The Demands of Character:

Performances of Authenticity and Virtue

in Marginalized Group Street Protests 1976-2000

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ABSTRACT

The Demands of Character: Performances of Authenticity and Virtue in Marginalized Group Street Protests 1976-2000

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This dissertation investigates the means of persuasion available to marginalized identity groups who protest against the state. "Performances of authenticity and virtue" provide one theoretical framework to explain how a group's very identity as "marginalized other" can be leveraged rhetorically for claim-making against the state and as a way of creating social/political change. Protest groups frequently harness the power of radical street performance. Because of the theatricality of the protest, a focus on "character" rather than "identity" seems more appropriate. An audience's judgment of protestor character as "authentic" or "virtuous" requires a horizon against which such evaluation can occur. The street performances therefore require recognizable character "types," characters inherited from various cultural narratives, and such characters make their own demands on the protestors. Aristotle's treatment of character as rhetorical ethos (*Rhetoric*), as dramatis persona (*Poetics*), and as one's virtuous or vicious nature (*Nichomachean Ethics*) serves as a basic division, structurally, in this thesis. Stanislavski's approach to theatrical performance offers insights into how the inhabiting of character and meeting the demands of a script function for protests. His premises that actors need to be in belief and fully committed to their performances are vital to

successful performances of authenticity. Erving Goffman, in sociology, relies on these same premises. Special emphasis is placed on the tactics used by protestors–these are their rhetorical *pisteis*, the appeals that actually persuade the audience. These tactics are intimately tied to the identities and specific situations of the protestors themselves. There is a clear connection between *ethos* and *logos*. I apply Burke's concept of "impious rhetoric" here. The sense of "what goes with what" is violated according to the rules of the public sphere, but justified in another sense by the collective character of the protesting group.

This dissertation represents an intersection among three academic areas: rhetoric, theatre and sociology. Concepts from one discipline help solve theoretical problems and fill in *lacunae* existing in the other disciplines.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

I. A. — A mother before Solomon (a brief Biblical exegesis)

In *Kings I*. 3 there is the well-known story of two women—prostitutes, or "harlots" as the King James Version calls them—who come before King Solomon, each claiming that the same week-old infant is her own. Unable to get at the truth from the women's conflicting statements, Solomon declares that the child should be cut in half so that each woman gets an equal share. According to the Bible, "the woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, 'Please, my Lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!' But the other said, 'Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!'" (*Harper Collins RSV* 518). From their responses to his ruling the king is able to determine the real mother, and he rewards her the child. This Biblical tale is typically meant to illustrate how wise King Solomon was.

Let me argue, however, that, through an alternate reading of the story, the tale of the two women before Solomon illustrates how "a performance of authenticity and virtue" is able to subvert a policy declared by the state, and how a claim of specific and recognizable identity—a labeled "character" or "role"—must necessarily enter into any effective form of political claim-making, at least for those whose claimed identities are what we might term "marginalized" (though Iris Marion Young's use of the labels "powerless" and "culturally dominated" might be more appropriate for such groups [*Justice* 56-60]).

Let us suppose that Solomon was not a wise king but a small-minded bureaucrat or a

cruel tyrant. Let us suppose that Solomon's edict to cut the baby in half was not a performance meant as a test but was, in fact, the state's vision of true justice. The first woman's plea then becomes an act of protest: do not carry out this unjust ruling. Her protest becomes effective in two ways. First, it delays the state's action (the sword remains in the air, not coming down to cut the baby in half). Second, her actions identify her as the true mother in the eyes of any savvy audience member. Her protest is a "performance of authenticity" that allows the audience to recognize the woman as the mother of the child. The first woman's actions arise naturally—authentically—out of her character as "mother" (the text notes that she is "deeply moved"). Instinctually, she acts to save the life of her baby. Her specific action has rhetorical weight, though, only when read against the horizon of her given identity as mother in that specific situation. Savvy audience members (Solomon yes, but hopefully others who may have been witness) recognize the woman as the true mother. If we suppose the king to be blind, stupid or cruel (rather than insightful, wise and kind as we believe Solomon to be), then it is the recognition of the truth by these witnesses that might spell the difference between the mother's success and failure in saving the life of her child.

Moreover, and just as important as being perceived as an authentic mother, the woman is perceived as a "good" mother. Audience members are able to fill in the unstated virtue: a mother's willingness to sacrifice her own happiness for the sake of her child. Given her various ascribed identities as woman, as mother, as poor, as prostitute, her options for virtuous action are really quite proscribed. She cannot physically challenge the king's men (an older brother character might do this to fulfill the expectation of virtuous action according to his gender); she cannot offer the king a bribe that would hold value for him and fulfill the expectation of her self-sacrifice (an innocent older sister character might willingly offer her own body for the king's pleasure, for example). In a different story, the mother might have presented a matching

birthmark to the baby's and proven her relationship in this way then, afterward, taken money from the king to give the child to the other woman. Such action would not invalidate her "authenticity" (she *is* the mother), but the action would negate her "virtue."

Also on display in the Biblical story is the familiar virtue of courage. We should not dismiss the woman's real fear in this situation; after all, she does not recognize "the story" she's in, nor its (now) well-known ending. Let us imagine that it is Caligula in the role of the king, and the child's fate—as well as the mother's—is anything but secure. Her "No" ("Don't kill him!") is an act of disobedience, an act of defiance against the state. The "No" proclaims to all who can hear that "this is wrong" and "the state is acting unjustly." There are potential consequences for such defiance, and such an act takes courage, a virtue rendered all the more admirable when in the service of such a profoundly important institution as justice. In the Biblical story, the mother's actions are seen as virtuous, and so she is *deserving* (morally) of her goal, of a "happy ending" to her story. Thus, in addition to serving as a "performance of authenticity," the woman's protest serves as a "performance of virtue," and both types of performances contribute to the rhetorical success of the woman's protest.

Her path to success follows several "steps" here, though the steps are not neatly sequential (indeed they overlap and function as mutually dependent): 1. The protestor claims a category of identity and her choices/actions reinforce this identity; 2. Her identity and the situation legitimize the protestor's dissenting and "impious" actions; 3. An evaluation of the character, her action, and her motivation vis-à-vis the society's script of virtues appropriate to that character deem the protestor as "morally worthy" and, thus, "deserving."

The steps suggested above will likely raise some of the concerns below. First, aren't

"categories of identity" problematic? Is this not the basis for the frequently maligned "identity politics?" A consistent objection to identity politics refers to its implicit or explicit subscription to "essentialism." To claim that "all mothers" are [blank] is to claim something "essential" about "mother-ness." Can identity be considered an absolute, a given, an objectively "true" element? Arguments of this sort—critiques of the essentialist underpinnings of identity politics—are arguments of pure logic, and pure logic exists abstractly, untethered to any concrete worldly reality that is always contingent. Identity, as it exists in our world (and, as I hope to show, as it is deployed by protesting groups), is not meaningful, not readable, outside of a specific cultural and historical context. It must be embedded. For this reason, although I will frequently work with the idea of identity groups and contend with the notion of identity politics, I will suggest a slightly different and preferred focus: "character." As a term, character allows identity to be embedded into real time, real place, real action.

James Jasinski notes how Aristotelian *phronesis*, or "practical wisdom," differs from Platonic *sophia*, typically translated as "wisdom." *Phronesis* is not concerned with abstract knowledge but with "the ultimate particular fact." As such, it is more closely related to a concept such as insight, or perceptiveness, dealing as it does in matters that are "variable, indeterminate or contingent" (463). King Solomon is wise, not logical. He relies on insight, not proof. He possesses what Aristotle refers to as "intuitive reason" and the ability to grasp "first principles," principles that precede any scientific knowledge. Wisdom is thus, at least partially, intuition, and so it functions, at least in part, "below" the level of logical discourse. We may (and I will, though not without qualification) refer to this level as "authentic." This authentic realm, as I hope to show, may be leveraged for rhetorical advantage.

Another concern might arise over connecting "virtue" to "identity" or "character" at all. Aren't certain actions objectively "right?"—as the Kantian tradition would have it? Or isn't it the outcome of the situation that dictates the "goodness" of the action taken—as Mill and the utilitarian tradition would have it? For protest groups, the evidence strongly suggests otherwise. Aristotle tells us, "We believe good men more fully and more readily than others" (*Rhetoric* 25). Aristotle also tells us that certain personal qualities in the rhetor induce us to believe a thing apart from any proof of that thing: namely good sense, good moral character and good will (91). The effective rhetor, thus, needs to be sensible, upright and well-disposed to his or her audience. Note that middle quality: good moral character, moral uprightness, virtue. How do we understand moral virtues except against the horizon of specific character? Solemnity may be a virtue for the undertaker but not for the cheerleader. Reasoned detachment may be a virtue for the judge but not for the man whose wife has just been raped.[1]

In his *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle notes that moral virtue comes about as a result of "habit" (23). Virtue, then, derives from life experience, which is, in turn, determined largely by one's specific social category. English nobility will likely possess the "virtuous habit" of good table manners; inner city youths will likely possess the "virtuous habit" of street smarts. "Goodness" is a function of socially correct behavior and so must be viewed through the lens of identity/character. (MacIntyre tells us that this is a Homeric construct, specific to "heroic societies" [121-30], though I will argue that this legacy remains with us today.) As with identity, the issue of virtue must be framed as a particular contingent case taking into account the specifics of character, situation and (as I will suggest later on) the cultural or national narrative(s) specific to a society.

The story of the woman before Solomon is not a story of identity politics as they are conventionally defined. There is no essentialist truth at stake here—no assertion that all women are objectively *x*. Solomon tells his court, "This one says my son is alive and your son is dead while that one says no! Your son is dead and mine is alive." There are no witnesses, no DNA tests to run, no facts to be weighed objectively. Simply put, this is the court of rhetoric. The truth cannot be ascertained, and only opinion (a wise opinion, hopefully) may be rendered. It is solely the women's actions before the king that persuade him. Woman number two defers to the king's ruling: Yes, cut the baby in half. The first woman protests and willingly relinquishes her claim to the child. Yet protest is the "correct" and virtuous action in this case. The first woman's actions do not arise out of simple "identity" but from a complex network of external forces and personal agency, with moral virtue playing a key role in the process; I choose to label this complex network "the demands of character," and the resulting actions "performances of authenticity and virtue."

I.B — Founding questions for the study: an interdisciplinary approach

What happens, though, if the King will not even entertain an audience with the protesting mother? What if the state cannot or will not hear her voice? What is her recourse? Let us transition to "real" mothers, circa 1976. The background is the Argentine "Dirty War," which began with a military coup that swept Isabel Perón from power on March 24, 1976. The leaders of the Argentine army, navy and air force ousted Perón and suspended all political parties in the country. The military junta immediately instituted a series of laws collectively known as the Process for National Reorganization, or the "Proceso." As part of the Proceso, the

new government began rounding up all of the radical elements in the country and, soon thereafter, individuals merely suspected of radical sympathies. The latter were kidnapped and never charged with any crimes; they were simply "disappeared." The junta viewed "Argentina as an enemy territory whose population was by definition, actively, potentially, or unwittingly subversive. Most of the desparecidos [the "disappeared"] were young people between the ages of twenty and thirty" (Navarro 245). The government officially denied any knowledge of such disappearances.

When Evel Aztarbe de Petrini's son Sergio was disappeared, she immediately rushed to the parish of San Martin, where her son taught Sunday school, and asked to see the bishop. The bishop refused, "and thus began [Aztarbe de Petrini's] painful introduction to a hierarchy that would turn away from the Mothers while supporting the military" (Bouvard 53). After a year of state-sponsored terror and denials, several mothers in a situation similar to Aztarbe de Petrini, frustrated in their efforts to find any information about their children, decided to take their questions and complaints directly to the seat of power, the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires. Abandoned by the apparatuses of state and church, and thus cut off from any access to political power, the women banded together as a collective of mothers (eventually known as Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo) and took to the streets in protest. These women were actually acting from their "authentic" selves, their "mother-ness," though in a quite unexpected way—choosing to leave the home and engage in public protest.

In a 2009 lecture in Madrid, Judith Butler spoke about the idea of "precarious populations," groups who are at risk (of violence, of displacement) due to the lack of official recognition vis-à-vis their status as collective subjects. Butler stated: "In the end, the question

of how performativity links with precarity might be summed up in these more important questions: How does the unspeakable population speak and makes its claims? What kind of disruption is this within the field of power? And how can such populations lay claim to what they require?" ("Performativity" xiii). Though "precarious" populations differ from "marginalized" groups in various ways, namely in that the marginalized group is in fact recognized as such by the society at large, the challenges involved in making political claims for both types of groups remain the same, requiring a "disruption in the field of power," as Butler calls it. It is the very questions that Butler raises for "the unspeakable population" that I ask with respects to marginalized identity (or "character") groups—and the question that I intend to answer in this thesis.

For marginalized groups like Las Madres, does the choice of street protest represent their best option in confronting what they perceive as the state's acts of injustice? If so, why does such protest work and, more specifically, how does it work? Can a group's social and political marginalization itself be a resource for that same group's "security" (in contrast to Butler's "precarity")? Might a marginalized group's very lifestyle or *ethos* serve as a disruption within the field of hegemonic power? Appiah writes in the introduction to his *Ethics of Identity*, "identities make ethical claims because—and this is just a fact about the world we human beings have created—we make our lives *as* men and *as* women, *as* gay and *as* straight people . . . What claims, if any, can identity groups as such justly make upon the state?" (xiv). I am interested in not just "what claims" identity groups may make upon the state but *how* they make these claims and *why* making such claims in these ways may be an effective rhetorical strategy.

Aristotle states, "Rhetoric can be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case

the available means of persuasion" (*Rhetoric* 24). What means of persuasion *are* available to the marginalized group that cannot make "the system" hear them through official, institutional means? If one's very identity as "marginalized other" can be leveraged rhetorically for claim-making against the state as a way of creating social/political change, how exactly is this done? How do such groups "perform identity," and why might these performances of identity resonate for the rhetorical audience?

These questions represent an intersection among three academic areas: rhetoric, theatre and sociology. This thesis will explore the interdisciplinary tensions and convergences at work, using theoretical frameworks from one discipline to solve theoretical problems or fill in lacunae in the other disciplines. Because of the breadth of questions, I will draw, as well, from additional academic disciplines: communication theory, performance studies, political science, history, ethics and philosophy.

I.C. — Literature review

What has been "the conversation" or, more accurately, "the conversations" to date around these intersecting issues? How do I enter these conversations? Because my focus is interdisciplinary, I find myself participating in multiple, separate academic conversations, often separated clearly by discipline despite a common thematic/subject focus. I hope not only to extend various of these conversations, and perhaps to challenge a few assumptions within them, but also to weave together strands from various conversations across disciplines in order to shed new light on the subject at hand. Thematically, and for convenience's sake, I will divide the conversations into four distinct categories, each of which represents my attempt to forge

connections between separate disciplines and focus areas. These four areas are: 1) identity, collective identity and identity politics; 2) the *ethos-logos* connection and impious rhetoric; 3) authenticity and virtue; and 4) protest and performance. Because many of these conversations have been going on for a very long time (some for over two thousand years!), I will be succinct in this section, citing those trends in these conversations that I intend to pursue in this thesis. I will venture a more in-depth analysis of the various theoretical arguments in the appropriate chapters of the thesis.

1) Identity, collective identity and identity politics

The charge that "identity politics" necessarily implies essentialism in the conception of group identities has been recurrent among feminist, queer and African-American theorists. The suspicion around "essentialism" has made identity politics a notorious byword in academic circles (I will pursue the specifics of some of these arguments in Chapter 2). Some recent feminist, queer and African-American critics, however, have begun to re-embrace the idea of "a politics of difference." Diana Fuss (1989) in "Essentially Speaking," offers a wonderfully specific analysis of the problems that feminist and other critics associate with "essentialism." Fuss then examines an alternative "constructivist" viewpoint and notes the implications of this viewpoint for "identity politics." Susan Bickford (1997), in her article "Anti-Anti-Identity Politics," notes the necessity of at least some degree of essentialist thought, pointing out that, without a concept such as "woman," there can be no feminist stance at all. Iris Marion Young (1990, 1996, 2000) negotiates the political usefulness of collective identity by defining a "politics of difference" as relational and socially constructed. Young also posits that certain

communication strategies will aid marginalized groups in asserting their differences in the public sphere; these strategies include "greeting" and "narrative."

Among queer theorists, Mark Blasius (1992) suggests that "ethos" might be the best way to conceive of and leverage lesbian and gay male identity and that the act of "coming out," of publicly claiming an "essential" identity as "other," is the ultimate political act. Michael Warner (1999, 2002) emphasizes the embodiment of queer identity in contrast to the "disembodied," and thus "neutral," straight/white/male hegemony. Warner cautions against the pressure of "normification" and encourages queer people to embrace their "otherness."

Cornel West (1990) writes about the "black diaspora" and the danger of African-Americans completely assimilating into white culture. West stresses a need for balance between particularity and cultural collectivity. Bell hooks (1990) notes that African-Americans' embracing of their own marginality may have the potential to serve as a site of resistance, for the "production of counter-hegemonic discourse" ("Marginality" 341).

Judith Butler (1993, 1997) writes about identity (as a group label) as a tension between interpellation (building on Althusser's theory) and what she terms "performativity." It is this tension that allows for identity to be not only accepted but also challenged. Butler's work in some ways reiterates the theories of Erving Goffman. Goffman's seminal works in the field of sociology, *Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and *Stigma* (1963), begin with the premise that all people perform in ways to adhere to social expectations for their given group identity and that those who are of "stigmatized" identities face specific challenges. Similarly, Kwame Appiah (2005) writes that people define themselves—and by extension, others—through inherited social "scripts." Gloria Anzaldúa (1990) offers the concept of "face" as an

intentionally, even coercively, performed identity, specifically by Latina women.

A different strand of the identity conversation (particularly in the field of sociology) concerns collective identity formation as historically forged and narratively sustained. Ron Eyerman (2004) writes about cultural trauma as a source for collective identity formation. Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994) detail the multiple ways that collective identities in social movements may be intentionally framed and how such framing reinforces the group identity. Jocelyn Maclure (2003, 2004) examines Québécois identity and offers narrative as a key source for such group identity sustainability. Alberto Melucci (1994, 1995) conceives of collective identity as a complex process that society has constructed, and continues to construct, rather than as a given "essence." Melucci (1996) also connects the formation of collective identity to collective action taken in the name of that identity. Philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1992) contributes to this conversation by examining the connections and tensions between an individual's categorical identity and his/her "narrativized" identity.

Postcolonial theorists, most notably Said (1994) and Fanon (1967), inform the debate over identity politics. For both, the colonized need to assert themselves and their collective identities against the (white, Western) colonizers. Such assertion of identity in opposition to a dominant political identity may be applicable for all marginalized social groups. Gayatri Spivak's (1987) concept of "strategic essentialism" is particularly useful in its treatment of marginalized group identity as a heuristic for political empowerment.

2) The ethos-logos connection and impious rhetoric

The idea of a connection between a rhetor's *ethos* and his or her *logos* emerges as early

as the work of Aristotle, whose *Rhetoric* (circa 335 B.C.E.) remains a vital text in the field of rhetoric today. More recently, this connection has been explored by Erving Goffman (1959), who theorizes that we perform "ourselves" in everyday life, and by Maurice Natanson (1965), who writes of the "claims of immediacy," which may be seen as a revelation of "self" (or "ethos") in effective arguments ("logos").

Eugene Garver (1994, 2004) offers arguably the greatest insights into the connection between one's character and one's arguments. As a modern-day Aristotelian, Garver unpacks the implications of the *ethos-logos* connection and revitalizes Aristotelian thought around the connection between *ethos* and "civic friendship." Since social/political protest is necessarily a public/civic action, Garver's work allows for Aristotle's rhetorical frameworks to resonate when applied to complex contemporary settings.

A particular type of "logos" that seems to permeate marginalized group protest is "impious rhetoric," a concept formulated by Kenneth Burke (1969, 1984). Impious rhetoric is a rich yet under-appreciated subfield in rhetoric. Related as it is to Burke's "perspective by incongruity," impious linkages have the power to undo and redo public attitudes. Rosteck and Leff (1989) have written on the subject of impious rhetoric, tying it to "indecorous" texts that nonetheless are rhetorically effective. Maurice Charland (2001, 2005) has done the most to advance the investigation of impious rhetoric and its connection to civic argument.

3) Authenticity and virtue

The conversation around "authenticity" seems to be a uniquely 20th century and early 21st century phenomenon. Heidegger (1927), in his *Being and Time*, analyzes what it means to

live one's life with authenticity, which is the result of a complex awareness that seems to involve equal parts surrender to the "thrownness" of the world one finds oneself already in and active choice to act in ways that embrace one's uniqueness. Heidegger's commentaries are notoriously difficult and dense, and so Brian Braman's *Meaning and Authenticity* (2008) offers a particularly useful explication and extension of Heidegger's thoughts on authenticity. Jean Paul Sartre (1948), and later Fanon (1967), frame authenticity as a challenge for individuals who are members of marginalized groups (Jews for Sartre, Blacks for Fanon). The pressure to succumb to inauthenticity is huge, but both Sartre and Fanon note the potential consequences for such inauthentic living, intra-personally, socially and politically.

Lionel Trilling (1972) offers an excellent genealogy of authenticity as a cultural concept in his *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Trilling locates the current cachet that authenticity seems to have in western society in an inherited Romantic notion of authenticity as inventing oneself, as it were, *ex nihilo*. Charles Taylor (1991) takes particular issue with this Romantic viewpoint of authenticity, noting that, far from being an unbounded ego-centered concept, authenticity comes with a variety of constraints. Taylor's articulation of a "politics of recognition" (1992) ties in with his ideas about an ethical authenticity, since members of marginalized groups require recognition by dominant groups in a society in order to "be" themselves. For Taylor, any identity, authentic or otherwise, needs to be "negotiated" through "dialogue" with others who have the capacity to extend their "recognition" to that identity ("Politics" 34). Authenticity is thus, at least in part, socially shaped.

Sonia Kruks (2001), in her *Retrieving Experience: Subjectivity and Recognition in Feminist Politics*, further explores the tensions and correspondences between authenticity and

claimed identity, tying authentic identity as "other" to an "epistemology of provenance," the idea that marginalized group members are uniquely situated to speak about issues that affect their own lives, thus linking authenticity, identity politics and rhetorical credibility.

The study of virtue has a far longer history than the study of authenticity, with classical Greek and Biblical texts (in the West) devoted to examination of what it means to be of virtuous character and to live one's life virtuously. Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* presents virtue as a trait tied to a person's character, developed over time through "habit," but also informed by conscious choice. Skipping ahead about 2,300 years, Alisdair MacIntyre (1981) re-embraces the Aristotelian conception of virtue, arguing against conceptions of virtue that have come to permeate western thought in the intervening two millennia.

Despite the seemingly huge gulf between the concepts of virtue and authenticity, and the fact that the conversations about each rarely seem to intersect with the other, a few key ties bind the two concepts. Virtue and authenticity, at least for marginalized persons, both seem to require self-awareness (comprehending one's situation/position), conscious choice-making, and an element of courage.

Finally, Pierre Bourdieu's "habitus" (1980) informs the discussion about both authenticity and virtue, although Bourdieu explicitly addresses neither concept. The "habitus" functions under the level of consciousness and affects the way we perceive and categorize certain actions or people as, among other things, "authentic" or "virtuous." Anthony Giddens' "structuration theory" (1984) similarly notes that human social practices become "self-reproducing." Such practices are "not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors" (2). Giddens'

idea of social "routine" functions similarly to Bourdieu's "habitus," at least for my purposes here. Both theories support the view that authenticity and virtue are inherited, socially perpetuated and typically unexamined. Such a perspective is key to any practical examination of authenticity and virtue as they play out in real-world situations.

4) Protest and performance

The literature of theatre studies begins with Aristotle. His *Poetics* (circa 330 B.C.E.) analyzes the elements that comprise an effective theatrical production. He examines plot, theme, character and dialogue, along with other elements, and the results of this examination remain viable and vital today—a testament to the influence of the *Poetics* and the West's inheriting of the Aristotelian system of drama. The next important leap into "modern" performance occurred with Constantin Stanislavski, whose 1936 *An Actor Prepares* still functions as the basis for the contemporary approach to acting. Stanislavski's "Method," encouraging actors to engage in a far more natural approach to performance than at any time in previous history, was already widely current by the time of his groundbreaking text's publication. The posthumous publication of his *Building a Character* (1949) and *Creating a Role* (1961) completed Stanislavski's trilogy on the art of acting. All Western theatre theorists whose focus is on the performer are, in one way or another, responding to Stanislavski.

Antonin Artaud (1936) objects to the type of "peeping Tom-ism" that the Stanislavskian theatre seems to encourage. Instead, Artaud suggests a "theatre of cruelty," a performance that harnesses the tremendous potential that a live encounter can have to re-shape an audience's psyche. Jacques Derrida (1978) expands upon Artaud's theory in his essay about the "closure

of representation." Derrida celebrates the irrational, pre-linguistic encounter to which Artaud alludes, and dismisses the "re" in "re-presentation." As with Artaud, Derrida locates something special and powerful in the live encounter that is the medium of performance.

Richard Schechner (1985, 1988), considered the father of performance studies, brings an anthropological focus to the theatre, exploring cultural rituals as a force for transformation. His ideas about the liminal nature of performance provide a valuable framework for considering the work of the actor. Schechner (2001) has also explicated the theatre of Jerzy Grotowski as an alternative to Stanislavski's theatre. Grotowski, especially in his "paratheatrical" period (1969-1978), repeatedly arranged performances that attempted to create live encounters between actors and audiences that were authentic and "pure."

A perhaps rather odd inclusion in this "conversation" around theatre and performance is theologian Martin Buber (1937). His articulation of the I-Thou encounter, though, provides an excellent paradigm for examining live performance as authentic encounter. Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975) may be similarly included as a "performance theorist"; his ideas around performance as the bringing forth of an "essence," and of a communicative encounter resulting in a fusion of horizons, offer valuable new insights into the power of performance.

Theatre and performance studies bleeds into social movement studies in the work of Jan Cohen-Cruz (1998), whose focus on radical street performance brings together theatre artists and "layperson" protestors under the same heading. The common denominator is creative disruption, which is exactly what Sidney Tarrow (1998) and Charles Tilly (2008), both sociologists, examine among historical social movements, each of which must necessarily draw upon previously developed "repertoires of contention." Sociologists Jeffrey Alexander and Ron

Eyerman (2006) also tie together social movements and theatrical performance in their examination of what they term "social performance." In addition, Alexander and Eyerman's (2004) work with "cultural trauma" informs the sources of protest.

The academic approach to protest events among sociologists takes many interesting turns after World War II, and William Gamson's work reflects many of those changes. Turner and Killian (1957) present social protest as a pathology of sorts, a crowd suffering from an irrational frenzy. A shift to a rationalist approach, namely "resource mobilization" theory, takes place during the 1970s and 1980s, and Gamson (1975) offers his own view that social protestors are quite strategic in their actions. The psychological turn in the 1990s examines collective motivations for protestors, and Gamson's "Social Psychology of Collective Action" (1992) is a prime example of this approach. Most recently, protest studies seems to be allowing for an affective turn. Sociologist Deborah Gould (2009) frames the protest actions of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) as emotionally motivated and emotionally charged public performances.

Given all of these different conversations to date, which theorists will I be arguing "with" and which will I be arguing "against"? Well, everyone, and no one. I will be incorporating pieces from all of these scholars and thinkers—and others as well. Though I might refute certain fierce opponents of identity politics and writers who perpetuate a purely Romantic version of authenticity, even here, elements from these arguments continue to resonate in the popular imagination and so must be respected, acknowledged, and even incorporated into the overall theoretical framework that I am presenting. As an interdisciplinary

scholar, I am far more interested in making connections across and among the above conversations than challenging particular scholars and theories. As well, my desire in this thesis is to locate those aspects of my subject (group protest) that have been historically ignored or under-examined and to devote theoretical attention to these aspects. To do so, I will be drawing upon surprising sources that have heretofore been ignored by scholars working in (seemingly) different disciplines.

