

Houses of Hospitality:
The Material Rhetoric of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker

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Finally, a note about the font I've selected for this document. *Perpetua* was designed by Eric Gill, who, along with Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, and others, espoused a distributist economic philosophy that Dorothy Day greatly admired; Day often quoted Gill in her writings. Gill named this font *Perpetua* after the third-century Christian martyr, whose account of the events leading to her death represents one of the first extant Christian autobiographical texts. The font, then, seems appropriate for a subject such as Day, a modern Christian woman autobiographer.

Abstract

This dissertation presents an analysis of the material practice of hospitality in the Catholic Worker movement during the 1930s. Dorothy Day (1897-1980), a radical Catholic social activist, co-founded the Catholic Worker movement in 1932, and one of the movement's goals was to provide hospitality to poor and unemployed people. Day's understanding of hospitality, and consequently the practice of hospitality at Catholic Worker houses, was shaped by Day's experiences as a radical during the 1910s and 1920s, her conversion to Roman Catholicism, and her notions of gender; each of these factors led Day to understand hospitality as consisting primarily in materially grounded practices that lead to the mutual identification of host and guest. Of particular importance to Catholic Worker hospitality were the materials of space and food, which, in addition to promoting the mutual identification of individual hosts and guests, also shaped the identity of the movement itself, the content of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, and Day's and her followers' critique of bureaucratic, state-sponsored responses to social injustices. Furthermore, the practice of hospitality also provided members of the movement with an epistemological grounding for their critiques of social injustices by allowing them to encounter real presences—subjective, transcendent realities that members of the movement understood in theological language as encounters with Christ. As Day and her followers practiced hospitality, they had to contend with a number of forces of institutionalization that would place conditions on their hospitality and limit its transformative potential. Finally, this analysis contributes to ongoing discussions about the place of hospitality in the teaching of composition by noting that the teaching of writing is subject to similar forces of institutionalization; the ways that Day and her followers responded to such forces—especially through an emphasis on domesticity and religious faith—are important to consider because they suggest that writing teachers need to consider the spiritual roots of transformative hospitality.

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Introduction

The Question of Hospitality

The central question of hospitality is a variation of one of the most basic questions of ethics: “How are we to relate to others?” Specifically, hospitality challenges us to consider how we treat those who do not, in some sense, belong: strangers, aliens, outcasts. And while we might at first think of hospitality as something pertaining to travellers or people whom we receive as guests in the literal sense, Henri Nouwen points out that the question of hospitality bears on many other sorts of encounters: between parents and children, healers and patients, teachers and students. Derrida draws our attention to the tremendously inhuman ways in which the question of hospitality was often answered in the twentieth century, “the multiplicity of menaces, of acts of censorship (*censure*) or of terrorism, of persecutions and of enslavements in all their forms” (*On Cosmopolitanism* 5). Current debates in the United States and in Europe about immigration and local debates about how to respond to the problem of homelessness indicate that the question of hospitality is still exigent. My aim in this dissertation is to examine one possible answer to that question, to explore what Janis and Richard Haswell and Glenn Blalock call “transformative hospitality” as a means of creative social critique and a possible model for rhetorical education.

Among those who write about hospitality, it has become a commonplace that hospitality is a lost tradition in modern, Western culture (e.g., Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock; Murray; Nouwen; Pohl). We tend to think of hospitality only as “soft sweet kindness, tea parties, bland conversations” (Nouwen 46), an “atrophied” practice that is “outmoded, a quaint holdout from primitive society perhaps, but of no functional value” (Murray 14-5). I am not inclined to disagree with such assessments of the modern doxa of hospitality, but they do beg the question of just what hospitality—the “true” hospitality we have apparently lost—might involve.

Hospitality has often been seen as a means of promoting and maintaining peace among groups of people. In Homer, for instance, hospitality involves an exchange of gifts meant to forge short-term alliances and to keep social power in the hands of those who already have it (Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock). More recently, Immanuel Kant identified hospitality as a prerequisite for peace. In his 1795 essay “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” Kant defines hospitality as “the right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another.” But there are limits to the hospitality Kant proposes. While he argues that the right to be shown hospitality is universal because the amount of habitable land on earth is finite, he also stresses that hospitality is obligatory only to temporary visitors, not to those who would take up permanent residence in another’s homeland.

Whereas Kant sees hospitality as a responsibility of the state, other philosophers have placed the responsibility for peace-fostering hospitality on smaller communities. For instance, Jacques Derrida, following Emmanuel Levinas, argues for the establishment of “cities of refuge” where immigrants could be offered shelter. Derrida hopes that these cities, autonomous but “allied to each other according to forms of solidarity yet to be invented,” might “reorient the politics of the state” towards greater justice (*On Cosmopolitanism* 4). Hospitality thus becomes a mode of social activism, a way to undermine economies of dominance by asserting and acting on a fundamental openness to others.

Derrida calls the most extreme form of openness to others “unconditional hospitality.” This is the ideal of hospitality, which requires that our national, social, or even personal thresholds be “open to each and every one, to every other, to all who might come, without question or without their even having to identify who they are or whence they came” (*On Cosmopolitanism* 18). Unconditional hospitality is not an act but an attitude, a “*preparation* for an act” (Burke, *Grammar* 20), and as such it is closely related to ethics. Indeed, Derrida claims that “one cannot speak of cultivating an ethic of hospitality [because] Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others. ...[E]thics is hospitality” (*On Cosmopolitanism* 16-7).

Ethics here may be understood in at least two senses: an outward sense and an inward sense. The outward sense of ethics aligns with the more popular understanding of the term—right behavior. The act of hospitality is certainly a matter of ethics in this sense because it refers to the specific ways people actually relate to one another. The inward sense of ethics is more closely tied to the etymological root of the term—*ethos*—and concerns identity. Unconditional hospitality is an ethical concern in this sense. As Tracy McNulty argues, hospitality “constitutes identity: the identity of the host, but also that of the group, culture, or nation in whose name he acts” (viii). In other words, it is only through my relations with others that I can know who I am. Two important points must be made about hospitality and identity. First, in McNulty’s argument, individual identity is inseparable from social and political identity. Second, and related to the first point, the identity fostered by hospitality is relational—that is, the identity of the host depends on the guest.

This is a paradox, of course: Host and guest are both separate and identified. This paradox of hospitality is crucial to understanding what hospitality is. In fact, it is encoded in the etymology of the term hospitality itself. The linguist Emile Benveniste has provided the most widely cited account of the origins of the term, arguing that the Latin *hospes*, from which the modern word derives, is a compound of roots with apparently contradictory meanings: *hostis*, meaning “guest” or “host,” and *pet* or *pot*, meaning “master” (71). On the one hand, the *hostis* root implies a reciprocal, interdependent relationship, as is evident from the fact that both host and guest are designated by a single term. In Roman custom, a *hostis* was a particular class of outsider who enjoyed the same rights as a citizen, and the relationship between *hostes* was ratified by an exchange of gifts (77). On the other hand, the *pet* root implies power, especially self-mastery or self-sufficiency—exactly the opposite of the reciprocity inherent in the idea of a *hostis*. Hospitality thus involves both interdependence and independence, the giving of oneself to an other and the maintenance of clear boundaries between the self and the other.

The paradoxical nature of the ethics of hospitality lends itself to abstract discussion, and numerous authors have explored this paradox in considerable detail. But in practice, unconditional, paradoxical hospitality is always constrained by particular laws—social norms and material conditions that limit it and prevent it from truly being unconditional. The task, argues Derrida, is to discover “how to transform and improve the law” so that “*The unconditional Law of hospitality*” does not remain “a pious and irresponsible desire, without form and without potency, and even [in danger] of being perverted at any moment” (22-3). But how to do this? The purpose of this dissertation is to examine one possible answer, by analyzing the practice of hospitality in the Catholic Worker movement in the 1930s. My argument is that, within the Catholic Worker movement, hospitality constituted a material rhetoric that enabled its members to offer insightful social critique.

Background: The Catholic Worker Movement

The Catholic Worker movement was a lay group started in 1933 by Dorothy Day (1897-1980) and Peter Maurin (1887-1949). Day was a writer and former socialist who had converted to Catholicism in 1927. Maurin was a French immigrant, a street preacher and “hobo apostle” (MacDonald, “Part I” n.p.) who was convinced of the need for a “green revolution”—the elimination of economic exploitation and dehumanizing violence through praxis based on Roman Catholic social doctrine and a return to an agrarian, non-capitalist economy. In 1932, when Maurin introduced himself to Day on the advice of a mutual acquaintance, Day was persuaded that Maurin’s program offered her a way to synthesize her socialist idealism and her Christian faith.

The first task Maurin proposed was the publication of a newspaper to popularize the social teachings of the Catholic Church and to promote “clarification of thought” on issues of social justice. Day

and Maurin feared that too many working class and poor people were being convinced to abandon religion because they were ignorant of the Church's social teachings, which, on paper at least, supported the rights of workers, and because even those Christians who were familiar with the Church's teachings were failing to live up to them. The newspaper, supplemented by discussions and lectures on Catholic social teaching, was to be a corrective to this problem. Although Maurin actually envisioned the paper exclusively as an outlet for his own writings, under Day's editorial leadership the paper, called the *Catholic Worker*, also included news related to workers' rights, pacifism, and racial justice, as well as quotations from the saints and from official Church documents. Day hoped that the paper could be a foil to the communist *Daily Worker*, and on May Day, 1933, Day and a handful of other volunteers distributed the first issue of the paper in Union Square.

The paper was at once an enigma and a success. Communists railed against it as a covert "program of fascism" (qtd. in Webb 76), and many Catholics objected to Day's and her followers' radical critique of modern society—a critique that frequently indicted bourgeois Catholics, including those in the Church hierarchy, for their failure to respond to the needs of poor people. One letter from an angry Catholic decried the paper as "the most poorly and thinly disguised sheet of Communistic, rabble-baiting literature" (qtd. in Miller *Harsh* 85). Despite these reactions, readership of the paper, which was published monthly and officially priced at one cent but often given away for free, rose from 2,500 in May 1933 to 20,000 in November of that year. By 1938, circulation had peaked around 190,000 (Roberts 48).

In the paper, Maurin urged the establishment of what he called houses of hospitality in each diocese in order to give care and shelter to those in need. An early reader of the paper pointed out that Day and the other members of the Catholic Worker movement ought to practice what they preached, and during the summer of 1933 they rented apartments in New York City that they set up as houses of hospitality where they lived in solidarity with the poor, sick, and homeless people who came to them. Day quickly came to

see these houses, which served as “homeless shelters, community centers, soup kitchens, and prayer gathering spaces” (Mehlretter, “Vernacular” 7), as essential to the Catholic Worker movement’s goal of re-evangelizing the working classes because the houses addressed a problem that she often identified by quoting Abbe Lugan: “You can’t preach the gospel to men with empty stomachs” (qtd. in Day, *House* Chapter 11). By 1939, when Day published *House of Hospitality*, an account of her experiences in the Catholic Worker movement up to that point, Day had also come to see the houses as important to the de-bureaucratization of charity; in these houses, hospitality was both a corporal work of mercy and a means of fostering social justice.

Maurin’s original plan for the houses of hospitality was that they should be half-way houses where unemployed and destitute people could be given shelter and rest. When guests at these houses were able, they could be sent to small rural communities, which Maurin envisioned as agronomic universities: places where people could learn to sustain themselves from the land rather than depend on modern, industrialized systems of wage labor. “There is no unemployment on the land,” Maurin often repeated.¹ Despite Maurin’s insistence on their importance, however, farms were never an especially successful part of the Catholic Worker movement in comparison with the newspaper and the houses of hospitality. In 1935 members of the Catholic Worker movement opened the first farming community on Staten Island, but for a variety of reasons, neither it nor the other farms established throughout the years ever became the agronomic universities that Maurin had hoped.²

¹ James Fischer points out that, the optimism of Maurin’s pre-modern economic ideals aside, in the 1930s there was in fact rampant unemployment among rural farmers in the United States (41).

² For a fuller history and analysis of the Catholic Worker movement’s farms, see Day’s *Loaves and Fishes*, Chapter 7 in Miller’s *A Harsh and Dreadful Love*, or Novitsky’s “Peter Maurin’s Green Revolution.”

One of the distinctive features of the Catholic Worker movement was its relationship with the hierarchy of the Church. Unlike some of the saints who inspired Day and who had sought to challenge the Church to follow the Gospel more faithfully—Francis of Assisi or Teresa of Avila, for instance—Day never sought official Church sanction for her work. The Catholic Worker movement was always a lay movement with no official status in the Church, and Day never asked her followers to subscribe to an official, common rule or to profess vows of any kind, as in religious orders. This separation from the institutional Church made the movement attractive to many who were not Catholic or even Christian but who shared Day's concern for social justice. Though Day herself hewed closely to official Church doctrine in theological and moral matters, her association with other radicals who did not profess such complete fidelity to the Church's teachings, as well as her radical views on economics, labor, and peace led to at least two official summonses to the Chancery of the Archdiocese of New York to defend herself before Church officials.

The Catholic Worker movement continued to grow throughout the 1930s, though Day's pacifist stance and consequent refusal to voice support for Franco, a Catholic whom many Catholics in the U.S. saw as defending Spain against atheism, during the Spanish Civil War cost her some support. By 1939 there were 30 houses of hospitality throughout the United States and in Canada and England. At the outbreak of the second World War, however, the number of the movement's followers declined sharply in response to Day's continued insistence on pacifism as central to the identity of the Catholic Worker movement. The movement recovered slowly during the 1940s and 1950s, and by the 1960s, as pacifism had become more popular—or at least more visible and widespread—the Catholic Worker movement, and Day in particular,

had become an important influence on both religious and social responses to war.³ When Day died in 1980, historian David O'Brien named her "the most significant, interesting, and influential person in the history of American Catholicism" ("Pilgrimage" 711).⁴ In 1997 Day's cause for canonization in the Roman Catholic Church was officially opened.

Although Day always identified Maurin as the founder of the movement, and in writing she professed to be an anarchist, Day was unquestionably the movement's leader and shaper—some called her a dictator (e.g., Cort 364; Day, *House* Chapter 9)—throughout its first several decades. William Miller, who later published a separate biography of Day, began his seminal book on the Catholic Worker movement by observing that Day was "the final exemplar/arbiter of what is contained in the substance of the Worker idea and how it is expressed in life" (xii). Likewise, Mel Piehl begins his similarly influential book *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America* by noting that "The Catholic Worker ... was Dorothy Day's invention, and ... a social, religious, and intellectual history of American Catholic radicalism ... turns out to be, in significant measure, an interpretation of the social outlook, religion, and ideas of this one person" (x). Therefore, as I consider the practice of hospitality at the Catholic Worker movement's houses, I focus primarily on how Day's understanding of hospitality affected what went on at the houses, particularly the flagship house, St. Joseph's, in New York City. The material rhetoric of

³ For analyses of the contributions of Day and the Catholic Worker movement to the peace movement in the United States in the 1960s, see Anne Klejment's and Nancy Roberts's *American Catholic Pacifism*, James J. Farrell's *The Making of the Sixties: Making Postwar Radicalism*, or Ira Chernus's *American Nonviolence: The History of an Idea*.

⁴ O'Brien's encomium to Day has met with widespread agreement, as evidenced by the fact that, according to O'Brien, it is "the most frequently quoted [sentence] from his significant corpus of scholarship" (Mize 36-7)

Catholic Worker hospitality, then, can best be understood in the context of Day's other rhetorical activities, most notably her autobiographical writing and her activist journalism in the *Catholic Worker*.

Rhetorical Studies of Day

In the inaugural issue of *The Catholic Worker* in May 1933, Dorothy Day wrote in the "To Our Readers" column:

The fundamental aim of most radical sheets is the conversion of its readers to radicalism and atheism.

Is it not possible to be radical and not atheist?

Is it not possible to protest, to expose, to complain, to point out abuses and demand reforms without desiring the overthrow of religion?

In an attempt to popularize and make known the encyclicals of the Popes in regard to social justice and the program put forth by the Church for the "reconstruction of the social order," this news sheet, *The Catholic Worker*, is started.

Day's rhetorical questions and their implication of another sort of "conversion"—that is, a conversion to theism—along with the pedagogical goal of popularizing Catholic social teaching, mark *The Catholic Worker* newspaper—and by extension, the whole Catholic Worker movement—as a self-consciously rhetorical enterprise. As a writer and as editor of the paper, Day was certainly concerned with the use of language to effect social change, so the argument hardly needs to be made that Day is a worthy subject of study for those interested in the practice of rhetoric in the United States in the twentieth century.

Indeed, in about the last decade, Day has received increasing attention from rhetoric scholars, and scholars in other fields where Day has a longer history of attention have also begun looking explicitly at her rhetoric, asking "How was Day persuasive?" For instance, while there is certainly no shortage of scholarly

treatments of Day's spirituality (see, e.g., DiDomizio; Klejment "Spirituality"; Merriman), theologian J. Leon Hooper has examined how Day used her spirituality persuasively. Hooper claims that Day appropriated and re-read St. Therese of Lisieux, a late-nineteenth century saint who was widely regarded as bourgeois and piously sentimental, in order to make Day's and Maurin's ideas more persuasive to Catholic audiences. There is little question that Day's devotion to Therese was sincere (the only biography that Day published was of Therese), yet at first glance, it seems paradoxical that such a personality as Therese would interest Day, who spent her life criticizing bourgeois complacency and sentimentality in the face of social injustice (I explore both Day's radical background and her relationship with Therese in more detail in Chapter 1).

Much of the rhetorical scholarship on Day begins in the same way as Hooper, noting that Day presents a paradox, or, as Catherine Carr Fitzwilliams calls her, echoing Martin Buber's phrase, "a unity of contraries": a radical anarchist who embraced a notoriously hierarchical Church; a pious and liturgically conservative Catholic who often explicitly criticized the actions of bishops and priests; a powerful and active woman—an "earth mother," as Debra Campbell has called her, who rejected many of the tenets of popular feminism; an activist whose FBI file described her as both a tool of Communism and "something of a fascist" (Roberts 144-5). An assumption guiding this rhetorical scholarship is that the apparent contradictions many people see in Day are a crucial element of her ethos, and so understanding how she reconciled or played on these tensions is key to understanding how Day was persuasive.

Autobiographies

Day's life writing offers scholars one way in which to approach the contradictions in Day's ethos. Day wrote several autobiographical books: *The Eleventh Virgin* (1924), an autobiographical novel⁵; *From Union Square to Rome* (1938), an apologia for her conversion to Roman Catholicism; *House of Hospitality* (1939), an account of the working of the Catholic Worker movement; *On Pilgrimage* (1948), a collection of excerpts from her diaries; *The Long Loneliness* (1952), an autobiography intended in part as a justification for the Catholic Worker movement; *Loaves and Fishes* (1963), a collection of essays about life in the Catholic Worker movement; and *On Pilgrimage: The Sixties* (1972), another collection of reflections and diary entries. Dana Anderson, in a chapter of his book on identity and conversion narratives, suggests that, in Burkean terms, Day's books, written in different circumstances and for different purposes, offer "*different* photographs of the *same* objects," that is, different terminological screens through which to read Day's life (Burke, *Language* 45). Anderson's argument is that Day constructs her identity in writing in various ways to encourage identifications. In other words, her autobiographies are persuasive not because of the claims they put forward but because of the identity they propose.

⁵ In the scholarship on Day, it is universally accepted that *The Eleventh Virgin* is transparently autobiographical. Day was quite uneasy about the book's existence because she feared that if details of her pre-conversion life (especially her abortion and her subsequent year-long rebound marriage) became widely known, young people would be encouraged eschew sexual morality. To her biographer William Miller, she held up a copy of *The Eleventh Virgin* and complained, "It's all true" (*Dorothy* xiii). The book was a critical failure, and few copies remain; however, in 2011, the text of the novel was added to the online archives of Day's writings at the Catholic Worker Movement's website.

Mary G. Mason sees the various ethoi that Day constructs for herself throughout her life writing as evidence that these works fit squarely in the traditions of women's spiritual autobiography and of American conversion narratives. For Mason, women's autobiography is often focused not on writing a singular, autonomous self (as in the tradition of male autobiography) but on writing a self within a relational community (186). Readers of Day's autobiographical writing quickly realize that Day's work and the relationships she developed in the Catholic Worker movement affected what she wrote because Day

allow[ed] it to shape her writing's content and form—going from one topic to another without clear transitions, repeating herself, digressing, inserting discussions of contemporary issues into her narrative of the past, presenting extended quotations from books and writers she found helpful (often without commentary), and including pages of life-stories visitors and staff as Catholic Worker houses across the country told her.

(Valenta 127)

This model of selfhood can make it difficult to determine whether the events narrated in an autobiography are personal or social, as “history is personalized and the personal is charged with the events of history” (O'Connor, “Dorothy” 292); indeed, Day begins *House of Hospitality*—a book that does not claim to be an autobiography—by noting that “what I write will be tinged with all the daily doings, with myself, my child, my work, my study, as well as with God. . . . Perhaps it is that I have a wandering mind. But I do not care. It is a woman's mind, and if my daily written meditations are of the people about me, of what is going on,—then it must be so” (Chapter 1).

But while Day's life writing does exhibit these characteristics of women's spiritual autobiography, other readers have identified different influences. Despite the communal, social aspect to Day's life writing, for instance, David Leigh notes that *The Long Loneliness*, in particular, still adheres closely to the traditional tripartite model for (male) autobiographical writing: youth, crisis and conversion, and life after conversion.

As well, Mason identifies typically American tendencies in Day's work: Day's autobiographies show the influences of both Puritan traditions in the degree of self-scrutiny in which Day engages, and the Quaker traditions of individual illumination that sets the protagonist apart from the rest of society and confers on her a prophetic mission (191).

Journalism

Other scholars of rhetoric have attempted to understand how Day was persuasive by looking at her writing in the *Catholic Worker*. From the start, Day and the other contributors to the paper were clear that its purpose was propaganda. Journalist and Catholic Worker Chuck Truckus argues that “never did any hint of journalistic objectivity appear in its controversial pages” (213). As with her life writing, the paper's role of propaganda placed it firmly within an established tradition. Shelia Webb points out that the paper “was launched during a time when much attention was devoted to ways to use journalism for social good” (78). Webb reads Day's writing in the *Catholic Worker* as following in the tradition not only of socialist publications like the *Call*, the *Masses*, and the *Liberator*, but also ones like the *Topeka Daily Capital*, an explicitly Christian newspaper that “functioned as a critique of the mainstream press” (78). In the *Catholic Worker*, Day used a number of strategies to persuade readers to share her views: reporting not only on events that happened but what should be done about it, reading and commenting on reports from other news outlets in light of the Gospel, and weaving personal experiences—both hers and those of the people she wrote about—into her accounts of social injustices (Webb 81).

Communications scholar Carol Jablonski argues the Day's experience as an activist journalist also contributed to her use of a rhetoric of “humble irony” in her writing in the *Catholic Worker* and in other venues where she defended the Catholic Worker movement. Invoking Kenneth Burke's phrase, Jablonski argues that Day used humble irony as a way of acknowledging her dialogic dependence upon her

interlocutors and critics even as she sought to persuade them. For instance, in the first issue of the *Catholic Worker*, Day wrote that the electric company had “helped” the movement publish the paper “by ‘taking’ their bill late” (qtd. in Jablonski, “Dorothy” 37). As Jablonski points out, this playful jab at the utility company creates a common ground between Day and her readers, who likely also had had run-ins with bill collectors. Such common ground is essential for irony to be effective; in *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke explains that irony that is humble “is based upon a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy” (514). Day often expressed this “fundamental kinship” in religious terms: “For Day, the Mystical Body of Christ provided a symbolic ‘container’ where all enemies or opposing ideas could be meaningfully brought together and made to appear functionally interdependent” (Jablonski, “Dorothy” 40). Despite this religious language, however, Jablonski concludes that Day’s rhetorical use of irony has complicated attempts to situate Day in the public memory, especially in relation to her possible canonization in the Roman Catholic Church.

Establishing common ground with readers was a primary concern of Day’s, as the *Catholic Worker* often contained material critical of both Communists and Church leaders. In her dissertation *Meeting When He Asks to Be Met: Public Religious Discourse in the Catholic Worker*, Kristine Johnson explores how Day negotiates religious and public discourses in order to persuade readers who were not Roman Catholic. According to Johnson, Day’s rhetorical strategies shifted throughout her career, from the use of rhetorical stasis in the 1930s, to a reliance on epideictic rhetoric after World War II, to an emphasis on ethos later in her life. When she describes Day’s use of ethos, Johnson’s analysis lines up with both Anderson’s and Jablonski’s: It was Day’s identity that was ultimately the most persuasive aspect of her rhetoric, and a significant element of her ethos was her humility. Rhetorician Sara Ann Mehlretter makes the complementary argument to Johnson’s: Day’s frequent references to saints and to Church dogma constituted a “vernacular rhetoric” crafted to persuade Catholic readers (“Vernacular”).

Out of these studies of Day's writing, a general picture emerges of Day as a skilled rhetor who was ultimately concerned with reconciling opposing and apparently contradictory viewpoints, who favored "a communication model textured by humanity" (Fitzwilliams 189), frequently appealing to her own experience and personality. Whether through her autobiographical writings, humble irony, or vernacular rhetoric, Day's main rhetorical strategy seems to have been to make readers feel "at home"; Dwight MacDonald calls Day "A good hostess on the printed page" ("Part II" 50). In other words, Day's rhetoric was often hospitable. But this extension of rhetorical hospitality comes with a challenge to readers. Day's appeals to her own identity position her as a host, using her writing to entertain contrary and possibly threatening guests in such a way as to reconcile them by fostering their mutual identification. Day's writing is hospitable in that it opens up space in which change can happen.

Contributions and Outline

My reference to the "space" opened by hospitality in Day's writings is obviously metaphorical. But what studies of Day's rhetoric have not yet addressed is that, in addition to her writing, Day was also devoted to the actual practice of hospitality—to the nonmetaphorical use of space to reconfigure identifications. As a journalist and prolific writer, Day was certainly concerned with the effective use of words to move her readers; however, Day was also interested in putting into practice what she wrote about, and her practice of the corporal works of mercy—of which hospitality is a key component—played an important role in how Day hoped to change people's attitudes and actions.⁶ What this dissertation offers is an analysis of how Day's practice of hospitality worked as rhetoric.

