

**QUEERLY REMEMBERED:
TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC RHETORICS FOR REPRESENTING
THE GLBTQ PAST**

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This dissertation explores a turn toward strategic public memories in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (GLBTQ) community. While GLBTQ people have long used memories to influence and persuade heterosexual audiences, these memories have largely been what Michel de Certeau labels *tactical*—fleeting, ephemeral texts built upon the detritus of dominant culture. In contrast, GLBTQ people increasingly deploy *strategic memories* that endure heterosexual forgetting, persist through time, and exert greater control in spaces of power. In four case studies, I examine the possibilities and pitfalls of the strategic turn for securing greater GLBTQ rights. The first case study examines the Alexander Wood statue and how gays and lesbians have used material rhetorics like commemorative sites to make their memories durable and to resist heteronormative forgetting. While highlighting Wood’s “official” meaning, I also demonstrate how both traditionalist and camp viewers of the statue contest that meaning through performative viewing practices. The second case study, on counterpublic memories of bias crime victim Matthew Shepard, illustrates how counterpublic memories can oscillate between public spheres. In doing so, vernacular memories of Shepard seek to replace dominant memories that obscure systemic antigay violence, endow Shepard with “saintly” qualities, and limit diverse imagining of GLBTQ identity. The third case study, featuring efforts to include GLBT people into California public school curriculums, examines how advocates use a “rhetoric of contribution” to align GLBT people with the strategic rhetoric of American nationalism. This

case also highlights the difficult choices marginalized groups must often make to enter strategic spaces, including “strategic forgettings” that render much of the GLBT past incomplete. The final case study details gay and lesbian rhetorical acts to ensure they are remembered as queer in the future. Examining two prominent death displays — Leonard Matlovich’s *Gay Vietnam Veterans Memorial* and Patricia Cronin’s *Memorial to a Marriage* — this chapter argues that both marked and unmarked strategies are required to disrupt the reterritorialization of gay and lesbian identity after death. This dissertation concludes by looking at George Segal’s *Gay Liberation* statue, reviewing the value of the strategic turn, and pondering the future of queer public memory.

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PREFACE

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Finally, this project is dedicated to the countless GLBTQ people in the past and present that — despite overwhelming efforts otherwise — found a way to live, to speak, to be heard, and to preserve that voice so that others, too, might learn to speak.

1.0 INTRODUCTION: QUEER *BRICOLAGE*

1.1 “MAKING DO” WITH HETEROSEXUAL HISTORY

In 1914, Dr. William J. Robinson, a physician, sexologist, and chief of the Department of Genito-Urinary Diseases at Bronx Hospital who examined individuals suspected of being homosexual “inverts,” published an account of his views on homosexuality.¹ Castigating his sexological colleagues who argued same-sex desire to be a normal part of human existence, Robinson reasserted that homosexuality was:

a sad, deplorable, pathological phenomenon. Every sexual deviation or disorder which has for its result an inability to perpetuate the race is *ipso facto* pathological, *ipso facto* an abnormality, and this is pre-eminently true of true homosexuality.

He concluded that, despite his opposition to overly harsh legal penalties for those engaging in same-sex acts and/or gender non-conformity, homosexuals “did not have a great or even capable

¹ “Invert” was the prevailing medical term for homosexual in the early 20th century.

thinker among them,” were all “distinctly inferior to the normal man,” and that the “world could get along very well without these step-children of nature.”²

Ten years later, Robinson had been persuaded otherwise. While still unprepared to regard homosexuality as favorably as possible, after a decade of research listening to “lovable, sympathetic types” of early gays and lesbians “of high intelligence,” Robinson’s position on homosexuality evolved. In an article published in 1925, he stated:

My attitude towards homosexuals of both sexes has undergone some change, has become broader, more tolerant, perhaps even sympathetic...

While still convinced that there was something “not quite right with the male or female homo,” Robinson’s change in opinion prompted him to alter his professional recommendations. In regard to the study, care, and treatment of homosexual invert, Robinson adopted the position of his new gay friend and homosexual advocate, Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld. Hirschfeld was a gay, Jewish-German physician, and homophile advocate whose research and political activity was founded on the idea that all people consisted of variable mixes of masculinity and femininity. Thus, homosexuality was not unnatural.³ Under such a presumption, Hirschfeld began the Berlin Institute for Sexual Science and argued for the repeal of anti-gay legislation in Germany. To aid

² In addition to his medical post at Bronx Hospital, Robinson was the editor of several journals including *Medical Critic and Guide* and the *Journal of Urology and Sexology*. William J. Robinson, “My Views on Homosexuality,” *American Journal of Urology and Sexology* 10 (1914): 550-52. Reprinted in part in Jonathan Ned Katz, *Gay/Lesbian Almanac: A New Documentary* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1983), 357-58. The phrase “step-children of nature” has been credited to German neurologist Dr. Richard von Kraft-Ebing in the controversial *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886). See Vernon A. Rosario, *Homosexuality and Science: A Guide to the Debates* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO 2002), 64.

³ “Homophile” was a term coined by Hirschfeld who argued other terms were degrading.

in his advocacy, Hirschfeld conducted extensive research on sexuality believing that science would produce a more just perspective on the homophile.⁴ In time, Robinson would move toward Hirschfeld's view on homosexuality. He argued that inverts were not pathological or a menace to society, but rather that they should be considered "merely a 'variation,' an intersex or a third sex."⁵ For at least one among the contemporary researchers of the medicalization of homosexuality, Robinson's conversion (if only a conversion from antagonism to neutrality) signaled a "notable instance" of queer persuasion in early twentieth century scientific and popular discourse.⁶

What contributed to the persuasion of this one famous skeptic and his prominent early sexological views of homosexuality? Robinson largely attributed his change of mind to conversations with countless gay men and lesbians over ten years of research and counseling. Early in his career, Robinson was provided with opportunities for such conversations in his position as a physician. However, Robinson's circle of gay and lesbian contacts expanded exponentially later in his career when he began to receive letters from gays and lesbians in his role as editor of the *Journal of Urology and Sexology*, many of which Robinson chose to publish.⁷ Such correspondence led to an even wider opportunity for conversation when Hirschfeld invited Robinson to Germany for an extended visit to his Berlin Institute for Sexual Science in the early 1920s.⁸ While some of these people were important leaders of the homophile movement — Hirschfeld the most notable example — most of them were everyday people awash

⁴ "Hirschfeld, Magnus," *GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Culture*, 2004, http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/hirschfeld_m.html (accessed April 15, 2011).

⁵ William J. Robinson, "Nature's Sex Stepchildren," *Medical Critic and Guide* (December 1925): 475-77. Reprinted in Katz, *Gay/Lesbian Almanac*, 424-25.

⁶ Henry L. Minton, *Departing from Deviance: A History of Homosexual Rights and Emancipatory Science in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 20.

⁷ An example of one such letter is re-printed in Rosario, *Homosexuality and Science*, 49.

⁸ See Minton, *Departing from Deviance*, 20.

in mixed feelings of pride, guilt, acceptance, and regret about their “condition.” Those who met with Robinson throughout his career came with different motives and different desires. Robinson believed that the vast majority of the homosexuals visited him because they were unhappy with their condition and sought a cure. In the early part of his career, Robinson declared that every homosexual he had ever met “considered their condition a great punishment, tho some of them were resigned to it.”⁹ However, as Robinson’s prestige grew in scientific and popular circles, others have suggested that Robinson became a targeted audience for homosexual activists.¹⁰ These later visitors almost all seemed compelled at some level to defend their homosexual feelings as justified. In doing so, they relied upon a particular kind of appeal to justify their being in the world. So repetitive was the appeal, Robinson made note of it in his publications:

the thing that struck me peculiarly in almost all homosexuals is their pathetic eagerness to claim...as homosexuals people whose homosexuality is extremely doubtful...Thus they speak of Shakespeare, Byron, and Whitman as belonging to their class, as if their homosexuality...were a well-established fact.¹¹

While the text itself demonstrates that Robinson doubted the veracity of these statements and that he was far from convinced that these gay and lesbian reclamation projects of accomplished historical individuals were either credible or merited attention, we can see

⁹ Robinson, “My Views on Homosexuality,” in Katz, *Gay/Lesbian Almanac*, 551.

¹⁰ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 282; Rosario, *Homosexuality and Science*, 49.

¹¹ Robinson, “Nature’s Sex Stepchildren.” Also cited in Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 285.

simultaneously within this account a *tactical* form of argumentation in process.¹² As a scene juxtaposing a scientist with his subject, an empowered, supposed heterosexual man against his disempowered, homosexual patient, we might be tempted to view these exchanges or conversations that Robinson conducted as invasive confessionals in which gays and lesbians were subjected to the disciplinary force of modern science and medicine.¹³ Doubtless, much of this dynamic was in play and, in such settings, little agency might be expected of those who in reality were considered by society at large as mentally ill patients, prisoners, or criminals. However, on the contrary, these conversations exemplified important moments in the formation of gay and lesbian subjects — the utterance of a gay and lesbian rhetoric of resistance; a tactical, persuasive appeal by a nascent gay and lesbian community to defend itself from disciplinary apparatuses and heteronormative culture — a culture “that [can] marginalize, minimize, punish, or erase the concerns and lives of those who do not ‘fit’ into the neat little box of normative heterosexuality” (potentially including avowed heterosexuals as well).¹⁴ At the very heart of these persuasive appeals that sought to influence Robinson’s view of his previously pathological patients was a deep and abiding rhetorical maneuver — the tactical deployment of gay and lesbian historical representations aimed at a powerful heterosexual audience. As such, the

¹² Chauncey labels this action a “strategy.” I use the term “tactic” to imply a particular iteration of the two words as described below. See Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 282.

¹³ For the possible ways of viewing such gay and lesbian rhetorics as oppression rather than the through the traditional speech/freedom binary, see Robert Alan Brookey, “Speak Up! I Can’t Queer You!” in *Queering Public Address: Sexualities in American Historical Discourse*, ed. Charles E. Morris III (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 195-219.

¹⁴ R. Anthony Slagle, “LGBTQ Research Past and Future,” *Spectra* 45.8 (September 2009): 4. Indeed, many argue that by limiting ourselves to conventional historical interpretations of the past, we will find that an authorized gay history simply cannot exist. This is particularly true if one recognizes that the traditional archive often privileges the records of those closest to power (hence the productive identification of GLBT historical documentation in other marginalized locations like the archives of people of color, the working class, the poor, the mentally ill, the criminal, etc.). See Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Chauncey, introduction to *Gay New York*, 1-29; and the corpus of Michel Foucault.

anonymous patients' interactions with Dr. Robinson illustrate in microcosm, the central question of this book: How have gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (GLBTQ)¹⁵ advocates of the past represented and contested history in endeavors to influence or persuade the judgments by dominant, apparently heterosexual citizens?

The anecdote above is only one example of how GLBTQ persons have increasingly used their collective past to counter heteronormative culture and shape a sustainable identity. This task has not been a simple one. The GLBTQ community is and has been a community rich in diversity, not only with regard to gender, sex, and sexuality but also with deeply intersectional experiences of race, class, ability, and age (among others) that have shifted in importance and articulation through time. Such diversity has frequently instigated contentious debates among GLBTQ persons about how and why a communal past should be represented — debates that are valuable for understanding not for the fissures they produce, but for the participation, forethought, and critical self-reflection such debates demand. At the same time, deploying the GLBTQ past in rhetorical ways has regularly been complicated by a pervasive drive to forget GLBTQ people within heterosexual culture. While forgetting can provide important

¹⁵ The terms “GLBTQ,” “gay and lesbian,” and “queer” are loaded terms within both academic and cultural discourses. I use these terms in this essay in a very specific way to distinguish between their communal, political, and critical natures. I use “GLBT” to signal the wide and diverse community of individuals often united by their exclusion from the “norms” of exclusive heterosexuality, opposite sex desire, and gender conformity. In particular, I arranged the acronym’s letters to reflect the historical emergence of such terms (gay and lesbian predating bisexual, transgender, and queer). Though such an arrangement reinscribes a problematic gender inequity, as a historically focused work, this books aims to utilize the terminology that reflects the popular terms of the day. I use “gay and lesbian” or “gay men and lesbians” to refer to a part of the GLBTQ community identified primarily by their homosexual desire and their strong identity as a discrete community. I use “queer” to signal an additional part of the GLBTQ community that seeks to disrupt static notions of identity. While the distinctions between these terms are often blurred in popular and scholarly usage, I attempt to use them precisely to specify distinctions within the following texts.

opportunities for communities to form, to be renewed, and to “begin anew,”¹⁶ the erasure of an entire people from the past also functions to sustain dominant culture, its privileges, and its attendant power structures. Heterosexuals, at the center of dominant culture, have regularly exerted a constellation of forgetting practices (both consciously and unconsciously) against the GLBTQ past — including heteronormativity, misrepresentation, the subjugation of knowledge, the destruction of records, the disqualification of evidence, and mnemonicicide,¹⁷ among many others — to resecure that center. At times, GLBTQ people themselves, for very different reasons, have contributed to this will to forget. Nonetheless, as Charles Morris has suggested, the GLBT community has increasingly made a queer “*turn toward* memory,” finding within their pasts valuable resources for rhetorical invention.¹⁸

As an epigram, the gay men and lesbians who drew upon the past in their attempts to persuade Robinson ask us likewise today to reflect upon how contemporary GLBTQ persons in Western culture utilize their pasts as rhetorical devices addressed to audiences or publics: In what ways do modern GLBTQ persons in the West remember the past? Do GLBTQ persons today remember the past in the same way, or what patterns typify diverse representations of GLBTQ history? Who do we remember for doing certain deeds in the past? How do we determine what sorts of symbolic and material deeds are worthy of remembering or forgetting? How do we go about *doing remembering* as individuals and as groups? Who do we remember as a community and, given the underlying roles of institutions and organizations such as publication outlets and archives, what symbolic and material costs does such memory require? These

¹⁶ Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 13.

¹⁷ Charles E. Morris III, “My Old Kentucky Homo: Abraham Lincoln, Larry Kramer, and the Politics of Queer Memory,” in *Queering Public Address: Sexualities in American Historical Discourse* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), 103.

¹⁸ Morris, “My Old Kentucky Homo,” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95.

questions are deeply historical, queer, and rhetorical. They also form the foundational themes that will emerge in the course of this project, which concentrates, above all, on how contemporary GLBTQ advocates have used remembrances of the past to influence and defend against the judgments by apparently heterosexual citizens who dominate public life in the United States and North America.

I will argue in this dissertation, that GLBTQ histories — or more specifically GLBTQ *public memories* — are key rhetorical devices addressed to audiences or publics, devices that have grown more pervasive, more complex, and more controversial as they have been used to influence not only GLBTQ audiences, but heterosexual audiences, as well. In remembering GLBTQ past(s), this community has not only preserved often overlooked, ignored, disqualified, or willfully misrepresented ways of being in time, but have sought to shape the present and the future of queer life in highly rhetorically-contested ways by seeking to influence diverse audiences with different stakes in remembrance.¹⁹ Driving this project will be three overarching claims:

[1] That public memories offer a vital resource for GLBTQ persons, communities, and institution for shaping public beliefs and judgments and winning political, cultural, and social change.

[2] That the trajectory of this memory work is not exclusively a contemporary phenomenon, but rather a long standing *tactical* practice that has recently begun to include more *strategic* enactments, styles, and forms.

¹⁹ On queer notions of time and temporality, see Michel Foucault, “Sexual Choice, Sexual Act: Foucault and Homosexuality,” in *Politics, Philosophy, and Culture: Interviews and Other Writings of Michel Foucault, 1977-1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988), 297, and Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

[3] That strategic memory practices in particular, while posing significant challenges to GLBTQ rhetors and audiences, will increasingly offer valuable effects in both heterosexual and homosexual public culture(s). As such, efforts to refine and *make better* strategic queer memories will be an ongoing and important project.

Through the case studies described in this dissertation, these claims will not only be proven as a more accurate reflection of actually-existing GLBTQ historical action, but will also demonstrate key developments toward using the past to craft a more equitable GLBTQ future.

Before outlining fully my orientation to GLBTQ pasts that will emerge in this project, it is important to review the attention thus far given to such work by scholars. I will proceed in this introduction by first reviewing scholarship on how history can be understood as rhetorical. In doing so, I will situate tellings of the past as public memories that are deployed to shape cultural understandings of the present and future. Next, I will detail a central distinction that will characterize the work of this dissertation: the distinction between tactical and strategic memory rhetorics. My distinction between the two draws upon the work of Michel de Certeau who rearticulates these two terms not as complementary but rather as competing forces of power. As will be discussed, tactical rhetorics are ephemeral practices and performances used in a guerilla-warfare fashion to disrupt hegemonic power structures within its space of control, while strategic rhetorics seek to generate, secure, and protect spaces of power that might persevere in opposition to other existent power bases.²⁰ Within this distinction, I argue that while GLBTQ historical representation has been and continues to be used to advocate for GLBTQ persons for decades with varying degrees of success, the tactical memory rhetorics that long pervaded the practice of

²⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 35-7.

GLBTQ rhetors has increasingly shifted to include the emergence of strategic memory rhetorics. While a trend towards the later does not preclude or necessarily devalue the ongoing and critically important work of earlier gays and lesbians to craft a tactical sense of history (in fact, I will suggest that it results from significant underlying changes in the cultural conditions for the public advocacy), these new strategic rhetorics raise important insights about alternate ways of securing GLBTQ rights often in tandem with tactical rhetorics. At the same time, this “strategic turn” generates critical questions from self-described queers, transgender persons, queers of color, and earlier gay historians (among others) over who becomes present and absent when queers cast their past (at times literally) in stone. To make this expansion of memory styles plain, in the third section of this chapter, I will give an account of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer histories as memories in early American culture that demonstrate their tactical quality. By briefly assessing discursive fragments or “snapshots” of these tactical practices so prevalent in previous decades, we will more clearly understand the values and drawbacks of such approaches to queer persuasion as well as clarify how the more contemporary strategic case studies that populate this dissertation represent a new and distinctive form of queer public memory work.²¹ In addition, I will also review the historiography of GLBTQ history, its incremental beginnings, and emerging critical analyses of contemporary GLBTQ historical scholarship. I will conclude by laying out the relevance of this project and previewing the chapters of the dissertation.

²¹ On the need for analyzing fragments in contemporary rhetorical criticism, see Michael Calvin McGee, “Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (1990): 274-89.

1.2 THE RHETORICITY OF THE (GLBTQ) PAST

While the creation of gay and lesbian histories has been an important cultural act within the diverse GLBTQ community for decades, the forms of recording GLBTQ histories that have become better known and more extensive since the 1970s emerged with some very particular purposes in mind. Among those purposes was to counterbalance distrust that a supposedly scientific and unbiased “History” would ever be told that included homosexuals. As pioneering gay historian Jonathan Ned Katz remarked in 1983, the categorizing and recording of gay men and lesbians in the past at the time was “mainly of concern to those who wish to be sure that they and their revered others do not fall into the class of the terrible tabooed.”²² Katz’s view was one shared by many gays and lesbians. Despite progressive work by scholars both inside and outside the academy to diversify the uses, concerns, and methodologies of history, the belief that history-writing’s function had long been much more than simply to record history still permeated the GLBTQ community. Early activists, scholars, and community GLBTQ historians undertook their work from this belief: that history often served instrumental and interventionist purposes within culture; purposes that present the past with persuasive intent to shape the present and craft a specific image of the future. In doing so, they joined with a long line of colleagues who had been instrumental in the creation of interpretive, cultural, social, radical socialist, Marxist, feminist, materialist, and American Studies historians (among others) to reshape the grand narratives of the discipline. If gays and lesbians were to tackle and counteract a persuasive, anti-GLBTQ history-writing process they would have to do so themselves by generating their own histories for their own uses. Thus, instead of studying GLBTQ history for history’s sake, this

²² Katz, *Gay and Lesbian Almanac*, 10-11.

project follows in the footsteps of others GLBTQ historians before in firmly understanding *history as rhetorical*.

Such a characterization of history generally is not new. Nietzsche's critical history called into question the implied "truth" of events described in historical tomes. Marx hinted at the concealing nature of history in *The German Ideology* (1846). Marxists like Althusser have been quick to argue that history is not a neutral telling of the past but an ideologically infused narrative that ordinarily ensures the perpetuation of the status quo and its attendant power structure.²³ Michel Foucault's genealogical and archaeological projects have exposed the meta-narratives of history (in particular the history of sexuality) as discursive constructions rather than rational Hegelian steps forward.²⁴ Such thinkers have been followed by a long line of workers and feminists in advocating for a suspicious orientation to presentations of a value-neutral history. As we have already seen, inverts, homophiles, fairies, and gays and lesbians like those who met with Dr. Robinson had engaged in such practical contestations of history for several decades by the time much of this writing was done.

While many historians were opposed to such interpretations of their work for some time, others like J.H. Hexter indicated that those in history who overlook the suasive elements of their work do so at their own peril, because rhetoric "affects not merely the outward appearance of history...but its inward character, its essential function — its capacity to convey knowledge of the past as it actually was."²⁵ However, Hayden White has been perhaps the most influential, academically-trained historian to challenge the self-evident, elitist, and neutral concepts of

²³ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 121-76.

²⁴ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 78-108.

²⁵ J.H. Hexter, *Doing History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 68.

history-writing for those interested in rhetoric. Key to White's re-articulation of history is that writing history is primarily a *literary* practice — a field immersed in the telling of narratives with recognizable tropes and genres, validated by the selection of particular events to form plotlines that appear internally consistent. Given the literary and politically infused practices by which history is then written, White suggests that history is best studied not through scientific analysis, but literary, political, and *rhetorical* methods.²⁶

Drawing inspiration in part from White's work, rhetoricians have also been keen to note history's rhetorical dimensions. Interest in rhetorical history and the prevalence of the "critical-historical" method within the field highlights the long-standing disciplinary concern with history and rhetorical action. But rhetoricians have dealt expressly with a rhetorical understanding of the writing of history. For instance, in 1987 Allan Megill and Deirdre McCloskey argued for seeing history as part of the Rhetoric of Inquiry Project: "A work of history...does not derive chiefly from solitary illumination in the archives. It is a writing, an attempt at persuasion. Histories can be read as orations."²⁷ While much of the rhetoric examined by scholars today looks beyond orality alone, other forms of rhetorical appeal through historical writing share the same interest in the "tropes, arguments, and other devices" that Megill and McCloskey describe.²⁸ In addition, Megill and McCloskey suggest the motivation to write history is also rhetorical in that it is

²⁶ Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973).

²⁷ Allan Megill and Deirdre N. McCloskey, "The Rhetoric of History," in *The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences: Language and Argument in Scholarship and Public Affairs*, eds. John S. Nelson, Allan Megill, and Deirdre N. McCloskey (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 221.

²⁸ The Rhetoric of Inquiry Project followed closely on the Wingspread Conference of 1970, which moved the field toward investigating broader notions of rhetoric beyond speeches and orality. For discussions generated from that conference, see Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black, eds., *The Prospects of Rhetoric* (Englewoods Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

impelled by problems in the present.²⁹ Thus, they summarize: “Trying to write history unrhetorically is like trying to tell a joke unverbally.”³⁰

However, within the broad view of history’s rhetoricity, there are more specific understandings that shape how we understand history as rhetorical. These specific approaches are many and, as Kathleen J. Turner states, “the conceptualizations and methodologies of rhetorical history will only increase in significance during the burgeoning ‘Communication Age.’”³¹ Turner’s edited volume *Doing Rhetorical History* goes on to highlight the multitude of specific functions the study of rhetorical history has to offer. Among these, the work outlined in this projects suggests one such particular reading of history as rhetorical — what David Zarefsky calls “the rhetoric of history” — namely, the use of history as evidence or argument in persuasive acts.³² In this sense, history is not just an object with rhetoricity (though that is another possible conception), but also something that is used in making rhetorical arguments. To quote Zarefsky: “Historians not only argue *about* history; they also argue *from* it, using historical premises to justify current actions and beliefs.”³³ Hence, we can understand and recognize the telling of the past as a rhetorical endeavor.

However, history as a concept is not quite adequate to explain the particular rhetorical uses of the GLBTQ past I will discuss in this project. Framing rhetorical tellings of the GLBTQ past as simply “gay and lesbian history” brings with it certain challenges. First, “gay and lesbian

²⁹ Megill and McCloskey, “The Rhetoric of History,” in Nelson, et al., *The Rhetoric of Human Sciences*, 223.

³⁰ Megill and McCloskey, “The Rhetoric of History,” in Nelson, et al., *The Rhetoric of Human Sciences*, 222.

³¹ Kathleen J. Turner, “Rhetorical History as Social Construction: The Challenge and the Promise,” in *Doing Rhetorical History*, ed. Kathleen J. Turner (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 15.

³² David Zarefsky, “Four Senses of Rhetorical History,” in *Doing Rhetorical History: Concepts and Cases*, ed. by Kathleen J. Turner (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 27-28.

³³ Zarefsky, “Four Sense of Rhetorical History,” in Turner, *Doing Rhetorical History*, 28.

history” implies that this project is contiguous with what Scott Bravmann has called the “first wave” of the gay history movement. Bravmann understands this “first wave” to have crafted a gay past to create identity and sustain the community. But, according to Bravmann:

Though the study of gay and lesbian history provides cogent ways of addressing questions of identity, politics, community, and difference, historical events and memories of them also continue to imbue the present with meaning and give the past a surplus of signification that is itself in need of critical analysis.³⁴

The language of “waves” deployed here by Bravmann is problematic, as many feminists have discovered, in excluding diversity and erasing difference at temporal moments within evolving social movements.³⁵ As such, despite the use of the term by some GLBTQ historiographers, I will not take up the language of waves in my project. However, at the same time, while I value and will at some points champion the impetus to do the unifying work of GLBTQ history replete with its internal conflicts and contestation, much of what I will take up in this project will also, like Bravmann and others, participate in the “queer cultural studies of gay history” that actively examines this first wave, as well as interrogates the problematic disruptions that emerge between them. Second, and related to the first point, some aspects of “gay history” often hint at the

³⁴ Scott Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past: History, Culture, and Difference* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4.

³⁵ For instance, see Kimberly Springer, “Third Wave Black Feminism?” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27 (2002): 1059 and Hokulani K. Aikau, Karla A. Erickson, and Jennifer L. Pierce, eds., *Feminist Waves, Feminist Generations: Life Stories from the Academy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

transhistorical conceptualization of a single, unitary meta-narrative of a gay past that can represent equitably all the diversity of the evolving GLBTQ experience. By and large, these notions — that confer a particularly universal sense of gay identity upon its subjects across time and culture — have fallen out of favor. However, the persistence of the notion of a single, monolithic identity is evident in the oscillation of these debates from academic to popular circles. This oscillating move suggests that, rather than being resolved, definitional debates over the *telos* of gay history continue. Thus, rather than examine public understandings of just one or another notion of gay history, I am interested in the diverse and conflicting narratives of the GLBTQ past that often make telling one or several gay histories a complicated challenge. Third, a monolithic “gay and lesbian history” may also suggest a specific, standardized set of disciplinary procedures, measures of credibility, and locations of worth by which a past can be (re)constructed. This should not suggest that I am hostile to the resources of the historical discipline. Indeed, I use many of them (oral history, historiographic methods, archival work, etc.) in this project. But I am in opposition to the belief that the *only* viable gay and lesbian history is one that can be reclaimed by uncovering the dust from an institutionally approved archival mound or told by elites within various GLBTQ movements. As I will detail later, the resources of this institutional space is not always worth the sacrifice it requires, nor is the GLBTQ past likely something to be easily found in the refuge of heteronormative power structures. Thus, gay and lesbian history should not be considered in any way a safe refuge from the general concerns or rhetorical deficiencies that often are overlooked in more generic histories.

Instead of history, the GLBTQ past can be better understood through the lens of memory. The clash between memory and history is central to contemporary debates about historical representation. These debates are often framed through conceptions of memory as a lived and

embodied ritual ways of being while history is our mass-produced accounting for memory's loss.³⁶ But memories are also important social practices. Indeed, as Maurice Halbwachs suggested, individuals are frequently unreliable *loci* for recording the past. Rather, people often acquire their remembrances of the past — and their meanings — through social exchanges.³⁷ A particular kind of social memory study amenable to an examination of GLBTQ historical representation is public memory. As Kendall Phillips has noted, public memories are “multiple, diverse, mutable, and competing accounts of past events.”³⁸ These memories are inherently rhetorical because they seek to articulate an argument for the meaning of the past that is debated within the public sphere. Within the frame of public memory, the past operates not as historical *fact* but as historical *interpretation* for the purposes of making public argument. Through framing the past, we serve a present need. Those most likely to do this memory work occupy a position of power in society. That power is often inscribed by the work of the institutional repositories of memory — archives, museums, libraries, etc. — that police what is accessible and therefore available to public memory. Since nations, corporations, and governments frequently control these institutions, public memory is often used to shape the past to justify the status quo. These “official memories” are powerful rhetorical forces that reproduce existing power relations and minimize meanings of the past that run counter to currently accepted grand narratives.³⁹

However, this official reading of the past is not the only way in which public memory operates in public argumentation. In contrast to official memories, there are “countermemories”

³⁶ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” *Representations* 26 (1989): 8.

³⁷ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.

³⁸ Kendall R. Phillips, introduction to *Framing Public Memory*, ed. Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 2.

³⁹ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 16.

that challenge not only the notion of a stable past, but also dominant cultural understandings of that past.⁴⁰ By using “countermemory,” I am invoking three different senses of the term. First, countermemory should imply a reactionary move — a memory that arises in response to an “official” memory (rather than a “vernacular” memory which may challenge an official memory but does not necessarily rise up in reaction to it).⁴¹ Second, countermemory implies a Foucauldian, genealogical perspective in which metanarratives are parodied, identities destabilized, and the impartiality of supposed historical knowledge is exposed. This is particularly clear in how countermemory can parody “monumental history.”⁴² Third, “countermemory” should also evoke the multiple forms of “counterpublicity” that clash, not just with official forms of public discourse, but simultaneous, alternate counterpublic discourses as well, as suggested by Phaedra Pezzullo and others.⁴³ We might then also consider these memories what I would term “counterpublic memories.”

Counterpublics can take many forms. Sometimes they emerge as separate memory texts or sites created by marginalized groups (Boston’s memorial to Crispus Attucks is a good

⁴⁰ The use of the term “countermemory” requires some clarification. I am explicitly not implying the “counter-monument” style described by James E. Young in his essay “Memory and Counter-Memory.” In his work, Young is attempting to grapple primarily with the relationship between the materiality and the function of monuments. He examines how counter-monuments are made invisible or self-destructive by design to “force both visitors and local citizens to look within themselves for memory” instead of within a material object. In doing so, artists and designers thereby “return the burden of memory to those who come looking for it.” See James E. Young, “Memory and Counter-Memory: The End of the Monument in Germany,” *Harvard Design Magazine* 9 (Fall 1999): 1-10. The term “counter-monument” receives wider usage in James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

⁴¹ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 14, 17.

⁴² Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 160-64. See also Michel Foucault, “Film and Popular Memory” in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), 122-32.

⁴³ Phaedra C. Pezzullo, “Resisting ‘National Breast Cancer Awareness Month’: The Rhetorics of Counterpublics and Their Cultural Performances,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (2003): 345-65.

example).⁴⁴ Frequently, these counter memories are made possible by efforts to record popular memories in archival zones separate from hegemonic forces (like the Lesbian Herstory Archive). Other times these memories appear as unconventional or unexpected interactions (or reading) of an official public memory.⁴⁵ Through oppositional readings, the meaning of an official memory can be contested and its façade as the definitive meaning of the past can be cracked. Such memory tactics can be effective tools for minorities and subaltern groups at the margins of society. Yet it is rare for official or unofficial memories to be mutually exclusive. Most memory texts exist in a constant state of flux wherein they can be understood as both official and counter simultaneously. In this way, public memory sites are multivocal texts that reflect diverse readings of both dominant and marginalized interpretation of the past.⁴⁶

Given the dynamism with which public memories engage the rhetorical use of the past, it should not be surprising that the study of *queer* public memory has evolved as an explicit area of study among rhetoricians. To my knowledge, Charles Morris was the first to coin the term in his 2004 essay, “My Old Kentucky Homo: Lincoln and the Politics of Queer Public Memory.”⁴⁷ Morris is not the first or only rhetorician to have studied connections between gay, lesbian,

⁴⁴ Crispus Attucks was a freed slave who was among the first killed at the Boston Massacre. Abolitionists and the black community fought for a public commemoration of Attucks in the years before the Civil War. See Stephen H. Browne, “Remembering Crispus Attucks: Race, Rhetoric, and the Politics of Commemoration,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 85 (1999): 169-87.

⁴⁵ Deborah Bright and Erica Rand encourage such readings as they tour the historic sites of Plymouth, Massachusetts in their “Queer Plymouth,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12 (2006): 259-77.

⁴⁶ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; Nora, “Between Memory and History”; Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991); John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Bodnar, *Remaking America*.

⁴⁷ Charles E. Morris III, “My Old Kentucky Homo: Lincoln and the Politics of Queer Public Memory,” in Phillips, *Framing Public Memory*, 89.

bisexual, transgender, and queer people and the past.⁴⁸ However, Morris's term has acquired a certain cache within scholarly parlance, used broadly to cover any intersections between GLBTQ identity and memory. As such, I frequently use Morris's terminology in this dissertation.

Nonetheless, it is crucial for our purposes to be explicit in how I will use the term both to be as specific as possible in labeling the motivations behind specific rhetorical actions as they appear and to aid readers in distinguishing between the complex forces at play within the wider GLBTQ community. Throughout this project, I use "queer public memory" in its broadest sense to refer to the practices and methods by which a diverse variety of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and self-described "queers" deploy memory rhetorics in the public sphere. In this way, I am signaling the most inclusive use of the term *queer* and not explicitly the collection of theories, criticisms, and political orientations popularized in the 1990s and known as "queer theory." However, this is not to say that "queers" or "queer theory" have no place in this study. To the contrary, queers and their memories run noticeably and persistently throughout the chapters of this dissertation. However, when I wish to signal a particularly "queer" sense of identity or memory moving forward, I will attempt to mark or signal that usage explicitly in the text. I believe clearly marking this meaning will allow this form of "queer" to be productively distinguished from other terms, allowing it to better imply a distinct set of memories that radically seek to disrupt heteronormativity — the oppressive belief that heterosexuality is and always has been the only viable way of being in the world — largely through a discursive and transient understanding of sex, gender, and performance with an active, critical distance from "normative" culture. As such, "queer counterpublic memories" appear in the text throughout this dissertation, as do other more targeted terms like "gay and lesbian public memory,"

⁴⁸ Other scholars who have examined these intersections include: Christopher Castiglia and James Darsey, among others.

“traditionalist counterpublic” and the like. The distinction between these other terms and more queer iterations of memory will emerge as this project moves forward.

That said, the benefits to framing the GLBTQ past through the lens of memory rather than history are many. First, by focusing on memory rather than history, a diverse range of past-oriented practices and productions become accessible for interrogation rather than simply History as an academic practice. This is key for a GLBTQ examination of the past in particular since many of the more traditional forums for historical articulation, like journals, books, archives, museums and other traditional media of historical exploration have often been inaccessible or unfavorable to queers (or only accessible to those willing to closet their sexuality as an act of complicity). Second, instead of privileging a hegemonic notion of a unitary past, the contestable, diverse, and political nature of the past comes to the fore when we embrace memory over history. Particularly present in this contestation for our interests will be tensions between not only heterosexual and homosexual tellings of the past, but simultaneous, distinct memories of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer pasts as well as how those pasts are inflected differently by issues of race, gender, class, etc. Third, memory allows for a more democratic telling of the past. Despite more progressive moves in rhetorical history, even Zarefsky centers his understanding of the term on “how *historians* talk and write *about* history.”⁴⁹ By privileging memory, the array of subjects capable of articulating a past extends beyond elites and the institutions of public authority and public knowledge.⁵⁰ This is particularly key in GLBTQ

⁴⁹ Zarefsky, “Four Senses of Rhetorical History,” in Turner, *Doing Rhetorical History*, 28 (emphasis added).

⁵⁰ Zarefsky also claims that when historians are not the focus of the rhetoric of history, it usually falls into examinations of collective memory. Indeed, Zarefsky points to memory as a primary area of future research: “We are far from knowing much about how collective memory is formed and modified or about how professional historians conduct (28) discourse differently from amateurs.” Zarefsky, “Four Senses of Rhetorical History,” in Turner, *Doing Rhetorical History*, 28-9.

history projects where most of the initial archival and recovery work was completed not by trained historians but diligent amateurs, community organizations, and other marginalized communities. Fourth, because of the tenuous existence of GLBTQ historical “evidence” and its often traumatic trappings, queer tellings of the past are highly creative in form and media and remembered in different media than more traditional public memory sites. For instance, many queer counterpublic memories are derived from fleeting, non-textual sources. Ephemera (pulp novels, costumes), myths (queer Greece, the warrior women of Amazons), and fantasies (sexual or otherwise) hold greater sway and sometimes-greater importance than what little documented proof might exist.⁵¹ In addition, queer narratives of the past increasingly rely more on fictive pasts than their heterosexual counterparts. Much of this diversity can be attributed to the diverse group of researchers and rhetorical producers who do queer history including scholars, archivists, documentarians, and librarians but also importantly (and often most prominently) activists, artists, performers, and the amateur or untrained historians.⁵² These producers generate queer memories visibly on bodies, through affect, in performance, or through art more readily than heterosexual memories. Finally, and most importantly, by considering the GLBTQ past as a discourse used in public to shape understanding and exercise power, the rhetoricity of the GLBTQ past — its social construction, its publicness, its constitutive nature, its contestability — becomes not simply an incidental feature but the central focus of this work.

⁵¹ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 8; also Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*, 26, 47-96; Patrick Moore, *Beyond Shame: Reclaiming the Abandoned History of Radical Gay Sexuality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 64, 70-1; and Christopher Nealon, *Foundlings: Lesbian and Gay Historical Emotion Before Stonewall* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 99, 141.

⁵² Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: Plume Book, 1990), x-xi; Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feeling*, 240-44.

Given the persistence of public memory as a resource for GLBTQ persuasion, fusing rhetorical histories that point to a contemporary queer “*turn toward* memory” with prior evidence of GLBTQ, homophile, fairy, or other groups’ memorial action in the past can be difficult. However, when distinguishing between the almost exclusive use of earlier tactical memory rhetorics and the addition of contemporary strategic memory rhetorics, a rhetorical history of how GLBTQ people have used the past for persuasive effect becomes clearer.

1.3 MEMORY AS TACTICS AND STRATEGIES

This project holds as one of its formative findings and organizing principles that there has been a recent trend within GLBTQ public memory in the last several decades to move from a rhetoric populated almost exclusively of tactical rhetorics to a broader constellation of rhetorical practices that rely increasingly heavily on GLBTQ strategic memory rhetorics. The conceptual distinction between these rhetorical forms is drawn from the work of Michel de Certeau in his germinal work *The Practices of Everyday Life* (1984). In this volume, de Certeau outlines a theory of power, particularly how authoritative forms of power are disrupted by *metistic* practices — people turning established sites, practices, and activities dictated from above to their own purposes in the course of everyday life. Among these *metistic* practices, de Certeau highlights how everyday men and women walk the streets outside of prescribed paths, how the creative use of food undermines prefabricated intent, and how the common person “reads” text in ways that

defy authorial intent.⁵³ In doing so, what often appear as static conceptions of power relations become nuanced, dynamic, and more complex.

To conceptualize this theory, de Certeau builds a metaphor of power relations understood as space. It is within this spatial metaphor that we can more fully detail distinctions between tactics and strategy. For de Certeau, tactics and strategies represent not related approaches towards a common goal, but rather oppositional forces characterized by their spatialized relationship to power:

I call a strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that become possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed...a tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the conditions necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep to itself,

⁵³ Debra Hawhee also suggests that *métis* occurs not just in intellectual challenges, but also in physical, embodied enactings. See Debra Hawhee, *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection.⁵⁴

Of all the human practices that might invoke tactical iterations, de Certeau suggests rhetoric — as a situational art — is one of the most adept: “rhetoric, the science of ‘the ways of speaking,’ offers an array of figure-types for the analysis of everyday ways of acting even though such analysis is in theory excluded from scientific discourse.”⁵⁵ It should then not be surprising that rhetoricians have turned to de Certeau to further account for how rhetoric can act in both strategic and tactical ways — in producing tactical and strategic rhetorics.

Most notable of these theorists are Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek in their work on whiteness.⁵⁶ Borrowing a spatialized view of power from Deleuze and Guattari, Nakayama and Krizek define tactical rhetorics and strategic rhetorics as discourses that either aid in the defense of inscribed power or that act in resistance to those powerful spaces. Thus, a *tactical rhetoric* is a discourse that seeks to open up moments of freedom and safety within the discourse controlled by the center of power. Meanwhile, *strategic rhetorics*, to quote Nakayama and Krizek, are “not itself a place, but...function[s] to resecure the center, the place” for those with some degree of power.⁵⁷

This dissertation will argue — as demonstrated by recent uses of GLBTQ public memory sites or *lieux de memoire* — that some GLBTQ persons and institutions have begun to move away from the tactical use of GLBTQ memory rhetorics toward a fuller deployment of strategic

⁵⁴ de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, 35-37.

⁵⁵ de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, xx.

⁵⁶ Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81 (1995): 291-309.

⁵⁷ Nakayama and Krizek, “Whiteness,” 295.

GLBTQ memory rhetorics (or a combination of the two). Such an argument presupposes that in the earlier days of the GLBTQ community, rhetors were largely forced to employ *tactical rhetorics of gay historical representation* within a heteronormative culture. These were inventional memories that “made do” with the rhetorical situation in which they found themselves. These early memories produced by those with same-sex attractions and gender non-conformity of all kinds were frequently generated under the pressure of disciplining heteronormative forces to defend moments of queer self-understanding. They emerged from the detritus of the “foreign” territory of the heterosexual past in which gay men and lesbians could scrape together a queer meaning. This should not suggest that gay men and lesbians were unable in earlier decades to find sustaining “safe spaces” in which they could nourish their own selves and communities with a sense of the past. Doubtless, such spaces existed. However, in many cases, the telling of gay memories in the earlier part of the twentieth century was mostly a tactical rhetoric — a past preserved on the fly and in the moment.

It is when this tactical memory work was practiced in public that it was at its most rhetorical. But the nature of that public is particularly important for our purposes. If we were to examine the GLBTQ past put on display before a queer counterpublic, we would have little difficulty finding countless examples. Indeed, George Chauncey’s pioneering work on early gay subcultures in New York at the dawn of the twentieth century suggest explicitly that these past were present within the discourse and deeply influential in beginning to shape a collective, queer imagining.⁵⁸ However, gay men performing the past for themselves or in front of other gay men does not depict the full extent of tactical memory rhetorics at the time. Rather, it is when the

⁵⁸ For more on early historical imaginings and community building, see Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 282-85.

queer past was performed, argued, or made visible *before heterosexual eyes* that the tactical nature of the queer public memory reached its apex.

The history of the tactical memory rhetorics by gays and lesbians can be seen in some of the earliest public acknowledgements of homosexuality. Perhaps, the most well known examples are the trials of Oscar Wilde. The boisterous and outlandish Wilde was a playwright, literary master, and social celebrity in England from the late 1800s until 1895 when he was hauled into court on charges of gross indecency (relating to his homosexuality). The trial was a media spectacle — one that Wilde himself became quite adept at playing to his advantage in the halls of the Old Bailey. One of the most noticeable and commented upon aspects of his apologia is a prominent example of a tactical memory rhetoric: in open court, in a manner presaging Robinson's patients decades later, Wilde's claimed that Plato, Michelangelo, and Shakespeare had all prospered from the "love that dare not speak its name:"

"The love that dare not speak its name" in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michelangelo, and those two letters of mine, such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the "Love that dare not speak its name," and on account of it I am placed where I

am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder man has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope and glamour of life before him. That it should be so the world does not understand. The world mocks it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it.⁵⁹

The description Wilde puts forth to justify his behavior with a string of younger men who only days before had given testimony against him on the stand is clearly more in line with a description of pederasty than what we might consider today to be a GLBTQ identity or same-sex relationship. However, Wilde's heterosexual audience believed him to be a homosexual and to have practiced sodomy, further aligning the two than might be otherwise. Nonetheless, it is apparent in this quote that Wilde sees resources for invention within heterosexual history that he might use to justify his own position "in the pillory."

But what qualifies Wilde's retort on the stand as tactical memory practice? Clearly it suggested a kind of homosexual content and relied heavily on historical imagination. But what makes it tactical or rather, in what way might we consider this a tactical form of memory? I argue that Wilde's claim can be characterized as a particular form of tactic: *bricolage*. A term used widely across the academy, many trace *bricolage* to Claude Lévi-Strauss in *The Savage*

⁵⁹ Quoted from Moïses Kaufman, ed. *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Dramatist Play Services, 1999), 70.

Mind who defines the *bricoleur* as someone who uses “whatever is at hand” to complete a job.⁶⁰

Lévi-Strauss’ characterization of *bricoleur* has been summarized as someone who uses:

the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once...⁶¹

This concept has been taken up and elaborated upon by a wide range of cultural critics from Jacques Derrida to Dick Hebdige.⁶² De Certeau also uses the term, defining *bricolage* as a “poetic way of ‘making do.’” For de Certeau, it is a way of using content (in this case public memory) for purposes unintended by its producer.⁶³ Indeed, in a system of cultural production where only those in a position of power (strategic) are able to make and sustain authoritative objects (or, in our case, texts), *bricolage* becomes a tactical resource for those on the margins to reappropriate existent culture for distinctly different purposes.

Wilde’s reclamation of revered historical figures that he believed participated in the “love that dare not speak its name” is an excellent example of a *queer bricolage* as a form of tactical

⁶⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 17.

⁶¹ Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” in *Postmodernism: Critical Texts*, Vol. 2, eds. Victor E. Taylor and Charles E. Winquist (New York: Routledge, 2002), 511.

⁶² See Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play,” 511 and Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York: Routledge, 1979, rpt. 2006), 103.

⁶³ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xv.

memory rhetoric. Because Wilde is not able to produce — in this case, evidence of a GLBTQ past that might ameliorate his actions — he is forced to borrow from heterosexual history to defend himself — to “make do” — with what his culture and discourse provides. Wilde’s selection of figures in this case is not purely intentional; to my knowledge he does not just randomly select figures he views as helpful. It is likely that he is selecting figures of whom there already existed some degree of suspicion, probably within homophile literary circles, and thus is a form of heavily circumscribed *doxa*. But while Wilde may not have been pulling historical figures out of the closet at random, he was certainly highly selective in his choices so as to align himself with figures that both might have practiced same-sex desire but that also already served an epideictic function within wider heterosexual culture. After all, Wilde did not align himself with any less reputable historical figures convicted of gross indecency. Rather, he chose to identify himself and his actions with those great men who constituted central figures in the epideictic realm of Western civilization, thereby seeking to make him credible and respectable, and to nullify his “crime.” Thus, by “making do” with the history he had access to, Wilde relied upon inventive, tactical memory rhetorics to make his case.

As we know, despite his insightful use of *bricolage*, Wilde’s defense would not be successful. He would be found guilty and spend two years sentenced to hard labor in an English prison. He would be released a visibly older man and with little of his previous *joie de vive*. Wilde would die shortly after his release in the year 1900 of meningitis, largely alone and penniless. Nonetheless, Wilde’s testimony is an excellent example of how GLBTQ people have long used public memory in tactical ways to defend themselves in public against heterosexual intrusion.

While Wilde's apologia is perhaps one of the most recognizable early examples of this tactical memory work on the part of an early individual with same-sex desires, it is only one example. However, a brief review of the certain historical "snapshots" over the last one hundred and fifty years reveals similar forms of *bricolage* at work among sexual and gender minorities, each making do with the past(s) they have. For instance, art and art display have long been a resource wherein collectors may situate historical (or perceived historical) homosexuality before heterosexual audiences. In many cases, this was a solitary joy of the homosexual himself or herself, for both male and female visitors to Victorian museums reveled in their gaze upon particularly Greco-Roman sculpture to fulfill an erotic desire.⁶⁴ However, early homosexuals themselves sometimes crafted homoerotic displays of the past to imagine a queer present and future. In particular, Whitney Davis has highlighted how the construction and display of homoerotic art collections between 1750 and 1920 often willfully combined otherwise non-homoerotic art pieces in ways that suggested — both blatantly and discreetly — historical same-sex desire before modern audiences.⁶⁵

Literature was also a common early discourse in which those of same-sex desires argued for acknowledgement by appropriating heterosexual history. One of the most powerful of these during the early twentieth century was the collection *The Ioläus*. Colloquially referred to as the "buggers bible," it was first published in 1917 and, while many of its essays were not explicitly homosexual in their content (its subtitle was "An Anthology of Friendship"), the assembly of these scattered essays into a single text framed them in a way that many early homosexuals found invigorating and assuring. As described by historian George Chauncey, *Ioläus*' "depiction

⁶⁴ Hilary Fraser, "A Visual Field: Michael Field And The Gaze," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 34 (2006): 553-571.

⁶⁵ Whitney Davis, "Homoerotic Art Collection from 1750 to 1920," *Art History* 24 (2001): 247-77.

of the nobility of male affection and love helped readers affirm their own love for men by encouraging them to identify it — and themselves — as part of an honorable tradition.”⁶⁶

While World War I and World War II provided opportunities for many inexperienced gay men and women to get their first taste of queer life, the wars and the situations they made possible required queers to rely upon a tactical use of heterosexual history to render themselves powerful in the face of often vindictive heteronormative antagonism. Just like many gay civilians had, gay soldiers, sailors, and Women’s Army Corps members (WACS) used tales of great gay war heroes and heroines of the past to justify their identity. In some cases, similar acts of historical *bricolage* enabled especially persuasive and patriotic men and women to win the approval of military psychologists to enlist. However, these memory tactics also served gay men and lesbians well in the course of battle. If they were ever questioned about their non-normative masculinities or their unusual proclivities by heterosexual peers or others (as well as to sure up their own questioning selves), gay soldiers and sailors could list many similarly situated historical examples (without making express their connection to homosexuality). Allan Bérubé suggested this was most common among college-educated soldiers who “carried with them a mythology, developed from reading the classics and in conversation with other gay men.” Of these Bérubé highlights “‘armies of lovers’ like the ‘Sacred Band of Thebes’ in ancient Greece and heroic military leaders such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Frederick the Great, and Lawrence of Arabia, who like themselves (in the case of gay men) had had male lovers.”⁶⁷

As we have already seen in the reports of Dr. Robinson, the fields of psychology and sexology became a prominent space in which homosexuality was not only described, assessed, accosted, and treated but was also a space where GLBTQ patients defended themselves, their

⁶⁶ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 284.

⁶⁷ Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 195.

sexual practices, and their lives by “making do” with the heterosexual past. While Robinson’s notoriety may have made him a target for tactical action by early gays and lesbians, the practice of citing historical precedent among esteemed figures was common in many doctor-patient interactions and was publicized in their reports, books, and conference proceedings. For instance, in an 1883 accounting of homosexual activities documented by medicine, Drs. J. C. Shaw and G.N. Ferris highlighted how a patient of Dr. Richard von Kraft-Ebing named “Dr. G.” in 1881 defended his homosexuality as “abnormal, but not pathological or unjustifiable...It was no vice since they were driven to it by a natural power.” In making such a claim, Dr. G assured Kraft-Ebing that “men of his character [have] poetically gifted natures; [he] considers as such Frederick the Great, Eugene of Savoy, [August von] Platen, and many others of the present day.”⁶⁸ Another young man, seeking assistance from Dr. William Hammond in 1883, reveled in retelling how “he spent the whole of one evening drawing the gluteal regions of the great men of the world, and imaging that he was having pederastic relations with them.”⁶⁹

Importantly, while gay men frequently relied upon these tactical historical discourses to make their claims to normalcy, women commonly did the same. In an 1895 article in *The American Naturalist* condemning the effects of female suffrage, Dr. James Weir, Jr. reported that many of the “viragints” (strong-willed, masculinized women of many types whose “most aggravated form ...is that known as homo-sexuality”) he had studied aligned themselves with others in history. He suggested Joan of Arc, Catherine the Great, Messalina, and Queen Elizabeth

⁶⁸ Reproduced in part as “1883, April, Drs. J.C. Shaw and G.N. Ferris: Perverted Sexual Instinct,” in Katz, *Gay/Lesbian Almanac*, 190.

⁶⁹ Dr. William Hammond, *Sexual Impotence in the Male* (1883), 66. Reprinted in part as “1883, March, Dr. William Hammond: Two Types of Pederasts,” in Katz, *Gay/Lesbian Almanac*, 187.

were strong examples of viragints in the “history of the world.”⁷⁰ In another account, Sarah Edmonds Seelye recalled in 1882 how the cross dressing style and lesbian-tendencies of Fanny Campbell — the “female pirate captain” — inspired her to live a life in drag and serve as a man in the American Civil War.⁷¹ Perhaps the most famous example from psychology, Alfred Kinsey’s reports on the private and public sexual pasts of thousands of average Americans opened the floodgates to many individuals who thought themselves alone in the world while simultaneously challenging the assumptions of the homo/hetero binary by popularizing notions of a bisexual norm.⁷²

As the gay and lesbian press developed in the early to mid-twentieth century, it also highlighted historical homosexuality (tactically) in its coverage. Many of these examples would be circulated into the heterosexual press or (more likely) be reiterated by homosexuals themselves in defense of their existence to others. In the 1940s and 50s, if a reader could acquire a national or international newsletters like *Vice Versa*, *ONE Magazine*, or those produced by the Mattachine Society (*Mattachine Review*) or the Daughters of Bilitis (*The Ladder*), it was quite simple to find allusions to a GLBTQ past within its pages. Articles discussed the potential queer orientations of Hadrian, members of British royalty, and George Washington in the first year of

⁷⁰ Dr. James Weir, Jr. “The Effect of Female Suffrage on Posterity,” in *The American Naturalist* (1895). Reprinted in part as “1895, September, Dr. James Weir, Jr.: ‘The Effect of Female Suffrage on Posterity,’” in Katz, *Gay/Lesbian Almanac*, 285.

⁷¹ “The Story of a Remarkable Life,” *Detroit Press and Tribune*, May 27, 1883. Reprinted in part as “1883, May 27, *Detroit Press and Tribune*: Sarah Edmonds Seelye, ‘The Story of a Remarkable Life.’” In Katz, *Gay/Lesbian Almanac*, 191-94.

⁷² Among the first of many such publication by Kinsey, see Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948).

the *Mattachine Review* alone.⁷³ Sapphistic poems and images of homosocial embraces between women and men were commonly conveyed to the reader in other publications. As the movement evolved, diversified, and expanded, other newsletters, journals, narratives, and images became accessible to a growing GLBTQ sub-cultural reading public which also diversified such displays of the past. In the 60s and 70s, *Body Politic*, *Gay Sunshine*, *Conditions*, *Fag Rag*, and *Sinister Wisdom* (to name a few) became popular publication venues for GLBTQ scholars, particularly historians.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, small local and regional newsletters, magazines, and newspapers circulated within communities beyond the large metropolitan areas spreading historical representations to its readers.

Art, literature, the military, psychology, and the media — each presented opportunities for a diverse range of same-sex identities to draw from wider culture to defend themselves from heteronormative invasion. These sorts of tactical deployments of GLBTQ history rhetorics continued as a primary means of queer argument in the public sphere throughout the last century and continue today in the present. For instance, one could easily conceptualize the discourse produced by GLBTQ youth navigating the coming out process as forms of a tactical rhetoric along the lines described above. In addition, nascent GLBTQ movements in some more aggressively homophobic cultures still rely heavily upon tactical, historical rhetorics to both build community and to minimize and question disciplining forces. Doubtless, GLBT persons and queers in our contemporary moment continue to face many of the same issues of violence, discrimination, and disciplining that queers of an earlier time faced when they invoked tactical

⁷³ Mack Fingal, “Hadrian and Antinous: The Love-Life of a Emperor,” *Mattachine Review*, November/December 1955, 21; Lyn Pedersen, “The Importance of Being Honest,” *Mattachine Review*, September/October 1955, 28.

⁷⁴ See John D’Emilio, “Then and Now: The Shifting Context of Gay Historical Writing,” in *The World Turned: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 214.

uses of the queer past more often.⁷⁵ As will be detailed in the chapters to follow, members of the community still rely heavily on tactical uses of history, to attend to important needs in the community. Nonetheless, it is the argument of this project that *strategic rhetorics of GLBTQ historical representation* have become an increasingly important part of the articulation of GLBTQ pasts.

1.4 THE STRATEGIC TURN IN QUEER MEMORY RHETORICS

Increasingly over the last three decades, the GLBTQ community has relied less and less exclusively upon tactical memory rhetorics and has increasingly turned toward strategic memory rhetorics, what I label a *strategic turn* within queer public memory. The primary characterizations of this strategic turn is memory's transition to an increasingly strategic space of power — a space of power which GLBTQ people themselves control (perhaps akin to a safe space); wherein they can exercise rhetorics that are not momentary or fleeting, but enduring and defensible on their own terms; wherein GLBTQ persons, collectives, and institutions are not solely rhetorical *users* of the past but *producers* of a GLBTQ memory. GLBTQ memory, in this conception, is more often deployed beyond the need to provide a temporary reprieve from a heteronormative apparatus. Strategic GLBTQ memory rhetorics thus become more public as self-reflective creations of GLBTQ pasts that serve both present and future needs against and beyond the workings of non-gay cultures. In short, contemporary GLBTQ persons and

⁷⁵ Discrimination in housing and education still persists. Despite the passage of federal bias crime (or hate crimes) protections based upon sexual orientation and gender identity in 2009, the rate of anti-gay violence has continued to increase. At the time of this writing, every time a public initiative in regard to same-sex marriage has been placed on the ballot it has failed.

movements are increasingly situated in *enduring spaces and moments* in the manifold relations of power — an increasingly strategic space.

To study GLBTQ historical representation as an increasingly strategic memory rhetoric suggests several key points. First, that GLBTQ strategic memories are highly emplaced rhetorics. As strategic memories, they presuppose spaces of GLBTQ identity that are not temporary or foreign but that have some degree of stability and security. As such, we can expect to find GLBTQ historical discourses attached to GLBTQ places (physical, institutional, and theoretical). Second, as strategies that seek to defend queer spaces, these remembering rhetorics signal a disposition to power that does not radically alter the present power infrastructure. Indeed, as we will see, while many of these strategic GLBTQ rememberings suggest contrary views of the past than those told in the heteronormative pasts, they many times also signal efforts to be inscribed into those systems as equals. Thus, these rhetorics generally seek not to destroy heterosexual history, but rather to be recognized along with heterosexual history as viable tellings of the past. As such, we will see how, third, these GLBTQ remembering strategies will often assume traditional forms to their heterosexual counterparts. This is not to say that they are identical; indeed, I will argue many of these strategic rhetorics take up the practice of “repetition with a difference,” as outlined by scholars like Gilles Deleuze, Homi Bhabba and Jeffrey T. Nealon.⁷⁶ However, much of what will proceed here will include traditional forms of public remembering: monuments, history books, films, gravestones and markers, etc.

Before detailing what strategic memory look like in greater detail, it is important to consider what prompted such a transition in memory rhetorics to begin with? It seems clear that

⁷⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Continuum, 1997), 19-20, 30-1; Homi Bhabba, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994, rpt. 1995), 85-7; Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 118-20.

many scholars of the GLBTQ past believe (correctly) that the traumatic losses of HIV/AIDS prompted an especially strong wave of past-oriented practices within the GLBTQ community. This point is, of course, not a new claim: Charles Morris, Christopher Nealon, Anne Czetkovich, Christopher Castiglia, and many others have all pointed out the role that the HIV/AIDS epidemic played in turning queer attention to memory. I whole-heartedly agree within these characterizations.

However, while I support the claim that HIV/AIDS played a vital part in this queer interest in memory, I disagree that the disease alone played this role and how such a characterization imagines the rhetorical history of queer memory practice. This chapter should make clear that GLBTQ persons had a profound interest (and indeed reliance) upon the GLBTQ past well before HIV/AIDS. Queer *bricolage* and other forms of queer memory work proliferated within early queer public practices, often serving as a vital bulwark against the disciplining gaze and actions of heterosexual culture and authorities. Thus, the HIV/AIDS crisis *alone* cannot explain the prominence of queer memory practice in the end of the twentieth century. Rather, an array of forces worked not to begin the (re)construction of the queer past, but to usher in a new stage of its utility. Thus, what we are left with is a different characterization: that the 80s and 90s are *not* a unique moment of queer memory work, but signals instead a renewed reliance upon memory by queers in historically distinct and culturally important forms. We might then suggest that the queer “*turn toward* memory” is really a *queer return to memory* with significant shifts to strategic over tactical forms of memory work.

Given this characterization, it seems that at least three additional factors contributed to making this strategic turn in queer public memory possible. First is the increasing organization of GLBTQ politics. While there has been a long history of GLBTQ organizational work dating well

back to the time of Hirschfelds' Berlin Institute for Sexual Science in Germany and the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis within the American context, the radical cultural upheaval of the 1960s made possible a new era of GLBTQ organizing that was instrumental to the success of the strategic turn. Whereas the earlier, limited and often conformist efforts of these groups were largely ignored or crushed by heteronormative apparatuses, the post-Stonewall political movement has had immense staying power, greater visibility, and a stronger organizational core. Thus, a large cohort of queer rhetors has been in play for decades, able to frame and make claims about queer equality. At the same time, progress on the institutional front has provided the tools, opportunities, and means to bring strategic memory rhetorics into fruition. Organizational spaces exist and persist, funds are raised, politicians and leaders are swayed, and opportunities for strategic planning are made possible. Without these resources — resulting mostly from political progress — gay and lesbian activists would be in no position to design monuments, acquire archives, lease space, change zoning laws, and interact with government and authorities in ways that would make queer memories more enduring.

Second, an assortment of academic and community projects to recollect and preserve GLBTQ history made possible and visible the raw materials for this larger rhetorical project. Beginning in the 1970s, a highly political GLBTQ archival movement began to collect GLBTQ historical representations for preservation while simultaneously making their holdings more accessible to the community. Many of these projects began at the local level within communities, local libraries, performance groups, reading groups, and universities.⁷⁷ While now-prominent gay and lesbian archives sprung up throughout the country after this decade, including the

⁷⁷ Society of American Archivists, Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable, "Lavender Legacies Guide," March 3, 2003, <http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/lagar/guide/guideintro.html> (accessed March 29, 2011).

Western Gay Archives/ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (1971/1986), the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Historical Society (1985), the Leather Archives and Museum (1991) and others, one of the earliest and most notable was the Lesbian Herstory Archive, which began work in New York City in 1972. These early archival efforts were important projects of the movement, made possible by the determined work and giving of a broad range of GLBTQ persons with little material, financial, or symbolic support. While in recent years, GLBTQ archives within more famous historical homes (the *Becoming Visible* exhibit at the New York Public Library in 1994, for example) have received extensive attention, it is nonetheless, because of the work of these first community projects that both early and contemporary GLBTQ historical work has been made possible.

In conjunction with this community-based work, academics began the arduous task of discovering, reconstructing, and in some cases inventing the GLBTQ past. Though late nineteenth century researchers like John Addington Symonds — named by Rictor Norton as the “father of queer history” — conducted some scholarly work on the gay and lesbian past, the researched histories of GLBTQ experiences that emerged after Stonewall began to shape decisively how the GLBTQ past was understood.⁷⁸ The first notable historical tome of the period highlighted by GLBTQ historiography was Jonathan Ned Katz’s *Gay American History*, published in 1976. A massive collection of documents related to the GLBTQ past from 1607 to 1950, the text demonstrated for political and academic observers (as well as gays and lesbians themselves) that lesbian and gay history was possible.⁷⁹ Katz’s first volume was shortly followed by a slew of influential, book-length histories: Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*

⁷⁸ Rictor Norton, *The Myth of the Modern Homosexual: Queer History and the Search for Cultural Unity* (London: Cassell, 1998), 162.

⁷⁹ Jeffrey Escoffier, Regina Kunzel, and Molly McGarry, “The Queer Issue: New Visions of America’s Lesbian and Gay Past,” *Radical History Review* 62 (1995): 1.

(1976), Jeffrey Weeks' *Coming Out* (1977), John Boswell's *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (1980), Lillian Faderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men* (1981), Alan Bray's *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (1982), Jonathan Ned Katz's *Gay/Lesbian Almanac* (1983), John D'Emilio's *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* (1983), Estelle B. Freedman's *The Lesbian Issue* (1985), Paula Gunn's *The Sacred Hoop* (1986), and Judith C. Brown's *Immodest Acts* (1986) among others all began to trace the GLBTQ past through the standard practices of historical research.⁸⁰ While these monographs received the widest attention, many had been predated by articles, and essays in feminist, Marxist, and social history journals well before the late 1980s including the works of Robert Padgug, Esther Newton, and Martha Vicinus.⁸¹ Early historiographic reflection on gay and lesbian history culminated in 1989 with *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, edited by Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey. Collectively, these books and essays constituted what Bravmann calls the "first wave" of GLBTQ history. Such terminology is suspect in light of the fact that many of these studies only became possible because of dutiful amateur, GLBTQ community historians and archivists who devoted hours to creating and preserving community histories in the decades before the academy decided such work was tolerable, if not acceptable.⁸² Even these histories had predecessors. But such demarcations are helpful in establishing new interests in gay historiography that began in the 1990s. While some of these new works by contemporary

⁸⁰ As Bérubé acknowledged before these publications, few of the early chroniclers of the GLBT past were trained historians. Rather, the work was conducted by "a grassroots movement that in the late 1970s set out to uncover the history of ordinary lesbians and gay men." See Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, x-xi.

⁸¹ For instance see Robert A. Padgug, "Sexuality Matters: On Conceptualizing Sexuality in History," *Radical History Review* 20 (Spring/Summer 1979): 3-23; Esther Newton, "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman," *Signs: The Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 9 (1984): 557-75; and Martha Vicinus, "Distance and Desire: English Boarding School Friendships," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 9 (1984): 600-22.

⁸² Escoffier, et al. "The Queer Issue," *Radical History Review*, 1.

scholars have continued near the lines of inquiry of earlier work, including such prominent publications as Allan Bérubé's *Coming Out Under Fire* (1990), Esther Newton's *Cherry Grove, Fire Island* (1993), George Chauncey's, *Gay New York* (1994), Kennedy and Davis' *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* (1993), other more recent trends in *queer historiography* have broken some of those bonds. As queer practice, these scholars have been concerned with "how 'queer' might point the way to methodologies that broaden the questions we ask of the lesbian and gay past."⁸³ Such queer work has pointed toward more complex rearticulations of the gay and lesbian identity, culture, geography, and history, Leslie Feinberg's *Transgender Warriors* (1996), John Howard's *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (1999), and E. Patrick Johnson's recent *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South* (2008) being three prominent examples.

A third contributing factor to the strategic turn was the "memory boom" beginning at the end of the twentieth century, spanning cultures and identities and revitalizing memory as a valuable rhetorical force for affecting public change. This broad, cultural appeal of the past (largely dated to the 1980s and early 90s) has been suggested for several reasons: the pervasive questioning of history and grand narratives, the turn of the millennium, the end of the Cold War and its attendant "end of history," among others. Countless authors in the academy have taken up the issue of memory while the "boom" has been signaled by countless other cultural signs: the expansion of national monuments and memorials, the culture wars, textbook debates, reparation payments, truth and reconciliation trials, speeches of national apology, memory tourism, and a wealth of "memory industries" among many others. Indeed, while this focus has been pervasive, it has also not been limited to academic and authoritarian undertakings.⁸⁴ Average people see the

⁸³ Escoffier, et al. "The Queer Issue," *Radical History Review*, 4.

⁸⁴ Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, introduction to *The Collective Memory Reader*, eds., Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy (New York: Oxford

memory boom reflected in the spread of genealogy, popular television shows that trace family histories, the increasing popularity of historical documentary, and new recording and event sharing technologies that allow us to preserve our local pasts more powerfully. As a result of the memory boom, Rosenfeld has argued: “memory became virtually inescapable in everyday life.”⁸⁵ Within this context, appeal to the past (and memory in particular) were not only more viable, but encouraged by the social milieu.

These three factors, when read in conjunction with the real and important needs of the HIV/AIDS crisis, clarify that recent work in queer public memory is not simply a new phenomenon, but a rapprochement — in a new form — of an older GLBTQ rhetoric. While the chapters that follow will begin the important work of shaping how we understand this strategic turn in queer public memory, three important caveats remain before we proceed.

First, it is important to note that, while my focus in the dissertation will be upon the shift to strategic rhetorics of GLBTQ history, this does not preclude the existence of other simultaneous acts of resistance, defiance, and struggle utilizing the gay and lesbian past. Indeed, my conception of power is one shared by those like Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari — a power that is not a single entity that contrary forces line up against, but rather a “manifold relation of power” that is infused throughout the social system simultaneously at various points. These many enactments of power have the ability not only to evolve and change but to “reterritorialize,” or compromise, what Deleuze and Guattari call “lines of flight” — temporary acts against power that offer moments of resistance and the potential for transformation.

University Press, 2011), 3-4. See also Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter, eds. *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 81-83.

⁸⁵ Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, “A Looming Crash or a Soft Landing? Forecasting the Future of the Memory ‘Industry,’” *Journal of Modern History* 81 (March 2009): 122-58.

However, inevitably these supposed acts of liberation are fleeting and become consumed back within the fold of power.⁸⁶ In view of such a conception of power, liberation *per se* is unlikely and a resistance to that power in hopes of transforming it (no matter how minutely) becomes the goal. In my view, the GLBTQ community (broadly defined) must be willing to engage the complex forms of heteronormative power at multiple points and in multiple ways. Thus, my focus on emerging and contemporary strategic rhetorics is an analysis of a *portion* of a larger struggle, not an effort to create a hierarchy of resistance or worldviews within the community itself.