That said, there are several key theorists that I will be relying upon more heavily than others to advance my arguments, thinkers whose ideas/writings very much inform this thesis:

Aristotle: My initial interest in the connection between ethos and logos for protest groups naturally led me to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle offers various qualities for the "character" of the effective rhetor. The word "character" in the English language has many implications, and Aristotle treats all of them in one way or another. Aristotle's treatment of "character" as rhetorical *ethos* (*Rhetoric*), as *dramatis persona* (*Poetics*) and as one's virtuous or vicious nature (*Nichomachean Ethics*) serves me as a basic division, structurally, in this thesis. Tying together the idea of "character" from these three different fields (rhetoric, theatre and moral philosophy) forms the foundation of my theoretical approach.

Paul Ricoeur: Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another* (1992) and *Course of Recognition* (2005) have provided me with the most philosophically rigorous investigations of identity and recognition. I build upon and engage with Ricoeur's concepts throughout this thesis. Additionally, the "sequential" approach to the concept of recognition that Ricoeur offers in his *Course of Recognition* informs the chapter structure that I have chosen here.

Kenneth Burke: So many Burkean concepts have taken root in my mind and grown into the various branches of this thesis. "Impious rhetoric," "perspective by incongruity," "the dramatist pentad," "godterms," "the comic frame"—so many ideas—have all informed my theoretical framings of protest events. Perhaps more importantly, Burke's general pragmatic approach to theory, offering us "equipment for living" as we negotiate life in the "human barnyard," has inspired me to take a similarly pragmatic approach to protest events, focusing foremost on "agency", the "how" of the act.

I make note here of my seeming reliance on and alliance with the "dead white men" of academia. My building upon many "classic" texts in various fields (Aristotle in rhetoric, Goffman in sociology, Stanislavski in theatre, etc.) will frequently see my relentless use of "he" and "his" in citations. I apologize for these authors' (perhaps historically excused) gender biases, but will not edit for or "[sic]" for, as I have seen other contemporary scholars do, this biased pronoun use. I will certainly supplement the ideas drawn from these classic works with those from more contemporary theorists, including leading feminist scholars (Judith Butler, Iris Marion Young and Diana Fuss among others) and scholars from a variety of marginalized groups. However, I do find remarkable that these traditional, "old" ideas continue to have such intellectual resonance and have provided a vital theoretical framing for the contemporary and (given my own personal politics) progressive issues presented here in this thesis.

I. D. — What's new here? Where is the shift in scholarship?

Christa J. Olson's article "Performing Embodiable Topoi," in the August 2010 *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, provides me with an interesting springboard into my argument.

Olson examines the rhetoric of mestizo Ecuadorians from the 1880s through the 1940s. She argues that these groups made use of "embodiable topoi" and that this was "a major source of persuasive power as it aggregated features, behaviors, and histories commonly associated with indigenous bodies" (301). She notes how "the availability of the trope of indigenous misery" allowed the mestizo group (not authentically "indigenous") to appropriate elements of "victimage" for rhetorical effect (307). Such topoi could be assumed "by actors across the socioethnic spectrum" (301); thus, the need for one to be "authentically" indigenous was unnecessary.

This concept of "embodiable topoi" is one that I will shift to "embodied topoi" or, even better, "performed topoi." The marginalized groups I examine are not appropriating the images of others but are, rather, "embodying themselves"; this can be framed as "authentic," which is another available *topos* to be deployed, although one that must be embodied by specific "character types" in specific (recognizable, even stereotypical) ways. The protest actions these groups partake in go beyond mere embodying: their character-specific topoi need to be actively "performed" in public space (rather than relying on rhetorical tropes in written documents, as Olson's subjects do). These public performances, as with the Ecuadorian documents, are contextualized in available cultural narratives, bringing into play further recognizable topoi related to "virtue" specific to character and situation.

I will further argue that these marginalized protest groups are not merely utilizing available topoi. The topoi—in this sense, pre-scripted "characters"—make their own "demands" on the protestors. These topoi, these characters, demand to be fully inhabited and lived; the characters' "scripts" demand to be fulfilled. The Stanislavskian approach to theatrical

performance offers useful insights into how such inhabiting of the character and meeting the demands of the script function. The introduction of Stanislavski's ideas to social movement is a decided shift in scholarship to date.

Olson also notes that the embodiable topoi she is investigating required performances that were "stylized" in nature. Similarly, the embodied topoi for the protest groups I examine are frequently stylized in order to be both recognizable and sufficiently theatrical to be disruptive and newsworthy. This stylization would seem to challenge the notion of authenticity (read "naturalness"), but, again, Stanislavski and other theorists from theatre and performance studies can help to resolve this apparent contradiction.

My work to reconcile "authenticity" and "theatricality" in terms of street protest tactics represents a new direction in scholarship. Moreover, using Stanislavski's theory outside of the traditional "actor training" sphere, especially applying his method to anything remotely political, is a departure from previous scholarship. Stanislavski receives scant attention from scholars whose focus is the nexus of theatre and politics. Two important collections of essays on this topic, *Staging Resistance: Essays on Political Theater* (edited by Jeanne Colleran and Jenny Spencer, 1998) and *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (edited by Jan Cohen-Cruz, 1998), ignore Stanislavski completely. Typical of other politically-focused theatre theorists, Jill Dolan in *Presence and Desire* (1993) and L.M. Bogad in *Electoral Guerilla Theatre* (2005) merely mention Stanislavski in order to dismiss the qualities in theatre that he stresses (namely a sense of belief on the part of the actor and on the part of the audience). Instead, these four works devote plenty of attention to the expected political theatre "stars": Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal (Theatre of the Oppressed), Peter Schumann (Bread and

Puppet Theater) and Julian Beck and Judith Malina (The Living Theatre). The easy association of Stanislavski with a tradition that is conservative and thus needs to be rebelled against is shortsighted, in my opinion. The Stanislavskian premises that actors need to be in belief, need to be committed to their performances and need to fully live in their world on stage are all vital to the success of street protest events. Erving Goffman, in sociology, relies on many of these same premises.

My research to date finds that in the writings of sociologists who rely on Goffman's work, no connections are made with Stanislavski, whose writings pre-date Goffman's by fifty years. Jeffrey Alexander, in his "Cultural Pragmatics" (2006), does use Stanislavski as an extended reference (pages 71 to 73), noting how Stanislavski's "as if" technique is a useful framework for "social performance"; Alexander then suggests a comparison to Goffman parenthetically. My extended comparative analyses and applications of *both* Stanislavski and Goffman, side by side, will thus also be something new.

The notion of "authenticity" seems to be in vogue among scholars in the 21st century. This in itself seems to indicate a directional change. An EBSCO database search of academic journals shows a growing flurry of articles written recently that treat the idea of "authenticity." For the dates between January 1970 and December 1989, "authenticity" given as a title or keyword yields a mere 26 results (for this 20-year period). The same search between January 1990 and December 2000 yields 59 results (for 11 years). Between January 2001 and December 2006, the search yield jumps to 136 results (for 6 years). Between January 2007 and June 2012 (the searches were done in July 2012), the number of articles nearly doubles again, yielding 254 results (for the final 5.5 year period). So clearly "authenticity" is a concept that is

attracting an increasing number of scholars. However, if you add the word "virtue" as a search word in title or keyword, the yield for the entire period between January 1970 and June 2012 falls to 4 articles.[2]   I think I can fairly claim that my tying together performances of "authenticity" with those of "virtue" is an innovation in scholarship.

James Jasper in his *Art of Moral Protest* (1997) echoes this point. Jasper identifies previous blind spots in protest research, and one of these is any focus on the moral evaluation of protest events. How can we, and how do we, evaluate protestors in terms of morality? Does the concept of virtue even play a role in the effectiveness of protest? I believe that it does, though such interpretation of virtue is tied up, once again, with the concept of the protestor's "character."

Jasper also notes that the examination of specific protest tactics has been another blind spot among social movement researchers: "How protesters pick their tactics, how they decide what actually to do, is a question rarely addressed in research on protest" (354). Sociologists who might have aligned themselves with the "crowd theorists" have tended to dismiss protest tactics as the result of mere frenzy and passion; for strategic mobilization and process theorists, protest tactics have been isolated as rational, strategic and/or opportunistic choices. As Jasper notes, "For most scholars, the choice of tactics has simply not been an interesting question . . . Either way, they seemed to have little meaning for protesters in and of themselves" (236). This current study seeks to change that. I argue that the tactics used by protestors are of the utmost importance—these are their rhetorical *pisteis,* the appeals that actually persuade the audience. These tactics are intimately tied to the identities and specific situations of the protestors themselves. In short, this study will elevate the aspect of "agency" (using Burke's term from

his *Grammar of Motives*)—the "how" of the action—to primary importance. Of course, the connections between and among "agency," "agent" and "scene" are, as Burke's pentad instructs us, elements that necessarily influence one another. With further regard to Burke's pentad, the focus in this thesis on the nature of virtue as it relates to protest groups might well fall under the category of "purpose" in the pentad. This is yet another shift from previous studies in social protest that tended to focus squarely on "act" "agent" and "scene."

In the area of rhetoric, the concept of "impious rhetoric" has been under-investigated. Notably missing from previous investigations into impious rhetoric is an examination of the relationship between impiety and the *ethos-logos* connection required by any type of rhetoric. Burke opens the door to this with his somewhat facetious example of Matthew Arnold and the gashouse gang (*Permanence* 77).[3] One group's impiety is another's piety, as Burke points out. Just as the "proper" Arnold moving into the realm of the "less-than-proper" gashouse gang presents a potential viewer with a series of incongruities to ponder, when any non-dominant group moves into the realm of the general public (where standards of decorum are set by the dominant group/s) and calls attention to itself, the audience (the general public) is forced to ponder various incongruities. The sense of "what goes with what" is justified in one sense by the "character" of the protesting group but violated in another sense by the rules of "the scene" in which the group is performing (the public sphere). New "impious linkages," as Burke terms it, may be forged and public opinion swayed. The pairing of rhetorical theories—that is, of "impious rhetoric" with the "ethos-logos connection"—has the potential to explain the success of marginalized group protest.

The idea that marginalized groups may leverage their very identities as marginalized

"others" for rhetorical and political success seems, at first, counter-intuitive. At a glance, it seems that these groups will more likely be successful if they attempt to speak as equals, fulfill the rules of discourse as set by dominant society and meet reason with reason. Lyotard makes the case that this is not so in his 1976 essay "On the Strength of the Weak." He cites a variety of examples in which "the relative, the particular, can be stronger than the absolute or what claims to be absolute" (63). This holds true in the protest case studies that I examine in this thesis. The idea that marginalized groups may leverage their very *identities* as marginalized others seems to be a new direction in social movement scholarship. It also seems to require a rehabilitation of "identity politics," something that has fallen out of favor among scholars of various disciplinary backgrounds. In this thesis, I will attempt to argue for the usefulness of identity politics; however, in this context, the concept might better be recast as a "politics of character."

Notwithstanding the overlapping facets of "identity" and "character," a politics of character addresses more directly the social demands made upon a character's behavior. Margaret Somers and Gloria Gibson (1994) introduce the concept of narrative identity: "a narrative identity approach assumes people act in particular ways because not to do so would fundamentally violate their sense of being at that particular time and place" (67). Somers and Gibson are sociologists. In this thesis, I will extend their idea but work with it through the additional lenses of theatre studies and rhetoric, using Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* (as well as many other texts) to expand and deepen this "narrative identity" concept. Such a narrative identity, identity specifically embedded in a rhetorical situation and aligned with a previously "scripted" character type, is the basis of the "politics of character" that I am proposing.

I. E. — Methodology and intent

In this thesis, I will take a comparative approach in examining collective identity mobilization and the use of radical street theatre protest across a variety of groups. My four key case studies are all from the last quarter of the 20th century (that is, 1976-2000). Those four case studies are as follows:

1. Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, 1977-1983.

2. Otpor (Serbian for "Resistance"), a student-led protest group in Serbia, 1998-2000.

3. The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, or ACT UP, in New York City (primarily), 1986-1992.

4. Protests by the Community for Creative Nonviolence (CCNV) and the National Union of the Homeless (NUH), as well as other groups of homeless and their advocates, against the Pres. Reagan (and later Pres. Bush) administrations in Washington, D.C. (primarily), 1980-1990.

I will, in the course of analyzing the above cases, find it instructive to cite additional cases of protest and performance from throughout the 20th century.

I hope to identify what makes radical street protest effective rhetorically by examining cases drawn from different cultures and group identities. All the groups engage in forms of disruption and theatricality to some degree, but each of the groups takes a distinctly different approach. Are there theoretical commonalities that can explain the repertoires of contentious action these groups use?

Robert Stake, in his article on "Qualitative Case Studies" (in the *Sage Handbook of*

Qualitative Research), discusses the differences between what he terms an "intrinsic case study" and an "instrumental case study." The former is a case study undertaken for the primary purpose of better understanding that particular case (445). The "instrumental case study" is a particular case examined "mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else" (445). As for a "multiple case study," Stake writes, "It is instrumental study extended to several cases" (445-46). In this thesis, I will be approaching the four cases as "instrumental case studies." My primary interest is to draw larger conclusions concerning the ways that marginalized group street protests function.

In his *Multiple Case Study Analysis* (2006), Stake offers the term "quintain," which offers a useful methodology for this thesis. As Stake states, "In multicase study research, the single case is of interest because it belongs to a particular collection of cases. The individual cases share a common characteristic or condition. The cases in the collection are somehow categorically bound together" (4-5). By working with a categorical group of cases, or a "quintain," the researcher's focus necessarily shifts away from primarily explaining the individual case to asking, "What helps us understand the quintain?" (6). For Stake, this represents "a move away from holistic viewing of the cases toward constrained viewing of the cases" (6). Such a "constrained viewing" is one that I find useful for my purposes here. Still, I am mindful of Stake's warning: "Damage occurs when the commitment to generalize or to theorize runs so strong that the researcher's attention is drawn away from features important for understanding the case itself" (*Sage Handbook* 448). I will make my best efforts in this work to strike a responsible balance between pushing towards generalizations and honoring the specific

and unique elements distinct to each of my individual cases.

What are the common characteristics of my "quintain" or, asked differently, what qualities do the chosen case studies share? The criteria I used for my case study selection were fourfold:

A. the historical period for the group's primary activities was limited to the time frame of 1976–2000.

B. the identity claim of the protesting group fits the category of "marginalized" group for the context culture.

C. the purpose of the group was to confront the state about its policies and may thus be termed political protest.

D. the tactics used by the group included what may be termed "radical street performance."

Historical period was the first criterion I imposed for consideration of case studies. With so many examples of group protest movements, I needed to limit the scope somehow. My case studies are all post-1975. At this point, the Vietnam War had ended, and the era of protest against that war (along with the general student protests that peaked in 1968) had already effectively transformed how protest was perceived. The late 1970s also witnessed the post–- "Black Power" movement and the Second Wave feminist movement (a.k.a., "women's lib") in a state of relative ascendancy. The Gay Liberation Movement was also well underway by this time. All of this to say that, by 1976, identity politics was fairly well-established and, as such, had already become the object of critique from a variety of fronts.

My case studies are all pre-9/11 (2001). The worldwide perception of protest changed in the face of the spectacular terrorism of the 9/11 attacks. Additionally, the World Wide Web

allows for new forms of local and international communication, making theatrical street protest only one among many means of gaining attention.

Several of my case studies persisted as groups well past the 2000 cutoff date that I am imposing on my research. Gamson (1975) asks what the "endpoint" of research into social movement groups should be. He offers several possibilities: the group ceases to exist or "ceases mobilization and influence activity" or "antagonist accepts the group as valid spokesperson for its constituency" (30-31). For several of my chosen case studies, my focus will specifically be on the group from their inception to a point when one of Gamson's "endpoints" is reached, and in each case this endpoint does occur before the end of the year 2000.

Because one of my primary interests is rhetorical *ethos*, I chose protest movements that appeared to be based in some sort of group identity, a *category* of people being the ones to spearhead and lead the protest movement. For this reason, such protest movements as those that are anti-nuclear, pro-environment, pro-animal rights or anti-corporate were not considered. Instead, the case studies in this thesis represent those that can be identified with particular marginalized groups of people. Melissa Williams, in her *Voice, Trust and Memory*, asks, "What is a marginalized group?" and offers four characteristic features to answer this question: "1) patterns of social and political inequality are structured along the lines of group membership; 2) membership in these groups is not usually experienced as voluntary; 3) membership in these groups is not usually experienced as mutable; 4) generally, negative meanings are assigned to group identity by the broader society, or the dominant culture" (15-16). These characteristics hold for the case studies that I have chosen to pursue here.

The third criterion I used for selecting cases was the purpose of the protest. I am

interested in groups that confront the state. Issues of power necessarily come into play in a David vs. Goliath type scenario, with the marginalized non-dominant group confronting the all-powerful state. It is this power dynamic in the various case studies that allows me to investigate the rhetorical effectiveness of the protest tactics being used, since the groups under investigation are powerless to coerce the state by physical force. James Jasper (1997) notes that "citizenship movements typically make their demands directly of state authorities" (78). In this light, then, one criterion for my choice of case studies is that each represents a "citizenship movement." Because of this, political identities are involved. Tilly and Tarrow in *Contentious Politics* tell us that "identities become political identities when governments become parties to them" (79) and that "the political identities that concern us here always involve plurals" (78). Group identities and political confrontation are ingredients in a recipe for "identity politics," and each of the case studies in this thesis will allow for an examination of how traditional "identity politics" (and the "politics of character" variant that I am suggesting) play out in practical situations.

The fourth and final criterion I used for selecting the current case studies was each group's use of public performance. These particular cases were selected for having made marked use of "radical street performance," though each has used it in a unique way. These protestors are not theatre professionals, and the majority of them are not trained artists. They are "common people" who engage in public performances as part of their political protest work. The phrase "radical street performance" is used by Jan Cohen-Cruz, who explains her choice of terms as follows: "By *radical* I refer to acts that question or re-envision ingrained social arrangements of power. *Street* signals theatrics that take place in public by-ways with

minimal constraints on access. *Performance* here indicates expressive behavior intended for public viewing" (1).[4] A live (theatre) event brings performers and spectators together in an immediate communicative relationship. Because the event is on "the street," spectators, whether they choose to do so or not, become participants in the theatre experience. Each of the case studies in this thesis, whether consciously or not, leverages this power of the live performance event in public space.

One criterion I did not consciously apply to my choice of case studies deals with the question of "success" for a given protest movement. As Jasper writes, "the importance of protesters, I think, lies more in their moral visions than their practical accomplishments. They are more like poets than engineers" (379). In some ways, I have taken this viewpoint to heart. Each of the groups I have chosen to investigate has a "moral vision," and I am interested in how that moral vision is connected to their group identities and how it is communicated publicly. "Success" for my case studies is thus limited to "being heard by the public," an accomplishment in itself for marginalized groups, especially those in oppressive dictatorships. Rhetorically, it is the group's ability to make use of "available means of persuasion," and not demonstrable practical results, that would determine "success." Nonetheless, I find myself attracted to groups that have had an impact on government policies—and even on the nature of the government itself. Perhaps because of this, the four case studies I am presenting here all have had at least some demonstrably practical effects in changing state policies.

In *Strategy of Social Protest* (1975), Gamson writes that, when evaluating protest groups, "success is an elusive idea" (28). He does work to define the "meaning of success" for such groups, and he categorizes such success along two distinct axes. In this way, he arrives at

four categories of group: 1) full response (group accepted as legitimate spokespersons for issue at hand AND new advantages accrue to the beneficiary); 2) preemption (group not accepted BUT new advantages accrue); 3) co-optation (group is accepted *but* no new advantages accrue); 4) collapse (group is not accepted, nor do any new benefits accrue). The first category might be considered a "full success," the last a "full failure" (28-37). In his study, Gamson uses 53 protest groups from 1800-1945, all in the U.S.A., both "successful" and "failed," as a way to minimize his own biases. This is not my approach here. The four case studies I am using have all, arguably, been accepted as valid spokespersons for the groups' causes, and, as a result of their protest actions, new benefits have indeed accrued to the constituencies. Yet it can also be argued—and I will note this for the cases where such is true—that not all of a group's stated goals (in some cases, their primary stated goal) have been accomplished. While the case of Otpor may be considered a "full success," the cases of Las Madres, ACT UP and CCNV/NUH may be considered stories of "mixed success," at least according to Gamson's definition.

Senda-Cook in her "Rugged Practices: Embodying Authenticity" writes:

> Studying performance in addition to texts is useful because performances, unlike texts, are dynamic, fluid and ephemeral. Texts are translated into stable objects so although the meaning may be open to interpretation and rereading, they lose their ability to change shape. Therefore, instead of studying secondary sources–those that have been documented–[Phaedra] Pezzullo claims that the researcher benefits from being present at the performance. (133)

Given the fact that my case studies are all pre-2001, and that I did not begin my research into this topic until 2006, I have not had the option of attending in person any of the protest events

under analysis. Instead, my research methods have consisted of archival studies, with particular

attention to news articles from the contemporaneous periods that describe the protest events

and the public's reaction. When available, I have used videotaped versions of key street

protests so that I can see and hear for myself some of these street performances, at least through

the one-step mediated remove of film. I have read and watched interviews with witnesses of

and participants in the various protest events. Through these varied means, and from these

varied perspectives, I have acquired a solid "view" of each case study.

I should note that research on two other cases, both Quebec-based, has helped to inform

my work here: the Mohawk Nation during the Oka Crisis of 1990 and the Canadian

Anglophones' staging of "the Unity Rally" in response to the Quebec separation referendum of

1995. These two cases helped me better understand how performances of authenticity and

virtue work "on the ground." While both fascinating and applicable, neither case is referenced

explicitly in this thesis for the reason that the four cases I have chosen do illustrate sufficiently

the theoretical framework in place while offering sufficient variations to generate new

questions. As in any written work, scope must be narrowed to a degree, allowing for

readability.[5]

I.F. — Overview of Four Key Case Studies

The four key case studies will be developed and explored in detail in the body of this

thesis. For this introductory chapter, I offer a brief, orienting summary of each. In the ensuing

chapters, I will make periodic note of a particular action or of certain persons associated with

these cases, quite possibly before I have fully examined that particular case (which will take

place in a later chapter). The summaries below should alleviate confusion when these periodic references occur.

LAS MADRES [6]

Below is a brief introduction to the case of Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo, commonly referred to as "Las Madres," in Argentina, 1977–1983:

Hours after the March 1976 military coup in Argentina, the newly reigning military junta instituted a series of laws collectively known as the Process for National Reorganization, or the "Proceso." The new government was thus empowered to arrest all of the politically radical elements in Argentina. However, the government soon began rounding up those who were merely suspected of radical sympathies, these latter including a disproportionate number of young people, who were kidnapped but never charged with any crimes. These young Argentines were simply "disappeared," and the military government denied any knowledge of or responsibility for the disappearances.

In April of 1977, a group of mothers of disappeared children decided to meet in the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, outside the president's palace, in order "to publicize the plight of their children so as to feel they were doing something for them and to break the silence about the kidnappings" (Navarro 250). Initially, the mothers did not believe that General Videla (the president) or the other government chiefs even knew what was happening; they assumed that the kidnappings were mistakes that could soon be remedied. Government officials told them to go home. In spite of the dismissal, the women continued to gather in the Plaza de Mayo every week, trying to seek information. The numbers of these women soon grew, and they eventually came to be called Las Madres (*"The Mothers"*) de Plaza de Mayo.

Las Madres protested in silence at first but eventually became more vocal, asking the question outright: "Where are our children?" The military junta, who would brook no political dissent, had a difficult time handling Las Madres. As mothers in Argentine society, these older and matronly women "were implicitly excluded from the different groups defined as 'subversive'" (Navarro 257), and so the government did not arrest them. This stand-off between the junta and the mothers continued for the six years between 1977 and 1983, at which point the military dictatorship was finally replaced by a democratically elected government (following the military debacle of the Falkland Islands War).

In terms of timeframe, I am choosing to focus on Las Madres from the group's formation in April 1977 up through and including the period between June 1982 (defeat in the Falklands, resignation of junta leader General Galtieri) and December 1983, when a democratic government was elected in Argentina. I am aware that, in 1986, Las Madres split into two groups due to internal dissent, but I will not extend my focus to this period. My examination concerns the rhetorical battle waged for Argentine and international sympathies, a battle waged between Las Madres and the military junta, which shifted markedly once the junta was swept from power.

OTPOR [7]

Below is a brief introduction to the case of Otpor (Serbian for *resistance*), a student-led protest group active in Serbia from 1998 to 2000. I also examine the antecedent Serbian student protests of 1992 and 1996-1997, which similarly opposed the government policies of Slobodan Milosevic:

During the last decade of the 20th century, three separate waves of Serbian student street

protests, centered primarily in Belgrade, arose in 1992, 1996-1997 and 1998-2000. This last

series of protests was led by a student group called Otpor. All of these student protests had two

things in common: They all targeted dictator Slobodan Milosevic and his policies, and they all

employed humorous and irreverent nonviolent actions.

A November 1998 BBC report noted that Otpor had emerged at Belgrade University

specifically in response to government actions that the students deemed repressive ("Serbia").

But Otpor's dissatisfaction, even from the beginning, lay beyond the university in Belgrade; it

was Serbia itself and the repressive Milosevic regime that were the fundamental problem.

According to an Otpor spokesman, the Belgrade University students who were original core

members of Otpor were "dissatisfied with the situation at the university and society in general,

regardless of their ideological, political, or any other affiliations" and stated that the group's

ultimate aim was to "create the broadest possible front against the authorities' repression in all

segments of society" ("Serbia").

Despite the political "heaviness" of the issues being raised by Otpor and its antecedent

student groups, the protests they produced were, for the most part, quite lighthearted and fun.

During the nine years from 1992 to the year of Milosevic's ousting in 2000, Serbian youth took

to the streets not in traditional marches or rallies, but in a series of clever theatrical events

satirizing Milosevic and his cohorts—and they had a hell of a good time doing it. Their strategy

of presenting themselves as "just kids" played a significant role in their success.

ACT UP

Below is a brief introduction to the case of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, or ACT UP,

in New York City (primarily), with attention to the group's activities from 1986 to 1992:

ACT UP was founded officially in 1987, already six years into the AIDS crisis. Building on some of the work done by the Gay Men's Health Crisis organization, ACT UP was more overtly—and angrily—political. Galvanized, at least in part, by the 1986 Supreme Court decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick* (Gould *Moving* 121-75), the queer community in New York City, and in other American urban centers, took to the streets in mass protests against government policies and societal attitudes that (they felt) were keeping them in the closet and ignoring them as the AIDS epidemic decimated their communities. U.S. President Reagan and, later, President Bush were key targets of the group's ire and irony. ACT UP protest strategies became infamous for their carnivalesque irreverence, their ability to disrupt daily routines and their in-your-face attitude, expressed well in the popular refrain "We're here! We're Queer! Get used to it!"

Two spin-off organizations from ACT UP also produced protest activism among members of the queer community during this same time frame. Gran Fury was a collaborative of artists and designers who worked in tandem with ACT UP between 1988 and 1992. Queer Nation was founded in New York in April 1990, with an aim to "extend the kinds of democratic counterpolitics deployed on behalf of AIDS activism for the transformation of public sexual discourse in general" (Berlant and Freeman 198). Although the three groups were distinct from one another, they worked in close proximity and had roots in the same community. Douglas Crimp notes that ACT UP members were, at least initially, mostly gay and lesbian and that the group "meant for us not only fighting AIDS, but fighting AIDS as queers, fighting homophobia, and rejuvenating a moribund queer activism" (Crimp, "Right On" 316). All three groups—ACT UP, Gran Fury and Queer Nation—worked to fight homophobia

and catalyze the queer community, targeting, in particular, official policies and unofficial attitudes that they perceived as aggravating the AIDS epidemic. Queer Nation never officially disbanded as a group but, by and large, ceased visible actions by 1993. Gran Fury disbanded in 1994 following the death of a key founding member. Though ACT UP remains an active organization in parts of the United States today, by the end of 1992 there was a noted shift in its activities and a definite decline in its regular production of street protest events.