⁶ In Catholic teaching, the corporal works of mercy are to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, house the homeless, free the captive, visit the sick, and bury the dead. In a 1935 editorial Day complained about the

Unlike the textual studies of Day discussed above, one difficulty for a rhetorical analysis of Day's and her followers' hospitality is that, to a large degree, the material realities involved in the practice of Catholic Worker hospitality in the 1930s no longer exist. For instance, the food shared by workers and guests in the 1930s is obviously gone.⁷ In other cases, the materials of houses themselves have been transformed so far beyond their 1930s condition as to be completely unrelated to the Catholic Worker movement. A clear example of this is the house at 115 Mott Street in New York City, where the movement's flagship house of hospitality, St. Joseph House, was located for nearly fifteen years, but which in 2011 houses an herb store and a skin care center. The changes made over the years to the house and to the neighborhood render the materiality of its 1939 existence inaccessible. Therefore, as I consider the materiality of hospitality, I "must acknowledge and even work with (instead of struggle against or ignore) the facts of textual reproduction" (Blair 38), and consider the ways in which the materials of hospitality worked in conjunction with verbal discourses that reported and interpreted it.

The most comprehensive and easily accessible information about the practice of hospitality in the Catholic Worker movement comes from the written accounts of how hospitality was practiced at St. Joseph's. Especially significant among these are Day's and others' writings in the *Catholic Worker* paper and in *House of Hospitality*, along with a small number of unpublished studies of the Catholic Worker movement

lack of emphasis Catholics placed on the corporal works of mercy in the practice of their faith by noting that, in ten prayer books she consulted, not one listed these, though each listed the seven deadly sins ("A Long").

⁷ This, notwithstanding the Catholic Worker lore that, as each day soup was made simply by adding ingredients to yesterday's leftover soup, "a few dim atoms" of the first pot of soup prepared at St. Joseph's House continue to simmer even to the present day (Cornell, Ellsberg, and Forest 235).

available in the Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker archives at Marquette University.⁸ Sensitive to Richard Enos's call for a greater use of primary extratextual evidence about the rhetorical practices of women rhetors, I also draw on other items from the Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker archives, such as photographs, letters, budgets, and grocery lists, which round out the picture of hospitality at the Catholic Worker movement in the 1930s.

Besides filling a gap in the scholarship about an important twentieth-century rhetor, my analysis also offers a number of insights into hospitality that may shed light on current questions in rhetoric. First, my analysis of Day's and her followers' practice of hospitality shows how an epistemology can be grounded in the material realm. The educational activist Parker Palmer has argued that our inherited ways of knowing in the academy are primarily objectivist; that is, our relationship to the world around us is distant, analytic, and experimental ("Community"). Palmer and others have called for a reevaluation of this objectivism and a (re)valuing of that which is known through primarily material, not only intellectual, means. This critique of objectivism is a familiar one to rhetoricians, and my aim in this analysis is not to put forward yet another argument that humans are more than their intellects, but to show how hospitality, as a form of interaction grounded in the material, can give rise to knowledge that is relational rather than propositional.

In a related way, this analysis shows how a material practice such as hospitality can foster rhetorical invention. At least since Aristotle's treatment of *topoi*, space and invention have been closely connected in rhetoric. And while modern(ist) rhetoricians have generally discounted the material in favor of logic and scientific demonstration, more recent scholarship has show just how pervasive rhetoric's attachment to

⁸ Because Day transcribed much of this book directly from her diaries, the recent publication of those diaries by Robert Ellsberg unfortunately adds very little to our picture of the material reality of the Catholic Worker in the 1930s. Much more useful is his publication of her selected letters (*All*).

materiality is (Blair; Hawhee and Holding; Sharon-Zisser). In the case of Catholic Worker hospitality, the relational, dialogic way a host and a guest position themselves has the potential to give rise to what John Shotter calls “real presences,” perceptual phenomena that act on us as agents in their own right. Our interaction with these presences can offer us a transcendent experience of a reality beyond our everyday perception, a reality that allows us to act rhetorically in new ways.

Finally, this analysis offers a model of creative educational resistance to bureaucracy. Numerous authors have advocated pedagogies of hospitality as a way of enacting resistance to the dominant social order (e.g., Nouwen; O’Reilly; Palmer; Strange). But as Matthew Heard reminds us, the fact that a practice has the potential for resistance certainly does not make it immune to the forces in our field, profession, and society that would seek to institutionalize, bureaucratize, and thereby tame the radical power of that practice. What educators need, therefore, if we are to pursue hospitality (setting aside the question of whether our pursuit of it can ever be truly successful), is a model of hospitality successfully held in tension with the various forces that seek to restrain it, in spirit and in practice.

This dissertation proceeds as follows. In the first chapter, I discuss how Day understood hospitality. When she met Peter Maurin in 1932, he introduced her to his particular readings of Christian history, the social teachings of the Catholic Church, and personalists philosophers like Jacques Maritain and Nicolai Berdyaev. Day, of course, was no tabula rasa, and she would have understood Maurin’s indoctrination through a lens colored by her experiences up to that point. And because, as Maurin put it when he was overruled regarding the name of the *Catholic Worker*, “Man proposes; woman disposes” (Day, *Loaves* 20), it was Day’s understanding of hospitality, not Maurin’s, that determined how the members of the Catholic Worker movement practiced hospitality. Day’s concept of hospitality, I argue, was rooted in her experiences of loneliness; chief among these were her family’s response to the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, her career as a journalist, a pair of imprisonments, and a number of failed romantic

relationships. Other influences on Day's understanding of hospitality were her spirituality and her rather traditional views of gender, both of which led her to understand hospitality as a primarily material practice.

In Chapter 2, I present an analysis of this material practice, drawing on foundational scholarship in material rhetorics. I begin by showing how the materiality of hospitality affected both members and guests of the movement by encouraging their mutual identification. Then, as I consider how the practice of hospitality interacted with various discourses surrounding the Catholic Worker movement, I argue that the materials of space and food were especially strong influences on the formation of a Catholic Worker identity and the transmission of that identity through Day's writings. Furthermore, the material practice of hospitality effected a wider social critique that extended beyond the Catholic Worker movement. The rhetorical orientation of hospitality, in other words, made it more than a simple matter of local interpersonal interactions, but a means of drawing attention to and undermining social injustice.

In Chapter 3, I argue that one special consequence of Day's material practice of hospitality was the appreciation of real presences. These phenomena, which Day and her followers recognized through an explicitly theological language, gave workers a transcendent grounding from which to speak out against social injustices. In particular, the voluntary poverty that Day and her followers advocated as a means of identifying with poor people helped them to give up control over their situations, and this lack of control allowed them to enter into more dialogic, relational encounters with the world—a prerequisite for the manifestation of real presences. Voluntary poverty was therefore a necessary condition of hospitality as practiced in the Catholic Worker movement, and it ultimately led to Day's growing commitment to pacifism.

In the final chapter, I turn to composition studies and consider what an understanding of Day's and her followers' practice of hospitality can add to our ongoing conversation about the place of hospitality in the teaching of writing. While radical, transformative models of hospitality are attractive, there are

legitimate concerns about whether such forms of hospitality can or should be pursued within an institutional site like the university writing classroom. I argue that Day and her followers encountered forces of institutionalization that would place conditions on their hospitality and limit its transformative potential, and they responded to these forces (not always successfully) primarily through a rhetoric of domesticity. Ultimately, this rhetoric, as well as the religious roots of hospitality, may make some teachers unlikely to pursue hospitality in their classrooms, but for those who wish to do so, hospitality has a powerful subversive potential.

Chapter One: Loneliness and Hospitality

We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community. (Day, Long 286)

Lessons in Loneliness: 1897-1932

An analysis of Day's and her followers' practice of hospitality must begin by considering the factors that shaped that lens through which Day interpreted the ideas about hospitality that Maurin presented to her when they met in 1932—that is, the elements of Day's experiences, especially before the founding of the Catholic Worker movement, that contributed to her understanding of hospitality. One theme common to many of those experiences is loneliness, a theme which Day herself highlighted in her most-read autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*. In fact, in telling the story of her life, one of Day's implicit arguments is that, as her friend Fr. Daniel Berrigan put it, the “‘long loneliness’ [is] a synonym for life itself” (164). In this chapter, I outline how Day came to understand loneliness and its terminological counterpart, hospitality, through several of Day's experiences from before her conversion to Catholicism—the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, her socialist activism, a brief incarceration, and her abortion—and argue that these contributed to Day's conviction that the dialectic between loneliness and hospitality was fundamental to the human condition. Second, I consider the role that Day's Catholicism—especially as it was shaped by her association with Peter Maurin and her reading of Therese of Lisieux—played in shaping her understanding of hospitality. Third, I briefly examine how Day's views of gender, independent of and in concert with her religious sensibilities, shaped her understanding of hospitality. Ultimately, Day's personal experiences, her religion, and her views on gender led her to conceive of hospitality as a personal responsibility with profound social and theological consequences, a responsibility that could be practiced only through mundane and material actions.

Dorothy Day was born in Brooklyn in 1897, the fourth of five children John and Grace Saterlee Day. John was originally from Cleveland, Tennessee, and worked as a sports journalist. Although his newspaper work kept him out of the house most of the time, he still exerted strict control over his children's lives due to what Day described as "an old-fashioned and beautiful impulse to protect innocence" (Long 25). Day's mother was also not especially affectionate, and Day led a "secure but quite lonely childhood" in this Victorian family (Piehl 4).

A Model of Hospitality: Charity after the 1906 Earthquake

In 1904, John Day moved the family from New York to San Francisco when he took a job with the *Morning Telegraph*. In April 1906, the city was struck by a strong earthquake that killed more than 3,000 people and resulted in around \$400 million damage, both directly from the earthquake and from the massive fires that spread through the city after the earthquake damaged gas lines ("Where"). The earthquake struck just after 5:00 in the morning, when much of the city, including Day, was still asleep.

The earthquake gave Day her first exposure to the connection between loneliness and hospitality. She recalls that while their house was shaking, her parents carried her brothers and sister to safety, leaving her alone in her bed, terrified. Day writes that the terror she experienced during the earthquake was partly theological, as the event was "linked up with [her] idea of God as a tremendous Force, a frightening and impersonal God" (Long 21). The adult Day writes that this understandably frightening experience exposed her to "part of the world's tragedy"(21); it is unclear whether she means the earthquake or the experience of being left alone.

In the following days, however, Day's experience of the aftermath of the earthquake suggested to her that hospitality might be an appropriate response to such tragedy, as her family joined others in their

community in opening their doors to their neighbors, sharing clothes and food with those whose homes had been destroyed in the disaster:

Another thing I remember about California was the joy of doing good, of sharing whatever we had with others after the earthquake, an event that threw us out of our complacent happiness into a world of catastrophe. . . . When the earth settled, the house was a shambles, dishes broken all over the floor, books out of their bookcases, chandeliers down, chimneys fallen, the house cracked from the roof to ground. But there was no fire in Oakland. The flames and cloudbank of smoke could be seen across the bay and all the next day the refugees poured over by ferry and boat. Idora Park and the racetrack made camping grounds for them. All the neighbors joined my mother in serving the homeless. Every stitch of available clothes was given away. (*Long* 21-2)

Although Day does not make this event central to this or any of her other autobiographies (significantly, she does not record the earthquake at all in her pre-conversion autobiographical novel, *The Eleventh Virgin*), several scholars and biographers of Day have argued that it was “a memory with driving force” in shaping Day’s ideas about God, suffering, and the poor (O’Connor, *Moral* 23; see also Astell; Leigh). Theologian Ann Astell argues that “Day’s experience of an anti-sacrificial civilization of love emerging spontaneously out of a chaotic situation of social crisis” informed her sense that personal responsibility was key to “restoring order and peace to a community whose very existence is threatened” (19). For Day, the aftermath of the earthquake proved that a society based on mutual charity and hospitality was both possible and appropriate as response to destitution.

Importantly, the charity Day’s and other families offer after the earthquake is occasioned not by their prosperity, but by their common poverty with the “refugees” from across the Bay. The Days, like the people to whom they gave clothing, were survivors of the earthquake. Thus the aftermath of the earthquake

provided Day with a model not only of hospitality (welcoming the stranger, sharing goods) but of charity that arises out of solidarity with the homeless. From the time she was a child, in other words, Day saw a connection between hospitality and identification: Hospitality is offered by a hosts who recognize that they are fundamentally the same as the guests they receive.

Day's experience of the earthquake probably also shaped her understanding of religion. Though her family was only nominally religious at most, Day loved to read from the Bible, and in San Francisco she began to attend a Methodist church with the family who lived next door. Her churchgoing led her to become, in her later estimation, "disgustingly, proudly pious" (*Long* 20), but she also came to be very much afraid of a "God, a Voice, a Hand stretched out to seize [her], His child, and not in love" (21). Given this, it is not surprising that the earthquake would come to have a theological significance for Day, reinforcing the connection between hospitality and God. The terror of the earthquake and "the joy of doing good" were both central to Day's eventual understanding of humans' condition and responsibility before God.

Increasing Social Awareness

The office of the *Morning Telegraph* was destroyed in the earthquake, and the Days were forced to move to Chicago; it was there that Day spent most of her youth. Although they lived for a short time in an austere flat in the poorer South Side, John Day began working at *Chicago Inter-Ocean* newspaper and moved the family to a more comfortable Victorian home on the North Side.

As a teenager, she read authors like Jack London and Upton Sinclair, whose social realism awakened in her a growing concern with the conditions of poor people and with social injustices. In 1913, Day's youngest brother was born. Day doted over him and loved to push his carriage on long walks through their neighborhood. When she read Sinclair's *The Jungle*, which is set in Chicago, she began to divert her frequent walks in the city towards the slums out of curiosity to see first-hand the conditions described in the

novel. What she saw there led her to reflect on the ways that the Christians she knew about were responding critically to poverty and injustice:

[T]he destitute were always looked upon as the shiftless, the worthless, those without talent of any kind They were that way because of their own fault. ...

I did not see anyone taking off his coat and giving it to the poor. I didn't see anyone having a banquet and calling in the lame, the halt and the blind. And those who were doing it, like the Salvation Army, did not appeal to me. ... I did not want just the few, the missionary-minded people like the Salvation Army, to be kind to the poor, as the poor. I wanted everyone to be kind. I wanted every home to be open to the lame, the halt and the blind, the way it had been after the San Francisco earthquake. (*Long* 39)

In San Francisco, Day had seen that radical hospitality was possible (even if only in the short term), and so she was keenly disappointed when she saw that this possibility was not being realized in the slums of Chicago.⁹

Her growing awareness of social injustice in Chicago also contributed to her skepticism toward religion. This skepticism continued to deepen and, fueled by her reading and increasing radicalization, eventually turned into antagonism. In 1914, Day earned a scholarship to the University of Illinois in Urbana. There, a professor whom she admired commented in class “that religion was something that had brought great comfort to people throughout the ages, so that we ought not to criticize it” (*Long* 43). The

⁹ There is no evidence to suggest that Day was aware at the time of Jane Addams's Hull House, despite living in the same city (Hamington, “Two”).

clear subtext of this remark was that “the strong did not need such props,” and Day decided then to renounce her faith altogether (43).

Socialism

The early 1910s, when Day was in college, were the height of socialism’s political success in the United States. Socialist party membership peaked in 1912 around 118,000. This number was small compared with party membership in other countries, but despite the low rate of official party membership, socialists in the United States achieved significant political successes. For instance, by 1912 socialists had been elected to some 1,100 political offices in the United States, including the U.S. House of Representatives and the mayor’s offices in Milwaukee and Berkeley (Lipset and Marks 86). In the same year, Eugene Debs received 6% of the popular vote as the Socialist Party’s candidate in the U.S. presidential election, an electoral showing comparable to socialist candidates’ in other countries, and the greatest percentage ever earned by a socialist presidential candidate in the United States (86).

Socialism’s disproportionate political success may have been due in part to its effective use of journalism. Socialist newspapers were widespread; for example, in 1913, the socialist *Appeal to Reason*—in which *The Jungle* had originally been published as a serial—had a circulation of more than 750,000 (Lipset and Marks 151). As a college student, Day was nominally involved with the local socialist party, but Historian Mel Piehl argues that it was Day’s involvement with socialist journalism that most strongly expressed and reinforced her growing social awareness (8). While she was at the university, Day began to write articles for the local paper criticizing the exploitation of students by employers, and it was as a journalist that Day would soon begin moving in socialist circles.

When she left college in 1916 after only two years and moved to New York, she continued writing, taking a job with a socialist newspaper, *The Call*. Day landed this job because she agreed to be paid just five

dollars a week and to write about how she managed on that sum—an agreement which she framed as a mocking response to the “diet squad” of New York City policemen who had been publishing accounts of how little money they could live on. The diet squads were, Day believed, “the city’s answer to the high cost of living complaints” (*Long* 52). The terms of Day’s employment at *The Call*, therefore, encouraged her to experience solidarity with the poor people of the city.

Day’s reports on her “diet squad of one” lifestyle turned out to be rather dull; “it is a frightful bore,” she concluded, “to have to state specifically what you ate, what you are eating, and what you are going to eat” (qtd. in Miller, *Harsh* 45). Many of her other reports for *The Call* were much more compelling, offering dramatic sketches of the plight of poor people other than Day herself. For example, one article, published in late November 1916, began with the headline, “Dying Man Unable to Carve Turkey If Family Had One, but It Hasn’t; Another Home Has a Famished Brood.” In another article, “Mr. J. D. Rockefeller, 26 Broadway: Here’s a Family Living on Dog Food,” Day invokes a wealthy audience in order to highlight the material disparity between the wealthy and the poor. Day also addressed the causes of poverty: “East Side Home is Cold and Dreary, Because Machine Takes Tailor’s Job.” Day’s writing from this time emphasized personal details in an attempt to show the humanity of the people she wrote about in contrast to the dehumanizing conditions in which they lived. This desire to humanize also manifested itself in the way Day would eventually practice hospitality; just as Day’s writing aims to make the humanity and poverty of the people she wrote about present to her readers, so the practice of hospitality aims to make guests present.

Writing for *The Call* also gave Day her first exposure to the court system, which she describes as a rather uncomfortable experience. Although she was in court as a reporter on assignment, her writing suggests that she identified with the defendants: “[I]t was my first court assignment, and I didn’t know a thing that was going on and I was scared stiff and I expected to hear myself summoned to stand up for trial any minute” (“Girl”). Between 1917 and 1973, Day would go to prison herself several times—always as a

result of her engagement in a protest—and her reporting in *The Call* shows that she was already predisposed to identify with people whom the judicial system labeled as criminals.

Imprisonment and Abortion

About a year later, in November 1917, Day found herself in prison for the first time, officially on a charge of obstructing traffic, and this experience also shaped her concept of hospitality. Day had learned of the treatment of the advocates of women's suffrage arrested in Washington DC, who were "treated as ordinary prisoners, deprived of their own clothing, put in shops to work, and starved on the meager food of the prison" (*Long* 72). With her friend Peggy Baird, Day joined a group including Alice Paul and Lucy Burns who had determined to picket the White House, be arrested, and participate in a hunger strike on behalf of the jailed suffragists. Day writes that the protest began as planned:

They started out, two by two, with colored ribbons of purple and gold across the bosoms of their dresses and banners in their hands. There was a religious flavor about the silent proceedings. . . . There were some cheers from women and indignation from men, who wanted to know if the President did not have enough to bother him, and in wartime, too! By the time the third contingent of six women reached the gates—I was of this group—small boys were beginning to throw stones, and groups of soldiers and sailors appearing from the crowd were trying to wrest the banners from the hands of the women. The police arrived at once with a number of patrol wagons. I had to struggle for my banner too, with a red-faced young sailor, before a policeman took me by the arm and escorted me to the waiting police van. Our banners were carried, protruding from the back of the car, and we made a gay procession through the streets. (*Long* 73)

The women were quickly released on bail, and after a rushed trial the next day—all the women were found guilty of obstructing traffic, with the sentence postponed—the women returned to the White House to picket again, and they were again arrested, tried, and released. When they picketed and were arrested for the third time, however, the women refused bail and were held overnight. At their trial this time, the women received prison sentences ranging from fifteen days to six months—Day received thirty days—and immediately determined to begin their hunger strike.

They then were made to wait for hours before being transported in cramped cars to the Occoquan Workhouse, where they endured what has come to be known as the Night of Terror. The guards physically carried the women to their cells and threw them inside; some were beaten, at least one to the point of passing out. Day says that she struggled against this treatment and tried to find Peggy in a “blind desire to be near a friend,” suggesting that her fundamental concern at that point was not to be alone (76).

Day was placed in a cell with Lucy Burns, who, as one of the leaders of the group, was handcuffed to the cell bars for hours before being allowed to lay down. When the women tried to call out to other members of their group in cells down the hall, the guards threatened to put them in straightjackets and gag them. The women were not offered food until the next day, but they refused it. This small violation of hospitality—refusing the milk and toast their “hosts” offered them—was meant to draw attention to the terrifically unjust treatment of political prisoners, themselves included. In other words, the women violated the norms of hospitality in order to show how important those norms are, even in a prison.

Being in prison was an excruciating experience for Day, in part because of the hunger strike: “Those first six days of inactivity were as six thousand years. To lie there through the long day, to feel the nausea and emptiness of hunger, the dazedness at the beginning and the feverish mental activity that came after” (*Long* 77). The experience led to a sort of identity crisis. She recalls, “I lost all consciousness of any cause. I had no sense of being a radical, making protest against a government, carrying on a nonviolent

revolution. ... I lost all feeling of my own identity” (78). This loss of her identity was precipitated by the mutual violations of hospitality. The cold and isolated cells, together with the lack of food, drove Day into despair. “Never would I recover from this wound,” she writes, “this ugly knowledge that I had gained of what men were capable in their treatment of others” (79). I suggest that Day did not forget what she learned from her first imprisonment, and that the “ugly knowledge” shaped her understanding of how humans ought to relate to one another. Day learned that in isolation there is no identity, and that only in community with others are humans able to know who they are.

The loss of identity that Day experienced led her to act in at least two ways that she saw at the time as failures. She asked for a Bible and was finally given one after four days. Though she was disappointed in herself for her apparent weakness in seeking religious comfort, she writes that her “heart swelled with joy and thankfulness for the Psalms” (*Long* 80). She also failed to keep the hunger strike as she had intended. On the sixth day, the women were transferred to hospital cells, and two days later she accepted a piece of toast soaked in milk that Peggy Baird was able to pass into her cell. Day rationalized that, by accepting the bread, she was both supporting her friend by offering social legitimation of Baird’s fast-breaking, and cheating the prison guards by eating food they did not know about. After ten days of the hunger strike, it was announced that the strikers’ demands for better treatment of political prisoners would be met, and Day and the rest of her group began eating and were transported to a much more comfortable jail for the remainder of their sentences.

Day returned to New York in December. About the years of her life that followed, from 1918 to around 1924, Day wrote evasively in *The Long Loneliness*, “I find that there is little to say” (94). But it was hardly an uneventful period for her. She began working as a writer for *The Liberator*, a socialist newspaper edited by Crystal Eastman, and interning as a nurse to help respond to the influenza epidemic. Also, in 1918, she became romantically involved with Lionel Moise, a newspaperman who had a reputation for

womanizing. When she became pregnant by him, she feared that Moise would leave her if she kept the baby, so she procured an abortion. Returning home after the procedure, however, she found a note from Moise explaining that he'd taken a job in another city and that she should try to forget about him.

Day does not record her abortion in her later autobiographies, though she did reluctantly discuss it with her biographer William Miller, and her character June in *The Eleventh Virgin*—a plainly autobiographical novel published in 1924—has one. Day's experience of the abortion and abandonment certainly contributed to Day's sense that loneliness is the most troubling problem of modern society. The abortion itself was an experience that Day would later consider one of the most profound violations of hospitality possible, an unprovoked attack on a stranger who had come into her presence (Astell, "Loneliness" 199). But perhaps more importantly in terms of Day's pre-conversion understanding of loneliness and hospitality, this violation of hospitality was motivated by a desire not to be alone: Paradoxically, it was her fear of losing companionship that led her to seek out the abortion.

After Moise left her, Day quickly sought out other companionship and married Berkeley Tobey, a man to whom she was apparently badly suited, as the marriage lasted less than a year. They separated while they were on an extended European vacation, and afterwards Day spent six months in Italy, where she wrote *The Eleventh Virgin*. Returning to the United States in 1920, Day settled in Chicago (she had learned that Moise was living there, and she entertained some hope that they might be reunited), and there she had her second experience of prison, an experience which, like her time in Occoquan in 1917, gave her a lesson in hospitality.

An acquaintance of Day's, Mae Cramer, tried to commit suicide by poisoning herself. She was hospitalized, and a few days later signed herself out and went to stay at a flop house run by the IWW. Cramer sent word to Day and asked her to bring food and clothing, and Day went immediately. By unfortunate coincidence for the two women, that same night the police raided the house in an effort to

suppress the communist-affiliated work of the IWW. When the police found Day and Cramer in the house, they arrested the women on charges of prostitution. Day later called this arrest “as ugly an experience as I ever wish to pass through, though a useful one” (*Long* 100). Day was not treated as violently as she had been at Occoquan, but she found this experience of imprisonment even more offensive because everyone with whom she interacted—both her jailors and the women with whom she shared a cell—assumed that she was in fact a prostitute. Unlike her arrest in 1917, when Day was imprisoned for a cause she (at least initially) supported, on this occasion was made to feel that her imprisonment was the result of her own foolishness in entering the flop house.

