical meaning if one is an Eskimo and has many different words for snow. The truth of the statement is always tied into meanings with

[252] Here I am thinking of the "disquotational theory of truth."

the words. These facts start to matter when given more meaning in a situation. If a housecat is on the mat, there might be no need to worry. If a bobcat is on the mat one should be cautious. And if a lion is on the mat one should hope that the mat was left outdoors. Dewey pointed this "fact" out in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry.*[253] Facts left alone are meaningless, and meaning cannot exist without facts.

What does this have to do with listening? If we take an example of a statement like, "I was raped," things start to clear up a bit. The Tarskian method fails to describe fully the truth of the statement because the truth is wrapped up in the meaning of the utterance. The two cannot be decoupled when listening to someone empathically. If the listener says, "You were raped if, and only if, someone raped you, and (this would be the conscientious disquotationalist), who is that person who raped you so I may be able to alert the police?" The entire truth of the initial sentence has been overlooked. Its meaning has been lost. This failure happens because most people involved in conversations like this do not care about truth but care about meaning and have developed a relationship with the person.

Relationships, whether they are between groups or individuals, require some sort of proximity: emotional, geographical , or digital. The disquotationalist would not know the history, emotional standing, or the geographical distance this person had from the person involved. Being a confidant requires some sort of background if one is to listen-with the other. And it requires a knowledge of the other's history, traditions, and cultures. Listening cannot occur in a vacuum. Both Addams and Gadamer are well aware of this necessity. And it is because of their realization of the importance of history, tradition, and culture, that they emphasized the conservative nature of experience.

[253] See LW: 16 and Dewey's discussion of "facts" in the "Pattern of Inquiry" chapter.

The Conservative Nature of Experience

Change is difficult and both Gadamer and Addams are aware of that fact. Their commitment to the idea that our experience is finite because we are historical, cultural, and traditional beings speaks to this truth. We are enculturated beings. In what follows, I will sketch out some of the similarities between Gadamer's and Addams' thoughts about individual human change, listening, and cultural change.

To accomplish this task, both thinkers will be compared and contrasted to others. I will specifically discuss Gadamer's notion of "genius" and look at Addams' perspective on change compared to her contemporary Emma Goldman. Both Gadamer and Addams realize the importance of the relational nature of persons and reject and atomistic concept of self. The relational nature of persons points both Addams and Gadamer in a conservative direction when it comes to change.

Gadamer's conservative nature in interpretation and experience is easily documented. Interpretation requires time and is also limited by our experiences. Since we are traditional, historical, and cultural beings, our understanding of our own experiences is mediated by these limits. These limits are not merely expressions of our finitude and close-mindedness but give us the possibility of our experiences. We learn from our experiences and new ideas arise from the past. We come up with new ideas because of the influence of the past. The notion of the isolated genius disregards this fact.

Gadamer describes how the concept of "genius" influenced many thinkers and results in a lack of appreciation for the influence of tradition, history, culture, etc. on any experience. He thinks it results in a limited account of hermeneutics and the role of it in the creation of art.

According to Gadamer, post-Kantian German philosophy mistakenly took Kant's supposed ideas about genius and went forward with them. Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel pushed forward a false Kantian concept of genius coming from *Erlebnis*:

> Goethe more than anyone else tempts one to coin this word, since in quite a new sense his poetry acquires intelligibility from what he experienced. He said himself that all his poetry had the character of a vast confession. Hermann Grimm's biography of Goethe takes this statement as its methodological principle, and consequently it uses the plural, *Erlebnisse*, frequently.[254]

Goethe's genius was seen as an example of an incredible leap of spirit. The same ideal has been alive and well in the United States' conception of the lone cowboy, the budding entrepreneur, and the newly-regulated financial advisor. Genius becomes impossible. It fails to be true to the actual experience of someone like Goethe who was enculturated. "Genius" was too atomistic of a concept.

Gadamer thought this conception of genius was incorrect. Genius comes from somewhere. It has a history and cannot be encapsulated in the thought of one person. People, along with geniuses, find themselves in certain places and situations. Their brilliance is expressed through those situations, because of them, and within their limits. Geniuses tend not to realize this fact, and it can sometimes drive them mad. In all of their intelligence, they forget that their bellowing at cultural traditions cannot move an immovable mass. They feel this mass is an outside force from which they cannot escape. One is never fully outside of tradition, history, and culture and those who act as if they attained this supra-cultural perspective are delusional.

Experience is finite and fundamentally conservative. Human beings do not like change and their ideas are structured by those cultural limits. When those limits are pushed and their

[254]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 54.

livelihoods are in danger, people tend to get upset. Experience is not *Erlebnis*, but *Erfahrung*. Change in others and ourselves takes a great deal of time if we are to make it lasting.

This conservative nature of experience makes listening difficult but not impossible. Indeed, it is what makes listening possible. When we come to meet the other in discourse we think we know the other person, but our own biases belie that fact. We have prejudices about the nature of the other, their intentions, their wants and desires, and these prejudices clouds our own interpretation of the other. Sometimes this fact results in our shunting off the other's concerns and disregarding their pain, and in a deafness to the other.

What we need to realize, as we come to know the other, understand her perspective, realize, and empathize with her, is that we could not even understand the other if it were not for our own history, culture, and tradition. Culture, history, and tradition are concretely felt filters that structure our hermeneutic experience. If we blindly open ourselves to the other we run the danger of too much openness and loss of the self.

An unfiltered, ahistorical, and un-enculturated being is nearly impossible for us to even imagine. What would be the perspective from which one would understand? How would one hear the other without a history, culture, or tradition? Would their words fall on deaf ears? Yes, they would if that person was bereft of a history, culture, and tradition, and I cannot even imagine that sort of person would be as aware as Donald Davidson's "swampman."[255] His "thought-experiment" regretfully omits time and history as variables in its analysis. Addams was not this sort of thinker.

[255] Donald Davidson, "Knowing One's Own Mind," Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, 60 (1987): 441-458

Addams was aware of the influence of history, and it shows in her writings. In every work, she speaks of the slow movement of time as experienced by people in the larger progressive ideal being realized through experience. *The Long Road of Woman's Memory* is one of the best examples of this method.

As I noted before, Addams did not initially realize the significance of the experience of the "Devil Baby" in the lives of the women who came to Hull House; she was not able to empathize with them. But over time she was able to come to an understanding of the significance of the myth and its role in their lives. The title of the first chapter already tells us much: "Women's Memories: Transmuting the Past, as Illustrated by the Story of the Devil Baby." From the title, one can see how the past lives in the present through myth.

These women were shifting and changing the myth, carried across the Atlantic over centuries, for the present conditions. And what Addams realized from her experiences with these women was the conservative nature of experience. History lives in the present. She describes the process of myth and memory coming to life for these women:

> So gradual is this process, so unconsciously are these converts under Memory's gentle coercion brought into a spiritual fellowship, that the social changes thus inaugurated, at least until the reformers begin to formulate them and to accelerate the process through propaganda, take on the aspect of beneficent natural phenomena.[256]

These women lived history and reconstructed it. They took old myths, realized their significance for contemporary experience, and transformed the past through the telling of their stories.

Addams initially thought they were foolish to defend and hold onto outdated myths, but she eventually came to realize the functional importance of these myths. These myths lived in the present and could be used for specific purposes. But there was a danger of using myth or

[256]Addams, *The Long Road of Women's Memory*, 5.

reacting to myth in a way of "propagandizing" it, as she noted by discussing the myriad issues propagation of the myth brought about in Hull House.

One way of responding to living myths is to reject them outright. This method runs the danger of forsaking the influence of the past on the present and repeating the same tropes. Too much of the time, those who attempt to reject religious myth tend to repeat some other historical dogma of which they are not aware. Emma Goldman was one of these people. The difference between Addams' method and Goldman's was striking.

Addams was able to appreciate the role of tradition, history, and culture in shaping the lives of Hull House residents and neighbors, while Goldman would have rejected their religious views as uneducated and in need of radical change. Goldman wanted radical shifts in thought, while Addams opted for gradual shifts in consciousness. Goldman lived under the myth of the atomistic individual, while Addams described individuals as bundles of relations. They were contemporaries and ran in the same circles, but they differed greatly about the nature of the human person. The difference is striking and should be noted.

Goldman was vehemently anti-religion. She thought that a belief in anything like a Christian God was antithetical to human freedom and stood in the way of the progress of humanity. While her position could be seen as laudably principled by some, the tone she took with those who affiliated themselves with religion bordered on vitriolic screed.

In "The Failure of Christianity" Goldman gives a strong critique of religion and Christ himself, but she begins by criticizing conservatism: "The counterfeiters and poisoners of ideas, in their attempt to obscure the line between truth and falsehood, find a valuable ally in the

conservatism of language."[257] She explains that conservatism stunts creativity. While this critique has some merit, there is no mention of the necessity for the conservation of tradition and culture if one is to be creative. Creativity without boundaries is without any order and has little meaning. It is impossible to learn how to speak a language or live in a culture that absolutely eschews conservation of its words and traditions. It would be bedlam and people would not be able to communicate with each other.

The real aim of the essay is to criticize the institution of Christianity. She explains that she is in agreement with Nietzsche and Max Stirner that Christianity creates a sort of "slave-morality:"

> Both Nietzsche and Stirner saw in Christianity the leveler of the human race, the breaker of man's will to dare and to do. They saw in every movement built on Christian morality and ethics attempts not at the emancipation from slavery, but for the perpetuation thereof. Hence they opposed these movements with might and main.
>
> Whether I do or do not entirely agree with these iconoclasts, I believe, with them, that Christianity is most admirably adapted to the training of slaves, to the perpetuation of a slave society; in short, to the very conditions confronting us to-day. Indeed, never could society have degenerated to its present appalling stage, if not for the assistance of Christianity.[258]

While Goldman makes an arguable point, her tone and the way she approaches the institution does not help open one up to listen to her ideas. There is a place for this type of speech, but it is not a type of speech that brings about piecemeal change; and Goldman is clear about that point. She thinks that the failure of all reformers stems from their affiliation with the Christian religion and Christ.[259]

Goldman saves her harshest words for her analysis of the beatitudes. Her criticism borders on cruelty and does not lend itself to anyone empathetic with the words of Christ:

[257] Goldman, Emma, "The Failure of Christianity" Mother Earth,V. 8 (1913): 41-48.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid.