CCNV AND NUH

Below is a brief introduction to the case of protests by the Community for Creative Nonviolence (CCNV) and the National Union of the Homeless (NUH), as well as other groups of homeless people and their advocates, against the Reagan (and later Bush) administration in Washington, D.C. (primarily) from 1980 to 1990.

CCNV began in the early 1970s as a Christian group opposed to the Vietnam War. By 1977, however, the group's focus had shifted to "the task of securing adequate, accessible space, offered in an atmosphere of reasonable dignity, for every man, woman, and child in need of shelter" (*CCNV* website). The group's focus on charitable work on behalf of the homeless population in Washington, D.C. found increasing urgency following the presidential election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Reagan's budgets and policies adversely affected the homeless in ways that alarmed CCNV. A 1981 CCNV public statement to President Reagan spells out the group's position in no uncertain terms: "What you have proposed is the legalized assault and rape of our nation's most vulnerable and defenseless citizens" (Hombs and Snyder 18).

Over the course of the 1980s, the homeless population in American urban centers was growing and becoming more and more visible. Protest events addressing issues of

homelessness became increasingly common. Between January 1980 and December 1992, there were seventy-five such protest events noted in U.S. newspapers (Imig, 71). CCNV protests garnered the most publicity. The Reaganville shantytown was a four-month long protest (Nov. 26, 1981–March 20, 1982) in which tents were installed in Lafayette Park across from the White House. CCNV leader Mitch Snyder famously undertook a public fast in 1984 to protest the Reagan administration's policies regarding the homeless. Other CCNV protests during the 1980s included a wide variety of creative theatrical events: sleep outs, public funerals and disruptions of Church-sponsored events, to name a few.

While CCNV membership consisted of what might be termed "housed advocates"—those who protested on behalf of the homeless but who were not homeless themselves—other groups during this same period consisted of homeless people. Among these groups, NUH (the National Union of the Homeless) was the most significant. In 1983 in Philadelphia, a group of homeless men, led by Chris Sprowal, founded the Committee for Dignity and Fairness for the Homeless, and by 1984 this group had established and had begun managing its own shelter for the homeless (*Homeless Union* website). The NUH slogan became "Homeless Not Helpless," and, in contradiction to the calls by housed advocates for increased funding for homeless shelters and food programs, the NUH made demands for permanent housing, work and healthcare for the homeless. By 1986, organization chapters sprouted up around the United States, and the organization officially became the National Union of the Homeless, electing officers and developing a national policy strategy. Between 1988 and 1990, NUH (and its new affiliate, Dignity Housing) sponsored housing takeovers to protest cuts in the federal Housing and Urban Development budget and various rallies and marches to raise awareness of

homelessness in America from the perspective of the homeless. In October 1989, at the

Housing Now! Rally in Washington, D.C., which drew a crowd of 100,000 people, NUH

demanded the right to speak at the rally, bringing into focus the growing tension between the

work of housed advocates on behalf of the homeless and the demands of the homeless.

I. G. — Preview: overall structure of argument

As I stated earlier, as part of my analysis of the tale of the mothers before Solomon,

three distinct steps in the success of marginalized populations' protest against the state appear

to emerge. First, the protest actions affirm and reinforce the categorized identity or "character"

of the protestors. Second, the marginalized identity and the specific rhetorical situation

legitimize the impious action/s undertaken by the protestors. Third, an audience (the "general

public") evaluates the protest action/s undertaken in terms of the culture's virtues appropriate to

that character: are these particular protestors *deserving* (morally) of their goal? Though these

steps are likely overlapping and mutually dependent rather than strictly sequenced, I will

attempt to follow the three steps above in the ensuing chapters of this thesis.

The concept of "recognition" and its own stages (à la Ricoeur's *Course of Recognition*)

underlies the structure of this thesis as well. In Chapter 2, I begin with the idea of recognition

as an identification by the audience—a categorization—which is where Ricoeur begins his

treatise. The "what" of identity precedes the "who." What is necessary for this type of

recognition to occur? In Chapter 3, I will deviate from Ricoeur's "course of recognition" and

back up a step. I begin in this chapter with the idea of recognition as simply "being noticed," of

entering an audience's field of perception. Ricoeur does not treat this aspect of recognition,

likely because his focus is not on public discourse and protest but on daily human interactions. What makes a protest event noteworthy? What kind of disruption in the life-as-usual routine is required? How does this aspect of being recognized reinforce (or undermine) the aspect of recognition treated in Chapter 2? In Chapter 4, I return to Ricoeur and examine recognition in its aspect of "recognizing oneself." This leads to the concept of a narrativized identity, which, in turn, allows for an evaluation in terms of virtue. After an examination of specific case studies in Chapter 5, in my conclusion (Chapter 6) I will speculate on the extension of Ricoeur's concept of "mutual recognition," the concept of "meeting" and recognizing an "other's" human-ness. Are the "authentic" encounter and "authentic" recognition even possible? Are they important for rhetoric?

The notion of "character" provides yet a third structuring concept for the following chapters. In Chapter 2, I focus on character as collective identity, as an identifiable "type." In Chapter 3, I focus on character as a dramatic personage, as a theatrical creation. In Chapter 4, I focus on character as moral judgment, as the ethical qualities attributed to a person or group. This treatment of character maps quite well to the stages of recognition noted above.

I will be using the case of Las Madres in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 as a way of applying the theoretical frameworks I am developing in each chapter. In Chapter 5, I will examine the other three cases (Otpor, ACT UP and CCNV and NUH) in light of the theoretical issues raised by each of the preceding chapters and to analyze specific issues raised uniquely by the different case studies. As previously stated, my primary interest in this thesis is to draw larger conclusions about the ways that marginalized group street protests function and how they may be effective in shaping public discourse and, ultimately, state policies and structures. The

multiple case study approach best allows me to do this.

Chapter Overview

In **Chapter 2**, I examine the key questions: *What is "identity"? What is "collective identity"? How is identity communicated/performed? How is such performance different for marginalized or "marked" identities?* In this chapter, I begin with the idea of recognition as identification by an audience, a categorization. The "what" of identity precedes the "who." But what is necessary for this type of recognition to occur? Recognition is actually *re*-cognition. To know or identify "again" something already known, a familiar identity category or trope must somehow be involved.

Arendt writes, "The moment we want to say who somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying what he is … we begin to describe a type or a 'character' in the old meaning of the word" (*Human* 181). This *idem* aspect of identity (Ricoeur's concept) relies on sameness across the category; certain descriptors should hold true for all members of a certain identity category. The collective identity should thus be representable by a character-type, as Arendt notes, one that is already familiar in the collective imagination of the dominant culture.

This way of thinking, however, has met with several objections. The attacks on identity politics are reviewed here, with the following question: *Can identity politics be justified*? I explore the charges of essentialism that have been leveled against identity politics and counter with certain constructivist arguments. Is there a "being," a "real," when it comes to collective identity? I defer this seemingly insoluble question; the "reality" of a group's essence is not really a question for rhetorical purposes; it is the "appearance" of such an essence by which the

group may be characterized and recognized that is necessary. It is the "how" of public performance that is key here; the "doing" takes precedence over the "being." I rely on Stanislavski's concept of tactics in pursuit of an objective and on Goffman's dramaturgical frameworks of daily life performances.

Another justification for identity politics that I present is that mutual recognition among group members is a vital part of protest actions. For protestors to feel *and state*, "we are 'the same' in solidarity" is imperative. Thus, collective identity must be performed in a recognizable way for protest actions to succeed. Group identity can be, and has been, deployed (as my case studies illustrate) for rhetorical purposes.

At this point, I focus more specifically on collective identities that may be considered stigmatized. What does it mean to be "marked" by one's identity? Cultural histories have "inscribed" these marked or stigmatized groups, and these groups may very well live out these inscriptions (Bourdieu's *habitus* is one explanation of this). Stigma sets the group apart, and the signs of stigma may be paraded publicly (rather than hidden) in order for the recognition addressed above to occur.

I assert that it is "performances of authenticity," rather than "authentic performances," that are imperative for marginalized group protests to succeed. The protestors' tactics must, at least in part and at least in the early stages of protest, consist of embodied tropes (available images of how marked group members *should* or *do* act). These performances of identity, though, must be perceived as authentic. Once again, I use Stanislavski and Goffman to explore the tensions between "showing" and "being." I note how Goffman, who presents real life identity as a "seeming," and Stanislaviski, who presents life on the stage as a "believing," are

theoretically moving towards one another's concepts, though they begin at opposite poles.

In **Chapter 3**, I examine the issues of the theatricality involved in street protest and consider character in terms associated with both Aristotle's *Poetics* (character as dramatic personage) and his *Rhetoric* (character as rhetorical ethos). In this chapter, I begin with the idea of recognition as simply "being noticed." What makes a protest event noteworthy? What kind of disruption to their daily routine does an audience require to take notice? Can these disruptive aspects of recognition reinforce the aspects of identity-based recognition treated in Chapter 2, and, if so, how?

I employ Burke's concept of impious rhetoric here. Acting out in disruptive ways is impious, from one perspective, but, since these protestors come from society's margins, their protest actions are also "pious." Piety is a sense of what goes with what (Burke, *Permanence* 76), but it is also a conforming to the "sources of one's being" (69). Whereas these two aspects of piety will more or less align for dominant groups in a society, this does not hold true for marginalized groups. Protestors publicly violate the concept of "what goes with what" through their disruptive actions. At the same time, groups protesting *from* their collective identities are conforming to their very "otherness," to the sources of their being (as distinct from the sources of the dominant group's being). Such protests, once they enter mainstream public discourse, create a new link between piety and impiety, encouraging a change in perspective (Burke's "perspective by incongruity").

The protest movements that concern me target the state. Such challenges to the state require public recognition; these groups must somehow insert their collective voice into the public discourse. First, the group must be recognized as in "noticed." What makes the group's

views noteworthy or newsworthy? To answer these questions, I refer to Tarrow's and Tilly's

analyses of contentious political actions and the value of disruption. Protest groups must seize

opportunities specific to their time and place. There is a need for commitment and creativity.

Beyond being merely "noticed," the group also needs to be acknowledged, heard. The

protestors need to combat the dominant prejudice against disruptive tactics. Recognition must

include being recognized "as a movement," seen as larger than a single, isolated event. Radical

street performance is invaluable in each of these processes.

I examine theater in the streets, offering some historical context, and note the wide

spectrum of theatrical approaches available to protestors. In particular, Artaud's theatre of

cruelty provides a useful framework for theatrical encounters with an audience on the streets.

Regardless of the theatrical style and specifics of performance adopted by the protest group, I

argue that all radical street performance can be re-framed in Stanislavskian terms. The very

choice of street theatre tactics reveals the true self, the "authentic" character of the protest

group. In this way, Stanislavski's legacy, with its focus on what is "true" in an otherwise

fictional performance, is a vital part of understanding street protest actions.

The specific performance tactics used by protest groups is—or should be—dictated by a

connection between *ethos* and *logos*. In his book *Aristotle's Rhetoric: An Art of Character*,

Eugene Garver argues that *ethos*, the character of the speaker, and *logos*, the means of

persuasion used, are inextricably linked: "In rhetoric and practical judgment ethos is necessary

for finding and formulating arguments, and not just presenting them" (191). The disruptive

tactics used by protestors is an extension of their *logos*; they are choosing to present their

arguments in these typically non-discursive ways on the street. This is born of their collective

character and, in turn, reflects upon their collective character. When radical street performance tactics are chosen wisely (sometimes through a process of trials and errors), the collective identity of the group legitimates the tactics used while the tactics themselves simultaneously "authenticate" the group's identity.

Here I consider character as dramatic personage and use Aristotle's *Poetics* to examine the qualities we (as audiences of drama) expect in a character. One of these qualities is that the character behaves "appropriately." But this appropriateness is specific to that character's station in society and role in the play. What is key is that the actions the character performs appear to match what we expect of such a character. In this way, a character may behave "authentically" even when s/he is acting in ways deemed impious by the larger society. The character we deem as inappropriate may thus behave quite "appropriately," since marginalized identity types are *expected* to behave in ways different than the unmarked, mainstream, respectable character.

I argue that authenticity of character exists in the balance between "piety" and "impiety," and between "congruity" and "incongruity," to use two different but related Burkean concepts. A character from the margins of a society may be viewed as "eccentric"; some of their actions will be "different" (incongruous by mainstream standards), even disruptive; but this is to be expected if we view life as a form of drama (as both Burke and Goffman encourage us to do). The character, though, is still pious in that he or she is acting in a way that remains "loyal to the sources of one's being" (Burke's notion of "piety" [*Permanence* 69]). Impiety is the marginalized group's piety.

Is there rhetorical value to these publicly performed acts of pious impiety for marginalized groups? Might this be a source of power when confronting the state? I argue most

emphatically in the affirmative. Marginalized groups are able to leverage their very identities as marginalized "others" in order to help shape public discourse and modify the public's perception/framing of state policies and current events. Confronted by disruptive, impious performances in the street, the public is startled into a changed perspective; something new has happened. But some element of "known-ness," arising from the pious or authentic ethos of the protest group itself, allows for the public to "recognize" these people as credible (insofar as they are sincere, real, authentic). This brings us back to an aspect of identity politics as examined in Chapter 2. Kruks writes that identity politics is, in part, the "reappropriating as a positive value the identity that others have imposed on me" (93). By publicly performing their own marginality, the protesting groups are linking, in the mind of the audience, recognition and authenticity.

At the end of this chapter, I treat a side issue, though not a negligible one, dealing with the concept of authenticity. A tension exists between (perceived) instrumentality and (perceived) authenticity. If so much of the marginalized protest group's rhetorical work is to convey authenticity to an audience, does its use of performance detract from that perceived authenticity? In many ways, authenticity is an anti-rhetorical concept. Public communication is artful/strategic/instrumental, and rhetoric acknowledges this. Although I will grapple with the question of whether or not there is such a thing as "true authenticity" in my concluding chapter (Chapter 6), here I again defer the issue in two ways. First, "authenticity" may be viewed as a trope for rhetorical use, an available concept that may be easily equated with "trustworthiness" and other positive values. Second, Stanislavski (again) helps to resolve the tension between being (authenticity) and *seeming* to be (artfulness, strategy) through his focus on the "doing."

In **Chapter 4**, I return to Ricoeur's "course of recognition" and examine recognition's aspect of "recognizing oneself." What does it mean to be or become self-aware? In order to do so, one must recognize oneself as playing a role in the larger context of one's "narrative." This leads to an analysis of character in terms of one's moral or ethical being, with a particular focus on the concept of virtue. What does it mean to fit the "good narrative," and how is this done?

I begin this chapter by examining the typical rhetorical attacks that the state wages against marginalized protest groups in its attempt to undermine the credibility of such groups and their claims. Perhaps not surprisingly, the state and its representatives will frequently challenge the authenticity of the groups (they are not who they claim to be). However, the processes engaged by protest groups as covered in Chapters 2 and 3 tend to deflect such attacks. The state will challenge the protestors' collective rationality as well. This reflects a general bias against protest in many societies and a particular bias against non-mainstream groups. "Rational" public discourse demands "disembodied" reason, and, thus, only the "unmarked" are naturally predisposed to participation in this discourse. Those with "marked" identities—women, people of color, queers, etc.—need to be excluded from rational public discourse, since these groups are "associated with body and feeling" as opposed to reason (Young, *Justice* 97). Such attacks require protest groups to either "tame" their bodily and emotional expressiveness (which undermines their collective group ethos) or somehow to gain rhetorical advantage through *pathos* and *ethos* rather than through a contrived "logical" *logos*. Finally, the state will attack the groups' morality. These marginalized groups are construed as debauched, irresponsible, unpatriotic, vicious, etc. It is the concept of a protest group's morality that will be the key focus of this chapter.

A person "of character" is a moral person, one who is virtuous. In short, "character" may imply "good"; there is a moral judgment passed on this person by the audience, by the public. This is vital to the rhetorical effectiveness of marginalized protest groups. Las Madres present themselves not merely as "mothers," but as "good mothers." How is "good" constructed? I argue that specific national and cultural narratives have given us our conceptions of what is good. Narrativizing is essential for meaning-making in general. One's identity is part of a larger narrative context, typically a narrative context that is specific to one's culture and/or nation. One plays a character as in a "role," and this role is part of a larger script already established, inherited, and mostly accepted without conscious consideration (akin to Bourdieu's *habitus*). The "good" character fulfills his/her specific role in the narrative in order to bring about the happy ending for all (or most). Here I examine the idea of virtue as presented by Aristotle in his *Nichomachean Ethics*, as well as MacIntyre's extension of Aristotle (in his *After Virtue)*. MacIntyre notes how narrativized characters are "the moral representatives of their culture and they are so because of the way in which moral and metaphysical ideas and theories assume through them an embodied existence in the social world" (28).

As in Chapter 3, there is a balance required here between piety and impiety, since the specific virtues of a certain group might very well compete with certain specific virtues of the greater society. The protest groups need to frame their actions as virtuous. In order for this to happen, the protesting groups must recognize themselves as virtuous players in the larger script. This is Ricoeur's "self-recognition," identity as *ipse* rather than merely *idem* (*Oneself* 115-25). Protest groups must narrativize their own identities and be seen to be making choices, not just impelled by forces beyond their control. This introduces another balancing act, that

between "action" and "motion" (to use Burke's terms), or between "choice" and "habit" (to use Aristotle's terms). Such a movement from simple motion or habit towards action within the scope of the agent is a vital aspect of Heidegger's concept of authenticity. The idea that we as humans are responsible for our own being, "burdened with deciding and choosing what it means to be a particular type of entity," is the first step towards "an authentic mode of human living" (Braman 17).

The general virtues of courage and civic character emerge as common denominators. The marginalized protestors face down the odds against them because they recognize that they need to be "true to themselves." The consequences they face for such protest (mockery, harassment, violence, arrest, even death) are proof of their courage. Further, by confronting the state they become "citizens" acting out of a more generalizable civic concern. Charland writes that impious rhetoric must "seek the means to persuade ethical others through an ethical performance . . . [and] the enactment of civic character is key" ("Place of Impiety" 42). Public performances by marginalized groups are not mere "identity politics," implying a narrow, self-centered, special interest motivation; these protests are the acts of citizens displaying courageous civic character.

I end this chapter with an argument against MacIntyre's dismissal of Goffman. MacIntyre writes that the "good" man in a Goffmanesque world possesses "honor," or "regard" from others, and this is the only reward that he craves (116). MacIntyre rejects this conception of "good" and claims that Aristotle would have rejected this as well. As he writes, "In Goffman's social world imputations of merit are themselves part of the contrived social reality whose function is to aid or to contain some striving, role-playing will" (116). My argument

here is that people in Goffman's world are not all this cynical, and they can sense the very charge that MacIntyre makes. They can discern what we (even MacIntyre) may conceive of as "authentic" and "virtuous." I believe that Goffman and Aristotle can coexist quite well theoretically, but it seems to me that it is Aristotle's *Poetics*, and not his *Ethics*, that can subsume/frame Goffman's approach to sociology without losing the valuable concept of virtue. Aristotelian drama is actually Goffmanesque. In this way, perhaps, it is ultimately an aesthetic framing that is most useful for the concept of virtue.

In **Chapter 5**, I focus on three case studies. At the end of Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I analyze the case of Las Madres vis-à-vis the theoretical points raised in the particular chapter. In Chapter 5, I examine the cases of Otpor, ACT UP and CCNV/NUH. The three cases studies raise new questions concerning performances of authenticity and virtue. The multiple cases allow me to note where differences exist and where there might be holes in and challenges to the ideas presented earlier in the thesis.

In **Chapter 6**, I briefly summarize and then point to areas for future investigation. I re-examine those questions involving group identity issues as yet unresolved. I revisit the essentialist dilemma of identity politics and ask whether there is the possibility, within a framework of identity politics, for marginalized group identities to grow and change. In this chapter, I also explore the possibility for a "true" authenticity that might be aligned with the concept of "meeting," invoking Gadamer and Buber. I speculate that aspects of phenomenology and rhetoric are ultimately reconcilable, and this would have significant implications for the question "What can a rhetoric be?"

I. H. — Key terms: "character" and "authenticity"

      The title of this thesis is "The Demands of Character: Performances of Authenticity and Virtue in Marginalized Group Street Protests 1976-2000." Clearly, there are several key terms in play that need to be defined and unpacked. "Marginalized" is a term that I addressed in the case study criteria above and will revisit in Chapter 2. "Virtue" is a term that I will examine in Chapter 4. "Character" is a term freighted with varied meanings, those very meanings undergirding this entire thesis; I will examine this key term in brief below. "Authenticity" is another key term that pervades each chapter in this thesis and that, given its ambiguity, I will examine at some length below.

Character

      According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the word "character" may be defined in any of the following ways:

1. The combination of qualities or features that distinguishes one person, group, or thing from another

2. The combined moral or ethical structure of a person or group

3. Reputation

4. Status

5. A person who is peculiar or eccentric

6. A person portrayed in a drama, novel or other artistic piece

7. A description of a person's attributes, traits or abilities

    Synonyms are listed as "disposition," "quality," "type." (226)

In *The Rhetoric*, Aristotle writes that a man's character "may be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses" (25). Such rhetorical *ethos* may be constituted by elements of character derived from definitions 1 through 5 and 7 in the list above. In his *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle writes that virtue emerges from a person's "firm and unchangeable character" (28). Here, although the idea of "virtue" links character most clearly to definition 2 above, the concept of character from which virtue springs are, as in *The Rhetoric*, aligned to definitions 1 through 5 and 7. What of definition 6 above, character as a "dramatic personage"? Aristotle treats this subject in his *Poetics*, arguing that the ideal character in drama should exhibit four qualities: 1) goodness (they enact a society's virtues); 2) appropriateness (they behave the way a person of their character "type" should); 3) verisimilitude (they are true-to-life and the details of their performance are recognizable from real life); 4) consistency (they remain the same throughout, their character "firm and unchangeable," to use his terms from the *Ethics*). The dramatic character, then, also draws upon the various dictionary definitions for the word "character": each has his or her own qualities, morality, reputation, status and eccentricities.

The radical street protests represented in my case studies feature characters who are classically Aristotelian in many ways. These characters may be viewed through the lens of the *Rhetoric*, the *Ethics* or the *Poetics*. I will employ all three lenses in this thesis. Using the three different texts from Aristotle to examine the concept of "character," I hope to identify contradictions and complements in order to create a fuller concept of "character" than any of these single texts may offer. My work to integrate/synthesize Aristotle's thoughts from distinct disciplines (rhetoric, theatre/aesthetics, moral ethics) mirrors my own interdisciplinary

approach.

Authenticity

"Authenticity" is an important concept in the areas of persuasion, theatre/performance and collective identity/social movements. Trying to define "authenticity," however, is something like trying to catch the wind in your hands: you will get a feel for it, but you will not be able actually to capture it. Authenticity, for the majority of this thesis, is best understood as a *topos* to which various rhetors, audiences and theorists make either explicit or implicit reference. Certainly there are some deeper analyses of authenticity that I will examine (from Taylor, Trilling, Heidegger, Sartre and others), but, whether or not there "really is" an "authentic," is largely irrelevant to my purposes. The "authentic" serves as a category of reference. It will be my work to determine what criteria we use to label something "authentic," thus allowing "authenticity," whether it is real or not, to be mobilized for rhetorical, theatrical and/or collective identity purposes.

Authenticity implies *genuine* and, because of this quality, is worthy of being considered credible. Many things cloud authenticity, according to various theories. Artifice, social conformity, and instrumentality are three such antitheses of authenticity. Stanislavski tries to encourage his actors to shed all artifice from their performances in order to reveal something more "genuine" or "authentic." This trajectory in theatre continues even today. Yet all performances for an audience's benefit will necessarily contain artificial, "theatricalized" elements. For Trilling, authenticity is different from "sincerity," the latter implying an obedience to social rules and roles, an aesthetic stance designed to please, as opposed to

"authenticity," which may flout social roles and the need to please society. Participating in public discourse, however, even when from a marginal position, requires some aspect of compliance with social rules and norms. In *I and Thou,* Buber writes that "every means is an obstacle. Only when every means has collapsed does the meeting come about" (12). The truly authentic cannot be "useful" in the sense of its instrumentality. If rhetoric is necessarily strategic, then tactical and/or artful rhetoric can never be truly "authentic," at least according to the various definitions offered above.

"Authentic" literally means being of an "undisputed origin," and is related to the word "author" (*American Heritage* 88). But do we "author" our own characters? Or does our character have its origin in something beyond our control? Goffman proposes that, for those in stigmatized groups, the presentation of "a coherent politics of identity" may very well be at odds with "authenticity" as he understands it and that there is likely "no 'authentic' solution at all" (*Stigma* 124). The stigmatized, or marked, individual becomes the mouthpiece for a group that, in effect, enacts an inherited social script. The "undisputed origin" aspect of "authenticity" is overdetermined. Similarly, E. Patrick Johnson, in *Appropriating Blackness*, writes, "Because the concept of blackness has no essence, 'black authenticity' is overdetermined —contingent on the historical, social, and political terms of its production" (3). Fanon makes a similar point in *Black Skin, White Masks* (89-90).

With all of these blocks to authenticity necessarily in place for street protest, how can authenticity be mobilized? Working from the idea that "authenticity" does not actually exist as anything more than a *topos*, a commonplace, is helpful. "Authentic" might be shorthand for "I'm real, I'm genuine, so you should trust me and be persuaded by me." Authenticity is

conveyed through those actions that *seem* to (do?) arise "naturally" out of one's given character as overdetermined by one's society. When Aristotle writes, "Naturalness is persuasive, artificiality is the contrary" (*Rhetoric* 167), he is essentially extolling the rhetorical power of perceived authenticity (since an "actual" authenticity may or may not exist). Johnson notes, "Authenticity, then, is yet another trope manipulated for cultural capital" (3). The same trope can be manipulated for social and political change.

As Goffman writes, "A given social front tends to become institutionalized in terms of the abstract stereotyped expectations to which it gives rise, and tends to take on a meaning and stability apart from the specific tasks which happen at the time to be performed in its name. The front becomes a 'collective representation' and a fact in its own right" (*Presentation* 27). "Authenticity," then, becomes a category we recognize: *Oh, those people are just behaving like themselves; therefore, they are not artificial; therefore, they are credible*. (Their arguments might still be challenged on other grounds, such as being unreasonable, immoral or unpatriotic). For Charles Taylor there is no conflict here. He writes, "Authenticity is clearly self-referential: this has to be *my* orientation. But this does not mean that on another level the *content* must be self-referential" (*Ethics* 82). For Taylor, authenticity cannot be entirely self-authored, and he blames the commonly misunderstood "ideal" of the authentic self as entirely self-authored on a Romantic-era construction.

Society shapes our inner selves so that we "fit" the role that society has assigned us. For Trilling this in not "authenticity" but is instead an aspect of "sincerity." "Sincerity" is a show of feelings, a social display. For Goffman, all public displays are performances that require the donning of social masks, whether consciously or not. For Goffman, then, there is no

"authentic." But for Trilling (as for Grotowski in his work with "uncovering"), the possibility

exists that "somewhere under all the roles there is Me" (10). That "Me" would be the

"authentic" self, one that might very well clash with social expectations. It is this authenticity,

Trilling argues, that in contemporary western society allows for a certain amount of social

deviance. He writes, "Much that culture traditionally condemned and sought to exclude is

accorded a considerable moral authority by reason of the authenticity claimed for it, for

example, disorder, violence, unreason" (11). Burke's framing of piety and impiety can help

resolve this sincerity/authenticity tension. Marginalized groups might very well be acting

piously ("true to themselves" or "authentically") while being labeled as impious ("socially

deviant"). Las Madres, ACT UP, Otpor, CCNV and NUH all engaged in disruptive behaviors

that were condemned by other factions in their society as "unfitting." Yet all of these groups

could claim the mantle of "authenticity" for themselves, and this gave them credibility.