Conversion and Crisis

In 1927, Day officially converted to Roman Catholicism. Though she had been a professed atheist for more than ten years, she never really succeeded in purging a religious sensibility from her personality, as the solace she found in reading the Bible while she was in prison demonstrates. In 1918, she began attending Mass occasionally with a friend from the hospital where she was volunteering, not praying but “warmed and comforted by ...the atmosphere or worship” (*Long* 84). She appreciated especially the fact that the Catholics whom she saw at Mass were the masses to whom she was devoted as a radical. Reflecting on her eventual conversion, she writes:

My very experience as a radical, my whole make-up, led me to want to associate myself with others, with the masses, in loving and praising God. Without even looking into the claims of the Catholic Church, I was willing to admit that for me she was the one true Church. She had come down through the centuries since the time of Peter, and far from being dead, she claimed and held the allegiance of the masses of people in all the cities where I had lived. (139)

Even before she articulated a faith in God, Day was attracted to Catholicism as a community.

One of the most significant events that precipitated Day's conversion was her common-law marriage to Forster Batterham, a biologist whom she met through her friend Peggy Baird.¹⁰ Day and Batterham soon began living together in the Staten Island cottage that Day had bought with royalties from the movie rights to *The Eleventh Virgin*. In *The Long Loneliness* Day recalls this period of her life as one of "natural happiness," and she was surprised to find herself beginning to pray again, despite a nagging conviction that religion was a crutch and an opiate.

Batterham "did not believe in bringing children into such a world as [he and Day] lived in," and was absolutely opposed to religion (*Long* 136). Nonetheless, when Day became pregnant she was determined to keep the baby (she had believed that her abortion left her sterile) and to have the baby baptized as a Catholic. And she decided that she, too, would be baptized, even though it would mean the end of her relationship with Batterham. Day was very much in love with him, but he opposed the institution of marriage as much as he opposed religion, and Day could not become a Catholic if she continued to live with him outside of marriage. The separation from Batterham was painful for Day, and her letters to him from the years following her conversion indicate that she hoped they might be reconciled and he might be persuaded to marry her.¹¹

Day writes that she found "no consolation whatsoever" in joining the Catholic Church (148). In addition to the emotional turmoil of ending her relationship with Batterham, Day was confronted by "the scandal of businesslike priests, of collective wealth, the lack of sense of responsibility for the poor," all of

¹⁰ Baird had married Malcolm Crowley, and it was through the Crowleys that Day met Batterham, whose sister was, at the time, married to Kenneth Burke.

¹¹ Batterham regularly sent Day money to help support their daughter.

which offended her understanding of Christianity and radical sensibilities (*Long* 150). Uncertain of her place in the Church, Day drifted from job to job for about five years after her conversion. She continued to write. She worked as a housekeeper for a house of Marist priests. In 1929 she was hired to write dialog for motion pictures and moved to Hollywood, but she found the work and her life there trivial and boring, so after her three-month contract ended, she moved with her daughter to Mexico City. Despite the political turmoil in Mexico during the 1920s, the articles Day published in *Commonweal* during this time focus on her daily life with her daughter and the lives of the poor people with whom she lived. As a writer, Day still emphasized the description of people and places, as she had as a journalist in the 1910s, but she did not connect these details with larger political points; Day had not yet discovered how to write (or live) as both a radical and a Catholic.

In 1930, Day returned to New York, but despite being back in the city where she had lived throughout much of the 1920s, she still felt isolated from the radical circles with which she used to associate. At the same time, she personally knew very few Catholics, and in December 1932, five years after her conversion, her sense of isolation reached a crisis point. She was in Washington, DC, as a freelance journalist working for two Catholic magazines on a story about a hunger march that was scheduled to take place. Although she was sympathetic to the marchers' cause, she lamented that she could not join them:

I stood on the curb and watched them, joy and pride in the courage of this band of men and women mounting in my heart, and with it a bitterness too that since I was now a Catholic, with fundamental philosophical differences, I could not be out there with them. I could write, I could protest, to arouse the conscience, but where was the Catholic leadership in the gathering of bands of men and women together, for the actual works of mercy that the comrades had always made part of their technique in reaching the workers?

How little, how puny my work had been since becoming a Catholic, I thought. How self-centered, how ingrown, how lacking in sense of community! (*Long* 165)

After the march, she prayed “that some way would open up for [her] to use what talents [she] possessed for [her] fellow workers, for the poor” (166). When she returned to New York days later, Day met the person she later understood to be the answer to this prayer, Peter Maurin.

Religious Influences: Peter Maurin and Therese de Lisieux

Maurin was born in 1877 into peasant family in Oultet, France. As a teenager, he lived for a time in community as a Christian Brother, but he eventually left the order and in 1903 became involved with a lay movement known as Le Sillon, which worked to integrate Catholicism with democracy in France in response to Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum* on the conditions of labor in the modern world. Despite initial support from Church leaders, Le Sillon was condemned by a papal letter in 1910 as too modernist and antagonistic towards the Church hierarchy, but even before this Maurin grew dissatisfied with the movement’s emphasis on the political as a means of advancing social justice (Novitsky 85). Maurin was deeply critical of modern, industrialized society, arguing that unemployment, poverty, and the spiritual malaise that resulted from them could be remedied by a large-scale return to an agrarian economy; but he had little interest in using political means to achieve this goal. Furthermore, Maurin was frustrated by the reluctance of the movement’s organizer, Marc Sangnier, to explore intellectually the roots of social problems.

In 1908 Maurin emigrated to America, where he first tried unsuccessfully to live as a farmer in rural Saskatchewan and then traveled to the United States and took a series of odd jobs. In 1925, he had what his biographer Arthur Sheehan describes as “some great religious experience” (83), the details of which, unfortunately, Maurin never shared with anyone. One result of this experience was that Maurin

travelled to New York and began preaching his ideas about a “green revolution” on street corners, on buses, and in libraries to anyone who would listen. “The content of Maurin’s program,” his biographer Anthony Novitsky points out, “was not original, but rather based on large doses of Thomas Aquinas, Kropotkin, Proudhon, Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, Eric Gill, Vincent McNabb, Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius XI and Luigi Sturzo, among others” (87).¹² Maurin’s “green revolution” was to include the “clarification of thought” through round-table discussion and a radical Catholic newspaper, houses of hospitality to care for poor or homeless people, and farming communities that would function as agronomic universities.

One of Maurin’s admirers was an editor at *Commonweal*, a progressive Catholic magazine to which Day often contributed articles. Maurin had read some of Day’s articles and thought she might be receptive to his ideas, and the editor of *Commonweal* gave him Day’s address. When Day returned from covering the 1932 hunger march in Washington, she found Maurin waiting for her, and it was through talking with Maurin (being “indoctrinated” by him, as Day often put it) that Day found the synthesis of radicalism and Catholicism that she had been searching for.

As a journalist, Day was immediately receptive to the idea of a radical newspaper, but she saw the necessity of hospitality, as well. For Maurin, hospitality meant a return to the medieval Christian practice of offering food and shelter to the stranger and to the poor. In one of his “easy essays”—short verse-style manifestos that he proclaimed on street corners or recited to anyone who would listen, and would eventually publish in the *Catholic Worker*—Maurin criticized modern Christianity for its failure to practice hospitality:

¹² Novitsky argues that the history of the Catholic Worker movement can best be understood if one keeps in mind that—given the authors from whom Maurin synthesized his ideas—the movement “is a product neither of the American Left nor of liberal Catholicism but, rather, of the European Right” (83).

People who are in need
and are not afraid to beg
give to people not in need
the occasion to do good
for goodness' sake.

Modern society calls the beggar
bum and panhandler
and gives him the bum's rush.
But the Greeks used to say
that people in need
are the ambassadors of the gods.

Although you may be called
bums and panhandlers
you are in fact
the Ambassadors of God.

As God's Ambassadors
you should be given food,
clothing and shelter
by those who are able to give it.

Mahometan teachers tell us
that God commands hospitality,
and hospitality is still practiced
in Mahometan countries.

But the duty of hospitality
is neither taught nor practiced
in Christian countries. (“Duty”)

By suggesting that the people of supposedly “Christian countries” compare poorly with Muslims and (pagan) Greeks in their practice of hospitality, Maurin argues that Christians have failed in their “duty.” This argument expresses Maurin's belief that Christianity, if it were only practiced, could bring about the transformation of society.

Elsewhere, Maurin recommends a specific manner of practicing Christianity by providing hospitality to those who need it:

We read in the Catholic Encyclopedia
that during the early ages
of Christianity
the Hospices
or Houses of Hospitality
was a shelter
for the sick, the poor,

the orphan, the old, the traveller,
and the needy of every kind. (“Hospices”)

In another easy essay, Maurin claims that the justification for establishing these houses of hospitality is “to give to the rich/ the opportunity / to serve the poor” and “to bring the scholars / to the workers / or the workers / to the scholars” (“Houses”). Because Maurin called for a return to the hospitable practices of “the early ages / of Christianity,” and Maurin’s understanding of Christian history and of hospitality were crucial in shaping how Day and her followers practiced hospitality, it is important to understand both the historical and theological basis for hospitality in the Christian tradition.

Hospitality in the Christian Tradition

Hospitality has long been an important component of religious practice in many traditions, including Christianity, though scholars point out that the role of hospitality in Christianity has been downplayed, ignored, or twisted in recent centuries (Murray; Pohl). Hospitality is often understood to be a means of encountering God, who may come in the guise of a stranger. The story of Abraham in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis is a paradigmatic example of this from the Judeo-Christian tradition:

And the Lord appeared to him [Abraham] in the vale of Mambre as he was sitting at the door of his tent, in the very heat of the day. And when he had lifted up his eyes, there appeared to him three men standing near him: And as soon as he saw them he ran to meet them from the door of his tent, and adored down to the ground. And he said: Lord, if I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away from thy servant: But I will fetch a little water, and wash ye your feet, and rest ye under the tree. And I will set a morsel of bread, and strengthen ye your heart, afterwards you shall pass on: for therefore are you come aside to your servant. And they said: Do as thou hast spoken. Abraham made haste into the tent to

Sara, and said to her: Make haste, temper together three measures of flour, and make cakes upon the hearth. And he himself ran to the herd, and took from thence a calf very tender and very good, and gave it to a young man, who made haste and boiled it. He took also butter and milk, and the calf which he had boiled, and set before them. But he stood by them under the tree. (18.1-8)

The text does not make clear whether the first sentence is to be understood as an exegesis of the events that follow it, or as depicting what Abraham was doing prior to his encounter with the three strangers.

Regardless, what is clear is that Abraham shows the strangers hospitality without knowing who they are.

Later, the strangers reveal themselves to be divine by predicting that Abraham's wife, Sarah, who is past childbearing years, will have a son within a year.

This episode stands in direct contrast to the events that follow it in the text. Taking their leave from Abraham, the guests reveal that they are traveling to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destroy them because of their residents' sins. Abraham, concerned that there may be innocent lives lost, convinces God to agree not to destroy Sodom if God can find ten righteous people there. The guests then go to Sodom, and the residents attempt to assault them and are prevented from doing so only by Lot, who guards the guests in his house. The city's residents' failure to show hospitality towards the strangers is sufficient confirmation of their collective guilt, and the city is destroyed, with only Lot and his family being allowed to escape (Genesis 18.16-19.30). Taken together, these two encounters with strangers make clear that God rewards hospitality and considers lack of hospitality to be indicative of moral depravity.

Later in the Hebrew tradition, hospitality towards strangers becomes an explicit part of the Law: In Exodus, God commands that aliens be sheltered. God provides an additional reason for the exhortation to practice hospitality: "Thou shalt not molest a stranger, nor afflict him: for yourselves also were strangers in the land of Egypt" (22.21). God's people are to practice hospitality out of a sense of identification with

those who are separated from their homes. And when Christians later read the account of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt as an anagogical sign of God's leading all people out from slavery to sin into the freedom of salvation, God's exhortation to hospitality was understood as applying to all people because all people had once been exiles in the spiritual sense.

For Christians, two passages in the Gospels make clear the requirement of hospitality. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus commands his followers that when they host a meal, they should not invite their friends or wealthy people (lest the host's generosity be returned), but "the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind" (14.13), indicating the preferred recipient of Christian hospitality. And in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus explains that hospitality to the poor is hospitality towards Christ and will be rewarded at the last judgment: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it [i.e., offered food, drink, shelter, or clothing] to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (25.40). Christian social ethicist Christine Pohl argues that "This has been the most important passage for the entire tradition on Christian hospitality" because it made caring for the material needs of poor people the central aim of Christian practice (22). According to Pohl, it was the Christian emphasis on hospitality towards the poor, rather than towards noble or worthy strangers, that separated it from other ethics of hospitality practiced throughout the Hellenic world (5).

This passage above from Matthew 25, besides exhorting Christ's followers to practice hospitality, also provides the basis for a theological understanding of why hospitality matters. Because Christians believe that Jesus is God, and because Jesus identifies himself with the recipients of hospitality, Christians who offer food or shelter to those in need have the opportunity to receive God. Of course, for many Christians, receiving the Eucharist—taking Christ's body into their own—is the paradigmatic act of hospitality. But whether Christians engage in hospitality towards God through this sacrament or through their interaction with other people, their disposition towards hospitality becomes not merely a matter of ethics but one of ontology. Christians believe that humans are made in the likeness of God (Genesis 1.26), and that sin

separates people from God by destroying that likeness. By receiving God, Christians overcome this separation from the divine; hospitality thus contributes to Christians' sanctification and glorification before God.

Other writings in the Christian scriptures urge hospitality as well (e.g., Romans 12.13; 1 Timothy 3.2; Hebrew 13.2). The First Letter of St. Peter addresses Christians as "strangers dispersed." Echoing the Hebrew call for identification as a motive for hospitality, this greeting makes use of what theologian Benjamin Dunning calls the "resident alien topos," reminds readers that they are members of the Kingdom of God, not of this world. Christians are thus not to think of themselves as at home here, and like the Israelites, they are to shelter the stranger because they know what it is to be a stranger.

In the first centuries after Christ, when Christians were periodically persecuted, Christians who practiced hospitality did so by opening their homes to others because these were the only spaces available to them. But as Christianity became an accepted and then official religion, it became easier for churches to establish hospitals where the poor and the sick could be cared for. For instance, around 370 C.E. Basil of Caesarea founded a hospital to care for victims of a famine, which became one of the first widely recognized institutionalized sites of Christian hospitality (Pohl 44). As such institutions became more common, they faced the problem that, as they were able to provide for the material needs of more and more people, they worked less and less as sites where individual Christians could encounter Christ by offering hospitality to the poor. Several Christian writers addressed this problem. One of the most prolific writers on Christian hospitality, John Chrysostom (349-407), urged Christians not to neglect offering hospitality to strangers in their own homes. Peter Maurin was fond of quoting Jerome, John's contemporary, as insisting that every house should have a "Christ room." Augustine likewise urged the personal practice of hospitality as a way for Christians to remember that all people are "in need" before God (Pohl).

Despite the urging of such notable churchmen, hospitality largely continued to be institutionalized (and practiced less and less on an individual scale) throughout the Middle Ages (Pohl 48). Dioceses established hospices to serve as shelters “for the sick, the poor, / the orphan, the old, the traveler, / and the needy of every kind,” as Peter Maurin noted (“Hospices”). In the sixth century, Benedictine monasticism enshrined hospitality as an essential service of monasteries; an entire chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict is devoted to norms for the reception of guests. With its increasing institutionalization, however, hospitality came to play a more and more peripheral role in the religious lives of most Christians, especially the laity. The various factors that contributed to this decline in personal hospitality are largely irrelevant here; the point is that by the time Peter Maurin met Dorothy Day in 1932, in advocating hospitality he was calling for a return to a badly neglected Christian practice.

Personalism

Day’s understanding of hospitality was also shaped by her exposure, again through Peter Maurin, to the philosophy of personalism. Although personalism is notoriously difficult to define, its most basic tenet is that the greatest good is the human person, so all ethical decisions and actions must be made in response to the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Importantly, this philosophy is radically opposed to individualism; while for the personalist the human person is the highest good, personhood cannot be fully realized in isolation. At the same time, change in society must be rooted in and effected by persons, rather than by impersonal bureaucracies. Although personalism is not explicitly a Christian philosophy, a number of thinkers in Maurin’s circle were deeply committed to it as an alternative to individualist liberalism and materialist, collectivist Marxism that were popular in Europe in the early twentieth century.

One such Christian personalist whose ideas Maurin presented to Day was the exiled Russian philosopher Nicolai Berdyaev (1874-1948). Berdyaev was extremely critical of the bourgeois spirit, which

he associated with “an endless search for the expedient and the useful” and that had the effect of objectifying persons (qtd. in Zwick and Zwick, “Roots” 66). In response to atheist and materialist narratives of social progress so prominent in the revolutionary movements of the early twentieth century, Berdyaev argued that “in the Incarnation and Redemption, Christ stands at the center of history and that the human person, made in the image and likeness of God, is meant to participate with God in the building of the New Creation” (Zwick and Zwick, “Roots” 66-7). William Miller calls Berdyaev a “particular prophet” of the Catholic Worker movement because Berdyaev’s insistence on the centrality of the human spirit encouraged Day and her followers to see those who came to the houses of hospitality as guest—that is, as persons—rather than as clients (*Harsh* 7; see also Zwick and Zwick, *Catholic* 91).

Another personalist who profoundly influenced Maurin was Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950). Maurin had been exposed to Mounier’s ideas through the journal *L’Esprit*, which Mounier first published just two months before Maurin and Day met in 1932. In his *Personalist Manifesto*, Mounier voiced the criticism of modern society that Maurin would so often echo:

Historically, the crisis that presses upon us is more than a simple political crisis or even than a profound economic crisis. We are witnessing the cave-in of a whole area of civilization, one, namely, that was born towards the end of the middle ages, was consolidated and at the same time threatened by the industrial age, is capitalistic in structure, liberal in its ideology, bourgeois in its ethics. (Mounier 8)

Maurin was such a strong supporter of Mounier’s ideas that he personally translated the *Personalist Manifesto* into English so that it could be read more widely.

Because of its insistence on the value of the human person, Maurin’s personalism resonated with the notions of hospitality Day had already formed, and it shaped the way that members of the Catholic Worker movement would practice hospitality. Day’s life experiences before meeting Maurin had led her to

value individuals and to see hospitable relations among individuals as the model for the better functioning of society, and personalism led her to stress that society could only be improved if individual people, especially Christians, practiced the works of charity, rather than relying on the state to care for those in need.

Therese of Lisieux

Besides Peter Maurin, the person who probably had the most significant effect on Day's vision of hospitality was Therese of Lisieux, whose name Day first encountered in 1927, just before Day entered the Church. Therese, a Carmelite nun, had died at the age of 24 in 1897 and was canonized remarkably soon afterwards, in 1925. Devotion to this saint, who was also known as Therese of the Little Child Jesus, spread quickly among Roman Catholics. Therese was known for her spirituality of the "little way," which emphasized the sanctifying potential of the most ordinary events and sought anonymity and childlike obedience rather than self-determination and achievement. Although Therese did not write specifically about hospitality, her effect on Day is evident from the fact that Day often described her own approach to hospitality as a "little way."

Day was not immediately impressed with Therese, however. When she first read Therese's autobiography, she found it "colorless, monotonous, too small" (*Therese* vii). As someone who had spent the greatest portion of her life thus far as a radical bent on righting the world's social ills, Day was insulted by what she saw as a bourgeois saint. "What did she have to do," Day complained of the cloistered, middle-class young woman, "with this world conflict, in which I in my way was involved?" (x). Theologically, Day was also critical of Therese's idea of mortification, which apparently consisted "in eating what was put in front of her" or enduring a "splash of dirty water from the careless washing of a nun next to her in the

laundry” (viii); Day was already familiar with saints who had endured tortures—Joan of Arc was a favorite—and to Day’s mind Therese was disappointingly soft.

Day was not the only person to recoil at the piety this saint appeared to endorse. Theologian Frederick Bauerschmidt writes that many Catholics have been “Rightly troubled by certain aspects of Therese’s history,” such as “the proto-fascist Catholic culture in which she was raised and the pernicious effects to which her image and story have subsequently been put” (80). Chief among those pernicious effects is the promotion of an apparently passive, saccharine model of female piety.

Yet Day gradually came to change her mind about Therese. For one thing, Day began to approach the saint in the same way that she had approached the Church—that is, through the masses. Just as the Roman Catholic Church “claimed and held the allegiance of the masses of people” (Day, *LL* 139), so “it was the ‘worker,’ the common man, who first spread [Therese’s] fame” (*Therese* 173). At the same time, however, the mere fact that Therese appealed to the masses did not mean that Day approached her in the same way that the masses did. Day needed to “read” Therese in a way that was consistent with her own more revolutionary values, and, as Bauerschmidt points out, any text as “overdetermined” as Therese is open to a number of possible readings. For example, Bauerschmidt suggests that Day came to see in Therese a response to the problem of modernism—for Day, the problem of loneliness. If, for many thinkers, the hierarchical understanding of the world and people’s relationship to God was no longer tenable after the nineteenth century, then perhaps

Her Little Way is not a “way of perfection,” but, in Simon Tugwell’s phrase, a way of *imperfection*. Her focus on her own littleness expresses not simply the saccharine piety of an eternally youngest child from a doting family, but it makes a radical statement about the impossibility in modernity of any “progress” up a ladder of perfection toward God. (84)

In other words, Day must have come to see Therese's little way as a better solution to the social problems of her day than the heroic, confrontational approaches that models like Joan of Arc seem to suggest.

Therese's little way offered Day what Bauerschmidt calls an "alternative politics" (87); that is, a novel way of addressing social injustice without resorting to violent revolutionary struggle or oppressive bureaucracies. This alternative politics had the advantage of being available to the poor people with whom Day came into contact; in fact, it may have been the only means available to them because "it does not presume that control [i.e., political power] is either the precondition or the goal of political action" (89). In her 1960 biography of Therese, Day likened the potential effectiveness of small actions to the potential of the atom:

Is the atom a small thing? And yet what havoc it has wrought. Is her little way contribution to the life of the spirit? It has all the power of the spirit of Christianity behind it. It is an explosive force that can transform our lives and the life of the world, once put into effect.
(175)

Day also came to appreciate the relevance of Therese's spirituality for the Catholic Worker movement through the practice of hospitality: "Year upon year of serving meals, making beds, cleaning, and conversing with destitute, outcast people provided Dorothy with 'schooling' in the Little Way" (Allaire 197). Thus, Day's understanding of hospitality and her reading of Therese became mutually influential factors in her life in the Catholic Worker movement, and Day often defended her practice of hospitality in terms of its littleness. Yes, the work was dirty and mundane, but, she argued, this is what Christians were called to do for their sisters and brothers. Day also found the smallness of this popular saint's spirituality to be a rhetorically useful foil against the inevitable disappointment of never being able to do enough to help those in need. As she wrote in her column in the March 1938 issue of the paper:

There is always so little we can do. There is always the complaint—"but we are only feeding them!" from some members of the groups in different parts of the country. It is right never to be satisfied with the little we can do, but we must remember the "little way" of St. Therese,—we must remember the importance of giving even a drink of cold water in the name of Christ. ("Day after Day—More")

Against those who argued (as Day had initially believed) that the best way to combat social injustice was through large-scale revolutionary efforts and that by offering hospitality to people in need members of the Catholic Worker movement failed to address the underlying social problems, Day suggested that what was needed was not heroic deeds but faithful ones.

Gender and Hospitality

Day's relationship with Therese is intertwined with Day's views of gender. Day begins her biography of the saint noting that the first time she heard of her was in the hospital, as Day was recovering from the birth of her daughter in 1927.¹³ About a year later, after both Day and Tamar Teresa had been baptized, Day's confessor gave her a copy of Therese's autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, saying it would do her good. Day was unpersuaded, complaining that Therese's writing was "like that of a schoolgirl." Expressing her aggravation at what she perceived to be her confessor's condescension, she concluded,

¹³ The woman in the bed next to Day, on learning that Day's daughter would be named Tamar Teresa, asked she was named for Therese of Lisieux. In fact her name came from Teresa of Avila, with whom Day was familiar; she had never heard of Therese. It would not hurt, she concluded, to have a daughter named after two saints (Day, *Therese* v-vii)

“Men, and priests too, were very insulting to women, ... handing out what they felt suited their intelligence; in other words, pious pap” (viii).

Day's Views of Gender

Day was certainly attuned to and concerned with the sexism evident in many men's attitudes, as her reaction to her confessor's spiritual advice makes clear. Yet despite the indignity she frequently expressed in writing, Day's own ideas of gender come across as rather less revolutionary than some might expect, both in her writing and in her actions as leader of the Catholic Worker movement.

Throughout the 1930s, Peter Maurin continued to contribute “easy essays” to the paper and to lead roundtable discussions for the clarification of thought at the Worker houses and farms and in parishes throughout the United States. But he left much of the daily work of the movement to Day and others. Day, for instance, maintained near total editorial control over the *Catholic Worker* paper. Despite Maurin's relative distance from the daily goings on of the Catholic Worker movement, however, Day continued to identify Maurin as the movement's leader and pointed out that houses of hospitality strove to follow “Peter's Principles” (Day, “Peter Maurin”). Most scholars believe she did this in order to increase the legitimacy of the movement within the Catholic Church. Day was aware that some Catholics would be hesitant to accept hers as a voice of moral leadership because she was a convert to the faith. More importantly, however, Day may have wanted to identify Maurin as the leader of the movement because having a man rather than a woman at the head of the movement was more likely to reassure some Catholics (especially in the hierarchy) of the Catholic Worker movement's legitimacy. While the Church officially recognized numerous active and powerful women saints, many Roman Catholics in the 1930s remained wary of women in religious leadership roles. So while Day may have recognized the sexism in many men's

attitudes, she demonstrated that she was willing to capitulate to sexist expectations in order to get the work of the Catholic Worker movement done.

As a young radical, Day had embraced many popular feminist causes, especially women's suffrage and access to birth control.¹⁴ And despite her nods to Peter Maurin's intellectual authority, she was universally recognized as the head of the Catholic Worker movement, even as its "dictator" (Cort 364). Yet despite the ideology of her youth and her influential and unusual position as a laywoman leader of a movement in the Church, Day's views on gender were fairly traditional: She opposed birth control and abortion, she never voted, and she rejected the idea that a woman could be completely happy without a man. Most importantly in term of hospitality, Day believed that "Women by their very nature are more materialistic, thinking of the home, the children, and of all things needful to them, especially love" (*Long* 60).