> 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.'
>
> Heaven must be an awfully dull place if the poor in spirit live there. How can anything creative, anything vital, useful and beautiful come from the poor in spirit? The idea conveyed in the Sermon on the Mount is the greatest indictment against the teachings of Christ, because it sees in the poverty of mind and body a virtue, and because it seeks to maintain this virtue by reward and punishment. Every intelligent being realizes that our worst curse is the poverty of the spirit; that it is productive of all evil and misery, of all the injustice and crimes in the world. Everyone knows that nothing good ever came or can come of the poor in spirit; surely never liberty, justice, or equality.[260]

Goldman gives such a strong indictment of the culture the reaction to her seems inevitable. Many Americans could not stand her and thought she was a dangerous person to have in the United States. Her eventual deportation spoke to that fear.

Goldman's deportation was an unfortunate series of events in American history and would have been a much better opportunity for listening rather than silencing. With that in mind, the conservative and reforming approach to the topic might have been a more practical way to bring about change. At the very least, Goldman did not seem adept at listening to or accounting for Christians in the public. Her words fell on deaf ears and she was too closed off to their perspective to listen-with.

One of the great ironies of reading many anarchists is their lack of the realization that their own ideas are historically bound to the narrative of the atomistic individual. The myth ran through much of their writings. William Godwin defended his notions about the distribution of property on isolated notions of reason, Mikhail Bakunin prescribed a necessity for radical freedom and total rejection of religion, both Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Peter Kropotkin were aware of the influence of history and evolution on the changing human culture, but even Kropotkin defended the idea of isolated individuals rationally entering into voluntary agreements without realizing his historical baggage. They all held up a conception of "reason" as

[260] Ibid.

tantamount, but missed that their notion of reason was historically produced. The method of all of these anarchists, including Goldman, was one that called for great changes in government and in culture. Not all of them called for revolution, but all of them called for great change. With such lofty goals, their rhetoric did not appeal to reformers and their tone made it difficult for moderates to even listen to them. Goldman came from this tradition and used her rhetoric, which she had learned from past anarchists and socialists, in ways too difficult for her culture to accept.[261] One only needs to look to the ideal anarchist society to see the worship of "natural" man as an atomistic individual.

Jane Addams, while being very aware of Goldman's method at the time, decided to take a different approach. Addams tried to be as open as possible to others and also push them in more nuanced ways.

Addams was open to the women in a way that did not wholly work to preserve or conserve culture, but she used culture as an avenue to let them speak. And what she heard from their voices was a cry for, and expression of, human freedom. When she first had to deal with the influx of calls regarding the birth of the demonic child in Hull House, she was almost disgusted with the visitors and reduced their experiences down to "What psychologists call the 'contagion of emotion' added to that 'aesthetic sociability' which impels any one of us to drag the entire household into the street or a rainbow appears in the sky."[262] But when Addams began to listen to the "high eager voices" of the old women, she explains she could hear the words of Robert Browning: "Wilt thou reject the past/ Big with deep warnings?"[263]

[261] I have purposely left out Voltairine de Cleyre because she came to be more of a conservative than Goldman.
[262] Addams, *The Long Road of Women's Memory*, 9.
[263] Ibid.

Addams uses Robert Browning's line for aesthetic affect, in much the same way that she frames the entire discussion of the situation in terms of Euripides' *Trojan Women*.[264] The Browning poem brings meaning to the description for her audience, and also shows the danger of forsaking the past like Goldman did.

Browning wrote a dramatic poem describing the life of Paracelsus who was a Renaissance philosopher, physician, and astrologer, but most importantly he was what we would called today a reductionist. Paracelsus was the first in a long line of psychologists who attempted to reduce all psychical phenomenon down to physical phenomenon and Browning's dramatic poem goes through that process in great detail and tells his life story as an almost Faustian bargain. The bargain he made was not with the devil, but with his own ego; his forsaking of the past's role in the present led to his downfall.

At the end of the poem, Paracelsus looks back on his life and his rejection of the role of tradition. This point is where Addams picks up on the quotation. Paracelsus describes his view of the past, "I saw no use of the past: only a scene/ Of degradation, ugliness and tears, / The record of disgraces best forgotten,/ A sullen page in human chronicles/ Fit to erase. I saw no cause why man/ Should not stand all sufficient even now…"[265] He recounts his arrogant attitude toward the past, and then he reneges:

> Not so, dear child/ Of after-days, wilt thou reject the past/ Big with deep warnings of the proper tenure/ By which thou hast the earth: for thee the present/ Shall have distinct and trembling beauty, seen/ Beside that past's own shade when, in relief,/ Its brightness shall stand out: nor yet on thee/ Shall burst the future, as successive zones/ Of several wonder open on some spirit/ Flying secure and glad from heaven to heaven:/ But thou shalt

[264] Marilyn Fischer, "Trojan Women and Devil Baby Tales," in *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams*, ed. Maurice Hamington (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 81-105.
[265] Robert Browning, *The Poems: Volume One*, ed. John Pettigrew, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 139.

> painfully attain to joy,/ While hope and fear and love shall keep thee man!/ All this was hid from me: as one by one/ My dreams grew dim…[266]

He eventually admits that his entire life has been a blind groping for power without any care for another human being and that love is a far greater pursuit. This poem, and the story of the life of Paracelsus, would have been known to Addams' audience. In her overall attempt to humanize these older women at Hull House and encourage a conservative process of getting to know these women she required an aesthetic narrative to frame her argument.

Addams was able to realize the importance of myth while Goldman rejects it too quickly. Addams described what she could hear in the voices of the old women: "But they were all alive and eager; something in the story [of the Devil Baby] or in its mysterious sequences had aroused one of those active forces in human nature which does not take orders, but insists only upon giving them. We had abruptly come into contact with a living and self-assertive human quality!"[267] The result for which Goldman had striven was the end Addams attained.

Goldman would have approached the story as a myth and left it at that. It is hard to imagine her taking the time to sit with and listen to these women as they went on about the birth of a Devil Baby. It is possible that Goldman would have done this, but her tone toward religion suggests otherwise.

Addams was able to see the human potential and freedom in these women *through* their traditions, cultures, and history, and in spite of her own initial misgivings. She accomplished part of what Goldman wanted to do through her conservative approach. If Addams would have approached these women the way that Goldman did, as many of the local anarchists indeed had

[266] Ibid.
[267] Addams, *The Long Road of Woman's* Memory, 9-10.

most likely done, they (Goldman and the other anarchists) would not likely have listened to these cries from the past.

Both Addams and Gadamer believe in progress, but they are reformers, not revolutionaries. Their ideas about listening also rely on this conservative method. To listen-with someone takes time. It is a process and requires detailed attention. Listening-with is fundamentally conservative. When coming to know anyone else or another culture, the process is long and difficult. Both sides grow and change through it, and it is a painful process. There is a phrase used during the Renaissance, and originally a Classical phrase, "*Festina Lente*," meaning "make haste slowly" that both Addams and Gadamer embodied in their hermeneutic approach and also their ethics. Goldman and many others, especially contemporary philosophers, would probably agree with the more well known, "*Carpe Diem*," to their own detriment and the detriment of others.

The contrast between Goldman and Addams comes down to a metaphysical difference in the conception of the person. Goldman assumes the person is fundamentally an atomistic individual, bereft of history, culture, and tradition, and Addams *begins* with the complexities of relations between people, cultures, and traditions. Goldman starts her analysis from the inside out and Addams begins from the outside in.

The Ground of Listening-With: Developing Aesthetic Consciousness

Both Addams and Gadamer took the need for an aesthetic consciousness in listening very seriously. They both made logically valid arguments, but they also realized that the development of aesthetic consciousness was necessary to reveal truth (Gadamer) or enliven meaning

(Addams). The development of aesthetic consciousness, as non-cognitive and a way to truth and meaning, sets them off from many contemporary philosophers who overlook its role in listening.

Most of *Truth and Method* tries to rehabilitate the role of aesthetic consciousness. Gadamer devotes a hefty portion of the book to it, and I cannot summarize it all here. But it should be clear that it, along with historical consciousness, is at the heart of the *Geisteswissenschaften*.

The key to the aesthetic consciousness, for Gadamer, is that it is tied directly to thinking about hermeneutics and listening. The paradigmatic example of aesthetic consciousness has nothing to do with thinking about art, but thinking about art can explain how it functions. The understanding of art is similar to the art of interpretation. Neither can be fully quantified in a fully logical (at least in the sense of logic as a dissection through a one-to-one correspondence to movements of thought in understanding anything) and deductive way. We can easily understand the logical validity of a syllogism, but the meaning of something like a work of art, or even the full content of many syllogisms, cannot be fully subsumed under a logical framework, if logic is merely a sort of formal reasoning. For example, applying the "disquotational theory of truth" can only relieve some of the burden of understanding sentences. Much, if not most, of human discourse requires a deeper, more nuanced, and more difficult approach to understanding sentences in context. And, as mentioned prior, so much of communication is not merely verbal but comes in all various forms.

In "Aesthetics and Hermeneutics" Gadamer links the importance of the work of art, and the way one interprets art, to the hermeneutic experience. Viewing an artwork helps bridge the gap between oneself and the other:

> In fact, an absolute contemporaneousness exists between the work and its present beholder that persists unhampered despite every intensification of the historical consciousness. The reality of the work of art and its expressive power cannot be restricted to its original historical horizon, in which the beholder was actually the contemporary of the creator. It seems instead to belong to the experience of art that the work of art always has its own present.[268]

Art is able to bring one out of oneself to view the relevance of the piece in a timeless way. It closes the historical gap between the viewer and the piece. Art, at its best, is able to help one get in touch with something beyond oneself, but the work of art also gives one a deeper sense of self-understanding.

Sometimes works of art are considered products of their time and inaccessible to contemporary audiences. Gadamer's point is that it is not the case for the core of the artistic work. There is always something in the work that speaks to the interpreter of the work, and this truth is at the heart of the aesthetic consciousness.

We exercise our aesthetic consciousness whenever we interpret anything. Words, gestures, and signs, because they are not always to be taken literally, need to be understood with the aesthetic consciousness. The work of the aesthetic consciousness is non-cognitive. It happens prior to logical thought and also works in concert with logical thinking.

Aesthetic consciousness as a non-cognitive path to truth and meaning sets both Addams and Gadamer apart from many contemporary philosophers. They both valued "logically" valued arguments, but also realized that the development of aesthetic consciousness was necessary to reveal truth (Gadamer) or enliven meaning (Addams).