An interesting example of a group leveraging their authenticity through radical street

performance is El Teatro Campesino, a group founded by Luis Valdez in California in the

1960s, which found Latino farmworkers performing protest plays about their working

conditions. Cultural critic Ralph Gleason writes of one 1966 El Teatro performance, "It is all

too real to the audience when it sees these men on stage and knows without thinking about it

that they come from the picket line where they faced violence and the terror they are talking

about." (qtd. in Elam 109). The actors are "giving testimony," to use Grotowski's phrase. The

result is that the audience's "perception of authenticity worked to strip away theatrical illusion

and foreground the relationship of the staged event to social conditions" (Elam 109).

Authenticity reframes the performance event, takes it off "the stage" and places it squarely in

the realm of "the real." Elam argues that authentic identity-based performances exist as "a powerful tool within contemporary politics" since they offer a privileged perspective in contrast to the "inauthentic" institutional state version of events (117). The projection of authenticity "can valorize the voice, presence and subjectivity of the previously silent and disenfranchised. Consequently, new political subjects repeatedly turn to assertions of authenticity to generate consensus and even political action" (Elam 117).

Authenticity is "asserted," "mobilized" or "performed": it is as much an aesthetic stance as Trilling's "sincerity" is. In fact, the two are arguably inseparable. Alexander, in his essay "Cultural Pragmatics," opposes the "naturalistic fallacy" of authenticity: "It is actually the illusory circularity of hermeneutic interpretation that creates the sense of authenticity, and not the other way around" (59). Alexander teases out various qualities that mark a public performance (à la Goffman) as inauthentic or fake. In such a performance, "the actor seems out of the role, merely to be reading from an impersonal script, pushed and pulled by the forces of society, acting not from sincere motives but to manipulate the audience" (55). Stanislavski might have written these very same words. By examining these negations, we may determine the elements that comprise an "authentic" performance: the actor is in the role; the script is personally felt; the actor is responsible for his or her choices; the actor is motivated inside the performance and not audience-focused. These elements of identity, emotionality, agency and non-instrumentality will all be examined in the ensuing chapters.

One particular aspect of authenticity that seems to recur is the idea of individual choice or agency and its dissociation from tangible results or instrumentality. Sartre, in his *Anti-Semite and Jew*, writes: "Thus the choice of authenticity appears to be a moral decision, bringing

certainty to the Jew on the ethical level but in no way serving as a solution on the social or political level" (141). For Sartre in the immediate aftermath of WWII France, evidence of anti-Semitism was inescapable, and the situation for the Jew in France did not inspire optimism; and, so, Sartre sees the Jew who authentically embraces his/her Jewish identity as, at once, ethically superior but still victimized in an anti-Semitic society. I believe that *because* authentically embracing one's marginalized/despised identity is an ethical/moral act, the result actually does have potential for creating social and political change through the medium of publicly performed protest (not Sartre's focus).

Since the "real-ness" of authenticity is immaterial to my thesis questions, I will accept it is as a *topos*, a construction, something to be "performed"—at least through the end of Chapter 5. It is only in Chapter 6, where I explore questions raised by the rest of the thesis, when I will grapple with the possible "real" authenticity.

Chapter Two
CHARACTER AS COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

II.A. — Identification and *Idem*: the "what" of the "who"

Hannah Arendt writes, "the paradox involved in the loss of human rights is that such loss coincides with the instant when a person becomes a human being in general – without a profession, without a citizenship, without an opinion, without a deed by which to identify and specify himself – and different in general, representing nothing but his own absolutely unique individuality, which, deprived of expression within and action upon a common world, loses all significance" (*Origins* 302). What does that mean? If I have a prayer of being effective in this world, effective as a political agent, I must do so from the basis of an identified and specified collective identity. "I am a College Professor" (one of many), "I am an American" (one of many), "I am a Democrat" (one of many), etc. The group I claim for the basis of my identity must be recognized and I must be recognizable, and ultimately, verifiable, as a group member.

Identity may be defined as "the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitively recognizable or known" (*American Heritage* 654). Alberto Melucci describes identity as "continuity of the subject over and beyond variations in time and its adaptations to the environment; the delimitation of this subject with respect to others; and the ability to recognize and to be recognized" (*Playing* 28). Identity presupposes the ability to be identified, and identification requires some form of categorization. Identity must be "recognized," that is, "known" *(cognoscere)* "again" *(re)*. Something already known, already familiar, must come into play in the process of recognition. Identity becomes an available

trope, possibly even a *cliché*, that one claims.

The "what" of identity necessarily precedes the "who" of identity. As Arendt writes, "the moment we want to say who somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying what he is . . . we begin to describe a type or a 'character' in the old meaning of the word" (*Human Condition* 181). Ricoeur compares "identity as *sameness*" (*idem*) and "identity as *selfhood*" (*ipse*) and notes that "the question of permanence in time is connected exclusively to *idem*-identity" (*Oneself* 116). Selfhood (who am I?) morphs over time; categorical identity (what am I?) remains more or less consistent over time. It is through being a member of a group, of a collective "what," that I can initially claim identity and be recognized.

Appiah asks, "Do identities represent a curb on autonomy, or do they provide its contours?" (xiv). The answer is both. My *idem*-identity is subject to external ascriptions, determined in advance of my unique arrival into that identity. The "role" is already in existence and so once I am identified in that role ("College Professor," "American," "Democrat") I am already inscribed in previously established national/cultural discourses and thus become recognizable. Certainly this curbs my autonomy, but the contours of this role/identity allow me to maneuver in the public sphere.

Judith Butler writes, "one exists not only by virtue of being recognized, but, in a prior sense, by being *recognizable*" (*Excitable* 5). Is it possible to add an entirely new category of character to the world's list of *dramatis personae*? Yes, over a long period of time a new category of subject might come to be recognized. But none of us can start that way. If we wish to engage with society we must be recognizable, a character that already exists. We are then "someone" who has agency in this ideologically framed world. In this way, "character" (as

"type", as *idem*-identity) is both embodied *and* embedded, created through one's own agency *and* inherited societal constraints.

The English word "character" derives from the Greek "kharakter," meaning an engraved mark or a brand. The word character means many things, as I noted in Chapter 1, but here in Chapter 2 I will focus on "character" as the qualities that distinguish one group from another, character as "type," character as *collective* identity. Although all human beings are "marked" in one way or another, there are dominant groups whose marks may not be noticed. In American society, for example, an "unmarked character" would be white (Obama is a "black President", Reagan was not referred to as a "white President"), male, heterosexual, able-bodied and Christian. Any "deviation" from these norms is not a "bad" thing, but it is notable, and so the character becomes "marked."

According to Aristotle, a man's character "may be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses" (*Rhetoric* 25). In the realm of rhetoric, there are advantages to claiming and enacting one's already-established character: I am easily recognized by an audience, and I may argue from an epistemology of provenance–that my own life experiences have given me unique insights into a particular reality. These things may contribute to the "marked" (recognizable character type) speaker's credibility.

The Romantic-era version of authenticity, the notion that a person completely creates himself as an original human being, is not available to the marked character. Butler writes, "the address that inaugurates the possibility of agency in a single stroke forecloses the possibility of radical autonomy" (*Excitable* 26). Once I claim my identity as "black" or "poor" or "disabled" or "girl," once I agree to be addressed as such in order to be recognized and thus able to engage

in public communication, I have given up a great deal of autonomy as to who I am and how I can act. Is any of this ontologically "real"? I'm not sure it matters for the purposes of this thesis. As Maurice Charland writes at the conclusion of his essay on "Constitutive Rhetoric," "ultimately, the position one embodies as a subject is a rhetorical effect" (148). For marked populations protesting against the state and attempting to persuade the general public to take their side, working with, rather than against, the constitutive rhetorical effect is the more practical choice.

If one key to persuading the public is getting the public to recognize the marginalized group's collective character, their "marks," how is this done? Recognizable tropes of character must be embodied and performed by protestors in the public sphere. The protestor performs "the mother," embodies "the homeless person," or whatever the character type may be. Ricoeur notes that it is "bodies" that serve as the first particular of identification, since bodies, as opposed to thoughts, have the advantage of being "public entities" (*Oneself* 33). We encounter bodies in public and categorize them: "matronly woman," "unwashed raggedy man," etc. The character type needs to be embodied, literally "in a body," in order to be recognized.

Such embodiment of character actually coincides with Aristotelian thought. In *The Rhetoric,* Book II, Aristotle encourages the orator to "make his character look right" in the eyes of an audience (90). In Book III, he discusses various "signs of genuineness" and notes that "each class of men, each type of disposition, will have its own appropriate way of letting the truth appear" (178). So in rhetoric, there is great importance on the speaker *displaying* the signs of genuineness and rightness, though these signs will vary by character type. Certain language choices and mannerisms are "right" for a particular age, or gender, or nationality, and not for

another. Rhetorical proofs ("pistis") are character in action ("I do"), but they have a definite relation to identity ("I am"). If one is already embodied in a certain character type (both biologically and sociologically), then one's "natural" display of signs should appear as "right" for that character. In essence, the lesson is "just be yourself."

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle writes that when playwrights create characters in dramatic works, they should aim to fulfill four criteria for those characters: "First and foremost, they should be good . . . The second point is to make them appropriate . . . The third is to make them like the reality . . . The fourth is to make them consistent and the same throughout" (242). Aristotle's dramatic personage is not dissimilar from Aristotle's rhetor.   The character of the rhetor should also be good, or at least seem to be. Aristotle is encouraging the rhetor to display signs of goodness, to "act" in a good way, which may in fact "be" goodness.   Regardless, such goodness must appropriately match the speaker's (or character's) station or identity–women are good in their own way, slaves in theirs. This is Aristotle's second criterion for the dramatic character ("appropriateness"). According to Aristotle's third point, such an approach to characterization should yield a character who resembles one in the "real" world. In short, there is a strong connection between what *I do* (how will I act in a good way?) and what *I am* (my embodied character), and this brings us into the contentious realm of identity politics.

II. B. — Identity politics questioned and justified

Identity politics defined

A 1977 statement from the Combahee River Collective articulates a key premise of identity politics: "We believe that the most profound and potentially the most radical politics

come directly out of our own identity" (qtd. in Fuss, *Essentially* 99). If you belong to a specific

identity group (woman, black, gay) then this group identity will necessarily influence your

political stance and activities, at least according to those who ascribe to traditional identity

politics. Moreover, there is potential power in leading with one's "private" identity in the

public sphere. David Wojnarowicz writes:

> To make the private into something public is an action that has terrific
>
> repercussions in the preinvented world. The government has the job of
>
> maintaining the day-to-day illusion of the ONE-TRIBE-NATION. Each public
>
> disclosure of a private reality becomes something of a magnet that can attract
>
> others with a similar frame of reference; thus each public disclosure of a
>
> fragment of private reality serves as a dismantling tool against the illusion of
>
> ONE-TRIBE-NATION. . . The term 'general public' disintegrates. (121)

This way of thinking, however, continues to be met with many objections.

     Having had its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s, the idea of identity politics has now

fallen out of favor. The charge that identity necessarily implies that groups have essential and

unchangeable qualities has been leveled against the use of identity politics by feminist, queer,

and African-American theorists, among others. The suspicion around essentialism has made

identity politics a notorious byword in most academic circles. Susan Bickford in her 1997

article "Anti-anti-identity Politics" calls identity politics "the antihero with 1000 faces," noting

how critics from the left – including feminists, communitarians, poststructuralists, Democrats,

and Marxists – have all attacked the concept (112). Bickford is not even including critics from

the right. There are several valid concerns regarding identity politics: it does have the tendency

to fracture the political left rather than unite them; such politics may very well gloss over significant differences among those of a certain group identity; and identity politics can perpetuate a politics of "victimhood."

Perhaps the greatest problem with identity politics is that it creates difficulty for coherence in any diverse democracy. The "liberal logic" of a democratic public sphere is such that "citizens long to abstract themselves into a privileged public disembodiment" (Warner, *Publics* 176). Sartre in *Anti-Semite and Jew* states that "the democrat, like the scientist, fails to see the particular case; to him the individual is only an ensemble of universal traits. It follows that his defense of the Jew saves the latter as man and annihilates him as Jew" (56). The state, supposedly, serves the "general public," the "one-tribe-nation" that Wojnarowicz emphasizes.

Ronald Reagan never mentioned the term AIDS in public until 1985, a good four years into the health crisis, and only in 1987 did he ask for the Department of Health to fully investigate the extent of the crisis. Why? Because by this point, the disease was no longer "the gay plague" but had penetrated "the general public" (Crimp, *AIDS* 11). If gay men had not been seen as a separate identity group, but instead as part of the disembodied, generic "general public," then Reagan would have acted sooner. The logical extension of this would be that identity politics is the problem, not the solution. Specific identity groups should simply "get over themselves" and work on projects of interest to society as a whole. But such an argument is ridiculous. The erasure of various collective identities is simply impossible.

Michael Walzer writes in his preface to Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew*: "the democrat's advocacy of assimilation for the Jews and classlessness for the workers, though no doubt well-intentioned, is also cruelly premature" (xii). The disappearance of group identity is not

something our world is currently ready for, and perhaps will never be, nor should be. Certainly

for today, and for my case studies dating from the last quarter of the 20th century, distinct group

identity is/was a crucial aspect of creating social and political progress. Society as a whole

("the state") cannot ignore the interests/needs of particular identity groups that comprise its

citizenry.

Essentialism and constructivism

Not only have the societal implications of identity politics been deemed problematic, so

have the theoretical underpinnings. Identity politics has frequently been accused of assuming

an "essentialism" around identity that does not exist. Jane Roland Martin opens her essay

"Methodological Essentialism" with a personal memory: "At meetings, workshops, and

conferences in the 1980s, feminist scholars became accustomed to hearing women accuse one

another of essentialism" (630). But is it even possible to talk about "identity" without

essentialism arising, at least to some degree?

As I noted in the beginning of this chapter, identity is defined as the collective "set of

characteristics by which a thing is definitively recognizable or known" (*American Heritage*

654). Identity is a "what" as much as it is a "who," and as Ricoeur shows in his *Course of

Recognition*, the "what" is actually prior to the "who." Alberto Melucci, one of the most

important sociologists theorizing on collective identity today, tells us: "of course actors have to

reify their actions in the making in order to speak about them. Objectifying is a basic trait of

human cognition" ("Process" 55). Or to take the argument yet further:

Any naming or categorizing tends to call attention to similarities and neglect

differences. In other words, the use of any general term, be it *chair, dog, virtue, mother, family, male dominance* or *women's subordination* easily can give rise to the very consequence that feminist scholars have attributed to essence talk. But this in turn, is to say that the masking of difference or diversity is built into the language itself. (Martin 636)

Humans categorize. This is how we are able to recognize and communicate about our world.

In order to get around the "essentialism" accusation, it may be possible to view identity politics as a social construction, rather than something biologically determined. A marginalized group identity may perpetually exist because members of that group identify and/or are identified as members of said group with its corresponding social status. It may be that the "common history that social status produces" is what constructs the marginalized group and allows it to be recognized as such. "Groups are real not as substances, but as forms of social relations" (Young, *Justice* 44). Diana Fuss in *Essentially Speaking* makes clear the distinction between the essentialist and contructionist approaches to identity politics: "while the essentialist holds that the natural is *represented* by the social, the constructionist maintains that the natural is *produced* by the social" (3). For the constructionist, there is no pre-social "given" that contributes to the organization of differential group identities (Fuss, 2).

Even so, despite there being no ontological "essence," is there not an "essence" to the group as a result of this social construction? And, if so, cannot this group "essence" be recognized, communicated and perhaps, in certain circumstances, leveraged for the group's benefit?

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is certainly a socially created phenomenon, but

one that functions as "fact." The *habitus* acknowledges the existence of "principles which generate and organize practices and representations." Such principles and practices pre-exist the individual's entrance into the world, and so one inherits "a world of already realized ends, procedures to follow, paths to take" (*Logic* 53). The *habitus* is larger than "identity" but necessarily encompasses aspects of identity, implicating the actor in a multi-dimensional web of rules, customs and perspectives that are as "real" as any pre-social "essence."

Goffman's theory of social performance leads to a similar conclusion. Goffman writes that "a given social front tends to become institutionalized in terms of the abstract stereotyped expectations to which it gives rise . . . . The front becomes a 'collective representation' and a fact in its own right" (*Presentation* 27). Here, the idea of "identity" is addressed directly. The socially constructed "front" or performance, over time, is taken for "fact," as something that is "essentially real" and not merely constructed.

Finally, Althusser's theory of interpellation supports the "essence" of social construction when it comes to a group member's identity.   In his essay "Ideology and the State," Althusser tells us that we live in a world defined by ideologies. The apparatuses of these ideologies exist everywhere and they are inescapable: the education system, the justice system, the economic system, the media, the government, the church, the family (96-97), and all of these apparatuses tell us who we are and what we should be. Ideology–a social construct–constitutes individuals as subjects with seemingly "essential" or "real" identities. Ideology "imposes obviousness as obviousness" (116). It names something which we then "cannot fail to recognize" (116), and we are named before we even come into existence: black, poor, disabled, girl. Each of these named categories is pre-scripted. When I rise to the name, when you call me

"Jew" and I acknowledge that call, that "hail" as Althusser calls it, I become transformed by the action of "interpellation" (118). The world calls out my mark, and I answer to the call, becoming what I am named.

None of this should really be that controversial. One of the clearest presentations of identity in communication studies can be found in the work of Mary Jane Collier, who along with Yea-Wen Chen, uses the phrase "cultural identities" in the 2012 essay "Intercultural Identity Positioning." Collier and Chen analyze "cultural identities," which exist as social constructions, but are nonetheless, specific and measurable (the article uses data collected from self-avowals and the ascriptions from others). The authors define cultural identities as "socially constructed, structurally enabled or constrained, discursively constituted locations of being, speaking, and acting that are enduring as well as constantly changing" (45). Such cultural identities, thus, take on the characteristics of both essences and constructions. In any specific (rhetorical) situation, the process of "cultural identity enactment" occurs; this process involves elements of "avowal, ascription, and salience," with salience referring to "the importance of particular cultural identity enactment relative to other potential identities" in that particular instance (45). Different aspects of identity such as race, class, sexual identity, gender and ability, will all intersect and may not be entirely separated from the other aspects of identity, but certain situations will make one such aspect more salient than another. When Las Madres gather in the Plaza de Mayo they are claiming the salience of their gender and social role identities (women and mothers), leaving class and race differences (more or less) behind. For marginalized groups, the salience of a particular non-dominant identity will emerge more prominently whenever group members collect together and enter the public sphere, dominated

as it is by non-marginalized identities.

I am not arguing that identity *cannot* be flexible. As noted previously, most people belong to multiple identity groups, one of which may happen to become salient in a particular situation. As well, an individual may consciously choose to rebel against a given identity group through his or her actions, refusing to behave according to the expectations built up over time by the *habitus* or the social front. And of course individuals each have their own individual style. Nonetheless, "groups constitute individuals . . . . Even the person's mode of reasoning, evaluating and expressing feelings are constituted partially by her or his group affinities" (Young, *Justice* 45). This is rhetorically valuable–vital, even–when it comes to marginalized individuals coming together with other individuals from the same "constituting" group in order to challenge the state.

The privilege of belonging

Burke writes, "Belonging is rhetorical" (*Rhetoric of Motives* 28). If a person takes part in a "specialized activity" associated with a particular group or class, they are constructed as belonging to that particular class or group (28). By doing what the other members of the group "typically" do, a person takes on the mantle of that group identity. This is akin to Goffman's thinking. Charland goes further with this, writing that the qualities of character are "inherent to the subject position" ("Constitutive" 134). The person who acknowledges some sort of group membership, even if that group membership is an involuntary act of being "interpellated" (à la Althusser), accepts the descriptors of character already inherent in that character position.

This does not hold for all types of characters. Appiah, for example, notes the difference

between the character or role of "butler" and the character or role of "black" or "gay." The

butler might merely observe the conventions of the role and perform the behaviors expected of

that role, but the other collective identities result in something far deeper:

> The labels operate to mold what we may call *identification*, the process through
>
> which individuals shape their projects – including their plans for their own lives
>
> and their conceptions of the good life – by reference to available labels,
>
> available identities. . . It seems right to call this "identification" because the
>
> label plays a role in shaping the way the agent makes decisions about how to
>
> conduct a life, in the process of the construction of one's identity. (*Ethics* 66)

These holistic constitutive effects hold for identities that may be politicized. Because of this

constitutive depth, the nature of belonging to a politicizeable marginalized group offers certain

privileges, particularly in the world of rhetoric. For example, it may be argued that "only those

who live a particular reality can know about it, and only they have the right to speak about it"

(Kruks 109). In short, only those who are marginalized may credibly speak to the issues facing

the marginalized.

For certain identities such as "woman" or "black," there is typically a biological aspect

involved that leads the individual to living *as* a woman or living *as* a black person, and to being

treated as such. Fuss challenges Derrida's "daring" to speak as a woman, writing that for a male

to speak as a woman is a "transgression suggest[ing] that 'woman' is a social space which any

sexed subject can fill" (*Essentially* 19). As Appiah notes, though, the role of "woman" is not

merely a social space to be filled (like a butler), but an identity that must be lived and that

demands a life dedicated to that role. Jill Dolan goes further in this vein, writing that "a

heterosexual woman playing a lesbian usurps a minority voice. She becomes an imposter, organizing an alien experience under the rubric of her heterosexual privilege" (145). Dolan is writing about stage performances, but this idea of actors and roles applies to "real life" as well. Dominant identities (heterosexual, male, white) may be privileged in the public sphere, but these identities cannot fathom the experience of the minority, and for them to attempt to do so is a usurpation, a blatantly *inauthentic* act. The privilege of speaking about the lived experience of the marginalized belongs exclusively to the marginalized group members themselves.

Solidarity in movement

  Shifting to a sociological perspective, another justification for identity politics and its advantages for public protest is that mutual recognition among group members is a vital part of protest actions. For protestors to feel and state, "We are 'the same' in solidarity," is imperative for any social movement. The collective identity invoked by any social movement organization "is a shorthand designation announcing a status–a set of attitudes, commitments, and rules for behavior–that those who assume the identity can be expected to subscribe to" (Friedman and McAdam 4). Such attitudes, commitments and behaviors will result from the common lived experiences of being a member of the marginalized group, but the collective identity of the movement might involve merely a subset of the entire group or require a re-categorizing across groups. For example, Las Madres do not include *all* mothers, though group draws upon the concept of "mother-ness." Only those mothers who experienced the disappearances of their children became involved in the protest movement (at least initially). Similarly, ACTUP does not represent all gay men, nor is it exclusive to gay men, but includes other "queer" identities

and all who are HIV positive. Nonetheless, once a person becomes a member of the movement organization, their "status" is such that they should adhere to certain public behaviors and buy into certain attitudes common to the group.

Frequently, this is an organic process. As Bourdieu writes, among "members of same group" (or same class), practices "are always more and better harmonized than the agents know, or wish" (*Logic* 59). Solidarity may be something that is explicitly claimed, but its sources are in the lived experiences of the group members, which are fundamentally similar. In the film *Las Madres*, one of the mothers of the disappeared relates the story of the first time she went to the Plaza de Mayo to join the other women protesting. She felt hesitant to join and afraid, but she ventured to the Plaza. She says, "The first question they asked me was, 'Who do you have that's disappeared?' Then I felt that we were all the same person" (*Las Madres*). The qualification for group belonging seems to be both a shared identity and a shared traumatic experience; occasionally, the latter is entirely implied in the former (homelessness, for example).

In their essay "New Rhetoric and New Social Movements," Hauser and Whalen write that a "minimal criterion for 'membership' in a contemporary social movement is that the change agent must see him/herself as acting out beliefs in a manner similar to those of distant members" (128). The group's sense of solidarity needs to trump spatial distance for any protest group beyond one representing a truly localized community. Especially in the era prior to widespread internet communication, such solidarity across distance frequently arose out of a previously shared and recognized identity, although sometimes it was the act of engaging in protest that brought that particular identity to salience. Wagner and Cohen examine the effect

of "disalienation" resulting from participation of homeless persons in political activism on their own behalf (555). They found that even those homeless who were previously reluctant to embrace the label or identity of "homeless," truly did embrace that identity due to their experiences as protestors on behalf of the group, and that such "embracement" continued even after the protest participants had secured housing and were thus no longer technically homeless. One 22 year old (now housed) man told the interviewers: "I know maybe this sounds weird, but those are my folks down there" at the homeless shelter (555). That sense of solidarity–"I'm one of them"–so important for the success of social movements, seems a natural result of embracing identity politics.

All of this is not to say that such conclusions about the connection between identity politics and group solidarity are not without critics or problems. Jasper takes issue with what he sees as a typical "bias of social movement research," namely "the assumption that protestors arise out of some already-defined category and collective identity, such as labor or African-Americans, rather than coming together out of shared goals or ideas" (89). He continues, "structural positions do not automatically lead to shared consciousness, identity, or action" (89). Instead, Jasper suggests that some sort of "moral shock" must occur as a "first step toward recruitment into social movements: when an unexpected event or piece of information raises such a sense of outrage in a person that she becomes inclined toward political action . . ." (106). A specific "moral shock," however, might more likely occur among an "already-defined category" of identity, rather than a more "random" moral shock happening that galvanizes a new group into existence. For example, Las Madres were met with the moral shock of their children being disappeared, but these women also already belonged to the pre-defined

categories of "woman" and "mother" and "middle-aged." All of these categories of identity were necessary in order for them to become the victims of the moral shock. The spread of AIDS among urban gay men in the United States, and the American government's refusal to deal constructively with the disease *because* it seemed to target that specific marginalized group, was another example of a moral shock specifically confronting a pre-defined demographic.

Tarrow identifies the problem with identity politics not in its initial stage of solidarity and consciousness-raising, but in the stages that ensue. He writes, "building a movement around strong ties of collective identity, whether inherited or constructed, does much of the work that would normally fall to organization; but it cannot do the work of mobilization, which depends on framing the identities so that they will lead to action, alliances, interaction" (*Power* 119). Jasper's "moral shock" might do the work of mobilization, however, and as noted above, such moral shocks might very well be confined to a specific collective identity. Still, Tarrow notes that "identity politics often produces insular, sectarian, and divisive movements incapable of expanding membership, broadening appeals, and negotiating with prospective allies" (119). These charges are true, but perhaps similar charges can be leveled at *any* social movement as it grows and expands beyond its immediate nucleus of founders.

Conversely, another problem with solidarity emerging from an identity-based movement occurs as the group grows over time to include members who are of different ascribed identities. Friedman and McAdam note how "over time, as a more heterogeneous group of individuals comes to be associated with a social movement organization, there is a tendency toward a more inclusive, and more ambiguous, definition of identity" (167). Although

this might be viewed as a positive thing (moving beyond Tarrow's charges of insularity and sectarianism), the results of such increased heterogeneity may include a dilution of the recognizable "brand" of the group in the public's eye, and an internal tension over who has the right to speak on behalf of the group, since it is the "epistemology of experience" that serves as a major justification of identity politics to begin with. Protest groups like Las Madres and Otpor were both very careful to establish boundaries for group membership in order to "appear" in a specific way in the public eye. Las Madres discouraged men (husbands and fathers) and younger women (sisters) from marching with them. Otpor students refused to establish any alliances with existing political parties in order to perpetuate their image as uncorrupted young people. A protest group like ACTUP, as it grew and expanded to include members beyond the initial community of queers, struggled with issues of solidarity: were these protestors in solidarity due only to the "cause" (i.e. combating AIDS) or were they in solidarity due to their shared identity and situation (i.e. fellow queers fighting "their" AIDS)?