A second point, which draws attention to the larger concerns of this project, is that, as strategic rhetorics, GLBTQ counterpublic memories are largely *not queer* in a theoretical sense. By this, I do not mean that they do not represent a wide swath of GLBTQ experiences (including people who may prefer the term queer). Similarly, they do not suggest some of the uses of “queer” that are represented within pioneering GLBTQ scholarship like those of James W. Chesebro, Sally Miller Gearhart, Joseph J. Hayes, Joseph A. DeVito, Fred Jandt, Karen Foss, James Darsey, Larry Gross, Dorothy Painter, and R. Jeffrey Ringer (among many others). These scholars (in diverse publications, conference proceedings, newsletters, and monographs like *Gayspeak* and *Queer Words, Queer Images*) presented for the first time in the communication discipline attention to the lives, desires, challenges, and violence done to gay and lesbian persons.⁸⁷ They laid out convincing cases for spaces of gay and lesbian identity, community, and

⁸⁶ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 93; See also Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), xiii. A good example of such power is “imperial racism” in Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 190-201.

⁸⁷ James W. Chesebro, ed. *Gayspeak: Gay Male and Lesbian Communication* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981) and R. Jeffery Ringer, ed., *Queer Words, Queer Images: Communication and the Construction of Homosexuality* (New York: New York University Press, 1994). In addition, a special edition on communication and same-sex desire was featured in the *Journal of Homosexuality* in 2003 that

subjectivity that were not assimilationist but that claimed a space for positive, life-affirming images of GLBTQ persons within a wider, often unfriendly, and frequently violent and discriminatory world. In this sense, this earlier scholarship was certainly queer. However, this work is less likely to be classified within the same theoretical lineage as what is contemporarily referred to by persons in the academy as “queer.”

Rather, by claiming these strategic memories are largely not queer, I am suggesting that they do not embrace to the fullest degree the radical deconstruction project of *queer theory*.⁸⁸ Queer theory emerged in the early 1990s out of the work of gay and lesbian, feminist, post-structuralist, and cultural studies as a theoretical position against “normalization.” At the heart of these theories is the belief that cultural forces of power continually seek to normalize human bodies, minds, and actions through discourse that reward acquiescence and discipline and make unintelligible those who do not. While in the past, such exclusions led some GLBTQ activists and thinkers to see inclusion into that system as the primary means towards individual and/or group liberation, queer theory holds that the subject position of the abnormal holds a valuable power that should not be given up. From these queer positions, the normalized center can be interrogated and disrupted, exploding the systemic binaries and definitions that frequently harm those on the margins. However, queer holds not only a destructive tendency towards the normal, but also a productive *telos* as imagined by Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner:

would later become *Queer Theory and Communication*. See also the forthcoming online archive of the journal *Alternative Communications* produced by the Caucus on Gay and Lesbian Concerns during the 80s and 90s at <http://www.ncaglbqtq.org>.

⁸⁸ The later text, *Queer Theory and Communication*, would fall more closely within this lineage. See Gust A. Yep, Karen Lovaas, and John P. Elia, eds., *Queer Theory and Communication: From Disciplining Queers to Queering the Discipline(s)* (Binghamton, NY: Harrington Points Press, 2003).

the queer project we imagine is not just to destabilize those average intimacies, not just to give access to the sentimentality of the couple for persons of the same sex, and definitely not to certify as properly private the personal lives of gays and lesbians. Rather it is to support forms of affective, erotic, and personal living that are public in the sense of accessible, available to memory, and sustained through collective activity.⁸⁹

However, “queer” orientations are not without their problems. As many scholars have suggested, the vigorous ascent of a queer orientation as simply against the norm can often lead to an apparent detachment from the exclusive concerns of gays and lesbians. In such a way, the real, lived concerns of gay men and lesbians that fueled queer theory’s emergence can be lost in an overly broad and at times reactionary use of the term. In addition, queer suffers from its eagerness to sometimes naively give over definitional power (among others) to the dominant culture it situates itself against. In doing so, the variations within that dominant culture become flattened, creating a false binary (us vs. them) which queers so urgently claim to seek to disrupt, even as they tacitly reproduce and depend upon it for their public, rhetorical posture. Queer has also proved problematic in regards to some transgender persons. The queer belief in the utter discursivity (and therefore alterability) of identity categories is in many ways antithetical to certain transgender theoretical and social impulses that are heavily invested in a complete

⁸⁹ Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, “Sex in Public,” *Critical Inquiry* 24 (Winter 1998): 547-66.

transition to stable identities.⁹⁰ At the same time, lesbians who have worked for decades to raise consciousness about the striking ways gender can amplify the challenges, violence, and material costs of the same-sex experience have often abrasively felt the supposedly gender-neutral presumption of “queer.”

Such concerns are present not only broadly within gay and lesbian studies, but within debates between gay and lesbian historians and queer historians. This at times acrimonious debate has frequently pitted earlier GLBTQ scholars against a new generation of historians drawn to the prospects of queer theory. So potent have such debates been that the famous early GLBTQ historian Henry Abelove claimed that many of his more queer theory-oriented students claimed that the “lesbian and gay histories I assign are not their history.”⁹¹ In doing so, queer historians have been accused (in some cases rightly so) of acting condescending, if not naively, towards earlier GLBTQ histories and historians. Criticizing such work, Lisa Duggan writes:

⁹⁰ David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 64. See also Lester C. Olson, “Traumatic Styles Public Address: Audre Lorde’s Discourse as Exemplar,” in *Queering Public Address: Sexualities in American Historical Discourse*, ed. Charles E. Morris, III (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 274-77, and Jay Prosser, *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 27-8.

⁹¹ Henry Abelove, “The Queering of Lesbian/Gay History,” *Radical History Review* 62 (Summer 1995): 54.

When earlier, ghettoized work by lesbian and gay scholars goes unacknowledged or is dismissed with an implied sneer, the hierarchy that has endowed the academic author with greater institutional resources and cultural privilege is reinforced. How radical! How subversive and transformative!⁹²

However, Duggan's comments are not directed at the younger generation of queer historians alone. She calls to the mat those earlier GLBTQ historians who fail to engage queer history's critical questions, which often then "hinder[s] our ability to analyze the ideological construction of 'documents,' and hide the political narratives underpinning our own texts." She continues:

Until lesbian and gay historians engage the critical implications of queer theory — as well as race theory, feminist theory, and emerging theoretical work on nationalism and imperialism — their productions will constitute a political and intellectual backwater (a backwater within queer studies, and within intellectual life more broadly).⁹³

⁹² Lisa Duggan, "The Discipline Problem: Queer Theory Meets Lesbian and Gay History," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 2 (1995): 181.

⁹³ Duggan, "The Discipline Problem," 182.

In sum, Duggan calls for “two-sided” engagement by gay and lesbian and queer historians to create better work and better understanding of the processes that produce the GLBTQ past.⁹⁴

It is within both this affirmative and negative read of queer ways of living and their conflicts between queer/gay and lesbian representations of history that these issues become a key part of this dissertation project. While I have centered within the discussion and case studies so far *GLBTQ* memory strategies and how they engage the heterosexual public sphere, the reaction to these GLBTQ memories by *queer* memory-makers is often intensely felt and visible. This is particularly interesting because I suggest that acrimonious debates within the expert sphere of GLQ historians described above appears to have oscillated to the wider GLBTQ public sphere. For instance, such a clash can be seen within one of the main texts in chapter two, the Alexander Wood statue. As much as this statue was contentious between heterosexuals and homosexuals, it was equally contentious within the community itself between those taking a traditional historical perspective and those seeking to queer Wood’s historical representations. Such conflicts are present in most of the texts I will examine in this dissertation. While I am not interested in choosing a side between either queer or gay and lesbian public historians, I am highly interested in how the deployment of certain strategic rhetorics generates such debates and the implications of such debates within public understandings of GLBTQ identity.

Simultaneously, the conflict between queer and gay and lesbian representations is important to this project because they are not simple, inconsequential background activities. As I have argued, while some gays and lesbians have increasingly taken up the strategic *accoutrement* in their public address, others who identify as queer have found the tactical perspectives of the early GLBTQ movements to be valuable. As will become clear in the chapters that follow, it is in

⁹⁴ Duggan, “The Discipline Problem,” 187.

using these tactical *queer* rhetorics against not the heterosexual public alone, but also against strategic GLBTQ memories that queer memory making has found success.⁹⁵ Indeed, queer challenges to GLBTQ memories have resulted in both camp readings of such commemorations that fail to be taken seriously (become mis-used for *metistic* purposes) and has halted or altered the way in which GLBTQ memories proceed. As such, *queer counterpublic memories often function as tactical rhetorics that contest and shape whether and how GLBTQ counterpublics speak to heterosexual audiences, becoming a formative part of their understanding*. Thus, while the focus of this project will be upon GLBTQ counterpublic memories and how they engage the heterosexual public sphere from a strategic position, the juxtaposition of these memories with queer counterpublic memories that challenge the orthodoxies of “queer fictions of the past” and disrupt their rhetorical appeals will be a strong secondary concern that permeates the dissertation.

Taken together, in this project, I will examine the rhetoric of the GLBTQ past that seeks to craft and defend an enduring space for GLBTQ people within the heteronormative public sphere and against the constraint and challenges brought forth by tactical queer counterpublic memories. It is strategic in that it is not responding to power, but seeking to harness it of its own accord. It is strategic in that it is not waylaid in a foreign land, but stands guard at the borders of its own space. It is strategic in that it is not free-floating through time, but firmly constructed from the past, rooted in the present, and with an eye towards the future.

⁹⁵ See also Thomas R. Dunn, “Remembering Matthew Shepard: Violence, Identity, and Queer Counterpublic Memories,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13 (2010): 611-51.

1.5 RELEVANCE OF TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC MEMORIES

Amid the veritable explosion of research on both public memory and GLBTQ topics during the last ten years, the relevance of this topic is important to ascertain. Indeed, I argue this project will have relevance for both rhetoric and memory studies generally and GLBTQ memories, in particular.

This project is highly relevant for those with a particular interest in GLBTQ issues for several reasons. First, as indicated earlier, a book-length analysis of GLBTQ memorial practices aimed at the heterosexual public in particular has not yet been undertaken. Other than the 2009 publication of *Queering Public Address*, even when GLBTQ memorial work has been examined, it has rarely been undertaken through the rhetorical perspective. As monuments continue to be built, legislation passed, and histories recorded, the rhetorical value (beyond the historical value alone) of these strategies should be examined.

Second, recent work on the queer past has highlighted the traumatic nature of the GLBTQ pasts. I do not question the importance of this work: GLBTQ pasts are frequently the result of isolated youths, closets, violence, bullying, ignorance, absences, memory voids, and much more. Such issues need to be grappled with and the work of scholars like Ann Cvetkovich, Heather Love, Christopher Nealon, and others do so admirably. Nonetheless, I believe there is also a space in the GLBTQ past where GLBTQ person have not just embraced illusions or suffered in silence but have also acted with agency (rhetorically) to affect the world around them. In doing so, I hope to recuperate the GLBTQ pasts as a more nuanced space — a space wherein GLBTQ persons might be able to affirm the value of their lives for themselves and others and to extend their gaze beyond simply survival to a greater degree of security, happiness, and agency.

To do so requires the examination of many new GLBTQ pasts in this text that have not received extended attention. This, in and of itself, is of value as a queer project.

Third, this project will highlight clearly that there is no single, unitary GLBTQ past and, in fact, there is frequently never a single, monolithic GLBTQ identity. Our community, like most others, is a complex, diverse, and opinionated mix of voices, issues, and priorities — all of which get frequently overlooked in efforts to deal with heteronormativity and homo/transphobia. I, for one, value this clash — not because it pulls us apart, but because it gives liveliness and critical thought to our community in how we proceed. A key way of interfacing with these diverse experiences of the past is the concept of *intersectionality*. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, the study of intersectionality asks critics to direct attention to the multiple ways in which the diverse, social experiences of identity (race, class gender, sexuality, etc.) interact with each other — often simultaneously — to produce systemic inequalities that are greater than those produced by any single dimension of identity on its own.⁹⁶ Because intersectionality is often invisible, little attention is given to how people and communities share related oppressions, face lose-lose situations and double binds, and are regularly marginalized by multiple socio-cultural forces simultaneously. As such, the tools of dominant culture are strengthened, increasing opportunities for subordination and depleting opportunities for resistance. However, when intersectionality is recognized, critics, scholars, and activists are better able to consider how to resist oppression, communicate across difference, and build coalitions for shared action.⁹⁷ Ignoring intersectionality has often been a key problem in telling and reclaiming the history and

⁹⁶ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991): 1241-299.

⁹⁷ For an excellent rhetorical analysis of Audre Lorde’s efforts to grapple with overlapping differences, see Lester C. Olson, “On the Margins of Rhetoric: Audre Lorde Transforming Silence into Language and Action,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1997): 49-70.

memory of the GLBTQ past and contributing to the false impression of a monolithic GLBTQ past. By directing attention to intersectionality in the case studies of this dissertation, this project continually finds value in pointing, not to unity in the community, but the act(s) of constructing the image of community, how they fail or succeed, and how they are contested for a more representative historical imagination.

Fourth, this project takes as a central concern the challenge posed by Dana Cloud that more often than not, arguments about the representation of GLBTQ pasts have little to say about the material world we inhabit now.⁹⁸ The contest between representation and materiality is an important one — both in contemporary GLBTQ politics and academic debates about the viability of the kind of work done here. I argue forcefully in this project that our pasts are not simple and/or simply representations but rhetorics with material effect that cannot and should not be overlooked.

Finally, in that vein, this dissertation builds upon Bravmann's work, reminding us that the image of the GLBTQ past we project backwards has ongoing effects for the image of ourselves we see today. By questioning these historical representations, we learn to question how we define ourselves as GLBTQ community in the twenty-first century.

At the same time, I believe this dissertation will have wide appeal for audiences beyond those interested solely in GLBTQ politics, rhetorics, and the past. Indeed, this project has much to say about the study of public memory and "history" broadly. In particular, I believe this project can question disciplinary and transdisciplinary work that is often attenuated far too frequently upon how the past can be burdensome and marginalizing in its public deployments. Rather, I hope this project will make clear that the past is a rhetorical resource (both for scholars

⁹⁸ Dana L. Cloud, "The First Lady's Privates: Queering Eleanor Roosevelt for Public Address Studies," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 23-44.

and activists) that can be turned to the benefit of those on the margins as much as against them. On this point, I push the envelope on arguments by early GLBTQ historians who suggest that minority histories like these are important for rounding out and making more equitable the data about the past. Instead, I see these histories as invasive, persuasive, and domineering in ways that I will elaborate later. As a case study of a particular marginalized community, I also hope that the strategies and tactics detailed within will point both toward useful forms of rhetorical resistance as well as challenges posed by such pursuits, so that other similarly situated communities and people might find resources worthy of replication.

This project also functions to expand the notion of tactical and strategic rhetorics as laid out by Nakayama and Krizek. These authors do excellent work in describing how rhetoric can function strategically to make the center invisible (i.e., whiteness). However, they speak little to elaborate how tactical rhetorics call those invisible centers into question. They also do not consider how strategic rhetorics might be used in life-affirming ways by those under duress to provide bulwarks against and temporary reprieves from the perpetual onslaught of the outside world. Such elaboration of these rhetorics and their deployment is important for understanding the everyday discourses of power. I hope this dissertation in particular will aid in arguing that tactical and strategic rhetorics are not static, but that marginalized communities can move from one toward the other (and back again) in the course of their social movements. Following their trails as rhetoricians also allows us to explore how the everyday practices of life continue to speak to the rhetorical aspects of the world around us.

While additional benefits to the scholar not interested in the GLBTQ pasts exclusively will emerge in the pages that follow, the interventions described above make a strong case for the moment of why such a project is worthwhile.

1.6 PREVIEW OF CHAPTERS

David Zarefsky reminds us, in writing his account of how rhetoricians can engage history, that:

historical scholarship is an interaction between the scholar and the historical record. Necessarily, then, it is interpretive. Regarding the selection of some historical materials and not others, it is well to remember Burke's dictum that a reflection of reality is also a selection and a deflection.⁹⁹

Similarly, the chapters that constitute this dissertation are *selections* of only a few of the many examples that might be of value. By highlighting these examples, I am *reflecting* a particular perspective on these GLBTQ historical strategies that others may wish to add to or detract from. I welcome them to do so. However, in choosing the objects that make up the chapters described below — with foci on key case studies that speak across the strategies I am examining — I have attempted to represent a diversity of forms, locations, and intersectional identities that represent an image of contemporary GLBTQ community and strategic rhetorical practice as widely as possible without sacrificing the most interesting of available options.

This dissertation consists of six chapters (including this chapter) that serve to orient the reader to the issues of this project and to establish the parameters for a larger consideration of strategic queer memory practice. The five chapters that follow feature several distinct case

⁹⁹ Zarefsky, "Four Senses of Rhetorical History," in Turner, *Doing Rhetorical History*, 20-21.

studies and a concluding chapter that offers some final thoughts about the opportunities, challenges, and future of queer public memory.

The first of several case studies to be examined will be *Chapter Two: “Remembering ‘A Great Fag.’* This chapter analyzes the 2005 statue to Toronto’s “Gay Pioneer,” Alexander Wood and examines the distinctive (and historic) rhetorical form of the GLBTQ public monument. In the course of this chapter, I point to four issues of concern for strategic rhetorics of GLBTQ pasts. First, what is gained by the occupation of the traditional statuary form in remembering GLBTQ lives? Second, how does one represent in stone an often complex, transitory, and unstable notion like sexuality? Third, how do gay historical representations in public space shape heterosexual understandings of GLBTQ lives? Finally, how do queer tactical rhetorics engage with these statues and constitute different notions of the queer past? Simultaneously, this chapter also addresses how the statues mark materially and, indeed, “eternally” gay space in the face of homophobia, gentrification, violence, urban development, hyper-tourism, and the disintegration of the gay ghetto.

The second case study, detailed in *Chapter Three: “Remembering Matthew Shepard,”* examines the occupation of queer memory within the strategic confines of a counterpublic. Chapter Three traces how the memory of Matthew Shepard became a key rhetorical intervention on the part of gays and lesbians to influence heterosexual interpretations of the gay and lesbian community. The chapter proceeds in two parts to analyze Shepard’s deployment among various publics and counterpublics to do rhetorical work. Part one traces how Shepard’s memory in the queer counterpublic rearticulates anti-GLBTQ violence and limits rhetorics of scapegoating to draw attention to the structural violence imposed on GLBTQ persons by heteronormative culture’s sanction. Part two, follows two cases in which members of the GLBTQ community

itself clash over how Shepard's memory should inform GLBTQ identity — as a moment of queer unity or a failure of diversity and as a moment of identification between heterosexual and homosexual cultures or rather an instant of incommensurability that reminds queers of how far they still have to go. This chapter concludes by arguing for a more complex notion of actually existing GLBTQ memory practice and demonstrates the utility of strategic rhetorical memories in creating political change.

Chapter Four: Imagining GLBTQ Americans follows the rhetoric and resultant public controversy in the three decade struggle to represent gays and lesbians within yet another highly traditional medium of heteronormative history-writing: primary and secondary textbooks and curriculum. As substantial scholarship has shown, textbooks are among the most pervasive form by which children are interpolated into the ideological systems of their cultures. Worldwide and throughout the twentieth century, textbooks have stood as a cultural and political marker for the expression of identity change, nationalism, performances of citizenship, etc. This chapter focuses on California as a case study, roughly between the years 1985 and 2010. In it, I will examine efforts by various GLBT (Q is absent in their discourse) persons and organizations (BANGLE, GLAAD/San Francisco, Project 21, Equality California) to teach GLBT history to all our children. The California example is particularly interesting in that the California textbook market is the nation's largest. Thus, changes within Californian standards frequently reverberate throughout the textbooks across the country. As such, the targeting and shaping of textbooks in California is a rhetorical choice that seeks to maximize its effects nationwide. The chapter traces the history of this work, focusing on two of the most prominent efforts to effect these representational reforms, and analyzes both the productive, rhetorical choices concerning who

serves as historic examples of “gay and lesbian Americans” and the troublesome effects of these choices produced by heteronormative double-binds and damaging strategic forgetting(s).

Chapter Five: “Strategizing a Queer (After) Life” will shift focus away from the present and past to how gays and lesbians have directed their energies to being remembered queerly in the future. The chapter will assess how the relatively mundane processes of an everyday individual’s death are deeply inscribed within heteronormativity. As such, it is highly likely that a person who lived a profoundly out and proud life may be constituted as straight by the technologies of death. The chapter will also examine several strategies by which gays and lesbians have sought to maintain a public, gay legacy after their death, primarily focused upon the performance and representation of GLBTQ identities within “gravespaces.” Two gravescape monuments are highlighted and analyzed. In 1986, Sgt. Leonard Matlovich, one of the first gay men to challenge publicly his discharge from the US military because of his sexuality, had inscribed on his gravestone: “When I was in the military, they gave me a medal for killing two men and a discharge for loving one.” In 2004, artist and lesbian Patricia Cronin sculpted *Memorial to a Marriage* as a grave marker for herself and her longtime partner. It is intended to serve as a permanent, visible signifier of same-sex desire after their deaths. By documenting these markers and investigating their archives, this project hopes to better understand such strategies as resistive rhetorics.

Finally, in *Chapter 6: In (Strategic) Memory’s Wake*, I conclude this project with some final thoughts on the challenge of queer public memory. Using musings on George Segal’s *Gay Liberation* statue(s) as an exemplary text, I sketch out in a synthetic way what these case studies suggest about the opportunities and problems of embracing a strategic turn in the queer past. I

end this chapter (and this dissertation) with some characterizations of how queer public memory can be done better to form a more thoughtful queer future.

2.0 REMEMBERING “A GREAT FAG”¹⁰⁰

2.1 VISUALIZING PUBLIC MEMORY AND GAY SPACE

In the summer of 2005, a prominent statue with a wry smile, historic dress, and a “gay flair” was unveiled for the first time in the Church Wellesley neighborhood of Toronto (fig. 1).¹⁰¹ The more than three hundred people in attendance would be the first to see the monument to Canada’s “gay pioneer,” Alexander Wood, a Scottish immigrant to the small town of York (present-day Toronto) in 1797. A man of means at the age of twenty-five, Wood quickly became engaged in the life of his new home as he rose to the position of magistrate in 1800. By most accounts, Wood excelled in his position until a scandalous incident in 1810 that would forever link the name “Wood” with “molly” (a derogatory term for gay throughout the period) in Upper

¹⁰⁰ A quote by Dennis O’Connor reported in Camille Roy, “Monument to ‘A Great Fag,’” *Toronto Star*, June 26, 2005, A3.

¹⁰¹ No image of Wood has survived other than a reproduction of a Georgian silhouette. Thus, Wood’s appearance is largely derived from the research and impressions of artist, Del Newbigging: “I have worked from the silhouette and researched the period for clothing styles and also added a gay flair which I am convinced he would have had.” “Statue Honouring Alexander Wood Unveiled in Toronto’s Gay Village,” *Xtra*, June 1, 2005, http://www.xtra.ca/public/National/Statue_honouring_Alexander_Wood_unveiled_in_Torontos_gay_village-582.aspx (accessed February 26, 2011).

Canada.¹⁰² During his time as magistrate, a local woman reported to Wood that she was raped. Distraught, the woman had difficulty describing her assailant; however, she believed a scratch she inflicted on his genitalia in the course of the attack could identify the perpetrator. As a dutiful enforcer of public safety, Wood leapt into action. Calling before him several local men of the right age, Wood ordered them to face forward and drop trou. He carefully inspected the genitalia of each man himself determined to seek justice for the victim and return order to fair York.¹⁰³

Or so we might like to think. Shortly after the inspection, the residents of York began to grumble. The examination had revealed no scratched member and no suspect had been found. Indeed, there were whispers the woman had begun to rescind aspects of her story. There were even rumors that there had been no woman at all. To this day, the facts remain unclear. Nonetheless, the magistrate was engulfed by fierce denunciations from all corners of colonial life. After months of personal anguish, the scandal forced Wood to flee not only York, but also the continent, seeking refuge in his native Scotland.¹⁰⁴

This story of Wood and his monument marks the beginning of perhaps the oddest effort to remember a queer life within the public sphere. Like many historical figures, Wood's sexuality is ambiguous at best.¹⁰⁵ The nature of the scandal, his life-long bachelor status, and his flamboyant character suggested to onlookers, both his contemporaries and his recent admirers, that he might be gay. Certainly, he was accused of being a "molly" on the street and

¹⁰² Norton also claims that "molly" was the word used by most gay men to refer to one another in England during the same time period. See Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England, 1700-1830* (London: GMP Publisher, 1992), 9 and *The Myth of the Modern Homosexual*, 85.

¹⁰³ *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, s.v. "Wood, Alexander" (by Edith G. Firth), <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?BioId=37856> (accessed February 26, 2011).

¹⁰⁴ *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, s.v. "Wood, Alexander."

¹⁰⁵ For more on the rhetoric of historical figures and ambiguous sexuality, see Charles E. Morris III, "Pink Herring and the Fourth Persona: J. Edgar Hoover's Sex Crime Panic," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 228-230.



Figure 1. East-facing view of the Alexander Wood statue. Photograph by author.

rumors about his sexuality swirled in the colonial press.¹⁰⁶ However, there was and is no convincing evidence one way or the other. Such uncertainties have made efforts to remember gay lives difficult. Nonetheless, a queer “*turn toward* memory” has accelerated in recent years making the place of queers in and out of the public spaces of the past an issue for activists, historians, and other scholars alike.¹⁰⁷ Cross-disciplinary research into queer public memory and history has increased while the merits of such memories have only begun to be debated.¹⁰⁸ Yet while this important scholarship has assessed queer public memory in one form or another, little work has been done on the material and visual elements that constitute these memory projects. This may be surprising since scholars have noted how queers have found in spaces, sites, and visual representations tactical and inventional resources for identity-formation, community, and resistance, often situated in modern and historical cityscapes.¹⁰⁹ In addition, these kinds of

¹⁰⁶ Archival evidence suggests that Wood never married and had no children. No record of a romantic relationship exists in his papers. Interestingly, Wood’s papers are largely absent for the year 1810. Alexander Wood Papers and Letterbooks, Special Collections, Toronto Reference Library, Toronto, ON. After the scandal, Wood was reportedly harassed in the street and his business suffered. Later in his life, Chief Justice William Dummer Powell publicly aired the allegations against Wood in refusing his appointment to a civic post. Wood sued Powell for damages and won. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, s.v. “Wood, Alexander.” In 1838, a “satirical broadsheet” notoriously announced the “wedding” of Wood to a male colleague as a public attack on his character. See Gerald Keith, “Alexander Wood: A Queer Tale of Early Toronto,” *Sightlines*, 1993, 24.

¹⁰⁷ This characterization of a queer “*turn toward* memory” is derived from Morris, “My Old Kentucky Homo,” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95, (italics original). See also Larry Kramer, “Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow,” *The Advocate*, March 30, 1999, 67.

¹⁰⁸ Excellent examples of such work include Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*; Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*; Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996); David M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Morris, “My Old Kentucky Homo,” in *Queering Public Address*, 93-120; and Nealon, *Foundlings*. Critical accounts of contemporary queer memory practices can be seen in Cloud, “The First Lady’s Privates,” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 23-44; Judith Halberstam, “Shame and White Gay Masculinity,” *Social Text* 23 (2005): 219-33; Patrick Moore, *Beyond Shame: Reclaiming the Abandoned History of Radical Gay Sexuality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁹ While memory and the visual take priority in this essay, the politics of “queer space” — “place-making practices” that produce new understandings of space in relation to queer publics — is another important aspect of the Wood statue. See Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place*, 6. Others

material memories in the form of monuments and statues have historically been the preferred means by which official community memories have been enshrined.¹¹⁰ Indeed, as I will show, it can be argued that Wood's statue — and the plaques that encircle its base — constitutes an official memory sanctioned within both the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer (GLBTQ) and heterosexual community. Thus, the Wood statue provides ample means for engaging a heretofore-unaddressed element of queer public memory scholarship in its material, visual, and official manifestations (one of only a few publicly known memory sites to label their subjects as queer).

Attention to the Wood statue's material rhetoric simultaneously provides an opportunity to detail further the role materiality plays in queer public memory more generally. Constrained by heteronormative forces and erased by historical arbiters, queers have often relied upon the most ephemeral forms of memory — like gesture, performance, and intergenerational

scholars have described queer space in other ways that might be considered within an analysis of the statue. Some scholars have compiled urban histories of GLBTQ lives while others have examined more theoretical elements of queers and the urban experience. These include conceptualizing “the closet” in various geographies, examining queer walking practices, and studying the dynamics of gay male cruising in cities. Also of interest is the connection between time, space, and memory. While I cannot delve into these perspectives here, the relevance of space in this case is apparent. See Julie Abraham, *Metropolitan Lovers: The Homosexuality of Cities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); David Higgs, ed., *Queer Sites: Gay Urban Histories Since 1600* (New York: Routledge, 1999); James McCourt, *Queer Street: The Rise and Fall of American Culture, 1947-1985* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004); Michael P. Brown, *Closet Space: Geographies of Metaphor from the Body to the Globe* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Dianne Chisholm, *Queer Constellations: Subcultural Space in the Wake of the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Mark W. Turner, *Backward Glances: Cruising the Queer Streets of New York and London* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003); Christopher Castiglia, “Sex Panics, Sex Publics, Sex Memories,” *boundary 2* 27 (2000): 149-75. See also Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and Yolanda Retter, *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1997).

¹¹⁰ See James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 2-4. For more on official memories, see Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 13-14.

storytelling — to maintain their shared pasts.¹¹¹ While many of these memory rhetorics have important material qualities, rarely have queers been afforded the means to enshrine their memories in material forms as enduring as monuments and commemorative sites. Thus, highly material memory projects like the Wood statue provide substantial opportunities for queers to disrupt the forgetting and erasure that has so contributed to GLBTQ marginalization. In this way, the statue can be characterized as a *strategic memory*. Yet, as this essay will demonstrate, the inclusion of such rhetorics into the queer memory repertoire simultaneously produces unintended consequences for how historical and contemporary GLBTQ identity is conceptualized. How gay and lesbian, queer, and heterosexual audiences respond to these consequences is a core concern of this chapter and will suggest important implications for queer public memory moving forward.

While the Wood statue raises broad concerns about materiality in the era of queer memorialization, it also serves as a dynamic example of how gay space within the city can be created and destroyed through various discursive, visual, and material readings of public memories. In this essay, I also argue that the Alexander Wood statue represents a central text for interpreting the meaning of gay space in Toronto. Despite suggestions to the contrary, the urban environment has not always been friendly to those in search of same-sex desire. While the fruitful work of George Chauncey, Allan Bérubé, Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis, and others have illuminated the possibilities for queer lives in the city, many cities across the globe, including Toronto, have a history of identifying and eradicating gay space.¹¹² As such, the

¹¹¹ José Esteban Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts,” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8.2 (1996): 5-7 and *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 65-67.

¹¹² Chauncey, *Gay New York*; Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*; Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993). For examinations of curbing queer space in a variety of cities, see Robert W. Bailey,

creation of gay spaces in cities is better thought of as an evolutionary process full of strife and political/cultural activism. Toronto's queer community has been waging such a battle for decades. From the shutting of lesbian bars to the infamous 1981 Bathhouse Raids, Toronto is an example of the dynamic tensions between expanding and shrinking queer sites. On the streets of Toronto, according to John Grube, "change did not happen overnight, nor were gains won without prolonged struggles that still continue." Instead, Grube suggests the GLBTQ community has waged a battle away from a hidden space of homosexual desire toward a "'democratic' gay public space." By "democratic," Grube names a process of spatial negotiation wherein GLBTQ people (primarily gay men) carve out for themselves geographies often taken for granted by the heterosexual community. The key characteristics of these spaces for Grube are three fold. First, unlike closeted spaces, gay democratic space makes GLBTQ identities visible, both to heterosexual and homosexual audiences alike. Second, gay democratic spaces promote a form of public sexuality (distinct from identity) where same-sex desire can be out in the open rather than hidden within veiled, everyday urban activities. Finally, gay democratic space is fostered when members of the GLBTQ community debate openly and frankly about the rules, organization, and structures of that space. This community dialogue is perhaps the key factor in naming these spaces "democratic." It is within these spaces that a new kind of GLBTQ community is formed.¹¹³

Gay Politics, Urban Politics: Identity and Economics in the Urban Setting (New York: Columbia University, 1999), 249-80; David Higgs, ed., *Queer Sites*; and Ingram et al., *Queers in Space*.

¹¹³ Grube generally conceptualizing these "democratic" spaces as primarily male spaces. In certain ways that will become clear in this analysis, the Wood statue is also largely representative of men and gay male space, though critiques of that conception leave open a wider range of identarian possibilities. John Grube, "No More Shit: The Struggle for Democratic Gay Space in Toronto," in Ingram et al., *Queers in Space*, 128-29.

However, Grube's perspective is only one of many possible ways to understand gay space in Toronto. While many in the GLBTQ community have worked to craft spaces that confer stability to gay sites (the Wood statue being a clear example), others from across the cultural and political spectrum have challenged this stability. As *tactical memory rhetorics*, these others regularly draw upon the statue itself to construct their meaning, subverting its intended message for their own (divergent) purposes. Two of these others include cultural traditionalists, who have continued to minimize and destroy gay space, and queer radicals, who seek to destabilize the meaning of all space. By examining not just the rhetorical messages crafted to express the public memory of Alexander Wood, but also the countermemory readings and performances of cultural traditionalist and queer radicals, the meaning of gay space in Toronto is opened up to diverse visual, cultural, and political interpretations.¹¹⁴ While none of these readings are mutually exclusive or available only to those who inhabit particular identity categories, the contest between these groups over the meaning of the statue and similar spaces throughout the city are central to understanding the public memory of Alexander Wood.

To tackle this rather complex and multivocal text, I will analyze the statue by performing three different ways of understanding it. By performing these positions, I will suggest ways of reading the Wood statue that draw upon and inform preexisting ideas of queer representation and public space. Key to this approach to studying queer public memory is Leah Ceccarelli's description of polysemy — “the existence of plural but finite denotational meanings for a single text.”¹¹⁵ As a marginalized community, GLBTQ memories have long been devalued and erased

¹¹⁴ Because of his extended and substantive use of the term, I use Castiglia's spelling of “countermemory” throughout this essay rather than Foucault's “counter-memory.” Foucault, by comparison, uses the term sparingly in his work.

¹¹⁵ Leah Ceccarelli, “Polysemy: Multiple Meanings in Rhetorical Criticism,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84 (1998): 409.

in dominant culture's reliance upon limited, heteronormative historical narratives.¹¹⁶ Monosemic approaches to criticism that privilege the rhetor can be complicit in this erasure by ignoring the resistive, creative, and tongue-in-cheek queer voices that permeate some texts below the surface. By embracing a polysemic analysis of the Wood statue in this essay, a constellation of readings will come to the fore, allowing the complexity of the text and its nuanced interactions among different audiences to emerge. In addition, I will supplement these readings with discourse about the statue in local newspapers and online material that will contextualize both what this statue was designed to do as well as its reception by those who interact with it. By doing so, I will examine the diverse meanings of the Wood statue in different interpretive communities by conducting a "close reading of receptional fragments in conjunction with a close reading of the text."¹¹⁷

To that end, I will begin by discussing how public memories are visually and materially contested. Next, I will perform three major ways of visualizing the statue: the *official democratic memory*, which remembers Wood as a valuable contributor to Canadian community; the *traditionalist countermemory*, which remembers Wood as a criminal who abused his authority and should be shielded from public view; and the *camp countermemory*, which remembers Wood as a camp figure both insufficient to represent contemporary identities and capable of being altered for more queer purposes. I will conclude this essay with some insights on how these readings and their interactions in the public sphere implicate new concerns in thinking about how memories are viewed and what constitutes queer public memory.

¹¹⁶ Muñoz, "Ephemera as Evidence," 5-6.

¹¹⁷ Ceccarelli, "Polysemy," 410.

2.2 CONTESTING MEMORY THROUGH POLYSEMIC VIEWING

At its core, the statue of Alexander Wood is a contested public memory made material and visual. When public memories are not just discursive but visual or material in nature, the ways in which the creator and receiver interact with these sites are critical to their contestation. Indeed, Carole Blair and Neil Michel have argued the viewing practices of diverse kinds of audiences are just as important in understanding the message that is conveyed through a memory site as what is made visible/invisible.¹¹⁸ In addition, Blair has demonstrated that contemporary commemorative sites in particular rely on materiality as well as symbolism in order to shape their memorial rhetoric.¹¹⁹ Thus, the visual, material, *and* discursive enactments of the Wood statue's rhetoric are of great concern. For instance, how one approaches the statue and in what order its components are consumed inform the meaning that is generated. How one views the statue, either through an extended "gaze" or a series of "looks," contributes to this understanding.¹²⁰ The statue's durability, reproducibility, tactile effect on people, and the way it interacts with

¹¹⁸ Carole Blair and Neil Michel argue that conventional analyses of public memory texts by rhetorical critics often suggest only one possible reading of a text. Instead, Blair and Michel suggest "critics be attentive to different readings practices, their conditions, and their contexts." They add: "We believe critics — including rhetorical critics — ought to be concerned with reception, not exclusively the reception of texts by professionally trained academic critics, but the readings, reactions, and responses of others as well." See Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "Commemorating in the Theme Park Zone: Reading the Astronauts Memorial," in *At the Intersection: Cultural Studies and Rhetorical Studies*, ed. Thomas Rosteck (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 70. Similar assessments have been made about other visual and material commemorations in Lester C. Olson, "Benjamin Franklin's Commemorative Medal *Libertas Americana*: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76 (1990): 41-2.

¹¹⁹ Carole Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality," in *Rhetorical Bodies*, eds. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 50.

¹²⁰ According to Laura Mulvey, creating a subject for the purposes of focusing one's gaze can reveal deep understandings of how that subject is positioned (often as object) within society. See Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16 (1975): 6-18.

other sites in Toronto and beyond also says much about the statue's meaning.¹²¹ In addition, the "image vernacular" which organizes how viewing practices are structured among various communities at different historical moments will be central to understanding how the statue is received by various audiences.¹²² Taken together with the representational and aesthetic elements, the various ways in which the Wood statue can be read provides fertile ground for rhetorical analysis.¹²³

To understand the Alexander Wood statue and its function in relation to gay space(s) in Toronto, it becomes incumbent to recognize both the official and resistive readings that are made possible in the statue and that collectively inform its meaning(s). While the meanings of this statue are as diverse as those who gaze upon it, three primary viewing positions emerge: the official democratic visualization, the traditionalist counter-visualization, and the camp counter-visualization. Within each, Wood's memory becomes "seen" in different ways, making his meaning highly contested with profound effects on the possibilities for gay space in Toronto.

2.3 VISUALIZING THE OFFICIAL DEMOCRATIC MEMORY

The first way of viewing the Wood statue is through what I call the official democratic frame. The term "official" designates that the meaning derived from this viewing position is the

¹²¹ Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 37-45.

¹²² Cara A. Finnegan, "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture," in *Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture*, eds. Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 62.

¹²³ In addition, the kinds of images featured (whether denotative, connotative, or subjunctive), which allow viewers to freeze meaning in time, signal greater meaning, or reconsider what could be, all contribute to how memory is made visible. See Barbie Zelizer, "The Voice of the Visual in Memory," in Phillips, *Framing Public Memory*, 158-60.

meaning intended not only by Wood's memory makers, but also by the institutional forces within Toronto that sanctioned its creation.¹²⁴ Simultaneously, "democratic" in this case suggests a commemorative designation akin to Grube's understanding of democratic gay space: one that makes gays visible, highlights public same-sex desire, and relies on community deliberation.¹²⁵ Collectively, both the official and democratic dimensions of this viewing position suggest a very particular way Wood should be understood within public memory.

This understanding relies heavily on the fact that Alexander Wood is remembered in the form of a commemorative site. Wood is not the first queer to be remembered in stone. Rather, the statue is part of a larger effort in recent decades to make the GLBTQ past more visible and material through public commemorative practices: a period of queer monumentality. Related to both academic and community-based history projects, many of these memorials were created in reaction to the considerable losses of GLBTQ lives and culture as a result of HIV/AIDS, most notably the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt.¹²⁶ While this important effort has received the most scholarly and public attention, other projects have attended to additional aspects of the GLBTQ past.¹²⁷ Increasingly, Holocaust memorials, like the 1987 *Homomonument* in Amsterdam and the 2008 *Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime* in Berlin, have recognized the violence, imprisonment, and systematic murder perpetrated against those

¹²⁴ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 13-14, 16.

¹²⁵ Grube, "No More Shit," in Ingram, et al., *Queers in Space*, 128-29.

¹²⁶ Morris, "My Old Kentucky Homo," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95.

¹²⁷ Twenty years of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt has produced extensive commentary and scholarship. Some prominent contributions from that research helpful in developing this essay includes Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: the Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembrance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Peter S. Hawkins, "Naming Names: The Art of Memory and the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (1993): 752-79; and Charles E. Morris III, ed., "20th Anniversary of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt," Special issue, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10 (2007).

believed to be gay or lesbian.¹²⁸ Others memorials have highlighted particular gay and lesbians heroes, most recognizably plazas, busts, and schools remembering Harvey Milk.¹²⁹ Prominent moments in the gay rights movement have also been commemorated, including the 1969 Stonewall Riots in George Segal's contentious *Gay Liberation* statues in both New York (1992) and California (1984). Indeed, the creators of the Wood statue identified Segal's monument as a precedent in undertaking their own gay monument.¹³⁰

However, while the Wood statue shares much in common with its predecessors, it is perhaps one of the first queer monuments to be authorized in part by a primarily official institution. This authorization appears in three forms: official funding, official sanction, and official endorsement. Unlike many other queer monuments, the Wood statue was not donated or funded by a non-profit organization. Instead, the Church Wellesley Business Improvement Association (BIA) — an organization of gay and lesbian businesses sanctioned by the city for local development projects funded by city taxes — initiated the statue and funded fifty percent of the \$200,000 cost of the statue through its own revenue. The remaining half was paid by the City of Toronto.¹³¹ In addition, the city sanctioned the statue through deliberations for city funds, alterations of street zoning to allow for the construction, and extensive support and consultation

¹²⁸ For more on these monuments, see “Homomonument,” <http://www.homomonument.nl/indexen.htm> (accessed April 15, 2011); “Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime,” <http://www.holocaust-mahnmal.de/en/homosexualmemorial> (accessed May 10, 2010).

¹²⁹ Supervisor Harvey Milk, the first openly gay elected official in the United States, was assassinated in 1978. Some notable memorial projects in honor of Milk include Harvey Milk Memorial Plaza in San Francisco, the Harvey Milk Memorial Bust in San Francisco City Hall, and the Harvey Milk High School at the Hetrick-Martin Institute in New York City.

¹³⁰ George Segal designed *Gay Liberation* for Christopher Park near the former Stonewall Inn where the bar's patrons rioted against a police raid in 1969. The riot is often credited as the start of the contemporary gay rights movement. The Segal project was approved for completion in 1982, but facing public opposition and extended redevelopment in the area, was not installed until 1992. In the meantime, a second casting of the sculpture was erected on Stanford University's campus in 1984; Dennis O'Connor (BIA Chair), oral history interview, Thomas R. Dunn, June 16, 2008.

¹³¹ “Statue Honouring.”

with municipal researchers, designers, coordinators, and experts. Public statements by officials also endorsed the Wood project. Toronto Councillor Kyle Rae stated: “People who have lived in this neighborhood have known and heard about him over the years...but it’s [sic] never been mainstream....This now becomes part of all of [sic] everyone’s knowledge.”¹³² In short, the Wood statue, its design, contents, and funding all signify an official stamp of approval by the state on a queer public memory. In this way, the Wood statue embodies an official public memory.

The idea of an officially sanctioned queer memory may seem drastically progressive in the American context, but Canadian perspectives on gay rights have changed more quickly. In Canada, homosexual acts were decriminalized in 1969 with the help of future Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau who argued “There’s no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation.”¹³³ The contemporary Canadian gay rights movement emerged soon thereafter at much the same time as its U.S. counterpart, most visibly with mass street protests in response to the raiding of four gay bathhouses in Toronto in 1981. The following years brought great success, including the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom in 1982, which was later used to grant legal equality for gays and lesbian in marriage, adoptions, employment, housing, and government services.¹³⁴ Recently, Canadian public opinion polls have shown a large majority support gay rights (as compared to the United States).¹³⁵ In real and visible ways, the

¹³² Councillor Kyle Rae, quoted in “Toronto Unveils Gay Statue,” *San Francisco Bay Times*, June 9, 2005, http://www.sfbaytimes.com/index.php?sec=article&article_id=3747 (accessed February 26, 2011).

¹³³ CBC News, “Trudeau's Omnibus Bill: Challenging Canadian Taboos,” http://archives.cbc.ca/politics/rights_freedoms/topics/538-2671/ (accessed February 26, 2011).

¹³⁴ Miriam Smith, *Lesbian and Gay Rights in Canada: Social Movements and Equality-Seeking, 1971-1995* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 68, 110.

¹³⁵ Gallup Canada, February 2000; Pew Internet and American Life Project, October 27, 2004.

last few years have marked a turning point wherein GLBTQ identity has been ushered into the Canadian notion of citizenship and nationality.

Within this context, I argue that the official reading of the Wood statue attempts to make visible a public memory that reifies queer citizenship and recognizes the Canadian queer community.¹³⁶ Much of this work draws upon how Canadian citizenship is made manifest in the statue and how a conservative image of homosexuality is made “safe” for public consumption. As an official memory, visitors to the statue are expected to read its meaning at face value. Evidence to support the official reading of Wood’s memory as the intent of the design can be gleaned from interactions between the BIA statue committee and the artist, Del Newbigging, who submitted two proposals for the statue design: a contemporary design and a traditional design. According to an oral history interview with Newbigging: “For the contemporary idea, we would do five bronze trees and put them on the corner of Alexander and Church Street [signifying Molly Wood’s Bush]...it’s a nice idea, but maybe it’s a little too contemporary for what the committee wanted.”¹³⁷ While the committee liked both designs, they ultimately chose the traditional design.¹³⁸ By choosing the traditional design over the more ambiguous postmodern design, the committee signaled its determination to establish a straightforward and conventional reading of Wood’s memory.¹³⁹ The distinction is clarified when comparing the

¹³⁶ Historically, queers have been defined as anti-citizens, largely because rights justify citizenship and queers are often denied those rights. David Bell and Jon Binnie, *The Sexual Citizen: Queer Politics and Beyond* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000), 142. See also Jeffrey A. Bennett, *Banning Queer Blood: Rhetorics of Citizenship, Contagion, and Resistance* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009); Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman, “Queer Nationality,” *boundary 2* 19 (1992): 149-80.

¹³⁷ Del Newbigging (Artist), oral history interview by Thomas R. Dunn, June 12, 2008.

¹³⁸ Del Newbigging, “The Alexander Wood Project,” <http://www.delnewbigging.com/awoodproject.html> (accessed February 26, 2011).

¹³⁹ On postmodern memorial design and memory, see Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr., “Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as

Wood statue to other monuments: “Gay rights monuments exist in Amsterdam, Cologne and New York, but none are large-scale foundry projects in the form of traditional bronze statuary used to celebrate more 'mainstream' historical figures.”¹⁴⁰ The statue is designed to present Wood as a legitimate and important gay man in the history of Upper Canada with no vice attached.

Part of the image that is made evident in reading the Wood statue in this way is the continuity of gay space within the city. It is no accident that the statue is erected on the corner of Church and Alexander Street just outside the Old City of Toronto, originally known as York. The spot in which the statue stands is located on land once owned by Alexander Wood himself. Indeed, much of the area that constitutes the largest gay district in the city is encompassed by this historic space.¹⁴¹ The statue thus serves as a marker in the city of present and past gay space. The statues creators intentionally articulated the continuity of space. Dennis O'Connor, BIA Chair noted: “We wanted to do a public art project....We chose him because he has a connection to our community, and [to] this particular spot.”¹⁴² But this continuity is not an assumed fact. Instead the statue visually signals both a past understanding of the space as gay and a present reaffirmation of that fact. While the visualization of Alexander Wood himself may signal to some to view the area as a historically gay space, for those unaccustomed to Toronto history, the statue makes this connection plain. This is particularly clear in one of the plaques (fig. 2), which features a depiction of Wood standing in a forest scene. Surrounded by trees, wildlife, and a

Prototype,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 263-88 and Charles Soukup, "I Love the 80s: The Pleasures of a Postmodern History," *Southern Communication Journal* 75 (2010): 76-93.

¹⁴⁰ “Statue Honouring.”

¹⁴¹ Church Wellesley Village Business Improvement Area, “History of the Village,” <http://www.churchwellesleyvillage.ca/location.php?id=18> (accessed April 15, 2011).

¹⁴² Quote by Dennis O'Connor cited in “Toronto Unveils.”

hidden figure in the distance, the viewer should surmise that this depiction represents the present space more than 200 years ago. In each space, both past and present, Wood stands to mark his



Figure 2. North-facing plaque depicting Wood's land in colonial times. Photograph by author.

territory. In this way the statue visually moves readers to consider this space as gay space. To quote O'Connor again: "We're trying to create a sense of place, a sense of history about why we're here... We're pretty lucky to have a link back to the 1800's. How many gay communities can say that?"¹⁴³ For those incapable of making the visual jump, another small plaque beneath Figure 2 states clearly that this spot marks the lands of Alexander Wood.

A third plaque plays a central role in establishing Wood as part of the Canadian community (fig. 3). Emphasizing Canadian citizenship is clearly part of the intent of the BIA in creating this statue. As O'Connor noted: "This monument is a monument to a great Toronto citizen, a great Canadian and a great fag."¹⁴⁴ Canadian citizenship and nationality is marked heavily in this viewing position of Wood's public memory. Aside from the constant refrain in the press that he was one of Canada's first "gay heroes," the long list of Wood's achievements over his lifetime position him firmly within the pioneering days of Old Canada.¹⁴⁵ On the plaque, Wood's service as "Militia Officer, Businessman, Public Servant, Justice of the Peace" is marked clearly, followed last in the list by "Gay Pioneer." By foregrounding his commercial and civic accomplishments first, the plaque highlights Wood's traditional and exemplary career over his sexuality. In addition, Wood's deeply Canadian past is highlighted, including his moves through the territory, his nationalist military service, being the owner of one of only three stores in the city, and also his return to Canada after his scandal had subsided. The plaque also features a small silhouette that shows Wood's prominent features. Beyond a mark of wealth and class, the visualization of such an image in bronze is almost reminiscent of a coin featuring a prominent

¹⁴³ Zoë Bake-Paterson, "Ye Olde Cocksucker: The Legend of Alexander Wood Rises Again," *Xtra*, September 30, 2004, <http://archives.xtra.ca/Story.aspx?s=15201835> (accessed April 15, 2011).

¹⁴⁴ Roy, "Monument to 'A Great Fag,'" A3.

¹⁴⁵ Cameron French, "Statue of Gay Hero Draws Monumental Flak," *Reuters*, June 14, 2005 (no longer accessible). Currently accessible at TVNZ World News, http://tvnz.co.nz/view/news_world_story_skin/592075 (accessed April 1, 2011).

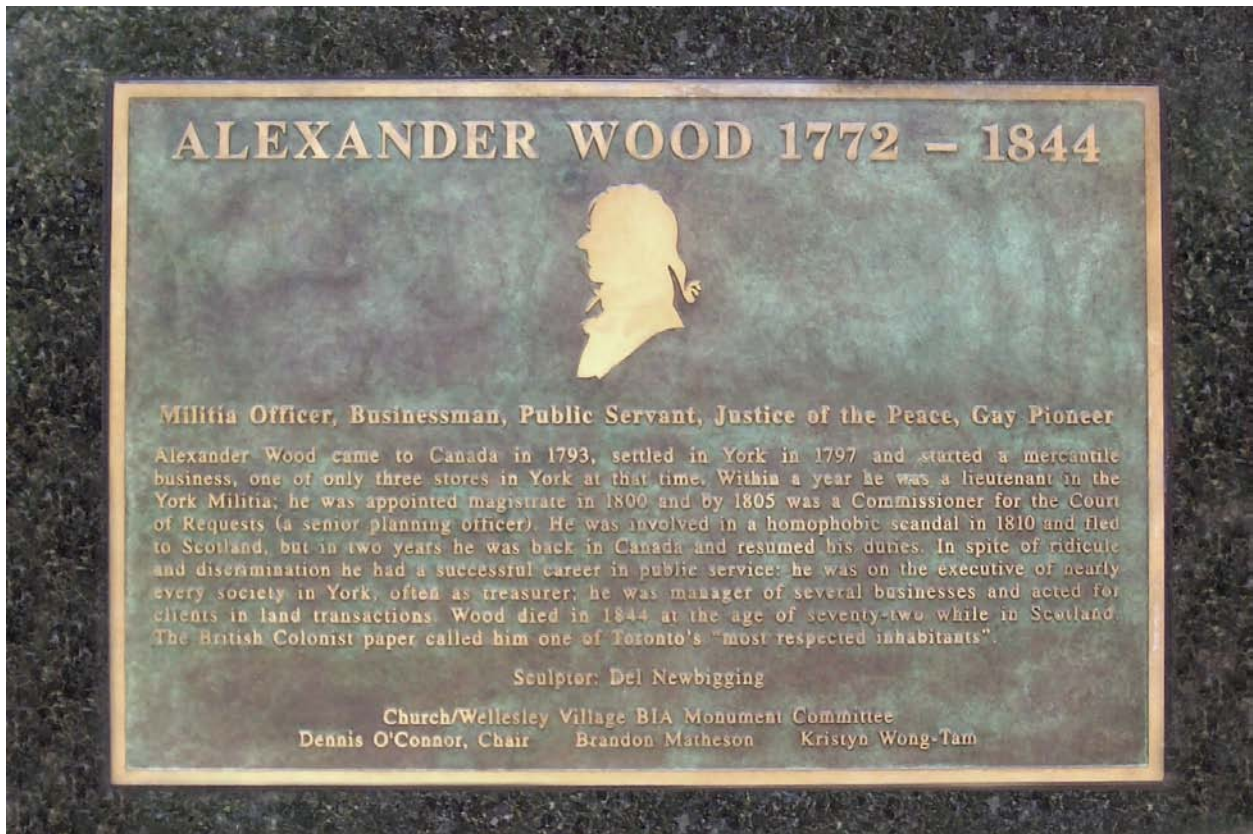


Figure 3. Plaque featuring Wood's accomplishments. Photograph by author.

national figure. Collectively, the statue reveals Wood's deep commitment to Canada and his full participation as citizen. This is perhaps most well summarized by the final line of the plaque that quotes Toronto's *The British Colonist* in 1844 upon Wood's death. According to the plaque, Wood was "one of Toronto's 'most respected inhabitants.'"

Beyond citizenship, the statue also cues a visual heroism specific to the GLBTQ community. His stately posture and elegant dress echo images of other statues depicting great war heroes and leaders. His exploits (beyond the infamous scandal) are outlined clearly on the statue, most notably the title of "Gay Pioneer." A heroic representation was even signaled in the design of the Wood figure. According to an oral history interview with Dennis O'Connor, the committee sought a more heroic image for Wood after early attempts to enlarge the statue from the original maquette revealed lackluster results: "When we enlarged the head...he really was ugly. And it wasn't really attractive. So [Del Newbigging] said, "I just rebuilt him"...and I looked at him and said, "Wow! He looks like he's a superhero!" And he said, "He was. He was a superhero."¹⁴⁶ In addition, the physical orientation of Wood to his viewers connotes the heroic framing of a gay forefather. Upon the raised pedestal, Wood's sculpted body towers over the crowds, forcing their eyes upwards in reverence. On a crowded day, particularly during the massive pride festivals that consume the neighborhood each summer, the Wood statue is a marker that is easily visible. But with this visibility also comes a meaning for many viewers. As one observer noted: "This is the statue of Alexander Wood that towers over the village. I'm sure he watches Pride with great approval!"¹⁴⁷ Standing watch over the parade, as if a head of state

¹⁴⁶ O'Connor, oral history interview.

¹⁴⁷ Revenante, "Alexander Watches Over the Crowd," Flickr, JPEG Image commentary, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/revenante/176732847/> (accessed April 15, 2011).

reviewing his proud army, Wood is positioned and understood as a central figure in a transhistorical Canadian GLBTQ community.

This public memory also presents a very specific (and what some have called “safe”) version of gay identity. Media and rhetorical scholars have described at length how gay identity can be co-opted in its least transgressive forms to be represented publicly. Among them, Larry Gross suggests: “When [marginalized] groups or perspectives do attain visibility, the manner of that representation will itself reflect the biases and interests of those elites who define the public agenda.”¹⁴⁸ Bonnie Dow argues that queers are often represented in “poster child politics, in which the attractiveness of an issue is directly related to who represents it.”¹⁴⁹ In addition, Helene A. Shugart and Robert Alan Brookey suggest that representations of “safe” gay men in particular are actually means by which patriarchy and other normative structures secure themselves, by reinscribing these more traditional images in new forms.¹⁵⁰ In this way, visibility comes with a cost.

However, this safe visibility should not suggest that the statue was designed so that Wood would be read as a heterosexual. Rather, the artist made several specific choices to signal to the contemporary viewer that Wood was, in fact, visibly gay. According to an oral history interview with Newbigging:

¹⁴⁸ Larry Gross, “What is Wrong with this Picture? Lesbian Women and Gay Men on Television,” in R. Jeffrey Ringer, *Queer Words, Queer Images*, 143.

¹⁴⁹ Bonnie J. Dow, “*Ellen*, Television, and the Politics of Gay and Lesbian Visibility,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18 (2001): 137.

¹⁵⁰ Robert Alan Brookey, “A Community Like *Philadelphia*,” *Western Journal of Communication* 60 (1996): 40-56; Helene A. Shugart, “Reinventing Privilege: The New (Gay) Man in Contemporary Popular Media,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20 (2003): 67-91.

just look at the curl on his hair that comes down on the front of his forehead...look at the bowtie...the ties around his neck...the frills on his sleeves...the tightness of his pants...the flow of his coat. All of this speaks of a gay taste, I think, and being very stylish and that, as most people know, would be talking about a gay man. I think you can see that in all gay people...and throughout history.¹⁵¹

While it is doubtful that these cues represent transhistorical or transnational markers of same-sex desire, they do play into (sometime stereotypical) expectations of contemporary gay visibility.

Nonetheless, as an official public memory, the Wood statue's design does come with significant representational costs. Visually, the image of gay presented is quite safe. Young, masculine, and physically fit, the statue's body size and dimensions mark Wood as an active man of strength. He exhibits no physical qualities (like a small frame or so-called effeminate hand gestures) that might potentially mark Wood as a sissy. Wood may be a "molly," but he is a masculine one. His dress is clearly period, but still indicates wealth and prestige. This is no average man in a simple ensemble, but a magistrate and businessman in colonial splendor. More insidiously, Wood is gloriously white. As Kirk Savage suggests, "classical sculpture served as the benchmark of whiteness." In sculptural style, facial physiognomy, and position, Wood is the exemplar of the Greco-Roman aesthetic — an aesthetic that has perpetually been used to

¹⁵¹ Newbigging, oral history interview.

denigrate non-white identities, here locating gay identity within whiteness.¹⁵² This white aesthetic is buttressed with codes of wealth, prestige, and historical Canadian identity. In essence, the Wood depicted in the statue reflects a contemporary gay male habitus likely to be found on the cover of *The Advocate* magazine.¹⁵³ Certainly Wood was white, male, and wealthy and his memory, some would argue, must *reflect* that. But the embodied, classical style of this design was a willful *selection* between two options presented to the statue committee. It was a choice between a less divisive, postmodern design that may not have *deflected* the diversity of GLBTQ identity and the end result.¹⁵⁴ Thus, while some argue there was no way to avoid these issues, the BIA's own design process provided alternatives.

The cost of this choice is profound. By constructing historical and modern gay Canadian identity as white, male, masculine, wealthy, and “moral,” these images become reified into the public consciousness. The diverse others of the queer community — queers of color, bisexuals, trans and intersex persons, sissies, dykes, leather daddies, queens, genderfucks, among others who complicate and enrich non-heterosexual life — become marginalized. They remain in the closet of public memory while the safest and more prestigious form of gay (according to contemporary heteronormative culture) makes its grand appearance.

This visual representation of Wood, when read through an official democratic lens, holds important significance not just for GLBTQ identity and citizenship, but also for the way in which gay space is constructed in the city. Read with an official democratic gaze, the Wood statue

¹⁵² Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 11. See also Kirk Savage, “The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument” in Gillis, *Commemorations*, 131.

¹⁵³ Katherine Sender, *Business, Not Politics: The Making of the Gay Market* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 239.

¹⁵⁴ See Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 45.

represents perhaps the most well defined democratic gay space within the city and a potentially prominent site within the nation. According to Grube's requirements, the statue can be read as such. First, it clearly makes gay identity visible on the statue. Not only is the material marker designated specifically for the gay community, but also the subject is marked as gay in the text itself. By using words like "homophobic" and "gay" on the statue, the Wood memorial stands out as a clear gay identity in the public sphere. Second, the statue also makes sexual contact somewhat obvious by dramatizing Wood's lurid physical examinations on the statue in what I label the "fondling plaque" (fig. 4). Though genitals are not shown visibly, the implied sexuality that accompanies the statue signifies obvious same-sex sexuality in a way that veiled cruising spots would never dream. Finally, through the official lens of this public memory, the statue reflects the shared past achieved through community dialogue. From discussions among the BIA itself, its work with the artist, its approval from the city council, and even the reaction of visitors to the site, the Wood statue represents a deeply democratic notion of gay space.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the statue marks the Church Wellesley gaybourhood as a primary site of democratic gay space that defies the hierarchical homosexual spaces so prevalent for much of history.

¹⁵⁵ "Statue Honoring"; "Toronto Unveils"; Roy, "Monument to 'A Great Fag,'" A3; Newbigging, "The Alexander Wood Project."



Figure 4. The "Fondling Plaque," featuring Wood inspecting the genitals of a local militiaman. Located on the base of the statue, facing west. Photograph by author.

2.4 VISUALIZING A TRADITIONALIST COUNTERMEMORY

With the introduction of such a progay text on the public scene, it is not surprising that a traditionalist, antigay countermemory arose to contest its meaning and significance. In the days leading up to the unveiling of the Wood statue, conservative columnist Rachel Marsden wrote a scathing attack of the memorial and public officials' assent to its presence in the *National Post*. Among the accusations, Marsden alleged Wood should primarily be remembered as a criminal "pervert" not a "gay icon," that Wood cannot be sufficiently verified as gay, and that the visible sex act depicted on the base of the statue is damaging to children and other passers-by.¹⁵⁶

Marsden is not the only voice to speak out against the public commemoration of Wood.¹⁵⁷ However, as a Canadian citizen and public figure, Marsden is the most prominent and cited pontificator of the traditionalist countermemory. Her commentaries are widely circulated in public newspapers and quoted, reproduced, or linked to in other critiques. In many ways, her perspective is a central and consistent organizing text of this anti-Wood view. As such, Marsden's articulation of the traditionalist countermemory is where I have focused this analysis.

While some of Marsden's contestation of the Wood statue echoes the typical "issue culture" arguments surrounding antigay rhetorics, she also offers a number of traditionalist readings against the official democratic memory of Wood that ask viewers, not to forget Wood,

¹⁵⁶ Rachel Marsden, "A Statuesque Disgrace," *National Post*, June 11, 2005, <http://www.rachelmarsden.com/columns/woodstatue.htm> (accessed February 26, 2011).

¹⁵⁷ Examples include: "Alexander Wood is a Stiff," *The London Fog*, July 13, 2005, <http://thelondonfog.blogspot.com/2005/07/alexander-wood-is-stiff.html> (accessed February 26, 2011); "...And a Penchant for Buggery," *Sick Day*, June 16, 2005, http://einspahr.blogspot.com/2005_06_12_archive.html (accessed February 26, 2011); "Celebrating Toronto's Gay History?" *Better Left Said*, July 22, 2005, <http://notadesperatehousewife.mu.nu/archives/105985.php> (accessed February 26, 2011).

but to remember him differently.¹⁵⁸ First, Marsden remembers Wood as a criminal, above and beyond his sexual orientation. She argues that if we must remember Wood (she may argue we should not), it is through this primary lens: “One of the monument’s plaques reads that Wood ‘suffered a homophobic scandal.’ Look, ‘homophobic’ implies that people were scared of this guy because he was gay. In reality, this event had nothing to do with his gayness — only his abuse of authority.”¹⁵⁹ At latter points in her framing, Marsden argues that sexuality is irrelevant to this criminal act. She suggests that any one — homosexual or heterosexual — caught in such an act today would be equally charged and run out of town. While this demonstrates Marsden’s unfamiliarity with the shocking history of false charges used against GLBTQ people, it also reveals Marsden’s focus on only one piece of the larger statue.¹⁶⁰ By foregrounding the fondling plaque and minimizing the rest of the statue, Marsden manages to increase the criminal ethos of Wood and his memory.

Marsden also seeks to criminalize not only Wood’s act, but also the representation of those acts. Marsden perpetually argues that the artistic depiction of Wood engaged in his scandalous act is essentially public pornography. Through such a reading, a traditionalist countermemory argues the act that made Wood infamous should be shielded from public view. According to Marsden, her view of gay visibility is clear: “For kids, that should mean lots of pretty rainbows and purple Teletubbies — not an illustration of something that could pass for a scene out of the Michael Jackson trial. If two people — gay or straight — were acting out this

¹⁵⁸ Ralph R. Smith and Russel R. Windes, *Progay/Antigay: The Rhetorical War Over Sexuality* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 35-6.

¹⁵⁹ Marsden, “A Statuesque Disgrace.”

¹⁶⁰ Gary David Comstock, *Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 8, 12-13, 17-18.

same type of thing in public, they'd be tossed in the slammer."¹⁶¹ Beyond the invective and punditry lies a legitimate means of framing queer memory: Gay identity is a sexual identity predicated on a sexual act. As such, this act should be private and representations of this act should be private as well. Thus, Wood the man and Wood the statue are visualizing not gay pride, but rather an illegal (and immoral) public act.

Second, Marsden argues for undermining Wood's claim to homosexuality. For Marsden, the statue's creators attempt to represent a visible gay identity in the statue. According to Marsden, this representation is illegitimate for Wood's sexuality is ambiguous at best. Citing Councillor Rae in her article: "'there's no determination that [Wood] was gay.' The evidence was only ever circumstantial. As Rae says, 'out of the event, people felt that he was homosexual. But I don't know if he was homosexual.'"¹⁶² In a separate article, Marsden claims not only is Wood's sexuality in doubt, but the process by which historical sexuality is identified is suspect: "gay history lessons seem to consist largely of combing the books to find prominent male figures who were never confirmed homosexuals — such as former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, or renowned Toronto area pervert Alexander Wood — and slapping the gay label on them retroactively."¹⁶³ Through this process of destabilizing Wood's homosexuality, Marsden seeks to challenge his legitimacy to public memory. In other words, the traditionalist countermemory reads Wood as just another unsexed, criminal. He becomes unremarkable and undisciplined and thus unworthy of memory. In no veiled way, Marsden is committing an act of mnemonicicide.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Marsden, "A Statuesque Disgrace."

¹⁶² Marsden, "A Statuesque Disgrace."

¹⁶³ Rachel Marsden, "The Trouble with 'Normal,'" *National Post*, June 25, 2005, <http://www.rachelmarsden.com/columns/pubschools.htm> (accessed February 26, 2011).

¹⁶⁴ Morris, "My Old Kentucky Homo," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 103.

By virtue of this countermemory reading of the Wood statue, Marsden also offers a counterargument against queer public memory projects altogether. The potential for the Wood statue to reimagine the past to include an official, heroic gay identity is a threat to antigay rhetors. Marsden acts against this threat, not by recourse to morality and decency, but by destroying the grounds upon which queer public memory is justified. With Wood as her representative anecdote, Marsden makes criminal activity a disqualifying feature of public memory, virtually eliminating any historical queers in a world replete with anti-sodomy laws. Doubting Wood's claim to homosexual identity, Marsden eliminates the remembering of anyone as gay whose sexuality cannot be proven definitively. In doing so, Marsden does not eliminate queer public memory per se, but sets the bar so high for making such a claim that almost no queer could meet it. At the end of her framing, Wood and all historical queers are no longer valuable enough, no longer gay enough, and thus no longer worth the public's time. The result is the de facto evisceration of queer public memory, leaving in its wake only the traditional narratives of the heteronormative past. In essence, Marsden and the traditionalist countermemory roll back the value of remembering queer lives in any capacity. Heteronormativity is defended.

A simultaneous tactic of the traditionalist memory is to argue the Wood statue is not an official memory. Throughout her articles, Marsden perpetually links what is depicted in the statue to a mismanagement of public funds. She asserts that liberals have taken over government and official culture to hijack public morality:

Patchen Barss, spokesman for Mayor David Miller, told me this week that ‘as a city, we should celebrate Alexander Wood for his association with gay rights, for the way he supported Toronto’s tradition of respect for diversity, and also for his cheekiness and sense of humour.’ ‘Cheekiness’ only describes the shiny, round backside of Wood’s victim, as depicted by the monument — not Wood himself. This statement is nothing but spun-out revisionist history that only serves to whitewash a sordid tale of abuse....The fact that taxpayers have funded this is a total disgrace.¹⁶⁵

Marsden thus seeks to undermine the credibility of the city council. In doing so, she delegitimizes their ability to speak for the public. As such, Wood is recast as an insurgent countermemory while Marsden and her ilk reclaim the official public memory for themselves.

While a challenge to queer public memory itself, this traditionalist countermemory has some particularly compelling effects for the way gay space is situated within Toronto. In particular, Marsden’s equation of the statue with public sex or pornography has important material effects on issues of gay space. By equating the representation of gay sex in a public memorial with public sex, the statue and its subject become outlaws in need of disciplining.¹⁶⁶ Thus, it is not surprising that Marsden urges her readers to keep their children away from the statue. Based upon the way the public memory of Wood is visualized, it becomes a marker not just of gay space, but also of immoral space. Gay space is constructed as deviant with the

¹⁶⁵ Marsden, “A Statuesque Disgrace.”