Gadamer's history of the subjectivization of aesthetics and its subsequent downgrade to something not considered knowledge has a purpose. He thinks that we have buried our respect

[268]Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 95.

of aesthetics as a form of knowledge. His task in *Truth and Method* is to bring it back into the forefront of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. We can see this emphasis in his conception of listening. Through the three-fold conception of listening, we can see how the historical consciousness limits and also creates the possibility for aesthetic consciousness to understand.

As explained before, listening-with requires a vulnerable openness to the other without setting up pre-figured boundaries. We must go into the listening situation with a truly open mind, as explained before in the process of listening-with. There will always be boundaries and prejudices of which we are not aware, but that does not mean we should not attempt to bridge the gap. We hope through the listening process that some of the boundaries will be broken down and some prejudices overcome. This experience is similar to viewing a work of art.

Gadamer explains hermeneutics as overcoming a gap between self and other in experience, which is very similar to experiences of art:

> Hermeneutics bridges the distance between minds and reveals the foreignness of the other mind. But revealing what is unfamiliar does not mean merely reconstructing historically the 'world' in which the work had its original meaning and function. It also means apprehending what is said to us, which is always more than the declared and comprehended meaning. Whatever says something to us is like a person who says something. It is alien in the sense that it transcends us.[269]

Art always speaks to us as long as we are willing to listen and be open to it. We cannot say that we understand a work of art because we can name the style, time period, artist, and the artist's intention. The essence of the work of art has nothing to do with these things. The most important part of listening, hermeneutics, and art is confronting what the piece or person says to us. We have to be open. There are other ways of listening that do not deal directly with the aesthetic consciousness, namely, listening-for and listening-to.

[269] Ibid., 100-101.

Gadamer succinctly explains how one should not perform hermeneutics: "Understanding speech is not understanding the wording of what is said in the step-by-step execution of word meanings."[270] Understanding, at least understanding of anything significant, cannot be a word-for-word understanding. One could look up all of the words in the dictionary, repeat the meanings back, and be under the faulty impression that she has understood something, but that clearly cannot be how understanding and interpretation work. Words, sentences, paragraphs, and conversations are much more complicated and require a movement of thought not constrained by literal interpretation. The listener who engages in this form of hermeneutics is always either listening-for or listening-to.

Surveys are a prime example of these types of listening. Creating a survey, as opposed to giving one, requires some exercise of the aesthetic consciousness. For a survey to be done properly, the surveyor must have an understanding of the audience for whom she is writing the questions, how the group will understand the questions, and how best to assess the group's answers. Because most surveys fail at even this first step (most likely showing a problem with the format itself), they are always a form of listening-for. Surveys, because of their lack of open-endedness and lack of the back and forth of conversation, are closed to growth and change. The person giving the survey is always listening-for. What are they listening-for? Listening-with requires more. It does not require a calculating consciousness but an aesthetic consciousness along with it.

The aesthetic consciousness is able to work within contexts and appreciate what is not said along with what is. It is needed in interpretation because words mostly never speak directly to us without remainder. Words, especially within sentences, which are in paragraphs, which are

[270] Ibid.

within books and conversations, in certain contexts, etc. *never* speak to us without remainder. The movement of aesthetic consciousness requires a leap beyond a literal understanding. Gadamer explains the leap: "…It [understanding speech] occurs in the unitary meaning of what is said—and this always transcends what is expressed by what is said… We cannot understand without wanting to understand, that is, without wanting to let something be said."[271] Listening-with requires openness and the aesthetic consciousness. Surveys, because of their closed form, cannot perform this feat. Jane Addams was also well aware of the necessity for developing an aesthetic consciousness herself, and she also utilized it with her audiences in mind.

Addams transformed herself throughout her life. She was a bourgeois, young woman, highly educated for her gender, and had traveled the world. In her travels she realized that the purpose of her life should be to help the poor and downtrodden. As she helped those unlike herself, she started to see the fortitude these people had. She initially saw these people as needing culture and helpless, but after time and listening, she was able to see those around the settlement on better terms. She came to this realization through developing her relationships with others and engaging her aesthetic consciousness.

Addams came to understand that art and the artistic process had an important role in education. At Hull House, she helped set up drama clubs, music clubs, art shows, poetry readings, and had in-house artists. Late in life, she compared the development of these programs to the work done by Dewey at the University of Chicago:

> The early school of education at the University of Chicago, founded by Dr. John Dewey, demonstrated that a child after an historic period had made itself at home in his imagination would wholeheartedly live in it for weeks at a time… But because this fresh imaginative life with its instinct for play is in a sense the mission of art itself we have found at Hull-House that our educational efforts tend constantly toward a training for

[271] Ibid.

> artistic expression… In the last which we call the Hull-House Art School the children are given great freedom in the use of color and clay and perpetually welling up from some inner fountain, and which suggest not only their secret aspirations, but, curiously enough, something of their historic background.[272]

Addams saw, through the use of the arts at Hull-House and her own experiences with them, that historical meaning was living in these children. They were able to develop as citizens by expressing themselves through the arts. But their transformation was not only a self-transformation. The development of their aesthetic consciousness played a role in their development as citizens and members of the community as well. They were developing ideals through play.

Play and art were sorely needed in the development of children at Hull-House in the face of early industrialization and the mechanization of the workplace. Addams saw children going into jobs not fit for them and having their intelligence and potential stunted. Their potentials were lessened because of their environment and a destruction of their aesthetic consciousness. She explained the necessity for developing it: "To give every child in our schools the ability to use his hands with ease and pleasure, not upon the narrow basis of fitting him for factory life as educated clerks have been formerly prepared for the merchants, but in order to retain that power of unfolding human life which is implicit in the play instinct."[273] She saw the training for the general workforce in just as dangerous terms as the training for industrial labor. Both of these regiments of training killed the creative potential of all involved. She was not speaking of creativity as blind and unorganized energy to be expressed without constraint, but creativity as intelligent transformation of current conditions. She saw these children as a precious resource for the culture at large.

[272] Addams, *The Jane Addams* Reader, 417.
[273] Ibid., 421.

Addams did not think that the aesthetic consciousness[274] would only transform the political sphere, though. It could also transform the technological and scientific sphere of industrialization, not by developing budding scientists to think creatively, but by workers reconstructing their tasks. She thought all parties involved would end up more satisfied. She described the necessity for creative intelligence in the wake of the industrial revolution:

> It would be unfortunate if we should become content with this achievement [the scientific and industrial progress the United States had made] and oblivious to the fact that the next industrial advance lies in the discovery and education of the workman himself to the end that his mind, his power of variation and his instinct for art may ultimately be reflected in the industrial product. The purchasing public including both consumers and producers—although it is impossible to regard them as two classes if we accept the dictum that the nation is most prosperous in which its producers are at the same time its best consumers—may in time refuse to be surrounded by manufactured objects which do not represent some gleam of intelligence on the part of the men who made them.[275]

She was wrong in her prediction that the public would not be willing to put up with mechanized, industrialized, uncreative, and machined products. But the point still rings true, and the unrealized power of intelligence, because of a lack of development of our aesthetic consciousness through a process of learning, has left our machines just as ignorant as our citizenry. The machines, just like the citizens, put out and also put up with unimaginative and unintelligent products.

Addams strongly stated that the arts have "always been embodied in the ultimate aims of Hull-House."[276] The emphasis on the transformative power of art and the aesthetic consciousness, not only of individuals but the community as a whole, showed the importance she placed on these things.

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[274] Addams did not ever use the term "aesthetic consciousness" to describe what she realized, but her descriptions of her own experiences and the experiences of Hull House residents and neighbors express that thought process. As we will see, Thomas Alexander explains the function of the aesthetic consciousness.
[275] Ibid., 422.
[276] Ibid., 427.

Addams was not explicit about developing a fully worked out theory of the aesthetic consciousness, but, as has been noted with other aspects of her philosophy, her theory is embedded in her practices. After describing a celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Hull-House, in which Addams and the residents published and performed a collection of songs, she described learning two lessons:

> We believed that all the songs in this collection fulfilled the highest mission in music, first in giving expression to the type of emotional experience which quickly tends to get beyond words, and second in affording an escape from the unnecessary disorder of actual life, into the wider region of the spirit which, under laws of great art, may be filled with an austere beauty and peace.[277]

Art was a way to bring peace to a turbulent world and also give release. It brought meaning and comfort to the lives of the residents and also gave expression to that which is inexpressible in words.

Her friend John Dewey had similar views about the developing need for an aesthetic consciousness. Thomas Alexander's *The Human Eros: Eco-Ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence* is a long study of the role of the aesthetic consciousness, along with many other topics, and its place in the human experience of the world. His description of Dewey's "denotative method" as an aesthetic exercise is very similar to the role of art Addams describes:

> Positively it [the "denotative method"] enjoins: Begin and end all reflections with an awareness of the world that transcends thought. Approach the world with humility and with an open mind: Have a receptive awe of and curiosity in the world… It asks that philosophy be a love of wisdom, not a love of knowledge.
>
> I think we have evidence for the peculiar importance Dewey came to attach to art and aesthetic experience, for art engages just such abilities as these to deal with 'experience' in the primary sense of the word and to exhibit or show the presence of the world, temporally as well as situationally, in the consummatory objects it creates. The aesthetic consciousness aligns itself so closely to the 'denotative method' that I am willing to say that the latter is really Dewey's effort to get philosophers to start thinking like artists. We

[277] Ibid., 427-428.

> cannot 'prove,' only 'disclose.' Of course, at its best, science does this as well and art, at its worst, does not.[278]

Alexander captures well the role of the aesthetic consciousness, its role in experience and in relation to Dewey's "denotative method." Addams' appreciation of the aesthetic consciousness, art, and their role in the creation of meaning on a personal and public level are very much in line with Dewey's.

The role of the aesthetic consciousness in listening is of the utmost importance for Addams as well as Gadamer. If one does not develop her aesthetic consciousness, she will not be able to understand fully the words of the other, much less the non-cognitive aspects of communication. Those who have not developed their aesthetic consciousness become automatons and their imaginations, intelligence, and capacity for empathy all suffer.

If Addams had not developed her own aesthetic consciousness, she would not have been able to realize the meanings of the old women who came to visit the Devil Baby as told in their stories. If she had been an anthropologist or sociologist without a developed aesthetic consciousness she might have just taken hurried observational notes. She was clearly capable of coming up with long statistical analyses of the neighborhood, as she had done in *Hull House Maps and Papers*. She listened-with these women, realized the meaning of their words and stories, and included her own meditation with theirs.[279] It took time, but she was able to develop a keen aesthetic consciousness and sensitivity which she used for listening.