In light of such essentialist comments, and because of Day's strong commitment to social justice, modern readers are sometimes frustrated that she did not endorse feminist ideals more explicitly than she did. For example, the autobiography scholar Mary Mason concludes that, despite Day's "coherent vision and untiring commitment" to social activism, her "journey through womanhood...[ended] in a victory for conservatism" rooted in "an inconsistent self-perception about her identity as a woman" (185). But while some scholars read Day's views on gender as the result of her "uncritical acceptance of Church teaching" on issues of sexuality (Pauli; see also Campbell), the seeds of her ideas about men and women (like her ideas about loneliness and hospitality) were already evident before her conversion to Catholicism. For instance,

¹⁴ The first letter that we have of Day's is to Margaret Sanger, from 1923. In it, Day writes that she would have liked to have worked with Sanger as part of the American Birth Control League.

June, Day's autobiographical character in *The Eleventh Virgin*, admits at the end of the novel that, despite all her bohemian protests to the contrary, her greatest desires in life are domestic and material:

I thought I was a free and emancipated young woman and I found out that I wasn't at all, really. ... And it looks to me that this freedom is just a modernity gown, a new trapping that we women affect to capture the man we want. ... I know what I want. It's Dick and marriage and babies! And I'll have them yet. Wait and see. (312)

So, as an explanation for Day's sexual conservatism and her stance towards feminism, religion alone is insufficient. A more likely explanation is her own experience and assessment of the women's movement. After Day was able to integrate her radical and religious tendencies in the Catholic Worker movement, she came to believe that the women's movement was not sufficiently radical. It is true that late in her life she was clearly comfortable framing her objection to popular feminism in religious terms, lamenting in a 1975 letter that "Scripture—St. Paul's writing—no attention is paid to that. It is all 'women's lib'" ("To Sister Peter Claver" 426). But when she addressed the issue publicly, she demonstrated that she felt that most feminist activists were too narrowly and selfishly concerned with the needs of the middle class. For instance, reflecting on her response to points raised by feminist Betty Friedan at an event where both women were asked to speak, Day wrote:

She spoke also for the middle class, pointing out the technological advances which freed women from drudgery and gave them more time for a public life, and again I could only point to my own experience among the poor and the most recent one of travelling through India and seeing women with baskets and trays of cement and bricks on their heads which they fed in long lines to the men who were working on the bamboo scaffolding around the new buildings going up for housing. The struggle as far as I could see was still a class struggle and the big issue today was world poverty. ("On Pilgrimage June 1971")

As June O'Connor puts it, "Insofar as the women's movement emphasized rights over responsibilities and focused on freedom rather than justice, it failed to engage Dorothy Day" (*Moral* 43).

Feminist Hospitality

This analysis of Day's views on gender sheds light on her understanding of hospitality, which is in many ways a complicated gendered practice. Much traditional, ritualized hospitality is the sort that Derrida calls "conditional" hospitality (*Of Cosmopolitanism*). This sort of hospitality is offered by a host from a position of material power. The guest is received, often with lavish displays of wealth, but the host is not changed; in fact, the host's display of hospitality serves to reinforce the social stratification of host and guest. Feminist scholar Maurice Hamington argues that this sort of hospitality, which "is limited, defensive, and rooted in mistrust of strangers" is an inherently masculine practice, since traditionally it has been men who have had power and wealth necessary to offer it ("Toward" 24).

Given Day's essentialist notions of gender, it makes sense that her practice of hospitality should be in some important way different from "masculine" hospitality. Hamington argues that a feminist hospitality would be "embedded in a positive human ontology" in which "guest and host disrupt each others' lives sufficiently to allow for meaningful exchanges that foster interpersonal connections of understanding" (24). In other words, Day's "feminist" hospitality would be thoroughly personalist.

It would also be materialist. Of course, when Day talks about women as more materialist than men, she is not necessarily using the term with the connotation of consumerism that it often carries in twenty-first century America. Instead, she understands materialism as the counterpart to spiritualism, and while she may have granted that the spiritual is somehow "higher" than the material, she was quick to point out that the material was essential to people's salvation: "You can't preach the Gospel to men with empty stomachs," she often repeated, citing Abbe Lugan (e.g. Day, "Letter to the Unemployed"). Therefore, when

we analyze the practice of hospitality in the Catholic Worker movement, we should look at it primarily as a material practice and consider how its materiality contributed to the sort of identification that Hamington describes. It is this analysis of hospitality as material that I shall pursue in the next chapter.

Chapter Two: Hospitality as a Material Rhetoric

*We have undertaken to bring about the proclamation and institution of numerous and, above all, autonomous 'cities of refuge', each as independent from the other and from the state as possible, but, nevertheless, allied to each other according to forms of solidarity yet to be invented. This invention is our task; the theoretical or critical reflection it involves is indissociable from the practical initiatives we have already, out of a sense of urgency, initiated and implemented. Whether it be the foreigner in general, the immigrant, the exiled, the deported, the stateless or the displaced person . . . , we would ask these new cities of refuge to reorient the politics of the state. We would ask them to transform and reform the modalities of membership by which the city (cité) belongs to the state (Derrida, *Of Cosmopolitanism* 4)*

No text is a text, nor does it have meaning, influence, political stance, or legibility, in the absence of material form. (Blair 18)

I thought how John Griffen once pointed out that men who were wolves in the Bowery were as lambs in the CW houses. Given halfway decent surroundings and a sense of community and men can begin to see Christ in each other instead of the devil. (Day, "Views")

Introduction: Hospitality and Identification

In much of the scholarly and popular literature about the Catholic Worker movement, the houses of hospitality are described as homeless shelters (e.g., McKanan, "Honoring" 929; Mehlretter). While this description is to some degree accurate—homeless people were indeed given shelter in the houses of hospitality—it is incomplete, and that incompleteness is problematic because it downplays or occludes the houses' subversive rhetorical nature. Rather than merely offering poor and homeless people a place to stay, putting the proverbial Band-Aid on the cancer of poverty, the materiality of the Catholic Worker movement's houses of hospitality encouraged both hosts and guests to realign their identifications, undermining unjust social structures that rest upon division. Of course it is true that the houses of hospitality were meant to meet the immediate needs of the people who came to them and to offer members of the movement opportunities to practice the works of mercy, thereby contributing to their own spiritual development, but the houses of hospitality also worked to "reorient the politics of the state" towards greater justice (Derrida, *Of Cosmopolitanism* 4).

An Illustration: Verbal and Material Rhetoric

In a story she relates to her biographer Robert Coles, Dorothy Day offers a strikingly clear example of how the material elements of hospitality did the rhetorical work of shifting people's identifications. The Catholic Worker movement's houses of hospitality, as their name implies, were intended to be homes where people in need could be received as guests, not institutionalized sites where professionals cared for clients but maintained their own, separate residences and lives apart from the work. While some of Day's followers did maintain their own apartments, it was preferable that members of the movement live in the houses with their guests, and from the beginning of the movement, Day's primary residence was a house of hospitality. Day often wrote of the joys that came from life in a house of hospitality (e.g., *House* Chapter 3), perhaps in part because she recognized the rhetorical necessity of practicing what she and Maurin preached about Christians' "duty of hospitality" (Maurin, "Duty"). But life in a house of hospitality was also often dirty, uncomfortable, and noisy. One of Day's perennial complaints was about the distraction of the constant noise. In the story Day relates to Coles, she points out that many times people would come in to house who "were agitated and noisy, so noisy, that they quieted everyone else down. In a strange way, they could be a relief." She continues:

I was recalling the time when a very drunk sailor, who was a notoriously angry man, came to us, and he told all the people in the room to shut up, and he told a few men if they didn't get out of the room, he'd kill them. I was serving soup and bread, and I went to him and told him he was a great friend to us that day, and we were grateful, *very* grateful. He looked at me. I'll never forget those blue eyes of his; they were moving away from me, then closing in on me; they were dancing all over, then they were so still and penetrating I was more afraid of them than any knife or gun he may have had. (qtd. in Coles 123)

Confronted with a dangerous situation, Day attempts to neutralize the threat by means of rhetoric. She names the man as a friend, hoping to identify with him so that he will not attack anyone, but the man's shifting and threatening eyes indicate his resistance to Day's rhetorical advances. So Day tries again:

[H]e would move his right hand through [his] thick, curly hair and then he'd wipe his hand on his trousers, as if he'd touched something dirty. Mind you, his trousers were fairly dirty themselves. He saw me following that hand, looking at his trousers, and he bellowed, "What are you looking at?" ... I said, "At you." He shouted back, "Why are you looking at me?" I answered, "Because I'm standing here talking with you." He shouted back, "Well, who are you?" I gave him my name and asked him who he was. He told me—his first name, at least, Fred. I offered my hand to him and he offered his, but before he let us shake, he asked me if I was worried that he was dirty. I said no, and besides, I hadn't washed my own hands, and there was all sorts of crud on them, from the kitchen, and would he excuse me, and he said yes, and then we shook. (qtd. in Coles 123)

When her verbal rhetoric fails, Day engages the man's material existence, apparently hoping that her drawing attention to their physical proximity will lead the man to interact with her in a less threatening manner. The man perceives her looking at him to be an inappropriately intimate act, and she counters that the fact that she is "standing here" justifies it; their physical proximity constitutes their intimacy, and her looking at him is thus understandable. Day further identifies with the man through their physical similarities—they are both dirty—and based on this identification, the man is persuaded to acknowledge their connection by shaking hands.

Day then thanks Fred for quieting the room down, calling him "a lifesaver." But Fred resists her thanks: "He gave me a strange look. He lowered his eyes, stared at the floor, and talked to me without looking at me. He said he didn't *want* to be called a lifesaver, I must not call him that. He was growling"

(qtd. in Coles 124). Again Day's attempts to bring Fred into her circle of identification through verbal rhetoric fail, so she takes a material approach:

I asked him if I could give him some soup. He asked me what was in it. I told him lots of good vegetables. He asked me if I would have some. I said I was hungry, and I sure would. So we sat down, and he wouldn't start until I did. He watched me swallow a few tablespoons, and then he was about to start his, when all of a sudden he changed his mind and asked me if he could have *my* soup. I said sure, and he gobbled it up!

Meanwhile, I had a flash of intuition, because I saw him staring at his soup! I asked him if I could have that soup. He said yes, that he *wanted* me to have it, as a matter of fact. I took the bowl and slurped it up, hungrily. I *was* hungry. He sat there watching me, as intently as I had ever been watched (qtd. in Coles 124)

Here the soup that Day and Fred share is what cements their identification. Importantly, though, their identification does not affect only Fred. The emphasis in Day's comment, "I *was* hungry," suggests that her interaction with Fred made her aware of her own need, a need which she was somewhat surprised to discover within herself. Although she had been serving food to guests when Fred came in, it was by sitting down and eating the soup with him that Day allowed herself to recognize and satisfy her own her hunger. Both host and guest are transformed by Day's practice of hospitality.

After the soup was finished, Fred became threatening again, and Day asked him if there was anything else he wanted. She continues:

I picked up a piece of bread, broke it in half, took part of one half in my mouth, and offered him the other half—and he took it. He said thank you, and I said ... "Oh, do come here, anytime; we'd love to have you as our guest." Then I excused myself. As I left, I could hear the room getting noisier and noisier, and I'll tell you, I was never happier to hear all

that rattle The next day that man came early in the morning with bags full of celery and carrots and onions and potatoes. I asked him, please, come and have lunch, taste the soup with his vegetables in it, and he said he would. He became one of our regulars. (qtd. in Coles 125)

The language Day uses to describe the three-part action of sharing bread with her guest (i.e., picking it up, breaking it, and offering it) clearly echoes the language Christians use to describe the institution of the Eucharist (e.g., in Matthew 26.26: “And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to his disciples”). And, just as in Roman Catholic teaching the sharing of the Eucharist is a means of showing hospitality towards God for the sanctification of the communicant, as I explained in Chapter 1, Day’s act of sharing soup and bread consummates Fred’s shift of identification from threat to member of the group. Day’s hospitality leads to a reciprocal gift from Fred, one that blurs the line between host as provider of food and guest as the recipient.

Theoretical Lens

In describing her encounter with Fred, Day offers a representative anecdote that suggests ways that hospitality worked as a nexus of rhetorical materials in the Catholic Worker movement’s houses of hospitality in the 1930s. Although Day does not say exactly when her meeting with Fred took place—she does put some distance between the events and time of her conversation with Coles by indicating that Fred’s “hair was long, for those days” (123)—the date is to some degree irrelevant because the materials involved in her interaction with Fred were ones involved in the practice of hospitality from the beginning of the movement. Day’s and Fred’s bodies, the space between them, the food they give each other, and their dirty clothes all contribute to their eventual mutual identification.

Importantly, as Day tells the story, she is unable to affect Fred by her verbal rhetoric; he rejects her attempts even implicitly to reason with him (e.g., her naming him as a friend, along with the warrant that friends do not threaten to kill one another, can be read as a rational argument, with the implied conclusion that Fred should not therefore threaten to kill people). To understand how Fred is brought eventually to identify with the Catholic Worker movement, it is therefore necessary to draw on recent scholarship in material rhetorics that seeks “to bracket the privileged place granted to reason, rationality, and their locus—the mind” and “to develop a more expansive conception of what rhetoric is and does” (Hawhee and Holding 261). As Kenneth Burke explains, “there is the dimension of sheer physicality (sheer ‘motion’) by which a word is uttered, transmitted, heard, read, etc.” (*Rhetoric of Religion* 16). Attending to this dimension of motion in rhetoric allows me to consider how Day’s and her followers’ practice of hospitality acted on not only the intellects but also the emotions and bodies of their audiences. There is, after all, a terminological connection between Burke’s idea of motion as “sheer physicality” and the classical office of rhetoric to *move* an audience: Motion, insofar as it is a function of the body and not the (disembodied) mind, concerns the whole person in a way that has been neglected in much rhetorical scholarship from the Enlightenment through the twentieth century.

It is widely accepted that rhetorical activity is not comprised solely of linguistic signs, but of “the significations of material things and corporal entities—objects that signify not through language but through their spatial organization, mobility, mass, utility, orality, and tactility” (Dickson 297). Although interest in material rhetoric surged in the late 1990s (see, e.g., Collins; Marback; Selzer and Crowley), rhetoricians’ awareness of the material dimensions of rhetoric is not entirely new. John Bulwar’s 1644 *Chirologia* and Gilbert Austin’s 1806 *Chironomia, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*, for instance, are well-known works on the different ways that gestures may be used in rhetorical delivery. Another common example of nonlinguistic symbolic communication is the traffic signal, which communicates a clear message without

words. But although some rhetoricians have claimed that hand gestures communicate universally intelligible meanings, being “the *Tongue and generall language of Humane Nature*, which, without teaching, men in all regions of the habitable world doe at the first sight most easily understand” (Bulwer 3), an obvious fact about all symbolic communication is that a symbol, whether verbal or material, can only carry an intended meaning within a particular discourse.¹⁵

The materials that contribute to Day’s encounter with Fred, for instance, work in conjunction with larger social narratives that equate dirtiness with badness and shame. In responding as she does to Fred’s threatening behavior, Day connects Fred’s dirtiness with a different narrative. She identifies herself as dirty

¹⁵ This approach to material rhetoric is in line with approaches that other scholars of material rhetoric have advocated since the late 1990s. For example, Richard Marback insists that material rhetoric is concerned with how materials and discourses affect each other: “A material theory of rhetoric maintains the dynamics of corporeality and spatiality and textuality . . . out of recognition that the significance of spaces grounds in uses of texts at the same time that the meanings of texts ground in uses of spaces” (86). In contrast, Vicki Tolar Collins poses a narrower definition of material rhetoric as a feminist methodology that examines texts produced by women rhetors and considers “how the rhetorical aims and functions of the initial text are changed by the processes of material production and distribution” (547). David Van Reybrouck, Raf de Bont, and Jan Rock also see material rhetoric as examining the interplay of verbal rhetoric with its accompanying materials: “By material rhetoric, we understand the regime of material practices that scholars deploy to accompany traditional, verbal and pictorial rhetoric with which they distribute their theories and ideas” (198). Taken together, these definitions of material rhetoric, though they differ in many ways, suggest that one concern of material rhetoric is to examine the ways that verbal discourse interacts with “the stuff that necessitates and facilitates rhetorical exchange” (Hawhee and Holding 264). And as I pointed out in the Introduction, scholarship on Day has not yet explored this interaction in the history of the Catholic Worker movement.

and relates her dirtiness with her action as part of the Catholic Worker movement: She has been working in the kitchen. Fred's dirtiness is no longer necessarily a source of shame, but a potential marker of commonality with the group he had previously been antagonizing.

So, turning around Carole Blair's observation about the materiality of rhetoric, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, no material can be called a text, "nor does it have meaning, influence, political stance, or legibility," in the absence of a discourse. A red traffic light means nothing outside of the context of particular, agreed-upon laws. And it is by examining the intersection (no pun intended) of nonlinguistic signs and a wider discourse that I approach my analysis of the practice of hospitality in the Catholic Worker movement's houses to understand how hospitality functioned as social critique. In this chapter, therefore, I analyze two of the most significant material elements of hospitality—space and food—and suggest how these materials contributed to Day's and her followers' social critique.

Rhetorical Space: St. Joseph's House of Hospitality

Perhaps the most fundamental material element of hospitality is space. By space I mean the physical environment in which Day and her followers practiced hospitality: the geographical locations, the characteristics of the buildings where the members of the movement lived and worked, as well as the ways that workers and guests negotiated these materials to make meaning and identify with each other. In his book *Space and Place*, geographer Yi-Fu Tuan explains that humans organize space "so that it conforms with and caters to [their] biological needs and social relations" (34). Space is not merely the backdrop against which human activity occurs, but an integral part of how we live and make meaning. But humans' relationship with space is not one-directional; Tuan also argues that space helps people to "know better who they are and how they ought to behave" (102). In other words, the use of space materializes a social order in ways that shape the identities of those who interact with it. This identification, of course, is rhetorical work.

Burkean scholarship also considers the rhetorical function of space. Burke himself acknowledges the importance of space as a factor in human activity: Though he places the act first in lists of the five terms of his pentad (*Grammar* xv), the first ratio he treats in depth is the scene-act ratio (3), and the first term he discusses in detail in Part II of his *Grammar of Motives* is the scene (127).¹⁶ Gregory Clark, whose work on the rhetoric of civic tourism in the United States is informed by Burke's theories, argues in *Rhetorical Landscapes in America* that the experience of visiting common spaces "gathers [individuals] together with others in an environment of shared perspectives, values, and commitments to reconstitute them as members of a community" (144). This gathering together of individuals and their reconstitution as a community is, of course, exactly the goal of hospitality as Day and her followers understood it.

In the following sections, I present a description of the sites where members of the movement practiced hospitality in the 1930s, focusing on St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, which also served as the movement's headquarters. I then consider three consequences of that rhetorical space. First, the space of hospitality contributed to the formation of an identity for the Catholic Worker movement. Second, it also shaped the content of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, through which that identity was communicated to a broader audience. And finally, the space of hospitality contributed to the elements of that identity that positioned the movement against prevailing social narratives and thus materialized the Day's and her followers' critique of unjust social structures.

¹⁶ Floyd Anderson points out that, as Burke's thinking about the pentad evolved, the order in which he listed the terms was influenced not so much by the terms' relative importance, but by the fact that he associated them with the personalities of his five children. As he came to associate "act" with his third daughter, he moved that term to the third position in his lists.

Beginnings: The Teresa-Joseph Cooperative

When the first issues of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper were distributed, the Great Depression was in full force. Fifteen million people (around a third of the workforce, not counting agriculture) were unemployed throughout the country (Eleanor). The number of homeless people had increased substantially, and municipal shelters were strained beyond capacity. Many people experienced frustration with what they perceived to be ineffective government responses to the serious economic situation, a frustration which led to demonstrations such as the hunger march Day had been reporting on when Maurin first came looking for her.

The apartment where Maurin found Day when she returned from Washington in December 1932 was, unofficially, the first Catholic Worker house of hospitality. Located on East Fifteenth Street, it belonged to Day's brother John and his wife Tessa, and Day was living there with her daughter as well. When Maurin first sought Day out, Tessa welcomed Maurin into their home "because she was Spanish and hospitable" (*House Forward*). It seems appropriate that Day's and Maurin's meeting was facilitated by an act of hospitality toward a man who was often mistaken for a derelict.

Shortly after the first issue of the newspaper was published for May Day 1933, Day and her followers, working out of the storefront of John and Tessa's apartment, began renting another apartment to house a few men who needed a place to stay. Soon "the need to start a hospice for women made itself felt" as well (*House Forward*), and in December 1933 Day and her followers rented a house down the street from the apartment and named it the "Teresa-Joseph Cooperative"—for Saint Teresa of Avila, who had worked to provide shelter for her nuns because she believed that their material well-being was a fundamental requirement of their spiritual life, and St. Joseph, whose job it was to care for Christ and Mary when they were homeless (Day, "Co-operative").

The house was funded by donations from members of a local parish. It had five large bedrooms and an additional room that served as a dormitory with four beds, and it was perhaps the most materially comfortable house that the movement operated in the 1930s, with steam heat, hot water, and a large, comfortable bath. As she described the opening of the house in the *Catholic Worker*, Day emphasized that readers' contributions were small individually but powerful collectively: The work of starting a house of hospitality "can all be done with the fifty-cent regularly-made donations of working girls and married women themselves" ("Co-operative"). Because the house opened in December, the most pressing material need, according to Day, was beds and blankets. Until they could secure enough donated blankets, Day asserted that people would have to "roll themselves in coats and newspapers, which are said to be warm, though we are sure they are very noisy" ("Co-operative").

As the months went on, the Catholic Worker movement opened more houses of hospitality in apartments around the city, including one in Harlem in which Peter Maurin took up residence, and these were eventually consolidated with the movement's office into one house (to save on rent) at 144 Charles Street in 1935. The house was crowded, with women on the top floor, men on the second floor, and more guests sleeping in the offices and dining room on the ground floor and basement.

The Move to Mott Street

After the movement had spent one winter on Charles Street, a wealthy reader of the paper offered the Catholic Worker movement the use of the rear part of a building she owned at 115 Mott Street, and it was there that the Worker stayed from 1936 until 1950. This house, known as St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, was a twenty-room rear tenement with two stores on the ground level and a small cement courtyard in the rear. The stores served as offices for the *Catholic Worker* paper and as a discussion hall for Friday night meetings, which featured invited speakers on topics related to Catholic social teaching. On the

second floor were the kitchen and dining rooms, which sometimes served as additional meeting space. On the third, fourth and fifth floors were the bedrooms, which were often full or overflowing with three or more people in each room; as at Charles Street, people also frequently slept in the offices.

St. Joseph's was located in the neighborhood known as Little Italy, two blocks east of the Bowery and just north of Chinatown. The neighborhood was an impoverished one, with pawnshops and secondhand clothes stores, movie theaters, bars, and cheap hotels. Despite the fact that many of the hotels offered rooms for around 20 cents a night, and despite the number of missions in the neighborhood—Day lamented that, since people who went to the missions had to submit to religious instruction, religion had become one more cheap commodity for sale on Mott Street (“Background”)—people often slept in the street. Although Mott Street opened into Chatham Square, much of the street was dark, with the five- and six-story buildings blocking out most of the direct sunlight.

The neighborhood around Mott Street also had “solid Catholic traditions” (Vishnewski 134). Three Catholic churches were located in the area, including the Archdiocese of New York's original cathedral, St. Patrick's, where the grandfather of the owner of the house at 115 Mott Street had once served as an armed guard during the Know-Nothing riots. St. Patrick's was also the site where Elizabeth Ann Seton had worshiped, and some of the Italian residents of Mott Street passed down stories of Seton's visits to their neighborhood.¹⁷ Nearby was also the bakery where Isaac Hecker had worked before founding the Society of Saint Paul. The neighborhood's Catholic identifications almost certainly contributed to the generally warm relationships Day and her followers shared with their neighbors, who would have been more inclined than outsiders to understand the work of the movement in terms of its Catholic identity.

¹⁷ Vishnewski claims that some residents of the neighborhood remembered Mother Seton's visits (133); however, this claim is highly doubtful, as Seton died in 1821.

When Day was first offered the use of the house on Mott Street, she was reluctant to accept it. In a letter to the owner of the house, "After a great deal of meditation and prayer," Day expressed her reservations about accepting the offer. Her first objection was to the idea that she would be charged with collecting rent from the occupants of the front part of the house, a task for which she claimed she was unsuited: "I would end up by letting everyone live rent free in the place if they claimed they were too poor to pay." Her second objection was to the condition of the house itself:

The house in the rear would only do for a house of hospitality if it were entirely renovated and cleaned, and then only if we were all located in front so that we would be on hand to look after it. For as it is, it is a fire trap, with old fashioned fire escapes which have been condemned long since, with their straight up and down ladders which are of no use to women and children. There are two families with children living on the top floor now. The lower floors are damp and airless, and from the holes I saw in the halls, and according to the young Italian girl who showed us around, rat ridden. ("To Gertrude Burke" 82-3)

Day did end up accepting the house, however, and when she described the move from Charles Street to Mott Street to readers, she put a much more positive spin on the conditions of the house:

It is a good solid old house, the banisters like iron, the walls of brick and built to stay. There are plenty of windows and in the morning the sun comes in. We are overwhelmed with the space of our new home and so far as we ourselves are concerned, the rats do not bother us at all. Our benefactor is donating linoleum for the kitchen and

dining room and curtains for the entire house and it will be a clean cheerful place. (*House*, Chapter 8)¹⁸

There is much to belie Day's somewhat breathless description of the house on Mott Street, not least her own letters to the house's owner, quoted above. In addition, other members of the Catholic Worker movement confirm that the new house was not such "a clean and cheerful place" as Day describes here. One new member, for instance, after his first night in the house, complained bitterly about the bedbugs. Interestingly, his complaints were met with laughter from other residents of the house, who saw the bedbugs as "novice masters" to "screen out the unworthy from the worthy" (Vishnewski 156). The characterization of bedbugs in monastic terms, along with Day's positive description of the house, shows how the materiality of space at St. Joseph's was tied to discourse in ways that contributed to the formation of a particular identity for members of the Catholic Worker movement. I explore the ways that rhetorical space shaped this identity in the next section.