¹⁶⁶ For more on queers and public sex, see Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public,” 547-66.

possibility of lasting detrimental effect upon those who enter it — particularly children. Through resistively reading the statue as public sex, gay space in Toronto becomes condemned space upon which no one should tread.

2.5 VISUALIZING AND PERFORMING A CAMP COUNTERMEMORY

Most interesting for the study of queer public memories is the countermemory reading of the statue by the queer community itself. This critical perspective reads the text with the same distrust as the traditionalist countermemory, but with a *jouissance* and an alternative *telos*: toward destabilizing gay identity and recuperating the queer potential of performance, site, and display. In essence, this part of the community confronts the public representation in the Wood memorial with one response: you must be kidding!

To justify this characterization, I argue that queers perform a resistive reading of the Wood memorial as camp. Camp is a notoriously complex term that skirts simplistic attempts at definition. Susan Sontag described camp as a “sensibility” that is a “love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration.” It has aesthetic qualities related to “bad art” or “kitsch.”¹⁶⁷ However, camp is almost always understood as being *performed*. It is an act, a style, a “fervent involvement,” an attitude for engaging culture and cultural objects in which the performer *does* camp.¹⁶⁸ Frequently making the performer look foolish, camp is typically directed at others —

¹⁶⁷ Susan Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp,’” in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. Fabio Cleto (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 53.

¹⁶⁸ This performative dimension is gleaned most easily from comparisons between camp and kitsch. While camp involves a certain degree of “insight” on the producer or critic of failure (and thus the ability to derive some pleasure from it), kitsch is often an “attribute” signaling failure of which its

usually cultural, economic, and political elites — amounting to “a trivialization through parody of the dominant culture.”¹⁶⁹ Gays, lesbians, and queers are widely recognized as engaging in camp, though GLBTQ persons need not perform it exclusively.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, camp is increasingly recognized as a necessary critical resource for others in the contemporary mediascape.¹⁷¹ While none of these characteristics are definitive of camp alone, collectively they suggest a highly visual and material performance in which a failure to be serious is celebrated at the cost of dominant culture, providing a lively *mélange* of meaning making.

When camp is performed within the realm of memory, certain characteristics of camp come to the fore. First, camp is often derived from the past. It focuses on the out of date; objects past their prime and in decline, resurrecting people, places, events, and memories of the past and provides them with a new form of attention.¹⁷² Sometimes these memories, as raw materials of camp, lack significant pre-existing meaning; other times they have been drained of meaning or overly signified. In either case, camp’s “necrophilic tendencies” work to make the past relevant in ways not seen before.¹⁷³ Second, camp is deeply tied with the idea of nostalgia. While some read camp and nostalgia as synonyms, camp is better understood as an “ironic nostalgia” that relies less upon both a genuine longing for the past and a tastefulness that might make that

producer is unaware. See Andrew Ross, “Uses of Camp,” in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. Fabio Cleto (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 316.

¹⁶⁹ While Haye’s quote is addressing “gayspeak” directly, he argues camp plays a substantial part in this language use. Joseph J. Hayes, “Gayspeak,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 62 (1976): 260.

¹⁷⁰ For a short summary of the debates and politics of camp as an exclusively gay sensibility, see Caryl Flinn, “The Deaths of Camp,” in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. Fabio Cleto (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 434-35.

¹⁷¹ Helene A. Shugart and Catherine Egly Waggoner, *Making Camp: Rhetorics of Transgression in U.S. Popular Culture* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 22-26, 165-66.

¹⁷² Fabio Cleto, introduction in *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*, ed. Fabio Cleto (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 304; Flinn, “The Deaths of Camp,” in Cleto, *Camp*, 435-38; Ross, “Uses of Camp,” in Cleto, *Camp*, 320.

¹⁷³ A characterization of camp as understood by Andrew Ross in his “Uses of Camp.” Ross does not use the phrase but rather “necrophilic trappings.” See Flinn, “The Deaths of Camp,” in Cleto, *Camp*, 434.

longing legitimate.¹⁷⁴ Third, camp is also a dated phenomenon. Several commentators have suggested camp was primarily a (counter-) cultural performance that pre-dated contemporary gay political activism beginning around 1969.¹⁷⁵ Indeed, some have suggested camp is now only a moribund aesthetic that has lost its power.¹⁷⁶ However, others claim camp continues today and thrives in drawing contemporary attention to previous historic periods.¹⁷⁷ For instance, Mark Booth suggests camp plays with the periodization of history by recreating “idealized versions of the past” and making them “retrograde rather than progressive.” In doing so, camp “sidestep[s] the onward march of history” making it “ephemeral.”¹⁷⁸

While it is difficult to encapsulate the essence of camp, several techniques of camping can be isolated for our purposes. For instance, by virtue of targeting Wood’s *memory*, his queer viewers are already engaged in a highly camp style.¹⁷⁹ However, understanding *how* queers resistively remember Wood requires turning to three other, related camp techniques.

First, camp celebrates the failure of acts attempted in all seriousness. Unlike kitsch or naïve camp that do not recognize their own ineptitude, camp derives much of its pleasure from its willful recognition of artifice and failure. According to Fabio Cleto:

¹⁷⁴ Flinn, “The Deaths of Camp,” in Cleto, *Camp*, 436.

¹⁷⁵ Mark Finch, “Sex and Address in *Dynasty*,” *Screen 27* (1986): 24-42; David Román, “‘It’s My Party and I’ll Die if I Want To!’: Gay Men, AIDS, and the Circulation of Camp in U.S. Theatre,” *Theatre Journal* 44 (1992): 305-27.

¹⁷⁶ Flinn attributes this characterization of camp to Fran Leibowitz, among others, in “The Deaths of Camp,” in Cleto, *Camp*, 433.

¹⁷⁷ For instance, David Román suggests contemporary camp functions by drawing focus to a “pre-AIDS moment.” See David Román, *Act of Intervention: Performance, Gay Culture, and AIDS* (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1998), 100.

¹⁷⁸ Mark Booth, *Camp* (New York: Quartet, 1983), 143-44.

¹⁷⁹ Fabio Cleto, introduction in Cleto, *Camp*, 304; Caryl Flinn, “The Deaths of Camp,” in Cleto, *Camp*, 435-38; Ross, “Uses of Camp,” in Cleto, *Camp*, 320.

Camp certainly debunks seriousness, along with the ‘original’ intentionality of the camped up object of perception. This is not to say that, though, that camp can’t envision a horizon of seriousness, or that it simply works through a conversion of the serious into the frivolous...on the contrary, seriousness always takes part in the production of camp effect, and it does so through the self-undermining, queer strategy of it ‘transvestic thinking.’¹⁸⁰

In short, camp is double voiced. It ridicules its target’s deficiencies in order to interrogate them, simultaneously making a legitimate point of critique. Thus, Christopher Isherwood’s statement: “You can’t camp about something you don’t take seriously.”¹⁸¹ Second, camp relies heavily on exaggeration to do its critical work. Exaggeration, as part of the camp aesthetic, uses excess to critically mark incongruence in its targets in a visible way. This excess of exaggeration renders its subjects spectacles, making them available for critical assessment. While exaggeration can play out in a number of ways, the exaggeration of gender (and its cultural markers) is one of the most common and recognized forms, especially in drag.¹⁸² Third, the grotesque: an emphasis on the out of control and the outer limits, often directed at the body. Representative of the carnivalesque and frequently visible in camp aesthetics, the grotesque directly challenges the beautiful human (male) form by celebrating bodies that are unstable, leaky, and “unruly” (and often, feminine).¹⁸³ Transforming an object into the grotesque, a camp performer marks that

¹⁸⁰ Cleto, *Camp*, 28.

¹⁸¹ Christopher Isherwood, “The World in the Evening,” in Cleto, *Camp*, 51.

¹⁸² Shugart and Waggoner, *Making Camp*, 33, 26.

¹⁸³ Flinn, “The Deaths of Camp,” in Cleto, *Camp*, 447-48.

object (or its meaning) as incomplete, out of focus, and marginal, recognizing the “perception that something is illegitimately in something else.”¹⁸⁴ Uncontrollable and often repulsive, the power of the grotesque is its ability to complicate the seemingly simple — a deeply queer act.

If camp is consuming or performing culture “in quotation marks,” then, from the perspective of the camp countermemory, what does it mean to “remember” Alexander Wood?¹⁸⁵ While queer visitors to the statue might partake in any number of different camp practices, celebrating the statue as a failure and playfully supplementing the statue itself with an exaggerated and grotesque style are key to a camp reading.¹⁸⁶ Collectively, these symbolic and materials practices challenge Wood’s official meaning, destabilize claims to rigid identities, and indulge tantalizingly sexual imaginings of his queerness.

A common way of challenging Wood’s memory is by reading his statue as a campy failure. As Isherwood’s definition suggests, at the core of attempts to read Wood’s memory as camp are serious concerns about how the statue fails to adequately represent Wood, queer identity, and the Church Wellesley community. Crucially, many Canadian queers do not see themselves in the Wood statue. For instance, the initial reporting on the statue by *Reuters* described the reaction of one local gay man in Toronto: “‘It’s nice to have the statue in the community, but I don’t think it’s well done,’ said one area resident, referring to a plaque at the statue’s base that outlines the scandal. ‘I think it’s misleading. The sensationalistic side of

¹⁸⁴ Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 13.

¹⁸⁵ Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp,’” in Cleto, *Camp*, 56.

¹⁸⁶ Rubbing the bare buttocks of the groped young man in the fondling plaque has evolved as a playful tradition unplanned by the statue committee. It is another way in which queer visitors add meaning to the statue, particularly as a means of transmitting ephemeral memories as “gesture.” See Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 65-67.

homosexuality is not the norm.’”¹⁸⁷ Beyond the spectacle, there is also the recognition that the statue fails to be recognizable with its contemporary audience. Many of the viewers have not heard of Wood before or if they have, they have little appreciation for who he is. In addition, Wood’s dress and appearance mark him as a historical queer — a move that may challenge the way many readers engage with the text given the paucity of images of historical queer identity. Most important is the way in which Wood’s race, class, and gender are foregrounded along with his sexuality. As noted above, this narrowly defined notion of queer embodied in the statue is a serious failure of representing the full diversity of the community. In a very real way, for women, queers of color, bisexual or transgender persons, and low-income queers, Alexander Wood is just another wealthy, white, gay man who means little to their present or their past. This leaves the statue open to a deep and abiding lack of resonance — a lack frequently marked by a camp reading.

To make this point, camp readers of Wood’s public memory have become adept at finding failure in a serious consideration of the statue. One way this failure is provoked is through an informed viewership that recognizes the name “Alexander Wood” has historically been a joke. Despite the rather dignified stature Wood attained before the end of his life, his memory in Canada has long been the subject of ridicule. Sometimes this ridicule has emerged from the heterosexual public, but more often, the very people who best understood Wood’s predicament — his queer colleagues — were his most merciless quipsters.¹⁸⁸ For example, there was a popular but limited run of an original play/musical in 1994 called *Molly Wood* that was

¹⁸⁷ French, “Statue of Gay Hero Draws Monumental Flak.”

¹⁸⁸ “Statue Honouring.”

performed in the Church Wellesley neighborhood.¹⁸⁹ The authors described the play as a “naughty Gothic romp” while a review of the play in the *Toronto Star* emphasized its “special attention to double-entendres, effete speech, campy gesture and over-loud bitchiness.”¹⁹⁰ Anecdotal commentary by fellow playwright Sky Gilbert put it succinctly: “Was it a drag show or was it a historical drama? And what was it really about? What was the theme? I wasn’t sure.”¹⁹¹ Presented as a campy laughingstock, the play did little to enhance Wood’s reputation as a serious figure. These previous experiences with the memory of Alexander Wood predispose viewers to read the statue in ways counter to the serious meaning intended by the official memory.

However, the failure of the statue to denote its original meaning for all readers does not rely solely upon prior knowledge. Indeed, another important way in which the camp countermemory reads Wood’s statue as a failure is as a strangely juxtaposed representation — a representation made possible by a specific “prescribed pathway” that structures how the statue is viewed. Blair argues that memorial sites sometimes prescribe pathways that dramatically shape the reception of memorials. These pathways — frequently paved walkways or mapped out routes — order sites in particular ways, direct gazes, and highlight different aspects of both the memorial and the landscape in which it is placed. In the process, they direct how we come to interpret the meaning of these sites.¹⁹² Situated on a busy street corner in a commercial district, the Wood statue prescribes four particular pathways that mimic the sidewalks and roadways that

¹⁸⁹ *Molly Wood*, written by John Wimbs and Christopher Richards, was performed in the gaybourhood at the Bathurst Street Theatre.

¹⁹⁰ Geoff Chapman, “Molly Wood Goes the Way of All Flash,” *Toronto Star*, October 27, 1994, E6.

¹⁹¹ Sky Gilbert, *Ejaculations from the Charm Factory: A Memoir* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2000), 227.

¹⁹² Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites,” in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 40.

run from north to south and east to west through the Church Wellesley neighborhood. Three out of the four of these pathways act on the body of the viewer to encourage the official democratic reading of the statue. Important to this reading is not the collectivity of images, but rather the order in which the images are read. If the statue is approached from the north, south, or east, the viewer would most likely see the large embodied Wood figure first followed by the two, more tame plaques on the base. Viewers at that point may choose to continue walking, confident they have absorbed the statue's intent. Others might pause and circle to the western side of the base which features the fondling plaque. As I have outlined above, when the plaques are read in this order, it is possible that the fondling plaque serves to visualize Wood's sexuality and society's homophobia. The viewer moves on and an official reading is confirmed.

However, approaching the statue from the western pathway produces a striking disconnect in the mind of a viewer between the fondling plaque and the rest of the statue. As the visitor walks closer to the statue, the stately figure of Wood upon his pedestal meeting most of the preconditioned expectations of official statuary is first to come into view. Yet, as the visitor moves closer and the eye strays to the fondling plaque below, a moment of visual and experiential incommensurability occurs. Before them, within one representation, the camp reader witnesses a strange union of stately Greco-Roman design and lurid, pseudo-sexual imagery. Unexpected in design and unclear in meaning, this jarring juxtaposition instantly sends the viewer into a visual conundrum. While an official-democratic reader would view these images as consistent and the traditionalist reader would focus on the fondling plaque alone, the camp viewer reads the two together, witnessing a representational failure on display. The statue, by Hayes' definition above, becomes a hilarious put down of one's self and one's culture. Mocking the idea of a democratic gay space, Wood and his statue become camp, not to be taken seriously.

Queers also “camp up” Wood’s public memory by augmenting the statue with campy, supplemental commemorations. The act of supplementing a commemorative site — usually by leaving intimate tokens or decorations — has become increasingly important in public commemorations. By leaving objects at these sites, individual visitors attempt to alter the meaning of otherwise officially articulated spaces by adding to their preexisting rhetoric(s). According to Carole Blair, these left objects “transmute the commemorative site from a completed text to a context for individual, but still public, memory practices.”¹⁹³ Individuals, in a sense, engage in a performance with the statue that “challenges the easy composure of history under the sign of objectivity.”¹⁹⁴ Thus, visitors supplement the meaning of an existing commemorative site’s rhetoric with their own in ways that call into question its previous (official) interpretation.

While supplementing rhetorics do not occur at all public commemorations, Kristin Hass has shown that they are particularly common when sites mark highly unstable memories, “restless” memories where meaning is still largely up for grabs and engaging with them materially can provide visitors ways to move those meanings in particular directions.¹⁹⁵ This essay has already demonstrated that the Wood statue is a site where meaning is still malleable. But while others have argued for various meanings through symbolic interpretations of the statue, camp visitors have relied excessively on material acts of supplementation to augment the statue’s understanding. However, these queers have not drawn upon traditional supplements like photos, flowers, or teddy bears to make their point. Rather, camp readers have supplemented the

¹⁹³ Carole Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites,” in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 40.

¹⁹⁴ Della Pollock, “Introduction: Making History Go,” in *Exceptional Spaces: Essays in Performance and History*, ed. Della Pollock (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 27.

¹⁹⁵ Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 1-2.

Wood statue with outrageously campy augmentations; augmentations that rely on common camp tactics to queer Wood's memory and destabilize the static interpretations of both official democratic and traditionalist readers.

The first major campy supplementation is drag or rather, the dragging of the Wood statue. To dress in drag is to perform a role marking the transformation betwixt and between genders.¹⁹⁶ It relies heavily on the exaggeration of gender prominent in camp.¹⁹⁷ While drag does critical work in balls, clubs, and daily life, the exaggeration and artifice of drag in public venues can also do important political work.¹⁹⁸ In remembering Wood, drag is used to contest the radically normative gay male habitus intended by the official-democratic memory. The dressing and alterations of the Wood statue in left objects that run counter to Wood's represented gender allow camp viewers to critique the stable, gay identity characterizations the statue represents. Performing such a transformation on the statue is not difficult. Already sporting a cape and tight fitting clothes, Wood's ensemble is routinely accessorized with beads, costume jewelry, feather boas, and hats. In addition, on more than one occasion, Wood's rigid demeanor has been brightened by an array of colorful rouges and lipsticks.¹⁹⁹ Given the diva ballads that emanate from the many gay clubs that line Church Street on any given night, a passerby might mistake

¹⁹⁶ Esther Newton, "Role Models," in Cleto, *Camp*, 98.

¹⁹⁷ Jack Babuscio, "The Cinema of Camp (AKA Camp and Gay Sensibility) in Cleto, *Camp*, 124-25.

¹⁹⁸ For instance, Christiansen and Hanson have shown how the exaggeration of gender and sexuality in ACT UP protests allowed for productive protest work and debunked common anti-gay, anti-HIV/AIDS arguments. See Adrienne E. Christiansen and Jeremy J. Hanson, "Comedy as Cure for Tragedy: ACT UP and the Rhetoric of AIDS," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82 (1996): 165.

¹⁹⁹ *Monument Treatment Summary: Alexander Wood* (Toronto, ON: David Sowerbutts Art Conservation 2005-2007); Sweet One, "DSCN6011," Flickr, JPEG Image, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/sweetone/3670404259/> (accessed April 15, 2011); Canadian Pacific, "Parade Watcher," JPEG Image, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/18378305@N00/2699548185/> (accessed April 15, 2011); NKRD, (näk'erd), "IMG_7634.jpg," JPEG Image, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nkrd/2630300367/> (accessed April 15, 2010); Lú, "Alexander Wood," JPEG Image, http://www.flickr.com/photos/lu_/21785267/ (accessed April 15, 2011); S.S. Poseidon, "Toronto Pride Day 2 007," JPEG Image, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/21795768@N05/2628197015/> (accessed April 15, 2011).

the Wood statue to be a drag queen ready to walk fiercely through the night, in stark contrast to his more official demeanor. Questioning publicly Wood's past gender, queers challenge official democratic discourses that represent past and contemporary sexual identity as stable and rigid.

In addition, graffiti is added to the statue both to challenge Wood's memory as a wealthy, white, male representative of the community and to render the ambiguous act on the fondling plaque clearly queer. Both critiques are achieved by transforming the classical Greco-Roman statue into a grotesque body on display. The grotesque body is a representative form of the carnivalesque that is echoed in camp aesthetics. In a direct challenge to the beautiful male form, the grotesque celebrates bodies that are unstable, leaky, and "unruly" (and often, feminine).²⁰⁰ By transforming an object into the grotesque, a performer marks that object (or its meaning) as incomplete, out of focus, and marginal, recognizing the perception that "something is illegitimately in something else."²⁰¹ For the camp reader, the Wood statue is made grotesque to question his neat and tidy representation as queer hero. Wood's body is made grotesque by supplementing its heroic form with very human representations of excrement, waste, and fluid. For example, for several months, Wood's cheeks were tattooed with tears dripping from his eyes. At other points, a highlighter was used to emphasize the prominent bulge between the statue's legs. Another thoughtful camp viewer used marker to draw a zipper and fly onto Wood's trousers, allowing his flawed body to relieve itself.²⁰² Perhaps most pointedly, for several months in 2006, Wood's face on the fondling plaque was smeared with an unknown substance. The milky, white substance on the infamous plaque unquestionably was meant to represent

²⁰⁰ Flinn, "The Deaths of Camp," in Cleto, *Camp*, 447-48.

²⁰¹ Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 13.

²⁰² *Monument Treatment Summary*.

ejaculate.²⁰³ The revisioning work done to Wood’s memory through this particular act of graffiti is powerful: the image of Wood and his young suspect, tantalizing frozen in an ambivalent moment of potential-sexuality, bursts forth into a visual, tactile, and an unmistakable sexual explosion. To play on Barbie Zelizer’s words, the graffiti destroys the “subjunctive voice” present in the fondling plaque, unfreezing the image’s ambiguous sexuality and making visible within public memory queer, male-on-male desire.²⁰⁴ With this act of counter-memory, the ambiguity of Wood’s sexuality — and more importantly, the sexual nature of his scandal — comes to a conclusion. The Wood monument is transformed from an about-to-be-queer image into an unquestionable portrait of queer lust. Each of these acts deftly demotes the privileged image of the white, gay, male form. By drawing attention to his very grotesque dimensions, the classical figure of Wood becomes less divine and more human — a more fitting representative image for a diverse queer community that is anything but stable.

Finally, the most common material interaction camp visitors have with the Wood statue is “rubbing the bum.” According to BIA Chairman O’Connor, “rubbing the bum” is a local tradition whereby visitors rub the bare buttocks of the young man being groped by Wood in the fondling plaque. Unplanned by the committee, this playful trend evolved on its own and circulates throughout the statue’s discourse. Commentary and images of the act are available online but the following description in *OUT Magazine* is a good example of the practice:

²⁰³ *Monument Treatment Summary*.

²⁰⁴ Zelizer, “The Voice of the Visual in Memory,” in Phillips, *Framing Public Memory*, 162-65.

Afterward, we walked to the nearby statue of Alexander Wood, the legendary testicle inspector that I wrote about yesterday...on one side of the statue there's a sculpted illustration of Alexander doing the actual genital inspecting that made him famous. The soldier's naked ass is right there for all to see and enjoy. Paul told me that it's become a tradition in the 'hood to rub the naked ass and make a wish. A lot of people must have been making wishes because that ass is already a little tarnished. And it's only been a couple of years.²⁰⁵

“Rubbing the bum” is yet another way in which queer visitors add meaning to the statue through campy supplementing rhetorics. Indeed, not only is this act supplemental, but it is also contrary to what some on the statue committee hoped would be the audience's reception. Perhaps not surprisingly, Newbigging in particular — as an artist hoping to preserve and protect his work — has suggested in oral history interviews that he would rather visitors not “rub the bum” of Wood’s inspectee: “If I had thought of that, I would have done something to make it not happen....I’m not thrilled that people are touching the bum.”²⁰⁶ Thus, rubbing the bum is a deeply supplemental act that contrasts with (at least some of) the original rhetors’ intended meaning of the statue.

²⁰⁵ Dennis Hensley, “Dennis Hensley Reports Live From Toronto for Halloweek!” *OutTraveler*, http://www.outtraveler.com/printer_friendly.asp?did=664 (accessed March 29, 2011).

²⁰⁶ Newbigging, oral history interview.

However, in this case, the supplemental material added to the statue is not a left object but the human body itself. Rhetorical bodies, when engaging commemorative sites, can produce powerful effects. As Blair and Michel suggests, somatic engagements with memorial sites (among others embodied interactions) can be key to understanding how memory is performed and sometimes altered, beyond what one might see or hear in the site itself.²⁰⁷ Indeed, one's ability to touch or not to touch these sites can dramatically contribute to their interpretation.²⁰⁸

Touching the Alexander Wood statue in particular generates two prominent rhetorical effects. First, the rubbing of the bum reinforces previously discussed supplemental acts to alter the meaning of Wood's public memory. Despite the various reasons one might participate in this act — luck, tradition, peer pressure, play, or an erotic *jouissance* — its focus on the buttocks of the young man is not inconsequential. The rubbing of the bum in particular, as a body part with both excretory and sexual connotations, again participates in the grotesque transformation of the bodies in the statue into flawed, human figures. Like the graffiti previously discussed, rubbing of the bum simultaneously unfreezes the static, pre-sexual image of the plaque. Particularly when rubbed by a queer man wishing for luck on his date, rubbing charges the image with a queer sexual desire the official democratic memory largely stifles.

However, more importantly, rubbing the bum is also an act of queer world-making. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner have argued that the creation of safe spaces for queer sex, culture, and ways of living as alternatives to the privileged zones of the heterosexual couple is key to the creation and maintenance of queer culture. These tactical spaces crafted on top of, in-between, or at the margins of heteronormative life are frequently fleeting and unrecognizable as

²⁰⁷ Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics: The Rhetorical Performances of the Civil Rights Memorial," *RSQ: Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30.2 (2000): 32-33, 42.

²⁰⁸ Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 46.

“entrances, exits, unsystematized lines of acquaintance, projected horizons, typifying examples, blockages, incommensurate geographies.”²⁰⁹ Charles Morris and John Sloop have suggested queers can devise these spaces of queer alterity by rupturing heteronormative spaces and gazes with tactical, political, and embodied queer displays, like queer public kissing.²¹⁰ Once created, these spaces provide a vital arena in which queer ways of living and “counterintimacy” are affirmed and the politics of heteronormativity can be reconsidered.²¹¹

As an embodied act, rubbing the bum participates in this queer world-making project. Like queer public kissing, the touch of human flesh against sculpted buttocks disrupts heteronormativity by showcasing queer desire in a public venue. However, the act also signifies more. Akin to Fiona Buckland’s description of queer club dancing, rubbing the bum positions the visitor’s body as a point which mediates between memories of an event and its present performance in a “theater of memory.”²¹² While Buckland regularly situates the body as restoring and reinterpreting in the present an individualized memory of the body itself, in this context, queers who rub the bum restore to the present, not their own memory, but rather of the queer public’s memory of Alexander Wood himself. This queer public memory remembers Wood not as an unsexed, victimized hero but an imperfect, desiring, sexual, queer man. Through the use of their bodies in the present, moving their hands across the bum of Wood’s young suspect, camp visitors actualize Wood’s queerness in the present: made real not by the statue itself, but through the performative interplay between human body and commemorative site. Considered in the realm of everyday life, the hundreds of queers who everyday rub the bum in an

²⁰⁹ Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public,” 548, 558.

²¹⁰ Charles E. Morris III and John M. Sloop, “‘What Lips These Lips Have Kissed’: Refiguring the Politics of Queer Public Kissing,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 3 (2006): 12-13.

²¹¹ Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public,” 561.

²¹² Fiona Buckland, *Impossible Dance: Club Culture and Queer World-Making* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 17-18.

anonymous string of stranger sociability do not simply participate in a tradition, but together construct in public view a new meaning of the statue as a marker of queer life, in both the past and the present. In doing so, the material rhetoric of the statue when joined with camp performance contributes to the creation of queer communal space.²¹³

Taken together, these three camp tactics offer dramatically different readings of Wood's memory than those proffered by either the official-democratic or traditionalist memories. Simultaneously, the camp memory of Wood also drastically reshapes the way queer space is understood in the city, by both creating *and* destroying it. First, a camp reading of this public memory can decimate the work of crafting a gay democratic space in Toronto. While Grube offers some useful and productive examples of gay democratic spaces that are visibly marked, the Wood statue takes that concept to an extreme. Identity is not just visible, it is oppressive — reaching into the past and claiming a man as gay whom history records as having a vague sexuality at best. Evidence of sexual contact is not just obvious but rendered visible in a way that cannot be taken seriously. Gay sex becomes a public joke. Finally, despite what appears to be a lengthy process of discussion among multiple groups about the creation and structure of this space, the democratic nature of this discussion is elitist. Designed by an economically entrenched community, approved by the city, and debated within the spheres of the gay business elite and the mostly heterosexual city council, any democratic exchange is far from open and inviting. A camp reading makes these failures meaningful to readers. In doing so, the notion of an officially sanctioned democratic gay space becomes destabilized.

Second, while destroying this more conservative notion of gay space, a camp reading points to queer world-making as a different process for generating queer space. Lauren Berlant

²¹³ Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 48.

and Michael Warner have argued queer world-making — the creation of safe spaces for queer sex, culture, and ways of living as alternatives to the privileged zones of the heterosexual couple — is key to the creation and maintenance of queer culture. Once created, these spaces provide a vital arena in which queer ways of living and “counterintimacy” are affirmed and the politics of heteronormativity can be reconsidered.²¹⁴ Ironically, the failings and appropriation of the Wood memorial dramatizes the ability of camp to queer even an already-supposedly gay space, reinforcing the potential for camp to read almost anything as queer.²¹⁵ Thus, queer space can be created in any moment by anyone with a discerning eye for failure and play. Drawing upon traditional notions of queer reading and camp, the entire city is opened up to a process of queer site creation. No site is free or stable and everything is up for grabs. In addition, these queering acts need not be tethered to the sexual uses of spaces alone. The possibilities of queering run deeper in all kinds of spaces, particularly in those where the reenactments of histories exercise a flair for a queer sensibility.²¹⁶ In this way, queer space becomes diverse, diffuse, and — in a way — more accessible than those fostered through officially sanctioned organizations. Visualizing camp moves readers from focusing on solitary queer sites to queer cities, nations, and beyond.

In the wake of these campy supplementing acts and celebrations of failure, what remains upon the pedestal where Wood once stood is a dramatically different imagining of his queer public memory. The camp countermemory, in making retrograde the previously idealized or vilified memories of Wood, clashes with both the official democratic and traditionalist frames of remembering. Instead of a virtuous and inclusive image of citizenship or a criminal to be feared, Wood becomes a laughable, gender-bending, grotesque, and scandalous queer — a subject

²¹⁴ Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public,” 548, 561.

²¹⁵ For instance, see Grube on cruising as placemaking in “No More Shit,” in Ingram et al., *Queers in Space*, 130-31. Others make this argument outside of the Toronto context.

²¹⁶ Bright and Rand, “Queer Plymouth,” 274.

unlikely to be welcomed into the fold of heteronormative culture, but certainly someone to be celebrated as a camp personality. Remembering Wood, in the camp countermemory, becomes an opportunity to mark the eccentric and destabilizing value of queer character, while at the same time seriously challenging efforts to encase a rigid view of sexual identity — in the past, present, or future — in stone.

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

The positions performed above are not rigid frames for remembering and understanding Alexander Wood. Rather, the discourse of the statue as a whole reveals a strange mixing and evolution of meanings that makes talking about firm frames difficult at best. However, these general perspectives appear frequently and serve as a heuristic by which we can understand the evolution of his public memory within this environment. Whether an official mark of existence and visibility, a backlash from tradition and heteronormativity, or a campy pervert that generates (critical) laughing fits across the world, the statue of Alexander Wood speaks profoundly to the power of memory to be crafted and undone by a simple series of looks or creative touches.

Beyond the specific work of the statue, this analysis suggests a number of important considerations at a theoretical level, primarily relating to theorizing queer public memory. While the term queer public memory has only recently been coined, its contours have been more precisely defined not only by the in-depth analysis of particular texts but also by highlighting the uniquely queer potential of the term to disrupt both heteronormative and more standard gay

memory practices.²¹⁷ This essay contributes to this deepening of the term, and the dynamics of public memory rhetoric, in two primary ways.

First, queer public memories are highly polysemic. As Ceccarelli has summarized, polysemy is an increasingly relevant aspect of contemporary rhetorical criticism.²¹⁸ This relevance is clear within the rhetoric of postmodern memory sites in particular.²¹⁹ However, despite the Alexander Wood statue's more classical aesthetic, I believe that it must also be understood as polysemic. The conflicting memory frames addressed in this essay highlight the multiple meanings of Wood in contemporary Toronto. In particular, both the traditional and camp counter-memories function as tactical, resistive readings that challenge the official democratic memory of Wood as presented by the BIA and its implications for gay/queer identity within the city and nation. Thus, critics must understand the statue as ripe with hermeneutic depth. However, I suspect that this demand is not exclusive to the Wood statue alone but rather is compelled by queer public memory, generally. If the queer project is to "support forms of affective, erotic, and personal living" by making them, in part, "available to memory," while simultaneously engaging in practices that disrupt norms, explode binaries, and embrace diversity, it seems clear that these queer memories must not only be open to but demand a multiplicity of meanings.²²⁰ Such a claim is supported by previous work in queer public memories that urge a "queer cultural studies of history" and challenge heteronormative counternostalgias.²²¹ This polysemic compulsion at the heart of the queer project requires that critics engage queer public

²¹⁷ Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*. Morris reflects this shift in updates and revisions to his earlier draft of the chapter "My Old Kentucky Homo: Lincoln and the Politics of Queer Public Memory" featured in Phillips, *Framing Public Memory*. The new version details these changes, particularly in footnote 5. See Morris, "My Old Kentucky Homo," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 110-11.

²¹⁸ Ceccarelli, "Polysemy," 409.

²¹⁹ Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci, "Public Memorializing in Post Modernity," 269.

²²⁰ Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public," 562.

²²¹ See Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*, x and Castiglia, "Sex Panics," 168.

memories as texts with hermeneutic depth, or risk missing (and potentially disciplining) the very disruptive, world-making potential that is queer public memory's promise.

Second, this essay also highlights the critical importance of materiality to remembering the queer past. Materiality itself is not a new dimension of queer studies. Examinations of queer lives on display have drawn similar attention to bodies, their parts and byproducts, their performances, and the substances they wield that act rhetorically.²²² Even some critics of the AIDS Quilt have highlighted the material nature of that project in assessing its rhetorical impact.²²³ However, many of these examples looks past the enduring qualities (i.e. strategic) queer material rhetorics can provide a community regularly erased from the past. Discursive recourse to bodies and performance are indeed valuable, but (as highly fleeting form of materiality) they do not attend to the benefits provided by the more strategic form of materiality found in commemorative sites. As such, more can be said as to why these material enactments are so critical to queer public memory. The Wood statue directs us to two important insights.

One vital contribution is that certain *structural* forms of materiality (like statues, plaques, and commemorative sites) provide security and longevity to queer memories that they are typically denied within largely discursive memory practices. Queer memories have often been situated contrary to collective and public remembering. Typically, queer pasts are banished to the closet, positioned as subjugated knowledges — either disguised in history's systemic archive or

²²² For instance, see Dan Brouwer, "The Precarious Visibility Politics of Self-Stigmatization: The Case of HIV/AIDS Tattoos," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 18 (1998): 114-36; Bennett, *Banning Queer Blood*; John Nguyet Erni, "Flaunting Identity: Spatial Figurations and the Display of Sexuality," in *Rhetorics of Display*, ed. Lawrence J. Prelli (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006) 311-26; among many others.

²²³ In particular, see Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 37, 44, 48. See also Morris, "20th Anniversary of the NAMES Project."

disqualified as disrupted and unwanted.²²⁴ In addition, as potentially critical texts that can offer alternative ways to conceptualize intimacy, family, and sexual culture, queer public memories have been subjected to “enforced amnesia” and mnemonicicide.²²⁵ Thus, it should not surprise us that queer pasts are regularly regarded as hidden from history.²²⁶ Structural materials like commemorative sites offer recourse to these destructive practices. Despite the ever-present recognition that commemorations often authorize us to forget, given the present position of queer memories, it might be argued that queers have little to lose. However, it is expressly because so much has been lost, both through systemic practice and (more painfully) through the loss of millions of memorable gay lives to HIV/AIDS, that these material structures offer an escape from the drive to forget. While documents disappear, and generations change, material structures of memory “do not fall into silence.”²²⁷ Projects like the Wood statue suggest, by gesturing to the ancient commemorative logics of the monument, that it is only the durable, material enactment of memory that can persevere through time. Indeed, that is what the members of the BIA had hoped. Beyond producing a public art project, they expressed a genuine desire, in an age of expanding gay rights and the gentrification of the gay ghetto, to use a monument to mark “Molly Wood’s Bush” as gay space in perpetuity.²²⁸ While queers know that even monuments and commemorative sites might not prevent the alteration of this past, materiality serves to make revising queers out of memory more difficult and the queer past more sustainable.

²²⁴ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 81-83.

²²⁵ Castiglia, “Sex Panics,” 158 and Morris, “My Old Kentucky Homo,” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 103.

²²⁶ George Chauncey Jr., Martin Bauml Duberman, and Martha Vicinus, introduction to *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, eds. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey Jr. (New York: NAL Books, 1989), 1-3.

²²⁷ Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites,” in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 17.

²²⁸ O’Connor, oral history interview.

Yet, as the traditional countermemory demonstrates, even when these memories are rendered durable, their queer meaning can be displaced. As José Esteban Muñoz has warned, while the “archive of queerness” has become more robust, dominant culture is still apt to question its rigor.²²⁹ Castiglia echoes this point, highlighting how some within queer culture dull (let alone eradicate) the more radical edges of queer public memories, sacrificing innovative queer world-making for the sake of preservation or acceptance.²³⁰ Given such challenges, even in an emerging age of queer monumentality, queers must also continue to rely on other forms of materiality — vernacular discourses, supplemental rhetorics, ephemera, and *metistic* practices — to preserve their pasts.²³¹ These commemorative rhetorics, inscribed in the bodies, performances, and acts of queer life, offers queers the ability to engage existing memory sites and read within them queer potential. Like the camp countermemory of Alexander Wood, these other *embodied* memory practices can supplement less queer historical imaginings, challenge anti-queer attacks, and disrupt the stability of identities that far too often become encased in these structural forms of public memory. Collectively, these two forms of material rhetoric are critical to indelibly marking queer memories in the public imaginary while preserving the queer potential to make any space, past or present, our own.

²²⁹ José Esteban Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts,” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8.2 (1996): 6-7.

²³⁰ Castiglia, “Sex Panics,” 158.

²³¹ On *metistic* practices, see de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, xix.

3.0 REMEMBERING MATTHEW SHEPARD

3.1 VIOLENCE, IDENTITY, AND COUNTERPUBLIC MEMORIES

Minutes after midnight October 7, 2008 marked the ten-year anniversary of the brutal beating and murder of Matthew Shepard, an openly gay college student in Laramie, Wyoming. Targeted for his sexual orientation, robbed, verbally abused, and tortured, the young gay man lashed to a cow fence left an indelible mark in the minds of many Americans. Shepard — unconscious, cold, beaten, and bleeding — would be found the next morning by a passing biker still hanging from the fence, his hands tied behind his back. He would die five days later without ever waking from his coma. News of the murder by two local men, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, was a transformative moment in the ongoing discourse over the status of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) persons within American society. Initial reports of his attack, vigils during his slow death, protests by antigay forces, and an unprecedented media circus all shaped a debate about what it meant to be gay in America and formed a moment in the public consciousness that transformed Matthew Shepard into an icon of unmatched appeal.²³²

²³² “GLBT,” “gay and lesbian,” and “queer” are loaded terms within both academic and cultural discourses. I use these terms in this essay in a very specific way to distinguish between their communal, political, and critical natures. I use “GLBT” to signal the wide and diverse community of individuals often united by their exclusion from the “norms” of exclusive heterosexuality, opposite sex desire, and gender conformity. I use “gay and lesbian” or “gay men and lesbians” to refer to a part of the GLBT community identified primarily by their homosexual desire and their strong identity as a discrete community. I use “queer” to signal an additional part of the GLBT community that seeks to disrupt static

More than ten years after the murder, critical reflection can be brought to bear in order to assess the long-term influence of this moment. Shepard's death occurred at a significant time in the struggle for GLBT rights — a struggle engaged throughout the century and forged anew during the HIV/AIDS crisis. In the aftermath of the worst part of the epidemic that threatened the very existence of “gay culture,” the GLBT community won important political and cultural successes in visibility, government sanction, corporate attention, and commitments to fight HIV/AIDS. Despite harsh rebukes, including the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), and “Don't Ask Don't Tell” (DADT), many gays and lesbians felt like they were on the cusp of acceptance into the American community in ways they never imagined. By the end of the 1990s, GLBT persons had begun to risk feeling secure in their lives with real hope for the future.²³³ Shepard's death shattered that security, inaugurating a contentious debate about what his murder meant, how he would be remembered, and how those memories could point to a future for gays and lesbians in this country.

This essay examines the interplay between public and counterpublic memories of Shepard within the GLBT community. I focus on how particular ways of remembering Shepard through “gay and lesbian” and “queer” counterpublic memories critiqued both heteronormative public memories of Shepard within the wider public sphere and alternative counterpublic memories from within the community itself. By doing so, I argue that multiple and conflicting kinds of counterpublics exist and remember within the GLBT community, that memories are a valuable *strategic* resource for counterpublics that articulate alternate ways of conceptualizing the past that endured due to their highly public circulation, and that particularly queer iterations

notions of identity. While the distinctions between these terms are often blurred in popular and scholarly usage, I attempt to use them precisely to specify distinctions within the following texts.

²³³ Charles Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis, 1940-1996* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 330, 327-47.

of counterpublic memorializing rhetorics can use more *tactical* forms of memory to challenge what it means to be gay in the twenty-first century.

The Shepard case has been a productive area of study for rhetoric and communication scholars. Most of this work has focused on how Shepard was framed within the heteronormative public sphere through the analysis of news reports, images, and televised miniseries. Brian Ott and Eric Aoki, Susan Balter-Reitz and Karen Stewart, and John Lynch all suggest that these framings aid in releasing the heterosexual public from culpability in the murder.²³⁴ My account adds to and extends this work, examining fragments within the GLBT discourse specifically and how these fragments employed memories of the murder to offer alternative worldviews within the community and the wider public sphere.

While the rhetoric of Shepard's memory is important for queer and memory scholars, it also has a more general relevance. In particular, the Shepard case demonstrates that public memories are not only the province of powerful, normative forces and institutions but also strategic rhetorical resources for marginalized groups to engage publics and counterpublics. As such, the memory strategies deployed by counterpublics detailed in this article suggest a template that other similarly situated groups might deploy. Also, whereas most work on public memory generally has focused exclusively on material markers of memory such as monuments and

²³⁴ For more information on Matthew Shepard's murder, GLBT politics, and American culture, see Brian Ott and Eric Aoki, "The Politics of Negotiating Public Tragedy: Media Framing of the Matthew Shepard Murder," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5 (2002): 483-505; Susan J. Balter-Reitz and Karen A. Stewart, "Looking for Matthew Shepard: A Study in Visual Argument Field," in *Visual Communication: Perception, Rhetoric and Technology*, ed. Diane S. Hope (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2006), 111-26; John Lynch, "Memory and Matthew Shepard: Opposing Expressions of Public Memory in Television Movies," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 31 (2007): 222-38; Smith and Windes, *Progay/Antigay*, 5, 109; Judy Shepard, *The Meaning of Matthew: My Son's Murder in Laramie, and a World Transformed* (New York: Hudson Street Press, 2009); Beth Loffreda, *Losing Matt Shepard: Life and Politics in the Aftermath of Anti-gay Murder* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); numerous stories within *The Advocate* magazine; and others.

photographs (as opposed to queer public memory scholarship), in this chapter my analysis will focus on public memory in both its material and non-material manifestations.²³⁵ In addition, while I examine the movement of memories between publics and counterpublics, I also highlight the dynamic, multiple, and simultaneous ways of remembering Shepard between counterpublics themselves, extending research already investigating this interplay.²³⁶ Thus, this analysis may have theoretical relevance for scholars throughout the field.

I will first summarize trends in the study of public memories, counterpublics, and queer theory, arguing that this scholarship can assist in framing a notion of a queer counterpublic memory. I will then examine popular fragments of Matthew Shepard discourse to tease out the conflicting and strategic ways Shepard is remembered, oscillating between publics and counterpublics as well as among counterpublics themselves. I will conclude by offering several implications for strategic remembering, counterpublic memories, and the queer “*turn toward memory.*”²³⁷

²³⁵ Some exemplary rhetorical scholars who have studied more material manifestations of public memory include Barbara A. Biesecker, “Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21st Century,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 393-409; Blair and Michel, “Commemorating in the Theme Park Zone,” in Rosteck, *At The Intersection*, 29-83; Browne, “Remembering Crispus Attucks,” 169-87; Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, “Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of ‘Accidental Napalm,’” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20 (2003): 35-66; and others.

²³⁶ On the interactions of multiple counterpublics, see Phaedra C. Pezzullo, “Resisting ‘National Breast Cancer Awareness Month’: The Rhetoric of Counterpublics and their Cultural Performances,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (2003): 345-65.

²³⁷ Morris, “My Old Kentucky Homo” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95 (italics original).

3.2 THE QUEER PAST AND COUNTERPUBLIC MEMORIES

The central claim of this chapter is that the GLBT community strategically remembers Shepard through several distinct frames of public memory. Beginning with the theories of Maurice Halbwachs, scholars have pursued public memories' emergence as key sites of political and cultural meaning making.²³⁸ As we have already seen, public memories are rhetorically crafted versions of the past that shift over time, contribute to identity and community, and contest structures of power.²³⁹ Their form often determined what tasks they undertake as either official or vernacular memories. State or public authorities articulate official public memories to solidify national, cultural, and community identities by shaping collective imaginings. How official memories function rhetorically and can be disrupted has been a trend of research in the field.²⁴⁰

By contrast, vernacular memories have received less scrutiny from rhetoricians. John Bodnar describes vernacular memories as “an array of specialized interests” that “convey what social reality feels like rather than what it should be like.”²⁴¹ Constituted by small or minority communities, vernacular memories articulate contrasting narratives of the past that serve local needs to a greater extent than official memory. Drawing on Kent Ono and John Sloop's work on vernacular discourses, vernacular memories can be understood as discourses that allow us to interrogate both how these minority communities are constructed and how they are operated in affirmative ways for their members.²⁴² At the same time, vernacular memories can also move

²³⁸ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*.

²³⁹ Phillips, introduction to *Framing Public Memory*, 1-14.

²⁴⁰ For a strong introduction to trends within public memory research, see Phillips, *Framing Public Memory*.

²⁴¹ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 14.

²⁴² Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, “The Critique of Vernacular Discourse,” *Communication Monographs* 62 (1995): 26.

beyond constituting safe spaces into the territory of the official past. As such, vernacular memories can be reiterated in defiance of contrary views of the past articulated by official memory makers. Through discursive practices (like pastiche), such vernacular memories are capable of illustrating “other possible realities”; realities that meet present needs but that can also adapt to emerging exigencies.²⁴³ In this way vernacular memories’ “very existence threatens the sacred and timeless nature of official expressions,” making them not only potentially critical in effect, but strategic in their deployment.²⁴⁴

As a minority community, GLBT memories of the past can be considered vernacular. However, considering the complex relations of GLBT persons to the past, one might question whether a lesbian or gay rhetor would find memory an appealing resource for rhetorical production. Indeed, for many gays and lesbians the past is marked by a heightened sense of pain or ambivalence.²⁴⁵ Closely aligned with trauma, such backwards glances often reveal agonizing years in the closet, personal and cultural isolation, heteronormative erasure or disciplining, and a “memory void” measured in the lives and reminiscences of a generation lost to AIDS.²⁴⁶ So great has been the trauma of AIDS that Christopher Castiglia has warned that opportunities for fruitful queer memories have been replaced by “a form of enforced amnesia,” plied on the community by certain conservative gays to distance present GLBT life from the values and practices of the

²⁴³ Ono and Sloop, “The Critique of Vernacular Discourse,” 23, 26-27.

²⁴⁴ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 14. For discussion of strategies, tactics, and rhetorics, see de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, xix-xx; Nakayama and Krizek, “Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric,” 291-309. For the use of public memories in strategic and critical endeavors, see M. Lane Bruner, *Strategies of Remembrance: The Rhetorical Dimensions of National Identity Construction* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002); Houston A. Baker Jr., “Critical Memory and the Black Public Sphere,” in *The Black Public Sphere: A Public Culture Book*, eds. The Black Public Sphere Collective (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 5-37.

²⁴⁵ Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 8.

²⁴⁶ See Morris, “My Old Kentucky Homo,” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95-6.

earlier sexual revolution.²⁴⁷ For GLBT rhetors and movements, memories of the past might be more readily forgotten than sought out as a tool for creating social change.

However, actually existing GLBT relations to the past indicate something different. The queer “*turn toward* memory” traced to the memorializing of gay men during the AIDS crisis and its “material and political depletions” has proliferated of late.²⁴⁸ Domestically and internationally, the memorializing of gay men and lesbians has expanded and extended beyond the locus of AIDS, emerging in gay and lesbian archives, Holocaust memorials, art, films, and oral history. While these examples demonstrate contemporary turns, Christopher Nealon has shown gays and lesbians also deployed “foundling” imaginings earlier in the century to make intelligible their own discomfiting subject positions — what we might consider queer “equipment for living.”²⁴⁹ Despite claims to the contrary and in view of these examples, public memories seem a valued tool for GLBT persons urging cultural and political change. The embrace reflects an increasingly popular belief among gay, lesbians, transgender, and queer intellectuals that the future prosperity of the community lies in grappling with its past.²⁵⁰

Yet, this should not signify that *all* public memories that issue from within the GLBT community are synonymous with every other form of public memory. While certainly some gays and lesbians have used public memory in rather traditional ways, others have engaged the past with a dramatic difference. Specifically, queer forms of public memories maintain unique

²⁴⁷ Castiglia, “Sex Panics,” 156-57.

²⁴⁸ Morris, “My Old Kentucky Homo,” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95 (italics original).

²⁴⁹ For “foundling” imaginings see Nealon, *Foundlings*, 1-2. Burke outlines how literature can be “equipment for living” in Kenneth Burke, “Literature as Equipment for Living,” in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), 293-304.

²⁵⁰ Scholars who have argued for more precise understandings of the GLBT past include Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, 276-79; Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*, 27, 125-29; Castiglia, “Sex Panics,” 173-74; Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors*, 121; Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*, 136-7, 154; Moore, *Beyond Shame*, 190.

qualities. For one, queer memories are almost exclusively counterpublic memories within the U.S. context. Falling outside the official public sphere, the GLBT community has been historically situated as a counterpublic.²⁵¹ Its designation as *counter* can be derived in Robert Asen and Daniel Brouwer's schema from its ability to generate "oppositional discourses" from a specific non-normative identity category and/or to introduce those discourses into the wider public sphere.²⁵² In this counter position, textual productions like memories shore up marginalized communities and "oscillate" beyond those margins toward the official public sphere to challenge sanctioned worldviews.²⁵³ In contrast to public memories generally, counterpublic memories explicitly call into being alternative ways of living through the past distinct from those of official memory makers. Another crucial differentiation of these memories is their critical, queer orientation. As Charles Morris suggests, a queer orientation to memory should "disrupt historiography as a regime of the normal by exploring queer historical imaginations."²⁵⁴ In doing so, queer memories complicate and question narratives of the past that

²⁵¹ For theories of counterpublics, see Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 109-42; Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer, eds., *Counterpublics and the State* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001); Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005). Fraser characterizes "gays and lesbians" as examples of subaltern counterpublics in Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 123; Warner regularly utilizes various groups from within the GLBT community to elaborate his theory of publics and counterpublics; Daniel C. Brouwer has analyzed the work of the AIDS activist group ACT UP as a counterpublic that emerges primarily from within the gay and lesbian community. See Daniel C. Brouwer, "ACT-ing UP in Congressional Hearings" in *Counterpublics and the State*, 87-109.

²⁵² Asen and Brouwer, *Counterpublics and the State*, 8.

²⁵³ Jane Mansbridge, "Using Power/Fighting Power: The Polity," in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 57.

²⁵⁴ Morris, "My Old Kentucky Homo," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 111. In addition, the disruptive potential of queer counterpublic memories emerges not only from their *telos* but also from their form or style. Recognizable in the materiality of the AIDS Quilt or the ephemeral performance of a drag queen, queer memories are likely to manifest in ways outside the traditional rehearsal of the past. The

minimize difference to solidifying national, cultural, and political identities. These complications frequently emerge from political concerns about materiality, intersectionality, and coalition-building often present within queer counterpublics.²⁵⁵ It should come as no surprise then that heterosexual histories within the wider public sphere are often the targets of such queering practices, solidifying the status of queer memories as a form of counterpublicity.

But the wider public sphere need not be the only site of counterpublic rhetorical action, in our case for a queer counterpublic.²⁵⁶ As we shall see, historical imaginings in need of queering can be either heterosexual or homosexual in their orientations. This is because while queer counterpublic memories seek to challenge public articulations of gays and lesbians in the past from a heterosexual viewpoint, gays and lesbians themselves often construct their own narratives of the past that can lack critical reflection. Though the motivations for such constructions are often strategic in their own right, they do not fall under a queer project to disrupt stable and normalizing discourses of identity. Thus, queer counterpublic memories may act *strategically* against not only official memories of the wider public sphere, but also against gay and lesbian counterpublic memories as well, what Scott Bravmann would call “queer fictions of the past.”²⁵⁷ Vernacular in form, counter in orientation, and critical in manner, queer counterpublic memories

formal differences emerge almost as much from the specialty of their producers as their persuasive goals in a community where artists, amateur archivists, community groups, and others have been central repositories of the queer past. See Moore, *Beyond Shame*, xxii – xxviii. See also Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 2-6.

²⁵⁵ Daniel C. Brouwer, “Counterpublicity and Corporeality in HIV/AIDS Zines,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 22 (2005): 357.

²⁵⁶ Pezzullo, “Resisting ‘National Breast Cancer Awareness Month,’” 349, 361. See also Brouwer, “Counterpublicity and Corporeality,” 358, 365.

²⁵⁷ Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*, 4-5. Bravmann’s use of “queer” is slightly inconsistent with my own framing. While Bravmann indeed seeks to *queer* the gay and lesbian fictions of the past, he refers to these historical narratives as “queer” simultaneously. To clarify this distinction, throughout this essay, I will utilize “gay and lesbian counterpublic memories” to signify what Bravmann labels “queer fictions” and “queer counterpublic memories” to label rhetorical efforts that seek to challenge or to “queer” them.

signify a strategic use of the past by queers to contest conservative memory practices, whether heterosexual or homosexual.

To examine the complex frames of remembering Matthew Shepard within the GLBT community, an equally complex text must be generated for its comprehensive rhetorical analysis. Such a text cannot be found when we consider the highly discursive quality of his memory, its mobility between spheres, and its potentially queer dimensions. In addition, the material memories of GLBT persons are often rendered invisible from historical archives and official memory.²⁵⁸ As such, representative “fragments” of discourse must be reconstructed to form a text worthy of rhetorical criticism.²⁵⁹ The text I have stitched together for this purpose draws fragments from throughout the GLBT community. The foundation of this text is the coverage of Matthew Shepard in *The Advocate* magazine, previously one of the longest running and one of the most widely read GLBT publication in the United States.²⁶⁰ Matthew Shepard was an important subject of the magazine, cited over 300 times in its pages from 1998 to 2009. With a broad selection of writers, editors, and images that aspire to represent all facets of the community, *The Advocate* is a multivocal text. To represent the scope of the community more fully and to address issues of critical concern, I have supplemented my analysis with statements from major GLBT organizations, websites, blogs, and speeches and comments from several

²⁵⁸ On the difficulty of finding evidence for GLBT history, see Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, ix-xiii; Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feeling*, 8-9; Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 2-6.

²⁵⁹ McGee, “Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture,” 279.

²⁶⁰ Ott and Aoki, “The Politics of Negotiating Public Tragedy,” 486; Wik Wikholm, “What is the History of the Advocate?” <http://web.archive.org/web/20080129125434/http://www.planetout.com/pno/news/history/archive/advocate.html> (accessed March 28, 2010). In 2009, Regent Media (the most recent owner of *The Advocate*) significantly cut the publication of the magazine, removed it from newsstands, and began packaging it with its recent sister publication *OUT* magazine. This move may significantly tarnish *The Advocate*’s value as a text in the future, but has little impact on its value over the last several decades when it was widely viewed as the essential news source of the gay and lesbian community. See Judy Wieder, “The Not-So-Sudden Death of *The Advocate*,” November 4, 2009, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/judy-wieder/the-not-so-sudden-death-o_b_342725.html (accessed April 10, 2011).

memorial services for Shepard.²⁶¹ I have also included references to previous scholarship on the televisual, filmic, and imagistic elements of Shepard's memory where appropriate. Clearly, even this gathering is not exhaustive, but collectively these fragments represent a range of voices across the GLBT community's discourse in which diverse opinions were expressed and divergent strategies used.

What follows is an analysis of GLBT discourse highlighting three frames of remembering Shepard in non-queer capacities and the ways those memories are challenged by queer counterpublic memories. The first frame considers Shepard as victim of violence, contested between the queer counterpublic and the wider public sphere. However, the next two frames — Shepard as Secular Saint and Common Man — are contested between elements or counterpublics of the GLBT community itself. Each case demonstrates the strategic use of memory by multiple iterations of GLBT counterpublics to both craft and critique the meaning of Shepard's death. They also signal that "queer fictions of the past" are hotly contested and deeply consequential rhetorical objects.

²⁶¹ Katherine Sender, "Sex Sells: Sex, Taste, and Class in Commercial Gay and Lesbian Media," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 9 (2003): 335. Concerns about the text relate specifically to *The Advocate's* mostly consumerist image and gay male audience; major GLBT organizations include the Matthew Shepard Foundation (MSF), the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce (NGLT), and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD); while the internet was only coming into its full potential in the days after Shepard's attack, innovative GLBT individuals and groups utilized the technology to visible effect in the coordination of vigils and protests, recording events, and tracking responses. In the last decade, the web has been an increasingly vocal place to find reflections on Shepard. See Steve Friess, "Cyber Activism: Forget Street Demonstrations – The Internet is the Newest Avenue for Organizing and Protesting," *The Advocate*, March 2, 1999, 35; The October 14, 1998 candlelight vigil in Washington, D.C., and the October 19, 1998 "political funeral march" through New York City are highlighted in particular among the dozens of vigils that took place nationwide.

3.3 THE PUBLIC AND COUNTERPUBLIC: VICTIM OF VIOLENCE

The initial reports of Matthew Shepard's attack sparked immediate attention in both the GLBT community and the wider public sphere. Just what garnered that attention when so many other acts of antigay violence escaped public scrutiny remains unclear, but some have suggested that the gruesome violence of the crime played an important part.²⁶² Indeed, the violence was so gruesome that it can be understood to have ruptured the sense of American community. While such violence leaves many speechless, it also constitutes for Stephen Howard Browne a chance for rhetorical invention — wherein rhetoric can stitch back together a lost sense of community.²⁶³

Shepard's death generated rhetorical inventions from many quarters. While within the wider public sphere these voices varied in detail, scholarship on the rhetoric of Shepard's death suggests that he was remembered in one primary way: as the victim of an unfortunate but isolated act of violence.²⁶⁴ For Ott and Aoki, Shepard's violent murder highlighted a pattern of victimization "through the expulsion of difference." But in classic Burkean style, Shepard's murder "transferred the public's guilt to McKinney and Henderson" who themselves became

²⁶² For arguments on Shepard's public appeal, see Ott and Aoki, "The Politics of Negotiating Public Tragedy," 489.

²⁶³ For Carl von Clausewitz, persuasion and violence constitute different ends of the political spectrum. See Anthony Giddens, "Political Theory and the Problem of Violence," in *The Politics of Human Rights*, ed. The Belgrade Circle (New York: Verso: 1999), 245. For violence as occasion for invention, see Stephen H. Browne, "Encountering Angelina Grimké: Violence, Identity, and the Creation of Radical Community," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82 (1996): 56.

²⁶⁴ For instance, as recently as 2009, Congresswoman Virginia Foxx remarked that Shepard's memory was a "hoax." See Congresswoman Virginia Foxx, speaking against the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, on April 29, 2009, in the House of Representatives, H.R. 1913, 111th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* (April 29, 2009): H4929. A similar accusation was made by the ABC newscast *20/20* in 2004 that Shepard had actually been the victim of a drug-related crime. See Patrick Letellier, "20/20 Hindsight," *The Advocate*, February 1, 2005, 35.

victims for social purging; releasing society of responsibility.²⁶⁵ This transfer of guilt took many forms. According to Lynch, popular representations of McKinney and Henderson often attempted to detach the two from the public by “making their actions appear unnatural and inhuman.”²⁶⁶ Balter-Reitz and Stewart argue that the visual argument field of Shepard’s death was demanded of the perpetrators by the mythos of the rural Western landscape.²⁶⁷ In each case, the wider heterosexual public sought to escape culpability for Shepard’s death. This did not mean that average Americans did not recognize horrible acts could be perpetrated against gay men (and lesbians) or that they did not feel it was morally wrong. But it did indicate that major public remembrances of Shepard within the public sphere functioned to frame that violence as a private incident between three individuals. Because of its private nature, it was not culturally sanctioned and the average American had no responsibility for its occurrence.

The wide adoption of such a view by the public at large, if left unchallenged, would mark a missed exigence — an exigence in which the GLBT community might argue for an alternative meaning of Shepard’s death productive for the community’s social, political, and cultural aims. If, as Browne (citing Richard Leeman) argues, the construction of violence and its response can “reorder collective commitments and shared meanings” within a culture, Shepard’s death was a rare opportunity for skilled queer rhetors to constitute the violence he faced as a worldview associated with culture at large. Once established, the rhetor could present that worldview to an audience, critique it, and articulate a contrary worldview that calls the original into question. If

²⁶⁵ Ott and Aoki, “The Politics of Negotiating Public Tragedy,” 499. Burke’s discourse on victims and victimage are pervasive in his work but are perhaps discussed most extensively in Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*.

²⁶⁶ Lynch, “Memory and Matthew Shepard,” 228.

²⁶⁷ Balter-Reitz and Stewart, “Looking for Matthew Shepard,” in *Visual Communication*, 123.

the new worldview was adopted, it could realign the politics of society and reconstitute community.²⁶⁸

Drawing upon the inventional opportunity of Shepard's violent death, the GLBT community deployed an alternative way of remembering Shepard as a victim that challenged the narrow reading provided by the wider public sphere. This alternative, counterpublic memory was highly critical of the systemic nature and invisibility of antigay violence, assuming a strong queer style to disrupt the "regime of the normal" that perpetuated such violence.²⁶⁹ To challenge the memory of Shepard as an isolated victim, the queer counterpublic circulated memories of Shepard that sought to turn him into a symbolic victim of antigay violence while minimizing opportunities for public guilt to be scapegoated onto others. As a symbol, Shepard's memory could call attention to public disavowals of responsibility, raise awareness of the pervasiveness of antigay violence, and marshal coalition building for GLBT protections. Without this symbolism, the violence of Shepard's death could become individuated and marginalized, losing its potential as it had in much of the wider public.

In order to craft the disruptive violence of Shepard's murder into a symbol, rhetorical work was needed. According to Browne: "to the degree that such violence was publicly performed and culturally sanctioned, it took on symbolic dimensions that might in turn be construed to the [rhetor's] advantage."²⁷⁰ Thus, to rearticulate antigay violence and make the memories of that violence rhetorically potent, the queer counterpublic needed to publicize the violence of Shepard's death and situated that violence within the wider public's sanction.

²⁶⁸ Browne, "Encountering Angelina Grimké," 55-6.

²⁶⁹ Morris, "My Old Kentucky Homo," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95, 110. The phrase "regimes of the normal" is coined in Michael Warner, introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xxvi.

²⁷⁰ Browne, "Encountering Angelina Grimké," 56.

First, came publicity (or rather, counterpublicity). Publicizing the violence of Shepard's death posed two challenges for queer counterpublic remembering. On one hand, the violent act of Shepard's murder was largely consigned to the activities of the private sphere. Sequestered in a field on the outskirts of town, McKinney and Henderson had ample opportunity to privatize their violent acts. Unlike the violence of war, lynching, or other bias crimes, Shepard's death was not suffered in public view. In Christine Harold and Kevin DeLuca's language, it was not "witnessed," at least not personally.²⁷¹ Such privatized views of violence would be more difficult to frame as culturally sanctioned and make scapegoating his death far easier. On the other hand, to the extent that there was publicity within the public sphere of Shepard's (private) death, it publicized his experience of violence differently than the queer counterpublic would choose. By and large, the popular press covered Shepard as a gay man who died in a solitary incident of violence. But such a view was contrary to Shepard's own experiences of violence and those faced everyday by other GLBT persons. The queer counterpublic had to renounce these views of Shepard's violent death if his potential as symbol was to be realized. To overcome this challenge, the queer counterpublic took two steps: it aggressively reiterated and recentered violence to enable its public witnessing and it recast the characterization of antigay violence in discourse.

The queer counterpublic reiterated over and over again in graphic detail the violence Shepard faced. More so than the popular press, the queer counterpublic focused attention on the description and framing of the violence of the crime, transforming the private act of violence into a public argument. In its first appearance in *The Advocate* on November 10, 1998 the "savage killing" of Shepard was rehearsed in all its terror: "Shepard, 21, was bludgeoned with the butt of

²⁷¹ Christine Harold and Kevin Michael DeLuca, "Behold the Corpse: Violent Images and the Case of Emmett Till," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8 (2005): 272.

a gun, burned, tied to a wooden fence and left for dead.”²⁷² In another story he was “abducted,” “beaten,” “tortured,” and “lashed.” One article speaks of his “battered, unconscious body.” Elsewhere in the article, Shepard was described as “pistol-whipped...with the butt of .357 Magnum and then left to die.”²⁷³ At a memorial vigil for Shepard, his brutal death was reiterated: “They did not dump Matt’s battered body in some ditch hoping the snow would hide it until next spring. They strung him up on a fence....this display was an attempt to intimidate and subjugate Wyoming’s gay community and send the message that all gays and lesbians deserve such violence.”²⁷⁴ One caption in *The Advocate* noted graphically: “Tied to a deer fence for 18 hours, Shepard was so brutally beaten that the bicyclist who discovered him at first thought he was a scarecrow.”²⁷⁵

Beyond reiteration, the queer counterpublic further publicized violence by revealing that Shepard’s attack on the night of his murder was not a unique moment in his life. Matthew Shepard had been attacked before.²⁷⁶ Indeed, for many GLBT persons, antigay and anti-trans violence is not a discrete, single incident but rather an ongoing part of everyday life.²⁷⁷ By raising the repetition of violence, queer memories of Shepard altered how his murder should be

²⁷² “The Good Shepard; Young Man’s Death Shakes the Nation,” *The Advocate*, November 10, 1998, 13.

²⁷³ Chris Bull, “All Eyes Were Watching: Matthew Shepard’s Murder Changed the Way the Press Covers Gays. Will the Change Last?” *The Advocate*, November 24, 1998, 33, 35; Jon Barrett, “The Lost Brother,” *The Advocate*, November 24, 1998, 27, 29.

²⁷⁴ Walter Boulden, “Remarks at Candlelight Vigil for Matthew Shepard, Washington, DC” October 14, 1998, <http://www.wiredstrategies.com/shepard3.html> (accessed April 15, 2011). This speech is from an online collection known as the Matthew Shepard Resource Archive.

²⁷⁵ Barrett, “The Lost Brother,” 27.

²⁷⁶ For discussion about common examinations of bias crime and the failure to recognize bias crime’s process of repetition, see Benjamin Bowling, “Racial Harassment and the Process of Victimization: Conceptual and Methodological Implications for the Local Crime Survey,” in *Hate and Bias Crime: A Reader*, ed. Barbara Perry (New York: Routledge, 2003), 70.

²⁷⁷ For more on how repeat violence not only occurs but exacerbates the lives of gay men, see Jay P. Paul et al., “Suicide Attempts Among Gay and Bisexual Men: Lifetime Prevalence and Antecedents,” *American Journal of Public Health* 92 (2002): 1343.

understood. In *The Advocate*, Shepard's mother, Judy, reported her son was the victim of a sexual assault in Morocco three years prior to his death.²⁷⁸ *The Advocate* detailed a separate incident the previous August in which Shepard was punched in the face by "a bartender turned off by his advances."²⁷⁹ In a speech at the Washington, D.C., vigil, Shepard's friend, Walter Boulden, stated Shepard also faced repeated harassment and name calling throughout his life.²⁸⁰ Thus, while both the queer counterpublic and public sphere remembered Shepard as a victim of violence, the queer counterpublic memory reflected and publicized not the solitary, private experiences of violence but rather an ongoing violence that stifled everyday GLBT life. Shepard's memory in the queer counterpublic centered publicly a new notion of violence in its articulation.

In addition to publicizing the violence of the crime, the rhetorical reframing of the experience of violence by GLBT persons also served the second strategy needed to frame Shepard as a symbol: demonstrating that the violence he faced was culturally sanctioned. Unfortunately, Matthew Shepard's experiences were (and are) not unique. The levels of violence gays and lesbians have faced, historically and contemporarily, cannot be understated. According to the FBI, 1,488 bias crimes were committed against gays and lesbians in 1998.²⁸¹ An increase from earlier years, this number does not adequately conceptualize the violence gays and lesbians face on a daily basis. As Dr. Frederick Lawrence argues, the FBI figures are based on voluntary reporting by local law enforcement which "has not yet reached an optimum, nor even representative, level." Equally important, gays and lesbians have been less likely to report bias

²⁷⁸ John Gallagher, "Matt's HIV Status: Will the Victim Be Made the Predator at the Upcoming Trial?" *The Advocate*, March 16, 1999, 33.

²⁷⁹ Barrett, "The Lost Brother," 28.

²⁸⁰ Boulden, "Remarks at Candlelight Vigil for Matthew Shepard."

²⁸¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Hate Crimes Statistics," <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/civilrights/hate.htm> (accessed March 28, 2011).

crimes due to historical animosities with the police and doubts that such charges would be taken seriously.²⁸² In reality, the violence, harassment, and abuse of gays and lesbians is significantly higher than any official tracking figure. By reframing Shepard as someone who faced violence throughout his life, McKinney and Henderson could be understood as only the most recent perpetrators of antigay violence against Shepard in a culture in which GLBT people were not welcome. However, other strategies were used more widely within queer counterpublic memories to demonstrate that a culture of violence indeed existed. Primary among these was identifying Shepard with other victims of violence.