Addams also used her aesthetic sensibilities in dealing with her audiences. Every one of her writings contains some sort of story, metaphor, analogy, or description of a piece of art as the

[278] Thomas M. Alexander, *The Human Eros: Eco-Ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence*, (New York, New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 63-64.
[279] See her long meditation on death at the end of *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*.

pivot point from which she "disclosed" meaning. She used arguments, but to get her audience to listen to her words and understand them she made an aesthetic and functional appeal. In *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*, as noted earlier, she turned the Devil Baby visitors into versions of Euripides' *The Trojan Women*.[280] In *Peace and Bread in Time of War*, she made an aesthetic appeal by using a matriarchal archetype of the breadmaker. And in "A Modern Lear" she was able to make all sides seem somewhat sympathetic to one another during the Pullman strike.[281] That nearly impossible feat could not have been executed without an aesthetic appeal. Purely logical argument would not have bred sympathy. To encourage listening, Addams knew to make an aesthetic appeal which she learned from aesthetically listening to others.

Both Gadamer and Addams appreciated the necessity for the aesthetic consciousness in interpretation, understanding, and listening. We cannot merely listen to another literally and expect ourselves to understand her meaning. We must develop our aesthetic consciousness over time to become better listeners and better communicators in general. This commitment to the aesthetic nearly flips on its head all of contemporary philosophy. The aesthetic has been so long overlooked, or described in inferior terms, many philosophers have not even developed their own aesthetic consciousness. Much more importantly, though, the culture as a whole still relegates art and developing one's artistic skills to a form of "hobby" and not the creation of meaning in the world. This situation not only creates aesthetic disasters, like "Keeping up with the Kardashians," but it also destroys the culture as a whole. Peoples' imaginations cannot flourish if they do not exercise them. Developing their aesthetic consciousness is one, if not the most important, way to solve the pressing political and moral problems of our time. If people cannot use their imaginations intelligently, they cannot offer novel solutions to dilemmas and

[280] As already noted, see Marilyn Fischer's article in *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams*.
[281] Addams Reader, 163.

democracy suffers. As Addams notes, business also suffers as a result. Even bureaucrats need to think somewhat autonomously, mildly creatively, and with a modicum of empathy just to do their work.

Differences between Gadamer and Addams: Perplexity, Tradition(s), and Ideals

While Gadamer and Addams share many similarities, they do have key differences. I will focus on three differences in their thought. These three points of difference are not points of contention but emphasis. Addams and Gadamer had vastly different life experiences, and their philosophies show these differences. Lack of exposure to certain situations can lead to a lack of coverage of a topic or group in one's own philosophy.

Addams spent her life serving the poor and always in the political sphere, while Gadamer spent his time in the academy. These separate realms of experience show through in three distinct ways: perplexity, tradition, and ideals.

For Addams, the other always intrudes into one's life and challenges one's ideas of tradition, but for Gadamer, the other or the text can be avoided if never confronted. Because of his monolithic concept of tradition, the hermeneut can avoid the challenge. She has no normative requirement in which texts would or should speak to her. Gadamer puts the hermeneut in a position of power in which she can avoid listening to the other or the text. This perspective on the hermeneutic experience and its lack of normative guidance has important implications for politics. While Gadamer and Addams are both politically conservative, in the broad sense, Gadamer falls into the overly-conservative category while Addams pushes for slow progress.

The role of tradition is also a point of departure for both thinkers. Gadamer's work speaks to the role of tradition in an important way, and he shows the importance of it in interpretation, but his hermeneutics seems to fall short when trying to describe multiple traditions coming into collision with each other. Since all of his examples in *Truth and Method* focus on personal experience it becomes extremely difficult to use his theory in terms of clashes of three traditions, much less, the dozens with which Addams had to deal. As pointed out earlier, Gadamer sees tradition in monolithic terms, and Addams views tradition as a possibility for debate, contrast, and discussion. Gadamer focuses on individual growth, and Addams focuses on growth amongst people in community. Her work can account for interpretative situations in which many cultures and traditions interact with each other at once because she was surrounded by other traditions and cultures. She had experiences when she was needed as an interpreter between many different cultures at once. Gadamer's fusion of horizons falls short of the mark in describing hermeneutical experiences like these. One merely needs to remember the role of call and answer and his sections discussing the interaction of the Platonic dialogue to see examples of how Gadamer does not discuss the clashing of many traditions at once.

Gadamer and Addams also have different views on ideals. Gadamer's philosophy has a place for ideals, and he works out a fine description of their role in hermeneutic experience, but his view of ideals as monolithic comes dangerously close to turning him into a Platonist. On the other hand, Addams is able still to discuss ideals in transformative terms. She thinks that human beings create and are also shaped by ideals within and through cultures. Ideals are concrete for Addams and can be reconstructed through cultural shifts brought about by imagining and re-imagining them.

Listening plays a role in all three of these differences and will be discussed in each of the sections and Addams' philosophy, because of its normative push toward pluralism, the realization and emphasis on traditions and not one tradition conflicting with another, and the importance of ideals as part of tradition and also a way to re-construct these ideals, will be shown to be superior to Gadamer's hermeneutics.

Gadamer and Addams, as we have seen, are close companions, but their differences do have practical implications in the ethics of listening which I hope to make clear in the next section.

The Call of the Text and Perplexity

Gadamer's hermeneutics eschews normativity, for the individual, when seeking out which texts to read or people with whom we should interact, but this fact does not mean he can avoid it. While his hermeneutics does stress the necessity for openness to the other and preparedness for self-transformation in light of the fusing of horizons with the other, he never describes how one comes into contact with the other. How do we come to know which texts to read? How do we know the others with whom we should converse? He explains in depth what will and should happen immediately after the meeting of the hermeneut with the text or other, but he does not describe how to know which texts to address or with which others we should engage. He discusses "openness" a great deal, but because of his limited view of experience, does not describe the concrete experience prior to the interaction with the other. How should we prepare ourselves to interact with the other? To whom do we go to be open? Do we know with whom to speak? Should we merely be driven by our own personal interests and what speaks to and challenges us in our everyday affairs? Gadamer does not address these questions.

He does describe the importance of accepting events which challenge one.[282] And he does briefly describe preparation for the challenge of the other in experience:

> I must allow tradition's claim to validity, not in the sense of simply acknowledging the past in its otherness, but in such a way that it has something to say to *me*… The hermeneutical consciousness culminates not in methodological sureness of itself, but in the same readiness for experience that distinguishes the experienced man from the man captivated by dogma. As we can now say more exactly in terms of the concept of experience, this readiness is what distinguishes historically effected consciousness.[283]

He is correct in saying that we must be prepared for the other to confront us with her challenge. He is also correct to say that we should be aware of our own historicity in our interactions with the other or the text, but he does not address developing a habit of seeking out situations that open our horizons.

The failure of the naïve historically effected consciousness is obvious. If one attempts to read Plato without an awareness of one's own historicity, or take into account that one is reading an historical text, one has failed. The next step is to realize that one is historically effected and one's interpretation is prejudiced because of that fact. The third step in the realization of hermeneutical consciousness is to realize one is historically effected and then see the other or text as speaking something to "me." Gadamer has described to us what happens after we meet the other, or we have picked up the text, but he is silent about which texts to read, or which people we should meet. This silence leaves him in a dangerous position because others with whom we should interact are left out.

While Gadamer clearly appreciates the importance of traditions, cultures, and histories in experience, his view of experience has a tinge of the historical and cultural atomism he abhorred.

[282]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 355.
[283] Ibid. (emphasis added)

His silence on the importance of the ethical call of the other and its role in hermeneutics comes from a Heideggerian view of conscience.

In discussing the "Existential-ontological foundations of conscience," Heidegger describes the ground of conscience coming in a form lost in the public (*das Man*):

> The presenting of these possibilities, however, is made possible existentially through the fact that Dasein, as a Being-with which understands, can *listen* to Others. Losing itself in the publicness and the idle talk of the 'they', it *fails to hear* its own Self in listening to the they-self. If Dasein is to be able to get brought back from this lostness of failing to hear itself, and if this is to be done through itself, then it must be first able to find itself—to find itself as something which has failed to hear itself, and which fails to hear in that it *listens away* to the 'they'.[284]

He goes on to describe how the call of conscience is a self-transformation and the "lostness" in *das Man* is a form of "inauthenticity." Calls of conscience, at least for the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, are always personal. They leave no room for the other (as public) and turn dilemmas of conscience into personal, not public ones. *Das Man* requires existential avoidance for Heidegger.

Gadamer does not go so far as to describe calls of conscience in such "existential"[285] terms. In describing Aristotle's concept of σύνεσις and its importance for explaining the hermeneutic experience, he gives a clear example of what a question of conscience is paradigmatically. The question involves another. He explains that it comes in the form of working out the question with a friend:

> The concrete example of this [σύνεσις] is the phenomenon of advice in 'questions of conscience.' Both the person asking for advice and the person giving it assume that they are bound together in friendship. Only friends can advise each other or, to put it another way, only a piece of advice that is meant in a friendly way has meaning for the person advised.[286]

[284]Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 315-316.
[285] I hazard to even use this term because of the possible misinterpretations of it, but Heidegger is being "existential" in the Sartrean sense at this point in *Being and Time*. He describes dilemmas of conscience in atomistic terms.
[286]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 320.

While Gadamer does expand on Heidegger's "existential" or atomistic account of conscience, he does not realize that there can be questions of conscience and even pieces of advice which can come from strangers, unfriendly others, and possibly from the masses (*das Man*).

Gadamer's hermeneutics has an Aristotelian normative framework.[287] He does not mention the role of σύνεσις in his hermeneutics as an aside or only a minor part of the hermeneutical process, but states directly the connection between Aristotle's ethics and the function of it within his hermeneutics:

> To summarize, if we relate Aritotle's description of the ethical phenomenon and especially the virtue of moral knowledge to our own investigation, we find that his analysis in fact offers a kind of *model of the problem of hermeneutics*. We too determined that this application is neither a subsequent nor merely an occasional part of the phenomenon of understanding, but codetermines it as a whole from the beginning.[288]

All of hermeneutical understanding is entangled within the model Gadamer mentions and σύνεσις as "sympathetic understanding" is the lynchpin of its structure. This call of conscience, arising out of personal and atomistic concerns for Heidegger and transformed into a discussion among friends in Gadamer, is at the heart of why Gadamer does not have a concept like Addams' "perplexity" in his hermeneutics.