Space and the Catholic Worker Identity

Besides the bedbugs, a number of aspects of the space of St. Joseph's contributed to the formation of a Catholic Worker identity: Here, I focus on the architecture of the building and the religious imagery that adorned it. Because of the limitations of space within the house, guests had to share rooms, and many

¹⁸ Day later recorded what were probably closer to her true feelings about the rats, writing that she was "so stiffened with horror even in my sleep that my neck is stiff this morning. Rats, the consciousness of them, makes me sleep with a certain rigidity." Still, Day admitted to writing of the rats "with a certain enjoyment, because really rats are such a small trouble compared to some of the others which are going on," such as "big fights with the powers that be" ("To Donald Powell" 93).

times people slept in the offices and dining rooms. This had the effect of bodily reinforcing the identification that Catholic Worker hospitality was meant to create: because all people were equally members of the Mystical Body of Christ, all people shared the same living conditions. This physical identification would have been particularly effective at challenging and reshaping the identities and behaviors of workers who came to St. Joseph's or other houses of hospitality from relatively comfortable economic backgrounds.

Harry Murray, in his case study of hospitality in St. Joseph's House, explains an important way that space works rhetorically in a Catholic Worker house:

[As a volunteer] at a Catholic Worker house you become painfully aware that every bite you take could be going to someone who is a lot hungrier than you. That second piece of chicken you want could be a meal for someone looking for leftovers. Sociologically, this points to the difference between face-to-face interaction and more abstract interaction. It is always true that the food I eat could feed someone who needs it more. However, it is only in the face-to-face situation that this affects my eating habits. (100)

The interaction between space, which creates "the face-to-face situation" Murray refers to, and food strengthens the identification between worker and guest. The self-restraint practiced by workers as a result of their proximity to others who might be hungrier than they are allows them to experience hunger in solidarity with others. Rather than a merely condescending compassion, therefore, workers were encouraged by the space of St. Joseph's to practice a form of bodily identification with hungry people.

St. Joseph's House also allowed members of the movement to hold regular Friday night meetings at which invited speakers discussed different points of Catholic social teaching. Maurin was, according to Day and others who knew him, quite happy to talk with anyone who would listen, in any place he happened to be, about Christian personalism and hospitality. But the space of St. Joseph's House provided members of the movement a regular place for its indoctrination to happen, which reinforced a sense of identity. The

flexibility of the space—the fact that rooms often had to serve as meeting rooms, dining rooms, editorial offices, or bedrooms as needs arose—also facilitated the integration of Catholic Worker idealism and Catholic Worker practice, helping Day and her followers to practice not only what but where they preached.

Day believed that houses of hospitality were essential to the work of the movement, and she urged readers to begin their own houses of hospitality using whatever resources they had available:

When we succeed in persuading our readers to take the homeless into their homes, having a Christ room in the house as St. Jerome said, then we will be known as Christians because of the way we love one another. We should have hospices in all the poor parishes. We should have coffee lines to take care of the transients But we need more Christian homes where the poor are sheltered and cared for. (“Of Finances”)

Many readers did take her up on this, and by the end of the 1930s, there were at least 30 Catholic Worker houses of hospitality throughout the United States (Day, “Letter on Hospices”). Day’s descriptions in the paper of other houses of hospitality further encouraged readers to become involved in the work. In 1938, for example, after she returned from visiting a number of cities where people had begun work inspired by the Catholic Worker movement, Day described houses of hospitality in Milwaukee, Chicago, Rochester, Pittsburgh, and Detroit (“News of C.W.”). Day especially praised the Detroit house as a “Model of Hospitality” (“Detroit”).

Another aspect of St. Joseph’s that contributed to the movement’s identity was the religious imagery that adorned the building at Mott Street. The two storefronts both had crosses in the windows with the words “The Catholic Worker” above them, clearly identifying the site as religious. In one window was displayed a large white statue of the house’s patron, St. Joseph (see Fig 1). Inside the house, the walls were decorated with religious pictures and murals, many by Ade Bethune, who had joined the Catholic Worker



Figure 1. The storefront of St. Joseph's House on Mott Street in the late 1930s (Untitled). Peter Maurin is the shorter man near at center of the group.

movement in 1933, and who also designed the *Catholic Worker* masthead (Fig. 2). The murals “were done in bright gay colors and showed the saints at their daily tasks” in order to “show that the saints were ordinary persons, like ourselves, who had to work for a living” (Vishnewski 135). In addition, many of the saints’ work could easily have been described as falling into the categories of the works of mercy—Paul was shown visiting Peter in prison, and Martin de Porres was shown feeding an apparently sick man—and others were engaged in the manual labor—Benedict of Nursia in his garden, Joseph and Jesus working with wood, and Francis of Assisi sweeping.

These murals contributed to a Catholic Worker identity in a number of ways. Residents and guests at St. Joseph’s were meant to look at images like these and agree, “This is what we do” recognizing both the



Figure 2. The first page of the May 1936 issue of the *Catholic Worker*.

dignity of work and their own similarities with the saints. In addition, Bethune's minimalist style recalls the voluntary poverty that Day advocated. While, unfortunately, pictures of the murals are not available, one can get a sense of this style from the masthead and the woodcut of the sower in Figure 2. Finally, even the work of painting the murals encouraged identification with the movement. Stanley Vishnewski writes that Bethune would frequently recruit onlookers to help her mix paints or fill in spaces in the mural. The murals thus became a collaborative effort, not merely an artistic display, that helped people to feel invested in the work of the movement.

The space in which Day and other workers interacted with homeless and unemployed people at St. Joseph's also shaped the content of the newspaper. Even as a journalist in the 1910s, Day had shown a preference for writing that gave vivid and moving profiles of people facing poverty, and in the *Catholic Worker* Day often described St. Joseph's, the Mott Street neighborhood, and the people who lived there in order to translate the practice hospitality into something her readers could learn about without actually visiting St. Joseph's House. When she wrote about the neighborhood, Day often juxtaposed the "Ugliness and beauty" of life on Mott Street, describing, for instance, both a brutal street fight and a dramatic recitation of the Psalms in the same article ("Views"; see also the "Day after Day" columns for September, October, and November 1936; "House"; "San Gennaro"). These descriptions gave readers a vivid mental image of what the space inside and around St. Joseph's House was like, and that image allowed them to identify with the work of the movement in a way similar to, if less potent than, actually being there. One of Day's more familiar refrains was the need for her readers to act on this identification contribute to the work of hospitality—by donating to St. Joseph house if they could, but (even better) by working to meet the needs of poor people in their own communities.

Above I described how Ade Bethune's murals worked rhetorically in St. Joseph's house, and Robert Ellsberg argues that her artistic style also "fundamentally defined the paper's aesthetic tone" (*All* 103). For instance, the first issue of the paper featured a masthead with the image of two workers, holding a pick and a shovel. The masthead was criticized because both of the workers were white, so for the next issue Bethune made up a new masthead, with one white and one black worker (see Fig. 2). This masthead was kept unchanged until 1985, when a new one (also by Bethune) was introduced, depicting a female agricultural worker with a child on her back and a black man (see Fig. 3) In addition to the mastheads, Bethune's woodcuts frequently dramatized images from the Bible that members of the Catholic Worker



Figure 3. The new masthead designed by Ade Bethune in 1985.

movement associated with their mission. For instance, below the masthead on the May 1936 issue appears a woodcut titled “The Sower” (see. Fig. 2), recalling a famous Christian parable:

Behold, the sower went out to sow. And whilst he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the birds of the air came and ate it up. And other some fell upon stony ground, where it had not much earth; and it shot up immediately, because it had no depth of earth. And when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And some fell upon good ground; and brought forth fruit that grew up, and increased and yielded, one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred. (Mark 4.3-8)

Day sometimes articulated the mission of the Catholic Worker movement as one of sowing the seeds of a new society (see, e.g., “Aims”), and this parable reminds members of the movement that they

should not necessarily expect their all of their work to bear proverbial fruit. In Bethune's depiction of this parable, the sower is muscular and haloed. He is set against a background comprised mostly of the rays of a (presumably) rising sun. While the image of the sower is certainly appropriate next to a headline about the establishment of a farming community in Easton, Pennsylvania ("Farming Commune is Finally Under Way: Workers Planting Now; More Ready to Go"), the image also suggests how readers are to interpret another headline on the page, one that explicitly articulates the movement's identity: "Catholic Worker Celebrates 3rd Birthday; A Restatement of C. W. Aims and Ideals." The fact that the sower is depicted as strong and glorious encourages readers of the paper to identify positively with the movement and to think of its work as noble.¹⁹

Space, Discourse, and the Catholic Worker's Critique of the State

Day also used the space of St. Joseph's in conjunction with verbal discourse in order to critique social injustices as well position herself and the Catholic Worker movement in opposition to the government's responses to the symptoms of those injustices. Given the number of homeless people in New York in the 1930s, it is obvious that the movement's houses could not accommodate everyone who might benefit from their hospitality. Certainly there were non-material constraints on the number of people the St. Joseph's House could take in, such as the energy and willingness of the workers to help more people. But the most significant constraint on the number of people who could receive hospitality at St. Joseph's

¹⁹ In later decades, different Catholic Worker communities and supporters began to use photographs to publicize the movement and to encourage others to join the work (see, e.g., Robert Coles's and Jon Erikson's *A Spectacle Unto the World*).

was the available space. Richard McSorley, a Jesuit priest who was active in the Washington, D.C., Catholic Worker movement, explains the constraint:

It's almost an in-built conflict in the Catholic Worker about how many [guests] you take into a house. One theory is that when a stranger comes to the door, it's Christ and you let him in. And the other theory is that if you're going to let Christ in, you don't want to have Christ sleep under the sink, and you don't want Christ to crowd out all the other Christs that are already in there. (qtd. in Troester 164)

As a result of this conflict, often when people would come to St. Joseph's, Day and the other workers would try to find other resources to help meet people's needs. For instance, Day frequently referred people to St. Zita's, a house run by a group of Catholic sisters for women in need. Thus the practice of hospitality sometimes involved moving people to other spaces where they could receive care, and doing so often gave Day an opportunity to comment on the need for hospitality. Once, when Day visited St. Zita's, she was taken to be someone looking for shelter. Since, Day reasoned, her own appearance was not terribly unclean or disheveled, "It just shows how many girls and women, who to the average eye, look as though they came from comfortable surroundings, are really homeless and destitute" (*House* Chapter 3).

While Day took this occasion to comment on a social injustice in general, she typically used encounters with the city's accommodations for homeless people to critique the city's approach to the problem of homelessness. For example, in her 1939 book *House of Hospitality*, Day describes and publicizes the work the Catholic Worker movement had been engaged in for nearly six years in trying to provide food and shelter to homeless and unemployed people at the Catholic Worker houses and farms. Early in the book, Day describes a visit she made shortly after the founding of the Catholic Worker to what she and other Workers often referred to disparagingly as the "muni," the Municipal Shelter of New York City set up to take care of the city's homeless. Catholic Workers regularly offered the muni as a "counterexample" of hospitality

(Murray 60), a place rife with inhuman bureaucracy and “endless corruption, special privilege and discrimination” (Hergenhan, qtd. in Murray 61). Day writes:

One afternoon last month we went up to the Municipal Lodging House of the City of New York and looked at the largest bedroom in the world there. The seventeen hundred beds, the eight rows stretching way out to the very end of a pier, two-tiered beds at that, were a grim sight, the collectivization of misery.

The huge vats of stew stirred with a tremendous ladle only emphasized the ugly state which the world is in today. Every night the men stand out on 25th Street in long lines and are hustled through, catalogued, ticketed, stamped with the seal of approval, fed in a rush and passed on to the baths, the doctor, the beds, all with a grim efficiency which gave testimony to the length of time this need has existed for the mass care of the impoverished.

(Chapter 1)

Here Day is “reading” the material conditions of the muni as symbols, and as she does so she personifies those materials, giving them a voice: the vats of stew “emphasized” and the manner of processing so many people “gave testimony.” In contrast to the way real humans are treated in this bureaucracy—they “are hustled through, catalogued, ticketed, stamped with the seal of approval” like products on an assembly line—the materiality of the muni is allowed to speak. Of course, Day must translate its “speech” into language that can be communicated in her book; whatever “testimony” the muni has to give, readers can only get Day’s interpretation of it, an interpretation shaded by her ingrained compassion for poor people and distaste for state-directed charity, and she concludes her description of the men’s facilities at the muni for her readers with a deliberative sigh that suggests what she hopes her readers will do in response to her rhetoric: “Oh for parish houses of hospitality.”

But even these houses of hospitality were not always successful in countering the state's institutionalized responses to homelessness. At Mott Street, where the movement was headquartered for 14 years, the physical structure of the building underwent significant changes at the demand of the government: A guest who did not like the food she received there complained to the health department, which then investigated St. Joseph's House and required a number of structural and procedural modifications to bring the Worker into compliance with New York City health codes. For instance, the fact that the house at Mott Street did not have hot water meant that cups used to serve coffee on the breadline and at meals could not be cleaned sufficiently, at least in the eyes of the city (Day, "To the Commissioner of Health"). After some back and forth with the city, eventually the house at Mott Street underwent significant remodeling, and many of the walls "built to stay" were torn down in an effort to bring the house into compliance with health and fire codes. Day lamented the final result of these changes: With many of the divisions between bedrooms eliminated, "There will be less privacy than ever" (*House* Chapter 8). The dynamic at work here, in which the house of hospitality is transformed by order of the state into something more closely resembling the muni's "largest bedroom in the world," is one of the forces that limited the ability of members of the Catholic Worker movement to enact their ideals as fully as they would have liked.

The Rhetoric of Food

In some of the anecdotes I have offered in the previous sections, space is not the only rhetorical material that contributes to the identity of the Catholic Worker movement or its social critique. Murray's assessment of how space fosters the sharing of food and Day's description of the muni both highlight the role of food in the rhetoric of hospitality. Records from the Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker archives indicate that it cost about \$17 a day to provide lunch and dinner to the residents and guests at St. Joseph's in the late 1930s (lunch was provided to anyone who showed up; dinner was typically for people living in the house).

In addition, a morning breadline cost around \$15 a day. This means that in a typical month, about three-fifths of the house's budget was spent on food (\$960 out of \$1594), in addition to nonfood expenses such as gas for the stove, which were necessary to prepare the food (DD-CW Archives, Series W-4.1, Box 1).

Clearly, food was a commodity that required a significant portion of the movement's material resources. However, as sociologist Eivind Jacobsen points out, food is not only economic commodity. Jacobsen argues that the rhetorical power of food comes from its conceptualization as part of nature, as a gift, and as a constituent of culture. It would be difficult to argue that the food served at St. Joseph's House was seen as especially connected to nature. Part of the rationale for the movement's farming communities was to supply food for the houses of hospitality, but as I noted in the introduction, these farms were never especially productive agriculturally, and this rationale was never significantly realized.²⁰ But food certainly was seen as both gift and culture by members of the Catholic Worker movement. Food shared by workers and guests at St. Joseph's House was a literal gift to the men and women who came out of need, and, as illustrated in the story of Fred at the beginning of this chapter, this food worked rhetorically to constitute new identities for both host and guest. Through this identification, workers hoped to be able to recognize and restore the human dignity of the "ambassadors of God" who came to them. The restoration of guests' dignity is a key factor in the relationship between food and culture. As anthropologist Tracey Heatherington explains in her study of the relationship between food and political engagement among rural Sardinians, food gives "material substance to the narratives of positive local identity with which residents attempt to respond to media discourses of criminality and the experience of tragic violence" (334). Food played a

²⁰ John Cort writes that "the farm [in Easton, Pennsylvania] never came close to being self-sufficient. Money had to be sent out regularly from Mott Street to buy food" (363-4).

similar role at St. Joseph's; the shared food was a material symbol of guests' identification, not as bums or criminals, but as Catholic Workers.

The Breadline

Although Day repeated insisted that "Breadlines are a disgrace" (e.g., "Letter on Hospices"), the morning breadline quickly became one of the most noticeable aspects of the movement's work. Workers would rise by 5:30 to begin cutting bread and brewing coffee. The breadline often stretched for blocks down Mott Street, with between 500 and 1,500 men in the line waiting single-file on the edge of the sidewalk by the street, in order to allow people to pass by on the sidewalk.

As Blair explains, "There are particular physical actions that the text [e.g., hospitality] demands of us: ways it inserts itself into our attention, and ways of encouraging or discouraging us to act or move, as well as think, in particular directions" (46). The breadline offers a clear example of how the work of the movement exerted such a physical influence. Photographs of the breadline show the men facing forward in the line, a position that would make talking to each other difficult (see Fig. 4). The line also affected passers-by; it would be easy enough for pedestrians to ignore individual people who were in need of food or shelter, but a line of 500 to 1,500 bodies could not be ignored, even in an impoverished neighborhood such as the one in which St. Joseph's was located. Day wrote of the way the physical presence of the breadline affected her each day as she walked to Mass:

It is hard to say, matter-of-factly and cheerfully, "Good morning" as we pass on our way to Mass. It was the hardest to say "Merry Christmas", or "Happy New Year" during the holiday time, to these men with despair and patient misery written on many of their faces.

One felt more like taking their hands and saying, "Forgive us—let us forgive each other!"

All of us who are more comfortable, who have a place to sleep, three meals a day, work to



Figure 4. The breadline along Mott Street, circa 1938 (CW).

do--we are responsible for your condition. We are guilty of each other's sins. We must bear each other's burdens. Forgive us and may God forgive us all!" (*House* Chapter 10)

Day's comments highlight the way the materiality of the breadline exposes the superficiality and hypocrisy by which comments like "Good morning" or "Merry Christmas" serve to maintain social injustices. Is it disingenuous, Day suggests, to say "Good morning" in the face of people's obvious "despair and patient misery."

Soup as a Symbol of Community

Along with the bread and coffee served each morning on the breadline, soup was certainly among the most iconic foods distributed in the houses of hospitality. An anonymous article in the March-April 1977 issue of the *Catholic Worker* explains the historic centrality of soup in the movement:

In the early days of the Catholic Worker, Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day thought it would be a good idea to keep a soup pot simmering at all times. This could be continually replenished by whatever vegetables the people of the house could acquire. It was a brilliant idea for a symbol of communal sharing, certainly. But, even more certainly, it was responsible for delicious soup. The longer the soup simmers, obviously, the better it tastes, and the vegetables and flavors that do not become compatible, even complimentary, after four hours' companionship in a boiling pot are rare. (qtd. in Cornell, Ellsberg, and Forest 235)

The author of this article explains why soup is a central element of Catholic Worker hospitality, both in its sheer materiality and in its symbolism. On the purely material level, the preferred method of making soup yields a product that tastes good: It acts on the non-rational, sensual tastes of those who consume it. It cements identification among those who share it through its common action on their physical, gustatory experience. And on the symbolic level, the constant pot of soup operates like a memorial eternal flame: an always-present reminder of the community that contributes to and is strengthened by it. Individual contributions to the soup are brought into harmony with each other, symbolizing the formation of a community within the house of hospitality that, in turn, strengthens the individual members of the community.

In this chapter, I have considered the ways that space and food encouraged both members of the Catholic Worker movement and their guests at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality to reorient their

identifications in ways that “constitute[d] their own moral world through the irrefutable evidence of the senses” (Heatherington 332). The shared sensory and experiential materials of space and food led, at least some of the time, to a “moral world” in which individualism was discouraged and the dignity of each person was recognized. But while this world was constituted and strengthened by the practice of hospitality, Dorothy Day and her followers never intended it to be a world closed in on itself: The Catholic Worker movement was, from the start, intended as a revolutionary program. In the next chapter, therefore, I turn to consider how the practice of hospitality competed with and supported the other rhetorical activities of the movement, such as the production of the *Catholic Worker* paper and public protests.

Chapter 3: Real Presences and Rhetorical (Inter)Actions

I often think that it is indeed very hard to extend such hospitality to everyone that comes in. It is so much easier to throw people the clothes, food, or what not that they need, and so hard to sit down with them and listen patiently. There are so many people dropping in that some days I do not sit down to the typewriter once,—the work gets far behind and I have to remind myself that all those little frittering things which take up one's time are quite as important . . . than answering letters or keeping one's files up to date. (Day, "To a Canadian" 59)

Why do we want these experiences that (at least in some sense) aren't "real"? What does presence offer us? Aside from its practical uses, what needs does it fulfill? (Lombard and Ditton)

The individual whom one is ready to sacrifice to the system is not only unreal de jure because he has lost his ontological status, but also de facto because he is not present. (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 119)

Hospitality and Public Action

In the first chapter, I argued that factors in her background and personality led Dorothy Day to understand the hospitality that Peter Maurin advocated in material terms. In chapter two, I analyzed some of the ways that Day and her followers materialized hospitality. As might be expected, my analysis of the Catholic Worker movement's practice of hospitality reveals several ways in which the materialization differs from the ideal. Hospitality in action could certainly be a harsh and dreadful thing, to paraphrase one of Day's favorite quotations from Dostoevsky; it was also constrained by the material situation in which it was practiced.²¹

Part of that situation was the fact that hospitality was not the only activity to which Day and her followers devoted themselves. Putting out the newspaper demanded considerable time and energy from members of the movement. Father Edmond Kent, an Irish Jesuit who visited the Worker in the 1940s to

²¹ The quotation, from *The Brothers Karamazov*, is Fr. Zosima's remark that "Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared with love in dreams" (55).

learn about the movement and to meet Dorothy Day, gives an idea of how the production of the paper affected the practice of hospitality:

As I pushed open the little door, the buzz of conversation stopped suddenly, in a furtive kind of way reminiscent of schoolboys' reaction to the entrance of the Master on a Monday morning. I stood in that little doorway uncertain as to what to do next. ... I smiled at the silent questioning faces turned in my direction. Reassured that my intentions were friendly, they turned back to their work and the buzz of conversation began again. At that moment, I was seized with a wild desire to make a hasty exit as if I had come to the wrong place. I held my ground however. No one spoke to me, as I shut the door and turned to the man nearest me. ... I spoke to him mechanically and asked to see someone about *The Catholic Worker*. ... My friend half rose and shouted one word 'Tom,' and then without a word pointed to a young man busy tying bundles of the paper at the far end of the room. (178)

Fr. Kent goes on to comment that he "was feeling far from being at home," and when he finally met Day, the reception she gave him did not immediately put him at ease:

She glanced at me and looked inquiringly at Tom. He told her who I was, and she kept looking at him and listening attentively to his account of me. When Tom had ended, she appeared satisfied and asked me to sit down. I don't remember that she gave me her hand. She waved me into the one and only kitchen chair that was in the room. I suggested that she should take it. She apparently did not hear me, for she presently sat on the only part of the table that was not littered with newspaper bundles, whence she turned to face me with a look which seemed to me to say: "I am a very busy woman; what can I do for you?" (179)

Aside from her offering Fr. Kent the chair, there is very little in this exchange that might be described as hospitable (and even Day's choice to perch on the table can be read as indicating an inhospitable impatience on her part; by locating herself alongside the papers, she ensures that her interlocutor is constantly reminded, simply by looking at her, that there is work to be done).²²

Fr. Kent was eventually won over to Day's cause (and he warmed to her personally, as well), but still, this episode is a striking illustration of how the various priorities of the movement competed with one another. These priorities included, in addition to the work of publishing the *Catholic Worker* newspaper and offering hospitality, strikes and protests supporting various radical causes, lectures (both at St. Joseph's and across the country—Day and Maurin traveled frequently and were sometimes absent from New York for weeks at a time), and responding to correspondence that came in.

Public Action

Although hospitality is not an individual affair—its very nature as openness to others is opposed to individualism—it is a private activity. Hospitality involves welcoming the stranger into a home, and while hospitality certainly had some very public rhetorical consequences, especially as Day publicized the practice in her writing, it is finally a domestic, intimate encounter. Many of the Worker's other activities, by contrast, were aimed at a larger, public audience. The *Catholic Worker*, for instance, had a circulation of 190,000 at its peak in the late 1930s. Likewise, Day worked to persuade both the public at large and other Catholic Workers of the rightness of pacifism through a variety of means, both verbal and corporal, as when Day joined in an anti-Nazi protest at the site where the German ship *Bremen* docked in New York in July

²² The gesture of offering her guest a chair may have been more meaningful at St. Joseph's than it might appear. Day elsewhere wrote about the perennial lack of chairs in the house, "so each one is a treasure" ("Peter the Materialist").

1935. Day witnessed many of the protesters on that occasion being brutally beaten by the some of the New York City police—presumably because the protesters were communists—and afterward she wrote a letter to the police commissioner decrying the violence as “Nazi tactics and a shame and a disgrace to the U.S.” and arguing that such violence only serves to confirm communists’ condemnations of Christians (75). Such attempts by Day and others to voice a social critique to a diverse audience are what I term public action.

In his study of hospitality at three Catholic Worker houses in the early 1980s, sociologist Harry Murray describes the tension that many of the workers he interviewed and observed felt between hospitality and public action—such as marches, sit-ins, prayer vigils, and civil disobedience—to expose and contest the evils of war, hypercapitalism, and the like. As Murray and others have pointed out, workers’ time and energy are not infinite, so there is always a tension between the need to practice hospitality and the need to raise one’s voice or one’s body in public witness for justice. Murray’s analysis of the differences between hospitality and protest suggests that the tension between them is due to more than the question of what to do with one’s time:

The very rhythm of hospitality differs from that of peace witness. Hospitality is a day-to-day, cyclical activity—requiring a constant, continual commitment simply to be present in the house and deal with whatever situations arise. The heroics it requires are simple, everyday heroics. . . . Peace witness, on the other hand, is an occasional activity. It too requires some continual effort—in terms of attending meetings, planning, “spreading the word.” However, a major aspect of peace work consists of the demonstrations that occur on an irregular basis. . . . Peace witness, then, involves an alternation between ordinary time and special events; hospitality, however, occurs entirely in ordinary time. (157)

In other words, negotiating the tension between hospitality and protest involves more than simply finding time for both. The activities seem to demand different mindsets from the workers who would practice them well, and it is easy to imagine how some workers might have tried to do both, badly.