Remembering Shepard in connection with other bias crime victims enhanced the likelihood that such violence would be seen as systemic rather than rare. These comparisons took place on several levels. Many in the GLBT community began comparisons with other well-known gay victims, particularly Harvey Milk, Allen Schindler, and Scott Amedure. Each was murdered in part because of his sexuality and each was mentioned in connection with the reporting of Shepard's death.²⁸³ Others in the queer counterpublic drew identifications between Shepard and James Byrd Jr., a disabled, African American bias crime victim who was dragged to his death a year earlier in Jasper, Texas. Community leaders, the press, and hate crime legislation made the Shepard-Byrd connection clearly, "impl[y]ing for perhaps the first time that gays are no different from other minorities targeted for hate crimes."²⁸⁴

²⁸² Frederick M. Lawrence, *Punishing Hate: Bias Crimes Under American Law* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 23. For a thorough analysis of the terminology of "hate crime" and "bias crime," see also Lu-in Wang, "The Transforming Power of 'Hate': Social Cognition Theory and the Harms of Bias-Related Crime," *Southern California Law Review* 71 (1997): 47-135.

²⁸³ Milk, murdered in 1978, was the first openly gay U.S. elected official; Schindler was a gay U.S. Navy sailor beaten to death by two of his crewmates in 1992; Amedure was a guest on the *Jenny Jones* show who was murdered in 1995 after admitting he had romantic feelings for another male guest.

²⁸⁴ Bull, "All Eyes Were Watching," 35; "The Good Shepard," 13; *Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act*, HR 1343, 107th Cong., 1st sess. (April 3, 2001); *Local Law Enforcement*

However, more compelling than Shepard's affiliation with other famous victims was his identification with a much larger number of unknown gay and lesbian victims of violence. In queer style, "reminiscing" about one's own experience with antigay violence became an important part of remembering Shepard.²⁸⁵ Often times, gays and lesbians would volunteer these reminiscences for the counterpublic. In the wake of Shepard's death, *The Advocate* received letters to the editor and news reports describing the violence GLBT victims had faced.²⁸⁶ A seventeen-year-old boy named Daniel drew connections between Shepard's death and his own attack and attempted suicide in a speech at Shepard's DC vigil.²⁸⁷ Advocacy groups relayed similar stories of violence. In a GLBT media interview, the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas argued Shepard's case was reminiscent of the murder of a deaf and mute gay man whose attackers were acquitted through a self-defense plea.²⁸⁸ Connections were also made between Shepard and other gays and lesbian bias crime victims through the GLBT press and supportive heterosexual journalists. *The Advocate* credited the attention of the Matthew Shepard case with prompting newspapers in several U.S. cities, including Philadelphia and Denver, to revisit previously overlooked bias crimes across the country, including a murder dating from 1960.²⁸⁹ Still others pointed to the likelihood of Shepard's attack in this culture by sharing their concerns

Enhancement Act of 2001, S 625, 107th Cong., 1st sess. (March 27, 2001); *The Congressional Record* contains numerous accounts of remarks on both of these bills throughout the 107th Congress and future Congresses. President Clinton made several notable connections between Shepard and Byrd in public statements, a weekly radio address, and an official proclamation. All of these remarks are available at The William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum, The Archives, <http://www.clintonlibrary.gov/research.html> (object name "Matthew Shepard and James Byrd;" accessed March 29, 2011).

²⁸⁵ On reminiscing and queer senses of time, see Foucault, "Sexual Choice, Sexual Act," in Kritzman, *Politics, Philosophy, and Culture*, 297. See also Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place*.

²⁸⁶ Bull, "All Eyes Were Watching," 35; Brendan Lemon, "The State of Hate," *The Advocate*, April 13, 1999, 24-8.

²⁸⁷ John Aravosis, "First-Hand Report from the DC Vigil, October 14," October 15, 1998, <http://www.wiredstrategies.com/shepard3.html> (accessed March 29, 2011).

²⁸⁸ Bull, "All Eyes Were Watching," 37.

²⁸⁹ Bull, "All Eyes Were Watching," 37.

that they could become a victim of violence in the future. “It could have been me” was a refrain echoed throughout the queer counterpublic.²⁹⁰ To remember Shepard became an occasion for many GLBT bias crime victims to air publicly their own stories of violence and thereby indict a culture that saw itself as free from blame.

An additional resource for the queer counterpublic in demonstrating the cultural responsibility for antigay violence was derived from the state-sanctioned crackdown at the “Matthew Shepard Political Funeral and Protest.” On the evening of October 19, 1998, four-to-five-thousand gay men, lesbians, and their supporters marched through Manhattan to protest Shepard’s murder. Hastily arranged without a city permit, the march was violently broken up after several blocks by the New York City Police Department. Described objectively as “halting traffic and causing chaos” in a short article in *The Advocate*, other queer texts rallied around the incident as further evidence of queers’ dangerous position in society.²⁹¹ For instance, ACT UP New York suggested: “Mayor Giuliani’s police state broke out in full force, escalating violence, with people injured by police brutality and with 136 people arrested and held in jail for 30 hours.” It noted: “More people saw first hand just how this mayor and his police force are running the city.”²⁹² While Habermas reminds us that the state is not always synonymous with the wider public, ACT UP implied it was possible to read the bloody shutting of the Shepard Political Funeral and Protest as just another example of antigay violence in America.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ Benoit Denizet-Lewis, “It Could Have Been Me: Students at Four U.S. Colleges Describe How Campus Life Has Changed Since Matthew’s Death,” *The Advocate*, October 12, 1999, 50.

²⁹¹ “An Urban Uproar over a Rural Tragedy,” *The Advocate*, November 24, 1998, 29.

²⁹² ACT UP/New York, “Matthew Shepard Political Funeral,” October 20, 1998, <http://www.actupny.org/reports/Shepard.html> (accessed March 29, 2011).

²⁹³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989); However, in some situations, the state and the public are increasingly aligned, if not one in the same. See Asen and Brouwer, *Counterpublics and the State*, 2.

By publicizing in detail the violence of the Shepard murder and linking that violence not to individual perpetrators but cultural sanctions, remembering Matthew Shepard became a means to confront the narrow worldview of the wider public sphere. In challenging contrary public memories that freed the public from culpability in the murder, the queer counterpublic offered an alternative worldview of bias crime violence and the public's responsibility for it. However, while gays and lesbians collectively found countering heterosexual memories of Shepard's death productive, the community was more splintered when it looked at its own deployments of strategic memories of Shepard.

3.4 COUNTERPUBLICS: SECULAR SAINT/COMMON MAN

While the GLBT community strategically employed queer counterpublic memories of Shepard to contest the meaning of violence within the wider public sphere, at the same time, alternative and conflicting memories of Shepard emerged within the community itself. Some of these memories (what I term "gay and lesbian counterpublic memories") challenged the marginalizing moves of the wider public sphere and articulated Shepard as a "queer fiction of the past" in an effort to solidify a distinctive gay identity and integrate that community into the wider public sphere. Meanwhile, other parts of the community, rather than challenging the public sphere more broadly, strategically undercut the gay and lesbian counterpublic. Assuming a critically queer perspective, these queer counterpublic memories sought to disrupt rhetorics of identification and inclusion by their gay and lesbian counterparts, instead arguing for a complex, intersectional, and counter form of queer identity. Two primary frames in which these views were contested were memories of Shepard as a Secular Saint and as a Common Man.

3.4.1 The Secular Saint

In the opening remarks of the trial of Aaron McKinney in the fall of 1999, McKinney's defense launched an all-out offensive on the "myth of St. Matthew." In a familiar pattern of blaming the victim known as the gay panic defense, they attacked Shepard's conduct, his lifestyle, his sexual experiences, his morals, and anything else that might sway the jury from convicting the accused.²⁹⁴ The gay panic defense argues discrimination, mistreatment, and violence against gays and lesbians is self-defense justified by a psychological "panic" in the "victim" as a result of unwanted same-sex interaction.²⁹⁵ To be effective, this strategy must construct the gay or lesbian as aberrant, immoral, and unnatural. Few judges or jurors could logically justify attacking a good person without provocation. But some could justify attacking a social pariah. Indeed, many jurors had in the past.²⁹⁶ For McKinney's trial team, the goal was clear: for McKinney to be exonerated, Shepard had to be seen as deviant. Thus, for McKinney's lawyers, the greatest threat to their defense was an emerging memory of Matthew Shepard as a valued, respected, and likeable person — a secular saint.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ Phil Curtis, "Letter from Laramie," *The Advocate*, October 26, 1999, <http://www.advocate.com/html/specials/shepard/laramie01.asp> (accessed August 31, 2004, no longer accessible). This article appeared as a special report in the online edition of the text, not the printed edition of the same date.

²⁹⁵ Gary David Comstock, "Dismantling the Homosexual Panic Defense," *Law & Sexuality: A Review of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Legal Issues* 2 (1992): 81-82.

²⁹⁶ To my knowledge, there is no accurate accounting for the countless number of GLBT persons whose perpetrators were excused because of the gay panic defense. A recent, well-known example is the murder of Terrance Hauser. See "Man Acquitted with Gay Panic Defense," *The Advocate*, August 1, 2009, <http://www.advocate.com/printArticle.aspx?id=88138> (accessed March 29, 2011).

²⁹⁷ Curtis, "Letter from Laramie."

It is important to clarify here what the term saint means. Indeed, the “saint” rarely appeared in the discourse and, where it did, it had no stridently religious implication.²⁹⁸ Rather, the saint frame signaled Shepard’s transition from an everyday person to an extraordinary symbol — a symbol with the power of a religious icon situated within the non-religious cultural world of social movements. Drawing upon Émile Durkheim, sociologist Barry Schwartz suggests that societies attenuated by “collective excitement” struggle for meaning by endowing collective values upon otherwise everyday objects or people making them “sacred.” In this way, “mundane objects and undistinguished people come to be respected or revered.” After the assassination of the unpopular Abraham Lincoln, Schwartz argues, his memory was filled with sacred (but secular) veneration, providing meaning to the confusion following his death, and motivating social action.²⁹⁹ In Shepard’s case, the previously unknown and unimposing gay man came to embody the suffering and pride of gays and lesbians across the country, processing their grief and fear, and urging cultural and political change. Remembered as a saint in the secular realm and filled with the collective values of the GLBT community, Shepard became a valuable rhetorical tool.

The sacred qualities that become key to this framing of Shepard emerged within the larger rhetorical process of making him a martyr. The creation of martyrs has been a productive area of inquiry across the academy.³⁰⁰ While martyrs have historically been most important to religions, social movements have relied heavily on their own victims of the cause to achieve their

²⁹⁸ Bull, “All Eyes Were Watching,” 37; See also James Brooke, “Gay Man Dies from Attacks, Fanning Outrage and Debate,” *New York Times*, October 13, 1998, A30.

²⁹⁹ Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 34, 30, 31-32.

³⁰⁰ For a summary of scholarship in the study of martyrs, see Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997, rpt. 1999).

ends. These “martyrs of choice” — men and women who give themselves willingly to the cause — can easily acquire rhetorical potential.³⁰¹ However, Shepard did not fit this profile. He held no political position in any GLBT organization, nor was he a willing victim for his attackers. Rather, Shepard was targeted for his identity during a routine bar visit. Thus, to remember Shepard as a martyr required greater rhetorical effort. As an individual who “through chance and circumstance stumbled upon death,” Shepard became an “accidental martyr” through the careful choreographing of his mourning.³⁰² By examining Shepard’s emergence as an accidental martyr within the gay and lesbian counterpublic, his sacred, “saintly” frame becomes clear.

According to Richard Jensen, Thomas Burkholder, and John Hammerback, three steps must occur to sanctify an accidental martyr: the blunt marking of the martyr’s dead body, the transformation of the martyr’s soul from the body to the “spiritual” or sacred realm, and the martyr’s identification with the secular cause.³⁰³ Shepard’s death was ritualized through this process, marking the discourse with fragments of martyr making.

First, Shepard’s death had to be made a reality and the focus of communal attention through the marking of his dead body. According to Jensen et al., “because the mourners’ physical relationship with the deceased has been permanently changed” the rhetor must “rhetorically alter the relationship [with the audience] by acknowledging the death in a straightforward, almost blunt, fashion.” This is usually done, they argue, through the presence of a coffin or body at a public funeral.³⁰⁴ While 1,000 people attended Shepard’s funeral, most of the day’s attention was drawn instead to threats to picket the event from right-wing Christian

³⁰¹ Richard J. Jensen, Thomas R. Burkholder, and John C. Hammerback, “Martyrs for a Just Cause: The Eulogies of Cesar Chavez,” *Western Journal of Communication* 67 (2003): 335-37.

³⁰² Baldwin Smith, *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors*, 373 quoted in Jensen, Burkholder, and Hammerback, “Martyrs for a Just Cause,” 337.

³⁰³ Jensen, Burkholder, and Hammerback, “Martyrs for a Just Cause,” 340-1.

³⁰⁴ Jensen, Burkholder, and Hammerback, “Martyrs for a Just Cause,” 340.

groups.³⁰⁵ However, the rendering of Shepard's death was solidified in other ways to maximize symbolic effect. Shepard's violent and highly publicized murder transformed Shepard into a dead body in the public mind. As we have already seen, the rehearsals of Shepard's death in the GLBT press, films, and images all aided in this transformation of relationship. In addition, the five-day media "death watch" between Shepard's attack and his passing marked this transformation. As Ott and Aoki noted, "That Shepard lay comatose in a hospital for several days while people around the country prayed and stood vigil for him functioned to heighten the public's investment in the story."³⁰⁶ When daily updates of Shepard's condition were broken by an announcement of his death, there was little doubt that Shepard was indeed dead. Along with contemporaneous vigils across the country organized by the gay and lesbian counterpublic to maximize public attention of Shepard's suffering and death, these discursive fragments show the symbolic transformation of Shepard into a dead body.

More rhetorically potent and compelling was the second step of creating Shepard as a martyr: endowing Shepard's memory with sacred qualities. It is through this rhetorical act that "the myth of St. Matthew" emerged that so threatened McKinney's defense. In the view of Jensen et al., endowing sacredness onto the memory of the dead requires that "the human frailties of the deceased are forgotten while their virtues and accomplishments are highlighted."³⁰⁷ Shepard's memorial discourse within the gay and lesbian counterpublic aided this process by putting his virtues and accomplishments on display. The virtues most commonly associated with Shepard were his gentility and his friendship. The first mention of his name in

³⁰⁵ James Brooke, "Friends and Strangers Mourn Gay Student in Wyoming," *New York Times*, October 17, 1998, A11.

³⁰⁶ Ott and Aoki, "The Politics of Negotiating Public Tragedy," 490.

³⁰⁷ Jensen, Burkholder, and Hammerback, "Martyrs for a Just Cause," 340.

The Advocate appeared in the headline: “The Good Shepard.”³⁰⁸ In an article by Jon Barrett, Shepard was called a “gentle young gay man” who “by all accounts...was a gentle, fun-loving person whose slight build (5 feet 2 inches, 105 pounds) and ebullient disposition made people feel protective toward him, not threatened by him.” Shepard was described as “loved” and “a great success” in life in GLBT public service announcements.³⁰⁹ Jim Osborn said Shepard “always has a smile on his face.”³¹⁰ Dennis Shepard’s letter to the readers of *The Advocate* described him as a “sensitive,” “quick witted” person who could “meet and make friends instantly.” Mr. Shepard solidified a perception of his son as a “loving, sensitive, and intelligent person” who was proud of who he was and is remembered as a gentle soul.³¹¹ In highlighting the virtues that Shepard had in life, the gay and lesbian counterpublic memory constructed an image of Shepard endowed with “saintly” appeal in a place of sacred honor that could serve rhetorical purposes beyond the creation of a martyr alone.

Third, as an accidental martyr not directly engaged in political action, Shepard’s memory underwent the greatest renovation in order to suggest he died serving a higher cause — gay and lesbian rights. Key to that perception was the frequent invocation of Shepard’s political and activist work generally. There were documented reports of Shepard’s political involvements, especially in some local campaigns.³¹² In addition, he was actively seeking a career in social justice and political science.³¹³ Shepard was also remembered as wanting to change the world.

³⁰⁸ “The Good Shepard,” 13.

³⁰⁹ Barrett, “The Lost Brother,” 28; Todd Savage, “His Story Lives On,” *The Advocate*, October 12, 1999, 48.

³¹⁰ Bull, “All Eyes Were Watching,” 37.

³¹¹ Dennis Shepard, “My Son Matt,” *The Advocate*, April 25, 2000, 30.

³¹² The Matthew Shepard Foundation, “Matthew’s Life,” 2006, http://www.matthewshepard.org/site/PageServer?pagename=mat_Matthews_Life (accessed December 15, 2009, no longer accessible).

³¹³ Moisés Kaufman and the Members of Tectonic Theater Project, *The Laramie Project* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 20; “The Good Shepard,” 13.

The Advocate declared early on: “Young man’s death shakes the nation. It is how Matthew Shepard would have wanted it.”³¹⁴ This thought was echoed by Boulden at the Washington, D.C., vigil: “Matt once told me that someday he was going to be famous and that he was going to make a difference in the area of human rights....I have to think he had no idea how true that statement would be.”³¹⁵ Later *Advocate* coverage continued: “If he had to die a tragic death, he would have wanted it to make the country a better place for all of us, and maybe it will.”³¹⁶ In addition, despite his non-affiliation with GLBT rights groups specifically, effort was made to link Shepard to the cause explicitly. In a 1998 article, Shepard was referred to as “something of a gay activist” at the University of Wyoming.³¹⁷ He was remembered as a new member in the university’s GLBT organization and as looking forward to the campus’s Coming Out Day events a few days after his attack.³¹⁸ Later press reports established that Shepard had left a planning meeting for the University’s Coming Out Day activities just prior to his fateful encounter with his attackers.³¹⁹ The gay and lesbian counterpublic continually emphasized his commitments to the community and GLBT life, positioning him as someone fighting for the cause of GLBT equality.

Two major effects emerged from this complex rhetorical project. First, the transformation of Shepard into a “secular saint” as part of the martyrdom process aided the gay and lesbian counterpublic in challenging (in both court and public opinion) the gay panic defense. Aware of the likelihood of this strategy, the gay and lesbian counterpublic levied Shepard’s sacred memory aggressively, oscillating these constructions into the wider public sphere through press releases,

³¹⁴ “The Good Shepard,” 13.

³¹⁵ Boulden, “Remarks at Candlelight Vigil for Matthew Shepard.”

³¹⁶ “The Good Shepard,” 13.

³¹⁷ Bull, “All Eyes Were Watching,” 37.

³¹⁸ Denizet-Lewis, “It Could Have Been Me,” 50-2.

³¹⁹ Barrett, “The Lost Brother,” 26.

news reports, and speeches.³²⁰ A telling indication of their success emerged at the conclusion of the McKinney trial. With the two memories of Matthew Shepard — the Saint and the Sinner — standing face to face in a Wyoming courtroom, the memory of “St. Matthew” won the day. McKinney was found guilty of murder in a clear rejection of the gay panic defense, later plea-bargaining for life in prison without parole.³²¹

More broadly, in constructing “St. Matthew” as a martyr, an image of a united gay and lesbian community was formed. As the creation of a martyr is a eulogistic process, one of its major goals is the construction of an identifiable community in the wake of violence. As Browne suggests, violence can tear community apart while a fitting rhetorical response can reconstitute it.³²² Eulogistic processes, like public memorialization, excel in this “constitutive rhetoric.”³²³ The creation of a martyr within a social movement “cement[s] the members of the organization together.”³²⁴ Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell concur, suggesting that speakers in eulogistic situations must attempt to unite the community and minimize advocacy

³²⁰ The HRC, MSF, and GLAAD all released statements highlighting Shepard’s virtues. Similar statements continued to be released throughout the last decade, especially to mark the tenth anniversary of Shepard’s murder and debates over hate crimes legislation. For example, see GLAAD, “The Matthew Shepard Murder: 10 Years Later,” October 3, 2008, http://archive.glaad.org/media/resource_kit_detail.php?id=4740 (accessed March 1, 2011); *The Advocate* also highlighted the “demise of the ‘gay panic defense’” after Shepard. See Phil Curtis, “At Issue: The End of the Nightmare,” *The Advocate*, December 7, 1999, 10; Phil Curtis, “More Than a Verdict: The Shepard Murder Trial is Over, But Its Impact Will Linger for Years,” *The Advocate*, January 18, 2000, 34.

³²¹ As part of the plea deal, the father of the victim, Dennis Shepard, was entitled to speak to the court. He spoke at length about his son and his family’s decision to grant life to a man who they clearly felt deserved the death penalty. He ended his speech powerfully: “Mr. McKinney, I give you life in the memory of one who no longer lives. May you have a long life, and may you thank Matthew every day for it.” Matthew Shepard believed in the death penalty, but in his name, the life of the man who killed him was spared. The myth of St. Matthew was cemented into memory with the sentence of his killer. For excerpts of the speech, see “Excerpts from Statement by Father,” *New York Times*, November 5, 1999, A22. See also Kauffman, *The Laramie Project*, 95-96.

³²² Browne, “Encountering Angelina Grimké,” 56.

³²³ Maurice Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québécois*,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 133-50.

³²⁴ Jensen, Burkholder, and Hammerback, “Martyrs for a Just Cause,” 336.

that might divide it. In eulogistic settings, rhetoric that “reknits the community” is generically demanded.³²⁵ Thus, remembering Shepard as a martyred saint would allow people to “understand the event and share in a renewed sense of community.”³²⁶

Many within the gay and lesbian counterpublic argued that just such a community had been formed or reconstituted through the ascendance of Shepard in counterpublic memory. Rebecca Granato believed Shepard’s murder “showed us how a community can come together.”³²⁷ Jeremy Kinser described the murder in *The Advocate* as a key moment for a “people joining to become a ‘we,’ not just an ‘I.’”³²⁸ According to Cathy Renna, media director of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), “Matthew made our community, for better or for worse, very real.”³²⁹ In some cases, the unity of identity forged in the early days of remembering Matthew Shepard seemed lost. Asked what it would take to unify millions of gay people into solitary action again, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) President Matthew Foreman said, “Movements have to keep being reinvigorated.... I think this time it's going to be another Matthew Shepard.”³³⁰ While the events around Shepard’s martyrdom reconstituted a gay and lesbian community, the incorporation of those events into a collective memory became an occasion for identity building as well. As George Chauncey has suggested, the reclamation of collective gay past experiences aided in defining a distinct community to

³²⁵ Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “Rhetorical Hybrids: Fusions of Generic Elements,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 149, 148.

³²⁶ Jensen, Burkholder, and Hammerback, “Martyrs for a Just Cause,” 340.

³²⁷ Jon Barrett, “Defining Moments of the Decade: History Has Yet to Make its Judgment on the Past Ten Years, But Our Readers Have,” *The Advocate*, January 18, 2000, 19.

³²⁸ Jeremy Kinser, “Stonewall 30: Can It Be Three Decades; Fast-Forward — and Back,” *The Advocate*, June 22, 1999, 34.

³²⁹ Michael Joseph Gross, “Matthew Shepard: Five Years Later – Pain and Prominence,” *The Advocate*, September 30, 2003, 26.

³³⁰ Adam B. Vary, “Is Gay Over?” *The Advocate*, June 20, 2006, 100.

“assert a collective identity in the present.”³³¹ The community sanctified certain moments to give gays and lesbians a past, generating identification between the disparate groups of people who constitute the GLBT community.³³² Shepard’s martyrdom was such a moment for many community members. Writing to *The Advocate*, Larry Drane suggested Shepard’s death was “like Stonewall” in as much as it changed lives. *The Advocate* featured Shepard’s death prominently in its historical narratives as the most important event of 1998 and key to the decade, with Shepard as a hero of the movement.³³³ Similarly, members of the gay and lesbian counterpublic made an impressive, concerted effort to make Shepard *TIME*’s Person of the Year.³³⁴ For advocates of remembering Shepard as a sacred figure, to remember Shepard was to participate in an act of identification — reinscribing the GLBT community from the violence that had shattered it. It is the effect of this construction that allowed Michael Gross to report “five years later, Matthew Shepard still matters.”³³⁵

However, while few objected to the defense of Shepard as a valued person, others GLBT persons were not so keen to remember Shepard as a symbol of a united gay and lesbian community. For these individuals, the elevation of Shepard did not signify a community coming together, but what little that was left of a community falling apart. These dissenters constituted a queer counterpublic in opposition to the gay and lesbian counterpublic. Strategically engaging the semi-official gay and lesbian counterpublic, the queer counterpublic utilized their memories of Shepard in a very different way.

³³¹ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 286.

³³² Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*, 4-6.

³³³ Barrett, “Defining Moments of the Decade,” 19.

³³⁴ M.M. Buechner, “TIME Man of Year Poll Roils Internet,” *TIME*, December 21, 1998, <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,17197,00.html> (accessed March 28, 2011).

³³⁵ Gross, “Matthew Shepard: Five Years Later,” 26.

3.4.2 Queer Counterpublic Memories of Intersectionality

A central dissociation in remembering Matthew Shepard for the queer counterpublic emerged from their queer orientation and complex notion of identity. While constructing Shepard as a prominent person heralded a coming together for the gay and lesbian counterpublic, the critical view of identity taken by the queer perspective saw it otherwise. Instead, the queer counterpublic remembered Shepard as the poster child of white, middle-class, gay men, at the core of the representational power in the gay rights movement, yet again centering itself and whitewashing the diversity of the actually existing community. Such a practice amounted to what Judith Halberstam has called a “representative individual model of minority history.”³³⁶

At the heart of this queer counterpublic memory was what Scott Bravmann has termed the “queer cultural studies of history.” Such projects located within discourses of gay and lesbian identity aim to “recognize the race, gender, class (among others) antagonisms ‘within’ that identity.”³³⁷ A queer cultural studies critique then labeled as “fiction” gay and lesbian counterpublic memories of Shepard for failing to recognize the diverse, coexisting dimensions within GLBT identity. Instead of being valued as an intersecting mix, GLBT was flattened into a singular, hegemonic notion of gay and lesbian identity. While traditional cultural studies projects focus on the dimensions of gender, race, class, and nationality, within the GLBT discourse around Shepard, issues of class and nationality were largely mute.³³⁸ As such, race and gender

³³⁶ Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place*, 44.

³³⁷ Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*, 31, 5.

³³⁸ While class was largely absent from many queer counterpublic critiques, it was clearly an issue. Had Shepard not been from a financially secure, middle class family he would not have been an easy victim to identify with; nor would his memory have been able to thrive thanks to the legal, cultural, and economic resources that his family and supporters brought to the task.

took on prominence as issues of critical concern in queering remembrances of Matthew Shepard, provoking an “outcry over other hate crimes against people of color and transgender people.”³³⁹

Race was the most prominent of these intersecting identities to draw attention in queer fragments. Little thought was given in the first days after Shepard’s murder to his racial status beyond the connection with James Byrd. But as Shepard’s memory emerged as a cultural force, critiques of the community’s ignorance of whiteness were articulated.³⁴⁰ Writing in *The Advocate*, former Executive Director of the NGLTF, Urvashi Vaid, argued that the GLBT rights movement, in its rush to embrace the media attention of the Shepard case, was “playing politics with some core principles” by failing to recognize corresponding violence against racial, gender, and political minorities.³⁴¹ Jasmyne Cannick echoed this statement a few years later: “If my memory serves me correctly, the world stopped because white gays across the country made Shepard’s death a nationwide issue.”³⁴² Out lesbian actress and activist Rosie O’Donnell pointed to racial concerns in gay and lesbian memorial practices as a reason for not attending and speaking at vigils for Shepard.³⁴³

Issues of gender also drew commentary from the queer counterpublic but little in regard to the masculine/feminine binary as an issue of critique. Instead, queer criticisms focused primarily on how transgender persons were made invisible by remembering Shepard. According to Richard Juang, in “conventional discussion of rights and equality” transgender persons have been “excluded...as aberrant cases.” This is particularly true in the area of bias crimes where the

³³⁹ Yusef Najafi, “Hope Emerges from Horror: Judy Shepard and Local Activists Reflect on the Decade Since Matthew Shepard’s Murder,” *Metroweekly: Washington DC’s GLBT Newsmagazine*, October 23, 2008, <http://www.metroweekly.com/gauge/?ak=3845> (accessed March 29, 2011).

³⁴⁰ The rhetorical dimensions of whiteness are discussed at length in Nakayama and Krizek, “Whiteness,” 291-309.

³⁴¹ Urvashi Vaid, “Post-Principle Blues,” *The Advocate*, December 8, 1998, 96.

³⁴² Jasmyne Cannick, “Hate Crimes in Black and White,” *The Advocate*, November 6, 2007, 22.

³⁴³ Judy Wieder, “Person of the Year: The Real Rosie,” *The Advocate*, Jan 21, 2003, 53.

“multilayered” relationship between recognition and violence promotes trans victims as “deserving” of violence, makes those crimes invisible, leads to dismissive attitudes by authorities and the community, and enshrines feelings of the inevitability of violence in its victims.³⁴⁴ Meanwhile transgender persons have a substantially higher risk of facing repeated violence and harassment, often with higher levels of injury and greater likelihood of death.³⁴⁵ Ironically, transgender people have received relatively less attention in bias crimes discourse with Shepard as the focus of a gay and lesbian sense of identity and community. Indeed, the first several iterations of federal hate crimes legislation prompted by Shepard’s murder left unclear whether transgender victims would be protected or not.³⁴⁶ As part of the queer counterpublic, transgender activists were keen to raise inequities in discussions of violence, sometimes using Shepard as a point of comparison.³⁴⁷ One such event was the protest of a speech by Judy Shepard at a 2008 Human Rights Campaign (HRC) event by transgender activists who were angry over trans exclusion from Democratic non-discrimination legislation. In the question-and-answer period after her speech, Judy Shepard defended the work of HRC and Congress, for which she received an unusually high level of criticism. Describing her actions as “cowardly and indefensible,” one

³⁴⁴ Richard M. Juang, “Transgendering the Politics of Recognition,” in *Transgender Rights*, eds. Paisley Currah, Richard M. Juang, and Shannon Price Minter (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 243, 253.

³⁴⁵ Rebecca L. Stotzer, “Violence Against Transgender People: A Review of United States Data,” *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 14 (2009): 170-9.

³⁴⁶ Lara Schwartz, Ithi Toy Ulit, and Deborah Morgan, “Straight Talk About Hate Crimes Bills: Anti-Gay, Anti-Transgender Bias Stalls Federal Hate Crimes Legislation,” *Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law* 7 (2006): 174-76. The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act that became law in 2009 included explicit protections for transgender persons.

³⁴⁷ While most queer theorists and activists have included transgender as an important part of their project, some transgender advocates and scholars have argued that this can be an unreflective inclusion that frequently does damage to crucial transgender concerns relating to security, housing, employment, and identity, among others. For example, see Ki Namaste, “‘Tragic Misreadings’: Queer Theory’s Erasure of Transgender Subjectivity,” in *Queer Studies: A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Anthology*, ed. Brett Beemyn and Mickey Eliason (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 183-203. See also Shannon Price Minter, “Do Transsexuals Dream of Gay Rights? Getting Real About Transgender Inclusion,” in *Transgender Rights*, 141-70.

trans activist remarked: “I remember when Judy Shepard was a friend of the T community, but no longer.”³⁴⁸

While many of these queer counterpublic memories were instigated by queer elites, everyday queers took up the argument as well. Readers and viewers of GLBT texts expressed similar critical concerns for identity formation through critiquing the memory of Shepard. Such sentiments were expressed vividly in letters to the editor in *The Advocate*. One example was a letter entitled “Past Tense,” by Mark Walcott, who wrote:

Thanks for reminding us that the phrase GLBT community is a fucking oxymoron. Two black transgendered women (Bella Evangelista and Emonie Kiera Spaulding) were murdered in Washington, D.C., less than a month before your September 30 issue hit the stands. Another transgendered woman was shot and seriously hurt. You reported on all this recent outrage in less than a page [Nation, September 30] yet in the same issue devoted no less than eight pages to the topic of a Caucasian gay male (Matthew Shepard) who was killed five years ago. You call yourselves *The Advocate*. Need I ask for whom?³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ “Polar,” comment on “Judy Shepard: Back Up HRC on Press ‘Misinformation’ About Leaving Transgender Behind!” *The Transadvocate*, comment posted June 15, 2008, <http://www.transadvocate.com/judy-shepard-back-up-hrc-on-press-misinformation-about-leaving-transgender-behind.htm> (accessed April 15, 2011).

³⁴⁹ Mark Walcott, “Past Tense,” *The Advocate*, October 28, 2003, 4.

To draw attention to these commemorative and representational deficiencies and raise awareness about the broader notions of identity unacknowledged by privileging Shepard's memory, queer counterpublic memories often attempted to link Shepard's name with GLBT people of color and transgender victims of bias crimes. Cannick situated her critique on Shepard's memory in relation to the murder of black, gay man Michael Sandy. In remembering Shepard, Cannick argued: "Why didn't Sandy's death merit the same response?"³⁵⁰ Some GLBT rights groups offered Pablo Zuniga as an example of a Hispanic man who was similarly attacked but given little attention, in part because of his disability and race.³⁵¹ The murder of transgendered Gwen Araujo in 2002 was often used by transgender activists, not only to connect Shepard's memory with that of a victim who might be more easily assailed, but also as a counterpoint to the prevalence of Shepard's memory. To quote one transgender blogger after an appearance by Judy Shepard: "I'm obviously sorry for her loss, but the T community has seen many losses in the ensuing years that were as blatant and vivid as hers, perhaps more so. Gwen Araujo's mother would have been a much better choice."³⁵² Countless other victims like J. R. Warren, Billy Jack Gaither, Angie Zapata, Jesse Dirkhising, and Lawrence King were mentioned in conjunction with Matthew Shepard to disrupt a singular focus upon him as the symbol of community and a rallying point for gay and lesbian identity.³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Cannick, "Hate Crimes in Black and White," 22.

³⁵¹ Bull, "All Eyes Were Watching," 37.

³⁵² "Polar," comment on "Judy Shepard."

³⁵³ J. R. Warren was an African American gay man beaten to death by two white men in 2000; Billy Jack Gaither was a 39 year-old gay man beaten to death in Alabama in 1999; Angie Zapata was an 18 year-old transgender woman who was murdered in Colorado in 2008; Jesse Dirkhising was a 13 year-old boy (who may himself have been gay) who was drugged, assaulted, raped, and left for dead by two older gay male neighbors in 1999; Lawrence King was a 15 year-old of unclear sexuality and gender identity shot in the head by a classmate in school. See also the Human Rights Campaign, "A Chronology of Hate Crimes: 1998-2002," http://www.hrc.org/issues/hate_crimes/4848.htm (accessed March 29, 2011).

To date, such criticisms of Shepard's reified memory have done little to alter the memory industry that has sprung up around his death. While it has been widely acknowledged even within the gay and lesbian counterpublic that "this is not just about Matthew," at the level of public memory, Shepard's whiteness (and with it his class, age, gender, ability, gender-identity, nationality, and the like) remained largely unmarked, leaving unrecognized the profound violence faced by queers whose identities are more intersectional and making suspicious claims of unity in the aftermath of Shepard's death.³⁵⁴ While queer counterpublic memories of Shepard continue to challenge such flattened notions of what it means to be gay, it was not the only identity controversy to result from the Shepard case.

3.4.3 The Common Man

Simultaneous to memories of Shepard as an exceptional event in understanding gay and lesbian identity, other gays and lesbians were constituting frames of remembering Shepard that linked him directly to average, everyday *heterosexual* Americans. In short, Shepard was remembered as a common man. The rhetorical power of a common man ethos cannot be understated, particularly in publics and politics. Schwartz highlights how Abraham Lincoln's "eulogists politicized common traits," to enshrine an affinity for Lincoln in the memory of the "common people."³⁵⁵ Jamieson, speaking of mediated images, notes "traditional arguments...have been replaced in American political discourse by staged dramatizations that identify the politicians with us and

³⁵⁴ Boulden, "Remarks at Candlelight Vigil for Matthew Shepard."

³⁵⁵ Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*, 156-57. See also Merrill D. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 31, 385.

associate them with images that we approve or disapprove of.”³⁵⁶ Richard Sennett echoes Jamieson, pointing to the significance of the personal in connecting with public figures.³⁵⁷ Kenneth Burke’s conceptualization of identification is central to this common connection. Burke draws upon Aristotle’s common topics to argue for rhetoric’s basis in identifying shared experiences with the audience: “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his.”³⁵⁸ Thus, the rhetorician divided from her “common” audience may invoke a strategy that demonstrates a common touch.

Because “you couldn’t even make up a more sympathetic victim,” Shepard was taken up strategically by elements of the GLBT community to link him specifically to the wider public.³⁵⁹ In doing so, they hoped to link explicitly gay and straight identities and wipe away the division made visible in Shepard’s murder. The gay and lesbian counterpublic reinforced the memory of Shepard as the common man by relaying his life story through various fragments. Media accounts, narratives, and reminiscences of friends and family within the gay and lesbian counterpublic that extended far beyond the events of Shepard’s murder and its aftermath pointed to a counterpublic memory geared more toward describing who Matthew Shepard was as a person rather than as a victim or a symbol. In what causes did he believe? What were his likes and dislikes? How did he spend his time? While these were not necessarily the expressed objectives of some fragments, these humanizing insights into Shepard’s personality emerged often and repeatedly whenever Shepard was discussed.

³⁵⁶ Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 115.

³⁵⁷ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 26, 104.

³⁵⁸ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950; rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 55, italics original. See also Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, 301.

³⁵⁹ Bull, “All Eyes Were Watching,” 37.

Stories about Shepard from his friends and classmates helped to craft this common man frame. In the hours and days after his death, Shepard's friends became reliable targets of media interviews and speakers at memorial events, circulating ample personal anecdotes into the counterpublic sphere and shaping a convincing image of Shepard's common touch. One friend noted Shepard was a "marathon shopper."³⁶⁰ Others discussed his predilection for books: "Matt read a lot – the Old West was his favorites." His small stature was perpetually remarked upon and earned him the nickname "little Matt."³⁶¹ Boulden spent a significant amount of his speech at the Washington, D.C., vigil "help[ing] people understand who Matt was." Among the details Boulden related were Shepard's smoking habit, his interests in world affairs, and how appalled Shepard would be that people attended his vigil in street clothes rather than "brand new suits."³⁶²

At times, Shepard's friends called into question his exceptionalism, in an effort to make him more identifiable. In an interesting example of how different frames of remembering Shepard were often contradictory, Shepard's close friend Romaine Patterson denigrated the "myth of St. Matthew" in an effort to embrace his common man persona: "The media really made [him] this saintly character, this martyr for the gay community. In reality, Matthew had struggles; he dealt with issues around drugs, and he dealt with issues around depression."³⁶³ As Patterson illustrated, remembering an individual's flaws can make them more typical.

Besides friends and classmates, others had important information to contribute to the common man frame. The most compelling of these portraits of Shepard emerged from interviews and editorials by his parents, Judy and Dennis Shepard, who played a major role in shaping the memory of their son after his death. They pictured Shepard's life in the most "normal" of

³⁶⁰ Barrett, "The Lost Brother," 28.

³⁶¹ Barrett, "The Lost Brother," 28.

³⁶² Boulden, "Remarks at Candlelight Vigil for Matthew Shepard."

³⁶³ Neal Broverman, "Short Answers: Romaine Patterson," *The Advocate*, October 25, 2005, 22.

circumstances. He had a strong way with people that made him very well liked.³⁶⁴ He cared deeply for his family, his parents and his younger brother. He had a typical American childhood, except for his final two years of high school when he attended The American School in Switzerland as his father worked abroad. Even his relationship with his father, sometimes strained, re-enforced the average-ness of Matthew Shepard. His way with people, his strong family bonds, and his demeanor all made Shepard out to be a typical U.S. college student.³⁶⁵

The Shepards' rhetoric framed their son, and by association all gays and lesbians, as "normal" children. In a poignant essay to other fathers of GLBT youth (posted in *The Advocate*), Dennis Shepard related the mistakes he made with Matthew, in particular his own feelings of discomfort with accepting a gay child. Shepard's father also encouraged other fathers to "accept their kids as kids." Mr. Shepard often refrained: "Matt was not my gay son. Matt was my son who happened to be gay."³⁶⁶ In other words, Dennis Shepard argued that Matthew was just like any other child, gay or straight, and frames sexual orientation as a common part of American life that should be accepted by everyone. Along with interviews of his wife Judy, Dennis reassured everyone that despite being gay, Matthew was "still the same person we loved and raised."³⁶⁷

In conjunction with portrayals from significant people in his life, other everyday gays and lesbians strengthened Shepard's common man status through acts of identification. *The Advocate* was full of men and women who related to Shepard's life. Some were simply expressions of grief. When Shepard died, Lee Thompson noted he felt as if he was "having a conversation with

³⁶⁴ Barrett, "The Lost Brother," 28.

³⁶⁵ Shepard, "My Son Matt," 30.

³⁶⁶ Shepard, "My Son Matt," 30.

³⁶⁷ Judy Wieder and John Gallagher, "The Shepard Family Heals," *The Advocate*, October 12, 1999, 40.

Matt.”³⁶⁸ *The Advocate* itself called Shepard “the lost brother who [we] were suddenly united [with] in a devastating grief.”³⁶⁹ Others found commonality in his shared traumas. One friend noted how Shepard had been “called ‘faggot’” like many GLBT people.³⁷⁰ Some commented on how his story was “a familiar sight.”³⁷¹ Indeed, others went so far as to express directly how universal he was. Shepard’s friend Jim Osborn stated in an interview that he “could have been anyone’s gay son.”³⁷² *The Advocate* noted that Shepard was “a middle class college kid Americans could really relate to.”³⁷³ For the gay and lesbian counterpublic, Shepard was framed as an appealing and familiar common man who could be easily identified with his peers in the wider public sphere and thus could serve as a bridge toward gaining greater rights.

3.4.4 Queer Counterpublic Memories of Division

Just as commemorations of Shepard as a “saint” had splintered views of identity within the GLBT community, framing Shepard as a “common man” failed to signal a moment of identification with heterosexual America for all GLBT persons. Instead, Shepard’s death reinforced as strongly as ever the divisions between the gay and the straight worlds.³⁷⁴ These divisions were especially sharp for those who had felt like they had become part of the wider American community prior to the murder. Many gay men and lesbians felt as though they had arrived in 1990. Charles Kaiser suggested, with the “sharply dropping shock value of being gay,” many deeply believed the “nation’s old ideas of tolerance and inclusiveness would finally

³⁶⁸ John Gallagher, “Hiking Against Hate,” *The Advocate*, March 16, 1999, 35.

³⁶⁹ Barrett, “The Lost Brother,” 28.

³⁷⁰ Barrett, “The Lost Brother,” 28.

³⁷¹ Bill Ghent, “Matthew Shepard Inc.?” *The Advocate*, January 19, 1999, 54.

³⁷² Bull, “All Eyes Were Watching,” 37.

³⁷³ Lemon, “The State of Hate,” 24.

³⁷⁴ The concept of a “gay world” is derived from Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 23-9.

expand to include what had long been its most hated minority.”³⁷⁵ Shepard’s murder rocked these wishful notions of security and identification, symbolizing that gays and lesbians had not, in fact, “arrived.”³⁷⁶ For these queers, remembering Shepard was a wake up call, not a celebration of a shared gay/straight identity.

This wake up call was reflected in the public, queer remembering of Shepard. Rather than argue for what was held in common between gay and straight Americans, remembering Shepard became an occasion for the queer counterpublic to emphasize that much difference remained. In doing so, queers again disrupted simplistic notions of identity, this time across the hetero/homo binary. These differences primarily fractured along lines of geography, generation, and complicity.

Recognizing regional differences in the acceptance of gays and lesbians was an important way of remembering Shepard’s death in the queer counterpublic. Balter-Reitz and Stewart demonstrate how the rural landscape played a key part in how Shepard’s death was framed. For them, Henderson and McKinney were “agents of the land” that “purified the landscape by eliminating the disruptive influence personified by Shepard.” Removing human agency from the murder, their argument signifies a sharp distinction between rural and urban life and the appropriateness of gays within them.³⁷⁷ This awful detachment for gays and lesbians in middle America is contrasted with GLBT persons on the supposedly liberal, urban, and gay-friendly coasts. Marchers in New York felt this distinction clearly: “There was a sense, I think, in the gay community, particularly living in a certain segment of it in New York City, that we can live in a

³⁷⁵ Kaiser, *The Gay Metropolis*, 340, 329.

³⁷⁶ Michael Cooper, “Killing Shakes Complacency of the Gay Rights Movement,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1998, http://www.nytimes.com/ads/marketing/laramie/19981021_laramie6.html (accessed March 29, 2011).

³⁷⁷ Balter-Reitz and Stewart, “Looking for Matthew Shepard,” in Hope, *Visual Communication*, 123.

kind of bubble and feel relatively safe and feel as if we've arrived."³⁷⁸ For this marcher, living in a gay mecca had blinded many gays and lesbians to the divisions that still remained in the rest of the country. Ironically, sometimes queers used the belief in the purity of rural America to emphasize geographic differences. Explained Jim Plogger: "Because it happened in rural, small-town America illustrates [sic] that no one is immune from potential hate crimes."³⁷⁹ Shepard's death was therefore more heinous in the safety and value system of the country rather than the city. However, this was a minority view in the discourse as rurality was believed to enhance divisions of queers from non-queers, making them more likely targets. By emphasizing the urban/rural elements of Shepard's death, the queer counterpublic articulated that liberalizing views of gay rights were not equitably disbursed. While some gays and lesbians in cities and on the coasts might have been closer to identifying with heterosexual America, those in middle America were still outsiders and deviants.

Many of those most keenly awakened to their division from mainstream America in the aftermath of Shepard's death were gay and lesbian youth. Born at a time when many of their gay forefathers were marching in the streets and dying in hospital beds, these young GLBT people in their twenties and teens had experienced a much different relationship between gay and straight cultures. For many of them, to be gay was intelligible, familiar, and acceptable.³⁸⁰ Accepted by more of their friends and many of their families at a higher rate than years earlier, this generation of gays and lesbians had faced less discrimination, hatred, and isolation. The inclusion was most noticeable on the street. After a decade of radical activism, former Queer Nation spokesman Jay

³⁷⁸ Cooper, "Killing Shakes Complacency."

³⁷⁹ Barrett, "Defining Moments of the Decade," 19.

³⁸⁰ Jennifer Mrozowski, "More Schools Get Gay-Straight Alliances: Support, Safety for All Students is Goal," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 12, 2001, http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2001/08/12/loc_more_schools_get.html (accessed March 29, 2011); Lambda Legal, "Making the Case for Equality," 2009, <http://www.lambdalegal.org/about-us/history.html> (accessed March 29, 2011).

Blotcher recalled, “We were looking to younger people to pick up the mantle and it wasn't really happening....a new generation came of age and said: ‘I don’t have to be a gay activist, I’m just a gay person. It doesn’t have to be an issue.’”³⁸¹ Twenty-one year old Shepard’s murder was a threat to this generational vision of equality.

Interviews with and news stories about gay and lesbian youth revealed the shock of division brought on by Shepard’s death. In a submission to *The Advocate*, twenty-two year old Shawn Harden acknowledged the murder “instilled fear and grief in all gays and lesbians...especially on college campuses.”³⁸² Indeed, colleges became the locus for similar remembering frames as “Shepard could have been any of the hundreds of thousands of other gay and lesbian students.” Despite having felt no homophobia at his school in Tennessee, twenty year old Chad Hughes told *The Advocate* he had to change his actions: “Right after what happened [to Shepard], I was a little more cautious, and I think a lot of gay people were.” Twenty-one year old Amy Warren corroborated this feeling while thinking of Shepard at college in northern Arizona: “We were all in shock after the murder, and for a long time I think people were afraid and careful of their actions in public.”³⁸³ These young gays and lesbians used this newfound sense of division to take action. Students on college campuses raised awareness, started organizations, came out, and took to the streets. For example, Jared Roper, after dealing with the fear resulting from Shepard’s death, came out of the closet “to provide resources and support for anyone who needs them.”³⁸⁴ A marcher in New York, while not surprised that many old gay friends were present, observed eagerly that “there were lots of young people at the rally on Fifth Avenue.”³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ Cooper, “Killing Shakes Complacency.”

³⁸² Barrett, “Defining Moments of the Decade,” 19.

³⁸³ Denizet-Lewis, “It Could Have Been Me,” 50.

³⁸⁴ Denizet-Lewis, “It Could Have Been Me,” 50.

³⁸⁵ Cooper, “Killing Shakes Complacency.”

In remembering Shepard, many queer youth recognized for the first time they were not quite the same as their heterosexual peers.

Along with generation and geography, a rhetoric of complacency emerged highlighting the need for recognizing division after Shepard.³⁸⁶ After the height of the domestic HIV/AIDS crisis, the radical and vigilant edge of the GLBT community had gone dull. Implied in such inaction was the belief that identification had been achieved with the wider public and along with it, an emerging security. In the wake of Shepard's death, queers articulated a recognition that complacency had settled into their everyday experiences. Marchers remembering Shepard in New York echoed this idea: "[There was] a sense that gay rights are there, that we are so much a part of the mainstream in so many ways, so visible, with so many role models on television. It's a bit of an illusion." Thomas Rubble also expressed this view in a *New York Times* interview at the New York protest: "Sometimes, in our little gay lives in the middle of America, I think we have forgotten that they kill us. They hate us."³⁸⁷ A complacent community had forgotten that real divisions between gay and straight existed. They had lost their queer vigilance and Shepard had died as a result. Even Shepard was framed as someone who had forgotten this division. Shepard's friend Kurt Scofield recalled in *The Advocate* that Shepard "was a wonderful person who thought everybody was as pleasant as he was."³⁸⁸ Boulden echoed this rhetoric of security in identification: "Matt told me how happy he was to be back home, how comfortable he felt in Laramie, and how safe he felt there compared to the big city. I was so happy to hear that because I had encouraged Matt to come home."³⁸⁹ Implicit in these statements was the reality that everyone was not "pleasant"; indeed, that a great deal of bigotry and hatred still existed in

³⁸⁶ Cooper, "Killing Shakes Complacency."

³⁸⁷ Cooper, "Killing Shakes Complacency."

³⁸⁸ Barrett, "The Lost Brother," 28.

³⁸⁹ Boulden, "Remarks at Candlelight Vigil for Matthew Shepard."

society. In failing to recognize this bigotry — at the core a sign of the division between the gay and straight world — Shepard lost his life. Whereas before the 1990s, gays and lesbians had been aware of their deep division from mainstream America and thrived on it, this decade had too easily embraced a false identification. The murder of Matthew Shepard was only one brilliant example of how forgetting divisions could be destructive; remembering him in the queer counterpublic became an occasion to place those continuing divisions front and center.

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

On October 28, 2009, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act was signed into law by President Barack Obama.³⁹⁰ Almost eleven years after his murder and twenty-three years after the U.S. House of Representative's first hearing on anti-gay violence, memories of Shepard oscillated to the state with persuasive effect, yielding political results.³⁹¹ But beyond laws, the remembering of Shepard in the GLBT community has much to tell us. First, the pace of events between Shepard's murder and this legislation is telling for scholars of public memory. While likely lengthy for those seeking action, eleven years in the study of public memory is rather concise. The Shepard case demonstrates effectively that memory work need not be focused only on events substantially inscribed in our history. Rather, near-term memories and their microturns over a short period are ripe with rhetorical possibilities. As we continue to probe

³⁹⁰ Perry Bacon Jr., "After 10-year Dispute, Expansion of Hate Crimes Law to Gays Signed," *Washington Post*, October 29, 2009, A03.

³⁹¹ House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice of the Committee on the Judiciary, *Hearing on Anti-Gay Violence*, 99th Cong., 2nd sess., 1986, 1-31.

the past for decisive moments in memory making, we must remember the scope of time is rhetorical and ignoring public memories of the recent past is short sighted.³⁹²

Just as important, this essay illustrates the utility of public memories in a rhetorical strategy for counterpublic action. While the field has brought the rhetorical dimensions of memory to the fore, far too often we overlook Barbara Biesecker's reminder that:

Collective memory *per se* is neither necessarily conservative nor innovative in force. Instead, the political entailments of collective memory are an effect of what and how we remember, and the uses to which those memories are put.³⁹³

Frequently, the *conservative* contributions of memory in rendering the past as a constant, historical record are often the starting point for rhetorical analysis while alternative means of understanding a memory text or site are overlooked. While more critical and cultural studies have pushed the field away from this hegemonic bias in rhetorical criticism more widely, we need to do more to accelerate this shift within public memory work. The examination of multiple, alternative, vernacular, counterpublic memories outside of the conservative view can shift the locus of memory's rhetorical study from reactions to oppressive metanarratives to the creations of contrary tellings of the past. With memories as strategies, counterpublics find new ways of challenging conservative worldviews not through tactical critique, but strategic production.

³⁹² For conceptualizing scope in language, see Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (1945; rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 59.

³⁹³ Biesecker, "Remembering World War II," 406 (*italics original*).

Next, this essay shows that contests over public memory are far more complicated than simple dialectical terms like “official and vernacular” or “public and counterpublic” might suggest. Rather, public memories are products of multiple, overlapping, and sometimes contradictory publics and counterpublics that muddle simple distinctions. As this study demonstrates, clashes may be just as likely between various iterations of gay and lesbian or queer counterpublics as between a supposed unitary gay and lesbian counterpublic and public sphere. Thus the study of counterpublic memories, while drawing upon already established points of conflict, must be extended to multiple, simultaneous, actually existing clashes, both internal and external, to our overly rigid contours of community. Such a finding, while not the purview of this essay, also suggests that, like elements of social movements themselves, public memories may have militant and moderate iterations that while not working in concert, may together shift society, culture, and public authority toward change in powerful ways.³⁹⁴

Finally and most specific to this analysis, despite traumatic and convoluted relationships to the past, the queer “*turn toward* memory” is and continues to be a valuable rhetorical strategy. Within the queer pasts seen here are lessons to be learned. One such lesson is that traumatic pasts need not be only damaging in their remembrance. Another lesson is that there are important distinctions between gay and lesbian and queer forms of the past. A final lesson for understanding is that there is no single, queer past. As Bravmann has shown and Morris exemplifies, there are multiple orientations to the queer past that both enable and disable the construction of queer historical subjects and with them contemporary queer identities and politics. The memory of Matthew Shepard within the GLBT community is currently one

³⁹⁴ For details on the dynamics on militant and moderate groups in social movement theory, see Herbert W. Simons, “Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (1970): 1-11.

example of a “queer fiction of the past” with excessive influence but also a queer fiction that can be most productively understood rhetorically by studying its fragmentation over and between diverse queer discourses.

4.0 IMAGINING GLBT AMERICANS

4.1 THE CALIFORNIA TEXTBOOK DEBATES

At the heart of the discourses of American history that have proven so unwelcoming (when not actively hostile) to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT)³⁹⁵ persons are a number of strategic rhetorics that patrol the borders of American identity and regulate the inclusion of marginalized groups within the wider culture. As we have already seen in this dissertation, strategic rhetorics of whiteness, maleness, and wealth are just some of those prominent, yet mostly invisible or unnoticed, strategic forces that have both constrained the ability of GLBT people to be represented in history by heterosexuals and that have limited the ways GLBT people are rendered visible when they are represented. This chapter continues the examination of the “strategic turn” within GLBT memory rhetorics, highlighting another form of strategic rhetoric at play within queer public memory with both benefits and problematic effects on GLBT representation in the past: American nationalism.

The study of nationalism has been a prominent part of twentieth-century historical, political, and cultural thought. Influential within this study, international studies scholar Benedict

³⁹⁵ Within this chapter, the terms “gay, lesbians, and bisexual” (or GLB) are differentiated by GLBT or GLBTQ primarily to reflect the texts and to delineate an evolution of thinking and inclusion on the part of later advocates. Thus, while early advocates only expressed gay, lesbian, and bisexual concerns in the early 1980s, advocates in the late 1990s and the new millennium broadened their outlook to include self-identified transgender persons and queers.

Anderson defines nationalism as “an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”³⁹⁶ By this, Anderson conceives of nationalism as the creative and productive (i.e., rhetorical) forces by which people come to “imagine” themselves as part of a large, contained group of persons, sharing a limited and specific set of characteristics and experiences, especially a shared past and/or culture. In his germinal work, *Imagined Communities* (1983), Anderson traces the development of nationalism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its subsequent circulation and alterations around the world in ways that highlight its rhetorical nature. As rhetorically invested phenomenon, studies of both history and public memory have been significantly influenced by work on nationalism, national identity, and national culture. The ways in which memory has been used rhetorically to construct national imaginings — through monuments and memorials, commemorative sites, flags, parades, heritage celebrations, and rituals — have been a key point of intersection in significant scholarship on public memory. Indeed, the construction of “American-ness” has been a formative dimension of interdisciplinary and rhetorical work in memory studies.³⁹⁷

While public and collective *memory* have often been the primary terms within discourses about nationalism during the last few decades, *forgetting* has come into its own right as a highly rhetorical force in shaping public understanding of the nation. As Christopher Castiglia so well points out in his quotation of Anderson: “All profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesia...out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives.”³⁹⁸ The rearticulation of national identity is one such “change

³⁹⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983, rpt. 2003) 6.

³⁹⁷ For instance, three prominent examples useful in completion of this chapter include Bodnar, *Remaking America*; Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory*; Gillis, *Commemorations*.

³⁹⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 204 cited in Castiglia, “Sex Panics,” 149-75.

in consciousness” ripe with fruitful forgettings. Indeed, Anderson suggests that both forgetting and remembering are necessary for the successful imagining of a national community. Rhetoricians studying the rhetorical construction of the nation have echoed this dynamic. For instance, M. Lane Bruner suggests in his rhetorical analysis of national identity construction that “all forms of identification and the narratives that accompany them simultaneously create a field of absence, and Other, and/or forms of forgetfulness.”³⁹⁹ Bruner goes on to demonstrate these forgettings in the national contexts of Germany, Canada, and Russia in the late twentieth century. Likewise, Bradford Vivian forcefully argues that what he labels as “public forgetting” can free communities from troublesome or traumatic pasts, allowing them to “begin anew.” For Vivian, public forgetting is “an equally rhetorical phenomenon” to public memory that can “coin a novel public idiom with which the community’s relation to its past, present, and future would be configured anew, or at least in profoundly altered ways.”⁴⁰⁰ In these assessment, each articulation (or rather *rearticulation*) of national identity brings with it simultaneous erasures or forgettings that make these new articulations consistent, viable, and believable. In this way, we tend to insist upon stories of national identity that must maintain what Walter Fisher labels as “narrative rationality.” By this, Fisher suggests we judge the viability of our shared stories by whether they create a sense of *probability* through an internal coherence and whether they keep *fidelity* with other stories that are true in our lives.⁴⁰¹ The narrative of American national identity is no exception.

However, while forgetting may indeed be a vital part of how nations are constructed, central to the process is *who is doing* the remembering and the forgetting. In the case of gays,

³⁹⁹ Bruner, *Strategies of Remembrance*, 7.

⁴⁰⁰ Vivian, *Public Forgetting*, 13.

⁴⁰¹ Walter R. Fisher, “Narrative as Human Communication Paradigm,” *Communication Monographs* 51 (1984): 8.

lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons the fact that strategic memory and forgetting has almost exclusively been within the purview of heterosexuals is extremely consequential for the way they are understood within contemporary society. Indeed, returning to Fisher's narrative rationality, the story or narrative of the American nation told by heterosexual culture would put much unquestioned privilege at risk by acknowledging the full extent to which same-sex desire, homosexuality, and homosexuals have been an important part of the past. In particular, in regards to history's narrative fidelity, Fisher suggests "questions of consequence" may emerge which highlight the benefits that would accrue to people who adhered to that telling of the story.⁴⁰² Heterosexual history is ripe with heterosexual adherents whose many privileges are made possible (consciously and unconsciously) by the forgetting of homosexuals from historical narratives. These privileges include: financial and material rewards for heterosexual couples based upon the assumption that heterosexual married relationships are and have always been the norm; privileges of leadership and power that can easily dispatch with challengers whom might identify otherwise; feelings of moral superiority and religious piety when homosexuals are marginalized as a few passing sinners; permission to assault and even kill sexual non-conformists that might threaten the logic of heterosexuality; and security that one's own sexual practices and identity are stable and secure. This list does not exhaust the privileges afforded to public heterosexuals by the forgetting of homosexuals in memory, but they point to just how dangerous and threatening disrupting this already existing narrative might be.

Given such overwhelming benefit to heterosexuals in controlling the levers of public memory and forgetting — which they often characterize wrongly as *objective* history — gays, lesbians, and bisexuals who have sought to represent themselves in heterosexual renderings of

⁴⁰² Walter R. Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

the past have faced significant roadblocks to doing so — often forcing them to select among a variety of highly constrained and sometimes compromised rhetorical choices or face oblivion. This is not surprising given the way in which gays, lesbians, and other marginalized groups are positioned within hegemonic culture, as Lester Olson points out in his analysis of traumatic styles:

Advocates exemplifying traumatic styles [like gays, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people] have made risky decisions in negotiating multiple double binds understood as lose-lose options...Whichever “choice” speakers and their audiences may make in response to unwelcome messages concerning yet another sexual assault, yet another violent act, yet another of the homicides affecting one of “us” — however “us” is understood — the decision entails significant losses.⁴⁰³

This chapter examines some of the choices — some tactical, some strategic, and some combining both — and their attendant losses made by an evolving coalition of gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates in California over the last thirty years to counter heterosexual culture’s strategic forgetting (the recognition of transgender and queer concerns among this group would emerge in time). The texts in this effort were public school textbooks and curriculums and how they could be reformed to represent gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. Rhetoricians studying

⁴⁰³ Lester C. Olson, “Traumatic Styles in Public Address: Audre Lorde’s Discourse as Exemplar,” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 254.

nationalism have largely overlooked these primary texts. Nonetheless, they remain a vital arena for constructing nationalism that is both highly rhetorical and critically important to explaining how gays, lesbians, and bisexuals do or do not enter the national imaginary. Indeed, as rhetorician Michael Calvin McGee has noted, from an ideological perspective, “grammar school history” may be the most “truly influential manifestation” of popular ideographs like nationalism.⁴⁰⁴

It is important to note that, despite this dissertation’s focus on public *memory*, the focus of the advocates in this chapter seems to be on the distinctly different issue of *history*. As already discussed in the introduction, drawing the line between history and memory has been a difficult task for scholars. However, one of the most influential characterizations of the two by Pierre Nora suggests that memory reflects the lived and embodied ritual way of being present in the everyday lives of people while history is a constructed narrative used by society to compensate for the increasing loss of memory: “Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. ... History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.”⁴⁰⁵ As such, an examination of history textbooks in public schools would suggest memory has little place. However, it is because history is so “problematic and incomplete” that memory’s role becomes entirely necessary. While the gaps in history can, at times, result from limitations in access, archives, and understanding, I would argue that many of history’s absences (generally and within public school textbooks) are also a result of intentional erasures, misrepresentations, and strategic forgettings in favor of supporting the privileges of

⁴⁰⁴ Michael Calvin McGee, “The Ideograph: A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): 11-12; while Anderson is loathe to label nationalism an ideology, he tends to characterize ideologies in blatant political terms like liberalism or fascism. Defined more broadly, nationalism could certainly qualify as ideological in the way McGee describes. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5.

⁴⁰⁵ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 8.

dominant culture; those, incidentally, usually doing the history writing. Thus, in certain key ideological zones within culture (like schools), history's incompleteness is a rhetorical choice, not a disciplinary necessity. If this is true, it is possible that memories can be used to complete or at least supplement the already incomplete history we teach our children. This is what gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates in California have done for three decades: attempt to state in public their shared memories of GLBT people both to draw attention to the strategic forgettings foisted upon public school children and to ameliorate history's incompleteness with a different way of imaging of the past.

Given the way history is presented within ideological texts like textbooks, including GLBT people into that history is not just an act of historical correction, but also brings with it cultural consequences. While some public heterosexuals have vigorously contested these consequences, gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates have suggested the inclusion of their public memories within textbooks would have life enhancing effects for both the GLBT community and heterosexual communities alike. Among these benefits, described across several decades have been increased self-confidence in gay and lesbian youth, broader appreciation for diversity and greater understanding by heterosexual students, a more accurate historical image, a decrease in bullying and harassment of gay and lesbian students, decreased number of perpetrated hate crimes, increased support for same sex-marriage, reductions in the always high teen suicide rate among gays and lesbians, and a more just and equitable culture.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁶ For instance, see Jessea Greenman, "Statement to the State of California Curriculum Commission," July 18, 1990, Project 21, GLAAD/SFBA Records, GLBT Historical Society Collection, GLC17, Box 1, Folder 43, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library; Gil Kaufman, "California Senate Passes Bill Requiring Gay History Education," *MTV News*, May 12, 2006, <http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1531648/20060512/story.jhtml> (accessed March 24, 2011); Wyatt Buchanan and Greg Lucas, "Bill Would Include Gays in Public School Texts," *San Francisco Chronicle*,

In pursuit of these goals, this essay assesses different elements of the wider movement for GLBT inclusion within the California public school curriculum, examining their rhetorical imaginings and performances and investigating the consequences of their tactical and strategic choices on queer public memory. To study these rhetorics, I examine fragments of discourse collected from the archives, public speeches, statements, press releases, publications, media coverage, and image events of the movements. While representational claims might be more ideally described by examining the textbooks and curriculums that resulted from this advocacy movement, it is important to note that no part of the movement has been fully successful in winning substantial changes to the point that such texts have been created. Nonetheless, the rich discourse reconstituted here represents the rhetorical imaginings of different voices in this effort in ways that telegraph their shared and divergent rhetorical wishes sufficiently for critical analysis.

Given this orientation to the California textbook debates, this chapter proceeds as follows. First, I will quickly outline the rhetorical dimensions of textbooks and how they function to shape the rhetorical imaginings of nationalism in general and American nationalism in particular. Second, I detail how gays, lesbians, and other sexual minorities — when remembered in American history — have regularly been defined as anti-national figures, primarily as scapegoats for public heterosexuals in pursuit of divergent and often inconsistent efforts to secure heterosexual privilege. Next, I will trace two of the most prominent rhetorical efforts undertaken to reimagine the GLB (and later T and Q) past and their relationship to American nationalism, each using a thoughtful both/and approach towards rhetorical tactics and strategies to make their cases. In each case, I will suggest both the virtues and disadvantages

April 16, 2006, http://articles.sfgate.com/2006-04-16/bay-area/17289654_1_sexual-orientation-gay-pride-gay-rights (accessed March 24, 2011).

posed by attempting to reimagine the past in these ways. I will conclude with some reflections on these choices by GLB(TQ) advocates and their consequences for public understanding of the past generally.

4.2 TEXTBOOKS AS TOOLS OF THE NATION

Over the last one hundred years, textbooks have become pervasive, highly rhetorical texts capable of broadly influencing public perception. This has not always been true. For centuries, textbooks were rarities in many public classrooms and, even when they were available, issues of printing, cost, and distribution gave them only isolated effect on reading publics.⁴⁰⁷ However, during the twentieth century, as efforts to create greater conformity in public education gained momentum, textbooks became an undeniably important tool for consistently educating tomorrow's citizens within large national contexts. Today, the textbook industry is a ten billion dollar a year business and a vital component of the American public school system.⁴⁰⁸ Given their pervasiveness and their ideological character, textbooks are also a vital front in the culture wars for shaping images of American identity and society.

Several factors contribute to making textbooks highly rhetorical texts. One key to the suasive power of (and controversial debates over) textbooks is their implied position of authority within the cultural institutions of the classroom, the community, and the nation. According to

⁴⁰⁷ David A. Squires, *Aligning and Balancing the Standards-Based Curriculum* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), 13-14.

⁴⁰⁸ "Fox News Reporting: Do You Know What Textbooks Your Children Are Really Reading?" *Fox News*, September 17, 2010, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,545900,00.html> (accessed March 24, 2011).

David Olson: “[Textbooks] are taken as the authorized version of society’s valid knowledge.”⁴⁰⁹

Those who read them and teach them situate textbook information as certain, as a place where answers to questions can be found with a great degree of reliability. This approach is common because textbooks are largely not seen as political or rhetorical texts. Indeed, because the selection of textbooks are often made by publishers, school boards, and others within government that are generally viewed to have less overt political motivations, their rhetorical imaginings are more likely to be overlooked by the average viewer. Because of this implied claim to authority, textbooks are often read with less critical thought than other rhetorical artifacts or media, like a magazine or newspaper.⁴¹⁰ This common belief makes the way information is presented in textbooks even more critical.

In addition, textbooks also engage in rhetorical acts. Like all texts, textbooks deploy various rhetorical strategies to shape how their content is to be understood and interpreted by its audience. Textbooks have their own “rhetorical forms,” defined by Avon Crismore as “the way the content is presented,” that shape how they are used and interpreted by students and teachers.⁴¹¹ As Kenneth Burke has suggested from his reading of classical rhetorical theory, rhetorical forms can be key to the success of a text because it aids in *identification* by providing a structure to an argument that allows the audience to feel as if they are “creatively participating” in the rhetors argument themselves. Examples of formal qualities vary between kinds of textbooks; however one could easily suggest that many history textbooks, in particular, utilize

⁴⁰⁹ David R. Olson, “On the Language and Authority of Textbooks” in *Language, Authority, and Criticism: Reading on the School Textbooks*, eds. Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke, and Carmen Luke (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1989), 238.

⁴¹⁰ Rosalee A. Clawson and Elizabeth R. Kegler, “The ‘Race Coding’ of Poverty in American Government College Textbooks,” *Howard Journal of Communications* 11 (2000): 181.

⁴¹¹ Avon Crismore, “Rhetorical Form, Selection and the Use of Textbooks” in *Language, Authority and Criticism*, Suzanne de Castell et al. ed., 133.

the formal rhetorical device of *climax* to craft a very Hegelian understanding of the past as perpetually in progressive, forward motion.⁴¹²

Yet, while the inclusion of some of these rhetorical forms may make textbooks more appealing to the user, they can simultaneously contain within them invisible or oftentimes unnoticed ideologies in need of critical attention and elucidation. Consider the visual images present within textbooks. While the inclusion of photographs within textbooks can aid in making them more understandable to readers, who is or is not represented in those photographs and how they are represented can have a profound effect on the interpretation of the content in the text. Exemplifying this possibility, an empirical analysis of American government textbooks in 2000 found that visual representations of the poor and impoverished disproportionately represented them as African American, reinforcing a false stereotype within the wider culture.⁴¹³ A similar charge has been made against popular public speaking textbooks that featured African American speakers primarily in sections of the book related to emotion, suggesting Black orators to be overly pathetic (i.e., emotional) and less likely to deploy more highly revered forms of rationality. Hence, common rhetorical devices like absence/presence, invisible meta-discourses, representative anecdotes, terministic screens, and the like can contribute to not only shaping the interpretation of topics, but can also mark “significant silences” that erase certain people and events from history. However, perhaps most important for our purposes, the most prominent invisible ideology infused within textbooks is American nationalism.