Identity politics justified: a pragmatic perspective

Todd Gitlin, an opponent of identity political movements, writes: "From popular culture to government policy, society has evidently assigned you a membership. Identity politics turns necessity to virtue" (153). Gitlin's rather flip analysis of identity politics as a fabrication-turned-actual ironically offers insight into how marginalized identities are practically mobilized for the purposes of furthering a particular group's political goals. Whether these identities are "real" or not is beside the point, since they are in "evidence," as Gitlin notes.

Sonia Kruks, a proponent of identity politics, offers a complementary analysis of

identity politics in her *Retrieving Experience*:

> What makes identity politics a significant departure from earlier pre-identarian
>
> forms of the politics of recognition is its demand for recognition on the basis of
>
> the very grounds on which recognition has previously been denied: it is *qua*
>
> women, *qua* blacks, *qua* lesbians that groups demand recognition. This demand
>
> is made irrespective of whether the identities are viewed in essentialist terms, as
>
> inerasable natural traits, or whether they are viewed as socially, culturally, or
>
> discursively constructed . . . [W]hat is demanded is respect for oneself *as*
>
> different. (85)

Kruks' assertion that the source of perceived identities is really beside the point when it comes

to the potential power of identity politics allows me to move towards a conclusion for this

section about identity politics. Is there an essential 'being,' something 'real' (as opposed

fabricated) when it comes to collective identity? Pragmatically, at this point in my thesis I

choose to defer answering this seemingly unresolvable question. The "reality" of a group's

identity is immaterial, as Kruks notes. Additionally, questions regarding "essential being" are

not useful for real-world political (rhetorical) purposes. Instead, it is the "appearance" of an

essence by which a group may be characterized and recognized that is necessary. It is the

"how" of public performance that is key here, and so the *doing* has to take precedence over the

being.   I can similarly defer all challenges to identity politics that question its validity without

challenging its rhetorical efficacy. I choose to take a pragmatic approach here, moving away

from the realm of abstract dialectic and embracing the realm of contingent rhetoric.[8]

       I argue that many elements of identity politics are useful, even necessary, for the

political gains among marginalized populations. Certain categories of identity have long been repressed or devalued by dominant categories in society. A valuable response to this, as Craig Calhoun notes, is "to claim a value for all those labeled by that category, thus implicitly invoking it in an essentialist way" (17). Identity politics is a useful political tool for those who have been repressed and devalued due to their categories of identity. In *Inclusion and Democracy*, Iris Marion Young asks the question: "what is and is not Identity Politics?" (102). She notes how critics of identity politics frequently "reduce political movements that arise from specificities of social group difference to [mere] assertions of group identity or [mere] self-regarding interest" (102-03). In this sense, such critics are removing the "politics" from "identity politics," but leaving the "identity" part intact. Young continues:

> Any movements or organizations mobilizing politically in response to the
> depreciating judgements, marginalization, or inequality in the wider society, I
> suggest, need to engage in 'identity politics' . . . . Such solidarity-producing
> cultural politics does consist in the assertion of specificity and difference
> towards a wider public, from whom the movement expects respect and
> recognition of its agency and virtues. (103)

The social and political changes being sought by marginalized groups are inextricably tied to the ways that the larger society views and treats the group based on their category of identity.

Steven Seidman reflects upon what he sees as the post-structuralist turn to an anti-identity politics and asks the very insightful question: "But to what end?" (133). Seidman challenges post-structuralist theory to offer something pragmatic. Cindy Patton takes a similar pragmatist approach to identity politics in her essay "Tremble, Hetero Swine!" Patton writes

that "the stabilization of identities appears to be ineluctably essentialist only when we treat them in the realm of the imaginary, with its apparent promise of infinite possibilities for performance and re-performance" (147). Of course the realm of politics, whether of the "identity" brand or not, does not exist in the imaginary, but in the real and contingent. Thus Patton proposes "that we treat identities as a series of rhetorical closures linked with practical strategies" as a practical means of "affect[ing] the system" and "staging political claims" (147). If identity can be successfully mobilized in certain political situations, then that is the "end" that may justify identity politics.

The use of identity claims for the purposes of political protest is a strategic act. Those identity claims are rhetorical in nature and purpose, and should not be examined for their "objective" logic. Protest is a real world event, not an academic exercise. Analysis of the essential nature of identity claims takes place in a realm "increasingly disconnected from the political impulses of the movement" (Seidman 128). The battle over whether or not the identity label of "gay" is merely a social construction or a biological imperative, for example, has become of "primarily academic interest" (Seidman 128). I agree with Seidman when he advocates a "pragmatic approach" to identity claims in the political sphere: "conceptual and political decision making [should] be debated in terms of concrete advantages and disadvantages" (137). The "concrete" is the realm of rhetoric, not logic.

Perhaps it is the term "identity" itself that is problematic. Identity may be considered an absolute, a given, an objectively "true" aspect of a human being. But "identity," as I intend it here, is not meaningful, not readable, outside of a specific context. It must be embedded. So I turn to a different word: *character*. Character is a term that allows identity to be embedded in

real time, real place, real action, and as such it is the term appropriate for rhetoric as opposed to logic. Character is an eminently "deployable" strategy for marginalized groups, one that dates back to Aristotle. Fuss uses the phrase "to deploy essentialism," noting that such phrasing "implies that essentialism may have some strategic or interventionary value" (*Essentially* 20), and I agree that it does. "Deploying character" offers the same strategic value, though perhaps with less contentiousness.

II. C. — Deploying the "marks" of character

The appearance of "essential" characteristics are necessary for the character of a group to be deployable for strategic reasons in the public sphere. Fuss writes how among many in the gay movement, *"*the notion of a gay essence is relied upon to mobilize and to legitimate gay activism" (*Essentially* 97). To "mobilize" and "legitimate" are two separate strategic moves, targeting two different audiences: those within the gay community for the former, and the "general public" for the latter. Both strategies, though, require invoking notions of "gay culture" and "gay sensibility," some "essence" of a gay "character," as Fuss notes. But *how* is this done?

Stanislavski's concept of an actor's tactics when pursuing an objective taken together with Goffmans's dramaturgical frameworks for performances in daily life can explain the success of marginalized group protestors looking to invoke "true" character. Interestingly, Stanislavski and Goffman approach the same issues involved in such performances of character, namely "belief" and "truth," but from different directions.

In his *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman calls his first chapter "Belief in

the Part One is Playing" (17), which is, perhaps unbeknownst to Goffman, a key premise of modern Stanislavskian acting. However, whose belief is at stake here? In modern acting there is the axiom "acting is about believing, not about being believed," and Goffman seems to invert this. Certainly for Goffman, if a person believes in his or her "role," then they will more likely be believed, but more important is that they are "believable" in the eyes of the audience, rather than acting out of internal belief. The goal, Goffman states, is for a person's public identity to be "accepted as believable" (*Presentation* 65-66) as opposed to being "genuine" or even, simply, "believable" for that matter. For Goffman, the key seems to be that one's character is *acknowledged as* "believable" or "credible" (even "authentic") whether or not it *is* so. This is a rhetorical and aesthetic move, concerned with appearances and acknowledgments. Observers "are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess" (*Presentation* 17). A competent performance of character should therefore do the trick, but of course Goffman is examining "real" people, and so the expectation of veracity is already in place from the perspective of an audience consisting of fellow "real" persons.

Stanislavski, on the other hand, is focusing on the presentation of characters on a fictional stage, with an audience watching the action framed by a proscenium. His actors must combat the expectation of falsehood. Stanislavski writes: "The approach we have chosen–the art of living a part–rebels with all the strength it can muster against those other current 'principles' of acting." He goes on to condemn all forms of "exhibitionism", "insincere representation", and anything "false" that enters an actor's performance (*Building* 208). Whereas Goffman's "real person" can emphasize aspects of exhibitionism, displaying one's character traits for the sake of being accepted as believable, Stanislavski's "actor" must avoid

pushing display of character traits for their own sake, lest the audience see through the falseness of the entire stage performance. Stanislavski's subject must "live" the part he is acting in; Goffman's subject must "act" the part he is living.

Both Goffman and Stanislavski explicitly acknowledge that any effective performance must consist of two differing aspects: the "lived" and the "self-monitored." Goffman writes about what he terms "dramaturgical discipline":

> While the performer is ostensibly immersed and given over to the activity he is performing, and is apparently engrossed in his actions in a spontaneous, uncalculating way, he must nonetheless be effectively dissociated from his presentation in a way that leaves him free to cope with dramaturgical contingencies as they arise. He must offer a show of intellectual and emotional involvement in the activity he is presenting, but must keep himself from actually being carried away by his own show lest this destroy his involvement in the task of putting on a successful performance. (*Presentation* 216)

Some degree of detachment, of self-monitoring, is necessary for effective impression management. One may ask then, since the performer is so conscious of the effectiveness of his/her performance, is the performance truly "authentic"? Is "performance" ever "authentic"? I will examine this seeming conundrum at length in Chapter 3.

It is fascinating to see that Stanislavski notes the same divide as Goffman, but Stanislavski emphasizes the need for the actor to live "in the moment" as much as possible. He writes that "one half of the actor's soul is absorbed by his super-objective, by the through line of action . . . . But the other half of it continues to operate on a psycho-technique" (*Building*

173). He continues: "This division does no harm to inspiration. On the contrary, the one encourages the other. Moreover we lead a double existence in our actual lives. But this does not prevent our living and having strong emotions" (*Building* 173). Making correct conscious choices about one's character (Stanislavski's psycho-technique) will continue to guide the actor to feel, to believe, the truth of the character's (fictional) world. The performer's "inner creative state" always requires at least some element of "theatrical calculation" (*Building* 173), but it is the sense of truth stemming from that internal state that is strongly emphasized by Stanislavski and what makes his technique such a historical departure in actor training.

Ultimately, both Goffmanian and Stanislavskian performers are giving "real" performances, so long as one does not interrogate what "reality" finally means. Goffman himself states this quite explicitly, claiming that the question of "which is more real" is irrelevant: "what reality really is can be left to other students" (*Presentation* 66). Since the actual "realness" of one's character, as opposed to the perceived "realness" of that character, does not affect the outcome of its deployment for rhetorical purposes, I, too, will leave the question be. Let it be said, though, that for both Stanislavski and Goffman, the character must be inhabited bodily.   The *topos* of the recognizable character is not merely "embodiable" but must be actually "embodied" and viewed publicly, thus, "performed." The performer must "walk the walk," as it were, not merely "talk the talk." CCNV protestors engaged in hunger strikes, AIDS activists willed their own corpses to be given political funerals, Las Madres wept and wailed their grief in public. Any claim to being a credible spokesperson *as* a given character needs to be accompanied by signs on the body and bodily acts.

The body is fully implicated in identity, and not just due to the biological indicators of

race, ethnicity or gender. As Bourdieu notes, the history of being socially treated as belonging to a specific status or identity will, in fact, "transform instituted differences into natural distinction, produce[ing] quite real effects, durably inscribed in the body and in belief" (*Logic* 58). Not only is "belief" modified–the public's attitudes towards a certain identity and one's own self-directed attitudes–but the body is modified, too. "Durably inscribed" is an excellent descriptor of how even a socially constructed identity can result in actual "marks" of identity that are palpably real and "readable."

What does it mean to be "marked" by one's identity? Group identities that typically pass as "unmarked" are those that are dominant in a society. Barack Obama is commonly described as a "black President"–his race is noted; George Bush was not a "white President," and neither Obama nor Bush are noted as a "male President" or as an "able-bodied President." It is departures from the dominant "norm" that are noted and the marks of these non-dominant identities are acknowledged or "read" whereas the signs of a dominant identity remain unremarkable. In this thesis, I use the term "marginalized" to refer to such marked, non-dominant identities, though Iris Marion Young's use of the terms "powerless" and "culturally dominated" might be as, or even more, appropriate for such groups (*Justice* 56-60). These groups are marginalized, though, in their general exclusion from mainstream "centrist" public discourse. Why is this? Because as Melissa Williams notes, "negative meanings are assigned to [the marginalized] group identity by the broader society, or the dominant culture" (15-16).

Tilly in *Durable Inequality* discusses how social movements "deliberately emphasize the unjust treatment of people on the weaker side of a categorical line" (212), thus depending on the clear "construction of categorical identities" (217). To frame one's social movement as

an "us versus them" story, categories of identity must be in place, and the story becomes an

unjust "David versus Goliath" only when the "us and them" clearly represent "unequal, paired

categories" (Tilly 217). The "marked" other asserts itself against the mighty dominant

"unmarked." The inequality of the pairings (man/woman, white/black, straight/gay, etc.) is

continually inscribed by cultural and ideological apparatuses which seek to perpetuate the

system already in place. The "identical histories" lived by those on the non-dominant side of

the identity-divide results in a distinctiveness that is "inscribed in [the] bodies" (Bourdieu,

Logic 59).

Feminist, queer and Latino/a theorists have made similar observations. Anzaldúa

focuses on the image of "face" describing it as "the surface of the body that is most noticeably

inscribed by social structures, marked with instructions on how to be *mujer, macho*, working

class, Chicana" (xv). Cultural norms dictate the "face" that we all present, as durably and

obviously as if this were a tattoo: "we are carved with the sharp needles of experience"

(Anzaldúa xv). And of course these inscriptions are there to be read by others. Because of this,

it may be difficult to believably usurp the embodied role of marginalized other. Dolan writes

about lesbian identity being inscribed on the body by life experiences as a lesbian: "These

experiences are signs available to be read on a lesbian body, signs to which realism cannot do

justice" (142). For Dolan, the marginalized "character" must be inhabited by the marginalized

"actor," since no "seeming" (theatre's attempt at "realism," as Dolan notes) can do justice to

portraying the intricate inscriptions carved on the body. "Authenticity" of character may be

read by any savvy audience member able to read the signs.

Ricoeur writes about the "sedimentation" that history confers on "character," and that

over time a set of identifiable, "stable" character traits emerges (*Oneself* 121-23). In fact, for Ricoeur, "character" is "nothing other than this set of distinctive signs" (*Oneself* 121). This set of signs allow for the public to categorize and so to recognize a certain character type. The second definition of "recognition" Ricoeur offers in his *Course of Recognition* is: "To know by some sign, some mark, some indication, a person or thing one has never seen before" (6). If a protest group wants recognition based on their group identity, they need to "indicate" who they are by offering up their "marks" to the public. The public might ask, "Who are these people complaining?" and a recognition of the group's "marks" will help answer. As Ricoeur notes, this process is akin to Aristotle's "anagnorisis" (from his *Poetics*), an episode "when lack of recognition turns into recognition" (*Course* 75). It is the "marks" of character that allow for such recognition to take place in both Classical tragedy and in radical street protest.

Sociologist William Gamson concurs. In his essay "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," Gamson writes that collective identity "is manifested through the language and symbols by which it is publicly expressed . . . To measure it, one would ask people about the meaning of labels and other cultural symbols, not about their own personal identity" (60). Again, it is the signs available to be read that are the essential elements here: the way group members dress, the way they speak. The external performance is noted and, perhaps, interrogated, not the group member's "personal identity."

Taken further, these recognizable marks of character may be viewed as "stigma." In his 1963 manuscript *Stigma*, Erving Goffman defines stigma as "bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier" (1). These signs of stigma have traditionally been burned or cut into the flesh for all of society to read the sign. Stigma

thus indicated vice and was a source of shame. As such, if possible, the stigma would be hidden, the marks disguised so public recognition of stigmatized identity could be avoided.

The sign of the stigma is read in place of an individual person. In effect, stigma reduces the marginalized other from being "a person" in other people's eyes, to being merely "a type." The stigmatized attribute converts the individual from "a whole and usual person to a tainted and discounted one," a person who is "not quite human" (Goffman, *Stigma* 5). The stigma thus becomes a form of synecdoche, the (condemnable) part representing the (thus condemnable) whole. The stigmatized become easy to identify, categorize and marginalize. As Tilly writes, "the most dramatic forms of categorization involve outright stigma . . . Such stigmata draw the line between decent citizens and others." He offers the examples of badges or other signs forced upon the bodies of society's "others" that were used during the Middle Ages (65). Such signs of stigma continue today, even if they are not external badges but rather bodily traits and "inscriptions" à la Ricoeur or Anzaldúa.

Examples of stigma are rampant in my case studies. The homeless in particular are not only stigmatized, but wear the signs of their stigma in obvious ways. Homeless people are typically easy to recognize since "the burden of having to carry one's possessions around affects homeless people's appearance" and life on the street is "not conducive to good hygiene" (Arnold 67). When a reporter for the *Washington Post* went "undercover" as a homeless man he wrote that in a short amount of time, he discovered "my appearance was my greatest drawback" (Hombs and Snyder 104). Kawash writes how homeless people are "marked" as homeless by physical signs that are specifically recognizable, and objectionable (from the perspective of "normal" society): "attributes such as dirty or disheveled clothing, the

possession of carts or bags of belongings, and particular activities such as panhandling or scavenging" (324). The homeless cannot help but display their stigma.

The mothers of the disappeared in Argentina also found themselves "stigmatized," reporting that many found themselves "ostracized" by neighbors and distant family members because their children had been labeled as subversive (Schumacher A2). Like the homeless, very few of whom were "born that way," Las Madres became stigmatized due to life circumstances. Unlike the homeless, the Mothers could have chosen to hide their stigma from the general public (though not from their immediate neighbors who would have witnessed the abductions of their children).

For the core members of ACTUP, their identity as "homosexual" carried a strong stigma in 1980s America. The disease AIDS, closely associated with the gay community, carried a stigma, as well. To be categorized as "gay" or "person with AIDS" implied that there was something morally wrong with the person in question. Gran Fury's piece "Let the Record Show" quotes an anonymous surgeon on gay men and AIDS: "We used to hate faggots on an emotional basis. Now we have a good reason" (qtd. in Crimp, *AIDS* 35). Stigma creates fear, hatred and animosity.

Goffman questions the value of political "militancy" among members of a stigmatized group. He writes, "[by] drawing attention to the situation of his kind he is in some respects consolidating a public image of his differentness as a real thing and of his fellow stigmatized as constituting a real group" (*Stigma* 114). Yet Goffman never questions the value for other groups of consolidating their public image or representing themselves as constituting a real group; his *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* is devoted to this very subject. Goffman has a

particular concern for the stigmatized, and perhaps rightly so. Given the feelings of "normal" society, why would any marginalized group willingly parade its stigma in public?

Goffman himself hints at one answer to this question in the opening of *Stigma* when he reminds us that stigma is related to the stigmata of Christian tradition, "bodily signs of holy grace" (1). Thus these marks that set the marginalized apart are special signs that may indicate both vice *and* virtue. The very stigma that sets group members apart from "normal" society as morally wrong, may indicate some aspect of the group's moral *superiority*. So the stigma can be displayed publicly, paraded rather than hidden, in order for character recognition to occur, if that character's difference may be perceived for the advantage of the group. This, however, requires a delicate balancing act in a variety of ways.

II. D. — Between normification and minstrelization

For rhetorical and political purposes, marginalized group identities must be made visible and recognizable to the general public. In their public performances, group members must adhere, at least in some respects, to the predetermined marks and actions (stereo-) typically associated with that group's identity. Hauser and Whalen note that "since identity movements lack institutions that create the rhetoric of identity," such rhetorical foundation must be found through "general social practices" and "requires vernacular expression to establish social meaning" (137). Marginalized groups must perform in the group's own vernacular, engage in the act of "performing oneself," as it were. According to Goffman, the vast majority of people do this most of the time anyway. But public performances by marginalized and stigmatized members of a society, especially for purposes of creating political

and social change, can go awry if the performances are viewed as entirely self-serving, as insincere, or in any way "inauthentic." A balancing act between "minstrelization" and "normification" is required.

Goffman offers the terms "minstrelization" and "normification" to refer to two distinct poles of performing stigmatized identity (*Stigma* 108-112). "Minstrelization" implies an overly eager embracing of one's group's signs of stigma for the entertainment of dominant groups, or in an attempt to gain the dominant group's patronization. "Normification" implies the hiding of such signs in an attempt to pass as "normal." Stigmatized identity may be mobilized for political ends, but only if done so in a rhetorically effective way in the eyes of the audience (most often a variety of dominant groups that constitute "the public sphere"). Visibility of one's stigma or marks in order for collective identity to be recognized is important, but this must be kept in check, lest the presentation of marks appear as inauthentic, unnatural and contrived– *minstrelized*. On the other hand, a performance that suffers from too much "normification" ("see, we are just like you") will render invisible the signs of stigmatized identity and there will be no recognition of the distinct group identity. Such seeming denial of one's identity will also be viewed as delusional, and hence, inauthentic. As Goffman writes, when the marked "fail to adhere to the code" that has been pre-written by society, when they refuse to acknowledge their distinct character, they are "self-deluded" and "misguided" (*Stigma* 111). But to go too far in the other direction, the direction of minstrelization, is to be hollow. The balance between the two is to be "both real and worthy, two spiritual qualities that combine to produce what is called 'authenticity'" (*Stigma* 111).

This balancing act resulting in "authenticity" is a fascinating idea, and one that makes sense from a variety of perspectives: rhetorically, aesthetically/theatrically, and sociologically. There are competing societal pressures to "normify" *and* to "minstrelize," and these are worth examining briefly.

The pressure towards "normification" is embedded in the very concept of the public sphere, according to Michael Warner. In his "Mass Public and the Mass Subject," Warner writes that "the bourgeois public sphere has been structured from the outset by a logic of abstraction that provides a privilege for unmarked identities: the male, the white, the middle class, the normal" (*Publics* 167). To succeed in the public sphere, one would need to erase any signs that would mark the speaker as deviant from the unmarked norm. The deviant and stigmatized will be ignored since they are not part of the "general" public, but instead are on the margins, marked as "other." Warner offers a specific example of this from the public discourse dealing with the AIDS crisis in 1980s America. A White House spokesman in 1985 explained to the press corps why Reagan had never mentioned AIDS in public until 1985, years into the crisis: "It hadn't spread into the general population yet." Warner rightly notes that such a statement naively and dangerously "interpellat[es] the public as unitary and as heterosexual" (*Publics* 181). This type of attitude, though, is one significant pressure for the stigmatized to "normify" themselves to better fit in and be accepted by the "general" and "normal" public.

Iris Marion Young offers another insight into the pressure to "normify." She writes that in order to achieve "assimilation into the dominant culture, acceptance into the roster of relative privilege," members of marginalized groups find themselves required to "adopt professional postures and suppress the expressiveness of their bodies," resulting in "a new kind of

distinction between public and private, in bodily behavior" (*Justice* 140). The pressure to "act normal" in order to be accepted as members of the privileged general public requires restraint of physicality and emotionality, two qualities so important to effective theatrical performance. Thus any bodily or emotional expressiveness that might be associated with a particular group (Las Madres grieving in public, ACT UP members screaming or singing or kissing) would be considered eccentric, at best, and quite likely as deviant, and therefore as dismissible.

On the other hand, marginalized group members may feel the pressure to display stereotypical behaviors. Appiah observes how "collective identities that call for recognition come with notions of how a proper person of that kind behaves: it is not that there is *one* way that gay people or blacks should behave, but that there are gay and black modes of behavior" (*Ethics* 108). These modes of behavior can lead to a seeming "minstrelization," a hollow acting out of behavioral signs that have no internal resonance. The charge that these people are "merely acting" is an accusation of inauthenticity, whether they are attempting to appear as "normal" or to appear as "marginalized."

Performances of identity, though, must be *perceived as* authentic, whether or not they are *indeed* authentic. Thus it is "performances of authenticity," rather than "authentic performances," that are imperative for marginalized group protests to succeed. The protestors' tactics must, at least in part, consist of accurately embodied tropes (that is, available images of how marked group members are expected to act). This public embodiment must not be seen as striving towards the pole of self-deluded normification, and at the same time must not be seen as hollow and ingratiating minstrelization. Such a balanced performance will be perceived as

"authentic" and, according to Goffman, the conferring of this term will carry with it implications that the group is "real and worthy" (*Stigma* 111).

Once again, Stanislavski's method for training actors can be useful in exploring the tensions between "showing" and "being" at play in a group's striving for a performance deemed as authentic. Schechner notes how Stanislavski was at the forefront of a new Euro-American theater tradition with the "goal of physicalizing interior mental states" (*Between* 235). What the character feels and thinks must somehow be conveyed to the audience. This can be done through bodily and vocal expression. In *Building a Character*, Stanislavski writes, "if you do not use your body, your voice, a manner of speaking, walking, moving, if you do not find a form of characterization which corresponds to the images [of the character], you probably cannot convey to others its inner, living spirit" (5). Character must be signaled to an audience through external behaviors.

Yet, in *An Actor Prepares*, Stanislavski writes, "Always and forever, when you are on the stage, you must play yourself . . . The moment you lose yourself on the stage marks the departure from truly living your part and the beginning of exaggerated false acting" (167). The actor must beware "telegraphing" the character merely for the sake of the audience– "minstrelization," as Goffman might call it. For Stanislavski's actor, there must be a mean between "showing" and "being" and this mean is best arrived at when "being" (what I really feel, what things I have really experienced in my life) is brought to a point of being "shown." It is Stanislavski's theory of actions (or tactics) and objectives that allows for this. The character is motivated by something; the actor must determine this "objective" and align every action he or she plays with that objective. "It is the objective that gives [the actor] faith in his right to

come onto the stage and stay there" (*Actor* 111). Each action played in service to that objective becomes "saturated with a belief in [its] truthfulness" (*Actor* 122). Such "real actions" have the capacity to breathe "life into stereotyped acting" (*Actor* 133). The result is a performance that audiences will acknowledge as "true," "authentic."

Jeffrey Alexander in "Cultural Pragmatics" notes how an actor's performance, so clearly "intentional," can escape the charges of being false, telegraphed or minstrelized. He writes that "the art of acting aims at eliminating the appearance of autonomy . . . to make it seem that the actor has not exercised her imagination–that she has no self except the one that is scripted on stage" (71). Alexander mentions Stanislavski's "as if" technique, a way for actors to arouse their own personal emotions, and applies the "as if" to the political/social actor, who, like the professional actor, must appear to be "in belief" regarding her role (72). If a performer appears "compelled" to perform as they do, perhaps by a well-chosen objective that engages one's inner self and outer actions, then she disappears into her role and traces of falseness or inauthenticity are not detectable.

To briefly review here, collective identity is established and reinforced by publicly performed actions. These are akin to Goffman's "presentation of self" routines and Stanislavski's tactics arising from the character's objective. In both cases, the actions are constrained by a previously set repertoire of actions associated with a given character type. A dialogue between Stanislavski and Goffman can be useful in exploring the tensions between "showing" and "being" in the group's striving for a public performance deemed authentic. Goffman, who presents real life identity as a "seeming," and Stanislaviski, who presents life on the stage as a "believing," begin at opposite poles but are interestingly moving towards the

other theorist's concept. For Goffman, the real person performing in life must exert care "in order to maintain the impression that is fostered" (*Presentation* 66). Stanislavski's technique is designed for such "exertions" on the part of the actor to be hidden, even transcended. Goffman shifts the view of real life from "authentic" to "technique"; Stanislavski shifts the view of life on stage from technique to something authentic. For public performances of identity, there seems a need for efforts to be made at both technique and authenticity. The battle between "seeming" and "being" will always be waged, but a convincing performance of authenticity will result in an audience's belief, regardless of how the performance was rendered.

II. E. — Case study: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo

Here at the end of this chapter (Chapter 2), and at the end of the following two chapters (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4), I analyze the case of Las Madres in Argentina vis-à-vis the theoretical points raised earlier in the chapter. Here at the end of Chapter 2, I ask: what does the case of Las Madres reveal, add to or challenge regarding "character as collective identity?"