The danger of which I am speaking can also be seen in Gadamer's discussion of Socratic dialectic, the role of question and answer in it, and the significance for both in listening and hermeneutics. Gadamer describes the openness of Socratic questioning as a model for hermeneutics, and he is right to emphasize this important point. Socrates showed great openness at times with his interlocutors.

[287] Please note that this normative framework is not describing how one picks out with whom one should interact.
[288] Ibid., 320-321.

In "The Logic of Question and Answer," Gadamer discusses the importance of the role of the back and forth of questioning and answering in hermeneutic experience:

> Thus we return to the conclusion that the hermeneutic phenomenon too implies the primacy of dialogue and the structure of question and answer. That a historical text is made the object of interpretation means that it puts a question to the interpreter… To understand a text means to understand this question. But this takes place, as we showed, by our attaining the hermeneutical horizon. We now recognize this as the *horizon of the question* within which the sense of the text is determined.[289]

The text has a central question which enters into our horizon as we experience it. We try to see how it speaks to us. Once we encounter the text, our own horizon will change as we fuse with the horizon of the other.

After discussing Collingwood, Gadamer explains the nature of questioning as an opening up into a conversation in which questions are at the heart of the matter:

> *To understand the questionableness of something is already to be questioning.* There can be no tentative or potential attitude to questioning, for questioning is not the positing but the testing of possibilities. Here the nature of questioning indicates what is demonstrated by the actual operation of the Platonic dialogue.[290]

He is right to say Platonic dialogue shows Socrates' openness to questions. Socrates, and the structure of the Platonic dialectic, obviously shows a great reverence for questioning without a pre-determined outcome. But Gadamer is not correct with saying that there "can be no tentative or potential attitude to questioning." Socrates had this attitude and it is what drove him to go out into the world to ask questions.

If we take the Socrates of the *Apology* at his word, his call started in the words of an oracle. He was called the wisest man in all of Athens, could not believe it, and spent his time exploring his call by speaking with *strangers*. Of course, Socrates would seek out the leaders, the wise, and the sophists of Athens, but many of them were strangers. He worked out his call of

[289] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 363
[290] Ibid., 368

conscience through pluralistically engaging those with whom he shared nothing, especially money and power. Many of his interlocutors did not share his calling of the love of truth. He threw himself into perplexity to find it. Socrates realized his own wisdom because of *das Man*.

Gadamer's hermeneutics does a spectacular job of explaining how to interpret and listen to others once one has been introduced, acquainted with, or even tangentially engaged with someone else. Once the process has started, Gadamer does well. But, what about everything prior to the hermeneutic experience? How should we pick out books from the shelf? Do we have a moral pull or a call of conscience to seek out others as we listen or hermeneutically experience? Gadamer's silence on this point, possibly because of his own life experiences, led to many confusions and disappointments with his work. Why did he never speak about issues dealing with gender, race, sexuality, class, and ethnicity in depth? It seems possible that this absence could have come from his not developing a concept like perplexity. Jane Addams, in large part because of the experiences she chose and the habits which arose from them, did develop this concept.

The most difficult part of listening is knowing to whom we should listen. The process of putting ourselves in different situations, most often unconsciously, sets the tone for the rest of the conversation. Addams was well aware of this fact and set out in her work to emphasize the necessity to realize that all of us are always already making this decision every day. Because our habits guide us throughout life and in conversation, we need to make a conscious effort to change those habits by putting ourselves in different situations. In the midst of experiences, we do not have much say in how the situation will play out, but we can make a decision as to how we decide to experience the world. Our own growth, and the growth of others, is dependent on it. Perplexity is the starting point for this growth.

If we compare Addams' commitment to democracy to Heidegger's and even Gadamer's descriptions of the question of conscience, the difference will be clear. Addams does not fear *das Man* and does not require that questions of conscience only be discussed amongst friends:

> We know, at last, 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. Thus the identification with the common lot which is the essential idea of Democracy becomes the source and expression of social ethics.[291]

We must *identify* ourselves with others who are not like us. We must meet with strangers, let our horizons collide and grow together. When Heidegger describes the idea of "lostness" that comes from "identification with the common lot," Addams would balk. The identification with the common lot is the most important commitment of democracy, and without it, people, governments, educational systems, and religious sentiments cannot grow. The collective, imaginative reconstruction of experiences is enriched and enlivened, not by identifying only with friends or those who share common interests, but with those who are decidedly not like us. The realization of difference, and the necessity to care for and about all in the "common lot," makes our lives more satisfying, good, and wise.

To only listen to the call of friends or the call of one's own conscience is dangerously atomistic. Addams describes the danger in narrowing one's scope of relations: "It is as though we thirsted to drink at the great wells of human experience, because we knew that a daintier or less potent draught would not carry us to the end of the journey, going forward as we must in the heat and jostle of the crowd."[292] Our experiences with others who are different from us is as important as our lifeblood, our sustenance, both spiritual and physical, and the air we breathe, for Addams. And she is deadly serious about this point.

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[291] Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*.
[292] Ibid.

Nearly all academics of her time were unwilling to live amongst those who were different from them, and the sentiment was not only coming from those with wealth and money. When Hull-House was first started, the surrounding community was confused and reacted with hesitancy. They saw anyone who had the capability to leave where they were living and suggested that one was able to live a fuller life when amongst those of different ethnicities, social classes, and economic classes, as ridiculous. But Addams, because of her refined habits of perplexity, was able to make the situation as fruitful as possible. She was able to foster growth.

The development of perplexity requires a commitment to it, but also a realization that our choices and reactions to situations are the result of habits, history, and culture. We cannot decide into which culture we are born or change our history, but we can change our habits.

In the beginning of *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Addams sets the notion of personal morality, or the idea that all moral decisions are singular acts uninfluenced by any outside factors, save the conscience of the individual, as not fully describing our moral life:

> Certain forms of personal righteousness have become to a majority of the community almost automatic. It is as easy for most of us to keep from stealing our dinners as it is to digest them, and there is quite as much voluntary morality involved in one process as in the other. To steal would be for us to fall sadly below the standard of habit and expectation which makes virtue easy.[293]

She does not mention the point explicitly, but the clear inference of this disclosure is that the engrained habits of the seedy underbelly of society are a result of habit. With this point in mind, Addams pushes her readers to realize that the younger generation has a moral calling which is not personal but social:

> The test which they would apply to their conduct is a social test. They fail to be content with the fulfillment of their family and personal obligations, and find themselves striving to respond to a new demand involving a social obligation… In the perplexity of this

[293] Ibid., 5.

> intricate situation at least one thing is becoming clear: if the latter day moral ideal is in reality that of a social morality, it is inevitable that those who desire it must be brought into contact with the moral experiences of the many in order to procure an adequate social motive.[294]

The social motive must be pursued with and amongst others, not as an outsider looking in and assessing the problem, but as a fellow traveler on the same road. To achieve this goal, one must change one's habits. The best way to do that is to change one's environment. And the clearest way to change one's environment is to change one's geographic location. Without even trying, one will change one's view of the "common lot" and also change one's reactions and interactions with them. One will be able to participate fully and listen-with others when one has changed one's habits.

The development of perplexity does not end with the initial encounter, though. Over time, one is able to adjust to one's environment and new perplexities arise and breed growth. If one does not change one's habits, one does not change the possibilities of one's perplexities, and one does not grow. We cannot truly listen if we do not grow with others, and growth requires perplexity.

Heidegger's method was far from Addams' when he sequestered himself in his hut in the Black Forest: he was not attempting to grow by experiencing others who challenged him. Heidegger was searching for "at-homeness" in his being by living in the forest, but he was not growing. He was able to listen to himself but had a difficult time listening to others. The "at-homeness" Heidegger sought was wholly antithetical to Addams' perplexity and not conducive to listening. Listening-with another, outside of those to whom one is closest, is nearly impossible without developing our habits through perplexity. Perplexity disrupts "at-homeness."

[294] Ibid., 6.

The same critique of Heidegger can be made of Gadamer but not as strongly. Gadamer's hermeneutics does not have a concept of perplexity to guide the hermeneut prior to the initial interaction with the text or the other. This problem, of not addressing the concerns, questions, and challenges of marginalized others, Gadamer left unaddressed throughout his career.[295] He had the hermeneutic structure in his thought to confront these situations, but he had not habituated perplexity enough to grow. He never left the academy.

We only need to compare Gadamer with Derrida to see the difference regarding perplexity between the two. Derrida was a French Jew of Algerian descent. He was a walking perplexity. Confusion surrounded him, and because of it, he was able to experience perplexities in regards to women, questions of race, religion, sexuality, etc. But it was not through any personal drive, he could not help it. Gadamer, on the other hand, had plenty of opportunities to engage with questions of feminism, race, etc., but his "phallogocentric" habits eventually took over. He felt "at-home" discussing other matters.

Hermeneutics, possibly because of its beginning in Biblical interpretation, shows some shortcomings when it is applied to lived and embodied experience. It focuses too much on a text with which one is already engaged and not the moments before which might call for interest. But this issue does not mean hermeneutics is doomed. It merely needs to "drink from the draught" of *all* human experience. And while Gadamer's hermeneutics goes a long way in helping to understand interactions among people, and between texts, it would serve it better with a sense of perplexity.

Tradition and Traditions: Learning to Listen Pluralistically

[295]Nearly every chapter of *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer* makes this point.

Both Gadamer and Addams have robust accounts of listening and the hermeneutic experience in general. But, again, their life experiences shape their philosophical ideas. Gadamer's hermeneutics takes as its paradigmatic example the scholar at work with a text, and he expands this framework out to the whole of human experience. This starting point is a dangerous one when trying to explain all hermeneutical experience. There are situations which do not fit the mold of scholarly work. Addams, because of her experiences with many different people with many different traditions, is able to account for these difficult interpretive endeavors. In what follows, I will explain how Gadamer's concept of tradition and the fusion of horizons does not fit situations when a cacophony of voices are heard and the experience's implications for listening, and go on then to describe some of Addams' descriptions of these multi-voiced dilemmas at Hull-House.

Gadamer's problems in accounting for conversations in which many voices speak start in his conception of tradition. His view of tradition, when describing two separate traditions coming together in a fusion of horizon, does adequately account for the experience, but there is a danger in attempting to apply this structure of hermeneutic experience to all experiences. It can leave some voices silent and unheard.