Hospitality and Epistemology

Nevertheless the question of how workers spend their time, which is important and has real and practical consequences, can be usefully reframed in light of the analysis presented in the previous chapter to minimize the opposition between the two sorts of activities. In other words, hospitality and protest can be understood not only as competing materializations of Catholic Worker philosophy, but as complementary rhetorical activities. In fact, Patrick Coy, a political scientist and former Catholic Worker, argues that it is precisely their practice of hospitality that allows workers to “speak truth to power.” Commenting on this often-used phrase, he writes that speaking truth to power “first presumes that the nonviolent actionist actually knows the truth, and second that the actionist is somehow empowered to speak” (“Beyond” 178). Coy asserts that both of these presumptions are often called into question in the context of deconstruction and postmodernism. He argues, however, that Catholic Workers are often less hesitant to engage in public protest than other groups precisely because their experiences of solidarity with poor people—their experiences of hospitality—provide them with a certainty from which to act decisively. In other words, hospitality provides an epistemological grounding for the other rhetorical work in which members of the Catholic Worker movement engage.

Of course, not all people who go through the motions of hospitality do or even want to engage in public action, and there are a number of reasons that practices like giving food to the poor can even reinforce people’s resistance to such action: They might become disillusioned with the perceived unworthiness or ingratitude of the recipients of their charity, or they might feel that, having provided some

immediate help to people in need, their responsibility is thereby fulfilled. Furthermore, Coy is writing as an apologist for the Catholic Worker movement (his essay appears in a collection published in honor of the centennial of Dorothy Day's birth), and as such he paints postmodernism with a broad brush. Many postmodernists do in fact find compelling grounds from which to "speak truth to power." Despite this weakness, however, Coy's point about the relationship between hospitality and public action is sound: Hospitality provided one important source of knowledge underlying the truth claims that members of the movement voiced when they engaged in public action.

An objection could be raised that the movement's personalism/anarchism (Day seems to have used the two terms relatively synonymously) could and does provide sufficient and formative justification for workers' engagement in public protest. That is, before her conversion to Catholicism, Day had already spent a decade engaging in public action as a writer and a picketer and so was well disposed to continue such action as part of the Catholic Worker movement. Indeed, the first point in Maurin's "green revolution" was the establishment of the Catholic Worker paper, and Day frequently admitted that this was the aspect of Maurin's program that most appealed to her (*Loaves* 11). And chronologically, it was this journalistic rhetorical activity that came first; the publication of the paper led to "the need to start a hospice for women [making] itself felt" (Day, *House Forward*). To suggest that the practice of hospitality should intercede in the epistemological chain from Catholic Worker philosophy to public protest action seems to introduce an unnecessary step.

What, then, does the practice of hospitality add to workers' understanding of social injustices and their readiness to engage in public action? How does it inform that action? To answer these questions, of course, it is necessary to understand how hospitality, as a material practice, can provide a ground of knowledge, and it is that process that I will examine in this chapter. In doing so, I draw on communication scholar John Shotter's concept of real presences, agentic forms which arise out of our dialogic interactions

with other people and with the physical world. I argue that Catholic Worker hospitality fostered the creation of real presences—which workers understood in theological terms as encounters with Christ—and that workers’ interactions with these real presences provided part of the epistemological grounding for their larger-scale public rhetoric, such as the *Catholic Worker* newspaper and protest actions.

Presence in Rhetoric

In their 1958 *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca briefly discuss the role of presence in argument. They explain that presence is the psychological salience that objects or ideas obtain by being brought before an audience, either in reality or “by verbal magic alone” (117). Because that which is present to an audience becomes “overestimated” (that is, it assumes a greater relative importance to an audience than it otherwise might have), rhetors’ task is to create presence for those aspects of their arguments on which they wish their audience to focus. Rhetors do this by choosing words that make a situation especially vivid in the imagination of the audience; this is one function of the narratio in classical oration.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca also acknowledge the presence-creating power of material objects—as when, for instance, in the course of a trial, “the children of the accused [are] brought before his judges in order to arouse their pity”—but they ultimately caution against the use of such materials to create presence, for “The real can exhibit unfavorable features from which it may be difficult to distract the viewer’s attention; the concrete object also might turn his attention in a direction leading away from what is of importance to the speaker” (117-8). In other words, because materiality has consequences beyond the intentions and control of the rhetor, it is not a sure way to gain assent. And, for Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, presence is ultimately that—a strategy for gaining the assent of an audience. Therefore, instead of relying on sheer material presence, rhetors must present their subjects in a favorable light, as it were,

remembering that presence should “not be confused with fidelity to reality” (118). The relationship between rhetorical presence and reality has important implications for my analysis of Catholic Worker hospitality, and I return to it below.

As a persuasive strategy, presence is a necessary component of argumentation because it enables audiences to act in response to a rhetorical message. Even if an audience is inclined to agree with the content of a message, what they actually do is another matter. There may be any number of reasons that an audience is unwilling to accept and act on what a rhetor has to say. Such obstacles to action may be rational, affective, social, or material, but in any case they are an important part of how an audience responds to an issue. For example, if we meet a homeless person on the street who asks us for money, and we decide not to give it, there may be a variety of reasons for our decision: because we believe she will spend it in ways we consider unworthy, because we fear for our safety, because our social reality has so constructed our consciousness that we do not consider a homeless person worthy of our attention, because we do not have any money to give, and so forth. What presence accomplishes is the overestimation of those elements of an argument that support the rhetor’s position, so that an audience is moved to dismiss those obstacles and is able, even eager, to act. To continue with the example, the task of the homeless person asking us for money is to imbue her argument with presence in such a way that we grant her request despite the obstacles or objections we perceive. (This is the reason that some people avoid meeting the gaze of people they expect may ask them for money: Looking someone in the eyes can make that person present to us, and thereby make it harder to refuse our help.) Communications scholar Thomas Mader names these obstacles as part of the context of an audience’s situation, and he defines presence in terms of its ability to enable action despite them: “[P]resence is the state of transcendence in which one is freed from the context of his existence and as a result of this freedom is able to *act*” (378). Like Perelman’s and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s caution against using material to create presence, Mader’s language of transcendence again emphasizes the divorce between a

person's physical, "real" environment (i.e., "the context of his existence") and what is present to that person.

An interesting aspect of rhetorical presence is the way that it blurs the lines between rational argumentation and materiality. For Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, the preferred efficient cause of rhetorical presence is language—that is, the symbolic rather than the sheerly material—yet the final cause, its purpose, is to motivate action by appealing to the sensory, rather than symbolic, experiences of an audience. The sensory, material aspect of presence has been perhaps most strongly articulated by scholars in communication and technology. The increasing use of technologies such as video conferencing and virtual reality has encouraged these scholars to investigate how such technologies create verisimilitude and how humans perceive it. For instance, Matthew Lombard and Theresa Ditton define presence as "the perceptual illusion of nonmediation," which "occurs when a person fails to perceive or acknowledge the existence of a medium in his/her communication environment and responds as he/she would if the medium were not there." Although Lombard and Ditton grant that even as simple a technology as a pair of eyeglasses constitutes a form of mediation, an assumption behind their definition of presence is that nonmediated experiences are possible and recognizable, and that they are in fact the default way in which humans interact with the world. If people fail to distinguish these from mediated experiences, that is the result of the deceptive nature of technological presence.²³

Lombard and Ditton also recognize that the deception of presence can motivate people's actions, and in this sense technological presence can be understood as persuasive. The greater the degree of presence a given technology creates, the more it persuades its users that what it presents to them is a nonmediated

²³ For Lombard and Ditton, presence is deceptive, unlike for Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, for whom it is merely selective.

experience and enables them to act accordingly. For instance, a 3D movie is designed to create presence more effectively than a conventional film. Viewers of a 3D film may be “persuaded” to jump in their seats or to duck when they see objects coming towards them from the screen, but people watching the same film in two dimensions, on a smaller screen (such as an iPad), are much less likely to react that way.

It is important to note that, as this example shows, the persuasive power of presence is not chiefly intellectual. In fact, presence is persuasive insofar as it motivates an audience to act despite the objections of the rational mind: Intellectually, members of an audience know that they are watching a film, yet they cooperate with the film’s presence in such a way that they react as though the projections of light they see actually were boulders hurtling towards them.

Real Presence

To be persuaded by presence, whether technological or not, requires that an audience relinquish its intellectual domination over the subject at hand (put another way, it requires that we grant subjectivity to the object at hand). The consequences of this giving up of rational mastery find their most developed rhetorical treatment in the writing of communications scholar John Shotter. Invoking the language of philosopher George Steiner, Shotter writes of “real presences,” which he defines in terms of the agency of presence. A real presence is:

a very special phenomenon that occurs only when we enter into mutually responsive, dialogically structured, living, embodied relations with the others and otherness around us—when we cease to set ourselves, unresponsively, over against them, and allow ourselves to enter into an inter-involvement with them. (“Real” 441)

In other words, real presences arise when we allow them to. We do this, Shotter suggests, by setting aside our Cartesian assumptions that we are “self-contained and self-controlled subjects” in “an objective,

mechanically structured, external material world” (437). Shotter offers two helpful examples of this sort of phenomenon. The first is the familiar autostereographic images that appear to be random groups of dots or blotches, but when viewed in a particular way reveal a previously invisible, apparently 3D image (441). A second phenomenon Shotter uses to explain real presences is the rainbow, which has no physical reality outside of the viewer’s perception, and which results from the interaction of a viewer’s vision and the physical environment (“Creating” 275). As I shall explain, these examples have their limitations, but they do help to illustrate how these real presences can arise out of human perception.

Qualities of Real Presences

Naturally, there is an inherent difficulty in talking about real presences. By their very nature as subjective realities, they defy comprehensive analysis, and so any discussion of them, any attempt to break them down and understand how they work, is bound to be incomplete at best. Nonetheless, Shotter’s discussion of real presences brings up three characteristics of these phenomena that are important for an understanding of the relationship between hospitality and public action. First, as they exist in dialog with “the realm of expressive bodily movements and changes,” real presences are a function of motion, in the Burkean sense. For Burke, motion is the behavior of “The human body, in its nature as a sheerly physiological organism ...in the realm of matter,” and is opposed to action, which refers to “modes of behavior made possible by the acquiring of a conventional, arbitrary symbol system” (“(Nonsymbolic)” 809). While Burke describes the pairing of motion and action as “the basic polarity” (809), scholars have pointed out that Burke never meant for action and motion to be seen as opposites, or that motion, as nonsymbolic, was ever meant to be seen as without meaning (Hawhee). Instead, motion is the primary means by which humans realize themselves “as living, embodied, participant parts of a larger, ongoing,

predominantly living whole” (Shotter, “Real” 439). Shotter insists that motion, which he describes as “spontaneously responsive, living bodily activity” can be meaningful (447).

Second, real presences are transcendent. The very identification of these phenomena as “real” stands in obvious contrast to a fundamental characteristic of rhetorical presence as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca and Lombard and Ditton describe it: that presence is an illusion. The knowledge that presence is not “real” is the control that our rational minds exert or attempt to exert over our situations and ourselves, and that fact, more than the much thornier issue of what reality is, is what matters here. For Shotter, what matters about the reality of real presences is that they offer a connection between our rational, Cartesian perceptions of existence (which lead us to favor detachment and objectivity in our relations with the world around us) and other ways of knowing and being in the world. It is in this sense of moving us beyond the narrowness of our vision—in fact, moving us beyond the assumptions that underlie the metonymy of vision and knowing to an understanding that we can know through our movement, our motion—that real presences are transcendent.

Finally, real presences are agents. Because they arise only when we give up our rational, autonomous stance by which we, as subjects, regard the external, objective world (including the other people around us) as something inert, and therefore something that our understanding can master, real presences are by definition co-participants in and co-creators of our reality. As such, “certain ‘real presences’ can, like actual others around us, ‘call’ us to action, can issue ‘action-guiding advisories,’ and can ‘witness and judge’ what we do with their ‘facial’ and ‘vocal’ expressions” (Shotter, “Real” 448), and “we feel ourselves coerced by, subjected to or compelled by ‘their’ requirements” (443). On this point, of course, Shotter’s examples of autostereographic images and rainbows fall short. However, it is easier to see how the real presences that may have arisen as a result of Catholic Worker hospitality might be said to have

compelling requirements of their own, especially in light of the fact that Day and other workers typically talked of such real presences in explicitly theological language.

Real Presences in Catholic Worker Theological Discourse

One of the clearest examples of Day using theological language to describe how hospitality can lead to the perception of real presences is her frequent references to the Emmaus story in the last chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. After Jesus had been crucified, his disciples had been walking to Emmaus, a town near Jerusalem, when they met a stranger whom they invited to dine with them.²⁴ At dinner, the disciples realized that the stranger was Jesus: "They knew him in the breaking of the bread" (Day, "They Knew"; Luke 24.35). Here, the sharing of food between the disciples and a stranger—clearly an act of hospitality grounded in the material—gives rise to their perception of transcendent reality. The first time Day referred to this story in the paper, she did so to suggest that souls were being lost because people were not encountering Christ and that the work of feeding the hungry was a necessary remedy because it fostered that encounter ("They Knew").

More generally, members of the Catholic Worker movement talked about the poor people who came to St. Joseph's as "ambassadors of God" (e.g., Maurin, "Duty"). Workers often repeated the Biblical pronouncement that care given or denied to people in need was given or denied to Christ (e.g., Matthew 25.40, 45), and they believed that in offering food and shelter to those people, they were able to encounter

²⁴ Many Catholic exegetes read "the breaking of the bread" in the Emmaus story as a celebration of the Eucharist, rather than an ordinary dinner. For example, in a 2008 address, Benedict XVI argued that "This stupendous Gospel text already contains the structure of the Mass: in the first part the hearing of the word through the sacred Scriptures; in the second the Eucharistic liturgy and communion with Christ present in the sacrament of his Body and his Blood."

Christ. An undated letter in the Catholic Worker archives, labeled simply as “Mame’s Letter to Henry,” offers vivid evidence that at least one worker believed that she was able, through the practice of hospitality, to encounter Christ:

Dearest Henry,

One day you came into The Catholic Worker very drunk. You staggered around for a while mumbling while your eyes darted back and forth in your head like some wild animal’s.

But gradually they stopped and you settled down and I noticed a calm gentle look almost reflective! Then you stood and started taking your shirt off (an action you told me is advantageous when wiping car windows) your poor thin body hiding the strength inside it. I’ll tell you what happened Henry.

For one brief remarkable second I saw Christ standing before me being stripped of His clothing vividly—realistically. You were interchangeable with Him for me. At that moment I know this was His way of telling me I was to help you and to be with you always.

The Christ whom Mame sees in Henry conforms to the pattern of real presences as Shotter describes them. Her encounter with this presence was “brief” but “realistic.” And, importantly, this presence demonstrates agency by communicating, “telling” Mame what she is to do.

Mame’s account of seeing Christ in a poor person who came to a house of hospitality shows the encounter with real presences in action, but it should not create the impression that such encounters were commonplace. Day wrote that seeing Christ in the poor was “the hardest problem we have yet” (“To Catherine de Hueck” 77). Indeed, one of Day’s criticisms of the movement’s work was that its members so often failed to see Christ in others. She granted that the houses of hospitality and the farms did good work,

“but pagan rather than Christian”; that is, too frequently the work did not foster transcendent encounters. “[H]ave we even the start of a Christian community,” Day lamented (“To Joe Zarrella” 120).

Voluntary Poverty

One possible reason for the frequent failure of Catholic Worker hospitality to foster an encounter with Christ was that the price of doing such an encounter would have been quite high. Day and her followers also spoke of the attitude one must assume in order to be able to perceive real presences in theological terms when they advocated voluntary poverty. Shotter calls our attention to the phenomena of real presences in order to encourage us to give up our need to control the world around us by holding it at arm’s length. His call to enter into a participatory, dialogic relationship with the material realm is a call to poverty, to helplessness, to be, as Gregory Clark puts it in writing about the relationship between motion and action, “humbled by the flood that sweeps us along beyond our control” (“Review” 294). Such humility and loss of control is precisely what Catholic Workers hoped to cultivate through voluntary poverty.

The idea of poverty, while it has much in Christian tradition to recommend it, was not always one for which Day could garner support. Ostensibly, part of the reason for the Catholic Worker movement’s existence was to combat poverty, and Day was sensitive to how exhortations to poverty would be received by the readers of the *Catholic Worker*. Especially in the early days of the movement, Day was concerned that the importance of poverty was “a thing delicate and precious and hard to convey” because her readers—“the embittered, fallen away Catholic,—the man on the street,—the poor mother of many children, the father out of work”—were already too familiar with the consequences of involuntary poverty (Day, “To a Jesuit” 60). Day also wanted to avoid giving credence to the communist objection that religion was only a means of pacifying poor people (and keeping them poor) by getting them to accept their condition as somehow worthy of eventual, eternal reward. For these reasons, Day was careful to differentiate between poverty

and destitution (Day, *House Conclusion*). The latter she understood to describe an extreme material and spiritual privation, whereas the former connoted only a lack of material security. Poverty was a condition that could be embraced, trusting that God would provide for one's true needs. In Day's understanding, therefore, poverty was ultimately a solution to the problem of destitution, but one's poverty must be voluntary. What was essential was not the lack of control over one's situation that poverty meant, but the voluntary giving up of the control that one had. Thus anyone, regardless of their material condition, could choose to embrace voluntary poverty; Day often noted that it was the materially poor who were the most generous (e.g., *House Chapter 5*).

Poverty and Presence

This understanding of voluntary poverty as a giving up of control over one's situation helps to explain how poverty fostered the perception of real presences, and especially how it allowed them to see Christ in the people who came to St. Joseph's. In a letter to another house of hospitality, Day described the importance of seeing people not as they are in material terms, but seeing the transcendent reality that people presented:

You can look at all men at all the houses and see them as pretty rotten. That, of course, is the way we should see things; to see men as but dust; from the human point of view that is perfectly true But from the standpoint of the supernatural they are a little less than the angels and if we could only keep that attitude toward them! ("To the Buffalo" 121)

The extent to which Day was willing to give up control in order to see Christ in others was often tested, as in the case of Edward Breen, who had come to St. Joseph house by 1935 and stayed until his death four years later. Although he professed a profound devotion to Day, he was frequently a source of torment for her because of the way that he verbally abused everyone at St. Joseph's. "He sits at the lower window like a

Cerberus and growls and curses at everyone who comes in,” she wrote in a 1935 letter, “And he, after all, is Christ” (“To Catherine de Hueck” 77). It was Breen who occasioned Day’s comment that seeing Christ in the people who came to the St. Joseph’s was the “hardest work.”

One result of their insistence on seeing Christ in people such as Edward Breen was that Catholic Workers were often accused of romanticizing poverty and being overly sentimental in their approach to social injustice. Day responded strongly to this charge, arguing that using poverty as a means of encountering Christ was no romantic, sublime affair:

But let those who talk of softness, of sentimentality, come to live with us in cold, unheated houses in the slums. Let them come to live with the criminal, the unbalanced, the drunken, the degraded, the pervert. (It is not decent poor, it is not the decent sinner who was the recipient of Christ’s love.) Let them live with rats, with vermin, bedbugs, roaches, lice (I could describe the several kinds of body lice).

Let their flesh be mortified by cold, by dirt, by vermin; let their eyes be mortified by the sight of bodily excretions, diseased limbs, eyes, noses, mouths.

Let their noses be mortified by the smells of sewage, decay and rotten flesh. Yes, and the smell of the sweat, blood and tears spoken of so blithely by Mr. Churchill, and so widely and bravely quoted by comfortable people.

Let their ears be mortified by harsh and screaming voices, by the constant coming and going of people living herded together with no privacy. (There is no privacy in tenements just as there is none in concentration camps.)

Let their taste be mortified by the constant eating of insufficient food cooked in huge quantities for hundreds of people, the coarser foods, the cheaper foods, so that there will be enough to go around; and the smell of such cooking is often foul.

Then when they have lived with these comrades, with these sights and sounds, let our critics talk of sentimentality. (“Why”)

Day’s defense here dwells on the material elements of poverty; to be voluntarily poor was to be at the mercy of these material conditions, and the mortification Day writes of is exactly the sort of giving up of control that allowed her and other workers to experience real presences as a consequence of their hospitality. Importantly, Day connects the mortification brought on by material poverty with rhetorical action; following this description of the poverty in which members of the Catholic Worker movement immersed themselves, Day concludes, “But we cannot keep silent” (“Why”). In the next section, I turn to consider the specific ways in which Catholic Workers were “coerced by, subjected to or compelled by” the presences they encountered to not “keep silent” but to speak out against social injustices.

Catholic Worker Activism and Pacifism

One of the first major disagreements between Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin was over the name of the paper they published. Day favored the *Catholic Worker*, which she felt articulated the paper’s sympathy with those laborers and unemployed people to whom it was addressed. Maurin, however, had wanted to call it the *Catholic Radical* (and to fill it with almost exclusively his own easy essays), and he worried that “everyone’s paper is no one’s paper” (Day, *Loaves* 16). Unlike Day, Maurin was little interested in supporting labor unions—he wanted people to abandon the industrialized economy and return to the land—and he was consequently uninterested in protests aimed at merely improving the conditions of workers within the current system (Novitsky). “Strikes don’t strike me,” he repeated often (Day, “Peter Maurin”).

Day's vision for the paper (and the movement) prevailed, of course, and from its beginning the *Catholic Worker* included reports of strikes by workers throughout the country. Articles in the October and November, 1933, issues decried the use of violence against strikers in a number of industries, including cotton, grapes, steel, coal, textiles, and beets. In 1937, when General Motors workers staged a sit-down strike, Day herself traveled to Flint, Michigan, to report on it. She praised the strike as a model of nonviolent resistance, even though she noted that the strikers were "ready to repel efforts to evict them" with makeshift weapons they had fashioned ("C.W. Editor").

In addition to reporting on strikes, Catholic Workers also regularly took part in picketing. To protest the Mexican government's persecution of Catholics, Day and other workers joined the Campion Propaganda Committee's picket lines outside of the Mexican consulate in Washington, DC, in 1934, in what Day called "the first time Catholics in this country had ever picketed as Catholics" ("Christmas"). The next year, Catholic Workers joined in an anti-Hitler protest in New York where the German ship *Bremen* had docked, as I described above. Day also advocated what she called in the first issue of the paper "gentle sabotage." For instance, Day encouraged readers to dine by candlelight or kerosene lamps in order to reduce revenue for the electric companies, because "the poor consumer does a lot of suffering . . . when it comes to paying the bills" ("For"). Readers of the paper were also urged to boycott Borden Milk and the National Biscuit Company because of these companies' repressive responses to strikes.

Eventually, Day connected this type of protest to the practice of hospitality. In her June 1940 "Day after Day" column, Day explained that, despite the poor material conditions of life at the St. Joseph's, workers had to look for opportunities to make sacrifices because, unlike the men on the breadlines, Catholic Workers enjoyed "the security which comes with communal living." One of the ways that Day suggested people might counterbalance their comfort and security—that is, pursue voluntary poverty—was

to enroll in a Non-Participation League, whose members would agree not to purchase products from companies that supported unjust labor practices. Day was, of course, interested in the particular social causes that a Non-Participation League was meant to advance: She was always an advocate of justice for workers. But it is worth noting that in recommending to readers that they enroll in the League, she takes readers' interest in labor justice for granted; the argument she does make—that is, the claim of which she apparently believes readers might need to be convinced—that non-participation is a way to pursue voluntary poverty suggests that Day's practice of hospitality, her association with the "wrecks of men [on the breadlines], gaunt and suffering," had by this time become a motivating factor for her engagement in particular sort of protest actions ("Day after Day—Thoughts").

Pacifism

All of the forms of activism mentioned in the previous section were important elements of the Catholic Worker movement's public action throughout the 1930s, and activism continued to be a defining feature of the movement in subsequent decades. Nonetheless, the most profound manifestation of the Catholic Worker movement's response to the real presences workers encountered as a result of their practice of hospitality was Day's growing embrace of total pacifism. To be sure, Day had participated in peace demonstrations before her involvement with the Catholic Worker movement—indeed before she was a Catholic—and she had sometimes referred to herself as a pacifist (Day, *Long* 87). But her main motivation for joining these demonstrations had been anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist, rather than an opposition to all violence (Klejment, "Radical"). Indeed, Day recalls that in her younger days she believed that social injustices could only be remedied by the use of force (*Long* 61). In this way, Day's pre-conversion opposition to war could be squared fairly easily with the Roman Catholic teaching about just war: that war might sometimes be a morally acceptable choice—even a morally necessary one—so long as certain

conditions were met. Whether particular wars met these conditions was of course, not dogmatically defined, and this enabled Catholics to oppose particular wars while not arguing that all war everywhere was sinful. Day's conversion to Roman Catholicism does not, therefore, in itself, seem to have effected any meaningful change in her thinking about war.