To begin, let me offer a personal "prejudice" of mine regarding the case. I have been told by other scholars who study this period in Argentina's history to beware "romanticizing" Las Madres, that their case is far more complex than representing them as heroines standing up to a brutal and repressive state. In my opinion, the facts really do paint the Mothers as the "heroes" of the Argentine story in those junta years. Such a view is certainly supported by other scholars. Antonius Robben in *Political Violence and Trauma in Argentina* attributes the fall of the junta, at least indirectly, to the protests of Las Madres: "It was the public protest of these mothers which would trigger large protest crowds against the military dictatorship and

precipitate its fall from power" (300). I acknowledge that framing the story of Las Madres as singlehandedly bringing down the dictatorship is an oversimplification, but there is essential truth there, and such a version of the story had traction in the years immediately after the junta's fall.

Following is a brief history (presented chronologically) for Las Madres during this period, offered as context for the ensuing analysis.

Historical overview

In March 1976, a military coup in Argentina installed a junta of generals as virtual dictators of the nation. The junta instituted a series of laws collectively known as the Process for National Reorganization, or the "Proceso." The new government was empowered to arrest all those deemed to be politically radical elements in Argentina, and immediately began to round up those who were suspected of radical sympathies. This resulted in a disproportionate number of young people being kidnapped and held by the government but without ever being charged for specific crimes. These young Argentines were simply "disappeared," and the military government denied any knowledge of, or responsibility for, the disappearances. In 1977, when General Videla eventually addressed the issue of the disappearances, he said, "the Argentine citizenry is not the victim of repression. The repression is against a minority which we do not consider Argentine" (Robben 185). The *desaparecidos* were considered *apatrida*, without a country and no longer citizens with any rights. The junta frequently cited their efforts towards "law, order, justice, and respect for individual rights" and so initially, many Argentines were "misled . . . about the identity of the civilian squads abducting people in their Ford

Falcons" (Robben 264). The communist guerillas were suspected, rather than the new

government.

There were no significant elements of Argentine society able or willing to challenge the

junta during this early period. "The judiciary failed to question the military version of events.

Those who did . . . were liable to find themselves on the lists of the disappeared" (Fisher 22).

1976 saw massive purges in the nation's unions, severely weakening what had been a previous

locus of power (Fisher 14). The "void created by the absence of mediating institutions was

filled by human rights organizations" in Argentina, but these groups quickly "brought the

repressive arm of the government down on them" (Navarro 248-9). This was the political

climate that gave birth to Las Madres.

In April of 1977, several mothers of disappeared children, frustrated with trying to find

out any information about their loved ones, decided to take their questions to the seat of power:

the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires. One mother, Azucena De Vicenti, angry after being

rebuffed yet again by the Ministry of Interior, passed by several other "waiting, anxious

mothers on her way out, [and] she muttered, 'It's not here that we ought to be–it's the Plaza de

Mayo. And when there's enough of us, we'll go to the Casa Rosada and see the president about

our children who are missing'" (McAllister 27). The following Saturday was April 30, 1977

and 14 women met in the Plaza de Mayo on that day. They worked together to draw up a

petition requesting an audience with the President. At the time, they did not believe that

General Videla or the other government chiefs even knew what was happening; they assumed

that the kidnappings were mistakes that could be remedied. Government officials told them to

go home. In spite of the dismissal, the women continued to gather in the Plaza de Mayo every

week, on Thursdays it had been decided, trying to seek further information (Fisher 27-30;

Bouvard 69-70).

By June 1977, the number of mothers gathering in the Plaza had swelled to around

sixty. Since sitting together was "tantamount to holding a meeting" according to the Proceso

laws, policemen now instructed them to "keep moving" with the intent that their presence

would be dispersed among the crowds of the enormous plaza. Instead, the women walked "arm

in arm" around the square (Bouvard 70). These weekly "marches" eventually caught the

attention of the junta. At first, the junta chose to ignore the women's presence, but soon worked

to discredit them when finally "pressed by an inquiring journalist" (Navarro 251). Government

officials began calling the marching women *"las locas"* or "the crazy women" (Navarro 251).

The junta, having silenced all opposition in the country from previously powerful sources,

likely thought: what threat could a group of women, housewives, pose to the military? So as

long as the women kept moving, and kept silent, the regime was content to let them be and

shrugged them off as a lunatic fringe.

This did not mean that the mothers were immune from government harassment. Dora de

Bazze reported that she was "detained many times, like a lot of the Mothers" (Fisher 62). But

the mothers were not arrested as subversives. The military junta, who would brook no political

dissent, had a difficult time handling Las Madres. As mothers in Argentine society, these older

and matronly women, "were implicitly excluded from the different groups defined as

'subversive'" (Navarro 257), and so the government did not arrest them at first. This changed

in December 1977.

Las Madres had initially protested in silence, but eventually they became vocal, asking the question outright: "Where are our children?" By this point, almost nine months since Las Madres first began meeting and marching, the government "finally recogniz[ed] the political implications of the Madres' Thursday marches, petitions and demonstrations" (Navarro 253). The junta was "increasingly worried by the foreign interest being shown in the events in Argentina" frequently focusing on the protests of the increasingly defiant Mothers (Fisher 67-8). So in December 1977, "the military decided to strike" (Navarro 253). The growing group of mothers was infiltrated by a secret military spy, Alfredo Astiz. Astiz reported on the women's movements, and on December 8, the day that Las Madres were going to run an ad in a newspaper, armed men came and stole the money for the ad and kidnapped nine of the women, including the nominal head of Las Madres, Azucena De Vicenti, who was "disappeared" forever (McAllister 28).

The Mothers "had cherished an illusion that as middle-aged mothers they would never be arrested" (Bouvard 77-78), but now things had changed dramatically. Periodically in 1978, the Mothers tried to return to the Plaza, but they encountered police violence and occasional arrests (McAllister 28). The Mothers were forced to abandon the Plaza de Mayo and for a time their weekly marches came to a halt. This was not the end of Las Madres, though. As Aida de Suarez notes: "They thought that by kidnapping her [Azucena De Vicenti], by kidnapping the [other] Mothers, they would destroy our movement. They didn't realize this would only strengthen our determination" (Fisher 69).

Las Madres were supported in their efforts by, and remained somewhat protected due to, an increased attention from the international community. In November 1977, Amnesty

International visited Argentina and met with members of Las Madres, and the Amnesty

International report of 1978 alerted the entire international community about human rights

abuses in Argentina (Bouvard 84). A 1979 *New York Times* article reported to the world:

"Evidence exists that the instilment of terror has not been completely effective in crushing the

[Argentine] junta's opposition. The most dramatic example of the mobilization which the

desaparecidos have inspired is the phenomenon of *Las locas de Plaza de Mayo*–the so-called

Mad Women of Plaza de Mayo" (Hoeffel and Montalvo 76). The Mothers had attained some

international celebrity at this point. As one mother noted, by late 1978, the junta "couldn't

touch us because too many people knew about us" (Fisher 78).

In the year and a half following the December 1977 kidnappings of their leaders, Las

Madres continued to evolve. Realizing that they had already "acquired a stature and an

identity," the group wrestled with what they might become next. During the first part of 1979,

the mothers met secretly in churches, passing notes, planning a new strategy (McAllister 29).

Then in May 1979, they emerged with a formalized organization structure, publishing a regular

bulletin, and, in a surprise move, returned once more to the Plaza. On August 22, 1979, the

group officially incorporated themselves as "The Association of the Mothers of the Plaza de

Mayo" (Bouvard 93). Las Madres were now an official political organization. Still, the group

was still more or less an isolated voice of dissent in a frightened Argentina where

disappearances and police raids were continuing on a regular basis, despite increasing

international pressure (Hoeffel and Montalvo 72).

In 1980, labor unions in Argentina began to protest, tentatively at first, but soon picking

up momentum (Robben 312). At the same time, Argentine human rights groups were re-

gathering and beginning to publicly voice their concerns. In August 1980, an ad appeared in the

Argentine *Clarin* newspaper signed by well-known Argentine supporters of Human Rights

(Robben 310). In October 1980, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Adolfo Perez Esquivel,

an Argentine human rights movement leader who had been imprisoned. The Mothers had also

been nominated for the Peace Prize (Guest 238). By March 1981, the growing vocal discontent

pressured General Videla to resign. General Viola became President for a short while, only to

be replaced in December 1981 by General Galtieri (Robben 312). Despite the changes in

leadership, by March 1982, the Argentine economy was a disaster, "[its] currency had

collapsed, wages had fallen, and inflation was rampant" (Guest 335). For the first time since the

1976 coup, labor unions were staging large protests and the government felt vulnerable. The

junta decided to invade the British-owned Falkland Islands, a gamble meant to restore national

order (Guest 335). The gamble was lost.

On June 14, 1982, the Argentine junta admitted defeat in the Falklands. The war was an

utter debacle for the junta, and defeat led directly to the junta's collapse. After the defeat in the

Falklands, fear of the military receded. On July 17, 1982, the government ban on political

rallies was lifted. At this point, "the cause [of the disappearances] was taken up by Argentina's

nascent political parties, as a symbol of their determination to restore democracy" (Guest 345).

Footage of a 1983 protest march shows the Mothers joined by many other types representing a

cross-section of Argentina's citizenry (*Las Madres*). In October 1983, democratic elections

brought Raul Alfonsín to power in Argentina; the junta was officially ousted. Las Madres

became a significant political group acknowledged by the new government. When the new

government abolished the junta's laws of self-amnesty as its first official act in late 1983, "upstairs in the gallery, the Mothers watched and applauded" (Guest 356).

I intentionally choose to end the story of at this point. As I noted in Chapter 1, I am aware that in 1986 Las Madres split into two groups due to internal dissent. Additionally, there were various political complications in the relations between Las Madres and the new Argentine government, as well as with the general Argentine public. But I will not extend my focus to this period of new complications. Instead, the image of the Mothers overseeing the condemnation of the junta officials responsible for disappearing their children is the ending I use, one that sums up the success of a surprising street protest movement.

Analysis

So how does "character as collective identity" play out in this particular case? To begin, Las Madres certainly exemplify a collective identity that was easily recognized: they were mothers, that is, women of a certain age who presented as "matronly." One could ascribe some sort of "essence" to the group's collective identity. The women were all Argentine housewives, several of them (those from a higher economic class) products of the *Escuela Profesional de Mujeres*, a finishing school that taught them how to be "good housewives" (Fisher 32). That these women were indeed "housewives," the guardians of home and hearth (in a conservative Catholic nation), ultimately became of supreme importance rhetorically in contributing to the group's success in its confrontation with the state.

It may seem odd that the confrontation with the state was headed by wives and mothers rather than the husbands and fathers, especially given that Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s

was a highly patriarchal society. According to Guest, practical considerations contributed to the mother of the family taking on this task: "the father had to work, and additionally any sort of protest could sign his own death warrant" (54). The mothers would, supposedly, have more time on their hands to meet with officials at the Interior Ministry. Once the marches in the Plaza began, the mothers discouraged the fathers from attending, even if they had the time or inclination. Robben notes that "the women did not want their husbands present at the protests, afraid that they might run to their defense aggressively" (305). The women felt themselves immune to police violence (as they indeed were in the beginning of the protests), but the men could very well be arrested, brutalized and even disappeared. Hebe de Bonafini, who eventually emerged as the group's leader after the kidnapping of Azucena De Vicenti, reasoned the participation of the mothers differently: "It wasn't less dangerous for women but perhaps a mother is prepared to take more risks. We had less fear" (Fisher 54). De Bonafini is here ascribing a certain "essentialism" to motherhood, which may or may not be "fact."

In any case, as the numbers of protestors in the Plaza increased with each passing week and month, it was almost exclusively women who were in attendance: "Their numbers grew as daughters, sisters, and grandmothers of the disappeared joined the circle" (McAllister 27). This was a gendered circle. Additionally, the women in the Plaza tended to be of an age that would allow them to be identified as "matrons." This was a conscious choice by Las Madres from the very beginning. At their first meeting, of the fifteen women present, one was a younger woman, a sister of one of the disappeared. The rest of the women, though, "told her it was too dangerous for her to come to the Plaza de Mayo as her young age might raise the suspicion of

the police" (Robben 300). The result was an apparently homogeneous group of protestors: matronly women marching around the Plaza.

However, this collective identity was not a simple extension of the women's biological and social identities. Las Madres came together as a group because only in one another's company could they experience a sense of belonging and solidarity. Following the disappearances of their children, the women felt "bewilderment" and were "unable to grasp their situations" (Bouvard 66 -67). This is what Jasper might describe as a "moral shock" that catalyzes a movement identity into existence (106). The state's violent action against their family was meant to isolate the women, and initially, each of the Mothers "believed that she alone had suffered this terrible tragedy" (Bouvard 66). State-controlled media reports framed the disappeared as terrorists: "They showed horrendous films [on the television] of people blowing up cars or putting bombs in colleges and blamed it on our children. People saw that and believed it was true . . . . The only people who really knew what was happening were the people it was happening to" (Fisher 26). Each individual mother of a disappeared child found herself living in a separate reality from her fellow citizens. This alienation primed each of the women to bond and identify with the other mothers of the disappeared once they discovered each other following the April 1977 meetings in the halls of the Interior Ministry and, afterward, in the Plaza. According to one of the mothers, Elisa de Landin, the women who constituted Las Madres "all had the same pain, spoke the same language and . . . understood each other better than our own families" (Fisher 30). It was the common experience of the "moral shock" that identified the women with one another despite such difference as class and religion. Landin recalls: "I remember the first time I went to the Square. No one asked me what

religion are you, what race, what are your politics. The only thing they asked me was 'Who has disappeared?'"(Fisher 30).

Despite differences in race, politics, religion and class, the common identifier was "mother" which meant that these were all women of a certain age. Being a woman of a certain age, though, even being a mother, did not ensure that a particular Argentine woman would be sympathetic to the cause of Las Madres or even feel any affinity with these other women. For the majority of Argentine mothers, those who did not experience disappearances in their own families, the actions of the women in the Plaza seemed incomprehensible. As one member of Las Madres relates, "Every Thursday, every day, we tried to explain this ineffable reality, which our compatriots were unable to understand unless they had been touched by it either directly or indirectly" (Bouvard 33). Las Madres are not an example of "all mothers are x"; they represent a specific, isolated category of "mothers," a collective identity that yields a "movement identity." The criteria for belonging to the group would be: 1) mother; 2) a child disappeared; 3) willing to go public. Many families of disappeared children chose to hide the shame of the event for fear of further reprisal or public censure. Other mothers in Argentina formed the League of Mothers of Families in 1977, urging education for young people that would instill "traditional and Christian values" (Taylor 78). Such a group of mothers existed in stark contrast to, and almost in rebuke of, the mothers who comprised Las Madres.

All of this served to contribute to an ever-increasing sense of solidarity among Las Madres. In the beginning, the mothers considered approaching other human rights organizations in Argentina (several such organizations continued working quietly despite the junta's efforts to silence them), but the women "felt that they were a distinct group and that the

other organizations did not understand them" (Bouvard 71). The collective identity of Las

Madres, a combination of experience and gendered identity, led to the creation of a distinct and

tightly knit organization, and this organization produced its own form of public protests that

stemmed "naturally" from the group's relatively homogenous membership.

Las Madres not only felt a sense of solidarity with one another, they deployed this

solidarity effectively. Their goal became a collective one. After several months of protests, the

Mothers felt they were "no longer looking for their individual sons or daughters: they were

seeking each other's children and the truth about what had happened to the children of

Argentina" (McAllister 28). Their sense of identity had gone from singular to plural, and this

implied a problem with Argentina itself; the women had become politicized. When police

would attempt to disrupt the protest marches by taking one woman aside and asking to see her

ID, all the mothers would come forward showing their papers. "The defiant act clogged not

only the surveillance procedures but also made the mothers assume responsibility for each

other, and thus strengthened their group solidarity" (Robben 301). The sense of solidarity itself,

though, is what instigated the action and the action protected the women. As one mother

reported, a typical response to the police in the Plaza was: "If you take one, you have to take all

of us" (Bouvard 72). The police could not detain them all.

The collective identity among the women both resulted from and contributed to their

stigmatization in the eyes of "mainstream" Argentine society. Because their children were

labeled as subversives by the state, their fellow citizens assumed there must be truth to the

charge and that the mothers themselves must, at least in part, be to blame for their children's

moral deviance. Robben reports that "people shied away from them [the family members of the

disappeared] as if they were contagious" (281). The searching mothers "had only each other to construct a sense of community" (281). The social shunning led to the formation of Las Madres.

Once the Mothers began to protest publicly in the Plaza, they were further stigmatized since they were now themselves acting in a deviant fashion according to the norms of Argentine society. Their actions were highly "inappropriate" for women. As Diana Taylor notes, at this time, "adherence to the uniform roles proscribed by the military became synonymous with Argentineness . . . Being 'seen' performing one's national identity correctly was key to survival" (104-5). One of these proscribed roles was "woman," and by violating the proscribed code of behavior, these women seemed to embrace a stigma that had already been assigned to them. Jo Fisher writes about Latin American "machismo," a code that "emphasizes a division of functions, capacities and qualities between male and female that seeks to confirm the superiority of the male" (5). Argentine machismo was a fundamental part of the social, cultural and political fabric, with women's "subordinate position in society" having been "consolidated by civil and family law" (Fisher 5). Women did not participate in the public sphere, and so the weekly marches of the women in the Plaza de Mayo, the most public arena in all of Argentina, could only be viewed as deviant, "unnatural." As Fisher writes, "the specific characteristics ascribed to each [gender] have come to be regarded as 'natural'" (5), as "essential." So the women in the Plaza who appeared to be mothers were acting "unnaturally." What can this mean for perception of "authenticity," since "authentic" is frequently equated with "natural"? I will pursue this fascinating discrepancy in Chapter 3 when I examine the need for a balance between what I call "piety" and "impiety."

The stigmatized identity assigned to Las Madres by their society actually helped to protect them. First of all, the military junta could not consider *women* as any sort of serious threat to them, since women were inferior. Especially after they had successfully stamped out resistance from the unions and the political parties, male-dominated organizations, "the military dismissed as laughable the suggestion that a group of women could pose a threat to their position" (Fisher 60). In a real sense, the junta fell victim to its own *machismo* (Fisher 60). They underestimated what the women in the Plaza were ultimately capable of. The junta's very categorization of Las Madres as "a bunch of housewives" in the end contributed to their downfall. As one mother, Marina de Curia, reported: "They didn't destroy us immediately because they thought we couldn't do anything and when they wanted to, it was too late. We were already organized" (Fisher 60).

Las Madres were additionally stigmatized as crazy, referred to as "*Las Locas*." Initially, the junta could not "conceive of mothers as political actors" and so "derision was the first response" (Robben 304). When asked about the growing numbers of women protesting in the Plaza de Mayo, the government dismissed them as crazy, and the label stuck. The junta's ridicule of the women as *"las locas"* further isolated the women, at least at first. The mothers noticed the withdrawal of friend and family support at this junction (Bouvard 79). The labeling with the stigma of *loca* stemmed naturally from the mothers' other marginalized identities, as women, generally, and as mothers daring to enter the public sphere. "On the level of male ideology, the designation of the mothers as crazy tied in with traditional Latin American notions about women as irrational, passionate, and thus susceptible to fits of hysteria when under duress" (Robben 305). For at least one mother, however, the government's labeling of

the group as crazy was a defense mechanism: "Of course they called us mad. How could the armed forces admit they were worried by a group of middle-aged women?"(Fisher 60). In any case, in this first year of the protest, the Argentine public willingly accepted that these mothers were merely grief-stricken madwomen, not to be taken seriously.

Yet being dismissed as crazy, grief-stricken mothers excluded the women from being identified in another category: political subversive. These matronly women were not considered dangerous, and so the government did not arrest them. How do you arrest a mother mad with grief? These were not political actors in the government's eyes and nothing "strategic" was being ascribed to them. The stigma of their collective identity served as protection for Las Madres.

The "marks" of their collective identity served Las Madres in other ways. The junta could mock women in the streets, but such mockery could not extend to the "family"; and since "family" necessarily implied "mother," Las Madres–*as* mothers–had legitimacy. In fact, as Valeria Fabj notes: "The myth of the good mother created a rhetorical tension: it constrained the Mothers by dictating the rhetorical choices available to them, but it opened avenues of discourse unavailable to men by allowing them to use their role as mothers strategically" (7). Aware of this, Las Madres publicly performed the role of mother to the utmost. This only worked, however, because they actually *were* mothers. The women were *performing themselves*.

Iain Guest, an international affairs expert, describes "the stocky figure of Hebe de Bonafini and the white scarves [that the Mothers wore]" as having come "to personify" the human rights movement in Argentina in the 1980s (354). Guest's focus on the body shape of

the movement's leader and the choice of dress on the part of the movement's members is

indicative of the attention paid to the physical marks of motherhood, as if the outward marks

themselves could stand in for the whole role. This Goffmanian approach to identity is one that

the Mothers intuitively understood and embraced. They presented as, simply, mothers. They

intentionally "dressed down as dowdy old women " (D. Taylor 198), despite the fact that

several of the mothers came from the upper middle class and might very well (and typically

did) dress more fashionably. One of the women went so far as wear her house slippers every

week when marching in the Plaza. "The woman may have stepped outside the home

momentarily, the slippers suggest, but they take their home with them wherever they go" (D.

Taylor 196). An audience could not fail to view the "character" presented as "housewife." And

since these women were just housewives and mothers, they were deemed unthreatening,

viewed as powerless when compared with the virile strength of the junta's military officers.

How could an elderly woman wearing her bedroom slippers compete with a male officer in full

military attire?

As their numbers grew, the Mothers needed a sign to recognize one another in the Plaza

or when gathering in different cities. One of them suggested "a gauze shawl" or a "diaper,"

noting, "it will make us feel closer to our children" (Bouvard 74). These white headscarves,

actually baby shawls or *pañuelos,* had many advantages. First of all, it was easy to spot the

headscarves in a crowd and so the mothers were able to recognize one another. Second, the

general public was able to recognize these women with their white scarves as a distinct group

and so, according to one mother, "people came up to us and asked who we were. We'd

managed to attract attention so we decided to use the scarves at other meetings and then every

time we went to the Plaza de Mayo together" (Fisher 54). Third, the white scarves, as baby

shawls, were a symbol of their identity as mothers. The white *pañuelos* soon became the most

recognizable symbol of Las Madres, and the mothers eventually embroidered each *pañuelo*

with the name of her child and the date of his or her disappearance (Fabj 7). A final advantage

of the headscarves was that the costume could be put on or taken off rapidly. In a situation

when the mothers wanted to escape notice, they could remove the scarf. This happened during

the December 1977 kidnapping of several mothers by the state. More of the mothers would

have been disappeared, or so they felt, had most of them not quickly removed the headscarves

and mingled in with the rest of the people leaving the church at that time (Fisher 68). Without

the headscarves, the mothers were just "regular" citizens, easily blending in with the crowd.[9]

Beyond the choice of dress, Las Madres presented themselves as mothers through their

public actions. They embodied the image of the self-sacrificing, suffering mother. They

marched with serious faces, eyes looking upward, and heads covered: the epitome of

supplicating and suffering women (D. Taylor 196). This idea of the suffering mother, the *mater*

dolorosa, had particular resonance in a Catholic nation like Argentina. When Hebe de Bonafini

made television appearances she was mindful of reinforcing this image of the suffering mother.

"She refuse[d] to wear makeup, insisting that her wrinkles and gray hair [were] a badge of her

suffering" (Bouvard 109).

The mothers' gender, age, and emotional distress rendered them simultaneously

harmless and authoritative. Las Madres presented themselves as the true guardians of the

Argentine home and family. By Fall 1977, the Mothers were openly asking where the

disappeared were, carrying banners and taking out newspaper ads (Fisher 62- 66). They took to

marching in the Plaza with photos of their children around their necks, or held up on placards, in effect "turning their bodies into walking billboards" (D. Taylor 183). These explicit references to their disappeared children not only escalated the subversiveness of their actions against the government, they simultaneously reinforced the very identity as suffering mothers that the women were working to achieve.

Reference to their children soon permeated every facet of their public discourse. For example, a typical interchange between a policeman and a mother during a march in the Plaza, might consist of the officer asking her "Why are you a Communist?" and the mother responding with a seeming *non sequitur*, "I am coming to the Plaza to look for my son" (Bouvard 72). Las Madres had a standard tactic when dealing with journalists. Whatever the question was that may have been posed, the response was always "We want our children. They must tell us where they are" (Bouvard 81). As Stanislavski might have told his actors, the sincere objective stemming from a character's circumstances–in this case, the desire to discover the whereabouts of one's child–justifies and authenticates the character's actions, no matter how seemingly outrageous.

Indeed, the performance of "authenticity" was key to Las Madres' success. The mothers were basically performing (as) themselves, so there was no apparent "performance"; everything seemed natural, uncontrived. When Hebe de Bonafini became the president of Las Madres she was asked to speak abroad on many occasions. Not a trained speaker but a housewife, she was periodically approached by leaders of other organizations who offered to act as the public representative for Las Madres at these formal speaking occasions. According to Bonafini, "Someone said they would represent us if we wanted and we said, 'No, we're just going to

speak.' I wasn't afraid because as I said before I believe that everyone is equal. There are no categories, however much they want to make them" (Fisher 77). She further justified her own role as public spokesperson as follows: "What do I need to prepare if I'm here all day long?" (Fisher 77). Her comment that all are equal, that there are no categories, actually belies her comment that she need not prepare. Certainly there is a great deal of validity in her challenging the notions that all effective public speakers must be trained, that they must rise to some norm of "eloquence," and that such speakers (at least in Argentina) must be male. But there are indeed "categories" and it is because of such categorization that she and Las Madres were able to succeed in the public sphere. It is because she identified herself and was identified by the public in the category of "mother" that she did not need to prepare speeches, but could just speak from her lived experiences.

Stanislavski writes: "Always and forever, when you are on the stage, you must play yourself . . . The moment you lose yourself on the stage marks the departure from truly living your part and the beginning of exaggerated false acting" (*Actor* 167). The approach of Las Madres to their public performances was very much in this vein. They insisted that they would "continue speaking as we know how and as we feel" (Fisher 77). They sought to come across as natural and unforced, as themselves, though of course–as their choices of dress and action make clear–such naturalness is still a performance requiring thought and intention, a degree of "self-monitoring." For Stanislavski, the actor needs to arrive at a mean between "showing" and "being," and this mean is best arrived at when "being" (what one really feels, drawing upon one's personal life experiences) is brought to a point of being "shown." The result is a

performance that audiences will recognize and will also acknowledge as "true." Las Madres are a case in point of such a performance.

II. F. — Conclusion

Las Madres exemplify how a marginalized identity may be strategically deployed by a protest group confronting the state. Recognition and authenticity are key. The public must be able to identify/categorize *what* ("idem") the protestors are. The pubic must also perceive that the protestors are "real," are what they claim to be, are *authentic*. This labeling of a protest group as authentic raises a few questions, though.

One question that arises is how pre-scripted behaviors, more-or-less rote performances, can be perceived as "authentic." This may be explained by pointing out a double standard for authenticity, one standard which may apply to dominant, "unmarked" identities and another which applies to marginalized, "marked" identities. Charles Taylor, in his *Ethics of Authenticity*, writes that "authenticity is not the enemy of demands that emanate from beyond the self; it supposes such demands" (41). Taylor blames the commonly misunderstood "ideal" of the authentic self as entirely self-authored on a Romantic era construction. For example, Johann Herder in the 1770s extolled the virtue of authenticity that called upon us to "discover [our] own original way of being." But as Taylor notes, such a definition of authenticity "cannot be socially derived but must be inwardly generated" (47). Such "inwardly generated" authenticity may be available to the Romantic Hero, who seeks to differentiate himself from other white, male, Christian, able-bodied, heterosexual, upper class citizens of whatever

Western nation he resides in. For the marked character, however, such a brand of authenticity is not possible.