As we saw before, Gadamer ties his understanding of tradition to the experience of a Thou: "Hermeneutical experience is concerned with *tradition*. This is what is to be experienced. But tradition is not simply a process that experience teaches us to know and govern; it is *language*—i.e., it expresses itself like a Thou. A Thou is not an object; it relates itself to us."[296] We can already see a problem when trying to think of situations where there might be many voices attempting to relate to each other and also us. He is correct to say that the experience of

[296]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 352.

the Thou is not one in which we experience an object, as a nearly un-relatable thing without meaning and which has no possibility of relating to us, but a relation. His problem comes when trying to apply the model to pluralistic experiences with many voices.

If we think of a town hall meeting the issue should become clear. The experience of a text or a singular Thou cannot be mapped onto a large group of voices with contradictory meanings. It is possible to think of the situation in terms of many traditions and Thou's coming together and meeting, but the mediation of so many traditions becomes complicated with so many voices. With a plurality of voices speaking at once, focusing on the personal relation that a singular voice has to oneself becomes very difficult. How can one be open when the focus must be so narrow? There are too many relations at play to address this problem clearly using the I-Thou relation as analgous to the experience of tradition, especially when it is not a singular experience, but many experiences resulting in a complex situation.

Gadamer's highest form of hermeneutical experience might shed some light on the problem. After addressing two problematic accounts of the I-Thou relation as being both too instrumental and disrespectful of the other, he moves onto his truly open hermeneut:

> …this constitutes the third, and highest, type of hermeneutical experience: the openness to tradition characteristic of historically effected consciousness. It too has a real analogue in the I's experience of the Thou. In human relations the important thing is, as we have seen, to experience the Thou truly as a Thou—i.e., not to overlook his claim but to let him really say something to us. Here is where openness belongs… Openness to the other, then, involves recognizing that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one forces me to do so.[297]

In the midst of many voices speaking at once it is difficult to "let him really say something to us." If one were to pull someone aside and take the conversation elsewhere this openness might be possible, but sometimes that is not an option. While listening to many voices one is surely

[297] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 355.

able to be open to "accepting some things that are against [her]," but, as Gadamer clearly states, the openness must come in the form of *someone* saying something to us.

It does seem possible, if we are to take Gadamer's meaning of "one" as just one tradition, that we could explain a situation wherein a large group of people is expressing opinions, ideas, thoughts, jokes, etc. These situations would still fit under his rubric, as long as all involved are part of the same tradition. When Moses cried out, "Let my people go!" he was speaking from a tradition and group of people, and in this way, the relation was very similar to the meeting of a Thou, but not all group discussions are so simple.

Sometimes the discussion involves many different traditions speaking many different languages and also with interpreters. These situations become even more complex. We only need to think of the difficulty of applying the "I-Thou" relation to a meeting of the United Nations where *all* delegates are speaking and understanding different languages, and through different interpreters at once. It still seems possible that there are those who would be genuinely open in these situations, but Gadamer's hermeneutics falls short of the mark in these cases.

Gadamer's focus on self-transformation, as opposed to transformation of the situation in general, creates problems when thinking about cases like town hall meetings and delegates of the United Nations all listening at once. His description of the necessity for "readiness" in the highest form of hermeneutical experience shows the focus:

> This is the parallel to the hermeneutical experience. I must allow tradition's claim to validity, not in the sense of simply acknowledging the past in its otherness, but in such a way that it has something to say to me… The hermeneutical consciousness culminates not in methodological sureness of itself, but in the same readiness for experience that distinguishes the experienced man from the man captivated by dogma. As we can now

> say more exactly in terms of the concept of experience, this readiness is what distinguishes historically effected consciousness.[298]

The narrow focus on self-transformation is ill-suited for describing political dialogue in general, but especially in situations with many different voices speaking. The advice to be open to self-transformation is important and laudable, but it does not capture all hermeneutical experience. Focusing on self-transformation, instead of transformation of the situation, leaves one without the ability to listen to many voices. Again, to whom should we listen? How can we listen to the voices of many traditions speaking at once? Is listening even possible in these pluralistic situations?

Addams' development of her own listening was able to hone in on these sorts of problems. It was her most consistently discussed problem. She found herself amongst people from all different traditions, and she had to moderate, mediate, listen, and interpret groups of people and individuals. Some of these conversations happened over long periods of time, some were heated, but she was able to develop, not necessarily a method, but a way of handling the difficulties of pluralistic traditions coming into contact with each other in myriad ways. I will only focus on one: the origins and transformations of the Labor Museum at Hull-House.[299]

For Addams, dealing with traditions began in perplexity. What would seem like insignificant events for most people she was able to interpret and react to in ways shaped by her habits which engendered perplexity. She was attuned to the needs and, more importantly, the interests of her neighbors surrounding Hull-House. Since she forced herself into a situation, because of geographic relocation, where she was in constant embodied contact with her

[298]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 355.

[299] There are ways that *Women at the Hague* and *Newer Ideals of Peace*, and *Peace and Bread in Time of War* all show the same situations. One of the reasons I have chosen the Labor Museum example is because it was such an intimate development. Town Hall meetings and the meeting of the U.N. are filled with people who refuse to listen to each other because of political strife, while the Labor Museum is a wonderful example of a shared project in a community. It was perfect for listening.

neighbors, she was able to gauge their wants and needs. One result of using this skill was the Labor Museum at Hull-House.

In *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, Addams describes the origins of the museum:

> An overmastering desire to reveal the humbler immigrant parents to their own children lay at the base of what has come to be called the Hull-House Labor Museum. This was first suggested to my mind one early spring day when I saw an old Italian woman, her distaff against her homesick face, patiently spinning a thread by the simple stick spindle so reminiscent of all southern Europe. I was walking down Polk Street perturbed in spirit, because it seemed so difficult to come into genuine relations with the Italian women and because they themselves so often lost their hold upon their Americanized children. It seemed to me that Hull-House ought to be able to devise some educational enterprise, which should build a bridge between European and American experiences in such wise as to give them both more meaning and a sense of relation. I meditated that perhaps the power to see life as a whole, is more needed in the immigrant quarter of a large city than anywhere else, and that the lack of this power is the most fruitful source of misunderstanding between European immigrants and their children, as it is between them and their American neighbors; and why should that chasm between fathers and sons, yawning at the feet of each generation, be made so unnecessarily cruel and impassible to these bewildered immigrants? Suddenly I looked up and saw the old woman with her distaff, sitting in the sun on the steps of a tenement house. She might have served as a model for one of Michael Angelo's Fates, but her face brightened as I passed and, holding up her spindle for me to see, she called out that when she had spun a little more yarn, she would knit a pair of stockings for her goddaughter. The occupation of the old woman gave me the clew that was needed. Could we not interest the young people working in the neighborhood factories, in these older forms of industry, so that, through their own parents and grandparents, they would find a dramatic representation of the inherited resources of their daily occupation. If these young people could actually see that the complicated machinery of the factory had been evolved from simple tools, they might at least make a beginning towards that education which Dr. Dewey defines as 'a continuing reconstruction of experience.' They might also lay a foundation for reverence of the past which Goethe declares to be the basis of all sound progress.[300]

In this passage we can see much of what has been discussed in the dissertation. She began the process in perplexity. She was purposely wandering about in the street because she had developed habits of cultivating perplexity, and the situation became imbued with the possibility for meaning. She then took that moment and turned it into a productive possibility for growth. She was able to see the worth and importance of the woman through her aesthetic consciousness as she made the analogy with Michelangelo's "Fates," and this description and personal experience brought meaning to both her readers and herself. We can also see in the passage her

[300]Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, 138-139.

place within a history which is not hers (Italian peasantry), enlarging her horizon, along with the woman's, to include the greater experience of all immigrants surrounding Hull-House, and, finally, she created a shared project among immigrants and their children to help reconstruct a situation in which she saw herself as a part.

There were at least four horizons and many traditions at work in this description of her experience: Addams', the Italian woman's, the horizon of the rest of immigrant population, and the myriad horizons of the children were all present. Addams was working in-between all of these different perspectives and interacting with them as she listened. The entire project began in listening and was then re-adjusted through the fusing of horizons as it went along.

The project developed new horizons, which came into contact with each other and pluralistically reconstructed the Labor Museum project. After discussions with Dewey, Addams and others set up an installment of historical devices for weaving to show the continuity with the present so that Syrian, Greek, Italian, and Russian women could realize the continuity of the present and the past of the weaving industry.[301]

Hull-House began to present lectures on the history of industry in light of the Labor Museum, and these presentations brought out realizations of continuity with the past and also moments where those in the audience were able to testify to Addams and others. In one instance, a Russian tailor spun his own story about the progress from hand-weaving to steam-powered technology and the relative short time of transition.[302]

From that impromptu testimonial, Addams was able to glean a realization about human progress and conservatism in general:

[301] Ibid., 139-140.
[302] Ibid., 140

> Human progress is slow and perhaps never more cruel than in the advance of industry, but it is not the worker comforted by knowing that other historical periods have existed similar to the one in which he finds himself, and that the readjustment may be shortened and alleviated by judicious action; and is he not entitled to the solace which an artistic portrayal of the situation might give him?[303]

She laments that there had been no artistic presentations of the tailor's plight in the history of Western literature, but the Labor Museum was at least one attempt at just that. The museum was a work in progress and came into contact with many different groups of people as it developed. And as they took in the ongoing work, their own input transformed the project, Addams' perspective and theirs. One of the other interesting functions of the museum was transforming observers into teachers.

During the week of Christmas, a group of thirty Russian women working in a sewing room near Hull-House heard of a party being given there. When they arrived, the residents alerted them that there was no party, but they tried to entertain each other. Addams and the other residents showed them the Labor Museum, and as they looked at all of the machinery and tools they shared their own knowledge about sewing and enlightened the residents. Addams explains, "Because of a direct appeal to former experiences, the immigrant visitors were able for the moment to instruct their American hostesses in an old and honored craft, as was indeed becoming to their age and experience."[304] The Labor Museum, brought about through interactions among Addams, the residents, and the locals, and clashes of youth with the older generation and different traditions, was able to turn these women into teachers. They did not have that opportunity before. The Labor Museum, as a shared project and interpretive experience, became a space for sharing traditions.

[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid., 141.

Addams describes personal transformations between mothers and daughters, among different ethnic groups, and regarding discussions surrounding issues of race.[305] She was able to use the Labor Museum and Hull-House, as living spaces for discussion, confrontation, and listening, to transform the experiences of the residents, herself, the surrounding groups of people, and eventually, through the publication of her reflections, the rest of the United States.