Instead, Day's devotion to pacifism developed gradually during the first decade of the Catholic Worker movement. Although the *Catholic Worker* had included references to "Catholic pacifism" as early as October 1933 ("Catholic"), the first identifiable mention of pacifism by Day herself in the newspaper came in the third anniversary issue (Day, "Pacifism"). Throughout the 1930s, the language with which Day condemned war became steadily more forceful. In a 1934 article, for instance, Day posed her opposition to war tentatively: "Is War Justifiable? War Preparations Cause Questions." Notably, one of the questions raised is economic: In keeping with her earlier views, Day's opposition to war in this article stems in part from her concern that money was being spent on war readiness that could better have been spent on other, more humane, priorities. In the same article, Day noted that "Conscience would *probably* put an end to war if it were given its rights" (emphasis added). But within two years, Day opposed war in more certain terms: "The Catholic Worker is sincerely a *pacifist* paper," she wrote in 1936, clarifying that the Catholic Worker movement was opposed to both class war and imperialist war, as well as preparations for war ("Pacifism" emphasis in original). At the very least, the intensification of Day's opposition to war seems to have occurred alongside her activity as part of the Catholic Worker movement during the movement's first decade. I argue, however, that the relationship between Day's experiences in the Catholic Worker movement and her pacifism was more than coincidental; indeed, her practice of hospitality and the experience of real presences contributed significantly to Day's pacifism.

It is true that, for her part, Day claimed that her "absolute pacifism stems purely from the gospel teaching" (qtd. in Miller, *Dorothy* 313). No doubt this claim was sincere, but it is hardly an unproblematic

explanation of how Day came to embrace pacifism: Billions of other Christians have encountered the gospels without embracing absolute pacifism. But Day's claim about the origin of her pacifism makes sense given that she understood hospitality to be mandated by the gospel, and, in particular, by Peter Maurin's reading of the gospel, which she found persuasive. As Andrew Hamilton has pointed out, "When she commends the commitment to pacifism, she usually places it within Peter Maurin's program. She does not defend it in isolation." This is curious rhetorical move for Day; while Maurin certainly opposed war on the grounds that the realities of modern technology and warfare made a just war impossible, he was less interested than Day in advocating total pacifism as a driving ideology within the Catholic Worker movement (Cornell). What Day's defense of pacifism in terms of Maurin's program shows, therefore, is not Maurin's pacifism but the essential connection between what Day saw as Maurin's program and pacifism: that is, between hospitality and pacifism. Indeed, I argue that it was her experiences of real presences, fostered by her practice of hospitality, that lead Day to embrace and advocate pacifism.

Indeed, by 1938, Day had explicitly connected the movement's pacifist stance with its vocation and practice of hospitality. Day reminded readers of the paper that it was necessary to see beyond the physical appearance in order to understand "the primacy of the spiritual" and the necessity of pacifism ("Explains"). By this time, apparently, Day's practice of hospitality and the encounter with real presences that it had fostered had sufficiently convinced her that commitment to the Catholic Worker movement's vision required renouncing all wars.

One reason that Day's interaction with real presences may have led her to advocate pacifism more strongly is that she recognized that peace was a necessary condition for the appreciation of real presences. As I have explained, real presences arise out of a participatory, embodied encounters of subjects. They depend upon relationality. The primary way that Day expressed this relationality was through her references to all people as "members or potential members of the Mystical Body of Christ" (e.g., *From*

Union, Chapter 1), and the primary way that she materialized this relationality was through the practice of hospitality. This practice, as I have argued, had the potential to give rise to real presences—encounters with Christ—but only so long as the conditions for real presence were maintained. The relationality upon which real presences depend can only exist when the parties to the relationship do not try to dominate one another, but rather recognize their mutual subjectivity. Thus pacifism, the refusal to dominate or objectify another subject, becomes an essential attitude in fostering real presence. Day's pacifism, therefore, can be seen as a pursuit of the sort of attitude that would allow members of the movement to encounter Christ more fully in their work of hospitality.

Indeed, her defense of pacifism during the Spanish Civil War suggests that she hoped such an encounter with Christ would be, if not normative, at least expected for all Christians:

We pray those martyrs of Spain to help us, to pray for us, to guide us in the stand we take. We speak in their name. Their blood cries out against the shedding of more blood to wash out theirs. Their blood cries out against a spirit of hatred and savagery which aims towards a peace founded upon victory, at the price of resentment and hatred enduring for years to come. Do you suppose they died, saying grimly—"Alright—we accept martyrdom—we will not lift the sword to defend ourselves but the lay troops will avenge us!" This would be martyrdom wasted. Blood spilled in vain. Or rather did they say with St. Stephen, "Father, forgive them," and pray with love for their conversion? And did they not rather pray, when the light of Christ burst upon them, that love would overcome hatred, that men *dying* for faith, rather than *killing* for their faith, would save the world? ("Explains")

Here, Day holds up the experience of Spanish martyrs as an example of how Christians should respond to violence. In Day's account, the crucial part of these martyrs' experience was that, having adopted an attitude of pacifism towards their adversaries (i.e., determining "not [to] lift the sword" but to

“pray with love for their conversion”), these martyrs would have created the conditions in which they might encounter Christ. As Day writes, “the light of Christ burst upon them.” Day’s defense of pacifism here, then, suggests that she saw pacifism as at once a necessary attitude in order to encounter a real presence, and the natural, appropriate response to a true encounter with Christ.

Day’s pacifism was not universally shared within the Catholic Worker movement. During the Spanish Civil War, when most Catholics saw Franco as a defender of the faith against the godless socialist rebels, the paper’s official stance of pacifism drew severe criticism. Subscriptions to the paper plummeted, and the movement lost the support of many clergy who had been friendly towards it. And by the time the United States entered the second World War, a number of Catholic Worker houses has explicitly stated their opposition to pacifism in the face of the Nazi threat.

The disparity among Catholic Worker houses with regard to pacifism raises the question of why hospitality, giving rise to real presences, did not in every case lead workers to embrace pacifism. Two possible explanations suggest themselves. First, as real presences are at once agentic and dialogically interdependent upon those who perceive them, it is simplistic to assume that they should make the same demands on every person. Such an assumption reduces them to the status of a mere variable in an objective sort of equation that connects the practice of hospitality with pacifism, regardless of the backgrounds and identities of their co-participants. The second possible explanation follows from this. Day’s particular background—her experiences, attitude, and understanding of hospitality as discussed in the first chapter—shaped the message that she took away from her encounters with real presences.

I began this chapter asking how the materialization of Catholic Worker philosophy in the practice of hospitality added to workers’ understanding of social injustices and their readiness to engage in public action, and how it informed that action. The concept of real presences, which Catholic Workers discussed as encounters with Christ, helps to answer both questions. Ultimately, as workers entered into dialogic,

participatory exchanges with their material environment—especially with those people who came to the Worker destitute or in an otherwise off-putting condition—their hospitality gave rise to real presences, which directed the sort of public action that workers would engage in. For Day, at the end of the first decade of the Worker's existence, this meant a deepening commitment to absolute pacifism. In the next chapter, I consider some ways that the practice of hospitality in the classroom might call us, as teachers of writing, to act in particular ways.

Chapter 4: Hospitality in Composition

Unlike [traveling, barn raising, parenting, or doctoring] . . . , hospitality literally can be performed in writhing classrooms. (Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock)

Hospitality cannot help us to create more ethical ways of thinking about writing instruction, teacher-student relations, or knowledge production in general: hospitality can only reveal to us the “other others” we have sacrificed to achieve our present goals and objectives. (Heard 329)

Dorothy was basically not political at all. She called it anarchism, but what she wanted was for everybody to perform the works of mercy. To transform their lives in a Christian way. Dorothy was for community. She was for charity. She was for the works of mercy. (Michael Harington, qtd. in Troester 126)

In the first chapter, I argued that Day understood hospitality as a remedy to the fundamental human condition of loneliness, a remedy that is necessarily material and closely tied to Day’s own beliefs about God and gender. In Chapter 2, I analyzed the material rhetoric of Day’s hospitality, and in Chapter 3, I considered one consequence of hospitality’s materiality—real presences—and explored how these presences affected Day’s and her followers’ other rhetorical activities. My analysis suggests that hospitality, as a material rhetoric, has implications for other rhetorical enterprises, and, for those of us concerned with the teaching of writing, the question naturally arises what this analysis of Day’s hospitality might contribute to our understanding of the role of hospitality in the teaching of writing. Our classrooms are not houses of hospitality, and our students do not come to class in order to get food and shelter, yet might we still, in some ways, practice hospitality towards them? Indeed, many of the compositionists whose arguments I engage in this chapter have recently begun to consider explicitly the place of hospitality in our teaching (e.g., Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock; Heard; Jacobs).

Teachers’ interest in hospitality is understandable. Students are, after all, “unknown arrivants [in] an ad-hoc community” of the classroom and in the larger but more abstract community of the academy (Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock); many teachers frequently begin our courses by “welcoming” students to

class. Most teachers, I hope, want to respect their students and teach them in ways that are genuinely welcoming. It is easy, too, to imagine simple ways that teachers might show hospitality. We can be sure that the language we use to relate to students avoids disciplinary jargon whose purpose is to carve out an ethos of professional distance from our students (Tremmel 192). We can share our own writing with our students as a means of sharing ourselves—not, of course, to impose ourselves on our students but to invite them to share their own work and selves, if they wish (196; see also Nouwen 60). We can also teach students to read hospitably, playing the “believing game” so that meaning might arise as a real presence from a text (Elbow). And we can be sure that the physical classroom is arranged in such a way that students are not encouraged to see the teacher as more worthy of respect than students, or to “exile” themselves to proverbial Siberia by sitting as far from the teacher as possible (Shor, *When*). Even something as simple as bringing food to class to share with our students might be an act of hospitality.

At the same time, however, there are a number of factors that complicate any attempt to practice hospitality in the classroom. For instance, a teacher’s authority—indeed, a teachers’ institutional responsibility—to assign grades violates a fundamental principle of hospitality because it requires a teacher to evaluate and judge students’ work. Furthermore, students’ presence in a university-level writing class is, paradoxically, both exclusive and compulsory. Students must pay (or have someone pay on their behalf) to enroll in a writing class, and once enrolled their involvement in the course is mandatory: Students who do not do the work assigned typically receive failing grades. Whatever the commonsensical equity of this arrangement, it cannot be called hospitality in the unlimited sense in which Day and her followers aimed to practice it.

Given these complicating factors, the question arises whether hospitality in the composition classroom is possible, as Haswell, Haswell and Blalock boldly claim in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and in this chapter I look again to Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement to

identify clues to how hospitality might be possible. I argue that the primary obstacles to the practice of hospitality in the composition classroom are the forces of institutionalization that surround the teaching of writing in the academy, and that Day's responses to similar forces in and around the Catholic Worker movement offer insight into how compositionists might respond to these forces. While some composition teachers may not find Day's responses entirely palatable (and it is therefore not my intention to argue that composition teachers should *necessarily* pursue a pedagogy of hospitality in their classes), in this chapter I present one exploration of what might be involved if teachers do pursue hospitality.

In what follows, therefore, I first consider the recent discussions of hospitality in education generally and in composition specifically, arguing that compositionists need to consider how to respond to forces of institutionalization that would strip hospitality of its radical potential. These discussions reveal two important aspects of hospitality in education: that it is radically tied to religious ideas, and that it is typically understood as opposing the institutionalization and bureaucratization of education. Next, I analyze Day's and her followers' responses to the forces of institutionalization that affected the Catholic Worker movement, especially in relation to the practice of hospitality. I suggest, while she often capitulated to these forces, failing to enact a "pure" personalist/anarchist version of hospitality, she consistently deployed a rhetoric of domesticity by which she hoped to maintain the movement's personalist/anarchist position. Finally, I consider what Day's rhetoric of domesticity and the spiritual roots of hospitality mean for the practice of hospitality in comp.

Calls for Hospitality in Education

Discussions of hospitality in education are almost universally endorsements of hospitality, and understandably so, as it is absurd that teachers should consciously aim to make their classrooms inhospitable. The education activist Parker Palmer, for instance, argues plainly that "Good teaching is an act of

hospitality” (*Courage* 51), and Michael Peters suggests in *Derrida, Deconstruction, and the Politics of Pedagogy*, that a hospitality of absolute openness such as Derrida proposes is a “basis and condition for pedagogy” (137). Focusing especially on tertiary education, Carney Strange argues that a Benedictine hospitality—openness to the student/guest as Christ—makes for a classroom that students recognize as “a place where they need not be at risk for reasons of who they are,” and that only in such a classroom can real learning happen (7). Likewise, Professor John Bennett stresses the role of hospitality in fostering social learning, calling hospitality “An indispensable characteristic of healthy learning communities” (23).

Among these and other endorsements of hospitality, two aspects of hospitality are worthy of note. First, hospitality is usually tied, in some way, to religion, or, at the very least, it is discussed in vestigial religious language. For example, most writers in the last 30 years who have addressed the role of hospitality in education make reference to Fr. Henri Nouwen’s *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. In that book, Nouwen criticizes the curiosity-killing commodification of modern educational systems, and calls instead for “the creation of a space where students and teachers can enter into a fearless communication with each other” (60). Such “fearless communication,” of course, demands hospitality, which, Nouwen argues, means that teachers must be able place themselves in the role of receptive hosts, eager and able to help students recognize and appreciate the contributions students make to learning. Importantly, Nouwen’s comments on hospitality come in the context not of a treatise about education but an extended essay on Christian spirituality, and that context suggests that, for Nouwen and the many writers who refer to him approvingly, hospitality in the classroom is not—indeed it cannot be—merely a technique of imparting information to students. Pedagogical hospitality is connected with and aimed towards something bigger than any particular class or subject. For Nouwen this something bigger is the spiritual growth of both teachers and students, which he understands as a “reaching out to our innermost self, to our fellow human beings and to our God” (9).

Dale Jacobs and Matthew Heard, whose arguments on hospitality in rhetorical education I discuss in more detail later in this chapter, also ground their discussions in religious terms. Jacobs draws explicitly on Christian writers like Nouwen to define hospitality and explain how it might improve our teaching and professional lives. And Heard draws on Levinas, whose understanding of hospitality is grounded in Jewish scriptures and traditions, to emphasize hospitality's infinite, ineffable nature.

Other writers appear to advocate less explicitly spiritual visions hospitality in education. Education professor Anthony Rud, for instance, associates hospitable education with "Learning in comfort and trust" that facilitates an ability to listen, first to oneself, but also to others (119). Rud wonders, "Might we not place hospitality . . . as a *communicative* and thus also *political* virtue, as a generative quality in public life that would ground a common and democratic political involvement" (127). Teachers who show hospitality to their students are, to this view, training them in the ability to listen to and engage respectfully with other people in a way that can contribute to a more civil society. And yet this apparently secular vision of hospitality as enabling civic participation has religious roots: In Rud's account, it is his experience as the recipient of hospitality in a Benedictine monastery that leads him to reflect on the value of hospitality for education. I explore the implications of hospitality's religious roots in more detail later in this chapter.

A second aspect of most discussions of hospitality in education is that hospitality is positioned against the depersonalization of education. Hospitality depends upon the relationship between hosts and guests, and it is this relationship (in the case of education, the relationship between teachers and students) that is often posited as the remedy to impersonal, institutionalized approaches to education that commodify knowledge, reduce teachers to mere dispensers of information, and measure students' learning exclusively by standardized tests. The possibility of hospitality in education as a way to combat institutionalization is particularly evident in the ways that teachers of rhetoric and writing have discussed hospitality. In the next

section, therefore, I consider the ways that hospitality might enable teachers to resist the depersonalization of education by examining discussions of hospitality in the field of composition and rhetoric.

Resisting Institutionalization: Hospitality and Rhetorical Education

Given hospitality's dependence upon relationship, it seems natural that teachers of rhetoric and composition should be interested in it, as our field is specifically concerned with the creation of meaningful (i.e., persuasive) relationships among people.²⁵ Until relatively recently, however, few scholars of composition and rhetoric have addressed the role of hospitality in the teaching of rhetorical skills, and, significantly, those who have done so have always written about pedagogical hospitality in the teaching of writing in specific, extrainstitutional contexts. For example, Rosemary Winslow has written about her experiences teaching poetry at a shelter for homeless women, where the practice of hospitality facilitates "new ways of being and participating in community in practical and literate action" ("Poetry" 202; see also "Hospitality"). Likewise, Judy Wenzel has written about teaching humanities classes in a prison, an environment that she claims fosters hospitable teaching. Having found her own plans and experience inadequate to meet her inmate students' needs, she writes that she had little choice but to listen to them and learn from them.

To my knowledge, the only discussion of hospitality in the college writing classroom published before 2008 is Robert Tremmel's 1984 article in the *Journal of Teaching Writing* in which he discusses the successes of the Writers in the Schools Program; and that program, it is worth noting, blurs the divide

²⁵ Or, perhaps more conventionally, ascribing meaning to the relationships that already exist among people and between people and the physical world. Regardless, the importance of relationship to rhetoric is self-evident: Rhetoric cannot happen absent a rhetor of some sort and an audience of some sort.

between institutional and extrainstitutional sites of teaching by bringing professional (i.e., nonacademic) writers into the classroom. Hospitality has, apparently, not been widely considered or embraced by teachers of writing within the academy until quite recently.

Since 2008, however, some compositionists have begun to investigate how hospitality might inform or reform the ways that we teach writing in the university classroom, and this rise in interest in hospitality is connected to hospitality's subversive potential vis-à-vis the institution of the academy. Following up on his work on the place of hope in teaching, for example, Dale Jacobs has suggested that "the notion of radical hospitality holds the key to activating the kind of intersubjective hope for change" he had previously advocated ("Audacity" 564; see also "What's"). As I mentioned above, Jacobs understands "radical hospitality" in Christian monastic terms, drawing on writers like Henri Nouwen, Benedictine oblate Kathleen Norris, and theologian and ethicist Christine Pohl, and equating the intersubjectivity upon which hospitality depends with "communion." Consequently, he focuses on the importance of availability and love as key components of hospitality in our teaching and in our professional relationships, arguing that these attitudes are key to realizing hospitality's potential for subversion of and resistance to our standard, adversarial ways of relating to our colleagues and our students.

Janis and Richard Haswell and Glenn Blalock also advocate hospitality in the college writing classroom as a means of subversion and resistance the power structures of the academy, stressing that hospitality, while it may be superficially similar in some ways to "the open classroom of the 1960s, with its radical desire to emancipate the student from teachers, textbooks, curriculum, and other arms of the social establishment," is not a return to previous praxis but a way to "re-radicalize ... the notion of student-centered classrooms." Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock insist that, unlike other practices that provide metaphoric models for teaching writing (e.g., coaching, midwifing), hospitality can truly be enacted in the classroom:

Hospitality . . . encourages a changed view of the teacher: not essentially as an expert offering wisdom to nescients, nor a coach training students to play a game, nor an adept helping students through the gates of the academic or discourse community, nor a proponent or advocate of a position such as men's or women's rights. The teacher may or may not be any of these things, but will always be a co-sharer with unknown arrivants of an ad-hoc community in which the teacher, as host, offers ease—ease with the unique lives and beliefs of strangers.

Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock identify three conceptions of hospitality: Homeric, Judeo-Christian, and nomadic. The last of these, nomadic hospitality, involves showing guests an “extreme deference,” refraining even from asking their names, while offering them food, shelter, and, perhaps most importantly, information about the area in which they are travelling. The authors also suggest that, in the context of nomadic hospitality (which they also call transformative hospitality), the roles of host and guest are easily reversed. They argue that transformative hospitality is the most promising for the composition classroom because it requires the teacher/host to be open to being changed by her or his students/guests, and “the focus [of college composition courses] has always been and must continue to be upon activities powerfully embedded in human change.” Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock recognize, of course, that most teachers, if they are honest, do not want to be changed by their students, but they stress that while true hospitality always involves risk—in this case, the risk of having one's identity challenged and changed by one's students—it can also “be an edgy act of *résistance*” to the bureaucratizing and dehumanizing currents within our field and our classrooms.

Poet and teacher Mary Rose O'Reilley offers an anecdote from her own teaching that illustrates how the vulnerability associated with pedagogical hospitality can work as resistance:

[A] man in a workshop I was leading wrote an essay about being seduced by his art teacher. After he read it, I looked at him like a black-and-white heifer and said nothing. This wasn't pedagogy, by the way, this was stupidity. There was silence, then some discussion, I don't remember of what. Later he wrote me a letter in which he said, "When you didn't respond to my seduction story, I was furious. I really wanted a lot of attention for that. Then I felt a great lightening of my soul. I was *free* of that story. It fell into that space of silence and just blew away. I could go on and stop obsessing." (28)

O'Reilley's lack of response to her student's story—the "space of silence" that she allowed—is thoroughly hospitable.²⁶ Her student was allowed to express himself without her imposing values or expectations on him (and she is careful to point out that her reaction to the student's essay might just have easily produced a less freeing, even dangerous, result). The fact that her reaction was one of "stupidity" rather than careful premeditation does not make it less hospitable; in fact, she offers this story "as a statement of [her] deficiency" (28). O'Reilley generalizes her approach to this student into a theory of what she calls "listening like a cow": listening without judging and without seeking to impose one's values on another, not out of condescension, but out of one's genuine and acknowledged inability to "fix" the problems others bring with them (29).

O'Reilley's response to her student shows how hospitality can work as resistance in the writing classroom. As she presents the story, her student appears to have been looking for a way to deal with his experience with his art teacher by using that experience to exert power over O'Reilley. His writing and

²⁶ Interestingly, Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock claim that not responding to student writing is one of the most inhospitable things a teacher can do. The fact that O'Reilley shows hospitality precisely through her lack of response demonstrates the difficulty inherent in prescribing specific behaviors as hospitable or not.

reading the essay in her class was—according to the note he later wrote her—an act intended to manipulate her, and this manipulation depended on the student’s assumption that O’Reilley would react to his essay in a way consistent with and limited to her role as a professional authority in the system of higher education: Perhaps she would be angry with him, or try to censor his writing. But rather than act as a predictable, quasi-mechanical component of the educational system, O’Reilley instead reacted humanly, inexpertly. In giving up (or more accurately, acknowledging her lack of) control over the situation, O’Reilley thwarted the student’s manipulation in a way that, ultimately, allowed him to act more freely. O’Reilley is, in other words, advocating an approach to students that is very similar to Day’s idea of voluntary poverty in that it requires a teacher/host to yield control over a situation. Listening like a cow—voluntary poverty—is a prerequisite for hospitality, and O’Reilley argues that students must be met with hospitality if they are to be freed from the constraints that prevent them from learning.

Hospitality and Selfishness

Besides its connection to voluntary poverty, there is another way that transformative pedagogical is similar to the hospitality of the Catholic Worker movement, and this concerns the extent to which hospitality might or might not “re-radicalize . . . the notion of student-centered classrooms” (Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock). I suggest that, despite Haswell’s, Haswell’s, and Blalock’s claims, a classroom in which transformative hospitality is practiced would not be, strictly speaking, student centered. It is true that, in its outward form, hospitality appears to be enacted by a host for the benefit of a guest; hospitality is thus superficially guest centered, and a pedagogy based on such hospitality would, again on the surface, appear to be student centered. But if transformative hospitality depends upon the fluidity of host/guest relations—that is, the roles of host and guest can easily be reversed as circumstances change—then it is not sufficient to posit guests/students as the exclusive beneficiaries in a hospitable classroom. In other words, a

classroom in which transformative hospitality is practiced is not so much student centered as relationship centered, and teachers who enact hospitality can do so as much for their own benefit as for that of their students.

There are, of course, resonances here with Day's practice of hospitality. She and other members of the Catholic Worker movement saw their own spiritual benefit as one of the motivations behind their practice of hospitality. In a letter about how to run a house of hospitality, for example, she posed and answered the question of motivation directly: "What are we trying to do? We are trying to get to heaven, all of us" ("Letter on Hospices"). Certainly Day understood that hospitality towards poor people could be for the benefit of those guests. But she always confessed that "there is so little we can do" in the face of the enormity of the problem of injustice and poverty (e.g., "Day after Day—Thoughts"), and she and her followers recognized, as I argued in Chapter 1, that by receiving poor people as guest, members of the Catholic Worker movement acted in ways that were spiritually beneficial to themselves.

It is in this "selfish" motivation that hospitality goes beyond the simple ways of acting that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, like respecting our students or sharing food in class. Respecting students and bringing food to class are both good practices, but the sort of transformative hospitality that Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock recommend (and which lines up nicely with Day's notions of hospitality) calls for a deeper vulnerability and desire for change on the part of the teacher. Teachers who would pursue transformative hospitality must recognize that the fluidity of the host/guest relationship means that their very identities will also be changed by what goes on in their classrooms. For these reasons, the practice of hospitality in the classroom is not something to be recommended or adopted lightly. In the next section, I consider another caution that has been raised by some writers who argue, not against hospitality per se, but against its quick and uncritical adoption by teachers.

Not all authors who have written about hospitality in composition have been as optimistic as Jacobs and Haswell, Haswell, and Blalock about compositionists' ability to practice subversive, transformative hospitality as a means of resistance to institutionalization. In fact, while hospitality might enable teachers to resist the bureaucratic, impersonal structures that constrain our relationships with our students and our disciplines, those structures themselves make it questionable whether compositionists can practice hospitality in the first place. As long as our primary goal in the writing classroom remains the teaching of writing (and this is a natural, sensible, and worthy goal, I think), then there is a danger of trying to make hospitality into a mere method of teaching writing; and if compositionists uncritically adopt hospitality as a "useful" approach to the teaching of writing, we risk trivializing it.

Responding explicitly to calls such as Haswell's, Haswell's, and Blalock's to introduce hospitality into composition, for instance, Matthew Heard urges compositionists to resist the urge "to oversimplify hospitality by putting the idea to work" (320). Heard hopes we will see hospitality as "an immeasurable, endless giving that does not break down into quantifiable results" (318) and that should "be pursued endlessly, without the hope that we will someday be able to control, explain, or contain hospitable action" (319). Likewise, professor of political science and aboriginal studies Rauna Kuokkanen qualifies her call for academics to pursue hospitality in the ways they approach alternative epistemologies: "Instead of yearning for an ultimate answer and solution, we need to accept that, necessarily, hospitality is a continuous, never-ending process of negotiation—a productive crisis in which we work continuously toward a new way of thinking" (267). Neither of these authors is arguing against hospitality; instead, they suggest that hospitality must be more than simply the next fashionable best practice in education. In seeking to make hospitality useful, academics risk reducing it to a mere intellectual tool, one that we control, rather than preserving it as a dynamic relationship. Regarding the discipline of composition, in particular, Heard argues that it has

too often “‘neutralize[d] the radical potential’ of ideas such as hospitality in the name of making writing more meaningful or visible” (319).