Textbooks have long been favored tools to construct and reconstruct the nation. Writing in the 1980s, John C. Reynolds argued that “the nation is the most consistent unit of political organization in human affairs at the present time and textbooks are the most consistent means of

⁴¹² Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 57-59.

⁴¹³ Clawson and Kegler, “The ‘Race Coding,’” 184-85.

maintaining the elements of nationalism for future generations.”⁴¹⁴ The narratives, memories, and images presented within textbooks functions to highlight for students ways of considering and imagining the nation. Textbooks fit securely into what the Frankfurt School labeled the “culture industry” — the shaping of a unified, ideologically-infused mass culture that seeks to perpetuate the status quo (i.e. capitalism) particularly at the expense of the consumer.⁴¹⁵ This is particularly visible in Louis Althusser’s description of schools as institution which teach “‘know-how,’ but in forms which ensure the *subjection to the ruling ideology* or the mastery of its practice,” almost certainly including national and state ideologies.⁴¹⁶ For McGee, classrooms are powerful means of interpolating people — inducting them as a subject within a discourse — into these ideologies because they are the “very first contact most have with their existence and experience as a part of a community.” Within them, we encounter those “ideographic touchstones” as an epideictic experience, preparing us to act and make judgments as members of our community.⁴¹⁷ However, even without such a critical reading of textbooks generally, the overwhelming persuasive force of a textbook in the public school system should be clear.

Countless academic analyses of textbooks reveal a great deal about how textbook content can shape imaginings of the nation. Jean Anyon details how textbooks were particularly adept in the discussion of social and economic ideas at passing on conservative values about the nation.⁴¹⁸ Textbooks can clarify who is a part of the national community and who is outside of it, as well as who is assumed to be recognized as worthy contributors presumptively and, in

⁴¹⁴ John C. Reynolds, “Textbooks: Guardians of Nationalism,” *Education* 102 (1981): 37.

⁴¹⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (New York: Routledge, 1991, rpt. 2005), 98-99.

⁴¹⁶ Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*.

⁴¹⁷ McGee, “The Ideograph,” 11-12.

⁴¹⁸ Jean Anyon, “Ideology and United States History Textbooks,” *Harvard Educational Review* 49 (1979), 361-86.

contrast, who bears additional burdens via contributions to claim any space, worth, or recognition.⁴¹⁹ Images and maps within textbook are crucial for visualizing what nationals look like and also the people who make up the nation's "imagined community."⁴²⁰ Importantly, literary theorist and critic Terry Eagleton notes that what is stated and what is unstated in these books are crucial for reflecting national values. He claims: "These absences — the not said of the work — are precisely what bind it to the ideological: ideology is present in the text in the form of its eloquent silences."⁴²¹ As such, textbooks are a critical component of any nationalist agenda.

Because of this prominence, textbook content has been a common site for controversy in nationalist debates. With the spread of post-colonial nations in the 20th century, a slew of new textbooks came to the market reflecting the national identities of these new sovereign states. In the United States, the social movements of the 60s and 70s and the ongoing culture war have long been the source of bitter debates about the representations of war, women, racial minorities, the poor, and others in textbooks. Most prominently in recent years, the characterizations of Japanese actions against China and Korea during World War II in Japanese textbooks have caused significant diplomatic strain between the two nations.⁴²²

Among these other topics, sexuality has also been an ongoing controversy within textbook reform. While both the California textbook debates of the 1980s and 90s as well as the 2000s are important turning points for gay and lesbian representations in education, they are not

⁴¹⁹ Paul Coman, "Reading About the Enemy: School Textbook Representation of Germany's Role in the War with Britain During the Period from April 1940 to May 1941," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 17 (1996): 327-40.

⁴²⁰ Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Maps and Mother Goddesses in Modern India," *Imago Mundi* 53 (2001): 97-114; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁴²¹ Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (New York: Verso, 2006), 89.

⁴²² Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Antoinette Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 132, 92, 135.

the first such cultural clashes to take place over sexuality in public curriculums. As rhetorician Robin Jensen has demonstrated, debates over how to teach people about sexuality and protect them from disease and/or unwanted pregnancies have extended at least back until the late 1800s.⁴²³ However, more recent debates about the role of homosexuality in education specifically have generated noticeable controversy.

Little scholarly attention has been paid to GLBT representations in textbooks prior to the last decade. However, some work has been completed; generally of a more quantitative variety and usually by scholars in education. The vast majority of this work to date has focused on GLBT representations in college-level textbooks. For example, a 2007 article revealed limited discussion of gays and lesbians as “‘another’ structurally disempowered group” in the seventeen top selling “Introduction to U.S. Politics” texts (and such characterizations tend, however inadvertently, to reproduce the image of gays and lesbians as “disempowered”). Meanwhile, in April 2008, an analysis of textbooks for classes in the “Foundations of Education” revealed that while GLBT issues were discussed in all introductory textbooks in the state of California, they generally further pathologized the GLBT community as understandable *only* as victims of abuse, violence, and discrimination (which they undoubtedly are, without being stereotyped as victims exclusively) rather than, more precisely and accurately, pathologizing the public heterosexuals who act in such damaging ways toward others.⁴²⁴ Analysis of elementary, middle, and high

⁴²³ Robin E. Jensen, *Dirty Words: The Rhetoric of Public Sex Education, 1870-1924* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

⁴²⁴ Julie Novkov and Charles Gossett, “Survey of Textbooks for Teaching Introduction to U.S. Politics: (How) Do They See Us?” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40 (2007): 393-98; Ian K. Macgillivray and Todd Jennings, “A Content Analysis Exploring Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Topics in Foundations of Education Textbooks,” *Journal of Teacher Education* 59 (2008): 170-88.

school textbooks are virtually absent, in particular because there are very few such representations to be analyzed.

Yet, despite limited representations of GLBT people in these textbooks to date, clashes over their inclusion have occurred frequently in the last twenty years. A key site of previous controversy between GLBT activists and textbook gatekeepers occurred in health and human sexuality textbooks. Scholars have delved deeply into these representations.⁴²⁵ According to an article surveying the conflict between sexuality and education in the *New York Times*, “chief among the targets [of conservative activists] are sex education programs that include discussions of homosexuality.”⁴²⁶ The health implications of same-sex sexuality (and sexuality in general) have long been a dispute in the culture war. Particularly with the emergence of HIV/AIDS, the need and limits of sex education in public schools grew as a contentious topic of debate. Principle among these concerns (along with safe sex practices, condom use and distribution, premarital sex, etc.) have been what, if any, commentary such courses should make on issues related to same-sex desire. This debate was heightened further in 2000 as the administration of President George W. Bush took an *extremely* conservative view of sex education, encouraging abstinence only sex education programs, many of which were discredited by independent groups for their vast mischaracterization of the reasons for and consequences of non-heterosexual practices.⁴²⁷ Indeed, it seems that many supporters of this policy (primarily within the

⁴²⁵ Mariamne Whatley, “Images of Gays and Lesbians in Sexuality and Health Textbooks,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 22 (1992): 197-211; Bonnie Trudell and Mariamne Henken Whatley, “Sex Respect: A Problematic Public School Sexuality Curriculum,” *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy* 17 (1991): 125-40.

⁴²⁶ Michael Janofsky, “Gay Rights Battlefields Spread to Public Schools,” *New York Times*, June 9, 2005.

⁴²⁷ Ceci Conolly, “Some Abstinence Programs Mislead Teens, Reports Says,” *Washington Post*, December 2, 2004; Nicholas D. Kristof, “Bush’s Sex Scandal,” *New York Times*, February 16, 2005. Of course, a double bind informs inclusion of GLBT people specifically in sex education only, since it is

Republican Party) seemed quite content to eviscerate any access of information to sexuality in public schools, simultaneously mobilizing voters within their shared ideology and doing great harm to a generation of children unprepared and unaware of the joys and real dangers in sexual activity.

A similar debate relating to GLBT representation in textbooks emerged in the realm of college admissions. In late 2005, the University of California rejected the high school credits of several applicants who attended the private Calvary Chapel Christian School. The basis of their rejection was that the textbooks the school used in many of their classes had a slanted or inaccurate view of certain subject matter, particularly issues related to science and sexuality. An often-cited example was that the textbook *Biology for Christian Schools* which argued that any scientific “fact” that did not conform to the teachings of the Bible was wrong. Another frequent example, useful to our present concern, was the textbook *United States History for Christian Schools* that argued some social movements were “less legitimate” than others, particularly the gay rights movement. To quote the textbook: “One of the worst [of these illegitimate social movements] was the ‘gay rights’ movement, in which homosexuals tried to remove legal protections to their immoral lifestyle and to gain recognition of homosexual ‘marriages’ for purposes of adoption and the like.”⁴²⁸ This highly problematic characterization, not just of gays and lesbians whom we might expect to be disfavored figures within a religious curriculum, but also a view of history in general that arrogantly situates non-heterosexuals as subservient in their

sexuality that becomes defining of diverse desires and, for that matter, families rather than a textured appreciation for all human components of meaningful courtship and/or family relationships.

⁴²⁸ “Excerpts of Textbooks in Disputed Courses,” *Associated Press*, December 9, 2005, no longer accessible. See Timothy Keese and Mark Sidwell, *United States History for Christian Schools* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 2001).

lives, their rights to protest, to marry, “and the like,” reflects how deeply ideological educational instruction can be and was very concerning to many institutions of higher learning.

These previous controversies demonstrate that GLBT representation in textbooks have and continue to be a pressing issue within the contemporary American culture wars. However, these previous debates differ from the controversies examined in this essay in two important ways. First, the debates about gay, lesbian, and bisexual representations in textbook in California began many years earlier than those described above, making them key discourses that establish some of the parameters of the debate we see later. Second, these more recent debates have certain characteristics that were markedly different than the California textbook debate’s uniquely nationalist contours. In part, these differences emerge from the long history in which publicly heterosexual Americans and institutions defined gays and lesbians *de facto* as “un-American,” “traitors,” and anti-nationals within American discourse.

4.3 RHETORICS OF GAYS AND LESBIANS AS ANTI-NATIONALS

As Kenneth Burke has noted, collective identities are often formed by highly resonant consubstantialities among its members, but also by active, rhetorical moves that divide these collectivities from others who are labeled different.⁴²⁹ Nations and national identities are perhaps the most recognizable example of these identifying and dividing groups, drawing lines both along geographic boundaries and between persons to constitute and maintain their distinctive characters. Those who find themselves divided from the rest of the community are often situated

⁴²⁹ Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 21-22.

as scapegoats, symbolically endowed with the deficiencies of the community and sacrificed and/or punished (sometimes violently) to restore the community's unity.⁴³⁰ Within the American context, one of the most useful groups of people to serve as scapegoats has been GLBT persons and their various precursors.⁴³¹

Early documents of the Republic demonstrates that, in many contexts, defining what it meant to be American excluded sexual minorities like contemporary gays and lesbians. As Jonathan Ned Katz's pioneering work in GLBT history demonstrates, early conceptions of the American nation used characterizations of the homosexual as a corruptive anti-national figure. For example, quoting from the British newspaper *The Whip* in 1782, Katz demonstrates how early Republican sodomites were not accepted as bona fide native-born Americans but rather as "foreigners" corrupted by European (particularly French) ideas: "These 'horrible offences' are 'foreign to our shores — to our nature they certainly are — yet they are growing apace in New York.'" In Katz's interpretation, "American nationalism was constructed at the expense of foreigners, including foreign sodomites. Acts of sodomy, *The Whip* suggested, were alien to America's 'nature,' another early version of the idea that sodomites' psyches differed substantially from those of ordinary men." Katz also goes on to claim that Walt Whitman experienced similar characterizations of male-male desire as "foreign" to American nature several decades later.⁴³² Likewise, historian George Mosse has demonstrated that similar

⁴³⁰ Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 406-07.

⁴³¹ I use the term precursors here to indicate that various identities and names associated with people of same-sex desire prior to the use of the terms gay or lesbian. George Chauncey's descriptions of "fairies" in New York in the early 1920s or Rictor Norton's "mollys" in the nineteenth and eighteenth century are two such example. See Chauncey, *Gay New York* and Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House*.

⁴³² Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 49.

descriptions of homosexuality, sodomy, and the like have been defined as anti-national characterizations in several European contexts.⁴³³

However, while gays and lesbians have been defined as against the nation since the beginning of nation states, the twentieth century saw those rhetorical divisions take on new degrees of explicitness and voraciousness, demonstrating just how self-serving and delusional these discourses can be purely to maintain the facade and privileges associated with the heteronormative ideal. For instance, Chauncey notes that the Bohemian men of 1920s Greenwich Village were “regarded as unmanly as well as un-American” because of their decided disinterest in getting married and making money coupled with their deep interest in art, long hair, and colorful clothes.⁴³⁴ Such dramatic disconnects are frequent not only in American history but in other nations, illustrating just how quickly nationalist discourses can turn on GLBT persons who seek to protect and ensure the nation. One powerful example is that of Allan Turing, a gay code breaker for the British during World War II who was irreplaceable in deciphering Nazi codes and became a national hero. However, in 1952, just a few years after the end of the war, Turing was prosecuted for “gross indecency,” stripped of his security clearances, and chemically castrated after admitting a sexual relationship with another man. Turing would commit suicide shortly thereafter in 1954.⁴³⁵ His case demonstrates compellingly the lengths which heteronormative privilege will go — even to illogical and inconsistent extremes — to protect its supremacy. Similar shocking and degrading examples relating specifically to American constructions of

⁴³³ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability & Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985), 34.

⁴³⁴ Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 229.

⁴³⁵ Ian Drury, “Gordon Brown Apologises to Enigma CodeBreaker Alan Turing for ‘Appalling’ Persecution,” *The Daily Mail*, September 11, 2009, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1212703/Gordon-Brown-apologises-gay-WW2-code-breaker-Alan-Turing-appalling-persecution.html> (accessed March 18, 2011).

GLBT persons as threats to the nation have been prominent in recent decades, particularly in national security debates and the response to HIV/AIDS.

Perhaps the first most profound interaction between sexuality and American nationalist discourses in the twentieth century emerged during the Cold War. In a period of heightened nationalist feelings and demands for public displays of patriotism (particularly during the McCarthy Era), GLBT people often became maligned in political and popular discourse as anti-American. As historian Alan Sinfield suggests:

The Cold War made it [e]specially necessary to control sexual dissidence for, even more than battle conditions, it depended on the ideological — spiritual, moral — determination of U.S. people....Queers...undermined family values and the frontier vision of the manly man.⁴³⁶

As primary domestic targets within this discourse, gays, lesbians, and other “sexual deviants” were often accused of un-American tendencies by Cold War principals like FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and Senator Joseph McCarthy.⁴³⁷ While little evidence suggests that gays and lesbians were more prone to be traitors than heterosexuals, the characterizations of the GLBT community served a vital purification purpose for a paranoid and suspicious nation. One way in which this purification process can be seen in American discourse is the myth of the homosexual

⁴³⁶ Alan Sinfield, *Cultural Politics – Queer Reading* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 41.

⁴³⁷ David K. Johnson, introduction to *The Lavender Scare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 56.

traitor.⁴³⁸ According to this construction, GLBT persons were adept liars, kept bad associations, were ungodly, and were easy to turn against the nation of their birth because of their many secrets. A popular case used by antigay activists, politicians, and government officials to support this myth is the Martin-Mitchell Affair.

William Hamilton Martin and Bernon Mitchell were two National Security Agency (NSA) code breakers who became infamous in 1960 for defecting to the Soviet Union. A major act of international espionage and treason (and a public embarrassment for the United States), government and political leaders perpetually justified Martin and Mitchell's betrayal as springing from the men's (homo)sexuality. In particular, a 1962 report by the House Un-American Activities Committee on Mitchell and Martin's defection suggested that Martin was "sexually abnormal; in fact masochistic," and that Mitchell's psychiatrist had testified that he "has had homosexual problems."⁴³⁹ The report labeled the men "sexual deviants" (i.e., homosexual) despite their public statements in a press conference in Moscow that they had defected for ideological reasons. Evidence for the government's belief about the supposed connection between homosexuality and traitorous activity can also be seen in the government's action in response to the scandal: twenty-six NSA employees would be forced out of the agency soon after Martin and Mitchell defected because of potential "perversions."⁴⁴⁰ Followed by a wave of firings at the State Department, some have suggested the case was the leading reason for major revisions to national security protocols and recruitment practices. The goal of these revisions was simple: to eliminate the access of such antinationalist "deviants" in the future. Nor were

⁴³⁸ Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 144.

⁴³⁹ Rick Anderson, "Worst Internal Scandal in NSA History Was Blamed on Cold War Defector's Sexuality: But What If They Weren't Gay?" *Seattle Weekly*, July 17, 2007, <http://www.seattleweekly.com/2007-07-18/news/the-worst-internal-scandal-in-nsa-history-was-blamed-on-cold-war-defectors-homosexuality.php/> (accessed March 8, 2011).

⁴⁴⁰ Anderson, "Worst Internal Scandal in NSA History."

politicians alone in this antinational framing. Major newspapers and media of the day (like the *Los Angeles Times*, the Hearst papers and *Washington Confidential*) reaffirmed and circulated these beliefs to a wider audience, often fanning the flames of hatred and suspicion. The case became the representative anecdote for conservative politicians, military leaders, and intelligence officials that homosexuals could not be trusted. *Perhaps* ironically (and perhaps infuriatingly), an expose by the *Seattle Weekly* in 2007 revealed that an internal CIA investigation at the time of the Martin-Mitchell affair found no evidence to support the claim that the two men were gay, homosexual, or lovers.⁴⁴¹ Nonetheless, though less blunt in style, these rhetorical characterizations persist into the present. Even today, many U.S. security institutions remain highly suspicious and discriminatory against GLBT persons, despite more recent efforts to attend to this unequal treatment.⁴⁴² As such, non-“normative” sexuality can remain a major red flag in obtaining national security clearances. At stake in such continued policies are powerful forms of heterosexual privilege, including access to classified information and assignments, but also power, prestige, benefits, and the ability to use the levers of government against GLBT persons through isolation, surveillance, and suspicion, among others. Ironically, even gays and lesbians who manage to win access to these ranks often find themselves choosing complicity, hiding their identity to advance and thereby contributing to the erasure of GLBT people from nationalist memory.

In addition to the Cold War, the HIV/AIDS crisis played a prominent part in shaping anti-nationalist views of the GLBT community. During the 1980s, characterizations of HIV/AIDS as “the wrath of God on homosexuals” and “nature’s revenge on gay men” shaped perceptions of

⁴⁴¹ Anderson, “Worst Internal Scandal in NSA History.”

⁴⁴² Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, “Remarks at an Event Celebrating Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Month,” June 22, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/06/143517.htm> (accessed March 24, 2011).

GLBT persons as deeply anti-religious. Though religion may not align itself as a key aspect of all forms of nationalism and national identity, a largely Christian religious piety is a cornerstone for some narratives of American nationalism. Another distinct but similar discourse is civil religion — “a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in [the particularly American] collectivity” — which is also a pervasive resource within American rhetoric and politics.⁴⁴³ This has been particularly true within the contemporary Christian Right. According to Anatol Lieven, “The meetings, propaganda, and rhetoric of the Christian Right has always been suffused with nationalism and national symbolism.”⁴⁴⁴ This connection between religious piety and American nationalism was deeply rooted in the Christian Right when it came to power in 1980 — just years prior to the beginning of the HIV/AIDS crisis. These devoutly religious imaginings of American identity were espoused most prominently in the civil religion rhetoric of President Ronald Regan and many have suggested was reflected in the administration’s response to the HIV/AIDS crisis.⁴⁴⁵

During the height of the epidemic, the Reagan Administration remained publicly silent about HIV/AIDS, and privately worked actively to enforce this silence, particularly during the years when the primary victims of the disease were gay men — going so far as to instruct the press not to ask questions concerning the disease during press conferences. C. Everett Koop, the

⁴⁴³ See Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 96 (1967): 1-21. Reprinted online at http://www.robertbellah.com/articles_5.htm (accessed March 18, 2011).

⁴⁴⁴ Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 143.

⁴⁴⁵ Larry Kramer, “Reagan and AIDS,” *New York Review of Books*, April 12, 2007, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2007/apr/12/reagan-and-aids/> (Accessed March 24, 2011); Matt Foreman, “Regarding the Death of Former President Ronald Reagan: A Letter to My Best Friend, Steven Powsner,” National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, June 6, 2004, http://www.thetaskforce.org/press/releases/pr690_060604 (accessed March 24, 2011).

Reagan Administration's Surgeon General, characterized the politics that drove this active silence in the White House:

I knew that telling the truth about AIDS, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth would not be well received in some places. One of those places would be the White House, at least in those offices where ideology would be the main concern....A large portion of the president's constituency was anti-homosexual, anti-drug abuse, anti-promiscuity, and anti-sex education; these people would not respond well to some of the things that would have to be said in a health report about AIDS.⁴⁴⁶

As Tina Perez and George Dionisopoulos demonstrated, the White House, for expressly political motivations that included an antigay agenda, engaged in a rhetoric of “presidential silence” that enabled “the belief that ‘somehow people from certain groups, deserved their illness’ ...to continue unchallenged from the great moral bully-pulpit that is — or should be — the Oval Office.”⁴⁴⁷ While silence itself need not necessarily label the largely gay male victims of HIV/AIDS as un-American, the President's neglect to even acknowledge these victims' existence and actively avoid Presidential discourse on the matter suggested that the administration did not consider HIV/AIDS victims Americans or citizens. If this was the case,

⁴⁴⁶ C. Everett Koop, *Koop: The Memoirs of America's Family Doctor* (New York: Random House, 1991), 204.

⁴⁴⁷ Tina L. Perez and George N. Dionisopoulos, “Presidential Silence, C. Everett Koop, and the Surgeon General's Report on AIDS,” *Communication Studies* 46 (1995): 34.

President Reagan may have felt secure that, despite personally knowing gay men who died of HIV/AIDS and the rhetorical presidency's demand for attention, he had no responsibility to these people.⁴⁴⁸ Thankfully, others disagreed. Not surprisingly, many of these critiques came from Reagan's political left. For example, Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA) attacked Reagan's lack of response to HIV/AIDS in an editorial in *The Washington Post* in 1985: "It is surprising that the president could remain silent as 6,000 *Americans* died, that he could fail to acknowledge the epidemic's existence. Perhaps his staff felt he had to, since many of his New Right supporters have raised money by campaigning against homosexuals."⁴⁴⁹ However, after years of silence in which 20,000 Americans died of the disease and 1 to 1.5 million others were infected, the Administration's silence was finally broken, but not by the President himself. In 1986, Surgeon General Koop, against administration orders and without their approval, released a thirty-six page report on the disease at a news conference.⁴⁵⁰ In the ensuing days, Koop managed to successfully shatter the silence of the administration, eventually leading the President himself to speak out, though still with "minimal" speech on the subject.⁴⁵¹ While no one in the Administration expressly characterized the overwhelmingly gay male victims of HIV/AIDS as un-American (and therefore unworthy of assistance), the blatant inaction of the Federal government and its supporting institutions in the face of such a destructive public health crisis inspired such a belief among many GLBT people, HIV/AIDS victims, their allies, and

⁴⁴⁸ Allen White, "Reagan's AIDS Legacy," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 8, 2004. <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2004/06/08/EDG777163F1.DTL> (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁴⁴⁹ Rep. Henry Waxman, "Fighting an Epidemic in the Absence of Leadership," *The Washington Post*, September 4, 1985, H19 (emphasis mine).

⁴⁵⁰ C. Everett Koop, *Surgeon General's Report on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome* (Washington, DC: U.S. Public Health Service Public Affairs Office, 1986), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1477712/> (accessed March 18, 2011).

⁴⁵¹ Perez and Dionisopoulos, "Presidential Silence," 34.

supporters. HIV/AIDS and the Cold War both significantly contributed to defining GLBT persons as outside of the American nation in the twentieth century.

This short review demonstrates the complex and political situation advocates of textbook reform faced in their challenges to rethink the California public school curriculum. Textbooks served as a representational hinge upon which active critiques of their strategically-centered nationalist ideologies continually opposed to GLBT inclusion could be made. Of the array of progay reform efforts to follow, GLBT educators and allies in California during the 1980s first embarked upon this critique by seeking to demonstrate both that the GLBT community consisted of worthy people and that the nation had wrongly mistreated them.

4.4 EARLY RHETORICS OF CURRICULAR REFORM: 1985 – 1992

Of the diverse means of countering dominant, heteronormative tellings of American history within California public schools, the first efforts by gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals and organizations drew largely upon a critical perspective to do so. These advocates sought to make the case for the representation not only of gay, lesbians, and bisexual people within public school curriculums, but also to forcefully and powerfully challenge how they were/would be represented. In doing so, these advocates made explicit critiques of the way heterosexual history was done, bringing its deficiencies to the surface, and offering alternatives that counteracted those dominant tendencies. Key to this rhetorical undertaking, these reformers focused their efforts upon challenging the strategic rhetorics of nationalism. In short, they articulated a public memory of *liberation* — a tactical memory rhetoric — that sought to critique existing strategic memories and free gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons from representational oblivion. In the

words of one activist: “We come before you today as a people seeking justice. We seek what is fair, that which is accorded other groups in our society. We seek that which is right, that the truth about history be told.”⁴⁵² For these activists, if a single story of American history was to be proclaimed, then gays and lesbian had to be included in that story for it to be complete.

This orientation to queer public memory was in line with the experiences, context, and politics of the earlier reformers, first in California but later across the country. The early struggle for representing gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in California school curriculum was fomented in the crucible of the 1970s gay rights struggle, particularly the very contentious and public campaign against the Briggs Initiative in California in 1978. Based largely in the liberal enclaves of Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area, the organizers of the curriculum reform movement drew from a wide array of experienced activists, trained in the tumultuous politics of the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, the early battles for gay rights after Stonewall, and, later, HIV/AIDS activism. Importantly, these advocates had experiences in the more radical gay lifestyles afforded by San Francisco in the 1970s. These experiences provided early activist a number of life-affirming resources: gay friendships, security, and feelings of self-worth, among others. As a result, these individuals knew firsthand that a proud gay, lesbian, or bisexual life need not be one of secrets, silence, and repression but could be one of joy, creativity, and nourishment. Practiced in gay sexual culture, history, forms of sociability, and coalition politics, the early advocates were deeply ensconced within the leading edge of the emergent gay liberation movement.

⁴⁵² Jessea Greenman, “Statement to Board of Education, State of California,” September 13, 1990, Project 21, GLAAD/SFBA Records, GLBT Historical Society Collection, GLC17, Box 1, Folder 43, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Drawing upon this previous social movement experience, these activists organized into a collection of organizations and institutions. As such, despite the fact that their *rhetorical* focus was largely tactical in that it sought to challenge the existing nationalist narrative of history, the organizations themselves represented an early attempt at strategic organization. Rather than isolated individuals advocating the past for their own self-defense (a la Wilde), gays, lesbians, and bisexuals came together to attempt to forge a proto-safe space that might endure long enough to more fully disrupt heteronormative history. Among the early organizations they created — the first featuring five people meeting in a small, basements apartment — many have since become powerful, nationwide institutions with far greater reach and effect.⁴⁵³

Perhaps the earliest and most influential of these advocates was a group of gay and lesbian teachers and allies organized as the San Francisco Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators (BANGLE). Formed in 1985 by gay educator Robert Birle, BANGLE stated as its purpose both to provide a network for gay and lesbian educators to share their experiences as well as to “promote the civil rights of gays and lesbians in the schools and the public as to the culture, history and needs of gay and lesbian people.”⁴⁵⁴ A key aspect of this rights agenda was to “see that textbooks in each discipline accurately portray the history and culture of Gays, Lesbians, and Bi-sexuals in the United States and in all world cultures.”⁴⁵⁵ In 1997, BANGLE would merge with another educational association into what is now the influential, nationwide

⁴⁵³ Ally Action, “Our History,” <http://www.allyaction.org> (accessed March 18, 2011).

⁴⁵⁴ BANGLE, “By-laws of the Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators,” 1987, Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators Records, 1985-1995, Box 1, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, California.

⁴⁵⁵ BANGLE, “BANGLE Membership Pamphlet,” Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators Records, 1985-1995, Box 1, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, California.

organization known as the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network or GLSEN.⁴⁵⁶ In 2006, the original organization previously known as BANGLE, in an effort to retain its independence, broke off from GLSEN and reorganized as Ally Action.⁴⁵⁷

Later to the debate, but an increasingly important voice in this effort, was the Gay and Lesbian Advocates Against Defamation or GLAAD. Although GLAAD would be formed in 1985 in New York City by Gay Activist Alliance veterans Marty Robinson, Jim Owles, Vito Russo, and Arnie Kantrowitz, the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of GLAAD (GLAAD/SFBA) would not be formed until 1987.⁴⁵⁸ In 1990, GLAAD/SFBA would be incorporated with its own Board of Directors and become established as its own entity independent of the east coast organization.⁴⁵⁹ While GLAAD/SFBA maintained a wide portfolio of activity, in 1990 the organization formed Project 21, “the community effort to get fair, accurate, and diverse information about lesbian, gay and bisexual people into public school texts and curricular materials.”⁴⁶⁰ While this was a “community effort,” Jessea Greenman spearheaded much of this initiative. Also highly involved in this process was former BANGLE chair Robert Birle, who had moved with his partner to Kansas City, Missouri, and was coordinating regional activities for GLAAD’s Project 21 in the Midwest. After several years, parts of the organization would separate and be reformed as the P.E.R.S.O.N. Project (circa 1995), which continued its work

⁴⁵⁶ Files of the Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators, Box 1, Bylaws Folder. San Francisco GLBT Historical Society.

⁴⁵⁷ Ally Action, “Our History.”

⁴⁵⁸ Vincent Doyle, “‘But Joan! You’re My Daughter!’: The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation and the Politics of Amnesia,” *Radical History Review* 100 (Winter 2008): 211-212. GLAAD/SFBA’s founding is established in the Collection Overview of the GLBT Historical Society.

⁴⁵⁹ “Historical Note” in Collection Detail of Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators Collection, GLBT Historical Society, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf7z09n8xx;query=;style=oac4;view=admin#did-1.7.1> (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁴⁶⁰ Letter from Jessea Greenman to Supervisor Carole Migden, July 15, 1991, Project 21, GLAAD/SFBA Records, GLBT Historical Society Collection, GLC17, Box 1, Folder 43, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

until approximately 2004.⁴⁶¹ Along with BANGLE, GLSEN, Ally Action, the P.E.R.S.O.N. Project, and Project 21, an array of activists and allies within local and state government would form the basis for the early years of activism in gay, lesbian, and bisexual textbook and curricular reform in California.

Given the subject positions of the earlier gay, lesbian, and bisexual rhetors, imagining a public memory that liberated the queer past from the constraints of mainstream history was a consistent approach. These activists recognized — contrary to the prevailing attitudes of the day — that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals were a marginalized group struggling against an entrenched hegemonic power. This centralized power, consisting of a white, male, heteronormative, and American community, was deeply invested in maintaining its dominant position within society, vigilant not to relinquish control of its privileges. Positioned at the metaphorical center of society, this heteronormative community crafted ideological discourses — like the history presented within California textbooks and curriculums — to ensure their strategic position would endure. To win any respite, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals believed they would have to engage in tactical memory work against this strategically entrenched system. Thus, advocates imagined a gay, lesbian, and bisexual public memory for California curriculums that ran contrary to existing narrative of “history” and actively critiqued its ideological nature. These tactical rhetorics were both performative and representational in nature.

On the performative level, one of the most important means of undermining the ongoing, uncritical telling of history was a rhetorically conscious use of context at the interplay of space and time. Tactical rhetorics are highly contextualized in nature. For de Certeau: “because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time — it is always on the watch for opportunities that must

⁴⁶¹ Jessea Greenman (coordinator of Project 21 and founder of the P.E.R.S.O.N. Project), in an e-mail to the author, March 23, 2011.

be seized ‘on the wing.’” In this way, tactics rely heavily on the “manner in which the opportunity is ‘seized.’” As de Certeau suggests, marginalized groups can act tactically by waiting for opportunities to present themselves to maximize tactical advantage.⁴⁶² In the case of the reformers, this contextual action occurred most obviously in several ways.

Reformers first carefully selected their field of engagement with the hegemonic historical forces: California. California was a deft rhetorical choice for reimagining the gay, lesbian, and bisexual past. Home to a politically tested, mobilized, and informed population, California provided ample supporters for the cause with deep personal memories of earlier gay, lesbian, and bisexual life. As a state with a history of bold government actions and public referendums, California was also understood as a “national laboratory” where progressive policies for social and cultural change could be tested and refined. Most importantly, as one of the nation’s largest textbook markets, reformers recognized that if they could win success in California, textbooks corporations would likely carry over those reforms to textbooks used by other, smaller states. Combined with the fact that a large number of early gay, lesbian, and bisexual associations and organizations had already begun to form in the state, California provided both tactical and strategic resources for GLB public memory action.

Reformers also used context with rhetorical savvy by carefully choosing their timing. In California, educational curriculums are broken down into a series of disciplinary frameworks. The California Curriculum Committee reviews frameworks — like math, science, and social studies — on a regular, staggered rotation once every six years. Having missed the social studies framework rotation in 1990, advocates focused on the health framework, up for consideration in 1992. By selecting the health framework, activists were in a substantially stronger position to

⁴⁶² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xix.

make their case for inclusion because of the highly visible HIV/AIDS crisis that had disproportionately affected gay men. Success in visibility in the health framework would presage future work. At the same time, the venues provided by the health frameworks enabled gays, lesbians, and bisexuals to raise issues of history as well. Though historical representations may not be incorporated into the health curriculum specifically, it provided a fortuitous means of familiarizing the Board with the relevance of gay, lesbian, and bisexual history issues in advance of the next social studies evaluation. As a *kairotically* informed rhetorical campaign, early advocates engaged their rhetorical situation to maximize persuasive impact.

A second performative dimension of queer public memory was less focused on context and more on style. At several times in their controversial campaign to recognize the gay, lesbian, and bisexual past, reformers staged dramatic public performances to gain attention and compel public action. In particular, advocates, already trained in the tactical performances of ACT UP and similar HIV/AIDS groups, conducted a “die-in” in a public, curriculum hearing to compel the state Board of Education to act on changes that had languished for months in debate. According to newspaper reports:

“We cannot, in good conscience, allow this death sentence for our young people to go unchallenged.” With these words, lesbian, gay and bisexual activists commenced a non-violent die-in at the monthly meeting of the California Board of Education in the state’s capital. Their peaceful civil disobedience sought to call public attention to the Board’s callous refusal to recognize the

needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in the new Health Framework.⁴⁶³

At the same time, reformers organized protests, concerts, and image events in the streets to raise public awareness of the issue.⁴⁶⁴

A final performative tactic of early gay and lesbian advocates was to adopt a coalitional politics in the selection of their queer public memories. Several theorists of social action provide means of conceptualizing this possibility. The first is feminist and gender studies scholar Iris Marion Young and her concept of *seriality*. Young argued that women, commonly situated as a “group” is an important social entity that brings with it problematic baggage, especially essentialism and privileges that do harm to some within the group and simultaneously limits collective action. However, Young says if we reconceptualize women not as a group but as a “series” (borrowing from Sartre) — a loose collection of diverse individuals organized by circumstance and routine rather than direct action — these problems could be avoided. As a series, women could remain different and not be essentialized while also being united for action at the same time.⁴⁶⁵ A second conceptual resource for understanding this coalitional performance is in the work of rhetorician Kevin DeLuca. In his germinal study of tactical rhetorics of environmental groups, DeLuca draws upon de Certeau to suggest coalitional action between

⁴⁶³ “Civil Disobedience at the State Board of Education Meeting: Board Censors Information About Lesbians and Gays,” October 8-9, 1992, Project 21, GLAAD/SFBA Records, GLBT Historical Society Collection, GLC17, Box 1, Folder 5, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

⁴⁶⁴ For more on “image events,” see Kevin DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005). For examples of similar forms of GLBT image events and their rhetorical style, see Christiansen and Hanson, “Comedy as the Cure for Tragedy.”

⁴⁶⁵ Iris Marion Young, “Gender as Seriality: Thinking About Women as a Social Collective,” *Signs: Journal of Women and Culture in Society* 19 (1994): 713-38.

disparate groups is akin to a form of tactical rhetoric because it relies upon the mobilization of multiple locals to challenge a larger hegemonic center. Citing environmental groups action against industrialism, DeLuca argues much of the success of these groups is found in their rhetorical work “constructing nature in ways that lead to linkages and networks among disparate groups, environmental justice groups embody a possible politics in a postmodern social field marked by fragmentation, simulation, and diversity.”⁴⁶⁶ Among these “disparate groups,” DeLuca cites groups concerned with race, class, and rural issues. He concludes that such diffuse tactics “can be a choice and an appropriate choice in a postmodern social field, not merely the only option of the weak.”⁴⁶⁷

Similarly, early gay and lesbian activists recognized that working in “contingent alliances” with other similarly situated groups could enhance their memory struggle to renovate the façade of normative American identity. Like DeLuca’s environmentalists, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals created communion with racial, class, and gendered minorities. This coalition of minority memory makers organized around what they saw as a heteronormative, racist, misogynist, and wealthy telling of American history. By working collectively to reiterate and reinforce each other’s memory rhetoric, they hoped to reimagine what this history could look like, and by default, what contemporary imaginings of Americans would look like. Thus, by aligning their memory rhetorics in coalition with other similarly situated “others,” the early gay and lesbian advocates sought to strengthen their critique and further expand their opportunities for challenging the center’s dominant representation.

This coalitional memory politics is most clearly signaled by early gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates support for the Oakland School district’s rejection of the state social studies

⁴⁶⁶ DeLuca, *Image Politics*, 82-83.

⁴⁶⁷ DeLuca, *Image Politics*, 82.

and history framework. In 1991, California adopted a revised multicultural curriculum for history and social studies textbook labeled a “World of Difference,” a framework that would not be reviewed again for six years.⁴⁶⁸ This new framework ignited controversy among California’s ethnic and cultural groups for its representational deficiencies. In particular, the Oakland School Board rejected outright the revised framework because of its skewed and underrepresented images of African Americans. As the controversy grabbed headlines across the state, Project 21 saw a moment of opportunity and, acting in coalition with other civil rights groups, raised the absence of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in the new curriculum as well.

While Oakland’s rejection of the framework made no mention of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals at all and instead focused exclusively on representations of race, the early advocates took this opportunity to link the struggles of these similarly situated, overlapping minorities. In a speech before the State of California Curriculum Commission on July 18, 1990, Greenman illustrated this absence and shared coalitional concern powerfully:

Our GLADD chapter in Los Angeles had to produce a curriculum on homophobia because lesbian, gay, and bisexual people were excluded from the recent “World of Difference” curriculum sponsored by the B’nai B’rith Anti-Defamation League. This GLAAD curriculum on homophobia, which parallels the “World

⁴⁶⁸ The World of Difference curriculum was adopted by the state of California based upon a series of proposed curricular changes by the organization B’nai B’rith Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in Los Angeles. Founded in 1913, the ADL is a potent Jewish lobby that sought to combat anti-Semitism in the United States. Concerned about the representations of Jews in California’s curriculum, the powerful organization successfully lobbied for a series of changes in California’s history and social science framework, most of which were largely accepted with little public scrutiny. See Anti-Defamation League, “History of the ADL,” 2011, <http://www.adl.org/adlhistory/intro.asp> (accessed March 24, 2011).

of Difference” program, has been approved for use in L.A. school districts. The problem is not only that B’nai B’rith did not include us. The problem is also that school districts throughout the state welcomed this program even though it deliberately excluded sexual minorities. The problem is that school districts do not take initiatives to produce or provide information or services for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth.⁴⁶⁹

By tactically aligning their cause for lesbian, gay, and bisexual representation with those intersecting and overlapping minority categories equally displaced, early advocates not only signaled a broader political message about textbook invisibility, but also gained greater tactical advantage by enhancing those in support of its own struggle. By performing resistance generally, reformers acted tactically to challenge the strategic discourses that maintained exclusive control over speaking time, representation, and attention.

However, more important than the performance of tactical memory, the *way* in which gay, lesbian, and bisexual reformers imagined their past as part of California textbooks and curriculums represented the most intensive tactical engagement with entrenched representational power. First, the early advocates sought to broaden the sites of gay, lesbian, and bisexual representation within the strategic framework of curricular reform. Within de Certeau’s spatial metaphor of power, hegemony’s power is derived directly from its ability to control the center, to defend it from attacks, and to maintain a space of privilege that can be “circumscribed” for rest

⁴⁶⁹ Greenman, “Statement to the State of California Curriculum Commission,” 3.

and recuperation.⁴⁷⁰ In these spatial terms, others might act tactically by spreading out and distracting those in the center by creating new zones of resistance in multiple, simultaneous, far flung locations. By doing so, the hegemonic center may still maintain control, but it will be forced to manage multiple incidents at once and work harder to defend its center. This metaphorical tactic can be rendered visible within public memory by extending the topics of debate beyond a single, traditional dialectic. The primary way in which early gay, lesbian, and bisexual activist multiplied their sites of contestation was by making arguments about *where* within the curriculum gay, lesbian, and bisexual history was of practical concern.

One of the focus areas of this tactical rhetoric was to move any reference of gay, lesbian, and bisexual content out of the realm of civil rights and into the curriculum more broadly. Despite the fact that gay, lesbian, bisexual representation was not required in any history framework, some school districts and textbook publishers included references to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals within their curriculums. However, the way in which these contributions were categorized — as brief mentions within the “civil rights” section of the textbooks — was problematic for early advocates. While any representation at all was valuable to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals at the time, such a limited representation posed problems for the particular queer public memory the advocates espoused. Specifically, these imaginings rendered gays, lesbians, and bisexuals as a late twentieth century phenomenon — an argument that ran counter to reality and the “we have always existed” argument adopted by gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates for decades.⁴⁷¹ It also suggested that only the most political aspects of gay life were worthy of concern. Attention to gay, lesbian, and bisexual politics was valuable, but it simultaneously

⁴⁷⁰ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xix.

⁴⁷¹ Greenman echoes this language in here public comments before the Board of Education: “We have existed everywhere on earth since the beginning of time and we will continue to participate in human civilization until the end of time.” See Greenman, “Statement to Board of Education.”

allowed teachers to ignore the sexual, artistic, creative, and economic cultures of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, further marginalizing them as a mere group of activists. Such a representation did not represent actually existing gay, lesbian, or bisexual life or politics (in the past or present), nor did it do much to serve the diverse needs of often-isolated gay youth the reforms were imagined to in part to assist.

As such, gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates adopted the argument that when sexual minorities are represented, they should be represented *across the curriculum*. By doing so, activists hoped to compel public school to demonstrate not only that they were fighting for civil rights, but had been for some time as part of a diverse and (at time) life-affirming existence that reached into all corners of human experience. Simultaneously, representing gays, lesbians, and bisexuals across the curriculum would prevent the easy caricature made possible by only teaching about gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in sexual education that this was only a sexual identity, or worse yet, a transient sexual behavior that constituted nothing of substance.

BANGLE's statement of purpose perhaps best sums up this point: "that textbooks *in each discipline* should accurately portray the *history* and culture of homosexuals and bisexuals in the United States and world cultures."⁴⁷² For activist, gays and lesbians needed a place in all of the curriculum frameworks: gay and lesbian sport stars should be highlighted in physical education classes, discussions of literary figures and their works should mention gay and lesbian identity openly, when the great insights of scientists and mathematicians were described their inventor's sexual identity should be mentioned as well. In this way, gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates did not simply seek to make visible gay, lesbian, and bisexual history; rather they sought to

⁴⁷² BANGLE, "Letter from Robert Birle to Honig, State Superintendent of Public Instruction," June 25, 1986, 2, Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators Records, 1985-1995, Box 1, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, California.

historicize the curriculum with an eye towards gay, lesbian, and bisexual representation. If successful, the adoption of this policy within public school curriculum would radically alter the way gays, lesbians, and bisexuals were represented to millions of school children.

Second, gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates built upon their performance of coalition politics to imagine a past that acknowledged the diverse and intersectional nature of gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity. This was largely achieved by the thoughtful selection of representative figures to be highlighted within the textbooks and curriculum. If gays, lesbians, and bisexuals were to adopt a multicultural and intersecting view of their politics, the selected figures within their proposed history should also represent diverse enactments of gay, lesbian, and bisexual life.

Vital to depicting the wide presence of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals within American society and world culture, were the selection of representative anecdotes advocates suggested would be highlighted within the curriculum. The individuals highlighted — individually and taken together — reflect a tactical memory of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual past wherein identity is not exclusive and rigid but diverse and coalitional. As one aspect of this diversity pledge, early advocates adopted as a principle that textbooks and school curriculum should balance representations between men and women. Such a claim was explicitly laid out in BANGLE's organizing documents, but was also represented within the speeches and public comments of advocates.⁴⁷³ For instance, nearly every list of gay, lesbian, and bisexual anecdotes that was made in the press during the 80s and 90s reflected both males and females. Such parity was a virtue of an earlier era in gay and lesbian politics that became prevalently reflected in textbook policy.

⁴⁷³ BANGLE, "Evaluation Criteria: Books for Gay and Lesbian Youth," Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators Records, 1985-1995, Box 1, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, California.

In addition, special attention was given to representing gays, lesbians, and bisexuals of color, different classes, ethnic origins, and ages. BANGLE's statement on evaluation criteria for youth books argued as a principle "when possible, the whole spectrum of gay and lesbian possibilities should be presented, i.e. many different classes, races, ethnic groups, ages, etc."⁴⁷⁴ In addition, a substantial number of anecdotal representatives listed by early advocates intentionally demanded a diverse representation of gay, lesbian, and bisexual life. In Greenman's speech before the State Curriculum Commission, she explicitly draws attention to the contributions of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals of color:

This state and its school districts need programs of affirmative acceptance of diversity. My lesbian, gay and bisexual sisters and brothers of all colors have been victims of a conspiracy of silence throughout history...Speaking of my lesbian, gay, and bisexual sisters and brothers of color, let me mention to you some in history of whom you may not be aware: Montezuma II, Yukio Mishima, James Baldwin, Garcia Lorca, Bayard Rustin, and Bessie Smith.⁴⁷⁵

Reflected in this diversity were also rich *transnational* representations of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual past. In an explicit challenge to strategic nationalist discourses, early advocates highlighted historical gays, lesbians, and bisexuals from many nations and civilizations. In her speech to the State of California Curriculum Commission, Greenman highlighted a number of

⁴⁷⁴ BANGLE, "Evaluation Criteria: Books for Gay and Lesbian Youth."

⁴⁷⁵ Greenman, "Statement to State of California Curriculum Commission," 1.

gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons from world history, including Erasmus (Dutch), Lawrence of Arabia (British), Dag Hammarskjold (Swedish), Alexander the Great (Macedonian), and others.⁴⁷⁶ While contemporary scholars may quibble with our labeling of some of these figures as “gay,” as a rhetorical tactic, the selection of figures throughout the world and an emphasis on their participation in “world culture” specified a very wide view of history.⁴⁷⁷

The diversity of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community was also depicted in ways beyond the traditional matrixes of race, age, color, and creed. The diverse contributions in professions and ways of life were also made explicit. Greenman identifies gay, lesbian, and bisexual figures that are patriotic, successful in business, world leaders, mighty conquerors, economic geniuses, people of science and learning, as well as the more traditional caricature of the gay and lesbian “people of arts and letters.”⁴⁷⁸ However, despite the fact that these figures were held up as role-models, early advocates did not erase the contributions of everyday gays and lesbians from their characterizations. Greenman argued explicitly before the California State Board of Education:

our history is not only the history of famous figures and front-page events, but also the history of a courageous people defining their own culture in the face of terrible persecution and prejudice. We are a proud people and rightly so.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ Greenman, “Statement to State of California Curriculum Commission,” 1.

⁴⁷⁷ BANGLE, “Letter from Birle to Honig.”

⁴⁷⁸ Greenman, “Statement to State of California Curriculum Commission,” 1-2.

⁴⁷⁹ Greenman, “Statement to the Board of Education,” 2.

Drawn from a diverse swath of gay, lesbian, and bisexual life that represented not just the memory but the political commitments of diverse communities, these figures created an image of the past vital to shaping public perceptions of the community.

Finally, the tactical memory rhetorics of early reformers adopted not simply strategies of defense but insurgent rhetorics of critique. The divide between critique and defense is crucial to the distinction de Certeau makes between tactics and strategies. In his scheme of power, it is within the purview of strategies to defend their space while it is the only recourse of the tactical to attack when the opportunity presents itself.⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, it is by virtue of having a space one can defend that a subject becomes situated strategically in the first place. Despite their tactical situation, early gay, lesbian, and bisexual public memory rhetorics did attempt to create some strategic space for defending the gay community and identity. Indeed, the goal of textbook reform was to create a safe and enduring space within California curriculum that might serve as a reprieve for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth otherwise awash in cultural homophobia and heteronormativity. Yet the way early gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates detailed these representational spaces was not simply as GLB-affirmative; they were also deeply critical of the heterosexual center, providing a tactical critique for remembering supposedly heterosexual history.

In their imaginings of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual past, early reformers argued that it was the responsibility of public schools to critique history-as-is and account for heteronormativity's pervasive presence and deplorable consequences to date. In her public speeches, Greenman charged explicitly "my lesbian, gay and bisexual sisters and brothers of all colors have been the victims of a conspiracy of silence throughout history, and I submit to you

⁴⁸⁰ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xv.

that until the present moment, the State Curriculum Commissions has been one of the silent partners in that conspiracy.” She goes on to label this as a “sin of omission” that was a “crime against our common humanity. It is KILLING us, and every day more lives are destroyed.”⁴⁸¹ Greenman continued her rhetorical critique of historiography before the Board of Education: “As surely as these books commit vericide (murder of the truth) by systemically eliminating any mention of my people, they contribute to the ongoing genocide of my people.”⁴⁸² Birle echoed this systemic attack on historiography in a 1985 letter: “this discrimination is occurring by the systemic omission of homosexual information. There is wanton omission in its textbooks, classrooms and teacher preparation. This discrimination has cultivated years of prejudice against gays and lesbians.”⁴⁸³

To counter these overt acts of discrimination in historical representation, early gay, lesbian, and bisexual advocates imagined a historical curriculum that would not just praise GLB lives, but that would also place heteronormative reactions against sexual minorities under inspection and, at times, condemnation. Birle and BANGLE stated in their assessment criteria: “When homosexuality is presented in a problematic manner, the focus should be on the homophobic and intolerant reactions to gay and lesbian people and never on the homosexuality as the problem.”⁴⁸⁴ Said another way, BANGLE argued that when curriculum items were to discuss problems related to homosexuality, it would teach that straight people were often the problem, not gays and lesbians themselves. Making such claims within historical representations was a powerful tactical move to critique the center of representational power. Such an approach was instantiated on several rhetorical fronts.

⁴⁸¹ Greenman, “Statement to State of California Curriculum Commission,” 1-3.

⁴⁸² Greenman, “Statement to the Board of Education,” 2.

⁴⁸³ BANGLE, “Letter from Birle to Honig.”

⁴⁸⁴ BANGLE, “Evaluation Criteria: Books for Gay and Lesbian Youth.”

Violence against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals was perhaps the most prominent issues critiqued by activists. The bullying of gay and lesbian youth was of particular importance, especially given the way in which bullying contributed to the high numbers of gay and lesbian teen suicides.⁴⁸⁵ Another target of early advocates were representations that implied gay, lesbian, and bisexual lifestyles were simply “phases” or that encouraged readers to transition out of them. These claims implied a veiled form of heteronormativity — acknowledging that gay people did exist, but casting them as ephemeral emotional or psychological forms of experimentation. To repudiate those suggestions, BANGLE explicitly suggested “the inclusion of gay or lesbian activity, when presented as a phase resulting in heterosexual orientation, is not acceptable unless balanced by the presentation of transient heterosexual activity.”⁴⁸⁶ By doing so, advocates sought to hold defenders of the status quo to the fire: if homosexuality was to be considered a phase, than so equally must be heterosexuality. Also under attack by early advocates were claims leveled in some California classrooms that homosexuality was a learned behavior or a choice. Finally and perhaps most pressing, early advocates sought to actively critique the idea that gay men (and lesbians to a much lesser extent) were the cause of HIV/AIDS, thereby inferring them to be “deserving” of the disease and giving permission to others to mistreat or harm GLB persons. By highlighting not just the good qualities of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in history, but also emphasizing the ways in they had been discriminated against and harmed in the past and urging those claims to be made explicit within public school curriculum, early advocates took an aggressive stand against curricular complicity in perpetuating these harms.

In the final analysis, the image of the history reformers imagined for California students was a powerful tactical image: History, as a space which had previously been contrary to gay,

⁴⁸⁵ Greenman, “Statement to State of California Curriculum Commission,” 2-3.

⁴⁸⁶ BANGLE, “Evaluation Criteria: Books for Gay and Lesbian Youth.”

lesbian, and bisexual representation, now included a dynamic and diverse mix of GLB figures from all times and around the world, engaged in powerful and important pursuits and content with themselves as worthwhile people. By attempting to position this image within the heretofore heteronormative and strategic space of public school textbooks and curriculums, this rhetoric was also highly strategic — particularly if accepted and made a lasting part of the educational process. Simultaneously, the very image of history itself called into question efforts by others to marginalize this image, leaving indelible marks on the objectivity and truthfulness of historical representation.

This gay, lesbian, and bisexual imagining was a direct challenge to normative memories of American history. It called into question a history that ignored or actively erased and misrepresented race, class, gender, and sexuality; it broadened the scope of the past to include diverse people from around the world; and it explicitly labeled historical methods as heteronormative and destructive to both gay, lesbian, and bisexual and straight youths. In addition, activists used tactical methods of resistance and thoughtful uses of context to push these imaginings into action.

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual activists pursued these tactical memory rhetorics for several years in the 80s and 90s, to some degree of success. Based upon the testimony and activism of early advocates, “factual, substantiated discussion” about homosexuality for middle and high school was made permissible within California health classes. Voluntary materials were also made available for individual usage and gay, lesbian, and bisexual books in public school libraries expanded.⁴⁸⁷ These were vital victories of the day. In addition, the very public

⁴⁸⁷ Judy Lin, “Gay Community Seeks Recognition in Textbooks; Bill Passed in Senate and Now in Assembly Doesn’t Detail How Noting Contributions Would Be Accomplished,” *Contra Costa Times*, May 28, 2006.

imagining of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual past performed by these advocates in their struggle for representational recognition and respectful or accurate inclusion was powerful. Within a culture in which gays, lesbians, and bisexuals are so often hidden from history, the attention given to that past through public controversy left an indelible mark within the public consciousness. Nonetheless, early gay, lesbian, and bisexual activists saw little progress in regards to their broader goals of historical representations in curriculums. Heteronormativity prevailed and the GLB past remained largely hidden to school-aged audiences, both heterosexual and homosexual. Recognizing such and turning their organizational strength elsewhere, substantial curricular reforms efforts ebbed by the late 1990s. It would not be until almost ten years later that a different approach to revise textbooks and curriculums would be undertaken — with greater potential for acceptance but also greater risk to GLBT public memory.

4.5 THE BIAS-FREE CURRICULUM: 2006 - 2012

A few years following the earliest efforts to reform California textbooks and curriculums, advocates in the GLB (and now T) rights movement shifted focus to other issues of concern in the new millennium. This remained the case until same-sex marriage decisions rocked California in the middle of the decade. With same-sex marriage legalized (at least for a time in California), the prospects of GLBT-affirming social change seemed unlimited and interest in further refining historical representations of GLBT people in California public schools regained momentum.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁸ According Senator Sheila Kuehl, “If gay marriage could pass in the [California] Assembly, this is nothing.” Jordan Rau, “State Senate Endorses Teaching Gays’ Historical Achievements,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 2006, A1.

At the behest of and in coordination with the non-profit group Equality California, a new wave of reforms and reformers more fully and publicly reengaged the debate. Indicative of this movement, in 2006, S.B. 1437: “The Bias-Free Curriculum Act” came to the floor of the California state legislature. The bill, written and introduced by openly lesbian State Senator Sheila Kuehl, sought to intervene in the standard practices of the California education system, calling for the prevention of discrimination against GLBT people in public school curriculum, activities, and teaching materials and mandating that all instructional material, particularly textbooks, “portray the contributions of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender to the economic, political, and social development of the state and the country.”⁴⁸⁹

With other groups having found little success in earlier efforts to render gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people explicitly within the California curriculum, Kuehl, Equality California, and other more contemporary advocates, facing the same rhetorical choices, pursued their reform goal on a different rhetorical track. Like earlier reformers, contemporary advocates believed that inclusion into the strategic space of the curriculum and its supporting materials would be a net positive achievement; thus they too pursued a *strategic* memory rhetoric in coordination with selective tactical choices. However, this second approach chose largely to foreclose efforts at criticism within the curriculum that had been so central to the more tactic-heavy earlier movement. Instead, contemporary advocates focused their attention on the very strategic rhetoric of nationalism already deeply inscribed into the ideology of public school education.

Several scholars, both within and outside of rhetorical thought, have labeled nationalism as a strategic rhetoric in American society. Most specifically, Laura C. Privera and John W.

⁴⁸⁹ Senator Sheila Kuehl, “SB 1437: Bias Free Curriculum Act,” <http://www.sen.ca.gov/> (accessed March 24, 2011).

Howard III have labeled nationalism a strategic rhetoric because, in conjunction with masculinity and whiteness, it “define[s] group membership and rank according to their location relative to an elusive ‘ideological center.’”⁴⁹⁰ Drawing on the work of Raka Shome, they suggest “the further one is from the “ideal” (or archetypal) national, the more foreign, impure, and, ultimately, untrustworthy a person becomes.”⁴⁹¹ Thus being labeled a national brings with it a powerful set of discursive resources that enhance an individual or group’s power, access, and respectability, with significant social and political consequences. However, being labeled a national requires participation in a series of intertwined strategic rhetorics that reaffirm the status quo power structure, often at the expense of those labeled as marginal or other. For GLBT advocates, participation in this strategic rhetoric of nationalism was extremely risky and presented a troubling double bind. On one hand, participate in the rhetoric of nationalism and gain a degree of visibility despite the fact that this visibility would be costly, representationally damaging, and further firm up the hegemonic status quo. On the other hand, not participating in this rhetoric would likely continue the relatively unsuccessful efforts tried earlier while the invisibility in textbooks perpetuated a worrisome rise in violence, bullying, suicide, and much worse for GLBT youth. Making a difficult choice, the advocates embraced a rhetorical imagining that sought to represent historical GLBT people as aligned *with and in support of* American nationalism. Key to this effort was constructing a “rhetoric of contribution.”

⁴⁹⁰ Laura C. Prividera and John W. Howard III, “Masculinity, Whiteness, and the Warrior Hero: Perpetuating the Strategic Rhetoric of U.S. Nationalism and the Marginalization of Women,” *Women and Language* 29.2 (2006): 30-31.

⁴⁹¹ Raka Shome, “White Femininity and the Discourse of the Nation: Re/membering Princess Diana,” *Feminist Media Studies* 1 (2001): 323-42.

4.5.1 Rhetoric of National Contribution

The rhetoric of contribution is pervasive within the discourse of GLBT advocates over S.B. 1437 and its subsequent versions. In almost every accounting of the bill, in the print media, on television, or online, the language of “contribution” appears prominently in the first few lines. For instance, the *Los Angeles Times* said the legislation would “require that the historical contributions of homosexuals in the United States be taught in California schools.”⁴⁹² The *Washington Times* reiterated this point: “a bill...would require public schools to teach students in all grades about the contributions homosexuals, bisexuals, and transsexuals have made to society.”⁴⁹³ A *San Francisco Chronicle* headline reads: “Senate OKs bill on gays in textbooks, Emotions run high about teaching their contributions.”⁴⁹⁴ The *New York Times*, *Associated Press*, *MSNBC*, *ABC News*, and shows on *Fox News* all echoed the contributory sentiment, quoting the legislation directly.⁴⁹⁵ From their very first reporting, mediated discourses about the legislation pinpointed the language of contribution as central to comprehending the debate.

Key to understanding the utility of the language in these characterizations, contribution suggested two different aspects in representing GLBT people in history. First, the word signaled that GLBT people were to be highlighted in positive ways, rather than negative ways (echoing

⁴⁹² Rau, “State Senate Endorses,” A1.

⁴⁹³ Joyce Howard Price, “California Panel Backs Teaching ‘Sexual Diversity,’” *Washington Times*, April 7, 2006, A10.

⁴⁹⁴ Greg Lucas, “Senate OKs Bill on Gays in Textbooks, Emotions Run High about Teaching their Contributions,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 12, 2006, B8, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/05/12/BAGSOIQN391.DTL> (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁴⁹⁵ Jesse McKinley, “From TV Role in ‘Dobbie Gillis’ to Rights Fight in Legislature,” *New York Times*, May 14, 2006, A16; Samantha Young, “Assembly to Scale Back Bill to Promote Homosexuals in Textbooks,” *Associated Press*, August 8, 2006; “California Might Honor Gays in Textbooks,” *MSNBC*, May 12, 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12754481/> (accessed March 24, 2011); Elizabeth Vargas, “Culture Clash, Culture Wars,” *World News Tonight/ABC News*, May 12, 2006; Bill O’Reilly, “Should California Schools Put Positive Spin on Gays?” *The O’Reilly Factor*, May 8, 2006.

earlier tactical advocates). Given the largely negative relationship between GLBT people (and their predecessors) and nationalism in historical discourse, such a dimension prevented *a priori* any negative discussion of GLBT people in the past that also characterized them in ways contrary to the nationalist project. Thus, gays and lesbians would be represented positively and frequently in the discourse to the extent that their contributions could be construed as supporting “American” values and interests and were deemed by advocates and educators as “good,” “valuable,” and “important.” By doing so, advocates hoped to counter demeaning presumptions and absences already within the curriculums and (at least tacitly) begin to mark heteronormativity. For instance, Kuehl is quoted as suggesting her legislation would make clear, in many ways for the first time, “the fact that somebody who did something good was a gay person.”⁴⁹⁶ Elsewhere, she suggested that “acknowledging that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people have made valuable contributions...” to history was crucial.⁴⁹⁷ Others echoed this claim, encouraging student to learn “about the accomplishments” of GLBT people in the past.⁴⁹⁸ These accomplishments would do important rhetorical work in an otherwise desolate representational vacuum. To quote Kuehl further: “if schools are silent about the diversity of talented people who were important in California, the impression is that only white, straight men did anything important. That leaves virtually everyone else in school believing their talents may not be sufficient.”⁴⁹⁹ While this change would be a representational victory for GLBT advocates,

⁴⁹⁶ Quote by Senator Kuehl in Juliet Williams, “Senate Committee Agrees to Add Sexual Orientation to Curriculum,” *Associated Press*, May 4, 2006.

⁴⁹⁷ Jonathan Snowden, “Press Release: SB 1437 (Kuehl): Bias-Free Curriculum Act, Question and Answers,” April 18, 2006, <http://dist23.casen.govoffice.com/> (site no longer active).

⁴⁹⁸ Williams, “Senate Committee Agrees.”

⁴⁹⁹ Steve Lawrence, “Bill Would Require Textbooks to Mention Gays’ Contributions,” *Associated Press*, April 30, 2006; Importantly, as seen above, “talent” is another term used to characterize these contributions of gays and lesbians. By sheer volume, it is discussed much less frequently than good, valuable, or importance, only appearing in two articles reviewed. However, talent here serves as a

at the same time, not discriminating against GLBT persons would do little to further the aims of the reformers. Rather it only served to prevent more blatant assaults on GLBT people in the curriculum — a feat in itself, but not a means of access to the strategic center of power.

In a second and more important dimension of the discourse, the language of contribution suggested that GLBT people would be represented in history as willing and active participants in the national project, aligning them with the strategic rhetoric of the wider public and potentially earning them a degree of representation and power. This assumption reflected in the language differed significantly from earlier tactic-oriented critics who, while advocating for recognizing and recovering the achievements of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals did not necessarily position those achievements as supportive of the status quo of American power. Rather, by including figures of diverse international, racial, gendered, and political perspectives, earlier advocates (at least implied) that any achievement in the past by a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person merited attention. By contrast, the way in which contemporary advocates attempted to represent their vision of the GLBT past implied a significantly more circumscribed view, favoring those with palatable historical achievements as their preferred choices. These choices then factored heavily into shaping GLBT people of the past as active contributors to American nationalism. Two prominent rhetorical approaches made the most impact in this regard: narrowing the scope of representation and aligning GLBT people with other minority identities.

valuable counter to the overwhelming language of good and important, for talent need not signify a support of nationalism. In the context of history and memory as displayed in textbooks, someone can be talented without being in support of the nation. For instance, Benedict Arnold might have been a very talented person, but his status as traitor marks him as non-nationalist. Thus, when gays and lesbians are described as being talented people in history, it need not necessarily confer group identity. In contrast, labeling their contributions as good and important partakes within the ideological value system of textbook and curriculum generally. If textbooks are ideological texts meant, in part, to promote a sense of American national inclusion, than highlighting gays and lesbians as being good and important figures within this ideology aligns them in ways a term like “talented” could not.

First, the scope of public remembrances of GLBT people was circumscribed to recall and represent only those figures of prominent “American” identity. While twenty year earlier, Greenman, Birle, and their colleagues had made a powerful case for including a diverse range of ethnic, national, and cultural others — including Aztec leader Montezuma II, Japanese author Yukio Mishima, and Spanish poet Garcia Lorca — by contrast, contemporary advocates specified Americans (meaning here U.S. and thereby excluding Montezuma II despite his Aztec home) exclusively as the benchmarks of representational worth.⁵⁰⁰ Every public list of representational figures within the discourse included only U.S. figures. This is largely because the legislation mandated contributions to America as a key representational factor. To do otherwise would be to promote figures that in many ways were antithetical to the values of American nationalism. Consider the above figures: Montezuma was an indigenous American who stood in the way of colonial “progress,” Mishima lead an attempted coup d’état in 1970 to restore the Japanese Emperor deposed during World War II with the help of the United States, and Lorca’s complicated politics and loyalty to Spanish nationalism, made all these earlier representative anecdotes problematic for representational authority within American textbooks. Facing similar problems, the international and transnational qualities of sexual minorities prevalent in earlier tactical discourses were largely erased. Instead, by limiting their claims to American figures, contemporary reformers could align all representative figures with the nationalist project implicitly, circumventing any challenges that might arise.⁵⁰¹

⁵⁰⁰ It is important note here that while “American” colloquially signifies a person of U.S. citizenship in contemporary parlance, originally American designated a person from any of the nations of North and South America. This discourse is regularly forgotten as first European, but then the U.S. nation sought to take exclusive ownership of the term, an only slightly veiled form of cultural imperialism.

⁵⁰¹ Interestingly, the national character of these GLBT contributors is more prominent than their contributions to the state of California, something equally required by the legislation. While Kuehl’s legislation and public statements do require GLBT contributions to the nation be highlighted, it also

Second, reformers attempted to align gays and lesbians with other ethnic-identity groups who had won inclusion into the cannon of American nationalist heroes. Such an effort has been a regular rhetorical strategy within American political discourse. Several scholarly analyses on memory and nationalism highlight how racial and ethnic minorities sought to incorporate themselves into mainstream civic nationalisms.⁵⁰² Meanwhile, historian Jonathan Zimmerman, while commenting on the S.B. 1437 controversy, reminds us that:

In the 1920s, when anti-immigrant sentiment was at its zenith, a wide range of ethnic groups fought to insert their own heroes into America's grand national narrative. Polish Americans demanded that textbooks include Thaddeus Kosciusko, the Polish nobleman who aided our revolution; Jewish-Americans pressed for Haym Solomon, a merchant who helped finance it; and blacks celebrated Crispus Attucks, the first American to die in it...German Americans wanted textbooks to include Molly Pitcher. Why? You guessed it: she was German! Her birth name, some said, was Maria Ludwig; and eventually, thanks to German pressure, the textbooks said so as well. Germans also claimed Abraham Lincoln as one of their own.⁵⁰³

includes support in the area of the state. However, it is the excessive focus upon the nation, national figures, and national consequences in the debate that contribute to the national underpinnings of the memories.

⁵⁰² For instance, see Bruner, *Strategies of Remembrance*, 83.

⁵⁰³ Jonathan Zimmerman, "Straight History: The Danger of Trying to Put a 'Positive' Face on the Past," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 7, 2006, http://articles.sfgate.com/2006-05-07/opinion/17297021_1_gay-kids-homosexuals-ethnic-groups (accessed March 24, 2011).

Bodnar's account of the "remaking" of America echoes this claim, detailing rhetorical acts by a diverse range of immigrants in the early part of the twentieth century as part of "a more subtle strain of Americanization in the form of programs that praised both immigrant contributions to America and immigrant heritage."⁵⁰⁴ California textbooks were considered particularly amenable to a similar strategy because, since the early 1980s, California law had already guaranteed the inclusion and contributions of minorities of diverse race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender and disabilities.⁵⁰⁵

However, such a strategic rhetoric posed a challenge to reformers to the extent that heterosexuals have not always characterized GLBT people as an ethnic identity akin to, say, Latinos or the Irish. In some accounts, particularly those espoused by social conservatives who consider homosexuality a life decision, sexuality was something profoundly different than ethnicity, something less inherent and more transient or learned. If GLBT people were to align themselves with other identities, they would have to build a case for those parallels though not identical conceptualization. Of course, drawing these parallels between distinctive social groups can be both a powerful and problematic rhetorical undertaking. To be able to connect the beliefs, values, feeling, or ideas about one community with another — regularly done through common rhetorical tropes like metaphor — has been an essential and effective tool to open the minds of hostile audiences, draw upon the existing ethos of others for one's own gain, and building a sense of community in ways that afford equality across difference. However, as Elizabeth Spelman points out, making comparison across groups, at the very least, makes it significantly harder for us to recognize and talk about significant differences within groups as well as to interrogate the ways our intersecting identities enable us to perpetuate real harms against those of

⁵⁰⁴ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 72.