Iris Marion Young writes in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, "stereotypes [about various marked identities] so permeate the society that they are not noticed as contestable . . . White males, on the other hand, insofar as they escape group marking, can be individuals" (59). Thus, the Romantic Ideal of "authenticity" is available exclusively to "the White Male" insofar as they are not "marked" in some other way (white males may very well be marked in ways other than gender or race: i.e. by class, sexual orientation or age). Goffman writes how for those in stigmatized groups, the presentation of "a coherent politics of identity" may very well be at odds with "authenticity" as it is understood, and that there is likely "no 'authentic' solution at all" (124). Stigmatized or marked individuals becomes mouthpieces for their group, and are in effect enacting a social script they themselves have inherited, not one of their own creation.

The case of Las Madres is typical of the protest groups I am examining in that their collective identity *as marginalized other* needs to be recognized first and this requires at least some adherence to a social script that was authored by the larger (dominant) society and by history. Once the group's identity has been effectively established, though, it is possible that the group's work can expand in the public's perception the possibilities of who these marginalized others are allowed to be in that society. This is a later "phase" of the protest movement; I will examine the possibility of group identity shifting and growing in Chapter 6.

In Chapter 3, I will examine a second question that has arisen here around the nature of authenticity. This issue stems from the need for a protest group not to be recognized as a certain

collective identity, but to be recognized period–to be noticed and acknowledged in the public sphere. This requires an element of disruption on the part of the protest group. The appearance of mothers marching around the Plaza de Mayo in confrontation with the government was a startling sight for the residents of Buenos Aires. In many ways, there is a need for a certain amount of "theatricality" for a protest group to gain attention the public eye and in the media. Costuming and emotionally elevated behaviors are two such theatrical elements in the case of the Mothers. But does not such "theatricality" undermine the perception of "authenticity"? These protests are not private events, with behaviors that might effectively communicate in the "fourth wall," proscenium theatre of Stanislavski, or in the everyday interpersonal encounters of Goffman. Performing in the street is, as a given, something quite "unnatural," and so not authentic. Chapter 3 will address this particular tension.

Chapter Three
CHARACTER AS *DRAMATIS PERSONAE*

III. A. — Recognition as disruption

In his essay "Performing Opposition, or how social movements move," Ron Eyerman writes, "social movement is a form of acting in public" (193). These social movements act in public in order to be seen and heard by the public, to become part of the public discourse around a particular issue or set of issues. This first requires a different form of "recognition" than the one treated in Chapter 2, namely *being noticed*. This is a detour from Ricoeur's "course of recognition," which begins with the assumption that such notice is a given. This is untrue, however, for many marginalized groups confronting the state. If a group does not register on the public radar, or if their issue is unknown to others outside the group (i.e. disappeared children in 1977 Argentina, the outbreak of AIDS in 1984 U.S.), then the group needs to fight for simple recognition before they can be acknowledged as saying *anything*.

What makes a protest event noteworthy, able to gain the attention of the general public? What kind of actions are required of protestors, and can such actions reinforce the aspects of identity-based recognition treated in Chapter 2? In order to remove the veil of silence and invisibility and achieve public recognition, social movements typically need to disrupt the *status quo*. Such disruption is treated in detail by Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow in their *Contentious Politics* and by Tarrow in his *Power in Movement*.

Tarrow writes: "Only in the modern world—when public opinion and national states begin to mediate between claim makers and their targets—has contention become a true performance for the benefit of third parties" (94). Marginalized groups engaged in the politics

of contention against the state need to appeal directly to public opinion, performing their

rhetoric in such a way that they are both noticed and convincing in the public sphere.

Furthermore, Tilly and Tarrow remind us that "governments always make rules governing

contention: who can make what collective claims, by what means, with what outcomes" (5).

The power of coercion is the exclusive property of the state, with its monopoly on the use of

force. The power of persuasion, though, is up for grabs, even if this remains a significant

struggle for marginalized groups with little access to the channels of public communication.

Making their actions newsworthy is one of the best strategies for being recognized, and

disrupting business as usual is frequently a key part of such a strategy.

Tarrow devotes the chapter entitled "Acting Contentiously" to an exploration of the

various options for disruptive action available to a protest group. He notes that acts of violence,

conventional collective action (e.g. boycotts, strikes) and what he terms "creative disruption"

are the three major types of politically contentious actions (*Power* 91-105). Of these, acts of

violence tend to be unsustainable in the long run, since the state has the official monopoly on

violence, and the public has a predisposition against perpetrators of violence. Conventional

tactics, such as strikes, boycotts or engagement with already established political processes, are

too easy for the public to ignore, since these have become routine. Thus, it is Tarrow's

"creative disruption" that becomes the most effective option for many social movements. Such

creative disruption exists on "the shifting frontier between convention and contention" and, at

least to some degree, manifests as "public performance" (93). "Impiety," which I will treat later

in this chapter, is one way to categorize such creative disruption. Charland writes that "the

weak, the powerless, the marginal … require another kind of rhetoric. Sometimes the

maximization of impiety is their best tactic, the only way to bring the cameras to deliver them an audience …" ("Impiety" 44). Indeed, the creative use of impiety may be the best strategy for marginalized groups seeking dual recognition: being afforded attention and being understood as a specific category of citizen.

Groups making use of creative disruption confront many challenges. First, they face the persistent need for abundant levels of commitment and creativity. Tarrow notes:

> There is a paradox in disruptive forms of contention: because they spread uncertainty and give weak actors leverage against powerful opponents, they are the strongest weapon of social movements. But when we analyze modern cycles of collective action, we see that disruptive forms are not the most common. For sustaining disruption depends on a high level of commitment, on keeping authorities off balance, and on resisting the attractions of both violence and conventionalization. (*Power* 98)

A social movement rooted in a specific marginalized identity, though, might be more likely to succeed with such creative contention. In publicly expressing their identity as "other," the group's acts of disruption will more likely be unconventional, and, at the same time, these public acts will reinforce individuals' sense of group identity and, hence, their commitment.

Another challenge is to seize the opportunity to protest at a time and place that will bring the tactics notice. As Las Madres discovered, "even in the heart of the most vicious dictatorship, no one cares if you demonstrate on a Saturday afternoon in a deserted square where no one is around to see you" (McAllister 27). The contentious public action on a Saturday was insufficiently disruptive. So, after that first demonstration, the mothers gathered

on Thursday afternoons, when the square was crowded (McAllister 27). Creative disruption, like theatre, needs an audience, and so choices of time and place are essential. When ACT UP protestors targeted St. Patrick's Cathedral during Mass, they were assured of being noticed. However, this led to another challenge inherent in creative disruption: the group needs to overcome the public's typical prejudice against the use of disruptive tactics.

Deborah Gould observes, "Like other social movements in the United States, ACT UP confronted a dominant emotional habitus that typically disparages angry people, seeing anger as chaotic, impulsive, and irrational" (*Moving* 214). Even if a group's protest tactics may not be categorized as "angry"—for example the public mourning of Las Madres, or the playful pranks of Otpor— the public's judgment of these acts as "chaotic, impulsive, and irrational" may still hold. Any sort of disruptive protest actions would be viewed as irritating by a public looking to go about "business as usual" and may take on "an especially negative cast when expressed by people whom mainstream society marks as 'other,' particularly when large numbers of them are taking to the streets, and breaking the law in order to disrupt 'business as usual'" (Gould, *Moving* 214). Ensuring the smooth flow of "business as usual" is the state's job, and so disruptive protest tactics are already antithetical to the state, and the state's clamping down on disruptive protest may be viewed positively by the general public. This is a major challenge for protestors looking to get public opinion on their side. I argue that it is the perceived qualities of authenticity (treated throughout this thesis) and virtue (treated specifically in Chapter 4) that can counterbalance the general public's initial negative attributions to disruptive protest actions.

An additional element that contributes to the noteworthiness of a social movement is its

recognition *as* a movement—that is, as something larger than a single, isolated event or cluster of random events. Disruptive public protests may contribute to the recognition of the protests as part of a larger, coherent movement, both in the eyes of the public and in the eyes of the protestors themselves. As Tarrow writes, "Disruption is the archetypal expression of challenging groups," mostly because such disruption serves as "the concrete performance of a movement's determination. By sitting, standing or moving together aggressively in public space, demonstrators signal their identity and reinforce their solidarity" (*Power* 96). If a group of people are willing to transgress public space in unison, there must be some cause feeding such determination. Tilly and Tarrow consider the question: "What qualifies as a social movement?" (8). One key criterion they identify is "repeated public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment," or WUNC (8). Conventional and innovative protest techniques can display WUNC through coordinated movements, costuming, slogans, etc. These public acts of disruption contribute to the group's recognition as a "qualifying" social movement.

A final aspect related to recognition of protest as a social movement relates to official "certification" of the group's existence and claims. According to Tilly and Tarrow, "certification" occurs when an external "authority" recognizes "the existence and claims of the political actor" (75). For this reason, the state may very well dismiss or ignore the disruptive actions of a protesting group (Las Madres were dismissed as madwomen; AIDS protests were never mentioned by the Reagan administration until several years into the movement). The media, though, may serve as an "authority" capable of offering "certification," and many groups need to start there, compelling the media (either international in the case of Las Madres

or local in the case of early AIDS protestors) to recognize their claims and acknowledge group members as political actors.

Radical street performance can aid in all of the abovementioned forms of recognition. To briefly review from Chapter 1, "radical street performance" is a phrase used by Jan Cohen-Cruz, who explains her choice of terms as follows: "By *radical* I refer to acts that question or re-envision ingrained social arrangements of power. *Street* signals theatrics that take place in public by-ways with minimal constraints on access. *Performance* here indicates expressive behavior intended for public viewing" (1). Radical street performance can help a protest group assert its "WUNC quotient" and become acknowledged as a movement, since street performance will typically display member unity and commitment to the cause. More fundamentally, though, street performance can help a protest group be recognized (as in noticed) due to the disruptive and creative nature of typical street performance.

"All forms of contention rest on performances" (Tilly and Tarrow 12). Performance implies the idea of "audience", and thus the idea of being observed and/or heard, and so by extension, being recognized. But gaining an audience's attention is not a given; the performers must work for that attention. In his essay "The Dramaturgy of the Spectator," Marco DeMarinis writes that "in order to attract and direct the spectator's attention, the performance must first manage to surprise or amaze; that is the performance must put into effect disruptive … strategies which will unsettle the spectator's expectations" (109). Effective theatre in the streets (DeMarinis's focus) requires elements of disruption, just as contentious political action for Tarrow requires elements of disruption. Street theatre would seem a suitable vehicle for contentious politics.

Street theatre comes in many forms, and not all of them will succeed in gaining a social movement the type of recognition it desires. As Cohen-Cruz reminds us, "the usual rhetoric of street performance configures the street as the gateway to the masses, directly or through the media. But the impulse to perform in the street reflects more the desire for popular access than its sure manifestation" (2). Successful conveyance of the group's message is not assured, since control of the street and of the media tend to rest with the state and with mainstream elites. How can the protesting group gain access to the public's ear and the media's lens? The most effective choice of street performance must not only create disruption and so get the group noticed, but the style of presentation must resonate with the group's identity and message, making effective use of theatrical images to clearly signal its rhetorical goals.

All types of theatre may be used for radical street performance purposes. Cohen-Cruz notes: "The diversity of street performers is manifested in the genres they use. Rallies, puppet shows, marches, vigils, choruses and clown shows are just some of the forms employed to capture both media and popular attention in a plethora of different contexts and circumstances" (3). Street performance, though, may avoid any typical theatre genre, avoiding spectacle altogether, yet still claim the full force of disruption. Especially under authoritarian regimes, "where nonviolent protest would be smartly repressed, opposition movements have become skilled at mounting unobtrusive, symbolic, and peaceful forms of disruption that avoid repression while symbolizing contention" (Tarrow 97). Otpor's plastering of small stickers reading "Gotov Je" ("He's through," here referring to Milosevic) all over Belgrade is an act of disruption. Las Madres' simple act of wearing white scarves during a church service is another act of disruption. Both acts symbolize contention yet remain sufficiently "below the radar" to

avoid effective state repression. Such acts as these may be termed radical street performance as well as the rallies, puppet shows and choruses noted by Cohen-Cruz.

In general, in order to be rhetorically effective, radical street performance needs to battle the public's profound prejudices about theatre as well as about public disruption. Politically motivated street performances all run the risk of being "politically devalued, as 'just theatre,' apart from the ebb and flow of life" (Cohen-Cruz 3). Theatre is for entertainment, an escape from real life. It is not "true," or at least such is its general appraisal. However, asking the question, "What kind of people need to do such theatre in the streets?" allows for a reconsideration of the "just theatre" dismissal. A larger frame, one based in collective identity, is required in order to authenticate such radical street performances.

III. B. — Choice of theatrical approach

Although I usually use the term "performance" rather than "theatre" in this thesis because the word suggests the absence of acting training among members of the social movements under investigation, this section will focus on "theatre." This focus on "theatre" is useful, since it is through reference to traditional theatre and its accompanying theoretical frameworks that we may arrive at original insights to explain the success of these protest groups and their various tactics.

A wide spectrum of theatrical approaches is available to protestors. In particular, Artaud's "theatre of cruelty" provides a useful framework for analyzing theatrical encounters between protestors and audience on the streets. Interest in the "authenticity" of the theatrical experience exploded during the 20th century, yielding a variety of theatrical styles, some

emphasizing the authenticity of the actor's experience, some emphasizing the authenticity of the audience's experience and some intentionally highlighting the artificiality of the theatre experience itself. Regardless of the theatrical style and specifics of performance adopted by an individual protest group, I argue that all radical street performance can be—and should be—interpreted through the Stanislavskian lens (even if the street performance varies wildly from the *style* of Stanislavski's "realism"). The very *choice* of street theatre tactics reveals the "authentic" character of the protest group. In this way, Stanislavski's legacy, with its focus on what is "true" in an otherwise fictional performance, is a vital part of understanding street protest actions.

Modern theatre in the west can trace its roots back to the work of Constantin Stanislavski and his work with the Moscow Art Theatre beginning in 1897. If, today, we evaluate actors' stage or screen performances based on whether or not we find them "believable," it is due to Stanislavski and his system of actor training that became the norm during the 20th century, notably crystallizing as the "American Method" in the 1930s and spread via Broadway and Hollywood by Lee Strasberg and his Actors Studio during the 1940s and 1950s. The search for theatrical "truth," rooted in something internal to the actor, was a significant departure from the former emphasis on external appearances. As Stanislavski writes, his approach to acting "rebels with all the strength it can muster against those other current 'principles' of acting," with their focus on "exhibitionism" and "insincere representation" (*Character* 208). Such "falseness" on stage was the inherited acting tradition from the centuries (millennia, really) prior to the 20th century.

In rebelling against the artificiality and cliché-ridden nature of professional acting in the

19th century, Stanislavski cultivated a respect for sincerity in acting. He was determined to create a training system that would allow actors to arrive at something more "authentic" on stage. Stanislavski insisted that actors use their real, natural emotions that arise in the moment. The focus of his training was on being in belief, in the "here and now," although that here and now, from the audience's perspective, was a fiction (a play) safely framed for them on a proscenium stage. In *An Actor Prepares*, Stanislavski offers the example of Dasha and the stick/baby (142-47) as an illustration of his new theatre system's concepts of belief in the moment and emotion memory. Young actress Dasha is rehearsing a scene about giving up a baby and only has the prop of a stick to work with. We (the reader) know that Dasha herself has experienced a similar event, having lost a baby of her own, and so with Stanislavski's coaching, Dasha experiences all the very real emotions that she had experienced previously, and the audience is brought to tears along with her. This is an important step on the road to authenticity in the theatre, with regard to "giving testimony" (Grotowski's phrase), meaning that the actor reveals her own self to the audience; although, in this case, such revelation is through the veil of a fictional character. Dasha and the other Stanislavski-trained actors "give testimony," use their own lives, reveal true parts of themselves, albeit in service to a text, a play, a fiction.

Stanislavski's goal was to make the spectator forget that he or she was in the theatre. So, while the actors might be moving in the direction of authenticity, the audience was not. Their world, in the theatre, remained artificial. And this gap between the "realness" of the performer and the "contrived-ness" of the stage became the central focus for exploring authenticity in the theatre during the 20th century. In *Between Theatre and Anthropology*, Schechner writes that there is always a space between the performer and the character and that

this allows for the insertion of a commentary (9). Thus, exploiting the very artificiality of the stage became one approach for theatre artists. Brecht, for example, attempted to "alienate" or distance audiences from the emotional content of the play in order to get them to think, to focus on his inserted "commentary." Because Brecht's theatre was very political (Brecht was a devout Marxist) and the Brechtian approach (including the use of written text on placards and the declaiming of speeches by actors rather than their actually emoting) is particularly friendly to demonstrations on the street, many protest groups who use radical street performance have embraced the Brechtian style.

Live performance, though, is a paradox. It inevitably, unavoidably, implicates the "real," since living bodies are present, and performers offer genuine aspects of themselves (emotions in the Stanislavski tradition). At the same time, the stage (that is, the framing of performance) unavoidably imposes an artifice around the performance. Can this artificial framing be removed? Can the gap between the real bodies of the performers/spectators and the artificiality of the theatrical setting be collapsed? This challenge has been taken up by many theatre practitioners and theorists, most significantly Antonin Artaud, who theorized a new theatre that would be truly "immediate" and "authentic".

Artaud espoused what he called a "theatre of cruelty," a theatre that was no longer framed for the spectator but one that actually framed and contained the spectator. Theatre was life, as it were. Artaud wrote that performers should be like "victims burnt at the stake, signalling through the flames" (13). In some ways, this is an extension of Stanislavski's work, with the actor offering up personal "testimony." But Artaud saw the role of the audience very differently. The theatrical event, for Artaud, was an encounter between two living

"epidermises" locked together in a "timeless debauchery" (79). Theatre should enter through the skin and the senses, not via empathy (à la Stanislavski) or critical thought (à la Brecht). Artaud's theatre was immediate, potentially dangerous. It was disruptive and unsettling. In fact, Artaud's aesthetic is the aesthetic of radical street performance.

Artaud envisioned a theatre where the audience experiences an assault on their senses from all sides. In his *Theatre and Its Double*, Artaud laments the separation of "the spectacle on one side, the public on the other" (76). The ability to frame an event, physically via a proscenium, and thus aesthetically and rationally, allows for the viewer's safety, but when the event frames the viewer, a sense of danger emerges. Artaud describes his theatre of cruelty in a private letter as follows: "I suppress the protective barrier" (Derrida 244). When the street becomes a performance space it becomes unpredictable. The spectator is in the middle of a live event—an event that could like a war zone or a carnival—and the spectator is without protection.

"Framing" emerges as an essential issue for protest groups who use radical street performance. These groups frequently take away the "frame" or, rather, re-frame the performance event so that the spectator is within the frame, and his or her sense of safety is lost. Boundaries are disrupted. The street theatre event brings performers and spectators together in an immediate communicative relationship. Spectators, whether they choose to do so or not, become participants in the theatre experience. In radical street performance the aesthetic or rational distance has been collapsed, as Artaud hoped it would be: "We choose to observe our acts and lose ourselves in considerations of their imagined form instead of being impelled by their force" (8). On the street, the roles of performer and observer are frequently blurred.

When spectators are implicated in the work—because they are "forced" to step over (or on) the bodies of ACT UP protestors in order to get to their trains, or because they are confronted with a shanty town of homeless people as they try to maneuver for a photo op of the White House— they become a part of the "work"; they are in "the world" of the performance. This is Artaud's "theatre of cruelty."

The charge of "just theatre" remains, though. Whether spectators to a protest are emotionally moved, intellectually provoked or physically assaulted, they may very well dismiss the protest event as "not real." I argue that "theatre" and "reality" can happily co-exist for protest groups whose performances are rooted in their very identities. When street performance tactics are natural outgrowths of the protest group's collective character, the street performance is as "real" as any more traditional political statements offered up to the public sphere. The theatrical choices that protestors make reflect the "true self" and, as such, are at once "authentic" and "theatrical."

Jasper writes that "[protest] tactics are rarely, if ever, neutral means about which protesters do not care. Tactics represent important routines that are emotionally and morally salient in these people's lives. Just as their ideologies do, their activities express protesters' political identities and moral visions" (237). These protest tactics, whether emerging spontaneously or chosen with great premeditation, reflect the protestors themselves and, when successful, provide unique fingerprints by which audiences (the public) may identify what/who the protest group is. One would not confuse the almost religious focus of Las Madres circling the Plaza with the defiant anger of ACT UP tossing condoms during a church service, and neither one would be confused with the lighthearted pranks of the Otpor students.

Among my case studies, I have found that a wide spectrum of theatrical approaches characterize street protest. Some protest events created by ACT UP or homeless groups truly embrace Artaud-style theatrical assaults. Other protest events, such as those of the Coalition for Creative Nonviolence (advocates for the homeless), favor Brechtian approaches that ironically distance the audience and encourage them to consider the issues intellectually. A group such as Las Madres engages in something closer to ritual à la Schechner. The students of Otpor in Serbia, and gay activists in New York, employ the carnivalesque, simultaneously amusing and disorienting spectators. In all of these cases, however, the performers are the authors of their own event, and so they are always "in character." And because of this wide variety of theatrical styles employed, I argue that it is Stanislavski's approach to acting (if applied in a "meta" fashion: "all the world's a stage," as it were) that is the most appropriate lens for analysis here. Stanislavski would have us ask: Is this action true for this (type of) character? Is it in concert with the character's objective? In each of these cases, the answers would be "yes." The character (even if a collective character) chooses tactics that best suit his or her particular situation and that best reflect his or her self. In this way, the specifically chosen theatricality is an authentic reflection of the group.

Stanislavski writes: "Always and forever, when you are on the stage, you must play yourself … The moment you lose yourself on the stage marks the departure from truly living your part and the beginning of exaggerated false acting" (*Actor* 167). Protestors who play themselves—even if those selves are highly theatrical, such as drag queen protestors in ACT UP events—are acting "truly." Identity-based protest groups "perform" themselves in the streets, "truly living" their "parts." In addition, the content of the protest message also resonates

with authenticity, and this, too, can be viewed through a Stanislavskian lens. Commenting on Dasha's performance with the stick/baby, Stanislavski notes that "she intuitively recalled her personal tragedy, and was moved by it" (*Actor* 146). By drawing on her own real experience and offering "testimony" of that experience, Dasha gives an authentic performance. Similarly, Las Madres, AIDS activists, homeless protestors and others are all ineluctably drawing on their own personal tragedies and communicating an authentic message. If one compares such "true living" by protestors with the constrained "persona" of respectability and detached message of legalism that must be enacted by and communicated through officials of the state, it would likely be the state officials who appear to be the "inauthentic" performers.

In summary, theatrical approaches to the staging of a protest vary, but, since a "performance of authenticity" is rooted in character/identity, one theatrical approach cannot be privileged as "more authentic" than any other. The theatricality must be re-framed as an expression of character. This, then, leads to a nagging question: Can *any* "false" behavior be re-framed as "authentic" because someone chooses to act that way? In answer to this question, I am reminded of two stories, one personal and one historical.

In the year following my graduation from Harvard University as an undergraduate, I moved to Chicago and from there exchanged letters with another Harvard alumnus who lived in California. This fellow alumnus, whom I will call "Adam," was not a close friend but an acquaintance, and, for this reason, I was not intimately familiar with his "style" prior to our correspondence. Adam's letters were filled with so many affectations that, at first, I doubted their sincerity. It was like a Noel Coward play, every word dripping with self-conscious posturing. I wrote back regularly, in my more "natural" style, and Adam responded as

affectedly as before. Through his seemingly artificial style, though, he did communicate his feelings of anxiety as a recent graduate, of insecurity in newly developing romances and of joy in his continued connections with other friends. It occurred to me, maybe after letter number three, that this affected style of writing was "really" Adam; it reflected who he truly was. His affectations were "authentic" *to him*. Had I—or any of my other friends—attempted to write in such a style, however, it would have been utterly false.

When Barack Obama first debated Mitt Romney during the 2012 U.S. presidential election, many critics charged Obama with being lackluster and dispassionate. I thought, at the time, was this not the "authentic" Obama, a man who is truly aloof and cerebral? Still, in the debates following, Obama changed his style in order to act more like the passionate agent of change the American public had worshiped during the 2008 Presidential campaign. In my opinion, these debates were not "authentic performances" of Obama's true nature, but they *could* be framed as "performances of authenticity." Why? Because any identity that could reasonably be claimed by or assigned to Obama (i.e. politician, lawyer, black man, father) could all happily co-exist with the identity "man of passion" without any discordance. On the other hand, Romney could never authentically enact the identity of "common man." His class identity actually stigmatized him, as he could not abjure his wealth and his privileged upbringing. The performance of authenticity as "common man" was not available to him, and his attempts to reframe himself as such were perceived as inauthentic and false.

There is a clear connection here between the *ethos* and the *logos* of the rhetor. The ethos—the character of the rhetor—will dictate not only their actual arguments ("preserve tax cuts for the wealthy" or "tell us where our children are") but also the tactics used for delivery,

which, for protest groups, involves the nature of the theatrical actions those arguments take when presented on the street. Both of these are aspects of the *logos*.

III. C. The *ethos-logos* connection

The specific performance tactics used by protest groups are, or should be, dictated by a connection between *ethos* and *logos*. In his book *Aristotle's Rhetoric: An Art of Character*, Eugene Garver argues that *ethos*, the character of the speaker, and *logos*, the means of persuasion used, are inextricably linked: "In rhetoric and practical judgment *ethos* is necessary for finding and formulating arguments, and not just presenting them" (191). The disruptive tactics used by protestors is an extension of their *logos*: they are choosing to present their arguments in these typically non-discursive ways on the street. This is born of their collective character and, in turn, reflects upon their collective character. When radical street performance tactics are chosen wisely, the collective identity of the group legitimates the tactics used, while the tactics themselves simultaneously "authenticate" the group's identity. The *ethos* and the *logos* support one another.

In his essay "Positioning Ethos in Historical and Contemporary Theory," James Baumlin defines ethos as "the problematic identification of a speaker with/in his or her speech" (xi). Baumlin then goes on to examine two separate ways of viewing *ethos* from two distinct Classical traditions. The Isocratean tradition allows that "discourse becomes a revelation of character," while in the Aristotelian tradition, "discourse becomes an active construction of character—or, rather, of an image, a representation of character" (xv). This seems to me a false dichotomy, harkening back to the question from Chapter 2 of this thesis regarding the existence

of an "essential" identity. The discourse is *both* a revealing of character and a construction of character. As Garver states, "when I deliberate, I am implicitly or explicitly adjusting proposed choices to pictures of who I think I am, or want to be, or want to seem to be. In deciding what to do, I decide what *I* should do" (*Aristotle's* 191). The *ethos* and the *logos* inform one another, regardless of whether there is an essential "being" or a mere "seeming." It is the "doing" that reveals the "I" (or the "we" for collective action) and creates the image of the "I" for public consumption. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle affirms a similar connection between *ethos* and *logos* for the dramatic personage: "Character is what makes us ascribe certain moral qualities to the agents; and Thought is shown in all they say when proving a point" (231). The "Thought" is born from the character's moral and personal qualities.

Because of the *ethos-logos* connection, collective identity (*ethos*) can legitimate the disruptive, theatrical choices of tactics and arguments (*logos*) used by certain protest groups. A disruptive *logos* (whether the content of the argument, such as "the government is wrong!" or the method of its delivery, such as shouting protestors surrounding a government building, or both) requires a specific *ethos* to justify it. For this reason, it *does* matter who speaks/performs the text. The protest tactics used by Serbian students illustrate this point. In 1996, Serbian student protestors covered the Electoral Commission building in Belgrade with toilet paper overnight (Ackerman 478). What could be a more quintessentially childish prank? Milosevic's state propaganda attempted to portray the student protestors as a dangerous neo-fascist organization and a group of terrorists, but the attempt failed. According to Serbian commentator Ivan Marovic, "[local people saw] that these kids are like 18 to 20 years of age … C'mon. This is ridiculous, these kids are not fascists. These kids are just kids" (*Bringing*

Down). This was precisely the trump card that the Serbian students played: we are "just kids." The protest tactics used tended to be pranks and small comic actions, the *logos* reinforcing the "just kids" *ethos*. In turn, the *ethos* ("just kids") tended to legitimate, at least in the eyes of the general public if not for the Milosevic regime, the disruptive tactics employed.