Heard’s desire that hospitality not be “useful” to compositionists is connected with the idea, explored in the previous chapter, that hospitality is a means of encountering presences that do not fit within the realm of our usual existence. Insofar as hospitality leads to the production of real presences, it is oriented towards realities that do not have a place within the economies of our ordinary lives, which are often governed by epistemologies of objectification and dominance, as I argued in Chapter 3. In this way, true hospitality has no value—it cannot be “used” towards an end within the regular system of our social interactions. As Heard points out, in language much like Maurin’s and Day’s, hospitality should not help compositionists to teach writing better, but it may instead “lead us to shake the entire stratified system of the university” (331).

According to this critique of calls for hospitality in education, the greatest obstacle to the practice of hospitality in the classroom might be the classroom itself; that is, the institutional structures that surround and constrain teachers’ attitudes and actions toward our students (and students’ toward their teachers). Part of this, of course, involves the obstacles to hospitality already mentioned in the first section of this chapter—grades and compulsory attendance, for instance. But more than that, the institutional context in which writing is often taught means that hospitality risks being promoted as a means to an end—a way to teach writing—one that can be quantified and reproduced in thousands of writing classrooms.

The desire to quantify and reproduce hospitable pedagogical practices is understandable. If hospitality is good, as so many have argued, then it is reasonable to want to disseminate that good as widely as possible. But if its goodness depends upon its ability to foster resistance to impersonal, bureaucratic structures of education, then the institutionalizing forces that Heard identifies within composition as a discipline mean that compositionists who wish to practice hospitality must find ways to respond to the

forces of institutionalization in our field and in the academy. It is unlikely—perhaps undesirable—that we should shake off these forces entirely, but we must find a way to negotiate the tension between hospitality and institutionalization. To help understand what such negotiation might involve, I return in the next section to Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement. Although Day’s personalist philosophy made her inclined to oppose institutionalization in favor of local action and personal responsibility, a number of forces towards institutionalization affected the Catholic Worker movement during its first decade, and I suggest that Day’s responses to these forces can be instructive for compositionists interested in hospitality.²⁷

Day and Institutionalization

Day strove to avoid institutionalization within the Catholic Worker movement as much as possible.²⁸ By institutionalization, I refer to the establishment of any norms that would constrain the work

²⁷ Christopher Wilkey addresses the question of institutionalization in the Catholic Worker movement, and its relationship to composition, by examining the institutionalization of social action (including but not limited to hospitality) at one Catholic Worker house in the 1990s and 2000s. His argument is that compositionists can look to the Catholic Worker movement for ways to institutionalize social justice work within our discipline. Although Wilkey is not concerned specifically with hospitality, his approach is subject to the same concerns I have explored in this section: that the institutionalization of radical practices can rob them of their radical potential.

²⁸ A few scholars have taken up the question of how members of the Catholic Worker movement have responded to pressures towards institutionalization, but most of these have looked primarily at the movement after Day’s death in 1980 (Aronica; McKanan; Murray; see also Troester, Chapter 28). A guiding assumption in most of these analyses of the Catholic Worker movement has been that, as in other social movements, the forces of institutionalization come into play after the death of a movement’s founding, charismatic leader.

of hospitality, whether they are imposed by an authority or arise out of the habitual praxis of workers themselves (i.e., as the normalization of routine). Any such norms—however necessary or natural they may be—are by their nature at odds with the philosophy of personalism that Day and Maurin articulated for the Catholic Worker movement, which philosophy, in its purest form, respected human freedom to the degree of never imposing a duty or command on another. Day often described this as a philosophy of personal responsibility; that is, each person is individually responsible for performing the works of mercy because all Christians are called, Day argued, to care for Christ in the poor. If some people did not meet their responsibilities, they were to be corrected by good example and not by coercion. Granted, as former Catholic Worker John Cort put it, “in the real world of Mott Street you could throw good example at some people forever and watch it bounce off them like peanuts off a tank” (364), but Day maintained her avowed personalism. Cort himself notes that at one point during his time at St. Joseph’s, he was driven by his “middle-class hangups” to post a list of rules on his floor of the house. Men on the floor were to be up by 9:00am, make their beds daily, and take turns sweeping. When his roommate objected to Cort’s posting these rules, Day intervened and insisted that Cort take them down (Cort 364).

Granted, too, that in many instances Day capitulated to the forces of institutionalization. Indeed, it would have been impossible to maintain an operation such as the bread line outside the house on Mott Street without some level of institutionalization. But throughout the 1930s (indeed, throughout her life in the Catholic Worker movement), Day deployed a rhetoric of domesticity in resistance to the forces of institutionalization, insisting that the Catholic Worker movement was a family, not an institution or agency. In the following sections, I identify the forces towards institutionalization that affected the Catholic Worker movement in the 1930s and examine Day’s rhetoric of domesticity in response to those forces.

To be sure, Day staunchly resisted formal institutionalization that would have brought the Catholic Worker movement into a complicit relationship with the government. The movement never sought tax-

exempt status from the government (though many individual workers either chose to own little enough so as to be below the tax line or refused to pay federal income taxes outright), and only one Catholic Worker house in the United States legally incorporated itself, a move which most workers considered “a dangerous compromise with the capitalist system” (Murray 128).

But still, “Holy Mother, the City,” as Day mockingly referred to the government, attempted to constrain the work of hospitality at St. Joseph’s House (Day, “St. Joseph’s House”). For example, I have already discussed in Chapter 2 how the government of New York City required Day to carry out significant renovations to the house in 1937. These renovations resulted in a physical structure that was, no doubt, more comfortable and “sounder,” as Day described it, than the building that members of the movement had been inhabiting since Gertrude Burke offered them the use of the house on Mott Street (“House Sounder”). But in “being made over to conform with the law,” St. Joseph’s came to resemble more and more the large, impersonal facilities sanctioned by the city to house the homeless, with a larger kitchen and dining room, and dormitories rather than bedrooms; lamenting the lack of homeliness, Day implied that she and her fellow workers were merely exchanging one kind of poverty for another (“House Sounder”).²⁹

²⁹ Even after the renovations, and in fact even after St. Joseph’s was forced to relocate to another house on Chrystie Street in 1950, Day had more run-ins with the New York City government regarding purported violations of the housing codes. The chief concern was that St. Joseph’s House did not appear to comply with the laws regarding boarding houses. Day, however, always insisted that because St. Joseph’s was a private, family home (no one being charged rent), those laws did not apply to them. It is unclear whether complying with those laws might have prevented the terrible events in April 1953, when a fire in the house trapped guests upstairs and left one guest so severely injured that he died a week later.

Pressure from within the Church

The government was not the only entity, however, that exerted institutionalizing pressure on the Catholic Worker movement. Even before the movement had to contend with the city, significant pressure also came from the Church. Certainly those within the Church hierarchy who were opposed to the movement's stances on labor, war, or other issues would have liked to bring the movement under the control of the institutional Church. Day herself was accused of being "an immoral woman, with illegitimate children, a drunkard, a racketeer, running an expensive apartment on the side, with money in several banks, owning property, in the pay of Moscow, etc. etc." (Day, "To Catherine" 90), and these rumors led to the movement's being investigated by officials the Church ("To Donald").

But even those friendly towards the movement exerted pressure on Day to give the movement a greater sense of structure than she would have liked (see Day, *House* Chapter 14). In 1934, the censor for the Archdiocese of New York, Msgr. Arthur Scanlan, determined to appoint a priest as an official spiritual advisor for the movement. Although Day consistently stressed that the Catholic Worker movement was a lay endeavor, she appears to have welcomed this spiritual oversight for a couple of reasons. First, it was made clear that the advisor was to offer guidance with regard to doctrinal, rather than economic, statements in the paper. Day regarded this as helpful, probably because she saw orthodoxy with regards to Catholic doctrine as a guard against critics who accused her of undermining the Church as a communist in disguise.³⁰ Second, Msgr. Scanlan, with whom Day had several contacts during the first years of the

³⁰ This is not to say, of course, that the fact that Day used her orthodoxy rhetorically implies that it was insincere. I agree with political scientist Patrick Coy, who argues that to dismiss Day's orthodoxy as a clever but empty rhetorical

movement, evidently presented himself as savvy and sympathetic about how the presence of an official relationship with the institutional Church might affect the work of the movement. Day records that Msgr. Scanlan offered to “give us the imprimatur *if we did not think it would hinder us*,” and that he asked Day to provide him with a list of priests sympathetic to the movement from whom he might select an advisor. (“To Father John Monaghan” 65, emphasis added). Day seems to have believed that Msgr. Scanlan’s intent was to help the Catholic Worker movement, not to control it. Regardless of intent, however, the movement’s official association with the Church in this way introduced a level of institutionalization into the movement.

Another friendly source of pressure towards institutionalization came from Day’s friend Catherine de Hueck, founder of Friendship House, a Catholic lay apostolate working for interracial justice. In their letters, Day and Hueck expressed mutual affection and admiration, and throughout the 1930s they frequently offered each other encouragement as they faced opposition to their work from their governments and from Catholics who accused them of being communists. While both hoped to awaken the consciousness of Catholics whose material security and complacency, they believed, were at odds with the demands of the Gospel, their approaches to this work differed. Comparing Friendship house with St. Joseph’s House, Day noted that “The atmosphere is very much the same, though their place [i.e., Friendship House] is cleaner and quieter” (“Day after Day—March 1935”). Hueck had received official sanction for her work from the Church hierarchy in 1934, and she was critical of Day’s approach to the work of social justice, which Hueck felt was too disorganized. After a visit to New York in 1936, Hueck recorded a number of criticisms of the Catholic Worker movement in her diary:

1. Mixing in the same house women from the streets and a man.

move is to misunderstand the entire purpose of the Catholic Worker movement (“Politics”). Ultimately, Day and Maurin did not want just any new society built in the shell of the old, but a Catholic one.

2. Conspicuous absence of priests now in work.
3. Rowdiness charged at Staten Island. Drinking beer and making noise; lease renewal refused.
- ...
5. General antagonism developing because young people come who are enthusiastic for the Catholic Worker, but lack of rules, order in meals and organization disillusion them. ...
6. Funny how good people can get it wrong. (qtd. in Wild 32-3)

These criticisms show that Hueck felt that the Catholic Worker movement's anarchist/personalist approach to hospitality was problematic because it allowed morally scandalous behavior (or at least the appearance of it) to continue, because it was not closely enough aligned with the hierarchical Church, and because it prevented people from being able to contribute to the work of the movement. Perhaps appealing to Day's affinity for Therese of Lisieux's "little way" as a model for the mundane, material practice of hospitality, Hueck summarized her criticisms of the movement in a letter to Day: "It is a wonderful work, evidently blessed by God, but why, since all things that belong to God are clean, orderly, and well defined, is there such a lackadaisical attitude towards those 'little things' that matter so much?" (qtd. in Wild 38). Hueck went on to offer specific suggestions on how to make the Catholic Worker houses more "clean, orderly, and well defined," such as establishing a rule for the house with set times for getting up, sitting down to meals, and meeting for prayer.

While Day faced criticism of her work from a number of sources, Hueck's comments would have carried special weight because of Day's friendship with Hueck. In fact, rather than offer rebuttals or explanations, as she often did when responding to criticism, Day wrote back to Hueck thanking her for her criticism and indicating that "many things are now changed" from what Hueck had observed at St. Joseph's

House (“To Catherine de Hueck” 87). Clearly, Hueck’s criticisms provided a significant pressure towards institutionalization of Catholic Worker hospitality.

Pressure from within the Catholic Worker Movement

Finally, a number of forces arising out of the nature of the movement itself pushed for institutionalization. When the movement was still headquartered on Fifteenth Street, a cigar box with petty cash was kept out with the idea of saving people the embarrassment of asking for money: People could take what they honestly needed. The honor system held for several months, but eventually the cash began to disappear daily. When she realized that a member of the movement had been stealing, Day decided to appoint someone to be in charge of the money (Vishnewski 40-1). Day had to concede that, in this case, trusting that all members of the movement could exercise personal responsibility simply did not work.

Another significant force toward institutionalization was the sheer number of guests who came to St. Joseph’s with real, material needs, such as food and clothing. The repeated, large-scale efforts that Day and her followers engaged in to respond to those needs—serving on the morning breadline, distributing clothes—required a system more structured than a simple reliance on personal responsibility.³¹ For instance, by 1938, workers had implemented a schedule to rotate who would be responsible for getting up

³¹ In later years, the most common solution to the tension between the Catholic Worker movement’s philosophy of personalism/anarchism and the requirements of large-scale hospitality was the system that came to be known as “taking the house,” in which one person was designated as “in charge” for a brief period. There were no guidelines in place for the person taking the house, other than to use common sense, and whoever was “on the house” was generally shown deference, even by people who had been living at the house for much longer; Murray describes this system of “institutionalized anarchy” as “a benevolent dictatorship that changed hands every five hours” (92).

at 5:00 each morning in order to prepare food for the daily breadline (Reveille 20). But while such a schedule obviously would have ensured a smoother operation within the house, such efficiency could easily become an obstacle to hospitality. Kathy Shuh-Ries, a worker at the Casa Maria house in Milwaukee, recalls the frustration of one guest who met with too much well-meaning efficiency: Because the woman who came to the house was elderly and ill, the workers immediately tried to set her up in a bedroom and arrange a doctor's visit for her. "Suddenly," Shuh-Ries recalls, "she just started crying and she said, 'You know everyone is so willing to *do* everything for me. All I really want is someone to sit down with me and have a cup of coffee'" (qtd. in Troester 171). Shuh-Ries says that this incident highlighted for her the way that the demands of efficiency conflict with those of hospitality.

The number and diversity of guests at St. Joseph's also gave rise to a need for rules related to safety. Because many of the guests were alcoholics who could become dangerous to others and to themselves when drunk, drinking was forbidden in the house. Even this regulation, though, was framed in terms of personal responsibility: The prohibition of drinking was understood not as a matter of curtailing guests' freedom, but of the responsibility of guests not to tempt one another by putting before them what might make them stumble (see Day, "Peter the Materialist"; Rom. 14.21).³² Physical violence was also forbidden, and people "who were obviously sex deviates or who used dope" were not taken in because of the danger they presented to other guests (qtd. in Pielh 106). The ways that Day and other leaders of the houses of hospitality limited their hospitality in order to protect the safety of their guests demonstrates that

³² This rule was not universally followed at all the houses of hospitality, and in some houses there was considerable debate about whether it was appropriate for long-term hosts to keep beer on the premises while denying that privilege to guests (Troester 165).

they were aware of the risks of “pure” hospitality. Even as they placed such limitations on their practice of hospitality, however, Day and her followers sought to resist the limitations of institutionalization, and in the next section I examine the rhetoric by which Day most frequently did so.

Institutionalization and the Rhetoric of Domesticity

Obviously, Day and her followers capitulated in a number of ways to the forces of institutionalization that surrounded the Catholic Worker movement. Despite these, capitulations, however, Day continued to voice objections to the institutionalization of the Catholic Worker movement, and her most frequent response to these pressure was to emphasize the domesticity of the Catholic Worker movement. In Chapter 1, I described how Day’s definition of hospitality was tied to her understanding of Therese of Lisieux’s “little way” and to Day’s notions of gender. For Day, this meant that hospitality was an essentially a feminine practice expressed in mundane material realities. Notably, she begins the first chapter of *House of Hospitality* with an epigraph stressing the importance of single-minded devotion to God when one is writing, and then she continues:

But I am a woman, with all the cares and responsibilities of a woman, and though I take these words [of the epigraph] to heart, I know that what I write will be tinged with all the daily doings, with myself, my child, my work, my study, as well as with God. . . . Perhaps it is that I have a wandering mind. But I do not care. It is a woman's mind, and if my daily written meditations are of the people about me, of what is going on,—then it must be so.

Day repeatedly wrote of women’s work as domestic, and the placement of this passage—about how Day works as a woman—at the beginning of Day’s book on hospitality shows that, for Day, an essential

characteristic of a house of hospitality was that it be homelike.³³ It is not surprising, therefore, that Day often stressed that St. Joseph's House of Hospitality was first of all a house, against claims that the work she and other members of the movement were engaged in was or should be more like institutional charity. Day did not emphasize the domestic nature of hospitality only because she was a woman, however; Day also believed that hospitality could be more effective than bureaucratic charity at effecting social change, even if the latter might be more efficient at meeting people's needs in the short term. Day explained in a column in the paper in 1939:

We believe it most necessary to give a sense of family life to those who come to us. We believe a sense of security is as necessary as bread or shelter. We believe that when we undertake the responsibility of caring for a man who comes to us, we are accepting it for good. We know that men cannot be changed in a day or three days, nor in three months.

We are trying "to make men." And this cannot be done overnight. ("House")

Here, against those who would argue for a greater institutionalization of the Catholic Worker movement, Day suggests that the work of the movement depends on its being like family. Indeed, the very term "house of hospitality" emphasizes the domestic nature Day's idea of hospitality: Guests are welcomed in a house, not a center, institute, or clinic. For Day, hospitality entails an open-ended commitment to welcome the stranger, however long he or she might decide to stay. Hospitality operates on a presumption of permanence parallel to that of a familial relationship.

³³ By claiming that Day believed women's work was domestic, I do not mean to imply that Day thought that women must restrict themselves to domestic work. Day's own activities as leader of the Catholic Worker movement would belie any such interpretation of Day's rhetoric of domesticity. Rather, Day felt that whatever work women engaged in, they would do it in a manner that was "tinged with all [their] daily doings" (*House*, Chapter 1).

Domesticity and Composition

Such a presumption of permanence obviously places Day's vision and practice of hospitality well outside the Kantian view I described in the Introduction, in which hospitality is "not the right to be a permanent visitor . . . [but] only a right of temporary sojourn." But it also presents a decided problem for teachers who might wish to practice hospitality in their classrooms. If, as Day insists, people "cannot be changed in a day or three days, nor in three months," then what are writing teachers to do, who, in a university setting typically see our students two or three times a week for little more than three months? The institutional setting of composition teaching seems designed to make hospitality as Day understood it impossible.

In a more ideological sense, the rhetoric of domesticity by which Day hoped to combat the forces of institutionalization in the Catholic Worker movement might prove difficult for some compositionists to accept because scholars in the field of composition have been working for years now to problematize and challenge the ways that images of domesticity have been applied to the writing classroom. Often, because composition classes are the first ones students take in the university, those classes are asked to introduce students to the discourse communities of the academy and of English studies in particular. In other words, first-year writing teachers' task is to help students feel "at home" in the academy and the English department. However, first-year writing classes, to the extent that they also serve a gatekeeping function for upper-level coursework, do not so much welcome students into a home as "domesticate" them for the institution, as animals are domesticated. This is clearly contrary to Day's vision of hospitality, which aimed to free people from the dehumanizing, meritocratic institutions of unrestrained capitalism and industrialism. For Day, domesticity was a means of promoting human development and personal responsibility, not of fitting people to into institutionalized structures.

Another possible problem with domesticity in composition is that it may tend to perpetuate the devaluation of writing instruction because of domesticity's association with sexist notions of "women's work." As Diane Buckles Slagle and Shirley K. Rose point out, writing instruction has typically been seen as feminine in relation to the (supposedly) masculine domain of literature within English studies. Metaphors for teaching writing often emphasize the feminine nature of composition: Teachers are constructed as nurturing mothers or midwives to students giving proverbial birth to essays. Additionally, the repetitious, labor-intensive work of teaching writing has been seen as something for which women are particularly well suited "because of their self-sacrificing and maternal instincts," and because they do "not need much remuneration" (Mountford 616). Mountford and other scholars have clearly demonstrated why such claims are both false and dangerous, and consequently to recommend a rhetoric of domesticity as a way of preserving hospitality from institutionalization risks invoking a discourse that some compositionists may find objectionable and contrary to their professional interests.

For Day, of course, domesticity did not carry the connotations of professional injustice it often does in the literature of composition. Day insisted on the domesticity of hospitality not as a means of mandating how people should relate to each other by casting them into prescribed roles, but of freeing people to act in more human ways. In Day's personalist/anarchist philosophy, the family was the opposite of the institution, and institutionalization accounted for much of what was wrong in the world because, in an institution, people are defined and valued for the role they play, not for their personhood. Recall Day's description of New York City's municipal homeless shelter, quoted in Chapter 2, in which Day associated the muni with "the collectivization of misery" (*House* Chapter 1). Therefore, while it is understandable that some compositionists may be reluctant to follow Day's lead and adopt a rhetoric of domesticity as a way of preserving hospitality against institutionalization in their classes, it is important to remember that such a

rhetoric was necessary for Day because the domestic sphere of human activity was precisely opposed to the institutional sphere.

Conclusion: Hospitality in Composition

What, finally, might hospitality entail in the composition classroom? While I do not think it generally advisable to try to offer tips and tricks for hospitable pedagogy, thus potentially trivializing it, as Heard has warned, Dorothy Day's instructions on how to run a house of hospitality offer hints at what sorts of practices hospitality in education might include.³⁴ In a letter answering questions she had received about how to start a house of hospitality, Day writes that a house of hospitality should be run by "a local group . . . who are willing to live in the house with those they serve" ("Letter on Hospices"). It is worth noting that Day elaborates on and defends this arrangement in domestic terms: The person in charge of a house of hospitality should be "father and mother of the group," and as a member of the family, it is natural that she or he should live in the house and not separately.

This idea of living in the house with guests might play out in education in a number of ways. Residential colleges, where faculty live in the same building as students, are perhaps the educational

³⁴ Although my focus is on the application of Day's instructions for operating a house of hospitality to the writing classroom specifically, she also makes an argument (in her "Letter on Hospices" and elsewhere) that suggests the importance of writing across the curriculum approaches to teaching composition. Day stresses that those who would run a house of hospitality do not need to be specially trained or authorized in order to provide hospitality; every person should be responsible for doing what needs to be done. This is not an argument against specialization and training, but rather against the shirking of one's responsibility on the excuse that another is better trained to deal with a particular situation.

arrangement closest to what Day recommends here, but such sites are exceptional. The vast majority of writing teachers who might wish to pursue hospitality in their classrooms must find other ways of “living with” their students. They may, for instance, complete the same assignments they ask their students to complete, or they may bring their own writing to class for critique, subjecting themselves to the same public scrutiny students receive in peer review or workshops. Another possible way teachers might share their students’ worlds is by attending campus events, eating in the school cafeteria, or reading the student newspaper regularly—anything that helps teachers share the daily rhythms of their students’ lives. Social media, too, can be helpful in this regard; friending one’s students on Facebook, for instance, can arguably be an act of hospitality in that it helps teachers to share experiences with their students.

Obviously, none of these tentative suggestions is always necessarily an act of hospitality; in each example, the power difference between teachers and students considerably complicates the any attempt at hospitality. Sharing one’s writing with students or friending them on Facebook, for example, can be done in a spirit of inhospitable self-promotion, and even of colonization. Instead, these suggestions are merely possible means of realizing an essential attitude of hospitality—a “willing[ness] to live in the house.” Sharing the real or figurative space of our students’ lives may not be hospitable in every instance, but it is difficult to imagine hospitality in which the host and guest (or teacher and student) do not in some way live together.

If these tentative suggestions, even if taken in a true spirit of hospitality, still seem inconvenient or even off-putting, this should not be surprising: Day is frank that living in a hospitality is not necessarily a pleasant experience. In fact, Day argues, the unpleasantness of hospitality is an important element of hospitality’s subversive potential. Day writes:

I expect that everything we do be attended with human conflicts, and the suffering that goes with it, and that this suffering will water the seed to make it grow in the future. I expect that all our natural love for each other which is so warming and so encouraging and

so much a reward of this kind of work and living, will be killed, put to death painfully by gossip, intrigue, suspicion, distrust, etc., and that this painful dying to self and the longing for the love of others will be rewarded by a tremendous increase of supernatural love amongst us all. (“Letter on Hospices”)

What a stark difference between Day’s endorsement of hospitality here—and despite her pessimism about the earthly success of the Catholic Worker movement, what she offers in the letter is undeniably an endorsement of the movement’s practices—and the those cited by educators throughout this chapter, which associate hospitality with, for instance, “Learning in comfort and trust” (Rudd 119). I noted earlier in this chapter that most endorsements of hospitality in education have more or less explicit religious roots; in Day’s assessment, the success of hospitality depends upon the divine.

Certainly not all compositionists will be comfortable with a pedagogy which, if Day is right, promises to begin with suffering and end with supernatural love. The academy’s public institutions, and the field of composition in particular, are often assumed to be a secular environment. But this assumption has been questioned recently, notably by Phillip Marzluf, who notes that 84% of first-year writing teachers in the U.S. describe themselves as either spiritual or religious, a percentage in line with the that of the U.S. as a whole (274), and by Toby Coley, who argues for a greater recognition of the perspectives that graduate students and scholars who profess religious identities can bring to the field. Surely, then, the religious underpinnings of hospitality are not an absolute impediment to its practice—or at least its pursuit—in the writing classroom, by some teachers. Indeed, the practice of hospitality in the classroom might provide teachers of faith with a means of enacting our faiths in ways that already have wide endorsement in the literature of education. The rhetoric of domesticity, and ultimately religion, that Day used to resist institutionalization in the Catholic Worker movement may prove to be one workable means of avoiding the pitfalls of institutionalization that Heard, Kuokkannen, and others have pointed out.

Hospitality in the classroom has a powerful subversive potential: It challenges both our institutions and our identities. At the same time, my analysis of Day's and her followers' practice of hospitality suggests that in order to resist the forces of institutionalization in our field, it may be necessary to appeal to domestic and religious rhetorics that not all compositionists will be comfortable with. For these reasons, hospitality may never be widely pursued by teachers of composition. Nonetheless, for those teachers who decide that they can embrace these rhetorics, or else find other ways of resisting institutionalization, hospitality provides a way of promoting student (and teacher) agency and peace, which makes it an attractive and appropriate way of being in the writing classroom.

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Vita

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