⁵⁰⁵ Lawrence, "Bill Would Require."

us who share some significant similarities, but also important differences.⁵⁰⁶ Possibly at its worst, comparisons across group can become a kind of imperialism of suffering — what Spelman calls “making your suffering mine.”⁵⁰⁷ Thus, GLBT advocates attempts to draw parallels between themselves and particular ethnic groups posed significant risks as well as benefits. Based upon the discourse, the benefit appeared either of greater importance or the risk went largely unnoticed. In either case, these parallels had been made previously by gay and lesbian rhetors. According to sociologist Steven Epstein, “gays in the 1970s increasingly came to conceptualize themselves as a legitimate minority group, having a certain quasi-“ethnic” status, and deserving the same protections against discrimination that are claimed by other groups in our society.”⁵⁰⁸ Despite prominent critiques of the “essentialist” nature of this conception by “constructionists” within the academic Left and perhaps an overgeneralization of prevailing views within the community at the time, this argument is still pervasively seen in contemporary popular rhetoric about GLBT identity. By using this characterization of GLBT identity and drawing parallels with other essentialist or ethnic groups already aligned with the nationalist project, reformers hoped they could create a rhetorical connection that would encourage audiences to draw more explicit analogies between these groups and welcome them into this diverse image of American history.

This move is frequently visible within accounts of the controversy. In an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, it noted that when critics raged against the inclusion, “Supporters countered that textbooks should include the contributions of gays and lesbians just as they are

⁵⁰⁶ Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Fruits of Sorrow: Framing Our Attention to Suffering* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 94.

⁵⁰⁷ Spelman, *Fruits of Sorrow*, 113.

⁵⁰⁸ Steven Epstein, “Gay Politics, Ethnic Identity: The Limits of Social Constructionism,” *Socialist Review* 17.3-4 (1987): 12.

required to contain those of other minority groups.”⁵⁰⁹ An interview with Geoffrey Kors of Equality California in the *Los Angeles Times* linked GLBT movements with other social movements: “If you’re teaching social movements in schools, and you talk about the United Farm Workers and Cesar Chavez, and you talk about the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King, and you talk about the women’s suffrage movement, to leave out the gay rights movement seems glaring.”⁵¹⁰ He added to this logic in another interview in the *Chronicle*: “This is simply adding the GLBT community to the groups that the state has said must be included in the curriculum....there's nothing special or different.”⁵¹¹ Even examples of earlier absences in textbooks since remedied were used to align GLBT people with other nationalized minorities. According to coverage of the bill by *MTV*, “Kuehl and the bill's supporters said that current textbooks are vague on the contributions of gays and lesbians in the same way they were once silent about those of African-Americans and other minority groups.”⁵¹²

Reflecting the ingrained nature of this essentialist rhetoric strategy, conservative critics of the new legislation participated in this strategy as well, engaging their GLBT interlocutors on essentialist terms. In an interview, Benjamin Lopez, a lobbyist for the Traditional Values Coalition noted that “You’re talking about elevating a practice, a lifestyle, and putting it on par with the struggles of blacks, women and (other) minorities....As a minority myself, that’s tremendously offensive.”⁵¹³ A *Los Angeles Times* article covering opposition remarks on the bill characterize statements of State Senator Bill Morrow in similar terms: “Sen. Bill Morrow called

⁵⁰⁹ Greg Lucas, “Bill Expanding Gay Rights in Public School Curriculum Watered Down,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 8, 2006, http://articles.sfgate.com/2006-08-08/bay-area/17305625_1_textbooks-sexual-orientation-gays-and-lesbians (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁵¹⁰ Rau, “State Senate Endorses,” A1.

⁵¹¹ Buchanan and Lucas, “Bill Would Include Gays in Public School Texts.”

⁵¹² Kaufman, “California Senate Passes Bill Requiring Gay History Education.”

⁵¹³ Lawrence, “Bill Would Require.”

the bill ‘dangerous’ and “insidious” because it *lumps* sexual orientation — something he said was a ‘cultural or behavioral lifestyle’ — together with race and sex, which are biological.”⁵¹⁴ Though clearly demonstrating a skewed understanding of sexuality’s shared by many of the most socially conservative politicians in the United States, Morrow and Lopez demonstrate — through their insistent opposition — just how similarly advocates had positioned historical GLBT people with other, already protected minorities within the American nation.

Yet, while this alignment posed numerous positive claims for celebrating American diversity, at the same time, the real diversity that had been a central tenant of earlier tactical rhetorics were eschewed in favor of only fleeting diverse understandings. Despite Kuehl’s claims to the legislation’s representational diversity, the diversity it called for was generally not intersectional *with* the GLBT identity. Rather, by aligning gays and lesbians as another (read: separate) ethnic-minority, they would become a static, homogenous group similar to but sharing none of the same characteristics as those minorities. Washed away in this characterization of American diversity are GLBT people of color and nationality specifically. Yet, by rhetorically separating these identities, it was possible for reformers to suggest they too had been contributors to the national project much like other ethnic-minority peers.

By situating GLBT representations in the past as similar to ethnic-like minorities seeking inclusion in greater society and emphasizing their contributions to the American nationalist project, GLBT reformers crafted a very specific public memory that they hoped would place them at the center of U.S. society and history. However, these rhetorical *additions* to earlier memory projects would be insufficient to gain access to the strategic center of American

⁵¹⁴ Rau, “State Senate Endorses,” A1 (emphasis mine).

nationality alone. In addition, certain key aspects of the GLBT past would have to be forgotten to make this access more complete.

4.5.2 The Strategic Forgetting of the GLBT Past

Though more contemporary GLBT rhetors found within the “rhetoric of contribution” a powerful means of recognizing the value of GLBT persons in dominant culture and aligning them with the strategic nationalism that organizes much of cultural acceptance in our society, this rhetorical choice also had consequential effects on how GLBT people would be understood. While there would undoubtedly be significant benefits for both heterosexual and homosexual youths to see within their curriculum positive representations of the GLBT community as leading, thoughtful, valued people, doing so would require sacrificing certain aspects of the GLBT experience in the past that could be viewed as damaging to American nationalism. While Burke reminds us that every such selection by necessity results in deflections (and as such the idea of a perfect representation is ludicrous), the qualities of GLBT life in the past deflected — i.e., strategically forgotten — by the contemporary advocate’s rhetoric may have come with significant costs that might question its value.

The imagining of GLBT people as vital members of American nationalism is dependent upon certain strategic forgettings that work in conjunction with the rhetoric of contribution described above. Just as the strategic forgetting by public heterosexuals of GLBT people has for centuries been essential to ensuring their vital position within culture and society, the strategic forgettings accepted by GLBT advocates were crucial components in making the prescribed image of homosexuals in California textbooks “work” in ways that could be accepted by national institutions and heterosexual audiences. Though costly, for these reformers the high number of

GLBT youth who committed suicide, harmed themselves, or faced violence on a regular basis merited this choice. As such, these strategic forgettings were viewed as a necessary adaptation to secure a measure of safety, an initial victory in a much larger struggle that for twenty years had little to show for its work. We have seen similar forgettings take place in earlier chapters of this book. While in earlier cases, these forgettings have largely been at the expense of the diversity of GLBT persons and queer attitudes, in this case study, the very core aspects of what fostered the twentieth century gay rights movement are on the chopping block. Sacrificed in the name of inclusion, strategic gay rememberers (either actively or by default) advocated for strategically forgetting several key parts of the GLBT past that was critical of the rhetorical underpinnings of American nationalism.

4.5.2.1 Forgetting Harms

Perhaps the starkest contrast with earlier efforts to include GLBT people into California curriculums was the willingness of latter reformers to forgo highlighting the specific and structural harms done to GLBT people by wider American culture. As we have already seen, earlier tactical efforts at curriculum reform had placed a premium on the critical act, making present, recognizable, and visible not just GLBT identities in the past but also making present, recognizable, and visible the oppression heterosexual culture and people had brought to bear on them. However, later reformers actively minimized those aspects of history in favor of exclusively positive representations of GLBT people.

To be fair, contemporary educational reformers in California have done some work to address GLBT harms. In 1999, Senator Kuehl sponsored legislation in the Assembly preventing

discrimination in classrooms against gays and lesbian that would later become law.⁵¹⁵ However, this law alone is inadequate in much the same ways that feminists have argued non-discrimination policies are an inadequate response to systemic gender discrimination. For dominant groups that have reaped the benefits of discrimination for centuries, such laws are appealing in that they demonstrate a supposed deference to the historically marginalized; a recognition that the prior situation was unfair, inappropriate, or immoral (depending on the context). However, consciously or not, this appeal to end discrimination is often a facade. For while outwardly appearing to address issues that disadvantage marginalized groups, these policies only address *future* discrimination without putting at risk the benefits — wealth, power, prestige, control— the center has accrued due to *historical* discrimination. Without a historically informed understanding of discrimination (and other coordinated means of addressing these harms), newly appreciated minorities retain their minority status because they have to start the race by digging out of a representational and material hole, further postponing the dominant culture's need to grapple with its own actions.⁵¹⁶ Thus, GLBT people still pay a substantial price by failing to demonstrate these harms in historic representations, even if present law may limit some of their effects in the future.

However, strategically forgetting the harms committed against GLBT people was a necessity if reformers wished to see themselves included into the center of American community. This is primarily because an emphasis on harms was both critical of American ideology and

⁵¹⁵ Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 334.

⁵¹⁶ Julia T. Wood, *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2009), 247. This situation is even more egregious in the case when the intersecting dimensions of victims' identities go unnoticed or unappreciated. See Kimberle Crenshaw, "A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Law and Politics," in *The Politics of Law: A Progressive Critique*, ed. David Kairys (New York: Pantheon, 1990), 195, 200.

challenged American values. It is difficult to imagine a nationalist rhetoric in which the nation was perpetually under attack. However, such would be the requirement if GLBT reformers insisted that the discussion of harms be included into these textbooks. Thus, unlike their more tactical forbearers, the critique of heterosexual culture in American society fell out of the textbook reform discourse during the 2000s. Instead, GLBT advocates embraced representations that sought to forget the harms they had faced in favor of national recognition and inclusion. Doubtless, many of those who supported this approach were unaware of earlier work that had taken the critical stance, did not recognize the costs incumbent with such a move, relied upon others to do this work, or made an informed choice with the hope that such harms could be addressed later after the initial concerns for visibility had been achieved. As such, they followed a long line of others marginalized communities making similarly difficult decisions both within textbooks and public memory generally. Zimmerman demonstrates how textbooks that should have described conquistador imperial violence against Native Americans “made no mention of this violence.”⁵¹⁷ Likewise, planners of the American bicentennial used their American memory projects to emphasize national unity and to forget the violence committed against members of the citizenry by the government during the 1960s.⁵¹⁸ Certainly discussions of violence in public education come with age-appropriate constraints that limit when such harms might be discussed. But this would not seem to prevent the discussion of harms at all levels of K-12 education. Nonetheless, GLBT advocates emphasized their contributions in the discourse over potentially anti-American criticisms.

⁵¹⁷ Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 128.

⁵¹⁸ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 228.

While the *absence* of harm is not something discussed commonly in discourse over the legislation, identifying this strategic forgetting is done prominently in a particular discursive fragment. Historian Jonathan Zimmerman echoes this concern in an often-cited editorial in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Zimmerman argues passionately against the bill, not because he fears GLBT inclusion into the curriculum but rather because he thinks it will distort critical thinking about the conditions of historical animosity often not present within textbooks:

So if the bill about gay history passes, we can expect another round of heroes — this time, of course, gay heroes — to enter the books. But that won't help us address the really tough questions about American history, writ large. Why have gays suffered so much discrimination, during the McCarthy era and into the present? What does that say about our nation — about its conceptions of love, of family, and of “freedom” itself?⁵¹⁹

While Zimmerman makes the charge in the spirit of promoting greater interrogation and critical thinking about American culture, this thought is somewhat marred by some flippant statements about contemporary gay culture post-AIDS. Nonetheless, his attention to (what he calls) making our kids “feel good” as the central motivation behind these efforts (what he also labels “history as therapy”) can be understood another way: a rhetorical strategy in support of American nationalism that willfully forgets anti-GLBT harms, while remembering a devastating disease

⁵¹⁹ Zimmerman, “Straight History.”

that, in fact, reproduced and amplified an already existing stereotype that can be traced back at least to the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵²⁰

Such a public memory seems difficult to imagine given the shape of similar, current textbooks representations. Indeed, could we envisage a contemporary social studies text that ignored the Holocaust, slavery, or the mistreatment of women? What if the genocidal destruction of the Native Americans was only presented as a footnote? How would we understand the place of Asian Americans in this century if we did not learn as students that our own government had interred them within the last century? The point here is that the language of “contribution” within the textbook debate — though serving a vitally important function in affirming the contemporary and historical value of GLBT people for a diverse audience — minimizes an equally important discussion of the individual and systemic harms perpetrated against GLBT people within a heteronormative culture. Combined with the impassioned support for American nationalism, the significant silence of GLBT existence in the current curriculum would be replaced with significant representation — but only of the “positive” news.⁵²¹ Such a positive narrative not only misrepresents history but also undercuts historical claims of injustice or discrimination or violence that might make today’s average student (and future full-fledged citizen) open to social change. This strategic forgetting of harms on the part of advocates was a rhetorical choice, likely one made with varying degrees of risk and comfort. However, by making this choice, the progressive changes GLBT advocates aspired to create in the first place was put in jeopardy by eliminating heterosexual responsibility for GLBT violence and marginalization.

⁵²⁰ An excellent accounting of some of the major stereotypes of gays and lesbians within American culture can be found in the film *The Celluloid Closet*. See *The Celluloid Closet: Special Edition*, DVD, directed by Robert Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman (Sony Pictures, 2001).

⁵²¹ Zimmerman, “Straight History.”

4.5.2.2 Forgetting Politics

Another consequential forgetting of the GLBT past necessitated by the strategic rhetoric of American nationalism was the political history of gay rights. Though GLBT people and others of gender non-conformity and/or same-sex desire have existed for centuries, the politics of gay and lesbian rights within the United States has often been the most visible aspect of that history. Indeed, as Scott Bravmann has suggested, despite the profound political contributions of GLBT leaders like Harry Hay, Bayard Rustin, and others documented in widely read GLBT historical monographs, the contemporary gay rights movement that has emerged in the cultural imaginary is almost exclusively perceived through the lens of the 1969 Stonewall Riots. The political memory of GLBT community — particularly around Stonewall remembrances and increasingly HIV/AIDS activism — has become so prevalent, that it often draws focus from other aspects of GLBT history.⁵²² However, the politics of the GLBT rights movement is an especially problematic part of queer public memory that had to be forgotten to enter the GLBT community into the American national canon. This is primarily because the contemporary gay rights movement emerged from a line of radical and moderate but still anti-establishment thought which was at its heart contrary to the norms of American nationalism. As historian Lisa Duggan has suggested, “despite internal conflicts over assimilationist versus confrontational tactics...the overall goals and directions of change [within the movement’s politics] have been relatively consistent: the expansion of a right to sexual privacy against the intrusive, investigatory labeling powers of the state, and the simultaneous expansion of gay public life through institution building and publicity.” However, Duggan demonstrates that, increasingly, these political consistencies from both the radical leftists and moderate center essential to GLBT historical

⁵²² Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*.

politics have often been forgotten by the discourses proffered by contemporary gay rights activists in support of neo-liberalism.⁵²³ In addition, as we have already seen, GLBT people had regularly been cast as anti-nationals based in part on their political beliefs and political style, particularly surrounding HIV/AIDS. Representing GLBT people both as they might wish to be remembered and as a part of the memory narrative of American nationalism would require challenging these existent political histories, or rather erasing them from public consciousness, a dubious task considering how pervasive and widely held they have and continue to be within American culture. As such, contemporary advocates made the difficult but targeted decision to minimize discussions of GLBT politics in hopes of winning some recognition from an already hostile heteronormative audience. Sadly, this choice necessitated minimizing GLBT politics to such an extent that it was made essentially invisible the within public memory. What remained in regards to politics, like antigay harms, was significant silence.

To navigate these difficult constraints, contemporary advocates utilized several rhetorical practices to minimize GLBT politics. First, strategic reformers took the earlier claim of activists in the 70s and 80s that “we are everywhere” to heart, distributing gays and lesbians throughout the memory discourse. Despite trends within media coverage of the controversy to label its focus on teaching GLBT people within “history” specifically, in reality, the legislation mandated that GLBT people be discussed in every aspect of public education. As a result, activists imagined that GLBT contributions to literature, science, math, sports, and the social sciences would all be discussed. At first glance, this is a positive trend reversing (as earlier tactical critics had wanted) the isolation of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals within the curriculum as *only* a late twentieth century civil rights movement. However, upon further consideration, the *degree* to which GLBT

⁵²³ Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon, 2003): 51-53.

people were distributed throughout the imagined curriculum encouraged the other extreme. In essence, individuals GLBT people would be discussed in so many places elsewhere in the curriculum that the politics of gay rights becomes intrinsically minimized. By making GLBT people visible everywhere, the community and its politics faded into the background of wider culture, making them unremarkable and unworthy of specific attention. In short, the contributions of GLBT people to the political history of the United States was so diluted by additional contributory rhetoric that it lost its focus within the wider curriculum. Thus, ironically, the issue most pertinent to understanding the public forgetting of GLBT politics became not too little information, but too much. In conjunction with other rhetorical moves, strategic advocates unwittingly diminished the prevalence of gay politics.

A second rhetorical choice that contributed to the minimization of GLBT political history was an almost exclusive emphasis on GLBT people as *individuals* in history and not as *both* individuals and collectivities. The focus on individuals, despite its drawbacks, was a powerful rhetorical choice for advocates. Building upon the inherited ideology of American individualism that permeates our culture, advocates situated GLBT “heroes” and “heroines” in a way that was familiar to most readers and could be easily inserted within existing historical narratives. However, the effect of this savvy focus resulted in a diminishing capacity to recognize GLBT persons as a community of people — a community that has been and continues to be highly political. This was primarily the result of identifying representative anecdotes in history to highlight GLBT identity in the past. Throughout discussion of the legislation in the public sphere, the emphasis was placed on *who* would represent GLBT people in the past rather than *that* groups of diverse people known as GLBT communities existed and acted in the past. This individual focus is present in a number of discursive contexts. As the lead spokesperson on the

bill, Senator Kuehl was the most likely to make these individuating moves. In an article in the *Advocate* magazine, Kuehl highlighted Harvey Milk and Bayard Rustin as two prominent gay men who might be taught as part of the curriculum change.⁵²⁴ Elsewhere, she suggested James Baldwin, “an African-American gay writer,” would be another great example of someone she would like to see in the reformed California curriculum.⁵²⁵ Others within the discourse participated in isolating individuals to make their claims. In a *Los Angeles Times* interview, Geoffrey Kors of Equality California identified Langston Hughes as a possible “subject” of discussion.⁵²⁶ Democratic State Senator Jackie Speier identified Oscar Wilde (despite his British citizenship) as an important figure in her remarks voting in favor of the legislation.⁵²⁷ In an editorial in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Debra J. Saunders suggested Abraham Lincoln, Eleanor Roosevelt, and J. Edgar Hoover would all be likely suspects.⁵²⁸ Walt Whitman and James Baldwin were also highlighted in another editorial.⁵²⁹ So rhetorically threatening was this individuating discourse that conservative critics of the legislation also chose to engage arguments about representation surrounding the individual. Taken together, they contribute to emphasizing individuals over collectives in historical analysis, making discussion of highly political groups, social movements, communities, etc. invisible and absent. However, it was not just the isolation of individuals as representational figures in GLBT public memory, but rather the *ways* in which these representations were made that impacted this political mnemonic.

⁵²⁴ William Henderson, “Cultural History,” *The Advocate*, June 20, 2006, 28.

⁵²⁵ Interview by Brian Rooney, “California Mulls Gay History in Textbooks,” *ABC News*, May 12, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/story?id=1956254&page=1> (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁵²⁶ Rau, “State Senate Endorses,” A1.

⁵²⁷ Lucas, “Senate OKs Bill on Gays,” B8.

⁵²⁸ Debra J. Saunders, “One for the Textbooks,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 21, 2006, E7.

⁵²⁹ Zimmerman, “Straight History.”

In a third dimensions of this effort, the kind of individuals selected as representative anecdotes in these strategic remembrances had two primary qualities that made possible the forgetting of GLBT politics: an emphasis on figures with cultural contributions and a favoritism toward historical GLBT individuals involved in politics *generally* (not GLBT politics specifically). When individuals were highlighted in the memory discourse, those remembered were primarily understood as *cultural* figures. Without question GLBT individuals have been vital contributors to American and world culture — and this culture has an important part to play in American nationalism. However, it is the *degree* to which cultural contribution — sports, entertainment, media, and the arts — was emphasized that serves to further minimize GLBT political history. Based on the references isolated within the debate, cultural contribution became the most prominent form of GLBT contribution to the American project while politics was selectively forgotten.

Indeed, some in the discourse embraced cultural contributions explicitly. In a letter to the Editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Gustavo Serina praised the bill specifically because it did not focus only on political figures but rightfully acknowledged the “cultural history” of gays and lesbians. Citing Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, Walt Whitman, James Baldwin, Willa Cather, and Lorraine Hansberry as examples, Serina suggests that “Silence about their sexual orientation denied them a crucial part of their identity as people and artists...” and he was grateful that:

Thanks to state Sen. Sheila Kuehl's legislation, that [silence] won't be possible in California. The writers cited above, of course, are a very small *sample of gays and lesbians who have transformed American culture*. Many others — from William Inge to Edward Albee to Tony Kushner — deserve to be studied.”⁵³⁰

While there is certainly value in the cultural contributions of GLBT persons, a focus on culture at the expense of (or rather as a stalking horse for) political representation is an affront to actually existing GLBT history and holds powerful, unstated political consequences.

This is not to suggest that the figures highlighted by the movement had no political acumen at all. Given the contributory nature of these representations, it would seem unlikely that political figures could be totally removed from any representational display. Certainly, figures explicitly named in the discourse like Lincoln, Roosevelt, Rustin, and Milk are primarily known as political actors. However, none of these individuals (save Milk and only until recently in popular culture) is remembered primarily for their *gay and lesbian* politics. It is important to emphasize what I mean by primarily. While the language and intent of S.B. 1437 was to ensure that prominent leaders like Lincoln could be identified as having a gay identity, it does not suggest that Lincoln's actions and presidency would be explicitly connected to the gay rights movement. Rather, a figure like Lincoln would be regarded as a political and *national* leader primarily who happened to be gay (as a secondary or tertiary claim). This in and of itself is certainly a valuable addition to Lincoln's complex representation and a positive for GLBT

⁵³⁰ Gustavo Serina, “Teaching Gay History,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 28, 2006, E6 (emphasis mine).

visibility. However, it does little or nothing to draw attention to the facts, arguments, tactics, goals, or desires of the decades long GLBT rights movement and its politics. Thus, these figures' political work, while a vital contribution to the nation, is likely to have little representational effect or make any direct comment on gay rights (whether or not they should have). By emphasizing these nationalists gay figures — over even fairly traditional gay politicians and statesmen like Harvey Milk — the history of political activism more radical (i.e. un-American) queers represent is repressed.

By articulating a rhetorical memory of GLBT people as individuals, aligning those individuals with conservative politics and cultural contributions, and dispersing these figurative anecdotes throughout the curriculum, reformers sought to remember gays as vital to American history by eviscerating and forgetting their political motivations, goals, and clout.

4.5.2.3 Forgetting Sex

Finally, contemporary textbook reformers made a strategic choice to sacrifice notable discussion about sex, sexual culture, and queer intimacy as a part of history in an effort to align GLBT people with American nationalism. This claim may seem erroneous at first. Indeed, given the cultural battles waged over the sex education in the public schools over the last twenty years, it would seem more likely than not that *explicit* discussions of sexuality are not prevalent in most U.S. school textbooks or curriculums. However, when we turn our attention beyond the explicit to the often invisible ideologies within school curriculums, another story emerges. As Michel Foucault has shown, it is often in periods when sex is stigmatized that it is actually the most

powerfully disciplined and discussed.⁵³¹ When we begin to consider school curriculums in this manner, it becomes clear that sexuality (and specifically *heterosexuality*) has a pervasive presence within public school curriculums, present largely in part to support nationalism generally and American nationalism in particular.

Sex and sexuality are highly important aspects of nationalist imagining. Historically, in the realm of sexuality, “abnormal” behavior (like masturbation and homosexual acts) became understood as detrimental to nationalist projects. Drawing from (and misreading) Darwinist theories of natural selection, nineteenth century nationalists in Europe and America believed natural selection “would reward a healthy national organism free of hereditary disease and moral weakness. On the simplest level, this meant dedication to reproduction.” As summed up by historian George Mosse, ‘abnormal’ masturbators and homosexuals “were a danger to the national community.”⁵³² In this way, nationalism has come to rely heavily on rhetorics of population and reproduction. As Foucault suggests in his *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, sovereign power in the contemporary world has become “a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them.” In this way, procreation and reproduction are organized under a “bio-politics of the population” in order to ensure the strength (and power) of the nation.⁵³³ Thus, spurring “healthy” and “normal” sexuality became conceived as an essential part to any nation’s success and, as such, was invested within the ideological apparatuses of the nation. Mosse’s and Foucault’s insights can be traced directly to twentieth century nationalism in Europe and

⁵³¹ This is a characterization of Foucault’s work that relies heavily upon his “repressive hypothesis,” outlined in *History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. 1* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978, rpt. 1990), 17-18.

⁵³² Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 34.

⁵³³ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 136, 139.

America, and parallel claims and understandings are reflected within the contemporary textbook discourse.

Given the nationalist imperative to promote reproduction and population growth, GLBT sexual culture is regularly forgotten — despite the fact that many GLBT people through history have been excellent parents in an assortment of family patterns — in order to secure representational clarity. To some degree, the absence of sex as the locus of queer memory practices might be understandable. While sexuality is a topic of conversation for older students, younger students — raised in a culture with a high discomfort discussing sexuality and the product of an educational system actively against instruction in sexual health — might be unprepared for such material. This likelihood is reflected in both critics’ and advocates’ perpetual refrain that those discussion be “age appropriate.”⁵³⁴ Also, advocates might not raise issues of sexual culture because, in some substantive ways, that fight had already been fought — and won. During the 1990s, earlier tactical advocates had been highly successful in including gay and lesbian issues regarding sex into the health curriculum, opening that space up (in the face of extreme challenges) to a greater degree of GLBT imaginings of sexuality. In addition, a focus upon sex would provide political problems. If sex could be ignored, the old progay/antigay discourse about the proper place of discussion about sex might be avoided, making chances of passage of the legislation more likely. So resolute were contemporary reformers in avoiding this issue that they explicitly disavowed sex as an aspect of their curricular goals. In a widely circulated press release from Sen. Kuehl’s office, she states:

⁵³⁴ McKinley, “From TV Role in ‘Dobbie Gillis,’” A16.

S.B. 1437 would not mandate discussions of any historical figures' sex lives. A person's sexual orientation and gender identity are identity characteristics, not sexual behaviors. The sex lives of historical lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people would not be taught, any more than the curriculum currently discusses the sexual lives of heterosexual historical figures.⁵³⁵

To gain strategic advantage, Kuehl and other reformers were willing to explicitly rule out the validity of sex or sexual culture in any representation of GLBT people in textbook reform. However, given the strong correlation between heterosexuality and nationalism, how reformers attempted to forget sex in their representations of GLBT people in the past is of primary importance, with powerful consequences for remembering GLBT Americans. Several rhetorical practices enforce this strategic forgetting within the discourse.

First, GLBT textbook discourse echoed and was complicit in replicating a wider forgetting of gay sexual culture prior to HIV/AIDS. In the decade after the Stonewall riots, GLBT (particularly gay male) sexual culture blossomed in a newly public way. Many gay men participated in sexual practices that radically reconsidered the collective wisdom on sexuality, pushing the limits of sexual propriety and experimenting with themselves and others in regards to the body, pleasure, monogamy, and procreation, among others. Indeed, these experiments had in mind social, cultural, and political consequences. As Patrick Moore suggests, "these men were using flesh and spirit and sexual energy as their artistic tools. The sex of the 1970s was creative; it was art...Gay men in the 1970s took the radical step of removing the line between life and art,

⁵³⁵ Snowden, "Press Release."

insisting that the performance not wait for the audience to arrive.”⁵³⁶ However, with the advent of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s and 90s, the experimentation so cherished in the 1970s became for some a political problem. In some views, this sexual experimentation was considered childish and unethical, and brought with it the scourge of HIV/AIDS. In response, a portion of the GLBT community actively sought to disavow that period of history and memory, resigning it to a “memory void.”⁵³⁷ According to Christopher Castiglia, these gay men participated in a powerful and consequential act of strategic forgetting,

part and parcel of a larger strategy to vilify queer memory; more than simply calling for a crackdown by the city, gay ‘neocons’ enact a form of enforced amnesia, cutting off gay men from sexual memories that provide alternative models of public intimacy and political union.”⁵³⁸

Castiglia highlights several power brokers of the new gay center as being key promoters of this forgetting, including author and documentarian Gabriel Rotello, journalist and commentator Michelangelo Signorile, and political and cultural critic Andrew Sullivan.⁵³⁹ To some degree, these claims amount to a certain degree of lateral hostility within the gay male community that easily draws focus away from other covert and overt activities by the culture at large for the toll and trauma of HIV/AIDS and its resultant atrocities. However, given recent attempts in separate

⁵³⁶ Moore, *Beyond Shame*, 13.

⁵³⁷ Morris, “My Old Kentucky Homo” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95.

⁵³⁸ Castiglia, “Sex Panics,” 158.

⁵³⁹ Castiglia, “Sex Panics,” 158.

books by Patrick Moore and Castiglia and films like *Gay Sex in 70s* (2005) to renew the memory of 1970s gay sexual culture, it seems some substantive degree of forgetting about sex has certainly taken place in American memory.⁵⁴⁰

While debates still rage about the characterization of this time and its response, the textbook debate of the 2000s clearly sought to replicate the strategic forgetting of some gay male contemporaries by eviscerating both the 1970s sexual culture and the response to HIV/AIDS from textbook discussion. This is particularly noticeable, not only in the absence of sex as a part of the discourse, but the chronological hole that appears in the narrative told about the gay past. Noticeably, the historical figures described in the discourse all end with Harvey Milk's assassination in 1978. No other GLBT figure of historical merit after 1978 is mentioned in any discourse. This may be a simple aberration; but if so, it is a convenient aberration with two powerful effects. First, and not inconsequentially, positioning Milk as the last gay figure in the narrative perpetuates the stereotype of gay men as victims already pervasive within dominant culture. Second, it obscures the need to discuss or describe any historical figures aligned with or "tainted" by the memory of HIV/AIDS or its precursors. In contrast to early tactical efforts to reform the curriculum that largely drew upon the scourge of the HIV/AIDS crisis as an explicit motivation for their work and the use of the ACT UP-like tactics in order to bring them to fruition, contemporary advocates ignored HIV/AIDS as a part of the discussion altogether. Rather, contemporary activist cited "positive role models" as the force driving their activism.⁵⁴¹ By replicating the strategic forgetting already underway *in some parts* of the gay community, the contemporary textbook reformers effectively removed HIV/AIDS and 1970 gay sexual culture

⁵⁴⁰ See Moore, *Beyond Shame*; Castiglia (forthcoming); *Gay Sex in the 70s*, DVD, directed by Joseph F. Lovett (Wolfe, 2005).

⁵⁴¹ Snowden, "Press Release."

from memory and thereby neutralizing much of the most dangerous threats GLBTQ people posed to American national virtues.

Second, and similar to the above, the emphasis upon GLBT individuals in the past again took on a prominent relevance in regards to de-sexualizing queer memory. As before, where individual gay and lesbian *figures* are the primary representational choice suggested by advocates, the highlighting of individuals removes from the discussion aspects of GLBT identity that are communal — including sex. Whereas I earlier highlighted the politics and social movements of the GLBT community as causalities of this representational refuge in the individual, in this case, the communal act eliminated from public memory is sex and its attendant institutions like same-sex marriage, bathhouses, cruising, public sex, etc. Though this absence does not suggest that student readers may not infer that a gay or lesbian figure in the past would have had sex with someone else, it diminishes that inference as likely. Indeed, it is entirely possible in this representational form that a student might infer historical queers to be individuals with same-sex affinities who never acted on them. Positioned as homosexual virgins within American public memory, these GLBT figures — individuals — posed no threat to the nationalist sexual order.

This forgetting is even more troubling given that American history as currently told heavily marks heterosexual couples and sex in numerous ways. Famous couples (Presidents and First Ladies) and love affairs (Romeo and Juliet), prominent husbands (Franklin Roosevelt) and wives (Eleanor Roosevelt), exaltations of political sons, daughters, and dynasties (the Kennedys, Adamses, the Clintons, and Bushes) — all of these validated forms are implicitly honored by textbook representations. In doing so, the heterosexual relationship and sexual act (resulting in children) is deftly reinforced. Indeed, as State Senator Debra Bowen reiterated in her remarks

about the bill (directed at conservative critics), American history is very concerned with considering individuals with whom heterosexuals in history slept. In particular she highlighted Thomas Jefferson's "relationship" with Sally Hemings as a "fairly significant section of any Jeffersonian Library." She also cited President Bill Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky as further evidence that history frequently records heterosexual sex as important.⁵⁴² So prominent are these heterosexual impulses, that reform critics strongly assailed previous gestures to recognize historical homosexuality in American historical figures.⁵⁴³ Unfortunately, Senator Bowen failed to recognize that simply labeling someone as gay is not synonymous with representing their sexual experiences, values, or practices. Rather, given the pervasive presence of heterosexual sex within American history and the strategic forgetting of any GLBT people in a communal sense, students might easily assume historical queers were lifelong bachelors, lonely spinsters, or isolated outsiders.

Ironically, in the face of these efforts to forget the sexual aspects of GLBT life, it is the conservative critics of the reformers who remained fixed upon the homosexual sexual act as an essential piece of GLBT historical imagining. Cindy Moles of the Concerned Women for America stated in the *New York Times* "We don't need to list all the behavior of historical figures...certainly not their sexual behavior."⁵⁴⁴ The organization later lambasted the bill as "silencing any objection to homosexual behavior."⁵⁴⁵ Gary Bauer, writing in *Human Events*, suggested that in the wake of same-sex marriage movements across the country "references in

⁵⁴² As quoted in Lucas, "Senate OKs Bill," B8.

⁵⁴³ Morris, "My Old Kentucky Homo," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 103.

⁵⁴⁴ McKinley, "From TV Role in 'Dobbie Gillis,'" A16.

⁵⁴⁵ Concerned Women of America, "'Gay' Activists Use California School Kids to Push Their Agenda," *Family Voice*, November/December 2006.

school textbooks to ‘mom’ and ‘dad’ and ‘wife’ and ‘husband’ would have to be removed.”⁵⁴⁶ State Senator Murrow claimed that a historical figure’s “contribution to history has nothing to do with their sexual proclivities.”⁵⁴⁷ While these critics in no way represent a more affirmative imagining of historical GLBT lives than the GLBT advocates appropriate for a public school curriculum, their critiques highlight that sex matters in debates about history. Indeed, unspoken by this conservative focus upon sex is the fear that moving beyond discussion about sex might destabilize the presumptive place of heterosexuality in American culture while also removing an easily accessible argument conservatives have used to bludgeon GLBT people within discourse broadly. Thus, ironically, detaching sex from historical imaginings of GLBT people posed a significant risk both for those represented as well as those who sought to maintain their hegemonic grip over the status quo.

By ignoring GLBT couples or institutions in which the physical and sexual aspects of same-sex relationships might be discussed, and participating in strategically forgetting the gay male sexual culture of the 1970s, the reformers severely limited the way the GLBT past could be understood by heterosexual audiences. In doing so, this strategic forgetting makes GLBT reformers complicit in affirming heteronormativity as one of the complementary strategic rhetorics of nationalism.

⁵⁴⁶ Gary Bauer, “The Aftershocks of Gay Marriage,” *Human Events*, May 29, 2008, <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=26745> (accessed March 29, 2011).

⁵⁴⁷ “California to Include Gays in School Texts.” *UPI Newswire*. May 12, 2006, http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2006/05/12/California-to-include-gays-in-school-texts/UPI-91841147467478/ (accessed March 29, 2011).

4.6 CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the contentious debate across the nation and approaching political consequences of an upcoming re-election campaign, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed S.B. 1437 in late 2006. However, this defeat for representing GLBT persons in public school curriculums was not the end of the debate. In 2007, Senator Kuehl and her allies resurrected the bill in a new form, S.B. 777: The Student Civil Rights Act. The less brazen bill removed much of the controversial “rhetoric of contributions” language by political necessity, instead laying out an aggressive non-discrimination and anti-harassment policy applicable to all aspects of the state curriculum, including textbooks. While this new bill would make valuable changes in the rights of GLBT students in California classrooms, it essentially jettisoned all mandates to recognize GLBT people within curricular materials and greatly diminished the bill’s value for imagining a GLBT past. With little media attention and the Governor safely into his second term, the bill passed both houses of the legislature and was signed into law. The Student Civil Rights Acts went into effect in January 2008 and will likely affect textbook content in a more subdued form when textbook guidelines are regularly issued by the state Curriculum Committee in 2012.⁵⁴⁸

Given a combination of compelling factors — the toxic combination of forces acting upon GLBT youth and adults, the persistence of anti-GLBT representations or invisibility, and the unique situation presented in California (in particular) in the midst of the same-sex marriage debate — the progress made first by S.B. 1437 and then in S.B. 777 (which we may shortly see the effects of) was a worthy rhetorical undertaking. The laws (at least as proposed) made significant and sustained progress in preventing the ideological apparatus of education from

⁵⁴⁸ Senator Sheila Kuehl, “SB777: Student Civil Rights Act,” <http://www.sen.ca.gov> (accessed March 24, 2011).

acting in an overt way to discriminate against, deter, or discipline GLBT youth. And, like the earlier advocates had in the 1980s and 90s, the sheer introduction of the discussion of the GLBT past into the wider public sphere (through controversy or otherwise) was a compelling rhetorical triumph, urging audiences of both a heterosexual and homosexual persuasion to imagine their heroes, their icons, and themselves as part of a bit-more-queer-nation.

More compelling on top of all this is that advocates managed to do so much in the face of a pervasive, coordinated, and systemic effort by the hegemonic center of American culture to resist such imaginings. Advocates in both examples faced legislative maneuvers, conservative politics, media campaigns, public smears, skewed debates, grossly unhistorical counter-examples, counter protests, and threats at different times and in different venues, yet all derived from a normative fear that the more accurate telling of the past might dislodge the bulwark of heterosexual privilege from its moorings. Through a series of concerted efforts (only the two most visible herein described) — featuring both strategic and tactical rhetorics — GLBT advocates pressed their case and emerged with some tangible results, hopefully to be quickly followed by real, material effects in the lives of GLBT people.

However, as was suggested at the beginning of this chapter, no choice made by GLBT rhetors positioned between the double binds of circumscribed visibility and representational oblivion is free of repercussions. For the earliest reformers, the repercussions of action itself do not seem to have been too substantial; however, the choice to seek representations of gay, lesbians, and bisexual in the past in a largely tactical form critical of heteronormative culture writ large suffered for its ability to make any real progress within historical discourses. Where these advocates were successful — within the sex education framework — advocates may have been forced to reinforce characterizations useful to heterosexual culture that gay men in particular

were mostly sexual creatures and victims in order to save the lives of countless others (heterosexual and homosexual) who in return were given some realistic form of knowledge about sex and protection from disease. For the later reformers of this century, the choice to minimize criticism of the heteronormative center and adopt a rhetoric of contribution in support of American nationalism, lead tantalizingly close to substantial representational gains, at the cost of significant strategic forgettings of the historical GLBT experience outlined above. In a very clear way, advocates were positioned in a lose-lose situation.

Such repercussions bring to the fore an ongoing concern within the strategic turn in queer public memory: the limitations of a strategic repetition with a difference. As we have seen over and over again in these chapters, the strategic turn in queer public memory rhetoric has benefitted particularly from its ability to reproduce the forms of strategic heterosexual memory (monuments, publics, textbooks) inflected with a homosexual difference, with substantial results. Yet, the textbook case forces us to recognize that — even with difference —repetition does not and cannot entirely remove all the entwined and imbedded forces of the original model. Difference is power, yes, but its ability to radically alter the norms in which its is ensconced are limited. This was very much the case for both the earlier and latter attempts to repeat the American history curriculum with a distinctly GLBT-affirmative inflection. For the earliest advocates, the differences they tried so hard to imbed in the repetition would have been so profoundly damaging to the integrity of the original that, despite some victories, little real change occurred. For the latter advocates, rhetors accepted the already-damaged proposition in an effort to placate the same original fidelity issues; in doing so, they came substantially closer to a more robust and visible difference being publicly impactful. However, that was not to come to pass, and the cost of repetition may have been so great that we may, in retrospect, be grateful for its

failure. As such, the lesson learned from the textbook debates is not the failure of the strategic turn, but its limits: some abundantly clear from the beginning and others, only visible in our attempts at rearticulation.

5.0 STRATEGIZING A QUEER (AFTER) LIFE

5.1 QUEERING (AFTER) LIFE

Stroll down the sylvan, cobbled pathways of the Cemetery of Père-Lachaise in central Paris and eventually viewers come to the northern most part of the cemetery and the grave of Gertrude Stein. Stein was a famous American writer, art collector, and intellectual who spent most of her life in France during the early twentieth century. To look at the memorial — a simple stone tablet inscribed with Stein’s name, date of birth, and date of death — reveals little information about her life. It is only by the chatter of visitors, literary mementos, and pebbles left on her grave that most casual viewers would acquire the reasons for her fame. Depending upon the cultural knowledge with which one is equipped, a viewer might also bring to mind another important part of her public life not represented on her visible headstone: the fact that Stein was a lesbian who lived her life openly when such choices were even more dangerous than they are today. But for many other visitors this aspect of Stein’s life is easily missed, forgotten by passed decades, erased by knowledges that do not value sexuality as a meritable aspect of the *vita activa*, and lost by the often imperceptible forces of heteronormativity. However, even for the less informed visitor to the grave, the public memory of Stein’s lesbianism can still be found, remembered, and celebrated — for those who know where to look. Nestled secretly, on the backside of Stein’s famous headstone, is engraved in gold the name Alice B. Toklas, Stein’s partner and lesbian

lover for over thirty years. Though hidden from obvious public view, an important rhetorical gesture persists upon Stein and Toklas' shared gravestone in Père-Lachaise to immortalize lesbian love and secure a queer afterlife.

Toklas and Stein's tactical intervention within death display rhetoric, while an exciting instance of queer visual style, is largely the exception rather than the rule. Even today, dying is perhaps the most efficient and totalizing way in which an otherwise out and proud gay man or lesbian person may find themselves normalized — queerly forgotten — by a heteronormative culture. While this forgetting has destroyed legacies of homosexual identity and same-sex desire for millennia, the HIV/AIDS crisis vividly demonstrated just how cruel and systemic this queer forgetting could be. The British author, Simon Watley, relates one of the most powerful examples of this heteronormative erasure. In the opening to his book *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS, and the Media*, Watley details his motivation for writing, citing in detail the passing of his friend "Bruno." A section of that introduction is reproduced at length below for its effect:

[Bruno's] funeral took place in an ancient Norman church on the outskirts of London. No mention was made of AIDS. Bruno had died, bravely, of an unspecified disease. In the congregation of some forty people there were two other gay men besides myself, both of whom had been his lover. They had been far closer to Bruno than anyone else present, except his parents. Yet their grief had to be contained within the confines of manly acceptability. The irony of the difference between the suffocating life of the suburbs

where we found ourselves and the knowledge of the world in which Bruno had actually lived, as a magnificently affirmative and life-enhancing gay man, was all but unbearable....My friend was not called Bruno. His father asked me not to use his real name. And so the anonymity is complete. The garrulous babble of commentary on AIDS constructs yet another “victim.” It is this babble which is my subject matter, the cacophony of voices which sounds through every institution of our society on the subject of AIDS.⁵⁴⁹

For “Bruno” and his family and friends, the ritual rhetorics of death provide little in the way of mourning. The often unacknowledged privileges death and dying rituals provide for heterosexuals — presence at the death bed, legal decision making, funeral arrangement insights, where one can be buried, religious services, and even the right to be buried with one’s partner — have often been made unavailable to GLBT persons. Rather, death magnifies the pain and violence committed against GLBT person that they experience in life (particularly those suffering from HIV/AIDS). Within that violence is lost much more than a missed loved one but also, as Cathy J. Cohen suggests, “the totality of his life which included lovers and gay friends who also grieve for that loss.”⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁹ Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS, and the Media* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 7-8.

⁵⁵⁰ Cathy J. Cohen, “Contested Membership: Black Gay Identities and the Politics of AIDS,” in *Queer Studies: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, eds. Robert J. Corber and Stephen Valocchi (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 56.

In the face of such destructive regimes of active silencing, revision, misrepresentation, and willed forgetting, queers have made efforts to ensure that they create for themselves a public legacy that matches their queer identities. However, much like Stein and Toklas, these rhetorical interventions have by necessity been tactical rather than strategic. Facing persecution in life and regulation in death, queers have found it difficult to make their queer legacies plain. Resigned to that fact, enigmatic inscriptions, geographic selection, and hidden icons have all been used by queers within their death displays to mark in some enduring way not only their queer relationships, but their queer identities as well.

While these efforts are certainly powerful, their tactical quality continues to make them insecure and objectionable. Many of these acts, like Toklas' inscription, are often so hidden that a great many viewers ignore them. In other cases, the gestures are so personal or obscure that they go unnoticed. Others are powerful, but more fleeting gestures that cannot but help to fall prey to the test of time, often failing in the end to prevent queer memorials from being reclaimed by heteronormative assumptions. Finally, even when these tactical rhetorics are able to endure, there is nothing to prevent them from being contested to the point that their queer meaning becomes, at best, questionable and, at worst, disregarded.⁵⁵¹ Indeed, despite the monumental efforts described above, a feminist editor of Stein's work has (at times) leveled assaults against claims that she and Toklas were lovers as besmirching both their credibility.⁵⁵² For these reasons and others, some queers have followed the rhetorical trend outlined in this dissertation and have

⁵⁵¹ For example, in 1992, a father sued to have his gay son's gravestone removed from the cemetery after he discovered it included both the words "gay" and "AIDS" as his cause of death. See Amy Louise Kazmin, "Judge Won't Change Gay Man's Gravestone," *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1992, http://articles.latimes.com/1992-09-26/local/me-1001_1_alexander-lawrence (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁵⁵² Esther Newton, "Sick to Death of Ambiguities..." *The Women's Review of Books* 3.4 (January 1986): 10.

attempted to move beyond improvisational tactical rhetorics to enduring rhetorical strategies that might outlast even the most vociferous attempts at heteronormative erasure, occupation, and reterritorialization.

This chapter examines efforts by gays and lesbians to claim death displays as a strategic rhetorical space for queer public memory. Highlighting two prominent examples of these strategic memories — the graves of several queer veterans, activists, and artists in Congressional Cemetery and Patricia Cronin’s *Memorial to a Marriage* in Woodlawn Cemetery — I investigate how queers might disrupt the meaning of cemeteries as heteronormative spaces. Beginning with an argument for viewing graveyards as a particular site of epideictic display, this essay demonstrates that the *accoutrement* of death do indeed showcase evidence of rhetorical intent. Next, the particularly heteronormative aspects of different cemetery styles are analyzed. Finally, I analyze how these two distinguished zones of queer memory making serve as prominent exemplars of how gays and lesbians can deploy the queer past not only in the deliberative realm of policy, but to ensure the perpetuation of a queer legacy for decades to come.

5.2 GRAVES AND CEMETERIES AS RHETORICAL TEXTS

As material and visual manifestations of public memory, death displays can function as important rhetorical texts. However, what makes these texts particularly rhetorical is not always clear and, in fact, varies depending on how the rhetor, audience, and critic of these death displays use those texts. For the purposes of this chapter, I will investigate two primary rhetorical elements of death displays: the individual graves of those interred and the collective meaning of these graves as a whole.

At first glance, symbolic markers of the individual dead, associated haphazardly with personal grieving, might be readily categorized as part of the private sphere of human life rather than as important public displays. Yet, individual death displays — headstones, footstones, mausoleums, and other gravemarkers — can have highly rhetorical dimensions that impact and shape public beliefs. By virtue of being located outside of the domestic sphere, among others who are deceased, graves acquire some degree of public character. This character is enhanced even more when circulated within public discourse. As Kendall Phillips reminds us, public memory consists not only of the “memory of a public,” but the “publicness of memory.”⁵⁵³ To the degree that an individual gravestone contributes to remembering an individual in the public sphere, it is highly rhetorical. Though this is often the case with famous gravesites, the more local characteristic of vernacular memory suggest it could apply equally to the less famous as well.⁵⁵⁴ When individual graves take on formal qualities that situate them to intentionally address the public at large (with express inscriptions or the like), this publicness is only enhanced. In these ways, individual graves can have rhetorical characteristics that influence the perceptions and beliefs of those whom view them.

However, while individual death displays have merit in public persuasion, cemeteries and graveyards have more pronounced, everyday rhetorical dimensions. As a collective expression of death within a community, cemeteries and graveyards speak not of what an individual might wish to say, but rather render community sentiments about death (and life) visible. In this way, cemeteries and graveyards can be pedagogical; in their design, style, arrangement, and invention, they instruct visitors and passersby about death and how one should live in relation to it. This instruction is largely accomplished through visual rhetorics — the “images, artifacts, and

⁵⁵³ Phillips, introduction to *Framing Public Memory*, 3.

⁵⁵⁴ Bodner, *Remaking America*, 14-8.

performances of looking” in the public sphere that “function to persuade” — primarily those that conceive of cemeteries as landscapes.⁵⁵⁵ The visual consumption of landscapes is a popular American practice that transforms individual others into a community identity. According to Gregory Clark, “for Americans, the most intense aesthetic experience of a landscape includes images of themselves enacting a new identity there.”⁵⁵⁶ When these landscapes are publicized for individual consumption — through discourse, or material and visual interactions — they do vital rhetorical work “symbolizing a common home and, thus, a common identity.”⁵⁵⁷ As such, viewing a landscape induces “a rhetorical power” between viewer and scene that “prompts people to adopt a public identity they read symbolized in the landscapes they share.”⁵⁵⁸

Cemeteries represent a particular kind of landscape, what rhetorician Richard Morris has termed a *gravescape*. As a visual scene that consists of “memorials and the landscapes containing them,” gravescapes work to gather viewers into a community of shared believers about life and death.⁵⁵⁹ By erecting particular kinds of death displays as “sacred symbols,” communities represent to each other and viewers their shared values, community ethos, and “world view.”⁵⁶⁰ This epideictic lesson instructs viewers in how to live one’s life so as to fit into the community value of death and, thereby, be interpolated into the shared identity it presupposes.

⁵⁵⁵ Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope, “Visual Rhetoric in Communication: Continuing Questions and Contemporary Issues,” in Olson, Finnegan, and Hope, *Visual Rhetoric*, 1.

⁵⁵⁶ Gregory Clark, *Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 35

⁵⁵⁷ Clark, *Rhetorical Landscapes*, 9.

⁵⁵⁸ Clark, *Rhetorical Landscapes*, 10.

⁵⁵⁹ Richard Morris, “Death on Display” in *Rhetorics of Display*, ed. Lawrence J. Prelli (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 204-05.

⁵⁶⁰ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89.

Critically, the individual and the community as expressed in cemetery representation are always interrelated. While an isolated grave or memorial might be considered in and of itself, within the cemetery setting, no single grave can ever be understood alone. Its possible meanings are always a negotiation, in agreement or in contestation, with the other graves that flank it (in some cases, with very little space in between). Equally, a cemetery's possible meanings are reliant upon the chorus of individual voices that constitute it. Each individual grave contributes to, shapes, and alters the meanings of the whole.⁵⁶¹ Therefore, the meanings of a death display are always contextual and contingent (i.e. rhetorical).

An important part of that context is the particular meaning of death held by the community and its antecedent judgments about life as they are derived from individual graves within their gravescapes. As such, it is inaccurate to speak of *the* way death is represented as if all communities and cemeteries were the same. Rather, gravescapes' stylistic displays vary by community, membership, location, and time. To understand the rhetorical effect of any individual grave or gravescape thus requires an understanding of the particular gravescape style it practices. Several scholars across disciplinary divides have taken to analyzing and categorizing these styles, as well as indicating the rhetorical values that they claim to represent.⁵⁶² For the purposes of this chapter, I will feature two particular gravescape styles of relevance to our queer texts: the *memento mori* gravescape and the garden cemetery gravescape.

Memento mori gravescapes — also referred to as “plain style” or the “Death’s Head” style — features a fairly simple collection of headstones. The headstones almost exclusively

⁵⁶¹ Morris, “Death on Display” in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 213-215.

⁵⁶² In my research, I have not discovered a single anthology that reviews the major cemetery styles in the United States. However, there are many texts that profile specific death display styles organized by geography, religion, and time period. A text helpful in the completion of this chapter was Richard E. Meyer, ed. *Cemeteries & Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989).

were simple single or double arches and sometimes, low horizontal tables (fig. 5). While the original, plain style often left no markings on a grave other than the placement of the stone itself, as the style developed, simple inscriptions were often placed on the headstones. According to James Hijjiya, such plainness was valued as cost effective and humble before God, while it also “asserted that people’s physical remains were of little importance, unworthy of conspicuous commemoration.”⁵⁶³ Later, many of these stones were etched with iconic figures like the “Death’s Head,” a winged skull not to scare viewers but to warn them to prepare themselves for death. Many of these stones also featured the simple inscription, *memento mori* — remember death.⁵⁶⁴

According to Morris’ analysis, the rhetorical message advocated by this style was largely summed up in those two simple words. He argues that instructing viewers to always remember death was the central task of the landscape style. Placed near major metropolitan areas where they were frequently visible (though less likely to be visited because of their degraded conditions), these cemeteries reiterated, in minute, everyday fashion, that sinners must change their behavior and prepare for death if they had any hope of reaching a better hereafter.⁵⁶⁵ Simultaneously, by speaking in unison of this warning, those interred found a community of believers who reinforced for them their assurance that they would escape the tortures of hell and bask in the glow of an eternal afterlife.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶³ James A. Hijjiya, “American Gravestones and Attitudes Toward Death: A Brief History,” *Proceeding of the American Philosophical Society* 127.5 (Oct. 1983): 342.

⁵⁶⁴ Hijjiya, “American Gravestones,” 345.

⁵⁶⁵ Morris, “Death on Display,” in *Rhetorics of Display*, ed. Prelli, 205.

⁵⁶⁶ Morris, “Death on Display,” in *Rhetorics of Display*, ed. Prelli, 209.



Figure 5. Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C. in the *memento mori* landscape style. Photograph by author.

Another popular gravescape style to take root in the United States is what Morris calls the garden cemetery style. Consisting of features from the rural cemetery, lawn and garden cemetery, and the “late Victorian period Monumental” style, the garden cemetery disposed of the previous landscape style’s propensity to represent death as a haunting warning and replaced it with a natural ethos in which communion with the dead was not only possible, but encouraged.⁵⁶⁷ Whereas previous landscape styles had highlighted the simplistic and humble design, the garden style celebrated art and accomplishment as virtues of a well-lived and eternal life. In combination with an emphasis on the natural world, demonstrated by both the artistic subject matter and the outlandish presence of plant life and flowers that adorned the area, these cemeteries welcomed the living in to stroll and enjoy these places by visiting and communing with the dead.⁵⁶⁸ In doing so it was hoped the living would not only be instructed on how to live a good, natural life but also to let loose their burdens for a rejuvenated return to the world of the living.⁵⁶⁹

The “natural” is key to Morris’ assessment of the garden cemetery’s rhetorical motives. The design of these cemeteries took as their central aesthetic the promotion of natural plants, natural orientations of stones, and the expression of natural imagery across the gravescape. With strict limits set by cemetery administrators on the aesthetics that supported this vision, the artistic designs of the death displays created “a gallery of art embraced by nature bejeweled.”⁵⁷⁰ With this demand present in the visual field, the creation of a memorial was always an effort to “actualize their potential to achieve a harmonious relationship with nature.” In doing so, not only was the individual memory more highly regarded, but the community of the cemetery as a whole

⁵⁶⁷ Hijiya, “American Gravestones,” 355.

⁵⁶⁸ Morris, “Death on Display” in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 210-11.

⁵⁶⁹ Morris, “Death on Display” in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 210.

⁵⁷⁰ Morris, “Death on Display” in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 212.

was strengthened to prevent the intrusion of “unnatural acts and actions” from entering and being represented within this sanctuary.⁵⁷¹

While both the *memento mori* and the garden styles were strongly adhered to by individual persons and their communities, it should be noted that pure examples of these landscape styles are hard to come by for the contemporary viewer. Certainly, as time passed and community values changed, cemetery styles were altered or supplemented by more fitting forms. Thus, it is likely that many cemeteries that one visits today will contain elements out of the ordinary for its original style. However, within certain well-maintained or famous cemeteries, it is still possible to recognize predominant landscape styles — styles that reflect, in form and function, the rhetorical wishes of their community sentiments.

5.3 THE HETERONORMATIVE REGIMES OF GRAVESCAPES

While each gravescape style overtly represents a particular cultural ethos through its visual frame, in less overt ways, these gravescapes also simultaneously represent other rhetorical meanings within their death displays. Among these alternative meanings, I argue that most gravescape styles also embed within their visual frames the view that life and death should be understood from a hegemonic, heterosexual perspective. Thus, gravescapes function as *heteronormative apparatuses* for obscuring and disciplining queer representations of life and death.

⁵⁷¹ Morris, “Death on Display” in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 214.

Heteronormativity is understood as the unquestionable presumption, both at the level of the individual and at the level of a culture, that all of society's members are heterosexual until proven otherwise.⁵⁷² While this presumption can be marked in public ways — like the debates over same-sex marriage — more frequently, heteronormativity operates under the radar, eschewing blatant forms of discrimination by creating the false visage of reality. Because of their marginalized positions, queers are often disadvantaged if not erased from public concern if these presumptions are not brought to light and challenged. Queer theory has emerged, in part, as a response to heteronormativity, seeking to identify and disrupt those relations of power that constitutes a “regime of the normal” so as to make space for the expression of queer alternatives.⁵⁷³

While it is common to employ a discourse of invisibility to describe the ways in which heteronormativity acts against queer lives, such descriptions are superficial to the multiple, simultaneous ways that heteronormativity really works. Indeed, as Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner have detailed, heteronormativity can take on a diverse set of forms. They argue that heteronormativity's:

⁵⁷² Julie M. Thompson, “Counter-Racist Queer Public Address Studies,” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 135. See also Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 28.

⁵⁷³ Warner, introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet*, xxvii.

coherence is always provisional, and its privilege can take several (sometimes contradictory) forms: unmarked, as the basic idiom of the personal or the social; or marked as a natural state; or projected as an ideal or moral accomplishment. It consists less of norms that could be summarized as a body of doctrine than of a sense of rightness produced in contradictory manifestations — often unconscious, immanent to practice or to institutions.⁵⁷⁴

Given this conceptualization, GLBT persons do not face merely a single, one-dimensional act of repression, but a convoluted array of opposing assumptions that challenge often misplaced faith in a single form of resistance. These manifestations are interspersed throughout the wider culture making resisting these forces even more complicated. As cultural institutions, cemeteries utilize these different forms of heteronormative privilege to produce their own effects that constrain queer alternatives, though the prevalence of each form is different depending upon the gravescape under inspection. Thus, as we will see, to resist heteronormativity within a gravescape requires GLBT rhetors not to undertake a single rhetorical response, but a constellation of rhetorics intervening at different points within the matrix of heterosexual power. However, central to this task is explicating the dynamics by which each form of heteronormativity functions within specific gravescapes.

Taking the last of the three first, there are explicit heteronormative policies that are pervasive in making gravescapes anti-queer in their orientation through the projection of heterosexuality as a cultural ideal or moral accomplishment. Many of these policies are inscribed

⁵⁷⁴ Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public,” 548.

both into the laws of the nation and individual states, as well as into the rules that regulate cemeteries as spaces of what Foucault would label as “biopolitical” action.⁵⁷⁵ At the most basic level, these laws regulate the form and style of gravestones and other death displays. While these vary in degree and effect across the nation, perhaps the worst offenders are the policies of Arlington National Cemetery and the U.S. military. As a product of the recently overturned Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell (DADT) policy instituted more than ten years ago, military veterans eligible for burial in the revered national cemetery are held to a tightly heteronormative regime in order to gain entrance. As a matter of policy, while the U.S. Military authorizes “personalized words of endearment” for veteran headstone inscriptions, the Department of Veterans Affairs reserves the right to review and approve all such text. Historically, Veterans Affairs has rejected GLBT-affirmative words like “gay,” “lesbian,” or “queer” from appearing on gravestones, as well as any other descriptive text that indicates a same-sex relationship.⁵⁷⁶ Similarly, less explicit gestures to such relationship have also been rejected by Veterans Affairs in the context of same-sex relationships. For instance, while the U.S. military offers inscriptions like “My Beloved” for any opposite-sex spouse, family member, or significant other, such gestures have been rejected for use between same-sex partners.⁵⁷⁷ However, without these explicit (or even veiled) inscriptions, service members interred within the cemetery are assumed to be heterosexual.

⁵⁷⁵ By “biopolitical,” I am referring to the systems of power that effectively manage bodies, the execution of death, and the production of life within the 19th, 20th, and 21st century. See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 135-59.

⁵⁷⁶ Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Form 40-1330 (August 2009), <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf> (accessed March 1, 2011). See also Department of Veterans Affairs, “Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors,” (2010), 64-65, http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/federal_benefits.pdf (accessed March 9, 2011).

⁵⁷⁷ Garance Burke, “A Call for Eternal Equality: Seeking Acceptance, Gay Veterans Group Pushes for Memorial at SE Cemetery,” *Washington Post*, September 14, 2003, C01.

These policies extend beyond Arlington to all military cemeteries that, incidentally, often set a cultural standard for how other cemeteries are imagined and policed.

In conjunction with these explicit regulations are a superstructure of heteronormative state and national laws that prevent queer subjects from acting to ensure their identities beyond death. Among a plethora of such laws regulating marriage, inheritance, property rights, etc. are explicit laws in reference to funerary rights and planning. While some states have taken major steps to recognizing same-sex marriage or domestic partnerships as valuable, social relationships, many states still maintain laws that prevent one same-sex partner from making funeral arrangements for significant other. For instance, liberal-leaning Minnesota has on a number of occasions denied same-sex partners funerary rights, even in cases where same-sex couples have completed paperwork giving power of attorney to each other.⁵⁷⁸ In these cases, funeral plans — including the design and selection of headstones and any rituals performed at the burial — revert to the next of kin, many of whom who might be downright hostile to same-sex relationships or might make more conservative representational choices that contribute to the erasure of their kin's queer identity in public memory. Currently, only the state of Rhode Island has passed legislation to attend to this discrepancy while other states have not even recognized this issue — intentionally or not — as a problem.⁵⁷⁹ Meanwhile, the Republican governor of Minnesota recently vetoed legislation in 2010 to rectify this situation on grounds that it created

⁵⁷⁸ Bill McAuliffe, "House Passes 'Final Wishes' Bill," *Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune*, May 11, 2010, <http://www.startribune.com/politics/state/93504484.html> (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁵⁷⁹ Ray Henry, "R.I. Enacts Gay Partner's Funeral – Planning Rights," *Boston Globe*, January 6, 2010, http://www.boston.com/news/local/rhode_island/articles/2010/01/06/ri_enacts_gay_partners_funeral_planning_right/ (accessed March 24, 2011).

an unnecessary level of bureaucracy and afforded privileges to same-sex couples that should be reserved for heterosexual marriages alone.⁵⁸⁰

These are just a few examples — not to mention the difficulties faced by GLBT persons in receiving burials in religiously affiliated cemeteries or because of their HIV/AIDS status — of the most explicit ways gravescapes take on and enforce a heteronormative posture. Drawing on Berlant and Warner’s definition, these regulative regimes “project...as an ideal or moral accomplishment” heterosexuality in a way that privileges that relationship and discriminates against alternatives, to the point that those alternatives cease to be represented easily within the public eye. In doing so, gravescapes participate in solidifying the larger culture assumption that heterosexuality is the only viable form of human desire and (re)secure for viewers the privileges of heterosexuality in every facet of human life, including death.

However, as Berlant and Warner’s definition demonstrates, queer-affirmative spaces within gravescapes can also be stymied in two other forms. Each of these forms of heteronormativity can be seen within the two particular gravescapes we described above: the *memento mori* style and the garden style.

In the *memento mori* style, heterosexuality is privileged because it is “unmarked.” As such, to be heterosexual becomes compulsory “as a basic idiom of the personal or social.”⁵⁸¹ By this, Berlant and Warner suggest that to be heterosexual is to be described as essentially a person or part of a community. As we have seen already, cemeteries and their gravescape can productively be thought of as social or community spaces. Thus, in the context of a cemetery gravescape, heterosexuality is privileged by virtue of one’s inclusion: both as an individual and

⁵⁸⁰ See “Editorial: ‘Final Wishes’ Veto is Cold, Calculating,” *Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune*, <http://www.startribune.com/opinion/editorials/94778999.html?page=2&c=y> (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁵⁸¹ Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public,” 548.

as a part of the wider community. By being buried within the community cemetery among others, not only is the deceased individual indoctrinated into the ethos of that community; at the same time, by this simple act of inclusion, the deceased is presumed to be heterosexual. Certainly, heterosexuality can be marked visibly in these spaces: opposite sex couples names are regularly inscribed on a common grave, for instance. However, the heteronormative quality of gravescapes is so pervasive and so invisible that this kind of explicit display is not necessary to suggest heterosexuality. Hence, to be buried in a *memento mori* cemetery is to be presumed heterosexual — and no marker is needed to make this explicit.

Despite the fact that markings are not needed (or, in fact, desired) to characterize those buried in this gravescape as heterosexual, several aspects of the *memento mori* aesthetic contribute to making this unmarked presumption possible.

The unmarked nature of this heterosexuality is enhanced by the style and form of the gravescape itself. The plain style usually associated with *memento mori* aesthetics functions both to limit markings that might distinguish one grave easily from another while emphasizing community (i.e. heterosexual) unity among all the graves and those buried there. However, when stylistic flourishes do appear on the graves, what is often inscribed also contributes to the heterosexual imperative.

Perhaps the most obvious of these stylistic claims to heteronormativity can be seen within the name of the style itself. “*Memento mori*” — remember death — bears the name of this style not only because it summarizes the rhetoric of the gravescape but because it was frequently inscribed upon the headstones of the dead. By inscribing this motto onto headstones, the deceased and community continually gestured to the living to forget life and to remember the coming judgment they would face in the afterlife. Such a discursive claim is enhanced by the

use of shared iconography. Winged skulls and crosses in particular become visual markers that speak both to the literate and the illiterate passerby, reproducing in a different form the same message that the inscription does itself. Both this inscription and iconography are highly unifying moves that sweep away the individuality of particular lives in favor of remembering their souls through the perspective of religious morality. Yet when lived experiences are homogenized and forgotten, queer identities and desires fall by the wayside.

In addition, the limited inscriptions placed upon *memento mori* graves, while functioning to limit the reflection upon life and to focus it upon our common march toward death, prevents elaborations that might mark a grave's owner as queer. Besides phrases like *memento mori*, the majority of these headstones only allow for a brief description including the name of the deceased, their date of birth, and their date of death. Even when the extraordinary step of including other details was taken (like family status or religious affiliation), these details left little room for marking a non-heterosexual aesthetic. Thus, the inability of those placed within *memento mori* cemeteries to include discourse that might mark them as queer is just another example of how queers who might speak become unable to express themselves in death displays intelligibly.

Finally, the denial of the body is largely productive of heteronormativity within the *memento mori* gravescape. For Morris, the most "salient memorial expression" for producing the worldview of the *memento mori* gravescape is the reliance upon the body/soul dichotomy.⁵⁸² The body is minimized in its representational form so that the soul might be remembered. However, the denial of body as an ephemeral object is in many ways a denial of homosexuality itself. Despite the fact that queer identities (since the beginning of queer theory) have largely

⁵⁸² Morris, "Death on Display" in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 208.

focused upon the discursive construction of the body, making the body largely a product of language and symbolism rather than something that exists *a priori*, the body remains a primary means for developing queer epistemologies.⁵⁸³ Indeed, much of assuming the position of a queer subject derives from experimenting with the body (one's own and others) or having one's bodily interactions disciplined and policed by others. However, it is because queer bodies are often not constituted by society as "bodies that matter" that the body becomes a key part of queer existence: a tool for interrogating heterosexuality. It is through queer work to resignify the body that queers might "expand the very meaning of what counts as a valued and valuable body in the world."⁵⁸⁴ Indeed, as Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman have argued, queer bodies can often be used in visibility politics to express heteronormativity's pervasive effects. As in the rhetorical acts of queer activist organization Queer Nation, it is the "bodies of queer nationals to act as visibly queer flash cards, in an ongoing object of cultural pedagogy aimed at exposing the range and variety of bounded spaces upon which heterosexual supremacy depends."⁵⁸⁵ As such, denial of the body is a rhetorical resources made mute by traditional *memento mori* style.

Similarly, the garden style cemetery also permeates a normative heterosexuality. However, unlike the *memento mori* style, the garden style proceeds to make this claim not by presumption, but by explicitly *marking* heterosexuality. In this way, the garden cemetery takes on the characteristic quality of heteronormativity (described by Berlant and Warner) by being "marked as natural."⁵⁸⁶ Indeed, as we have already seen, the rhetoric of the natural is fundamental to understanding the work done within a garden cemetery. Thus, the death displays

⁵⁸³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990, rpt. 1999), xv.