She did not present an abstract theory of human experience and give oversimplified answers to the problems met, but a way for people to listen-to and listen-with each other through a shared project. Her method was educative and experimental with a view toward application throughout the rest of the country. She was not trying to solve specific problems through projects like the Labor Museum, but merely creatively adjusting to her surroundings in order to create a space in which people could listen-with each other. Her examples and descriptions of her experiences were meant as invitations and challenges to the reader to find a way to empathize with others around her and suggest possible ways to deal with the clashing of traditions in urban life.

Gadamer's explanation of the hermeneutic process, while clearly not a method, cannot fully describe Addams' experiences. Through her virulent defenses of immigrants in the face of despotic hatred, she was able to find her way through briar-patches.

Addams' description gives a view of her mindset and all of her concerns with which she was dealing. She was worried about the passing on of the past from one immigrant group to

[305] Ibid., 149. W.E.B. DuBois came to speak on Lincoln's birthday about race and Addams described the sympathy the surrounding neighbors felt with him because of their own persecutions over ethnic struggles. She described the presentation, "They [the neighbors] listened with respect and enthusiasm to a scholarly address delivered by Professor Du Bois at Hull-House on Lincoln's birthday, with apparently no consciousness of that race difference which color seems to accentuate so absurdly, and upon my return from various conferences held in the interest of 'the advancement of colored people,' I have had many illuminating conversations with my cosmopolitan neighbors."

their children as an act of remembrance, she was concerned about the role that history would play in the lives of their young, she was curious about her place in the situation as a whole, and she had a vested interest in developing democratic ideals through reconstructing American citizenship. This morass of complicated issues shows how difficult dealing with many traditions at once can be. Her work as a mediator and interpreter was the most difficult.

Her descriptions of her experiences with traditions was meant to educate the reader in the complexities of American life. Because of her sense of aesthetic consciousness in transforming perspectives, she did not write in a way that alienated her audience by use of jargon. She led by example, and the example showed the prickliness of the path on which she trod.

The lesson to be learned about listening is that pluralistic cultures, while containing many different traditions, can still be brought together through mediation, tempered by constant perplexity, focused on a shared goal or ideal (not set out in advance), and have robust communicative interaction. But people must learn to develop habits of learning to listenin-with each other. Addams demonstrated and did not merely describe how that could be done.

Gadamer's hermeneutics and its focus on openness is apt in its description of some interpretive situations, but not all. While some situations lend themselves to the I-Thou relation, the fusion of horizons, or any of its tools, Addams' educative theory of listening is better able to describe some pluralistically complex situations more robustly and to point in a direction of where one might work between traditions and a cacophony of voices.

Reconstructing Ideals, Conserving Ideals, and Listening

Both Addams and Gadamer use ideals in their philosophies. Addams understands ideals as always under reconstruction. They both shape our experience of listening, and we are

productively involved in reconstructing "newer" versions of them. Gadamer, on the other hand, while maintaining that the conservation of tradition is always a challenge to tradition, comes dangerously close to turning ideals into monolithic constructs which overtake our possibilities as persons. This difference matters for listening.

In the case of listening-for the failure to reconstruct ideals is at stake. The listener and speaker tend to be so far removed from each other in this situation that the ideals that they hold and which are present in the situation cannot be brought under scrutiny and thus inevitably remain unchanged. Where two people hold divergent ideals and do not realize it, the danger of their inability to listen-with or even listen-to each other is clear.

When two groups value an ideal like peace, but differ in method, they cannot come together under the ideal. In *Newer Ideals of Peace* Addams spoke directly to this phenomenon. She realized that her "newer" ideal of peace was at odds with the war machine in the United States and at work around the world which had its own ideal of "peace." The purpose of the book was to get her audience to listen-with her, but many only listened-for.[306]

Those in disagreement with Addams could not get past the idea that peace was the absence of war, which Addams thought was antithetical to her newer ideal of peace as a positive condition. She thought the absence of war would only lead to more conflict, justifying war as *the* antidote to greater violence and the only way to peace. Sadly, Addams' critics won out and the First World War began and continued to its inevitable outcome: a Second World War.

[306] I would like to note that it is possible for listening-for to take part in the reconstruction of an ideal. In cases where a calculative thought process is necessary to solve a dilemma as part of a larger ideal involved listening-for is necessary and sometimes the best way to deal with a given situation. If a doctor in tending to a patient must quickly make a diagnosis because time is of the essence listening-for is necessary and listening-with would not be possible, listening-for can be useful. If that action was taken with an overall view toward something like an ideal of health, listening-for would clearly be the most prudent course of action. So, as part of a larger project, listening-for can contribute, but it should not be used when working through the larger dilemmas. If we have time, we should listen-with.

The ideal of peace as an absence of war, because of its historical weight and influence on the minds of the American public and the world, was too monolithic for Addams' challenge. It was so embedded in the consciousness of people that the plea for a "newer," reconstructed ideal, went unheard. Listening-with requires a commitment to malleable ideals and the realization that we both are constructed by and can reconstruct our ideals. Our ideals are both outside and constitutive of us. When we listen-to, we can also be disrupted by monolithic ideals.

Listening-to, while not the highest form of listening, comes closer to realizing ideals as concrete and fluid. In this case one's listening can identify and even make a positive contribution to another's ideal, but the self-realization that one is also part of the ideal is overlooked. When listening-to we realize that the other is limited and shaped by ideals, and can even see her ability to take part in shaping them herself, but we are blind to the fact that we are also part of the other's ideal or ideals.

If we go back to the case of Sartre counseling his student during wartime, the need for listening-with, as a productive way to deal with ideals in a situation, seems necessary. When Sartre discussed the decision his student was making about whether to take care of his mother or to go to war to defend his nation, Sartre did not see himself as part of the young man's life. Remember, Sartre consistently told the student that he had already made his decision before coming to meet with Sartre. Sartre saw the decision as the young man's alone. Sartre was able to listen-to the young man, in a sense, because he could identify the ideals at stake and also realized that there were certain ideals at stake along with commitments to duty. He could also see that the young man, through his actions, was committing to one of these ideals, either the ideal of family and what it was to be a good son, or the ideal of justice as carried out in war. Sartre was not explicit about how these ideals might have been concrete or malleable—it was not

the point of the essay anyway—but we can imagine that someone in Sartre's same situation could have realized that the young man was committing to one of these ideals and was, through his specific actions, contributing to the ideal and making it grow.

What Sartre did not realize was that he was taking part in the ideals along with the young man. Sartre's own discussion with the student had an impact that was felt beyond those two in the room. They were making the decision together, whether or not Sartre wanted to admit it. Listening-with always involves the realization that one is caught up in the predicament of the other and reconstructing ideals with her.

Listening-with requires realizing and also reconstructing the ideals in the situation. It requires the realization of the role the ideals for both parties because anything less would fall short of anything resembling a union of oneself and the other. The other would always be separate, and listening would be no more than hearing. But realizing that ideals are constitutive of the situation is not enough to produce listening-with: both must realize that their conversation is changing their ideals as they continue on in their discussion. They need not realize the abstract idea that all situations are constituted by ideals and shape ideals, but their interaction must speak to this truth.

Addams' development of the Labor Museum and what she learned from the experience illustrates listening-with. After describing all of the interactions amongst herself, the residents, and her Hull-House neighbors regarding the Labor Museum, she gives an account of the hundredth anniversary of Giuseppe Mazzini's birth:

> Throughout the world that day Italians who believed in a United Italy came together. They recalled the hopes of this man who, with all of his devotion to his country, was still more devoted to humanity and who dedicated to the workingmen of Italy, an appeal so philosophical, so filled with a yearning for righteousness, that it transcended all national

> boundaries and became a bugle call for 'The Duties of Man.' A copy of this document was given to every school child in the public schools of Italy on this one hundredth anniversary, and as the Chicago branch of the Society of Young Italy marched into our largest hall and presented to Hull-House an heroic bust of Mazzini, I found myself devoutly hoping that the Italian youth, who have committed their future to America, might indeed become 'the Apostles of the fraternity of nations' and that our American citizenship might be built without disturbing these foundations.[307]

From this section, it is clear that Addams was listening-with the Italians as they presented her this bust. She saw herself as part of a larger ideal of American citizenship, along with the Italian men. She also situated this section directly after discussing similar interactions with children, women, and immigrants from all over the globe, to show that it was not just an interaction between herself and the Italians. She was able also to realize that the Italians were part of this ideal of American citizenship. And her usage of the word "built" in reference to it should not be overlooked. She did not think that American citizenship was set in stone: it was always a work in progress. But she also made it clear that the ideal of American citizenship required leaving one's own traditions. She went so far as to say that it was the "foundation" to be left undisturbed.

Through their meetings, plays, and conversations Addams, the residents of Hull-House, and their neighbors were able to reconstruct the ideals of American citizenship in ways that did make an impact on the country. Prior to the turn of the century, Italians, Greeks, Russians, and Jews were not seen as American. And while it is certainly the case that there are many groups still not counted as part of "America" today, Addams, along with many others, was able to help reconstruct a "newer" ideal of American citizenship. Listening-with these people was one of the most important parts of this process.

[307] Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 150.

Gadamer's hermeneutics, at the very least, does not emphasize the importance ideals play in the hermeneutical situation and their role in listening. His account of listening, because of its lack of perplexity and lack of a pluralistic conception of tradition, falls short in its treatment of ideals.

Because his theory does not account for the coming together of a plurality of traditions, he falls into well-trodden issues when it comes to the development of ideals. In discussing natural law and Aristotle, Gadamer comes extremely close to Addams' view of the role of ideals in the lives of people and also how they develop:

> For what Aristotle shows here is true of all man's ideas of what he ought to be, and not only of the problem of law. All these concepts are not just arbitrary ideals conditioned by convention, but despite all the variety of moral ideas in the most different times and peoples, in this sphere there is still something like the nature of the thing. This is not to say that the nature of the thing—e..g., the ideal of bravery—is a fixed standard that we could recognize and apply by ourselves. Rather, Aristotle affirms as true of the teacher of ethics precisely what is true, in his view, of all men: that he too is always already involved in a moral and political context and acquires his image of the thing from that standpoint. He does not himself regard the guiding principles that he describes as knowledge that can be taught. They are valid only as schemata. They are concretized only in the concrete situation of the person acting. Thus they are not norms to be found in the stars, nor do they have an unchanging place in a natural moral universe, so that all that would be necessary would be to perceive them. Nor are they mere conventions, but really do correspond to the nature of the thing—except that the latter is always itself determined in each case by the use the moral consciousness makes of them.[308]

This explanation lines up with Addams' view of ideals and their role in human experience in many ways. Gadamer notes that Aristotle views ideals as changing, not wholly relative, and taught with a vague structure. On all of these counts, he is correct; but the last line is problematic. His explanation of moral consciousness takes it out of individual human reach. Of course, we all take part in moral consciousness, but any description which takes seriously the role of individuals along with others must testify to the concrete nature of it. His emphasis on the monolithic nature of the moral consciousness does not fully describe the situation.