⁵⁸⁴ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 22.

⁵⁸⁵ Berlant and Freeman, "Queer Nationality," 160.

⁵⁸⁶ Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public," 548.

and their heteronormative rhetorics presented within the garden cemetery gravescape highlight what are presumed to be natural qualities of community life and death.

Several representative forms are present within the death displays of garden cemeteries that mark heterosexuality as not only normative, but natural. First, the garden cemetery is designed to visually represent desire and romance. As spaces that combined art and nature in hopes of creating the beautiful landscape, garden cemeteries largely had as their *telos* the production of romantic emotions. As Blanche Linden-Ward suggests, these displays of death “intended to elicit specific emotions, especially the so-called pleasures of the melancholy that particularly appealed to contemporary romantic sensibilities.”⁵⁸⁷ Indeed, romance was often the goal, not only of the displays themselves but also of those who visited these places. In the height of the garden style’s popularity, suitors and young couples frequently visited these rural, picturesque cemeteries as activities to further their wooing. More than a few couples took such steps literally, so overcome with the romantic nature of the graves that they used the sometimes-secluded spaces of the cemeteries for more torrid, physical expressions of romance.⁵⁸⁸ In this way, the gravescapes were romantic, not only in the sense of the natural beauty of the grounds and the pathetic designs of the markers, but also in the sense that those who visited the cemetery observed other couples romantically enjoying it. Thus, the garden cemetery gravescape (in ways never possible for the *memento mori* space) became venues where romance was put on display, performed, and then re-displayed in performances before others.⁵⁸⁹ It goes without saying that

⁵⁸⁷ Blanche Linden-Ward, “Strange but Genteel Pleasure Grounds: Tourist and Leisure Uses of Nineteenth Century Cemeteries,” in Meyer, *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers*, 295.

⁵⁸⁸ Linden-Ward, “Strange but Genteel,” in Meyer, *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers*, 305.

⁵⁸⁹ Similar scopic regimes display interpersonal relationships have been discussed in reference to World’s Fairs in the late 1800s and early twentieth century. See Manon Niquette and William Buxton, “Meet Me at the Fair: Sociability and Reflexivity in Nineteenth-Century World Expositions,” *Canadian*

these performances and representations of romance and desire are overwhelmingly heterosexual. For the visitor to the garden gravescape then, heterosexual desire was endlessly on display in ways that encouraged its cultural value and performative reproduction.

Where the garden gravescape succeeded in representing heterosexual romance and desire, it also relied upon gravemarkers that expressed highly heteronormative imagery. By heteronormative imagery, I am not suggesting that these markers contained male and female figures in romantic embraces (though they might exist), but more implicit, symbolic markers that instructed viewers in the importance of this cultural value. One way this was achieved was by prominently featuring two figures within the art of garden cemetery gravescapes: women and children.⁵⁹⁰ This, of course, tellingly leaves out the other figure requisite to a heterosexual norm: the male and/or father figure. However, his absence within this gravescape makes sense in two ways. First, the male figure is often used to represent rationality, a cultural value antithetical to the pathos driven goals of the garden style. Second, the male figure is never needed to be present in these representations for the sheer fact that he is always there *a priori*. Indeed, in Peggy Phelan's characterization, it is because the male is considered normative that he is unmarked:

Within this psycho-philosophical frame, cultural reproduction takes she who is unmarked, and remarks her, rhetorically and imagistically, while he who is marked with value is left unremarked, in discursive paradigms and visual fields.⁵⁹¹

Journal of Communication 22 (1997): <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/977/883> (accessed March 23, 2011).

⁵⁹⁰ Morris, "Death on Display" in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 213.

⁵⁹¹ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 5.

Thus, it is because of the very cultural necessity of man as a valued part of representative life that he need not appear. It is, of course, ironic that masculinity is assured in this case because it is unmarked, while homosexuality is made precarious through a similar, though different, unmarked valence. However, it is because masculinity is normatively assumed in Western culture (unlike homosexuality which is normatively not assumed), that the man's presence may be made without explicit acknowledgement. Without the representational appeal to a man however, how do these forms represent heterosexuality as the preferred mode of living (and dying)? The images of women and children do so in their own way, each contributing to shaping a public view that ensures heteronormativity.

The form of the woman in funerary art — while serving other representational purposes like pathetic appeal — supports heterosexuality by providing the male gaze with an object of pleasurable looking. Women have frequently served this role within visual culture in many diverse gazing settings and cemeteries are no exception. While women in gravescapes and monuments generally often serve allegorical purposes,⁵⁹² the aesthetic that they embody is always favorable to the male gaze; a gaze that Laura Mulvey reminds us is highly “erotic” in its choice of object.⁵⁹³ By visualizing highly desirable-yet allegorical women in funerary art, garden gravescapes serve much the same function that classical male statuary did for some homosexual men during the Victorian era: as galleries of desire.⁵⁹⁴ While such a desirable gaze can be imagined by women viewers in the cemetery as well, it seems likely those stares would be

⁵⁹² Marina Warner, foreword of *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), xx.

⁵⁹³ Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 11.

⁵⁹⁴ Allen Ellenzweig, “Picturing the Homoerotic” in *Queer Representations: Reading Lives, Reading Cultures*, ed. Martin Duberman (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 66.

policed, leaving the beautiful female forms of the garden gravescape the purview of (and instructor in) heterosexual desire.

Yet, perhaps more important than depictions of women, the image of children is a prominent signifier of the heterosexual imperative. During the nineteenth century, when the garden cemetery came into its popularity, the symbolic use of children in funerary art became a popular refrain in American culture. In the pathos driven environment of these gravescapes, the loss of the child was perhaps the most difficult and frequently necessitated an elaborate display.⁵⁹⁵ While angels or cherub figures often represented the graves of children, sculptures of children themselves were also sometimes used to adorn garden cemetery gravescapes. According to Viviana A. Rotman Zelizer, during the nineteenth century in large cemeteries in France, Italy, and the United States, “small children quickly became the favorite subject of funerary art.”⁵⁹⁶ Even when children were not themselves represented in a physical form in the cemetery sculpture, children were still highly visible in the garden gravescape. Scholars have noted how cemeteries began the trend of placing smaller headstones to visually mark the deceased as having died in childhood at least since the early eighteenth century.⁵⁹⁷ In this landscape, children are a prominent visual feature.

The highly visual marking of children in representational funerary displays signified important meanings. First, representations of children suggested the cyclical nature of life and

⁵⁹⁵ Doris Francis, Leonie A. Kellaher, and Georgina Neophtou, *The Secret Cemetery* (New York: Berg, 2005), 172-74; Blanche M.G. Linden, *Silent City on a Hill: Picturesque Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 175.

⁵⁹⁶ Viviana A. Rotman Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 26.

⁵⁹⁷ Harold Mytum, *Mortuary Monuments and Burial Grounds of the Historical Period* (New York: Kluwer Academic, 2004), 129.

death made possible through reproduction.⁵⁹⁸ In the nineteenth century, the only possible means of bringing such a child into the world was through heterosexual intercourse. Thus, heterosexuality was demanded to maintain this cyclical logic. Second, these representations also showed the exceptional cultural value of children. Within this visual frame, children are perpetually cherished. Their death are mourned extraordinarily and marked with highly elaborate displays. Thus, the loss or absence of a child signified not only a personal, but also a cultural travesty. This may not appear to be necessarily anti-queer in its characterization. However, Lee Edelman has suggested that *representationally* children are symbolically opposed to queer existence because they signify and demonstrate the value the future-oriented drive for reproduction.⁵⁹⁹ Hence, Edelman argues, the common rhetorical appeal to “save the children,” exceeds the politics of the Left or Right, often to the detriment of those who cannot biologically reproduce. Though many queers challenge Edelman’s read of this visual logic, at the very least, the elaborate visual and material culture organized around children in the garden funerary gravescape signals to any viewer that children (as the product of heterosexual intercourse) are of high epideictic value.

In conjunction with the prominence of images of children, other representative logics were also used to instruct viewers in the value of compulsory heterosexuality.⁶⁰⁰ Prominent among these are how grave organization instilled a cyclical sense of time within the gravescape, representing heteronormative reproduction as the measure of order, success, and identity. As opposed to the *memento mori* style that focused upon the fleeting quality of earth-bound life, the

⁵⁹⁸ Morris, “Death on Display” in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 213.

⁵⁹⁹ Lee Edelman, “The Future is Kid Stuff: Queer Theory, Disidentification, and the Death Drive,” *Narrative* 6 (1998): 19.

⁶⁰⁰ On compulsory heterosexuality, see Adrienne Rich, see “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 5 (1980): 631-60.

garden gravescapes “consistently and continually recapitulates a view of time as cyclical.”⁶⁰¹ Key to securing this conception was the notion of generations. In short, if the gravescape promoted a cyclical time, reproduction becomes a primary means of representing that notion. Thus, it should not be surprising that “family” is an exaggerated representational element in garden death displays. Indeed, the landscapes of garden cemeteries are highly communal. Mausoleums and family crypts were promoted as ideal representational forms for those who could make such a monetary investment. For others, the plans of cemeteries “encouraged families to have a centerpiece memorial surrounded by matching footstones.”⁶⁰² No matter the design choice, the gravescape operated by the logic that family was a key measure of life’s assessment. In this way, the garden cemetery’s logic participates fully within what Warner might call a *repro-narrativity* rhetoric — a visual message that reproduction is everything, a rhetoric that by its very nature can be antithetical to many queer lives.⁶⁰³ And as Edelman reminds us: “that rhetoric is intended precisely to assert that this issue *has* only one side.”⁶⁰⁴ For the sole queer, this representational form was largely unavailable. This is not to say that a queer might not find a place within a family plot. But outside of the confines of marriage and family, the single deceased person, either within or outside of the family plot system, becomes positioned as the queer “old spinster” or “bachelor.” For the viewer of these queer figures within a family style gravescape, these figures become unintelligible and largely troublesome. Thus, biological families became not just the organizing logic of these gravescapes, but the visual reflection of a well-lived life, surrounded by waves of generational heirs.

⁶⁰¹ Morris, “Death on Display” in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 213.

⁶⁰² Woodlawn Cemetery, “History of the Landscape Lawn Plan,” 2006, <http://www.thewoodlawncemetery.org/landscape.html> (accessed July 27, 2010).

⁶⁰³ *Repro-narrativity* is discussed in Warner, “Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet,” *Social Text* 29 (1991): 7.

⁶⁰⁴ Edelman, “The Future is Kid Stuff,” 18.

Projected, marked, and unmarked: each form of heteronormative (non-) representation within rhetorics of death contributes to the marginalization of queer alternatives. The contradictory natures of these three forms of heteronormativity suggest the complex relations of power that make the heterosexual presumption difficult to overcome. For the queer activist, attacking any one form on its own would be inherently useless. In doing so, the other forms of heteronormativity would compensate for the challenge by activists until the singular queer effort to resist would presumably be re-territorialized or enveloped back into the fold.⁶⁰⁵ Rather, a queer project of resistance to the heteronormative death and dying apparatus requires a contingent of durable, simultaneous acts of disruption that focus on the highly contextual (i.e. rhetorical) needs of each form. Of these, the heteronormative form that projects heterosexuality as an ideal has already come under sustained interrogation by queer-affirmative forces. Traditional and non-conventional strategies against DADT, DOMA, funerary rights laws, discrimination, etc. have and continue to be undertaken regularly. As such they have also been written about extensively. Thus, the remainder of this chapter focuses upon the two other forms of heteronormativity — its unmarked and marked (but natural) forms — within the confines of gravescapes as the locus of queer rhetorical action.

5.4 THE QUEERING OF CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

Along the banks of the Anacosta River, a few miles before it empties into the Potomac basin that surrounds Washington, D.C., sits the famed and forgotten Congressional Cemetery. Founded in

⁶⁰⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Continuum Books, 1987, rpt. 2004), 11-12.

1807 as a burial site for an Episcopal Church, the cemetery quickly became a favored burial ground for Washington and the nation's most revered souls. Interred in its grounds are American luminaries, Congressmen, Vice Presidents, Supreme Court Justices, soldiers, and others like John Phillip Sousa and J. Edgar Hoover, giving the cemetery an ethos at the very heart of our cultural epideictic. The prestige of the cemetery lasted decades until after the Civil War when Arlington National Cemetery was constructed a few miles to the west, largely based upon the design of Congressional Cemetery.⁶⁰⁶ In the decades that followed, the popularity of Congressional for displaying the national dead waned, falling into disrepair by the end of the twentieth century and almost forgotten by the nation that once so prized its pristine ethos.⁶⁰⁷

Within this needed, but neglected national space has emerged a compelling rhetorical recuperation by a group of gay men seeking to build their own lasting space of queer memory amidst the national ethos. The queering of Congressional Cemetery has been a strategic effort by both queer individuals and the queer counterpublic for several decades and it is only recently that these efforts' full potential has come into public view. Drawing upon strategic rhetorics, this queer project has been highly successful not only at creating enduring queer spaces of meaning but also at disrupting the heteronormative apparatus that is present in its rhetorical gravescape.

This rhetorical endeavor features not a single, coordinated effort of queer memory making. Rather, this queer project is better understood as the work of a series of individual and fragmentary acts, perpetrated by individuals and groups at different times and in uncoordinated ways, but united in a shared perspective and with common queer strategies of resistance. As

⁶⁰⁶ Burke, "A Call for Eternal Equality," C01.

⁶⁰⁷ Cathleen Bretkreutz, "The Developmental History of Congressional Cemetery," The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery, 2002, 51-56, <http://www.congressionalcemetery.org/sites/default/files/2002BreitkreutzHistoryrfs.pdf> (accessed March 24, 2011).

such, reading and analyzing the rhetoric of all these acts together is an effort at synthesizing a viable rhetorical text from fragmentary rhetorics dispersed over several decades.⁶⁰⁸ The contributors to these acts can best be understood as three different waves of queer subjects.

The first is the original, known queer inhabitant of the cemetery: Peter Doyle. Doyle is widely regarded as Walt Whitman's longest and most beloved lover.⁶⁰⁹ He is buried in one of the older parts of the cemetery, in a shared grave with his brother, Edward. His headstone is appropriate to the stylistic constraints of a *memento mori* gravescape: a simple marble arch with his name, date of death, and age at the time of death (59 years). Though Doyle does little in his death display to mark himself as queer, his notoriety has made his grave a popular tourist site for queer visitors. Thus, Doyle's grave can be read as a queer representation only for an audience already in the know.

The second wave of queer death display is the most prominent: the *Gay Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, also known as the grave of Sgt. Leonard Matlovich (fig. 6). Matlovich was a gay Vietnam veteran who challenged his dishonorable discharge from the United States Air Force in 1975. With the support of the National Gay Task Force (now the NGLTF) and his military appointed attorney, Matlovich waged a cautious public battle to remain in the military and continue his service as a decorated airman (Matlovich received the Purple Heart when he received extensive injuries while removing a minefield in Vietnam in 1971). Matlovich would become a heavily promoted public face of the still nascent modern gay rights movement, appearing on popular television shows like *Donahue* and becoming the first openly-gay person to make the cover of *TIME* magazine in 1975. His conservative politics, his military heroism, and

⁶⁰⁸ McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," 274-89.

⁶⁰⁹ Library of Congress, "Good Gray Poet," October 5, 2006, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/whitman-goodgraypoet.html> (accessed March 24, 2011).

his patriotic beliefs made him an appealing representative for many within the community and made him a successful public figure. Nonetheless, the Air Force succeeded in removing Matlovich from the service after the civilian courts upheld his initial dismissal in 1976. However, Matlovich was able to appeal his “general” discharge to an honorable discharge soon thereafter, a feat rarely repeated until recently. While Matlovich will perhaps always be best known for his challenge of military policy, his work extended far beyond that issue alone. He would become a prominent advocate for gay rights and a highly visible figure within the movement. Matlovich also founded the short-lived Never Forget Project, which focused on creating memorials for GLBT people.⁶¹⁰ However, like many men of his generation, Matlovich’s contributions were cut short by an early death. After only a few short months, Matlovich would die of “AIDS-related illnesses” in June of 1988 at the age of forty-four.

Prior to his death, Matlovich would design and install the *Gay Vietnam Veterans Memorial* at the future site of his own grave in Congressional Cemetery. Confronted by a grim prognosis and having faced death earlier in his life, Matlovich, perhaps more than most, was aware of the ease with which an individual’s sexuality could be wiped away in the process of death and dying: “Had I died in Vietnam when I hit the mine, I would have been just another dead Vietnam vet, you see. I would not have been a specifically gay Vietnam veteran who died for his country.”⁶¹¹ Having lived near Congressional Cemetery and once been asked by a passerby where the grave of Peter Doyle was buried, Matlovich was intrigued by the possibilities of creating a memorial site where gay men and women could gather and where gay veterans in particular could be remembered “not only for their sacrifice but also for their sense of self-worth

⁶¹⁰ Mike Hippler, *Matlovich: The Good Soldier* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1989), 146.

⁶¹¹ Hippler, *Matlovich*, 133-34.



Figure 6. *Gay Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, also known as the grave of Sgt. Leonard Matlovich, in Congressional Cemetery, Washington, D.C. Photograph by author.

as gay people.”⁶¹² This feeling was only strengthened after he would visit the grave of Stein and Toklas on a trip to Paris. Two years after conceiving the idea, he would complete and install the memorial.⁶¹³ More than most other early leaders of the gay liberation movement, Matlovich understood the potential of queer public memory projects to do rhetorical work, setting the standard by which many others would soon follow.

The third and most recent wave of queer memorialists is a collection of gay veterans, artists, and activist who have followed Matlovich’s lead and sought to mark intentionally their graves as queer within the public space of Congressional Cemetery. This group consists of about ten to fifteen gay men and couples who have either been interred or placed their markers within the cemetery. While separated by years and with diverse backgrounds and politics often different from those of Matlovich himself, the third wave of memorialists has largely adopted his rhetorical strategy of marking homosexuality within the gravescape. Collectively, these three waves of death displays work to disrupt the heteronormative gravescape of Congressional Cemetery while simultaneously making space for enduring images of queer alternatives.

The key to understanding the strategies of the queer legacy makers lies in identifying the cemetery’s pre-existing rhetorical messaging. Like most cemeteries in existence over several centuries, the style of Congressional has evolved to include more contemporary forms. However, by and large, Congressional Cemetery can be understood as a *memento mori* gravescape. The vast majority of the graves within the cemetery are simple headstones with simple inscriptions that participate in a visual argument to passersby to remember death is always present and to make haste in preparing for its coming. Within Congressional Cemetery, life is fleeting, bodies

⁶¹² Hippler, *Matlovich*, 134.

⁶¹³ Hippler, *Matlovich*, 146.

become unimportant to the soul, and all participants seeks to join the chorus in echoing the call to prepare for eternity now.

Amidst this rhetorical imagery, queer subjects and viewers have intervened to challenge this heteronormative rhetoric and make space for queer alternatives. This rhetorical intervention has been successful largely because it suits the forms of heteronormativity that function within the *memento mori* landscape: leaving sexuality an unmarked expression within death display. Thus, in a gravescape in which homosexuality is made invisible, the rhetorical strategy utilized by the gay graves is to mark homosexuality visibly for others to see.

To mark their graves and their identities as queer within the *memento mori* gravescape, the memorialists utilize a number of different rhetorical strategies: drawing attention and scrutiny through design, marking through inscriptions, highlighting with iconography, signifying with bodies, juxtaposing with others monuments, and circulating reproductions of the graves to a wider audience.

The first strategy is to draw attention and scrutiny to their graves through design. An important aspect of the heteronormative quality of *memento mori* style graves is their normative, universal appeal. Within traditional viewing practice, *memento mori* gravescapes were not inspected deeply or lingered upon. Rather, they were viewed from afar, requiring a repetitive, highly visible series of images and icons to make its rhetorical case. This practice was encouraged often by the disrepair into which *memento mori* cemeteries were allowed to fall. Containing only the remains of the deceased, little attention was given to maintaining these empty vessels.⁶¹⁴ Viewers have looked at Congressional Cemetery in a similar manner, particularly during the several decades in recent years when it was in a high state of disrepair. By

⁶¹⁴ Morris, "Death on Display" in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 205.

virtue of this limited viewing practice, few graves received individual scrutiny and community outliers were rendered mute to the community worldview. As such, the memorialist's first strategy to mark homosexuality within the cemetery was to obtain passersby's attention and invite their scrutiny. This act of rhetorical summoning, if done successfully, would provide the rhetorical situation for other interventions to be made that might more fully speak to queer identity.⁶¹⁵

The memorialists manage to hail its audiences in several ways. One way is by *color*. Almost every traditional grave within Congressional Cemetery is white or gray in color. However, both Matlovich's grave and the grave of F. Warren O'Reilly stand out for their dark, black granite color, a gesture towards the postmodern *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* a few miles to the west on the National Mall. The joint grave of Charles Fowler and Kenneth Dresser is a similarly dark marble color. In addition, the stones of Michael Hildebrand and Clyde Tolson are a pinkish hue that stands out especially on brighter days. Even from afar, many of these graves are highly noticeable as distinct from the others.

Similarly, *form* is another way in which queers play with attention in the visual field. While some of the headstones utilize the traditional arch pattern, Hildebrand's stone, for instance, is highly triangular, featuring a squat pyramid design that would be more common in later cemeteries. Most powerful, however, is Fowler and Dresser's joint marker. It features a polished cube, about two feet long on each side, in a highly three-dimensional form. The form is exacerbated in its distinction because it is raised above the ground and turned on its axis so that it is tilted into the air (fig. 7). Within a gravescape where flat, vertical stones reach for heaven and one's ability to create a taller stone ensures them a grander place in the hierarchy of souls,

⁶¹⁵ Carole Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 46.

Fowler and Dresser's cube speaks not of hierarchy but of both a cosmic equality and an equality shared between these two same-sex lovers. Of all the stones, it is noticeably unique in the gravescape, particularly as it is featured near the main gate at the center of the cemetery.

Finally, *location* is another way in which the gay graves garner attention. While all of these graves are unique in some way that marks them as queer, in a cemetery where over 55,000 bodies are buried, it would be extremely difficult to locate one, even for the highly perceptive viewer. As such, queers have attempted to utilize a shared location to magnify their visual impact. Though many of the graves are scattered across the cemetery due to cost and space needs, seven graves are clustered near each other in a spot that has become unofficially known as the "gay corner" or "gay ghetto."⁶¹⁶ This unique memorial zone is a highly trafficked area within the cemetery, positioned at the intersection of two of the major prescribed "pathways" within the space.⁶¹⁷ At least one gay grave is situated on each side of the intersection, making it all but impossible for a passing visitor's eye to miss. This location is also powerful from a distance: not only is it visible on a low slope from the center of the cemetery, but by placing all these markers together, their visual impact in color and form are heightened further. This strong choice of position is enhanced by other material elements that gesture to viewers for greater inspection. In particular, the corner features both a bench — which is an addendum to the Matlovich memorial — and a shade tree. Both of these elements appeal to the material needs of the viewing body,

⁶¹⁶ Steve Goldstein, "Congressional Graveyard, Dog Run" *Obit Magazine*, July 30, 2007. See also Yusef Najafi, "Honor Role: Gay Veterans Gather to Honor Those Who Served," *MetroWeekly*, November 9, 2006, <http://www.metroweekly.com/news/?ak=2397> (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁶¹⁷ Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 47.



Figure 7. A death display using form to queer the gravescape. Photograph by author.

inviting relief from weary feet and intense sun while simultaneously raising audience attention. By utilizing color, form, and location to hail viewing audiences from both inside and outside the cemetery gates, these graves encourage attention to this unique set of rhetorical headstones, both marking them as outsiders (i.e. queer) from the normative appearance of the other interred and positioning viewers for an array of other rhetorical efforts from close range.

Having garnered the viewer's attention, these gravescape put to work an array of other rhetorical interventions to mark them as queer and disrupt the heteronormative presumption of the gravescape.

The second strategy employed by the memorialists is the use of complex, rhetorical inscriptions to mark themselves as queer. As noted earlier, excessive inscription is widely disparaged within the *memento mori* gravescape. Morris suggests the marker inscriptions within these *memento mori* gravescapes “characteristically provide only the deceased’s name, age, date of death, and less frequently, date of birth, cause of death, and family or community status, with by far the largest number providing nothing more than a very brief inscription.”⁶¹⁸ This is the norm within Congressional Cemetery, even on the larger markers. Indeed, even on the famous cenotaphs of Congressional leaders, only the name, dates of birth and death, and the state and/or district they represented is engraved.

However, these queers defy this stylistic expectation, utilizing their headstone inscriptions to make a powerful coming out statement within a heteronormative afterlife. Matlovich’s grave is perhaps the most notable in defying this convention. His headstone is inscribed with text above and beyond names, birth, and death dates. Most important of these lines is the main text: “A Gay Vietnam Veteran.” Two aspects of this text have powerful

⁶¹⁸ Morris, “Death on Display” in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 207.

rhetorical effect: its anonymity and its use of the word “gay.” By using the anonymous inscription “Vietnam Veteran,” Matlovich manages both to disrupt the convention of *memento mori* graves that require a proper name and to create a (strategic) space for not just himself, but for all gay veterans who have gone forgotten in cemeteries around the world. By using the word gay explicitly on the headstone, Matlovich makes a statement of identification. Etched into the stone in explicit terms, the text here serves as a vehicle for a commemorative coming out. While countless other gay veterans have given their lives in support of their country, many of them continue to go unacknowledged because their identity is so easily forgotten in its ephemeral state. By engraving gay onto the tombstone itself, Matlovich rhetorically attempts to prevent any effort to minimize or forget his intersectional position. More importantly than even his name (which would be added to his footstone later), the title “Gay Vietnam Veteran” defines Matlovich’s identity so as to persist through time.

Beneath this main text, another secondary inscription appears on the gravestone: “When I was in the military, they gave me a medal for killing two men and a discharge for loving one.” This inscription is powerful in that it again makes explicit the fact that Matlovich and other veterans were indeed gay while simultaneously serving their nation honorably. The statement contradicts the logic of DADT, which attempts to bifurcate homosexuality and service as incompatible. In addition, this line of inscription is powerful because it is a quote Matlovich frequently used in his various speeches, interviews, and protests. By reproducing this ephemeral form of public address within stone, Matlovich ensures that not only will he be remembered as queer, but also that persuasive intent will live beyond him.

While Matlovich’s headstone is perhaps the most well-known and viewed uses of inscriptions within the cemetery, several other gay memorialists’ graves also use inscriptions to

make their queer identities visible. Like Matlovich, O'Reilly's grave marks his military service with the phrase "A Gay W.W. II Veteran." He also uses a favored line of public address to make a perpetual political statement: "During my eventful lifetime, the only honest and truthful ending of the Pledge of Allegiance was '...with Liberty and Justice for SOME.'" Tom "Gator" Swann mimics this act, marking his military service as a "Proud Gay Veteran" while reminding his grave's viewers to "Never give up hope or give in to discrimination." William Boyce Mueller's headstone also relies on inscriptions, though not to mark his military service. Instead, Boyce highlights that he was the "Founder of Forgotten Scouts," an organization committed to opening the Boy Scouts of America to gay scouts and scoutmasters. While other inscriptions vary, the use of inscription to mark queer identity in a way to prevent the forgetting power of heteronormativity is a powerful means of disrupting the heterosexual gaze and perpetuating queer activism after death.

In conjunction with the textual inscriptions, a third rhetorical strategy uses iconography on the headstone to challenge the conventions of *memento mori* death display and mark queer identity visibly. Again, Matlovich's marker sets the standard. Whereas *memento mori* displays generally rely heavily upon a crop of deathly images — winged skulls, skeletons, crosses, etc. — to remind even the illiterate of the message of impending death, Matlovich embraces two important icons with powerful significance in the gay community: both the upright and inverted pink triangle. The first triangle (worn by homosexuals in concentration camps) is a ghostly reminder of the persecution homosexuals faced during the Nazi regime — a persecution which continued *after* the war because homosexuality was considered illegal by liberating Allied forces. As such, while Allied liberators freed Jewish prisoners, homosexuals remained

imprisoned.⁶¹⁹ Meanwhile, the second is a symbol of the gay liberation movement, an inverted symbol of persecution reclaimed by a people in search of political and cultural recognition. Enhancing the iconography of the triangles are two phrases just below each icon: beneath the pink triangle the phrase “Never Again” and below the inverted pink triangle the phrase “Never Forget.”

While the effect of these gay icons is similar to all icons in that they translate the rhetoric of the headstones’ words into visual form (in this case, marking a queer identity), the icons also simultaneously return the viewer back to a reflection upon life, not death. As Morris suggests, the limited use of icons on *memento mori* graves was only to emphasize the eternal soul and not the empty vessel of the human body. By privileging an alternative set of icons for the viewer, Matlovich is able to question the superfluousness of life on earth. In particular, by utilizing both triangles in linear unison, Matlovich iconographic rhetoric suggests not only that life matters, but that life can be productive of important works — in this case, progress from the persecution of gay victims to the liberation of gay activists. A similar iconography of victory and liberation through life’s vital work is represented in other gay graves in the cemetery.⁶²⁰ Thus, in addition to re-enforcing the fact that this grave marks a queer person, the use of these alternative icons also signal that we should remember life — particularly, as it is within life that many gay persons can most easily mark their sexuality.

Fourth, another strategy in marking homosexuality visibly within the gravescape is a reliance upon making queer *bodies* visible. While the majority of the memorials that populate the

⁶¹⁹ Though this imprisonment, it seems, was not *necessarily* within the concentration camps. Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986), 181.

⁶²⁰ Among the other icons figured upon the gay graves are a bald eagle, an animated cartoon character, and an icon of the Freemasons.

Congressional Cemetery gravescape are vertical and contribute to the heavenward imperative to forget the ephemeral existence of life, many of the queer death displays seek to draw attention to their queer bodies to provide an alternative rhetoric. For instance, the Matlovich memorial, despite its vertical elements, is largely horizontal in its dimensions. This visual form is created in part by a squat headstone, but more importantly by the large black memorial tomb that marks the location of Matlovich's body in the grave. While Matlovich's grave is not the only one to contain a memorial tomb in the cemetery, it is one of only a few. Equally, it features several visual elements that make it more powerful than others. The visual weight of this memorial tomb is enhanced by its color — a black granite to match the headstone itself. The memorial tomb is also adorned with a small decorative plaque from the United States government and engraved with the signature of President George H. W. Bush, signaling Matlovich's status as a veteran and thanking him for his military service to the nation (an important, albeit, hard fought recognition that would require minimal effort on the part of heterosexual veterans to secure).

The highly visible presence of the body at Matlovich's memorial is a key way in which heteronormativity is disrupted. Amidst the other graves, the bodies of the deceased disappear into the headstones. We witness the stones but do not linger upon what they mark. This, in itself, speaks to the success of the *memento mori* displays: their desire to push the corporeal body away to forget the body as inconsequential to the soul. But by foregrounding the body, in its posthumous, physical container, Matlovich's grave prevents such work from happening. The body here is ever present; it retains epistemological value, and as such, is able to instruct the viewer in a rhetoric that is queer-friendly and contrary to that espoused by the cemetery as a whole. Though Matlovich's body is not something upon which a greater queer message is written per se, its presence, its embodiment serves to argue for the serious contemplation not just

of the dead's pious soul (a notable antigay standard by most interpretations) but also of the embodied lives we lead here on earth. By privileging instead of fearing the body, the rhetoric of the Matlovich memorial expands the availability for queer existence within a heteronormative landscape.

For other queers, the body becomes present in another way: a shared-burial plot for same-sex lovers. While Matlovich's early death due to HIV/AIDS prevented him from ever finding the life partner he had so desired, several gay men are buried in shared plots in Congressional Cemetery after long lives together. Shared plots, while cost effective, are also highly rhetorical in what they say about the two persons buried together. It indicates, at the very least, a powerful relationship between the two. Importantly, this relationship is rendered corporeal in a gravescape, not just spiritual. According to Alan Bray:

The hope that gesture makes concrete...is not a hope of a distant life in heaven, but a corporeal hope on this earth: that on the Last Day, at the general resurrection of the dead, the first figure his awakened eyes will see will be him."⁶²¹

Two people of the same gender sharing a grave is not necessarily a radical statement to be found in a cemetery. For centuries, the practice occurred frequently between two male friends who participated in a certain liturgical rite that made them "sworn brothers."⁶²² David Wallace, in a review of Bray's important book *The Friend*, characterizes the relationship of sworn brothers as

⁶²¹ Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 296.

⁶²² Bray, *The Friend*, 8.

“the particularly embodied, same sex person to whom an individual elects to be ceremonially bound for life, to love unto death, and to be buried within a common grave.”⁶²³ While this rite, in many ways, seems comparable to similar early forms of same-sex union, there is much disagreement about its meaning.⁶²⁴ However, perhaps more important to its visual meaning is that this practice largely became unintelligible among same-sex friends after the 19th century, when married couples and other family members were almost exclusively buried together.⁶²⁵ Contemporarily, by placing two men in a common grave that is marked and visible by passing visitors, the grave signals the meaning affiliated with a spousal relationship between gay lovers.

To further prevent the possibility that such graves might be attributed to a friendly or, in some cases, brotherly relationship, some of the couples include inscriptions on the stone qualifying how their shared, corporeal marking should be understood. For instance, the grave of Larry Worrell and James Duell has little etched onto their shared grave except the phrase “Two Most Excellent Adventures.” Indicative of the statement is a shared adventure as lovers and not individual journeys as friends. The Fowler-Dresser gravestone places each man’s name on one side of the cube marking them as distinct in their lives but together in a shared life as well. The representation of these shared plots are prominent ways in which heteronormativity is disrupted within the cemetery. As such, the memorialists question the standard assumption of same-sex interaction by removing the gay men out of the context of individual graves where they might more easily be disciplined by the passing viewer as a presumed heterosexual man and placing them within a mutual grave commonly shared only by heterosexual spouses.

⁶²³ David Wallace, “Alan Bray, The Friend,” *Speculum* 80 (2005): 846.

⁶²⁴ See John Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). Wallace also comments on this comparison in his review. See Wallace, “Alan Bray,” 846-48.

⁶²⁵ In his introduction, Bray thoughtfully recounts the difficulty with which this practice has been historicized at various points in time. See Bray, *The Friend*, 1-10.

Fifth, juxtaposition between graves is a highly effective means of disrupting the heteronormativity of Congressional Cemetery. While we have already discussed how the proximity of the gay graves to each other frequently enhances their rhetorical value — despite the ghettoization and tokenism that might be read by some viewers — the way in which these graves are differentiated from others is also a powerful, visual rhetorical act. Putting into dialogue the various gay graves with another prominent grave within the Congressional most effectively does this: that of J. Edgar Hoover.

Most visible of all the graves in generating a queer dialogue within the cemetery gravescape is Matlovich's visual interaction with the grave of J. Edgar Hoover. The juxtaposition is perhaps most satisfying not only because of the proximity of the two graves, but also because both are held in esteem for their service to their country. The fact that Matlovich chose to be buried only a few plots away in the same row as the (in) famous J. Edgar Hoover sets up a telling rhetorical frame, though it is not entirely clear Matlovich selected the location with a specific intent.⁶²⁶ Indeed, whereas Matlovich established his gravestone to contrast with the other stones in the cemetery, he also seems to have established a stark point of comparison between himself and the deeply closeted FBI Director, who actively persecuted gay men through the FBI in what some might psychoanalyze as a consequence of his self loathing.⁶²⁷

Juxtaposed within a single gaze, Hoover's and Matlovich's graves are a story in contrasts: Matlovich in black granite, Hoover in pure white granite; Matlovich with a highly eloquent statement of pride and defiance, Hoover with only his name, birth, and death dates;

⁶²⁶ Matlovich appears to have had extensive control over choosing his plots and was well aware that he would spend eternity very near Hoover: "When I bought the plot, I left room for two, because I still hope to have a lover some day....As it is now, though, I'll have to be content with the company of J. Edgar Hoover and his boyfriend, Clyde Tolson. They aren't buried together, but J. Edgar is buried just down the row." Hippler, *Matlovich*, 134.

⁶²⁷ See Morris, "Pink Herring and the Fourth Persona," 228-44.

Matlovich buried as the single gay man he was, Hoover buried in a shared grave with his mother and sister. These contrasts alone speak to a certain queer ethos. Making the comparison even starker, in the more depressed days of the cemetery, the FBI erected a high black, iron gate around Hoover's grave. Ostensibly to keep out troublemakers, in its contemporary viewership, the fence seems to lock Hoover away behind the secretive veil he so cherished while alive. Reflected in the large, colored seal of the Federal Bureau of Investigation that fronts the fence, the heteronormative state apparatus seems to swallow Hoover and his sexuality whole.

Perhaps most poignantly, situated in between Matlovich and Hoover's graves lies another small grave to a man named Clyde Tolson. Tolson was an Associate Director of the FBI and a protégé of Hoover's. However, many believe that Tolson and Hoover were also lovers. For decades, they worked together, ate all their meals together, vacationed together, and socialized together at various nightclubs. After Hoover's death, he left almost everything to Tolson. While biographers squabble over how to label their relationship, the fact that Tolson took immeasurable effort to be buried as near as possible to Hoover, suggests at the least a deeply powerful homosocial attraction, if not a full-blown love affair.⁶²⁸ Meanwhile, while Tolson's body lies in limbo, hidden forever a few insurmountable feet away from his likely lover, Matlovich's body lies alone⁶²⁹ in his tomb made for two, in perpetual hope that the love of his life that never

⁶²⁸ Hank Hyena, "J. Edgar Hoover: Gay Marriage Role Model?" *Salon*, January 5, 2000, <http://www.salon.com/health/sex/urge/world/2000/01/05/hoover/> (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁶²⁹ There seems to be a great deal of disagreement over whether Matlovich is buried alone. Clearly, he was buried alone upon his death and according to his biography, Matlovich very much expected to be buried alone: "When I bought the plot [1984], I left room for two, because I still hope to have a lover some day. I would love to have two names on there so we could make love for all time....As it is now, though I'll have to be content with the company of J. Edgar Hoover and his boyfriend, Clyde Tolson." See Hippler, *Matlovich*, 134. However, Matlovich's grave is now graced with a bench in a similar pattern, featuring the name Cliff Anchor. Anchor is reputed by documents in the GLBT Historical Society to have been romantically linked with Matlovich beginning in 1979. However, Matlovich's biography makes no reference to Anchor. However, his biography does mention a "Michael" who had an

materialized might be buried next to him openly and proudly. Simply stated within these conflicting representational forms, emerges a powerful argument for how to live a queer life and how to have one's life decimated by paying fake tribute to the heteronormative powers that be.

Finally, and most recent of these strategies, the gay graves of those buried in Congressional Cemetery have been reproduced in museum displays, other memorials, and GLBT media — including magazines, blogs, travel guides, books, and now this dissertation — to enhance their circulation. The reproduction of memorials, as Carole Blair has suggested, has a number of positive benefits, chief of which is the “democratization” of access to these rhetorical and commemorative acts.⁶³⁰ Thus, efforts to reproduce these gay graves in other settings have the potential to shape memory practices beyond the gravescape.

The most prominent reproduction is not surprisingly Matlovich's grave. It has been reproduced in two formats with high visibility and thus, the opportunity to enhance public persuasion. The first of these is a photograph of the memorial as reproduced for display during the groundbreaking 1994 exhibition *Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall* at the New York Public Library. According to the authoritative text, the exhibition “was the largest and most extensive display of lesbian and gay history ever mounted in a museum or gallery space.”⁶³¹ Not only was the exhibition itself large, but it was well attended. In Lisa Duggan's account: “It is hard to overstate the importance of this exhibition which broke attendance records at the library,

evolving relationship with Matlovich beginning 1979. Interestingly, the GLBT Historical Society claims that Anchor changed his name to Michael Erickson in his youth, though he returned to Anchor before his death. And Anchor's papers suggest he was actively planning to be buried with Matlovich. Suffice it to say, the facts are, at the time of this writing, unclear.

⁶³⁰ Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites,” in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 38.

⁶³¹ Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman, *Becoming Visible: An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin Studio, 1998), xv.

drawing 17,258 visitors in its first week and an average of 1,000 per day thereafter.”⁶³² It is estimated more than 100,000 people visited the exhibit during its run. Images of Matlovich’s grave featured prominently in the exhibit, circulating his rhetorical appeal beyond visitors to the cemetery alone.⁶³³

The second of these reproductions is a life-size replica of Matlovich’s gravestone as a plaque on display on a sidewalk-facing wall near the Castro Theatre in San Francisco. The plaque is a modified replica of the original, changed in substance and some colors, height, and in text to include Matlovich’s name. The Service Members Legal Defense Network (SLDN), a non-profit organization that represents gays and lesbians dismissed or closeted in the U.S. military because of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” installed the plaque. Appropriately, the plaque was unveiled on November 14, 2008 during ongoing queer activism for same-sex marriage and against DADT. The goal of the plaque, according to the official website is to honor Matlovich’s life and activism and to “inspire” us all with “his courage, his commitment and his love.”⁶³⁴

In many ways, these two reproductions of the Matlovich grave are powerful rhetorical acts that further mark the public memory of Matlovich as queer. Through them, Matlovich’s initial effort to create a queer afterlife is enhanced for heterosexual and homosexual viewers on the San Francisco streets or visitors to the New York Public Library. In some ways, this strategy also impacts Matlovich’s memory in his original gravescape as well, to the extent that viewers learn that there is an actual gravestone in the original cemetery in Washington. Meanwhile, the strategy of Matlovich and his gay brethren at Congressional Cemetery to mark themselves as

⁶³² Lisa Duggan, “‘Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall,’ New York Public Library, June 18-September 24, 1994,” *Radical History Review* 62 (1995): 188.

⁶³³ McGarry and Wasserman, *Becoming Visible*, 36.

⁶³⁴ “Honoring the Life of Leonard Matlovich,” *Frontlines: The SLDN Blog*, November 26, 2008, <http://www.sldn.org/blog/archives/honoring-the-life-of-leonard-matlovich/> (accessed March 24, 2011).

queer in the medium of death displays is circulated, potentially providing others with strategies for queering their own afterlife.

However, it cannot be overlooked that the reproduction of the Matlovich memorial and its original is not materially the same rhetorical act. In this case, like many others, “what appears to be the rhetorical text is not the rhetorical text”; thus the meaning the reproduction produces is qualitatively different.⁶³⁵ This is particularly true for our present analysis of the Matlovich memorial because so much of its value is derived from its interaction with the visual landscape of Congressional Cemetery. Hence, while the reproduction of the Matlovich memorial is a powerful supplemental act in ensuring the disruption of gravescapes heteronormativity, these reproductions do little in impacting how the conventional viewer sees and understands the gravescapes heteronormative visualization of life and death, other than perhaps serve as a motivation to bring viewers to the site.⁶³⁶

While the strategic rhetorics of the gay veterans, artists, and activists to claim within Congressional Cemetery the space and time for an enduring queer afterlife are powerful, it would be inappropriate to suggest that they have overcome the heteronormative demands of death and dying completely. Indeed, despite the persuasive and apparently propagating rhetoric at work that seems to ensure a monumental memory of queer existence within the gravescape, heteronormativity is a powerful force. Residents have already witnessed the luckily temporary forgetting of Matlovich’s grave during the deterioration of the cemetery in the 80s and 90s. It is possible his acts to queer this space would be entirely forgotten if not for the symbolic circulation of his gravescape in the queer public sphere in photographic form in 1994. Though renewed to public attention, Matlovich’s queer grave and his admirers are again a powerful

⁶³⁵ Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites,” in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 38-9.

⁶³⁶ Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites,” in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 40.

intervention on public views of sexuality. But heteronormativity still persists. The fact that none of the queer gravesites is mentioned in a public tour or map of the cemetery is a haunting reminder of just how insidious efforts to forget the queer past can become. However, though perhaps more fleeting than we might wish, collectively, these six rhetorical strategies function effectively together to mark for the casual viewer the pervasive heteronormative stylings of Congressional Cemetery. Simultaneously, they argue, through powerful visual markings, that these spaces need not be heterosexual alone — that those interred here might be remembered otherwise.

5.5 NATURALIZING LESBIAN LOVE IN THE GARDEN

Sixteen years after Matlovich's gravestone would be placed in Congressional Cemetery, New York sculptor Patricia Cronin would install her own gravemarker in a distinguished public cemetery to sanction her and her partner's legacy as same-sex lovers in marriage. The statue is entitled *Memorial to a Marriage* and features the sculpted bodies of Cronin and her real-life partner (artist Deborah Kass) nakedly embracing one another beneath the covers of their heavenly bed in eternal rest (fig. 8).

In design, the statue draws its influences from several sources. In part, its subject matter and title is a homage to the famous *Adams Memorial* designed by Augustus Saint-Gaudens which Henry Adams commissioned in the memory of his wife Clover Hooper Adams, both to

mediate upon her traumatic suicide and to celebrate their marriage after her death.⁶³⁷ The design of the piece itself also relies heavily upon the work of lesbian artist Harriet Hosmer, a prominent 18th century female artist of whom Cronin is both an admirer and scholastic interest. Others attest much of the influence to the design to Gustave Courbet's painting *The Sleepers* (1866).⁶³⁸

However, despite the influences of the sculpture, *Memorial* is distinctly its own, and a prominent example of the turn to queer monumentality in the last twenty years. The installation is made of one piece of white Carrara marble, carved by the artists herself using advanced 21st century technology. At 84 x 42 x 27 inches, the installation is over life-size, giving the memorial visual presence to compete within the cemetery's visual smorgasbord, but not so much as to exaggerate the figures and their realistic qualities. In addition to the memorial itself, the other gravemarkers that surround the installation within the perceived landscape of the viewer are of extraordinary importance. The installation is located in a small valley at the base of a slowly sloping hill, dotted with a selection of diverse kinds of markers. While there are several small headstones directly in the vicinity of *Memorial*, the gravescape is dominated by a series of profound mausoleums and epic statuary, along with a large number of trees and shrubs.

Like Matlovich's gravestone, *Memorial* derives a great deal of its rhetorical effect from its circulation as an iconic image. The piece itself has been featured prominently in several

⁶³⁷ The Adams memorial is known by numerous names but was officially entitled *The Mystery of the Hereafter and The Peace of God that Passeth Understanding* by the artist. The more popular 19th century title *Grief* was greatly despised by Saint-Gauden. The *Adams Memorial* is the more colloquial contemporary usage.

⁶³⁸ Jan Garden Castro, "Making the Personal Monumental: A Conversation with Patricia Cronin," *Sculpture* 22.1 (Jan/Feb 2003), <http://www.sculpture.org/documents/scmag03/janfeb03/cronin/cronin.shtml> (accessed March 23, 2011).



Figure 8. Patricia Cronin's *Memorial to a Marriage* (2002). Courtesy Patricia Cronin.

gallery shows (both national and international), circulated on the Internet, and appeared on the cover of artistic periodicals like *Sculpture* and popular queer publications like the *Gay & Lesbian Review*. The piece has also been prominently discussed and displayed in more “mainstream” forums like *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, and the *Houston Chronicle*.⁶³⁹ While it is doubtless that this circulation has reached and affected numerous individuals within the heterosexual public, it is more likely that the vast majority of viewers of these reproduced images would consider themselves to be homosexual or their allies themselves, preventing a deft rhetorical impact within the frame of photography alone.

However, unlike Matlovich’s grave, *Memorial* is placed within an entirely different gravescape, thus relying upon a completely different rhetorical strategy to make clear queer public memory (fig. 9). *Memorial* is located within Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, what is known as one of the United States’ premier examples of the Garden Cemetery movement.⁶⁴⁰ In many ways, the Woodlawn and Congressional gravescapes share much in common: their purpose, their fame, their proximity to major urban centers, and their age. However, unlike the gay graves in Congressional cemetery, the successful disruption of heteronormativity within the garden gravescape does not rely upon heavily marking or making visible same-sex desire. In Congressional Cemetery, heteronormativity is ensured by exclusion, by leaving all other alternatives unmarked. Hence, a visual rhetoric of visibility was appropriate and effective.

⁶³⁹ Castro, “Making the Personal Monument,” *Sculpture*; Cassandra Langer, “The Second Life of Harriet Hosmer,” *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, January-February 2010; “Galleries – The Bronx” *The New Yorker*, December 2, 2002, 25; Anthony DePalma, “Sleeping Together: A Daring (and Icy) Duet,” *New York Times*, February 23, 2003; Jerry Saltz, “Forever Yours,” *The Village Voice*, October 28, 2003; Douglas Britt, “Exhibit on ‘Queer Identity’ Requires Unusual Preparations,” *Houston Chronicle*, June 18, 2010, http://blogs.chron.com/peep/2010/06/exhibit_on_queer_identity_requ.html (accessed March 8, 2011).

⁶⁴⁰ Deitch Projects, “Patricia Cronin: Memorial to a Marriage,” <http://www.deitch.com/projects/sub.php?projId=49> (accessed March 23, 2011).



Figure 9. *Memorial* in Woodlawn Cemetery's garden gravescape. Courtesy Patricia Cronin.

In the case of the Woodlawn Cemetery, it is not visibility that is at issue, but rather the rhetorical performance of that visibility. As a gravescape that provides greater creativity to the individual, exclusion is not the preferred or sometimes possible option. Rather, it is by visually marking a grave within the gravescape as valuable in its social hierarchy that heteronormativity is ensured. In this gravescape, “valuable” is equated with the rhetoric of the natural. As Morris reminds us, it is by creating highly natural graves that the deceased demonstrated their value, and in the process wards off unnatural expressions within this sacred space.⁶⁴¹ In this vein, it is by marking the grave as both queer *and* natural that heteronormativity can be disrupted. Thus, *appropriation* of the visual rhetoric of the gravescape becomes the key rhetorical strategy of the Cronin memorial.⁶⁴² By ensconcing within the garden style gravescape a queer monument, the memorial seeks to simultaneously make space for queer alternatives and disrupt heteronormativity.

To undertake this rhetorical strategy, the death display must first represent the queerness of the grave. The most obvious and visually striking strategy Cronin uses to represent the homosexual relationship of she and her lover is to embody them within her work. However, it is not just the existence of the *bodies* that do this work. History has demonstrated effectively that the mere presence of two women’s bodies in proximity can easily be reasoned away as platonic if such an interpretation is not within the interest of the desiring (supposedly male) viewing subject. Rather it is the fact these bodies are engaged in a form of visual, same-sex affection that leaves little room to question their queer propensity. This queer visibility is especially keen in acquiring rapt, if not favorable, attention and infusing that attention with rhetorical consequence. As Charles Morris and John Sloop have argued in relation to queer public kissing, putting

⁶⁴¹ Morris, “Death on Display” in Prelli, *Rhetorics of Display*, 214.

⁶⁴² Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites,” in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 39.

representations of queer affection of display in the public sphere can have a radical political effect because:

Such displays constitute a “marked” and threatening act, a performance instantly understood as contrary to hegemonic assumptions about public behavior, and the public good, because it invites judgments about...*deviant sexual behavior* and its imagined encroachments, violations, and contagions, judgments that inevitably exceed the mere fact of their having a mutually affirming encounter.⁶⁴³

While Morris and Sloop suggest that these displays are especially powerful when they include kissing, men, and media display, I would suggest that the highly charged sexual connotations of the memorial *beyond kissing* in conjunction with the touristic qualities of the cemetery make the fact that this display features lesbians equally, if not more, significant in furthering a queer political act.⁶⁴⁴ Certainly, the blissful and intimate embrace shared by these two naked women’s bodies in the memorial can easily be read as sexual, serving (in a visually compelling way) not only to hail the attention of the passerby, but to mark the object of their gazing as intensely queer.⁶⁴⁵ Thus, the memorial functions, within another visual frame, as a *queer juggernaut*.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴³ Morris and Sloop, ““What Lips These Lips Have Kissed,”” 2, italics original.

⁶⁴⁴ Morris and Sloop, ““What Lips These Lips Have Kissed,”” 9.

⁶⁴⁵ Castro, “Making the Personal Monumental.”

⁶⁴⁶ Morris and Sloop, ““What Lips These Lips Have Kissed,”” 3, italics original.

Simultaneously, the memorial identifies its participants as queer by failing to participate within the heteronormative logic of space within the visual field. Spatially, the memorial is isolated in the middle of a lush green field. Though there are other more traditional gravemarkers near it, contrast in colors, the orientation of the grave, and a few strategically placed plants clearly mark *Memorial* as separate from these others. This isolation is unusual in that the excessively elaborate styling of the grave is not a central marker around which familial others are organized. This is visually heightened by the assortment of family mausoleums that flank the grave on all sides. Their presence makes it abundantly clear that a more familial orientation is an option within the gravescape; just not the option selected by those buried here. The memorial also suggests this non-reproductive rhetoric by ceasing its connection to ritual upkeep with the living family. As Francis, Kellaher, and Neophitou outline, garden gravescapes, with their exotic plant life, ornate designs, and welcoming atmosphere, created a cult of visitation to cemeteries by the deceased's family, to keep up the grave and commune with their loved one.⁶⁴⁷ However, Cronin's design breaks this bond. Indeed, this design requires little upkeep at all. No plantings adorn the plot that must be watered or kept. No flags need to be placed or gates secured. The memorial is very much statuary; self contained and perpetual, preventing at the material level, the need for a lineage to maintain it. In lieu of participation in the material structuring of graves to duplicate biological kinship patterns, the grave of the two lovers is alone. Visually isolated, unencumbered by the organization of familial plots, the memorial positions Cronin and Kass as persons outside the logic of reproduction, and therefore, outside the compulsion to heteronormativity.

⁶⁴⁷ Francis, et al., *The Secret Cemetery*, 3.

While the absence of reproductive imagery and organization within *Memorial* serves to rupture heteronormative gazing, the way in which it *visualizes the queer alternative*, particularly what Edelman calls the queer “death drive,” is also a powerful rebuke. The death drive refers to the Freudian compulsion to start anew (or to die), a product of an excess of signification.⁶⁴⁸ Drawing from Freud, Edelman situates the death drive not within individual psychologies, but within the social at the level of culture. For Edelman, the queer represents the death drive within the social world: a manifestation not focused upon the perpetual reproduction of itself into an endless future (as represented by the “child”), but rather focused upon the present moment, the maximization of the existent, the reliance upon the past and the now rather than always looking toward the future.⁶⁴⁹ To feature this highly controversial form of queer ethics within her work was likely not Cronin’s desire. However, Edelman might suggest that any representation of the truly queer signals the death drive over the child. If this is true, then, representationally, the rhetorical work done by the memorial is intended to answer the question posed by T.S. Elliot in “The Waste Land”: “What you get married for if you don’t want children?”

In this way, *Memorial* suggests that there is much to desire within a (queer) marriage minus children. This is highlighted first by the highly sexual yet totally non-reproductive quality of the subjects it represents. Clearly, the sculpture can be read as two lovers in the aftermath of a sexual encounter. This is a particularly salient reading if the viewer embraces Cronin’s characterization of the sculpture depicting her and her lover in a moment of “post-coital bliss.”⁶⁵⁰ In this case, the sexual nature of the scene is rather clear; but so is the fact that this sexual quality is not reproductive (by virtue of it involving two women exclusively). Thus, sex here becomes

⁶⁴⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. C.J.M. Hubback (London: International Psych-Analytical Press, 1922), 55, accessed March 23, 2011, Google e-book.

⁶⁴⁹ Edelman, “The Future is Kid Stuff,” 26-28.

⁶⁵⁰ Castro, “Making the Personal Monumental.”

represented, rhetorically, not as something with an end goal of reproduction (future) but a present goal of pleasure (present).

In addition, not only is this scene non-reproductive (in terms of procreation), it is also frozen in time. It is out of chronological time, a moment taken from an unrecognized marriage, and left suspended in animation to be cherished by those who view it. While describing a grave display as frozen may sound ridiculous — aren't all graves frozen? — the key here is not that the figures do not move, but that the viewer believes that they could have and now is not. Rather than representing a face in a static state reflecting death, Cronin's *Memorial* reflects live bodies frozen in a moment of time. Such a distinction does not encourage the viewer to ask what might happen next, but rather to linger in the queer moment. In all these ways, the rhetoric of the piece shifts from the deliberative to the epideictic genre. The monument is no longer *proscriptive* to how the viewer should choose to live their life — i.e. heterosexuality with the intent of reproducing biologically — but *descriptive*, praising an alternative cultural value that should be enacted in the present. Thus, by combining a presence of queer sexuality while intentionally effacing more traditional markers of compulsory heterosexuality, *Memorial* leaves the viewer in a new mode of viewing.

Finally, the death display positions the two lovers as queer in a rather unique way: by literally not placing their bodies within their shared grave. This is no radical act of queer deception: it is simply the case that Cronin and her lover are not dead yet. Indeed, not only are they alive but they are both relatively young (Cronin created the piece at age thirty-nine) and might expect to live for many more decades together before either one's remains might be interred where their marker exists. Such a situation is not highly unusual. Many thoughtful individuals make arrangements for their death well in advance of their actual passing. In the case

of shared graves or family plots, it is common that gravestones are simply reinscribed with new members as they pass away. Indeed, Matlovich and several of the gay graves that populate Congressional Cemetery were created and installed well before any bodies were placed there. Simultaneously, this approach is also beneficial in preempting any efforts less GLBT-affirmative next of kin might make to normalize or minimize the women's identities.

However, the effect of this absence in a highly publicized grave serves to position Cronin and her lover as queer figures in the broadest sense of the term. They are outsiders — literally outside of their graves — able to question their deaths and their representations in death with a perspectivism that can only be considered “ghostly.” While this reality is likely often lost on most viewers of the memorial within the gravescape, for those in the know, the death display becomes an even more powerfully queer device, a place, a “positionality vis-à-vis the normative” from which, a queerer way of life and death might be envisioned.⁶⁵¹

Yet, making the queer memory of the Cronin-Kass marriage visible is not the end of this rhetorical endeavor. To disrupt the visual rhetoric of the gravescape effectively without being written off as a failed death display, *Memorial* had to maintain its lesbian representations while aesthetically participating in the natural style revered in garden design. To do this, Cronin adopted a number of different strategies to appropriate and figure *Memorial* within the rhetoric of the natural.

Several aspects of the design contribute to giving *Memorial* a garden style imprimatur. First, the color and kind of stone used to design the memorial is highly traditional to garden gravescapes generally and Woodlawn Cemetery in particular. White marble was a traditional stone used during the nineteenth century monument making. Cronin uses a similar marble to

⁶⁵¹ David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 62.

reflect this style, despite the fact that marble is today largely not approved for monument making because of its soft texture and ability to be worn down.⁶⁵² Yet, by going to extra lengths to use a stone that visually matches the gravescape, the memorial becomes a seamless part of the cemetery's visual frame.

Not only the substance of the memorial, but the style of the design is what one would expect within a garden gravescape. It features a number of qualities that harkens to the representational field of a natural rhetoric. Most of these are represented in the bodily aesthetic on display. Despite the fact that these two bodies are traditionally viewed as unnatural by their default existence in two feminine forms, each body individually displays attributes that make a communion with nature. The flowing hair of each woman is a prominent flourish on the grave, mimicking both living forms, as well as the “spaghetti hair” often seen within Art Nouveau designs that focus upon nature and the natural as sources of inspiration.⁶⁵³ The almost complete nakedness of the two women's bodies highlights their natural state while also serving to draw attention and incite queer visibility. The post-coital imagery of the scene represents the very natural act of human sexuality, despite the fact that it may not necessarily represent a reproductive act. This stylistic imagery aided in conferring naturalness upon the otherwise “unnatural” figures, securing for *Memorial* a comfortable place within the logic of the garden gravescape.

In addition to the aesthetic and imagery, by featuring women, *Memorial* emphasizes a theme found in other garden gravescapes. As previously discussed, women were a common representative form within these cemeteries. By choosing the imagery of women to make a

⁶⁵² Castro, “Making the Personal Monumental.”

⁶⁵³ Debora L. Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 1.

commentary on queer desire — as opposed to two male forms, a transgendered form, or three or more forms that would exceed a traditional monogamous couple — Cronin makes a rhetorical “selection” that, while meeting her representational threshold, also raises the fewest visual hackles as possible.⁶⁵⁴ In doing so, she manages to enter queer forms into the cemetery landscape in stealth.

Finally, the memorial also exudes pathetic appeals at the core of garden commemoration. As opposed to *memento mori* gravescapes that focus upon the mind, the garden gravescape’s gesture to the emotions — specifically romance, grief, mourning, and melancholy — can be seen in *Memorial*. The embodied figures exude intimacy, nestled together and clearly representing a substantial emotional bond. Their faces revel in emotion, somewhere between desire and happiness, as they lay in each other’s arms. In a pose reminiscent of a long line of nineteenth century art, the figures represent sleep, a state powerful not only for its metaphoric resonance with death but also for the emotional trust required for two people to share that state together. By embracing pathos, *Memorial* replicates the natural, emotional bonds between the deceased and their loved ones visible across the Woodlawn Cemetery grounds.

Collectively, by hewing closely to the conventions of the rhetoric of the garden gravescape, *Memorial*, at least to some degree, manages to insert itself into the rhetoric of the cemetery as a whole. The seamless insertion within such a renowned cemetery is compelling, as described by art critic Jerry Saltz:

⁶⁵⁴ For more on rhetoric and “selection,” see Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, 45.

Here, among the tombs and temples, amid the urns, broken columns, inverted torches, medieval Celtic castles, carved weeping women, forlorn angels and heartbroken figures, *Memorial to a Marriage* doesn't stand out, it blends in. So much so that it's almost invisible — just another monument to death, love and loss in this amazing garden of graves. Only when you think about why *Memorial* blends in does it stop being conventional and start being insurrectionary.⁶⁵⁵

It is the combined use of strategic-inclusion and tactical-appropriation rhetorics that makes this insertion so seamless. At the core of this rhetoric, Cronin's memorial adopts the post-modern technique described by Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Jeffrey Nealon, and others as “repetition with a difference” to create a space for queer public memory. Utilizing a rhetorical “repetition with a difference,” *Memorial* turns the rhetoric of the hierarchical and exclusionary forms of heteronormativity against itself to embrace a queer potential.⁶⁵⁶ Through appropriation of the cemetery's style, the memorial also appropriates its visual rhetoric, rendering the queer condition of its figures within the security of the natural landscape.

The effect of this powerful rhetorical strategy can be seen in its reception among heterosexual audiences. Upon its initial reveal, the heterosexual public expressed sentiments that

⁶⁵⁵ Saltz, “Forever Yours.”

⁶⁵⁶ The phrase “repetition with a difference” appears first in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* as well as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*. See *Difference and Repetition*, 27 and *A Thousand Plateaus*, 385. The phrase is used most clearly by Jeffrey T. Nealon to describe tactics and strategies of minorities to deterritorialize aspects of culture. See *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 119.

were both worried and condemnatory. Yet despite these outbursts, the Cronin-Kass memorial has become the third most visited statue within the cemetery grounds behind Duke Ellington and Miles Davis.⁶⁵⁷ However, the reception that it receives when visited is not always so clear, as demonstrated by an anecdote from the *Village Voice*:

When I asked a clean-cut, 20-something couple who they thought the carved women in Cronin's sculpture were, the young man said, "mythical people or saints"; the woman, "angels." I said, "I think they're lesbians, and that they've just had sex." The couple peered down, widened their eyes, tottered slightly, then began shaking their heads back and forth. I don't know what, only that *Memorial* did something to them.⁶⁵⁸

Such responses are to be expected and indeed, hoped for, by this powerful act of queer public memory. In a garden cemetery, with the rhetoric of the natural as the locus of attention, Cronin's display speaks with two voices, each heard differently by different audiences. The first is a disruptive rhetoric that challenges the unequivocal prayer to unity through nature by revisualizing and materializing a heretofore unconsidered characterization of natural. For the visitor to the cemetery closed-minded to the possibilities of alternative conceptions of joy, love, and happiness imaged in *Memorial*, the memorial serves as a visual flashpoint to destabilize the idea of the heterosexual as the sole bearer of the natural, both as culturally performed by the

⁶⁵⁷ DePalma, "Sleeping Together."

⁶⁵⁸ Saltz, "Forever Yours."

other memorials in the gravescape and those repeated within the performance of heteronormativity in the individual constructs of everyday life. In all conceivable ways, this memorial performs a very militant queer rhetorical vision.

On the other hand, for a more inclusive viewer to glance upon the gravescape, the memorial does not signal a challenge to the rhetoric of nature, but a life-affirming recharacterization of what is natural. Within the loving, emotional embrace of the two women's bodies is manifested the rhetorical hurrah previously only articulated in speech — that the love between people of the same sex is not unnatural, but something of humanity, granted by God, or a part of nature.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

While earlier acts of queer resistance relied solely on tactical efforts to ensure the viability of queer legacies, both the gay graves currently spreading through Congressional Cemetery and monumental contribution by Cronin in Woodlawn Cemetery have shifted attention to more strategic acts of queer memory making. The rhetors responsible for these strategic rhetorics have much to hope for if current receptions among heterosexual audiences are any evidence. While the number of graves already marked visibly queer in Congressional is already substantial, new graves are purchased everyday with the intent to enhance further the existing public memories' already prominent message. Indeed, after years of neglect, the gay graves of Congressional Cemetery are the most visited of any of those interred. At the same time, other cemeteries in the United States have themselves become more marked by similar funerary projects. Both Palm Springs and Phoenix have created their own visibly queer markers to honor gay veterans within

public cemeteries.⁶⁵⁹ With the reproductions of the Matlovich graves in media and material form in recent years, the likelihood of Matlovich's queer afterlife and, more importantly, the strategic place these graves create within gravescapes generally seem even more assured.

While the reproductive quality of such sites should not be expected for such a unique work of art as *Memorial*, here too, the rhetoric of queer public memory has been largely successful. In line with the gravescape in which it occurs, success for Cronin's memorial lies mostly in its acceptance as appropriate and desirable within the existent cemetery space rather than its replication or visibility. At the time of this writing, it seems the initial grumblings of some visitors to the memorial have largely passed without incident. With the exception of one year during which the original marble piece was replaced with a more durable duplicate, *Memorial* is now one of the most visited sites within Woodlawn Cemetery.⁶⁶⁰ Importantly, most of this audience is of a more diverse heterosexual nature than just mere homosexual admirers. Much of this success can probably be attributed to the continued interest in the piece as it has been displayed in several more exhibits since its release in 2002. Yet perhaps the most successful measure of Cronin's rhetorical success is how favorably *Memorial* has been incorporated into the regular tours offered by Woodlawn's professional staff, particularly the "Beautiful Women of Woodlawn" tour.⁶⁶¹ Clearly, despite the important difference memorial brings to its

⁶⁵⁹ American Veterans for Equal Rights, "Special Projects," http://aver.us/aver/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=43&Itemid=82 (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁶⁶⁰ While it is ironic that a monument that was intended to mark same-sex desire eternally was removed in 2010, the removal was strategic on two accounts. First, reminded of earlier concerns that marble would not weather the elements well, Cronin replaced the original *Memorial* with a more substantial duplicate that could live up to its eternal aspirations. Second, this replacement allowed the original piece to go on tour, further circulating the rhetorical work of the project. A third, bronze replica of the original was recently purchased for permanent display by Scotland's Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art.

⁶⁶¹ Deitch Projects, "Patricia Cronin: Memorial to a Marriage," press release, <http://www.deitch.com/files/projects/memorial%20to%20a%20marriage.pdf> (accessed March 24, 2011).

representation of queer death and memory, its repetition has been viewed favorably enough not only to include it with its ilk, but to reappraise what the cemetery's viewers conceive of as "natural."

Beyond the measure of effects, both of these efforts to construct a queer afterlife raise important theoretical concerns. Two contributions seem most important both for queer public memory and the concerns of this dissertation

First, this chapter highlights that if queer memory projects are to be a successful rhetorical strategy for affecting the judgments of the heterosexual public, a more sophisticated view of heterosexual power and its deployments will be needed. While earlier efforts to remember queer lives have focused on the language of memory/forgetting to justify and plan their rhetorical preservations, such a view of the heteronormativity that plagues queer memory is, at present, simplistic at best. Like post-modern racism and other intersecting forms of power before it, queers require a postmodern view of heteronormativity if they are to find actually-existing modes of resistance.⁶⁶² This suggestion further calls into doubt the already dubious claims to success advocated by more traditional forms of queer visibility. In this argument, visibility in and of itself is the key towards queer empowerment. Yet, as work cited earlier by both Phelan and Berlant and Warner demonstrate, visibility is only one means of affecting resistance. In facing the threats of postmodern heteronormativity, queers must employ a series of simultaneous and potentially contrary approaches to generate lengthier moments of resistance, safety, and security. Thus, as this chapter demonstrates, the visibility politics that have been successful in Congressional Cemetery must be joined with the *invisibility* politics of *Memorial* and a collection of other such approaches if heteronormativity's "manifold relations of power"

⁶⁶² For more post-modern racism and/or imperial racism, see Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 190.

are to be deftly resisted.⁶⁶³ Analyzing these postmodern forms of heteronormativity and theorizing and producing these additional methods of resistance thus becomes a familiar focus of the scholar, newly amended to represent the shifting realities of contemporary queer politics.⁶⁶⁴

Second, and related to this earlier point: if indeed a postmodern heteronormativity requires an array of attendant postmodern queer methods for generating acts of resistance, the happy distinction between tactical and strategic queer rhetorics posed earlier in this book cannot stand. Indeed, such simple binary thinking, while productive for describing previous eras of queer historical rhetorics and their shifting over the last three decades, seems incompatible with the uses of power seen in the evolving world. Certainly while the legislative and judicial rhetorics of liberal democracy, the acts of visibility politics practiced by Congressional's gay graves, and the acts of invisibility politics as suggested by *Memorial's* "repetition with a difference" speak to the simultaneous needs of contemporary queer rhetors, even these three rhetorical strategies are not so easily divided. While Matlovich succeeded in creating an enduring space for a visible queer memory within Congressional Cemetery that might be best labeled an act of strategic rhetoric, his success was largely made possible by tactically recognizing both the strange official/unofficial status of Congressional Cemetery in representing the nation and its inattentive leadership during the time he purchased the lot as opportunities to make advances what would normally be forbidden. Similarly, while *Memorial* excels at strategically claiming and remaking the rhetoric of the "natural" in Woodlawn Cemetery to include same-sex desire, it is not by an imperialistic crusade but rather a tactical appropriation of form and style that such an accomplishment was achieved. This chapter demonstrates that, in the unending struggle for queer alteriority, there is no refuge in "pure" definitions or methods. Thus, these graves serve as a

⁶⁶³ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 93.