[308]Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 317-318.

Gadamer's view of moral consciousness is monolithic because it does not include the plurality of individuals who make it up. They are absent in his account, and we can see this again and again in his hermeneutics. The overarching ideals at play, like the moral consciousness, the horizons into which we fuse, and the truth of the object of hermeneutical understanding,[309] all fall into this dilemma. He fails to consider that interpreters also change the object of interpretation.

Gadamer does not see ideals as possibilities in the same way that Addams does. Ideals are reconstructed possibilities for Addams, and they are constraints for Gadamer. When we reach an ideal, for Gadamer, we are subsumed with the other into it, and for Addams, we are working within it and on it at all times. For Addams, ideals are projects we reconstruct as finite individuals, and for Gadamer's ideals act as goals without realizing their function.

For Gadamer, ideals do not work and live within human experience writ small, but only writ large. It is no surprise that someone so committed to the importance of history, tradition, and ideals would hold this conception, but it remains true that ideals are constantly reconstructed through human interaction in lieu of the future. For him to say that, "except that the latter is always itself determined in each case by the use the moral consciousness makes of them" clearly indicates that moral consciousness is not embodied or concrete on his account. It is a monolithic and impenetrable thing. Addams' use of perplexity, not as a passive fall into a text or a call from a text, but a proactive push to rethink and rework habits, is a necessary antidote.

Addams' use of perplexity is advantageous for three reasons when thinking about ideals. The first is an awareness of stagnant ideals. At some point, most ideals are deadened and from

[309] Ibid., 371.

their ashes come new ideals that speak to new contexts. If we do not develop a sense of perplexity about these ideas and ideals, we are left floundering and confused about the change going on around us.

Perplexity is also an important habit for realizing that ideals are malleable and always changing. Since Plato, the notion that ideals are unperturbed by human inquiry, discussion, and action, has led philosophy into a dangerous position. At once, it describes the ideals and also registers a judgment on them. There is no purpose to the judgment if there is no change in the ideal. If our judgments are futile and unheard, they have no function.

Addams' work testifies to the fact that reconstruction of ideals and their possibilities comes from concrete experiences with others whom we listen-with. If there were no embodied individuals, ideals would never change. Gadamer's hermeneutics fails to describe these situations.

The contemporary "gay rights" movement speaks to this claim. After the Stonewall protests, the movement shifted to protests surrounding acceptance of lifestyles and reconstructing ideals of marriage. In this way, it was successful in changing policy and ideals. The Stonewall protests began the process of creating perplexity for large numbers of people and were buttressed by gay pride parades in most cities in the United States to enliven conversation and change.

Perplexity, when embodied, can give rise to past ideals as possibilities instead of hiding them. Gadamer's hermeneutics does not describe embodiment much, if at all, and hence fails to see the importance of bodies in the streets. Addams' perplexity can account for this situation. Her embodied hermeneutics is lived, communal, and concrete. It serves two purposes.

The first is that even within a cacophony of voices, all are still heard (ideally). If we are to be democratic, we must re-construct ideals with everyone. Those ideals are both constitutive of the situation and give us the building blocks to create new ideals. The Democratic blood still pulses through the veins and is reconstituted through the heart of the Democratic body.

The second is that anytime there are a cacophony of voices there is a project involved. People work with and under ideals. There are a constant slew of voices crying out from the shadows. Perplexity piques the interests of the listener to move her to action. It pokes holes in prejudice.

Gadamer does not have a concept like perplexity in *Truth and Method*. This lack breeds problems with his account of changes in history, tradition, culture, and ideals. Because he sees ideals as monolithic and their change in the same way, he fails to account for ways of listening that include more progressive change of ideas in the text.

We can either begin in the text and work our way out from it into conversation and interpersonal human experience, or we can begin in interpersonal experience and divine from those experiences how to interpret texts. Both of these approaches to hermeneutics have their advantages and deficits.

When we start with Gadamer's approach from the text and hermeneutical relationship we overlook the relationship we had to the world prior to the text, and expanding his framework out to living, embodied, and concrete conversation becomes problematic when we encounter a cacophony of voices.

And when we begin with the concrete experiences Addams had with those around her, we have difficulty understanding how her interpretive approach can be used for something like

Biblical interpretation. The difference between the two approaches comes in what they promised from their thoughts on listening in the first place. Gadamer's *Truth and Method* promised to be a guide to all hermeneutic experience, while Addams only offered her reflections on concrete situations and only hinted at generalizing abstractions that might be from them. The question as to the better method, or whether or not both are needed, will be left open, but Addams' approach seems more suited to educating someone about how to listen-with another.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

I have hopefully shown that there is still much to be discussed when thinking about listening. This dissertation merely touches the surface of a vast horizon. Since listening has been barely discussed in the canonical literature, I hope others will take up this topic to show its importance and give it the depth its study needs.

The discussion began with the importance of Gadamer's hermeneutics as a starting point for linking interpretation and listening. He set out, in a round-about-way, to open up a discourse surrounding listening through his challenges to enlightenment thinking.

One of the most important critiques of enlightenment thinking is that it focuses too much on the atomistic individual and not the community, tradition or the whole. The tradition, beginning with Bacon, shuns the importance of the relations of individuals and cuts off their embodied connections. Gadamer realized this point, and set out to re-invigorate the concepts of tradition, authority, and culture.

In the same way Gadamer tried to be open to tradition, we must be open in listening-for, listening-to, or listening-with others. Listening, as an act of a person, begins in openness to someone or something "foreign," "alien," or "primitive." It begins in someone not like us. Texts are a good starting point for listening, but texts are not at the core of the experience of listening; people are.

Gadamer's thought lacks the appreciation of fully embodied communication between individuals. He has textualized the other, and while this approach in his hermeneutics is successful for interpreting Plato, it is lacking when describing the interactions of real people in

communication with each other. This fault shows itself when trying to mediate between multiple traditions at once, like Addams does.

Jane Addams' ideas about listening help fill out the electric interactions between embodied individuals. Because of her concepts of perplexity and concrete ideals, she is able to expose some shortcomings in Gadamer's hermeneutics.

They are both in agreement on many ideas, though. Both of them realize the importance of conservative change in politics, the need to prepare oneself for openness to the other, and the importance of history, tradition, and culture in shaping all individuals as they listen-for, to, and with each other.

There are a few points of the dissertation which need filling out. I have not gone into an in depth discussion of the differences between groups listening to each other compared with individuals. All of the major concepts of the dissertation: perplexity, prejudice, tradition, and culture have vastly different implications when taken by a group compared with an individual.

As I have suggested, for example, bringing an individual into perplexity is a somewhat simple process of changing the physical location of a person. It is much more difficult to bring an entire group, or a culture, into perplexity. One cannot just pick up and move a country or place.

In the future, I hope to fill out some of the subtle differences between individuals listening-for, to, and with each other, and groups listening-for, to, and with each other. I think the key is realizing that ideals pervade groups and bringing ideals into communication with each other through embodied dialogue can improve this process.

I also hope I have not short-sighted the need for listening-for and listening-to. Much of this dissertation discusses the need for listening-with in ethical and political situations, while shorting listening-for and listening-to.

Listening-for and listening-to are absolutely necessary in the everyday affairs of life. If one is a mechanic, or even a psychologist, listening-for might be the most expedient way of dealing with a situation. And sometimes listening-to is required if a psychologist, social worker, or politician, is to get any work done. These are complicated issues and need to be discussed in detail. I tend to think that these discussions have more to do with the phenomenology of listening than the ethics and politics of listening. The daily practice of listening is a difficult matter.

I also think that this dissertation lays the groundwork for projects in listening and race. In the last forty years, Black Feminists[310] have consistently spoken of the necessary silence in their lives and younger scholars are just beginning to speak of that lived experience. The history of subaltern peoples is riddled with the call to listen, which so much of the time falls on deaf ears.

I would also like to explore in more depth the metaphysical and epistemological implications of taking listening seriously. One of the most oft-quoted, if not the most oft-quoted phrase of Aristotle is: "All men by nature desire to know."[311] It is the first sentence of the metaphysics.

Many do not follow up with the next sentence: "An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above

[310] I know this is an extreme understatement of the dilemma, but we must start somewhere.
[311] Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 2001), 689.

all others the sense of sight."[312] Sight is the greatest of the senses, and also the greatest source of knowledge, for Aristotle. This bias probably comes from the fact that we are visual creatures. There is a compelling evolutionary story to be told about it, but that does not mean we are not capable of re-evaluating our metaphysics from the perspective of another sense. It is at least possible that Heraclitus began this journey with his emphasis on the flux of the world. A focus on ocular experience lends itself to clear cut divisions between things. An aural experience belies it.

The metaphysical and epistemological questions are much more difficult and will take an effort far beyond my own capabilities, but I hope that this dissertation has at least hinted at the possibility of someone attempting it. We are a visual people, but I think that is a product of our culture and biology in concert, and not biological determinism. We have the capacity of reflection upon our ways of knowing the world. We also have the capability to explore listening and hearing nature to a great degree. The project can go far beyond listening. The implications of a metaphysics based on smell are great.

Olfactory experience is something of which we are not capable of describing in detail and understanding in detail. Our senses belie it. In the same way dogs can only see in black and white, we only smell a bit of our experience. We can only slightly imagine what it would be like for a dog, who has an olfactory centered life, to write poetry, but we can get closer to understanding a creature who primarily takes in auditory experience because we have the capacity to understand it in some depth. We merely need to look at the descriptions of visual experiences, aural experiences, and olfactory experiences to see how our vocabulary and concepts are truncated. We are not fully describing the world, or at the very least, missing out on

[312] Ibid.

it. All of these questions are interesting from a phenomenological point of view, but this dissertation relies on the idea that the most pressing ethical issues have to do with listening amongst people.

The central point, as an ethical and political point, to be taken away from this dissertation is the tri-fold schematic of listening implicit in both Gadamer and Addams' work. Listening-for, listening-to, and listening-with all shape our lives as people. We spend most of our waking hours interacting with others and most likely never reflect on whether or not we are actually listening.

I hope to have shined some sort of light, or at least, pricked up the ears of those who have read this work to think about listening a bit more than we normally do.

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