⁶⁶⁴ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 125-33.

reminder not just to remember and secure a queer legacy within the public sphere, but also that in preventing the erasure of a queer afterlife by an evolving and amorphous set of powers, queer rhetors must be willing to arm themselves with whatever rhetorical tools the “available means of persuasion” provides.

6.0 CONCLUSION: IN (STRATEGIC) MEMORY'S WAKE

I have never taken the opportunity to tell you how great 'Gay Liberation' looks in Christopher Park. I first saw it later in the summer of its installation. I stood across from it, studying its placement, and was struck by [the] notion of the two benches echoing the theme of two same-sex couples. Why that had never occurred to me before, I cannot say. I was probably too busy looking at myself. Last summer, I visited it again on the day of the Stonewall 25 celebration. The line of people waiting to photograph and be photographed with the piece astonished me. It is an eerie feeling watching people touch 'you,' and especially where they were touching! Later, I ran into a friend I hadn't seen in years who told me my crotch had become a national shrine. A dubious honor to be sure, but I found the irony amusing as I have been celibate for years now. I am often overwhelmed by AIDS survivor guilt — an issue I am currently working on. When the number of deaths of friends surpasses the number of your birthdays, sex is no longer the same. The party that was the 1970's seems to have receded into a very long ago past and the loss of my fellow revelers has left a

gaping [hole] in the continuity of my life. It's sort of like the proverbial tree falling in the woods — if there's no one to share the past with, did it really exist?

— David B. Boyce on *Gay Liberation*, June 1995⁶⁶⁵

6.1 REMEMBERING *GAY LIBERATION*

The epigraph of this chapter is taken from a letter between David B. Boyce and George Segal in the summer of 1995. Segal — a world-renowned American painter and sculptor in the Pop Art movement — was commissioned to design and install a celebratory monument in a small park abutting the site of the historic Stonewall Inn in New York City ten years after the riots there that many scholars and activists believe heralded the contemporary gay rights movement. What emerged from this commission was *Gay Liberation*, the first widely known, permanent, gay themed monument in the United States.⁶⁶⁶ Though begun in 1979 and completed soon thereafter, the statue would not be installed in New York until 1992 following a series of delays by bureaucratic stoppages, political grandstanding, citizen protests, park renovations, and rampant homophobia. When finally erected thirteen years later, the park, the city, and the GLBTQ

⁶⁶⁵ This excerpt is taken from a letter between David Boyce, a journalist and one-time model, and the artist of *Gay Liberation* (1992), George Segal. See “Letter from David Boyce to George Segal,” June 8, 1995, The George Segal Papers, Princeton University Rare Books and Special Collections, Box 40, Folder 6: Correspondence 2. Permission by David B. Boyce.

⁶⁶⁶ *Gay Liberation* was nearly the first such widely known monument in the world. It was predated by the *Homomonument* in Amsterdam only because the Dutch statue was approved and installed several years earlier. While both *Gay Liberation* and the *Homomonument* were conceived in 1979, the *Homomonument* was installed in 1987; *Gay Liberation* was installed in New York in 1992. A second casting of *Gay Liberation* was erected on Stanford University's campus in 1984, though there is some debate as to whether it was to be permanently installed in that location or not.

community had changed drastically. Perhaps the most noticeable change for the GLBTQ community, as the letter above suggests, was as a result of HIV/AIDS. Today, many consider *Gay Liberation* not only a moving reminder of the gay rights movement, but also a memorial to those who lost their lives in the epidemic and those within the GLBTQ community who struggled against the fear, shame, hatred, misunderstanding, and indifference the disease wrought.

Boyce, the author of the letter above, was a young gay man plucked out of relative obscurity by Segal to model for one of the male figures in *Gay Liberation*. He was an enthusiastic participant in the process and became close friends with Segal during their short time together, though they would lose touch during the years the statue's fate hung in limbo. However, struck by a powerful sense of nostalgia, Boyce wrote to Segal in 1995, three years after the statue's eventual installation in New York and just a few years before Segal's death, to recall the statue's creation and effect. This intimate recollection of queer monumentality offers a poignant meditation upon the strategic turn within queer public memory at this dissertation's close. In all its complex detail, Boyce's reminiscences suggest the rhetorical merits of remembering the GLBTQ past, the obstacles presented by memory, and the unique capacity of more strategic forms of queer public memory to bridge the gap between cultural amnesia and social and political need.

Boyce's reflections on *Gay Liberation* pinpoint several ways in which the statue functions as a valuable public and *rhetorical* act. Though many of Boyce's comments tend toward the aesthetic (noting "how great *Gay Liberation* looks") and reveal a playful tone indicating his pleasure with how both the statue and his own image appear in the final work, he details several ways in which *Gay Liberation* acts rhetorically. For instance, Boyce celebrates the

statue's constitutive and epideictic functions. During the Stonewall 25 celebration, Boyce was "astonished" at the "line of people" gathered to see and be seen with the statue. Though he does not say so explicitly, it is not difficult to imagine that those standing in line in a shared space are participants in a stranger-sociability essential to the creation and maintenance of a modern public.⁶⁶⁷ Those standing in line to partake in a queer text mark themselves, to each other and to passersby, as part of a public with shared identities, experiences, and ways of being in the world. Particularly on such a historic date for the GLBTQ community, the statue provides a rallying point where GLBTQ individuals can affirm their sense of self through witnessing their social movement in existence.⁶⁶⁸ As such, Boyce draws attention to *Gay Liberation* as a site of community formation. However, the statue and its material form also prompt visitors to partake in a very specific kind of community formation: a rhetoric of queer world-making. Reminiscent of "rubbing the bum" of the Alexander Wood statue, *Gay Liberation* inspires some of its audience to *perform* same-sexuality in public through "eerie" touches that make Boyce's crotch a "national shrine." In doing so, these visitors create a *queer juggernaut* that disrupts the heteronormativity of space and vision.⁶⁶⁹ Simultaneously, by gesturing toward the statue with their own bodies, these visitors supplement the commemorative meaning of the statue. Their sexually charged touches add to its publicly articulated meaning, amending its message to encompass not only past struggles but also sexual pleasure (in the past, present, and future). Thus, the statue becomes a canvas upon which visitors can create their own meanings for public

⁶⁶⁷ Warner argues that publics generated through the sharing of a text among strangers are among the "purest" form. This characterization seems applicable to the *Gay Liberation* context, though a GLBTQ public can also be said to have its own "test of membership." Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 74-76.

⁶⁶⁸ This is reminiscent of the ego-affirmation function of social movements detailed by Richard Gregg. Richard B. Gregg, "The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 4 (1971): 84-85.

⁶⁶⁹ See Morris and Sloop, "What Lips These Lips Have Kissed," 3.

display. Lastly, Boyce also suggests that the rhetoric of *Gay Liberation* will profit from circulation beyond its space near Christopher Street. Echoing both Shepard's counterpublic memories and the photography of the Matlovich and Cronin memorials, *Gay Liberation* is photographed extensively because of its growing iconicity. As such, the statue acts rhetorically beyond its limited commemorative zone, circulating and affecting other audiences not corporeally present. Captured in visitors' photo albums, slideshows, reminiscences, and recorded in the Stonewall 25 archives, the statue becomes not just something to remind us of the GLBTQ past; rather it becomes a *call* to remember queerly.⁶⁷⁰ Through his own vivid recollections to Segal, Boyce highlights just a few of the many valuable ways queer public memory can serve rhetorical ends worthwhile for a GLBTQ political project.

At the same time, Boyce's account marks emotionally some of the challenges GLBTQ people in particular can face when they turn to memory. While earlier case studies in this dissertation have enumerated powerful motivations not to remember — painful childhoods, a history of violence, missing documentation, questioned evidence, heteronormative reterritorialization, among others — Boyce's own memory returns to the most wrenching of these obstacles: the trauma of HIV/AIDS. As many GLBTQ scholars and authors have suggested, the individual and collective memory losses that resulted from the epidemic posed (and continue to pose) a potent threat to remembering the GLBTQ past.⁶⁷¹ The literal losses of the disease were many — hundreds of thousands of primarily gay men who died at the height of

⁶⁷⁰ Carole Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 38-9.

⁶⁷¹ James Darsey, "From 'Gay Is Good' to the Scourge of AIDS: the Evolution of Gay Liberation Rhetoric, 1977-1990," *Communication Studies* 42 (1991): 43-66; Charles E. Morris III in "My Old Kentucky Homo: Abraham Lincoln, Larry Kramer, and the Politics of Queer Public Memory," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95.

the epidemic and with them their personal and institutional memories, old stories, perspectives, beliefs, talents, and so much more.

But Boyce openly admits to another obstacle of remembering a GLBTQ past tainted by HIV/AIDS: survivor's guilt. It is impossible for someone of my generation — having been only an infant in 1981 when the disease then called GRID began to take its terrible toll — to be able to understand the emotions, suffering, and trauma multitudes experienced in the earliest days of the epidemic. As Boyce so hauntingly remembers, “when the number of deaths of friends surpasses the number of your birthdays,” nothing is quite the same anymore. In Boyce's account, we begin to see — in a very human and personal way — the conditions that might urge survivors to foreclose memories of their collective pasts, particularly surrounding sex.⁶⁷² Moore, Castiglia, and now I in this dissertation, have all critiqued this overwhelming desire to forget in the age of HIV/AIDS.⁶⁷³ But in reading Boyce's words, at a personal level, such a critique almost seems cruel. Yet, this conflict reveals the nature of the epidemic and its fraught relationship with queer public memory as both an impetus and impediment to remembering together.⁶⁷⁴ Thus, despite *Gay Liberation's* value as both a commemorative space and a rhetorical project, Boyce marks clearly the personal and cultural limitations of memory for the GLBTQ rhetor.

⁶⁷² As Patrick Moore suggest of many gay men of his generation: “we have allowed the history of radical gay sex to become intermingled with AIDS and then thrown them both away as part of a painful past.” Moore, *Beyond Shame*, 149.

⁶⁷³ See Castiglia, “Sex Panics,” 149-75 and Moore, *Beyond Shame*.

⁶⁷⁴ Ironically, GLBT people were not alone in having their relationship with memory disrupted by HIV/AIDS. In a very different way, the disease radically altered heterosexual experiences with memory and the GLBTQ community. Particularly among those public heterosexuals who, prior to the epidemic, blithely proclaimed that they knew no GLBT people, the dramatic and visible loses of HIV/AIDS made the plausibility of such a claim dubious. As the disease left no corner of society untouched, no corner of society could realistically claim ignorance anymore. As a result, the possibilities to be remembered queerly — either as an HIV/AIDS victim, a survivor, or as someone whom came out to care for others in its wake — were greatly enhanced.

Yet despite these limitations, Boyce's recollection also suggests that if these rhetorical constraints are to be overcome, turning to more strategic forms of queer memory may offer a means of doing so. In Boyce's case, *Gay Liberation's* strategic form — as a material, enduring commemorative site — offers recourse to a wariness or inability to remember. Clearly, Boyce's letter expresses this wariness. Toward the end of this excerpt, Boyce questions the validity of the GLBTQ past he experienced. "Did it really exist?" he wonders, as his memories seem to recede into the "very long ago past." The reason Boyce wonders this is unclear. For some survivors of the epidemic, the past disappears against their will; another victim of a slew of heteronormative apparatuses bent upon silencing, erasure, and forced amnesia. For others, the forgetting may be a willful choice to give up a past fraught with memories of battling the disease in hopes of finding an inhabitable present and bittersweet future. In either case, this passage posits gay memories slipping into oblivion, to the point where that past may never have existed.

However, before Boyce's letter turns to the introspective question of memories lost, the beginning of his letter demonstrates how the past can come *alive* in the presence of a strategic public memory. Far from a traumatized individual meandering through his own Freudian conception of memory,⁶⁷⁵ the social accretions possible in a statue batters introspective isolation, if only for a moment, and constitutes a site amenable to fostering social relationships in potentially lighthearted and playful ways. In Boyce's memory, seeing the statue sparks new forms of looking, urging him to visualize the past in ways that "had never occurred to me before." The campy *jouissance* with which visitors caress the crotch of Boyce's embodied form evokes memories of a sexual culture long since past. To be sure, that sexual charge is "ironic" for Boyce, but it is not forgotten. His "fellow revelers" may be gone, but their memory — and

⁶⁷⁵ The Freudian view of memory, as opposed to Halbwachs and others, is that it is a largely individual experience.

his own — are *reconstituted* from a commemorative interaction. For Boyce, more than others, this is an even more compelling effect for in seeing the statue, he sees himself — his own image literally cast in the past and preserved in the public sphere. In ways impossible for a fleeting tactical memory to match, Boyce’s gay past — publicized and shared with others — is made enduring. Thus, the strategic turn in queer public memory proves to be restorative and reinvigorating, emboldening the queer past for battles ahead.

The value of the strategic form is crucial for understanding the evolving role of public memory in the GLBTQ community. Indeed, it seems Boyce knows this, too. Inspired by his sense of nostalgia, Boyce used his letter as an opportunity to request information from Segal about the statue and its history. In a return letter, Segal would fulfill that request. Armed with this information and newly enamored with own memories, Boyce would go on to publish a history of the *Gay Liberation* statue to detail for today’s young gay and lesbian people that “public emblem of acknowledgement that we exist and belong.”⁶⁷⁶

6.2 THE VALUE OF QUEER PUBLIC MEMORY

Much like Boyce’s letter remembering *Gay Liberation*, this dissertation argues both that GLBTQ memories offer powerful rhetorical possibilities to contemporary rhetors and that these possibilities are deeply constrained by a variety of forces aligned in urging this past be forgotten. Equally, this dissertation also argues that a turn toward more strategic forms of GLBTQ

⁶⁷⁶ David B. Boyce, “The Making of Gay Liberation (the Statue),” *Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review* 4.2 (1997): 11.

memories may offer recourse against heteronormative impulses to forget in ways that offers hope for a more inclusive and secure GLBTQ future.

The case studies in this dissertation highlight the ability of queer public memory to do valuable *rhetorical* work. In every case study, a diverse array of GLBTQ rhetors used strategic queer public memories for distinct rhetorical goals. In the Shepard example, both the gay and lesbian and (separately) queer counterpublics used public memory as *deliberative* rhetoric to help persuade heterosexual audiences that bias crime legislation was necessary to protect GLBTQ people from harm. Simultaneously, memories enabled these differing counterpublics to argue *judiciously* both that American culture was accountable for the anti-gay violence and that those victims represented a much wider community than Shepard alone. The California curricular reformers also used an array of GLBTQ historical imaginings to argue for legislative changes that would have both powerful effects for GLBTQ and heterosexual youth as well as to urge heterosexual citizens to reimagine how they constituted their sense of community to include or exclude GLBTQ people. The Alexander Wood statue served a vital public purpose: creating a gay democratic space in which new forms of GLBTQ citizenship might be practiced and ensuring that, despite the trend toward gentrification within the Church-Wellesley area (and similar former gay ghettos), the presence of the queer past will always be felt. Wood's memory also served as a symbol over which community members debated their *identification* with one another and Wood himself. Meanwhile, Cronin, Matlovich, and other gay veterans, artists, and activist used their material and visual memory rhetorics to make expressly *epideictic* claims about who they are and how they should be remembered in the future. Through his example, Matlovich also helped steel GLBTQ veterans and advocates in making deliberative arguments that contributed to the 2011 repeal of the U.S. Military's 1993 "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. In

each chapter, many of the diverse ways in which rhetoric can be used to shape public life are demonstrated by the deployment of queer public memory. If one way we might choose to determine an act's rhetoricity is by the effects it has on public belief, community, responsibility, identity, law, and perception, then these memory projects demonstrate the powerful rhetorical potential within a queer "*turn toward memory*."⁶⁷⁷

The case studies in this dissertation also illustrate the enormous challenges GLBTQ individuals and institutions face in their attempts to remember the queer past. In its own way, each chapter corroborates scholarship that identifies an array of obstacles, both within heterosexual history and GLBTQ historical imaginings, for doing productive queer memory work, including the AIDS epidemic, mnemonicicide, survivor's guilt, erasure, misrepresentation, the subjugation of GLBTQ knowledges, the questioning of GLBTQ evidence and its rigor, heteronormativity, and homonormativity.⁶⁷⁸ However, this dissertation also highlights particular challenges to queer public memories within the strategic turn. As camp viewers to the Wood statue demonstrated, the Church-Wellesley BIA's decision to embrace the strategic form of the monument in order to remember Wood both limited and calcified his identity and the identity of the community. In doing so, the statue makes static what, if queerly understood, should be a highly variable, intersecting continuum of being. The decision to select Matthew Shepard was a deft strategic choice to make in-roads to wider heterosexual culture, but illustrated the propensity to select "safe" figures from the GLBTQ past that often left much of the community still in the closet. The case of the California textbook debates illustrates that, despite the positive possibilities made available by a strategic turn to public school textbooks and American

⁶⁷⁷ Morris, "My Old Kentucky Homo," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95.

⁶⁷⁸ On subjugated knowledges, see Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*; On questioning rigor, see Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 65; On homonormativity, see Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?* 50.

nationalism, aspiring to strategic spaces already occupied by heteronormative forces usually requires making difficult choices. In this case, the contemporary reform effort resulted in troublesome, but necessary strategic forgetting that made GLBTQ politics seem unimportant, anti-gay violence and harms be forgotten, and sex — far too often the defining feature of heterosexual characterizations of GLBTQ identity — be eliminated. The examination of death displays and gravescapes, too, powerfully demonstrated the ways in which heteronormative apparatuses of death often easily reterritorialize out and proud GLBTQ persons after their death when they no longer are able to speak for themselves. Thus, this dissertation does not quibble in recognizing that, while queer public memories may be a valuable rhetorical tool, deploying those rhetorics is never undertaken without risk, cost, or restriction.

Despite these challenges, this dissertation also demonstrates the value of the “strategic turn” within queer public memory. It argues that strategic queer memories are valuable resources for GLBTQ publics because of the unique benefits they afford rhetors. These benefits can be seen within the distinction between tactics and strategies more generally. According to de Certeau, the primary benefits afforded to strategies result from having a proper space, which tactics (having no such space) lack:

A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as *proper* and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it....The place of a tactic belongs to the other....It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. The “proper” is a victory of space over time.⁶⁷⁹

Keeping in mind that de Certeau’s characterizations of space here are metaphoric, it is possible for us to conceptualize how his understanding of a strategy can direct us to key values provided by the strategic turn in queer public memory. Based on this quote, three strategic values emerge: independence, durability, and expansion.

As this dissertation has demonstrated, one of the most powerful advantages of strategic memories over tactical memories is their relative *independence* from heterosexual history. Obviously, no discourse within the public sphere can be completely detached from a narrative as powerful as dominant culture’s conception of history. As Foucault suggests, there is no “outside” of the discourse of power; we can only hope to resist from within.⁶⁸⁰ However, to the extent possible, strategic memories do resist by generating increasingly independent narratives of the past that (while not entirely free from heterosexual history) are no longer reliant upon it to be seen and heard.

This independence can largely be seen in the distinction between queer *bricolage* and the strategic case studies in this dissertation. As the introduction demonstrated, for decades the queer

⁶⁷⁹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xix.

⁶⁸⁰ “It seems to me that power is ‘always already there,’ that one is never ‘outside’ it, that there are no ‘margins’ for those who break with the system to gambol in.” Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 141.

past was only able to emerge within the public sphere when it could be made from the detritus of heterosexual history. Wilde claimed Michelangelo, Shakespeare, and Plato, not because they were known homosexuals, but because they were already represented in history and, if read as queer, could be turned to his advantage. This “making do” offered Wilde a powerful, yet temporary counterargument against heteronormativity. But because these figures were derived *from* heteronormativity, because dominant culture was deeply invested in reading these men as heterosexual, Wilde could make no lasting claim on them. It would only be a matter of time before each of Wilde’s representative anecdotes would be returned to the heterosexual fold. Thus, tactical memory rhetorics like *bricolage* suffered due to a lack of independence.

However, many of the more strategic rhetors in this dissertation were able to act differently. They selected and built public memories around figures who were not already heavily tied to heterosexual history. Rather, they identified valuable and important GLBTQ people in the past and built public discourses around them. This strategic turn obviously posed its own kind of problems: Shepard was not representative enough, Wood’s morals were questionable, and many figures in the textbook debate distracted from community or may have been too closely aligned with heterosexual history. However, they each also granted queer public memories a greater degree of *independence* in their articulation. For their selected subjects, queerness was a value in itself, not a secondary “making do.” Equally, because they were notably queer, heterosexual history had less incentive to patrol their sexuality. As such, the memories erected around these strategic figures could be articulated, controlled, and shaped almost exclusively by the GLBTQ community itself, free of the fear of reterritorialization. Thus, the strategic turn is extremely valuable because of the security it offers in its relative independence from heterosexual history.

Another value of strategic memories is their *durability*; their ability to endure the slings and arrows of heteronormativity and still persist. Indeed, a queer rhetor's greatest "advantage" to capitalize on when turning to strategic memories is durability. As Carole Blair has argued, durability can be a valuable rhetorical quality because it has the potential to allow texts to endure, giving them longevity to outlast contrary arguments. Materiality is probably the most obvious form of rhetorical durability, although Blair rightly acknowledges that materiality may in fact make a text a greater target.⁶⁸¹ However, particularly as the conclusion of the Wood chapter shows, material (i.e., strategic) forms of memory can be extremely beneficial to marginalized communities whose memories are under constant threat of annihilation. By being durable, annihilation becomes less likely or at least more difficult. Thus, the forms of queer monumentality that run through this dissertation highlight a corollary value to durability: persistence.

While materiality is a key way in which strategic memories display durability, durability also exists within non-material, but still strategic forms of public memory. Consider both the Shepard and textbook chapters. In the California textbook debate, advocates sought to make their pasts durable against misrepresentation, forgetting, and erasure by attempting to insert GLBTQ memories into already existent strategic memory discourses (i.e., American nationalism). In the case of Shepard's memory, by seeking to oscillate alternative memories into the public sphere to become the memory of the public, the various GLBTQ counterpublics sought to give their pasts a durable position within society. In all these ways, durability becomes a primary advantage to queer rhetors invested in making known persistent GLBTQ pasts in the face of heteronormativity.

⁶⁸¹ Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," in Selzer and Crowley, *Rhetorical Bodies*, 37-38.

A final value of the strategic turn is the ability of strategic memory rhetorics to be replicated and repeated. Strategic memories can be more valuable than tactical memories because they are more likely to serve as vital inventional resources that allow for greater *expansions* of the community. To be sure, tactics have been frequently repeated in public life. Though Wilde may have been one of the earlier homosexual rhetors to publicly reclaim heterosexual heroes for his own uses, he was certainly not the first or the last. Queer forms of *bricolage* are frequent in the GLBTQ past and present. Yet, the value of these repetitions are limited because they are always fleeting; tactics are repeated and spread, but little ever comes of them beyond that single moment. In little time, the tactical memory space is retaken by dominant culture. At the end of the day, tactical rhetors may have made momentary advances; yet they will still walk away with little real territory gained.

By contrast, when strategic memories are repeated, both the new memory and the original memory continue to persist. Because they are independent and durable, the inspirational strategic example can continue to inspire while its new derivatives can themselves inspire greater repetition. Drawing on de Certeau's spatial metaphor, because the initial strategic memory gains and holds territory, it gains ground with an eye toward expansion. We have seen this repetition lead to self-perpetuating gains for the GLBTQ past throughout this dissertation: the Wood memorial was built upon the strategic model of the *Gay Liberation* statue; the 21st century textbook debate relied upon the efforts in the 80s, and 90s for critical insights to propel their struggle; advocates for other victims of bias crime have used and critiqued Shepard's memory to raise attention and broaden the public understanding of anti-gay/trans violence; Matlovich drew inspiration from the grave of Toklas and Stein, just as other gay memorialists drew inspiration from his *Vietnam Veteran's Memorial*. In each case, the strategic nature of these memories to

endure, be remembered, and be deployed in second generation rhetorical strategies are a key resource for the GLBTQ community to expand the queer past. Chaining out in multiple lines from central rhetorical acts, strategic memories generate powerful effects, which in turn, inspire greater action beyond themselves. Thus, strategic memories allow for substantial gains in power that tactics cannot.

These three values of the strategic turn are not an exhaustive list of this trend's potential. I am certain that with a wider scope of analyses, more strategic values will emerge in time. However, these three values emerge as primary benefits from the case studies discussed in this project. Collectively, by making GLBTQ memories independent, durable, and expansive, the strategic turn offers important advantages in counteracting anti-GLBTQ forces that may offer some of the best paths forward to social change.

While Boyce's memory provides a useful frame for summarizing the complex possibilities and pitfalls of strategic public memories, his characterization does not address every issue needing attention at the close of this dissertation. As such, this conclusion will proceed to address the contributions of this project to the fields of GLBTQ studies, memory studies, and rhetorical studies. Next, I will consider the future of queer public memory research and how the strategic turn in particular might be improved. Finally, I will conclude by suggesting how I expect to further refine this project and offer a short, personal memory that I believe demonstrates the crucial impetus to expanding strategic queer public memory.

6.3 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THREE FIELDS OF INQUIRY

While the focus of this dissertation has been to examine a powerful trend emerging within the study and practice of queer public memory, it has simultaneously endeavored to make thoughtful contributions to the fields of GLBTQ Studies, Public Memory Studies, and Rhetorical Studies more generally. In the introduction, I suggested several ways in which I believed this project would prove relevant and productive in those areas. I would now like to return to these earlier claims to assess the value of these case studies at their close.

This dissertation makes important contributions to GLBTQ studies, particularly regarding how the field relates to the past. These contributions include: the possibility for a life-affirming GLBTQ past, the expansion of Bravmann's "queer cultural studies of history," and a counterargument to claims that examinations of GLBTQ historical representation have no material bearing on actually-existing GLBTQ existence in the present.

As one of the first book-length investigations of queer commemorations and memory work, I insisted in the introduction that this project should not focus *exclusively* upon the many traumatic and troublesome ways GLBTQ people are related to the past. Many others scholars and writers have engaged these questions and rightfully expressed the importance of making these connections plain. However, while staying true to the discourse itself and marking the trauma and vindictiveness of heteronormativity where productive, I have endeavored in this project to emphasize how GLBTQ memories can be put to life-affirming and valuable uses. As I conclude this dissertation, I am even more firmly convinced that there is great positive potential to a queer "*turn toward* memory," strategic or otherwise. All of the case studies undertaken here, despite prompting controversies both inside and outside the community, have at some level positively impacted the political and social sphere for the GLBTQ community: Wood's statue

continues to mark the gaybourhood as a proud, gay space and his memory grows more recognizable with every passing visitor; though ever cognizant of his horrific death, Shepard's memory continues to remind the heterosexual sphere that we all are accountable for how we treat one another, even those of us within the GLBTQ community; despite decades of setbacks, next year California public school textbooks will begin to reflect a more positive and visible image of the GLBTQ past within its pages; and each day, Matlovich's and Cronin's death displays continue to have powerful effects on the gravescapes in which they are placed and the people who visit them. It is worth noting, that any of these case studies could have been written with an exclusive focus upon the limitations of this memory work, the challenges these GLBTQ rhetors endured, or the many ways in which these memory discourses fail or are incomplete. Nonetheless, this project demonstrates categorically that the past need not only be a foe, a threat or a painful reminder to GLBTQ people: it can also hold possibilities for a better future.

This dissertation also reaffirms the need, and indeed the value, of Bravmann's "queer cultural studies of history."⁶⁸² Though the subject of this project has been memory and not history, many of the case studies herein demonstrate Bravmann's critiques about history are just as valid (if not more so) for memory. Particularly within the Wood, Shepard, and textbook chapters, the initial and most prominent characterizations of GLBTQ memory, upon further inspection, revealed significant misrepresentations and erasures of the community's full diversity. Whiteness, nationalism, and patriarchy: all of these and others are not just within the purview of heterosexual history, but take up prominent position within GLBTQ public memories. By drawing attention, not to a singular narrative of the queer past, but the multiple,

⁶⁸² Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*, 125.

contradictory and conflicting memories of the past *within the GLBTQ community itself*, these chapters demonstrate that much productive scholarship can emerge from attention in this area. As such, the richness of the discourse examined in this dissertation further demonstrates the necessity of those writing about the GLBTQ past to seek out difference, rather than cover it up for our own needs of narrative fidelity.

The case studies above also offer a powerful counterargument to the claim made by Dana Cloud that debates over the visibility of GLBTQ people within the past have little to contribute to making the material lives of GLBTQ people better in the present and future. Speaking specifically in regards to debates over Eleanor Roosevelt's sexuality, Cloud argues:

We ought not settle for scandalous visibility when there are major instrumental projects — including equal rights and protection in the workplace and in private life and a real fight against AIDS — that need real advocates, not mysterious figures from the past.⁶⁸³

Broadly speaking, these case studies controvert that assumption. In Shepard's case, challenging the way he was remembered helped produce not only legislation, but a decade of dialogue about the role and place of GLBTQ people in American culture that, though not complete, has produced beneficial results in heterosexual perceptions of the community. Similarly, whether deeply surprising a young couple on a stroll through Woodlawn Cemetery or serving as a dramatic site of inspiration for antidiscrimination forces in the U.S. military, Cronin and

⁶⁸³ Cloud, "The First Lady's Privates," in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 40.

Matlovich's death displays create present and enduring reminders to others that GLBTQ people existed in the past, loved one another, and served their country well, inspiring personal reassessments of their beliefs and contributing to a nation's reassessment of its inclusion policies. Nonetheless, Cloud is correct to the extent that she rejects the lateral hostility and wasted energy spent on merely attempting to prove that someone in the past was queer. However, when these efforts go beyond demonstrating questionable existence, when they can be deployed in rhetorical arguments with contemporary effect, queer memory work is crucial to defending the material needs of the GLBTQ community. Both the Wood statue and the textbook debate illustrate that these arguments are not without their consequence. For a passing visitor to Toronto or a small child in a California classroom, identifying with a historical figure in a positive way who is labeled gay may seem small, but these small moments of renewal and insight can form the basis for greater social change: either reshaping a GLBTQ person's way of thinking about themselves or challenging dominant culture's straight story about the past. If this dissertation demonstrates nothing else, it is that the past matters as much for the present and future as it does for itself.

For the still growing field of memory studies, this dissertation makes contributions in two primary ways: drawing further attention to GLBTQ iterations of memory and demonstrating how "conservative" tendencies within memory studies foreclose valuable opportunities for scholarship and practice.⁶⁸⁴ Despite a constellation of forces aligned against remembering the GLBTQ past, this project has profited substantially by the work of earlier scholars, artists, and activists for making the diverse experience of GLBTQ people intelligible and accessible. The many scholars and thinkers outlined in the introduction who have made possible conceptualizing various iterations of the GLBTQ past have been essential for giving this project a voice with

⁶⁸⁴ Biesecker, "Remembering World War II," 406.

which to speak. Similarly, none of the case studies here detailed would have been possible to examine without proud GLBTQ individuals and institutions who fought for decades to preserve that past, raise money for monuments, build archives, ensure records were kept, and much more. Thanks to these pioneering individuals, there is much ripe fruit to pick from studying the GLBTQ past. At the same time, this project has made a particular point to draw a distinction between *history* and *memory*. Despite a growing list of monographs, journal articles, films, museums, and projects devoted to studying GLBTQ *history*, this project remains one of only a few projects engaged at the intersection of GLBTQ people and *memory*. As the study of the everyday, the disruptive, the ephemeral, the unexpected, the marginal, the contested, and the popular, memory is often better positioned to enlighten some understandings of the past in ways that history is not. While I believe this situation is improving, given the “memory boom” we currently are situated in can now be measured in decades, greater attention to this subfield should be given. I believe this project has demonstrated that thoughtful work on queer memory can be productive, insightful, and (as I will detail in a moment) offer much to the wider field of memory studies.

Second, this dissertation illustrates credibly that scholars (and critical/cultural scholars in particular) should not approach memory studies with an unstated bias toward understanding memory’s conservative or nefarious purposes. This tendency has been prevalent and productive: countless studies have illustrated how public memory — largely viewed as a tool of the status quo — has been used to preserve hegemony, eliminate complexity, overcome painful pasts, consolidate power, and marginalize those who disagree. This is important work and should continue to help us better understand how our cultures of memory weigh on us. However, as I argued at the end of the chapter on Matthew Shepard, the existence of such tendencies within

memory should not prevent us from seeing how memory might be proved useful for those at the margins and out of power. Clearly, the case studies examined in this dissertation demonstrate that the rhetoric of public memory need not *only* be used in conservative ways. Marginalized people (in this case GLBTQ rhetors), relying on both tactical and strategic acts, have used memories for decades to counteract the very conservative cultural forces that most often wield memory's power. Particularly with a strategic turn, as laid out in this project, the ability of cultural outsiders to challenge memory *with* memory is a notable avenue of resistance in need of further interrogation. This project then argues that memory scholars, in overlooking memory's rhetorical quality to be used by any side in a debate, are missing valuable means of turning the conversation about memory studies away from oppression to include discourses of resistance.

Finally, this dissertation makes three primary contributions to the field of rhetorical studies: the introduction of tactical and strategic memory rhetorics, the need for critics to better understand the role of the audience, particularly in material commemorative rhetorics, and the prospects of "repetition with a difference" as a valuable rhetorical strategy.

In their 1995 essay "Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric," Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek made a valuable contribution to the field of rhetoric by demonstrating the existence of powerful strategic rhetorics at the heart of American discourse that invisibly shaped our understandings of identity, self, and other. Drawing up de Certeau, they translated his broader terms of "tactics" and "strategies" into tactical and strategic rhetorics, providing a discourse they and others have since used in a number of ways. This project has relied heavily on Nakayama and Krizek's contribution and further extends their work by deploying their language into the field of memory studies, particularly public memories.

Doing so presents two important new ways of thinking about public memories and their relationship to rhetoric. While traditionally, public memories have been understood between dialectics of official/vernacular, national/local, insider/outsider, invisible/visible, and old/new, Nakayama and Krizek's language offers a new way of differentiating between kinds of public memories. As tactical or strategic memories, the attention of the critic is drawn away from *who* is doing or represented by these memory rhetorics. Rather, tactical and strategic rhetorics allow us to consider what forms these memories take, what spaces they inhabit, and what relationships they have to each other. In rhetorical terms, moving the discourse away from a focus on the *rhetors* and toward an array of distinctive mnemonic *styles* necessitates new questions and new opportunities for conceptualizing commemorative action.

Interestingly, by thinking of memories as divergent *styles* rather than belonging to specific and diametrically opposed stakeholders, it becomes possible to conceptualize tactical and strategic memories as operating both simultaneously and in coalition on the behalf of an aligned set of rhetors. De Certeau did not conceptualize tactics and strategies as such; in his view they were opposing forces of power. But this is largely because de Certeau only saw tactics as the last resort of the disempowered. By default then, those in power, armed with more secure and stable strategies, would be expected to have little use for tactics at all. This dissertation has, at least in part, argued otherwise. While most of the case studies have focused on more strategic forms, in both the textbook chapter and gravescape chapter, GLBTQ rhetors relied on a combination of tactical *and* strategic memory rhetorics to make their case: textbooks advocates aligned themselves with strategic nationalism but only at tactical moments of opportunity that maximized their prospects; meanwhile, GLBTQ rhetors deployed strategic forms of death display in key sites and spaces to make their rhetorics more effective. In doing so, these GLBTQ

rhetors were better prepared to resist a matrix of power that operates against them on multiple fronts at the same time. As such, tactical and strategic memory rhetorics become two ways in which memory can be deployed by aligned rhetors to argue for a common understanding of the past.

Importantly, while these altered dynamics in conceptualizing public memories are valuable to rhetorical scholars, this project is also valuable as a model for similarly situated communities in the public sphere. Recourse to tactical and strategic pasts are not the exclusive province of the GLBTQ past — although they may be more prone to certain performances of the past than others. Other communities at the margins of culture and memory may find within their own deployments of a strategic turn that opportunities for remaking their memory are possible.

This dissertation also contributes to rhetorical studies evidence to suggest rhetorical critics need to devote greater attention to the role audiences play in shaping the meaning of commemorative sites. Emphasizing a greater role for the audience in our rhetorical analyses is not a new claim. In particular, Blair and Michel have made such claims explicitly within the context of commemorative sites on at least two occasions. In their analysis of the *Astronaut's Memorial* in Florida, they urged rhetorical critics to pay greater attention to the role of audience reception in determining the meaning of a memorial site.⁶⁸⁵ Later, Blair argued that an audience's ability to supplement a commemorative site's meaning was a key aspect of opening up rhetoric's potential in these spaces.⁶⁸⁶ I completely agree on both counts. Where this essay extends their claims on audience is in relation to just how far audiences can take reception and supplementation into their own hands. This has been particularly clear in recording GLBTQ tactical rhetorics within this dissertation. The practices of queer *bricolage* described in the

⁶⁸⁵ Blair and Michel, "Commemorating in a Theme Park Zone," 70.

⁶⁸⁶ Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," 40.

introduction begin to demonstrate the long history in which GLBTQ people have taken the memories of dominant culture and radically reinvented them for their own purposes. By supplementing those memories with a queer tinge, heterosexual memories became tools in the hands of the disenfranchised. However, the degree to which this practice can be taken is even clearer in the case of the Alexander Wood statue. The camp readers of the statue did not just reimagine Wood or add sparsely to his figure; instead, they materially interacted with the commemorative site in enduring and ephemeral ways that not only changed how they themselves viewed the past, but how bystanders did as well. The Wood example, along with others in this dissertation, illustrate the potential for audiences not just to supplement, but to take over the meaning of a commemorative space, sometimes to a degree that is unimaginable by their creators. Attending to this blind spot in contemporary rhetorical scholarship will be a key concern for critics interested in understanding all the possible ways audiences can affect the meaning of our commemorative texts.

Related to the role of supplementation and reception, this project offers a compelling *entre* to theorizing “repetition with a difference” as a rhetorical strategy. Deleuze’s recognition that critical potential lies within the repetitive act, as long as that act is infused with a range of degrees of difference, has been taken up in many discourses. Yet, surprisingly few rhetoricians have taken up this line of thought despite the obvious rhetorical merits to “repetition with a difference.” Certainly, repetition and difference (individually) have been significant terms in rhetorical work and several subfields within the discipline — identity, gender, and reconciliation, among others — draw on the notions in conjunction with each other, though often implicitly. Most expressly, the use of repetition with a difference has recently been taken up in interactions with performance studies, particularly in a recent forum on Gayla ceremonies in *Text and*

Performance Quarterly in 2010.⁶⁸⁷ While fully developing this area of inquiry has not been a goal in this project, this dissertation nonetheless continues nascent moves toward a rhetorical theory of “repetition with a difference” with several case studies. The power of this conception is perhaps most visible with the California textbook debates and the analyses of gravescapes. In the textbook instance, the complexities of repeating the American history presented with U.S. history textbooks becomes clear, as GLBTQ advocates grappled with doing so while maintaining a significant enough degree of difference. Though their efforts would only have limited effect, this chapter illustrates the challenge difference can pose for marginalized communities to enter strategic spaces. On the contrary, the *Gay Vietnam Veterans Memorial* and *Memorial to a Marriage* both demonstrate that shrewd queer efforts to repeat traditional gravescape designs with appropriate difference to their unique contexts has reaped powerful rhetorical effects. The successful lessons gleaned from the gravescape discussion offer valuable insights in moving more fully toward integrating “repetition with a difference” into mainstream examinations of rhetorical effect.

In important ways, this dissertation has made significant contributions to three distinct fields of inquiry. However, these case studies also highlight important flaws that persist within queer public memory’s strategic turn; flaws that need to be ameliorated should strategic memory rhetorics realize their full potential.

⁶⁸⁷ In particular, see Kimberlee Pérez and Daniel C. Brouwer, “Potentialities and Ambivalences in the Performance of Queer Decorum,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 30 (2010): 317-18.

6.4 THE FUTURE OF QUEER PUBLIC MEMORY

If all acts of public memory are as much about the present and future as they are about the past, at the close of this dissertation, I would like to highlight what this project suggests about the future study and practice of queer public memory. Key dimensions of this future are the continued turn by GLBTQ people to memory, an important and continuing role for tactical memories, and a need to do strategic queer memory *better*.

Perhaps the easiest prognostication about the future of queer public memory is that the “*turn toward* memory” as a rhetorical resource for GLBTQ people will only continue.⁶⁸⁸ The persistent “memory boom” (and resultant memory industry) of the last three decades currently shows no signs of abetting and interest in the GLBTQ past has only continued.⁶⁸⁹ As long as the past continues to be a palatable place to find persuasion, GLBTQ rhetors will continue to mine its resources for all they are worth. Yet, I think it is also likely that, within the “*turn toward* memory,” efforts to embrace more *strategic* forms of GLBTQ public memory will persist and, indeed, *accelerate*. Consider that during the first two decades of the memory boom (1980-2000), only a handful of GLBTQ monuments were created and installed, many of them requiring years of planning, fundraising, and public diplomacy.⁶⁹⁰ By contrast, at least nine prominent, permanent GLBTQ memorials or monuments have been erected in the last ten years, seven of

⁶⁸⁸ Morris, “My Old Kentucky Homo,” in Morris, *Queering Public Address*, 95.

⁶⁸⁹ Michael Kammen dates the memory boom to approximately 1980. See Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 685-88.

⁶⁹⁰ Interestingly, a large number of small monuments and memorials to the GLBT victims of Nazi persecution emerged at many German concentration camps starting in 1984. Including the Holocaust-related memorials, Germany likely has the highest percentage of GLBT memorials in the world.

those during the last five years.⁶⁹¹ Most of the new monuments to emerge have pointed to earlier GLBTQ monuments as inspiration for their own work, a task made significantly easier by advances in information and media technologies. Indeed, as we have already seen, many of the texts described in this dissertation's case studies echo this claim. Considering GLBTQ culture's penchant for *bricolage* and thoughtful borrowing, I suspect that other GLBTQ people in other communities will continue to borrow from earlier rhetors to undertake similar work. In doing so, these strategic memories will spawn greater effects, admirers, and imitators in the years to come.

Another (somewhat counterintuitive) claim about the future of queer public memory is that while the turn toward strategic queer public memories will accelerate, tactical GLBTQ memories will continue to play a vital and visible role in remembering the queer past. To be frank, at the outset of this dissertation, I did not expect tactical memories to play a significant part in the powerful memory displays that were emerging on the public scene. Rather, I expected the turn to strategic memories to be an undeniably positive contribution to queer rhetorical action that would make earlier tactical memories seem outmoded and unnecessary. On this count, I was not completely wrong: I still maintain that the strategic turn represents a net positive for queer public memory practice and that it holds valuable resources for those in similarly situated subject positions. However, it has also become increasingly clear that tactics remain an essential resource for faithfully representing the GLBTQ past.

There are several reasons why tactical memory rhetorics will remain essential to the GLBTQ past even as strategic memory rhetorics become more prevalent. The first is out of an abundance of caution. Far too often, GLBTQ people have acceded to the idea that progress is

⁶⁹¹ Recent projects in this decade include memorials in Dayton (United States), Toronto (Canada), Berlin (Germany), Vienna (Italy), Rome (Italy), Sydney (Australia), Trieste (Italy), Saint Malo (France), Montevideo (Uruguay), and Barcelona (Spain). A proposed monument remains planned for Israel as well.

both inevitable and irreversible. We find safety in important accomplishments, content that milestones have been met, change has occurred, and things will only get better. The experiences of GLBTQ people around the world — as with many other marginalized people — tells another story. Few GLBTQ people in Germany in the 1920s expected their progressive and secure lifestyles would soon be wrecked by persecution, imprisonment in concentration camps, and war. Similarly, as we have seen in this project, many gays and lesbians in their urban havens were shocked to see Shepard's image blare across their television screens, another victim of violence reminiscent of a time they thought had past. Less egregious but still harmful setbacks continue today. Where is the security and recognition for the hundreds of GLBTQ couples legally married in several U.S. states beginning in 2004 that soon after had their unions nullified by court action, legislation, or referendum? Why should GLBTQ people believe they are secure when, as recently as 2010, Pride events in Pennsylvania were surveilled by contractors under direct orders from the state's chief homeland security official?⁶⁹² Both historical examples and contemporary incidents illustrate that progress is not irreversible and repression can come with little warning. Because of this fact, the GLBTQ community should find little comfort in supposedly enduring monuments and recognition within textbooks. Monuments can be torn down and textbooks rewritten, far easier than we might suspect. GLBTQ tactics generally, and GLBTQ tactical memories specifically, are essential stopgaps against these hopefully over-zealous concerns. Disposing with them would be an imprudent act complicit in GLBTQ marginalization.

The need for queer tactical memories also persists because they provide access to historical knowledge not yet readily incorporated into strategic forms of queer public memory.

⁶⁹² Cristina Corbin, "Pennsylvania Official Under Fire for Civilian Surveillance Project, Rendell Apologizes," Fox News, September 17, 2010, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/09/17/pennsylvania-security-chief-civilian-surveillance-project/> (accessed March 23, 2011).

As local, ephemeral, and *metistic* forms of action, tactical memories are essential to preserving the more diverse, everyday pasts of GLBTQ life. For now, strategic memories (by and large) are far too biased toward “great” men and women, more normative forms of accomplishment, and more accepted spaces of recognition. But (gladly) GLBTQ life is not only found in those places and among those people. Everyday GLBTQ people, self-described freaks, gender benders and gender fucks, leather daddies, queens, exhibitionists, outsiders, non-conformists, political radicals, and others continue to permeate the GLBTQ experience. Indeed, I would suggest, it is often within the still marginal aspects of GLBTQ life with which we renew our queerness. On the borders of our identities, where diversity and difference are most pronounced, challenges are most felt, and representation costs the most, GLBTQ people have innovated to create forms, styles, and epistemologies that by necessity feed their existence. These experiences, acts, people, and events need to be remembered, not because someday they will be incorporated into a more strategic form, but rather because that day is still highly unlikely to come. Many of these more ephemeral forms of memory cannot be contained in these traditional forms; others may wither and die under such constraints. Tactical ways of remembering keep alive the vibrancy of queer life and should be preserved at all cost.

Lastly, tactical forms of remembering can be crucial for holding more strategic forms of queer public memory accountable for their choices. This dissertation is replete with examples of queers questioning the very public memories supposedly representing all GLBTQ people. Using innovative rhetorical acts — graffiti and putting the Wood statue in drag, reimagining others victims of violence beyond Shepard, critiquing textbook representations — these tactics highlight deficiencies in more strategic displays of the past. While many rhetors that construct these more strategic GLBTQ memories may view these tactical critiques as a nuisance, tactical

contestations of the strategic GLBTQ past are essential for serving the greater good of the queer counterpublic. They demand our visions represent real diversity that is present and important; they challenge notions of stable identity when many are highly fluid; they counteract powerful voices that drive blindly toward inclusion; and they recall events that some may find uncomfortable or objectionable but that are central to understanding the GLBTQ past. When those voices go unheard or unrecognized, the campy queer potential to raise a ruckus and act out in disruptive ways vibrantly restores the contestation essential to a strong public memory. By keeping these more strategic forms of memory honest, tactical memories provide an invaluable service to the entire GLBTQ community.

A final dimension of the future of queer public memory is that strategic remembering must be done *better*. This dissertation, along with the work of several scholars and critics of the GLBTQ past, has made explicit a number of challenges that have emerged as a result of how queer public memory practice has been conducted in recent years. These challenges include issues regarding diversity, equity, homonormativity, heteronormativity, strategic forgetting, static notions of identity, among others. These are serious flaws within queer public memory discourse that should justifiably be identified. However, in my experience, many critics are too quick to condemn certain practices as problematic and thus ill advised without offering prospects for improving those problems. While I have spent most of my time in this dissertation highlighting the valuable ways strategic memory rhetorics can promote social change, I have also pointed to issues that raise concerns. At the same time, I have sought to introduce ideas that may address these concerns as well. I would like to reiterate and expand upon those suggestions in imagining the future of queer public memory.

There are a number of steps that can be taken to make strategic queer memory better. First, in line with Bravmann's characterization of the "queer cultural studies of history," GLBTQ scholars and activists need to be critically aware that our own tellings of pasts are often as contingent and as flawed as the heterosexual histories they react against.⁶⁹³ As I have detailed earlier in this conclusion, showing greater awareness of the representational deficiencies within the GLBTQ past and making an effort to include diverse others essential to our communities may greatly enhance the value of these projects, both for our own community and wider culture alike. Such awareness can contribute to doing queer public memory better in many ways, but may be most transformational if Bravmann's methods are altered from a cultural studies approach to criticism to a self-reflexive practice. Clearly, if GLBTQ rhetors build this reflexivity into the process *prior* to designing commemorative sites and monuments, honoring GLBTQ heroes and heroines, and making other representational choice about the GLBTQ past, they may make a great deal of difference in preventing or at least mitigating the more troublesome erasures endemic to queer memory practice so far. The strategic queer memories that result from a more self-reflexive process will be better positioned to unify the community for collective action and challenge other strategic pasts at the center of dominant culture.

Second, queer memory makers may do better by embracing diverse forms of memory more specifically. As has been noted several times in this dissertation, while there are many similarities between history and memory, they are two distinctly different phenomena: memory representing our lived, everyday experiences in the world and history as a collective means of managing our accelerating loss of memory.⁶⁹⁴ Whether due to memory's loss and/or (as the textbook chapter demonstrates) history's powerful ideological value, history has often

⁶⁹³ Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past*, x.

⁶⁹⁴ Nora, "Between History and Memory," 8.

been the default means of understanding the past, including for many GLBTQ rhetors. Without a doubt, the GLBTQ history done by thoughtful scholars and made publicly accessible in places like the GLBT Historical Society has been highly beneficial to the community. However, as discussed in the introduction, sometimes by too rigidly embracing history, scholars, activists, and everyday people miss the opportunities to highlight memories that have distinctly different and important views on the past to offer. For instance, consider how our understanding of the GLBTQ past changes if we learned about the Stonewall Riots from archived news coverage (history) rather than a preserved oral history interview with one its participants (memory)? What do we lose in our understanding and appreciation of Alexander Wood if we only examine his entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* or his documents in official archives? Instead, how much more might we gain by visiting his statue, “rubbing the bum” in the presence of others, and watching his forms be played with in a communal emergence of meaning? How do we come to see the past differently with a visit to a radically different kind of archive like the Leather Archives in Chicago or the Lesbian Herstory Archives in New York rather than a more traditional museum exhibit like *Becoming Visible* at the New York Public Library? History can be an important and essential basis by which we judge our actions and ourselves; but it can also be a tool used to shape our perception of the past while hiding its own ideological values. Similarly, reliance upon memory *exclusively* opens the door to the natural frailties of human and collective memory and even (at times) the rigor of detailed analyses and debate. However, by bringing them together, by augmenting our history with a turn toward memory and its rich resources — film, pulp, ephemera, scandal, gossip, posters, performance, among others — we are able, in the very best moments, to bring our histories to life and fully invest them with rhetorical zeal. Perhaps more importantly, when needed most, memories give us recourse to

challenge and disrupt the hegemony inscribed by those who practice history thoughtlessly or with open or veiled malice. In either case, by representing the GLBTQ past as memory rather than history alone, greater degrees of opportunity for rhetorical action are likely to present themselves.

Another means of improving the strategic turn within queer public memory specific to its more monumental forms is to consider less traditional forms of monumentality. Despite the durability with which monuments provide queer public memory, an interdisciplinary array of scholars and artists have noted that monuments' static forms can be problematic. For instance, James E. Young has shown that rather than preserve memory, some monuments fail because they "seal memory off from awareness altogether." In doing so, monuments become not insurance that the community will remember, but rather an authorization that gives viewers permission to forget.⁶⁹⁵ Similarly, historian Lewis Mumford argued decades ago that the excessive use of monuments, memorials, and museums in certain commemorative zones could overwhelm their intended meaning, leaving those meant to be remembered *unremembered* and those living and working among these monuments constrained in the public square.⁶⁹⁶ In addition, architectural scholar Kirk Savage argues that in particularly important representative spaces — like the National Mall in Washington, D.C. — the perpetual addition of new monuments to represent an ever-growing list of subcultures, ethnicities, and identities may be counterproductive and

⁶⁹⁵ Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 28.

⁶⁹⁶ Lewis Mumford, "The Death of the Monument" in *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art*, J.L. Martin, Ben Nicholson, and N. Gabo, eds. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 263-67.

unsustainable.⁶⁹⁷ Given these concerns, the expansion of queer monumentality (as it is currently practiced) may be a rhetorical strategy with diminishing returns.

However, rather than abandon the monument altogether, GLBTQ memory makers may do their work better by taking up more innovative efforts to use materiality to their advantage. For example, GLBTQ monument makers might adopt material forms that provide a greater degree of fluidity in representation. Similarly, designers and community leaders might embrace the “countermonument movement” which seeks to disrupt monuments’ eternal quality. Rather than rely entirely on a monument’s materiality, countermonuments use materiality to begin a conversation by encouraging audiences to participate in the memorial act, often by making the monument’s materiality fleeting. In doing so, as Young suggests, countermonuments function to “return the burden of memory to those who come looking for it.”⁶⁹⁸ Specifically to address Savage’s concerns, rather than create new monuments, GLBTQ rhetors may seek out GLBTQ representation within already existent commemorative sites. For instance, during the 1980s and 90s, GLBTQ representatives in Germany campaigned for concentration camp sites to erect memorials to the GLBTQ victims of Nazi persecution. While several Holocaust memorials around the world similarly recognize the Holocaust’s GLBTQ victims (for instance, the *New England Holocaust Memorial* in Boston and the *Tiergarten* in Berlin), conducting a similar campaign at these sites or other forms of commemorative sites may greatly expand the recognition of the GLBTQ past without diminishing limited memorial resources. Clearly, as GLBT advocates’ experiences with textbooks reform illustrate, efforts to include GLBT people into already existent strategic rhetorics can prove highly problematic. Nonetheless, if done

⁶⁹⁷ Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California, 2009), 310-13.

⁶⁹⁸ Young, “Memory and Counter-Memory,” 9.

cautiously, reflexively, and selectively, such a strategy may expand GLBTQ memories while ameliorating some of monumentality's concerns.

A final way of doing strategic memory better is recognizing that the strategic turn is *not* the point of arrival, but only a further step in leveraging the GLBTQ past for rhetorical purposes. As we more fully enter a postmodern state of politics, rife with complex and intersecting forces of power that have radically reengineered their methods of normalizing and disciplining queer people and cultures, the future of the queer past will require constant vigilance in order to continue both to exist and resist. Just as tactical memories had their limitations, strategies do as well. The coming years will demonstrate heteronormativity's efforts to compromise strategic memories and whether or not they will be successful. Yet, working in combination, the strategic and tactical use of the past can be an effective series of rhetorical moves for continuing to claim greater queer empowerment.

While these suggestions may seem difficult to implement at a time when the strategic turn has only just begun, efforts to refine strategic queer public memory practices are already underway. One short example should suffice. A little more than a year ago, in October 2009, a new queer monument was erected to Natalie Barney, a lesbian born in 1879. Barney was an heiress, philanthropist, and writer who published her first book of poems, *Quelques Portraits-Sonnets de Femmes*, in 1900. The poems consisted largely of insights on the lesbian experience, a theme she returned to throughout her life, in addition to political writings in support of feminism, paganism, and pacifism. Though Barney lived most of her life as an expatriate in Paris (where open homosexuality was to some degree tolerated), she was born and raised in Dayton,

Ohio, where a large state historical marker bearing her name, life, and sexuality was placed in Cooper Park outside of the Dayton Metro Library.⁶⁹⁹

In many ways, this strategic memory is similar to the monumental strategic rhetorics we have seen elsewhere in this project: the monument is a material marker, endorsed by public authority, and difficult to ignore. It has also faced attacks and attempts to destroy it as other GLBTQ monuments have.⁷⁰⁰ However, this monument is an exciting example of a better strategic practice for several reasons. Barney was a lesbian, and her monument is one of the first in the world to inscribe the word “lesbian” explicitly on its plaque. In addition, Barney was a self-described lesbian, avoiding any issue of false reclamation or transient identity. Also, what Barney is remembered for is important. As an activist and author, Barney is remembered for her contributions to GLBTQ life and heterosexual life. She is no queer masquerading as a heterosexual, but rather a queer radical in her age who inspired and taught others within her literary *salons*. Perhaps most telling of all is where this monument is located: Dayton, Ohio. Unlike almost all the memories in this project that emanate from the liberal coasts, gay meccas, or that replicate rural queer voices through the urban centers of New York or California, Barney is recognized in a small city in the middle of Rust Belt America. Her memory disrupts the biases of space and beliefs that might mitigate the rhetorical work of earlier projects, instead being remembered in public before an audience perhaps less accustomed to such interventions and hopefully more affected by them. Though still not the “perfect” GLBTQ strategic memory, Barney’s marker is a refined vision of how GLBTQ rhetorics and rememberers in the future can

⁶⁹⁹ Joanne Huist Smith, “Dayton May Honor Famous Lesbian Author with Memorial,” *Dayton Daily News*, August 19, 2009, <http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/dayton-news/dayton-may-honor-famous-lesbian-author-with-memorial-257064.html> (accessed March 24, 2011).

⁷⁰⁰ Marchae Grair, “Historic Ohio LGBT Marker Destroyed,” *Advocate*, July 13, 2010, http://www.advocate.com/News/Daily_News/2010/07/13/Ohio_LGBT_Historic_Marker_Destroyed/ (accessed March 24, 2011).

do better. Encouragingly, as I write, more projects to reclaim and recast the queer past with strategic intent and durable effect begin every day. It is in these projects that we look for a better practice of strategic queer memories to emerge, and it is these projects that we must continue to watch — ever vigilant of the prospects and pitfalls of remembering and forgetting the GLBTQ past with rhetorical intent.

6.5 THE FUTURE OF THIS PROJECT

Though this dissertation has argued the value of strategic queer public memories, described how strategic practice might be improved, and contributed important insights to interdisciplinary discussions about memory, sexuality, and rhetoric, this project is not the final word on these subjects. More scholarship is required: some to be combined into future expansions of this dissertation, others to be circulated in distinctly different spheres of argument, and still others to be pursued by future scholars.

As I develop and expand this work into a larger book project, I hope to add to this dissertation in order to expand its scope and better understand additional dimensions of the strategic turn in queer public memory not feasible in these chapters. Key to this expansion will be the addition of several case studies that will provide both new texts for rhetorical analyses and new questions for consideration. At this juncture, several such case studies appear likely.

One area of queer public memory scholarship in need of further development is the relationship between gay, lesbian, and queer memory and transgender identity. To study this

relationship, I would like to examine the film *Paris Is Burning*.⁷⁰¹ Though much has been written about the film in critical and popular circles, none of this scholarship has addressed the role of memory in *Paris Is Burning*. This is interesting because not only does the film understand itself (and the “queens” it highlights) through a particular memory rhetoric, but it also functions as what Foucault calls a “popular memory” in which heterosexual audiences come to recognize (or not recognize) a transgender past. By analyzing both the internal and external memory discourses of the film, I hope to highlight how each discourse serves a distinct set of rhetors with important consequences for how transgender persons are imagined in a public GLBTQ past and present.

Another important issue worth further investigation is the relative absence of lesbian representation within the strategic turn and queer public memory generally. While this dissertation has taken efforts to include some discussion of women within the chapters on textbooks and by highlighting Cronin’s *Memorial to a Marriage*, most of the case studies in this project feature (white) gay men. However, I would suggest this is not simply a bias on the part of the author. Rather, I suspect there are gendered dynamics endemic to the practice of monument, commemoration, history, and memory generally that have for centuries minimized the role of women in retelling the past and that have been replicated within contemporary patriarchal queer public memory practice. As such, the GLBTQ community, in seeking to “repeat with a difference” strategic memory forms may have also repeated patriarchal assumptions and practices. By citing previous work on the limitations of female representation in commemorative forms, surveying the space for women within contemporary GLBTQ memory sites, and looking to other prominent zones of lesbian memory (like the Lesbian Herstory Archive) for insight, I hope to critique these practices and argue for a more equitable strategic turn.

⁷⁰¹ *Paris Is Burning*, DVD, director. Jennie Livingston. (Miramax, 1990)

Drawing greater attention to the relationship between history and memory, a further chapter could examine the rhetoric of GLBTQ historians in their *amicus brief* to the U.S. Supreme Court before the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision. Despite humble expressions from the historians themselves, a number of contemporary legal and political scholars have cited this brief as a key piece of evidence in persuading the Court to rescind *Bowers v. Hardwick* and end the use of anti-sodomy statutes as a bludgeon wielded against GLBTQ people. Completing a thorough rhetorical read of the document, I would question how the historians present history, whether they appropriately distinguish between history and memory, and how the addition of memory as an explicit term in their brief may have helped or harmed the case for GLBTQ equality.

A final prospective chapter to this dissertation might examine the much-discussed social networking rhetoric, the “It Gets Better” Project. Started in the Summer of 2010 by gay author and activist Dan Savage, the project features thousands of GLBTQ individual and allies from all walks of life in personal videos to GLBTQ youth sharing their own personal memories and experiences of how gay life “gets better.” The goal of the project is to create “a place where young people who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans can see how love and happiness can be a reality in their future.”⁷⁰² As a collection of private memories deployed in the public sphere, the project is a public memory strategy — an archive of queer public memory — with wide-ranging, rhetorical effects. Reading these collective, public memories as strategic texts in the highly ephemeral space of the internet, I hope to understand the utility of the strategic turn within an increasingly digital world.

⁷⁰² It Gets Better Project, “What Is The It Gets Better Project?” 2010, <http://www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/about-it-gets-better-project/> (accessed March 30, 2011).

In addition to adding content to this dissertation for future academic publication, I also believe that this project can have useful rhetorical effects if made available beyond the technical sphere of academia. Specifically, I believe circulating certain aspects of this work to the more popular spheres of culture and argumentation may contribute to a greater understanding of the GLBTQ past, greater attention to these commemorative and mnemonic acts, and greater reflection in how future acts of queer public memory might be carried out.⁷⁰³ Formatting this project in ways that appeal to broader audiences is an important, personal aspect of this project. Though I have spent the last several years thinking and writing about queer public memory for academic audiences, my search for rhetorically potent strategies useful for creating social, cultural, and political change derives from my earlier experiences in politics and activism. In those experiences, I found rhetoric to be a compelling tool that could produce real world consequences. Indeed, rhetoric's practical qualities have always been its appeal to me. I am a firm believer that rhetorical scholarship always has the potential for producing consequential effect(s) in the world and, that to remain relevant amidst this evolving desire for public engagement, it becomes incumbent for scholars to more expressly tackle how they and their work might be better interfaced with public change. Thus, I believe circulating my academic project to wider audiences beyond the academy is an important imperative. By doing so, I hope to take on some role relating to a public intellectual, particularly what Foucault has described as a "specific intellectual." According to Foucault, a specific intellectual differs (and is, in fact, more effective in modern society) from a traditional public intellectual by doing "work within specific sectors, at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them" in

⁷⁰³ On the transition between technical and public spheres of argument, see G. Thomas Goodnight, "The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument: A Speculative Inquiry into the Art of Public Deliberation," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 18 (1982): 214-27.

order that they might also “operate and struggle at the general level of that regime of truth which is so essential to the structure and functioning of our society.”⁷⁰⁴ Doing this work as a specific intellectual reflects a prominent trend within rhetorical scholarship over several decades, what John Ackerman and David Coogan have called the “public work of rhetoric.”⁷⁰⁵

While determining how to proceed in circulating this work as a specific intellectual requires knowing more explicitly the “precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them,” I have in mind an undertaking that is already underway: an evolving blog I have named the *Queer Monument Project* (<http://www.queermonumentproject.wordpress.com>). The initial goal of this project is simple: to make available, in an easily accessible and online format, information and images documenting the various GLBTQ commemorative sites throughout the world for a wider audience. The goals of such a project include the dissemination of images and information about queer public memory projects, producing a better understanding of the GLBTQ past, raising awareness about these commemorative zones and acts, and providing insights that might lead to a more reflexive strategic memory practice. However, perhaps most of all, it is my hope that this site will also provide the groundwork for the reproduction of these acts of queer public memory by others, further enhancing the rhetorical effects of queer public memory. Certainly, authoring a single blog does not me a politically engaged scholar. However, it represents a down payment on future efforts to impact more fully the way wider publics discuss and imagine the GLBTQ past.

As I continue my work on queer public memory on these two fronts, it is my sincere hope that this dissertation is not a definitive end of scholarship in this area. This seems highly unlikely

⁷⁰⁴ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 126, 132.

⁷⁰⁵ John M. Ackerman and David J. Coogan, *The Public Work of Rhetoric: Citizen-Scholars and Civic Engagement* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010).

considering at least two new book projects on the topic will be released by major university presses in the near future.⁷⁰⁶ My own dissertation and these other monographs are part of a wider group of scholars and colleagues interested in the relationships between GLBTQ people and public memory. In addition, a growing cohort of graduate students and new Assistant Professors has taken up queer memory projects similar to my own in significant ways.⁷⁰⁷ In that light, I hope that this project contributes to productive future work on the rhetorical dimensions of the GLBTQ past by others.

6.6 A MONUMENTAL MEMORY

At the close of this dissertation, my own queer memory continually draws me back to a particular moment in my research on the Alexander Wood statue. I had studied the Wood statue from afar for many months, tracing its online and mediated discourse, looking through visitors' photographs online, and preparing to visiting Toronto myself to experience the monument as a material rhetoric. My trip to Toronto soon arrived and after quickly dropping my bags in my sparse room, I proceeded a few blocks away to see the statue for the first time. It was a powerful moment, not just because I had waited so long to see it, but because it was the first time I had ever witnessed a public monument explicitly marking someone as gay *in stone*. The

⁷⁰⁶ See Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed, *If Memory Serves: Remembering (and) Sexual Subculture* (forthcoming). Another monograph from Charles E. Morris, III should also be forthcoming shortly.

⁷⁰⁷ Some of these scholars include Ben Krueger (University of Maryland), Alyssa Samek (University of Maryland), Jon Hoffman (University of Minnesota), K.J. Rawson (University of Kentucky), Jean Bessette (University of Pittsburgh), among others.

experience was gratifying and reassuring — it confirmed for me that somewhere in the long struggle for GLBTQ rights, some progress was made.

I awoke the next day in good spirits and decided to begin background research for my essay with a visit to a local archive that held Wood's papers. Walking into the massive city library, I was not sure what to expect. I had read extensively about the erasure of GLBTQ people from history but this was my first archival experience. I knew that Wood's letterbooks were held there, so there must be something, but what? Submitting the call slip to the archivist, my nervousness deepened. What if there was nothing there? Had this entire trip been in vain? You can imagine my exhilaration when the archivist returned with several, good-sized boxes. After gingerly putting on my white gloves, I opened the lid of the first box and inside were a number of folders, full of letters and notes spanning much of Wood's life. Wood was a complicated man, but anyone who studies his archive quickly learns that he was a rather meticulous record keeper. His letters were almost all dated and he kept them for nearly every year of his life. I was thrilled! I didn't expect a rainbow flag or a love letter to another man to be among the contents, but still I felt sure there would be something of value here. As my fingers walked through the files, 1806...1807...1808... I had one particular file in mind: 1810, the year of Wood's infamous scandal, persecution, and departure from Canada. However, after 1809, my fingers paused. Where an 1810 folder should have been, there was literally a gap in the records.

Where that space came from, I will never know for sure. It is possible that Wood, mortified by his scandal or fearing his letters might be used against him, did not keep any records for that year or simply destroyed them. It could have been that Wood's survivors (though he had few and they were quite distant) may have excised the records, fearing his embarrassment might become their own. It is plausible that the collectors who acquired, split up, and sold Wood's

letters over the decades may have made careful choices, making sure that just a few of those records were put away in a drawer, away from troublemaking or prying eyes. It is even possible that some owner, perhaps a prominent Toronto citizen himself, knowing that Wood's name was well-known in the history of the city actively removed the 1810 folder, preventing the scandal from tainting the city again. In the end, it does not matter. The hole in the records — a literal gap between folders — may have resulted from one, none, or a combination of these factors. However, the motives behind the gap's existence matters little because all of these reasons derive from a common root: a matrix of heteronormativity that for centuries has insisted that GLBTQ people should be hated, accosted, silenced, ignored, papered-over, and erased, even if GLBTQ people themselves had to do the erasing. Until that root cause is removed, until GLBTQ people are recognized for the valuable, loving, creative, thoughtful, and intelligent people they are and always have been, the history of silence, misrepresentation, and erasure will continue. And until that time, it is critical that GLBTQ people and their allies make a space in the past for themselves and their forbearers; a space that can endure this heteronormative impulse for as long as possible.

Later that evening, after my encounter in the archives, I returned to the gaybourhood. It was Friday night and the clubs blared the most recent dance hit, the aroma of food and wine lingered in the air, and same-sex couples walked down the street hand in hand, not thinking twice about it. The street was loud, queer voices shouted out from every direction, calling for friends, laughing, and making plans for the rest of the night. The moon was bright, eerily so, reflecting happy faces on every street corner. As I rounded the corner to stroll by the Wood statue for the second time, I was caught off guard by an unexpected image. The statue was there, of course, as was the regular, large group of hefty gay men (“bears”) sitting on benches and street corners, cruising each other around the Wood statue. However, directly in front the statue, arm in arm and

hand in hand, stood two women smiling at a camera. They each wore white and each woman held a bouquet of flowers in her hand. Clearly the women had just been married and they wanted a photo with the statue. I paused for a moment to consider the sight — the regular clamor of everyday gay life, a community of bears, the celebration of a special union for two young lesbians, and towering above, the statue of Alexander Wood in the moonlight. Fifty years ago, that image would have been impossible. But today, the image persists in my memory in ways that can never be forgotten.

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