The collective identity of the protest group may be viewed as a type of dramatic persona, a "character." Such a viewpoint allows the use of Aristotle's *Poetics* as an analytic tool for social protest. In that text, Aristotle notes that the ideal characters in drama are good (they enact a society's virtues), are appropriate (they behave the way a person of their character type should), are true to life (the details of their performance are recognizable from real life) and are consistent (they remain the same throughout the play) (242). Radical street performances may successfully abide by such Aristotelian rules for drama. In the next chapter, I will examine the concept of a character's "goodness" or virtue. In this section, I will stress the importance of characters acting in ways that are recognizably "appropriate"—that is, in ways consistent with descriptions that society would ascribe to these marginalized characters. Additionally, the details of the performance must be recognizable from "real" life; it is these details that corroborate and emphasize the group identity (as noted in Chapter 2).

Characters must behave "appropriately." Such appropriateness, though, is specific to that character's station in society and role in the play. A key insight here is that the actions a character plays must appear to match what we expect of such a character. In this way, a character may behave "authentically" even when s/he is acting in ways deemed "inappropriate" (vis-à-vis society's norms) by mainstream society and/or the state. One expects certain behaviors from the "kids" of Otpor, behaviors that conform to their character but might violate

social norms (and even laws). The mark ("I am") of character demands the actions that are appropriate to that character.

Many years ago, I saw a student actress play a scene from Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*. Traditionally, the character of Laura is painfully shy. Williams has written the role this way; her severe social awkwardness (she throws up if people stare at her) is at the root of each of her actions in the play. Stanislavski would have insisted that his actors studiously observe this essential character quality. In the student scene, though, the actress played Laura as a sexual predator. She aggressively came on to the Gentleman Caller, inverting traditional expectations of the scene and the role. This was certainly disruptive—and clearly memorable! But it simply felt "wrong." I was only aware of the actor's choices and believed nothing about the scene. It was an "inauthentic," though strong and theatrical, performance. So what does this have to do with collective identity and social protest? As examined in Chapter 2, a collective group *ethos* (the "role", the "what am I?") does preexist any specific individual's texts, whether because of innate character qualities or a history of inherited social constructions. Thus, there are "appropriate" texts and methods of delivery that an audience expects from that role. When violated, the dissonance creates disbelief, a feeling of inauthenticity similar to my experience with the sexually predatory Laura.

Though character does not necessarily determine a person's action, it does *make demands* on a person's actions—"character" is embedded in a larger dramatic structure, a cultural narrative—and, for the role played to merit acknowledgment as "true" from an audience in that culture, the choices of actions played must be "appropriate." This need not be a conscious choice for the player of the character. In *Creating a Role*, Stanislavski writes about

the "period of study," an actor's first encounter/s with the written script containing the character that they are assigned to portray:

> These first impressions are unexpected and direct. They often leave a permanent mark on the work of the actor … Unfiltered by any criticism, they pass freely into the depths of an actor's soul, into the wellsprings of his nature, and often leave ineradicable traces which will remain as a basis of a part …." (3)

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* works similarly, deep in "the wellsprings of one's nature." There is a life "script" with which each of us is confronted almost from birth. Because of this, a performer in life (that is, any human being) from a very early age develops an intuitive, uncritical sense of how his or her role should be played; the "correct" way to play "mother," "student," "gay man" is pre-scripted. Aristotle's emphasis on making such habits fundamental to the education of every citizen (*NE* 26) offers yet another explanation for what could be called "the *habitus* effect."

Similarly, Appiah, in his *Ethics of Identity*, writes about "the collective dimensions of our individual identities" and notes that these produce demands on us since "our engagement with them invokes capacities that are not under our control … [T]hey are constituted in part by socially transmitted conceptions of how a person of that identity properly behaves" (21). It is not only the external pressure of conforming to a social role that make demands on character but internal pressures from "the depths of the soul," to use Stanislavski's phrase. Such internal pressures might very well be conflated with an "essential" nature of a given character, but, as noted in Chapter 2, this contentious point need not determine the rhetorical effectiveness of identity-based protest actions. As long as the actions appear to coincide with the "proper"

behavior of a character, they may be accepted as "authentic."

III. D. — Impiety: eccentricity of character

What can we make of "improper" behavior, though, such as behavior considered socially "inappropriate" (like many protest actions)? Drama is rich with characters that are eccentric character "types," characters whose very *ethos* demands that they behave in ways different from the mainstream "unmarked" character. Might we use the "eccentric character" as an analytical model for looking at the marginalized citizen's protest actions?

Burke's concept of "impious rhetoric" proves useful here. Protestors of marginal identities publicly act in disruptive ways, and this is "impious" from the perspective of mainstream society. However, since these protestors reside outside the mainstream, their protest actions are also "pious," at least from the perspective of their own non-mainstream identity. According to Burke, piety is the "sense of what properly goes with what" (*Permanence* 74). Yet Burke also notes that piety is a conforming to the "sources of one's being" (69). Whereas these two different aspects of piety will more or less align for dominant groups in a society, this does not always hold true for marginalized groups. Protestors frequently violate the mainstream's concept of "what goes with what" through their disruptive actions. A public plaza filled with businessmen rushing to and from appointments is not the place for housewives to mourn the loss of their children. At the same time, groups protesting from their collective identities are acting piously in that their actions conform to their very "otherness," to the sources of their being (as distinct from the sources of the dominant group's being). So mothers do mourn the loss of their children, and women are irrational creatures (at

least from the perspective of traditional Argentine patriarchy) who might very well violate the norms of public decorum if emotion pushes them to do so. The tension between piety and impiety can be pivotal (rhetorically) for non-dominant protest groups.

I argue that authenticity of character exists in the balance between "piety" and "impiety" and between "congruity" and "incongruity," to use two different but related Burkean concepts. A character from the margins of a society may be viewed as "eccentric," and some of her or his actions will be "different" (incongruous by mainstream standards), even disruptive; but this is to be expected if we view life as a form of drama (as both Burke and Goffman encourage us to do). The character, though, is still pious in that s/he is acting in a way that remains "loyal to the sources of one's being" (Santayana's definition of piety). In this way, impiety frequently, at least for the purposes of social movements, is the marginalized group's piety. Furthermore, impious protest rhetoric, once it enters mainstream public discourse, has the potential to create "new linkages" between piety and impiety, encouraging a larger change in societal perspective (akin to Burke's "perspective by incongruity").

"Eccentric" implies being "off of the center," deviating from "normal." Michael Warner analyzes, at some length, the "trouble with normal" in his book of that title. Warner criticizes the gay/lesbian advocacy group the Human Rights Campaign, which served as the dominant public voice of the gay/lesbian community in the late 1980s and the 1990s. He writes of the HRC: "respectability is the goal of its politics because respectability is the prerequisite for being heard within it" (*Trouble* 78). The HRC became mainstream because it strived to appear "normal," always mindful of "what goes with what" in a respectable way. Its rhetoric was pious by mainstream (that is, heterosexual/heterosexist) standards. For Warner, this was a betrayal of

"the sources of one's being," a denial of the group's very roots in the "deviant" *queer*

community. Warner condemns the HRC's "betrayal of the abject and the queer in favor of a

banalized respectability" (*Trouble* 66). In contrast, the street protest tactics used by ACTUP

were not banal in the least, nor were they considered respectable. Respectability might offer

access to mainstream authority, but the goal of mainstream authority will likely be the further

"normification" of the entire marginalized group, getting these eccentric "others" to act

"normal." As Warner reminds us, this is a betrayal of one's very identity (*as* marginalized

other). One option, then, for such a group to "be heard" is to engage in acts of impious

disruption on the streets.[10]

Impious disruption may come at a price, however. In Sophocles' *Antigone*, the title

character bemoans, "because of piety I was called impious" (l. 980). The same seeming

contradiction may be claimed by marginalized groups who take to the street in protest. Groups

who protest from their collective identities as "other" may, through protest, publicly assert their

very "otherness" and, thus, their pious loyalty *to* their "otherness.*"* Getting the mainstream

public to view the protest in this way—as an act of piety—is a powerful rhetorical

breakthrough.

Burke points to this possibility in *Permanence and Change* with the humorous example

of Matthew Arnold and the gashouse gang. From the perspective of the vulgar gang, proper

Matthew Arnold is the impious one. In this situation, Burke asserts, "vulgarity is pious" (77).

So the question must be asked, through the lens of which particular community or culture are

"piety" and "impiety" being judged? Burke goes even further and notes that, once removed

from mainstream society's "locus of judgment," even criminal elements in a society are acting

quite "piously." He writes: "If a man who is a criminal lets the criminal trait in him serve as the informing aspect of his character, piously taking unto him all other traits and habits that he feels should go with his criminality," this would be a pious "integration, guided by a scrupulous sense of the appropriate" (77). Burke's use of the spatial metaphor "locus of judgment" reinforces that non-mainstream (or perhaps "non-dominant") groups in a society are away from center, "eccentric" (literally), on the margins. A group invested in its own "eccentric piety" will take such a piety for granted, but until such piety enters mainstream discourse, the locus of mainstream judgments regarding what is appropriate and what is not will remain firmly judgmental against this "eccentric piety." If Burke's gashouse gang had ever gained traction in the mainstream media/discourse of its time, others might have appreciated the possibility that the mainstream politeness of Victorian England was as potentially "impious" as the marginalized vulgarity of street gangs, and *vice versa* regarding the piousness of the gang's vulgarity.

In "The Place of Impiety in Civic Argument," Charland writes that "piety is the virtue of harmonious subjects" (37). For citizens whose *ethos* is in the image of mainstream society, or for citizens who aspire to such an image (i.e. Warner's complaints regarding the Human Rights Campaign leadership), then piety is non-problematic. But for "non-harmonious" subjects, for those who are decidedly "other," piety is problematic. As Charland notes, "Piety moves toward unity: it seeks wholeness through the denial of difference" (37). Marginalized group protest actually enacts both piety and impiety. The group asserts its difference from mainstream respectability but also asserts its own "unity" as a group. This helps to resolve the problem that Charland raises regarding impiety, namely, that for impiety "there is no 'being' to

go to" (38); that is, the impious actor cannot claim loyalty to the sources of one's being. But there *is* a "being" for these marginalized protest groups to go to, a unity that binds them together (as with Burke's gashouse gang) that is really a "piety" that can be recognized and appreciated, at least aesthetically if not morally (I will approach the issue of moral judgment in Chapter 4).

Impious rhetoric can be used effectively by certain groups for whom such actions serve to reinforce and not undermine their *ethos*. Diogenes the Cynic is an example of this on the individual level. He was not impious at all, if piety is being true "to the source of one's being." His unorthodox actions (masturbating in public, sleeping on the streets) actually reinforced his ethical piety as "protestor." Yet his rhetorical message vis-à-vis Plato and the Greek polis were viewed (by Plato and the Greek polis and, hence, by "history") as impious. The same may be said for ACT UP activists who sing show tunes while being dragged off to jail and toss condoms while High Mass is being said. Society's authorities (the police, the church) may condemn these protestors as criminals and hell-bound perverts, as utterly "impious," but these protestors are being true to the sources of their own (eccentric) being.

Similarly, when Las Madres take to the streets to mourn their children, they are acting "in character" (mothers truly mourn for missing children) and thus "appropriately," or "piously," though simultaneously "impiously" (Argentine women do not make public spectacles of themselves and, in fact, should not even leave the home). When the protestors of Otpor perform outrageous pranks, they violate social taboos (thus acting "impiously"), but they are also acting "piously" according to the rules of their own collective identity ("Serbian youth"). Their ironic and outrageous choice of *logos* (argument and expression) is an authentic

extension of the group's *ethos*, with the pious *ethos* serving as an authenticator (and so as an excuse, perhaps?) for the impious *logos*. By violating certain social codes in order to obey other "pre-political" codes (rooted in one's body, one's emotions, one's given identity as something other than citizen of the state), all of these protestors are acting "impiously pious."

Really what these protest groups do is violate a certain sense of *decorum*, a sense that is dictated by mainstream society. Certain social conventions that dominate the public sphere are violated by introducing elements (condoms, mourning, pranks) that are perfectly appropriate (or at least accepted) in the private sphere of a particular marginalized community. These "indecorous" (impious) actions are consistent with the eccentric character type being presented for public consumption. The impious actions further reinforce the sense of character and cede an aura of authenticity to the group. The impious actions may also serve to create a viable challenge to the state's discursive authority.

Once the protest message gains a significant hearing in the public realm, these protest groups have the potential of offering a "new link" between piety and impiety, introducing a changed perspective, away from the dominant viewpoint taken for granted by mainstream society and/or promulgated by the state. A key to rhetorical success for these protest groups, though, is creating a balance between piety and impiety. Some piece of mainstream society's pious expectations must be honored even as the group deploys its impious protest actions. Benford and Hunt write that "some movement performances incongruent with audience interpretations of their empirical, experiential and cultural realities may fail to resonate or move them" (49). The mainstream audience can only view any social movement performance through the lens of its inherited attitudes, beliefs and cultural stories. A performance that is

entirely incongruent, one that defies all expectations, that is utterly "impious," will fail to resonate for the audience. It will fail rhetorically. Rosteck and Leff offer a similar insight vis-à-vis rhetorical form in their essay "Piety, Propriety and Perspective." They note that "propriety" informs the structuring of all (successful) rhetorical discourses, even those whose content is "radical and apparently subversive in character" (338). To support this point, Rosteck and Leff analyze a historically important anarchist speech and conclude that "under the aegis of propriety, all the elements of rhetoric function …. to maintain the coherence of a perspective against the claims of rival perspectives" (339). Propriety, appropriateness, piety—these are essential elements for a coherent and communicable message to be transmitted to an audience, especially one that wishes to compete with conflicting messages offered by the state and other segments of mainstream society.

"Only those voices from without are effective which can speak in the language of a voice within" (Burke, *RoM* 39). Burke correctly notes that messages can only persuade an audience when they build upon those "images and ideas" into which the audience has previously been "indoctrinated" (*RoM* 39). Such previous images and ideas are aspects of "piety." They need to provide the base for any new or "impious" message. Again, Burke realizes this: "True, the rhetorician may have to change an audience's opinion in one respect; but he can succeed only insofar as he yields to that audience's opinions in other respects" (*RoM* 56). A balance is necessary: between the established, the already accepted, the "pious" and the new, the radical, the "impious." Marco De Marinis offers a similar insight in the realm of street theatre, writing about the essential need for a "fragile balance" between what he describes as "the pleasure of discovery, the unexpected, and the unusual, on the one hand, and the pleasure

of recognition, *déjà vu,* and the anticipated on the other" (112). Tarrow's "creative disruption," likewise, "exists on the shifting frontier between convention and contention" (*Power* 93)*.* In all of these areas, rhetoric, street performance and social protest, a similar balance seems to be required. The rhetor/performer/protestor must offer to the audience something old and something new, something the audience can recognize (know *again*) and something that will disrupt their expectations.

So what is the rhetorical value of publicly performed acts of "pious impiety" for marginalized groups? Confronted by disruptive, impious performances in the street, the public is potentially startled into a changed perspective; something new has been introduced. But some element of "known-ness," arising from the pious or authentic *ethos* of the protest group itself, allows for the public to "recognize" these people as credible (insofar as they are sincere, real, authentic). Burke writes that new meanings may be created when rhetors offer some "new way of putting the characters of events together in an attempt to convert people." Such an act "is impious … insofar as it attacks the kinds of linkages already established" (*Permanence* 87). Sociologist Kevin Hetherington echoes this idea in writing about "strips of restored behavior" in his *Expressions of Identity*. Marginalized protestors must rely on such restored behavior, since entirely "original action" is an impossibility, according to Hetherington (153). In terms of theatrical protest events, strips of restored behavior, those "appropriate" actions typically performed by a marginalized group, are a given, since they represent "the stock of knowledge that individuals have," both protestors and audience alike. The restored behaviors are what they *know* (that is, "re-cognize"). However, such restored, recognizable behaviors "will not necessarily follow the conventions of everyday life" (Hetherington 154). New linkages are

forged when these restored behaviors are pieced together in unconventional, impious ways. So if Argentine women can be both mothers *and* political actors, if American gay men can be both sexualized *and* openly proud, then new linkages have been forged in the public mind. These new, impious linkages will only be effective for the public if the protestors' collective ethos is unimpeachable, if the protestors are deemed "authentic."

Charland offers the case of a single protestor throwing a pie in the face of a public official as an illustration of what he terms the "rhetoric of impiety." Charland writes: "the pieman risks his own *ethos* in the performance, becoming worthy of respect only if he secures audience identification, and only if his act elicits the laughter that can stand as proof of his claim." Such a post-act judgment on the part of the audience requires "a recognition of the justness of the act" ("Impiety" 36), but is it always the judgment of the act that affirms the *ethos* of the protestor? Cannot the already established *ethos* help affirm the rightness of the action—or at least a questioning of its "not wrongness" in the mind of the audience? Which comes first, the impious act deemed just ("He had the pie in the face coming to him!"), with the post-act judgment lending ethical credibility to the actor, or the ethos of the impious rhetor offering credibility to the impious charge/act? Certainly both are possible. In the case of Charland's pieman, there was no collective identity ethos for the protestor to cite as a reference. "Impiety" was truly his only aim. The marginalized group protests that are my case studies are another matter; both piety and impiety are simultaneously possible, and *ethos* may justify *logos*, regardless of audience judgment regarding the rightness or justness of the act.

It is worth noting that impious rhetoric is likely unavailable at all to established politicians and official representatives of the state, whether they be Milosevic and his Socialist

party official, the Argentine junta leaders and their military supporters or Pres. Ronald Reagan

and his administration. "Respectable" professional politicians have their own *ethos* to

perpetuate. Their roles dictate very different rhetorical strategies, namely "pious" ones.[11] The

professional politicians could never get away with the disruptive exploits of the protestors

without coming off as weak (Argentina), as buffoons (Serbia) or else as very petty in their

mockery of the dying (America). The Burkean sense of "what goes with what" typically leads

state officials to play politics as usual.

Impious rhetoric is a form of perspective by incongruity, something that Burke

discusses at great length in *Permanence and Change* (71-162). The incongruity, the putting of a

"this" that should not typically go with a "that," creates a new linkage and thus allows an

audience to gain a new perspective. That certain marginalized groups are *able* to use such

impious strategies in order to be effectively persuasive is due to the solid construction of the

group's collective identity, a construction the group both inherits and continues to reaffirm. For

such marginalized groups, their authenticity exists in the balance between "piety" and

"impiety," between "congruity" and "incongruity." When protest actions are both pious and

impious, when they obey the demands of the group *ethos* but challenge mainstream norms,

when they honor certain previous linkages yet simultaneously create new ones, we have

rhetorically effective "performances of authenticity" that obey the "demands of character."

III. E. — Performing authenticity and the problem of instrumentality

A problem arises here, due to a tension between instrumentality and authenticity. If so

much of the marginalized protest group's work is to convey authenticity to an audience, does

their use of intentional performance itself detract from that perceived authenticity? In many ways, authenticity is an anti-rhetorical concept. Protest, and public communication in general, is artful/strategic/instrumental. It is rhetoric. Can rhetorical communication be considered "authentic"? At the very least, "authenticity" may be viewed as a useful trope for rhetorical usage. "Authenticity" becomes an available concept that may be easily equated with "trustworthiness" and other positive values, giving rhetorical advantage to the "authentic" protestors.[12]

What, then, are the hallmarks of "authenticity" that may be performed by protestors in their quest to appear genuine and trustworthy in the eyes of the public audience? Benford and Hunt examine the case study of an anti-apartheid protest held on an American college campus. The event organizers wanted the demonstration to "appear to be an impromptu reaction," as an emotional response to previous student arrests on campus. Notes were given to the protest leader to guide the action, and one of these notes read: "STRESS SPONTANEITY" (44). The protest organizers felt that the action would be more rhetorically effective if it was perceived as a spontaneous uprising rather than a carefully planned event. Of course, the fact that there were pre-penned notes stressing spontaneity is rather ironic. Still, it shows the importance of protest appearing to arise "organically" or "naturally." The protest event should not come off as pre-planned or "staged," these latter qualities seeming "artificial" rather than "authentic." This could be termed the "Rosa Parks phenomenon." The myth is about the woman who "spontaneously" had enough one day and "happened to" set off a significant civil rights protest. The story neglects any mention of her previous training in the civil rights movement or the previous groundwork and planning by a larger group who were able to swiftly capitalize on the

bus incident. Such previous training and planning should in no way diminish Parks's protest; it is the reality of how most protest actually succeeds. Still the perception of spontaneity is a vital aspect of the Rosa Parks story's power in the American mind.

Michael Kirby, in his essay "On Acting and Not Acting," writes that acting "appears" at the moment when certain emotions are "pushed for the sake of an audience" (103). Acting thus becomes "for" someone else and is, at least partly, inauthentic, since it is "pushed," partly fabricated for purely instrumental purposes. This instrumental performance aspect of protests has been stressed by sociologists subscribing to the rationalist approach to protest study. Jean Cohen, in "Strategy or Identity," concludes that protestors' assertion of their collective identity is not so much "a matter of *spontaneous* expressivity" but instead is something that "involves *stylized* and *planned staging* of one's identity for the purpose of gaining recognition and/or influence" (706). Similarly, Benford and Hunt focus on protest as performance with an emphasis on the process of "staging," noting how activists "attend to developing and manipulating symbols … that are consistent with the [group's] script" (43). From the perspective of these sociologists, protest movements are rational and strategic actions (a theoretical shift from the previous view in sociology that framed protest as irrational actions stemming from mob mentality). If all there is to protest is strategy and carefully chosen tactics, then "authenticity" is not an issue, except in the most manipulative and, ironically, inauthentic of ways (e.g. "STRESS SPONTANEITY").

This is consonant with Goffman's approach to human interaction, which basically ignores "authenticity." Instead, successful performances of the self in Goffman's world might be termed "sincere," if we use Lionel Trilling's classification. In his *Sincerity and Authenticity*,

Trilling offers that people behaving in ways that coincide with "approved conduct" are being "sincere" (37). Trilling notes, though, that in the 20th century "sincerity" came to be perceived as merely a "means to an end" (social success) rather than as an end in and of itself, as "authenticity" was touted to be (9). "The unmediated exhibition of the self … with the intention of being true to it" (9) is Trilling's "authenticity," and it has as its aim only itself. Authenticity is suspect if it is seen as a strategic or conscious "act" in order to get something rather than as simply an honest expression of self. Sincerity may be instrumental; authenticity may not.

But some degree of "strategy" is unavoidable when it comes to communication. The reason humans developed the capacity for communication was to enable cooperation between and among human actors, an instrumental function, not as a means for "authentic" self-expression. It is not simply a matter of black and white. Communication, or at least elements of that communication, may be categorized as "not artificial" or, positively phrased, as "genuine." Burke writes that the rhetor's success depends on his/her ability to "identify" with the audience and that such identification "will be more effective if it is genuine" (*RoM* 56). What is "genuine," though? A more useful way to approach this might be to ask: how does one achieve "genuine-ness?" Once again, I turn to Stanislavski.

A key to "genuine" involves the performer's actual experiencing of emotions. This is not Aristotle's rhetorical *pathos* (at least not necessarily), since it is not about stirring the emotions of the audience members, although such an emotional reaction from the audience might result. The emotional focus is on the performer himself or herself. Stanislavski instructs his actors as follows: "never allow yourself externally to portray anything that you have not inwardly experienced and which is not even interesting to you" (*Actor* 28). The Stanislavski-

trained actor may only "perform" inward experiences that he or she has actually experienced, emotions that are, or at least have been, felt. Action on stage is not fully strategic or instrumental, though it is, of course, all highly planned. An actor is "impelled to act by [his or her] inner feelings" (*Actor* 156). The performance is, thus, at least in part, impulsive and spontaneous. The performer is actually compelled to act in certain ways by a genuinely felt internal emotional state. To return to Michael Kirby once again, recall his notion that acting "appears" at the moment when certain emotions are "pushed for the sake of an audience" (103). What about emotions that are not pushed but simply exist for their own sake and "happen" to be witnessed by an audience? This, of course, is the illusion that Stanislavski was seeking for the staging of Chekhov's dramas. If the label of "actor" is stripped from the performer, as with various street protestors, then it is conceivable that there is no illusion at all—the emotions being conveyed are indeed genuine, authentic.

Sociologist Deborah Gould, writing in 2009 (well after the rationalist turn in protest studies of the 1970s and 1980s), allows for the fact that "much of a movement's emotion work is nonstrategic and unpremeditated" (*Moving* 215). Gould's focus on the emotional states and what she terms the "emotional habitus" of protest movements (ACT UP in particular) echoes Stanislavski's view that genuinely felt emotions can impel the performer to action. Gould uses the example of a group chant at an ACT UP protest, offering the possibility that "rather than a strategic intent, the stimulus behind the chant simply might have been a felt need by demonstrators to express their own anger" (223). Emotional expression by protestors need not be seen as strategic and, in fact, should not be in every case, since such "a view of feelings as strategic deployments strips them of all their bodily, noncognitive, non-instrumental attributes"

(Gould, *Moving* 223); that is, the instrumentalist view robs these publicly expressed emotions of their "authenticity." By allowing for the fact that protestors are feeling real feelings arising from their collective situations and arising "in the moment" during the street protest actions themselves, Gould restores the possibility of framing street protest as authentic.

The *ethos-logos* connection, covered previously in this chapter, is another way to help resolve the apparent contradiction between "genuine" or "authentic" and "strategic" or "instrumental" performance. When Las Madres take to the street in protest, it is certainly a strategic move, but it is a move that, arguably, is an unforced outgrowth of the mothers' *ethos*. With their children disappeared, the mothers can no longer remain in their homes and continue to be mothers; they are compelled to take to the streets to find their children. Marysa Navarro states in her essay "The Personal Is Political," the refusal on the part of Las Madres "to acquiesce in the loss of their children was not an act out of character, but a coherent expression of their socialization … True to themselves, they had no other choice but to act, even if it meant confronting the junta" (256-57). Being true to one's *ethos* may dictate a course of action, and, despite this action being performed for instrumental ends, it stems from an unimpeachably genuine source: one's very identity.

Authenticity—or at least the perception of authenticity—is vital for rhetorical success, especially for marginalized group protestors. As Garver writes, "most enthymemes are presented with some premise absent, and the audience has to fill it in. Whether they add a premise that makes the argument cogent and believable or one that makes it incredible is up to the audience. They will insert the premise most to the speaker's advantage if they trust the speaker" (*Aristotle's* 192). How does an audience come to trust the speaker and thus come to

believe his or her arguments? Perceiving the speaker as "authentic" will go a long way to creating this trust.

Authenticity allows for what Maurice Natanson called "the claims of immediacy." Natanson writes that "risking the self in argument is inviting a stranger to the interior familiarity of our home, not merely the living room of the floor plan but the living space of a private sphere, home as it is meant by the one for whom it is home … This is the opening of the self" (16). The opening up of the self, the sharing of one's inner state, is what Stanislavski required of his actors. This sense of "immediacy" between performer/rhetor and audience is powerful. For marginalized group performers/rhetors who choose to "perform themselves," to "open" up their true selves to the public, the typical private-self/public-self divide is erased. As Wojnarowicz reminds us, "to make the private into something public is an action that has terrific repercussions in the preinvented world" (121). Not only do such actions chip away at the concept of "general public," but they invite the mainstream audience into the "interior familiarity" of what would previously have been merely "alien" and "other." This sharing of the private self, this act of immediacy, feeds an audience's sense of trust. The act says: trust me, I am who I claim to be as you can see, since I am opening up my private self to you and, by doing so, I am risking your potential condemnation of who I am.[13] The marginalized protestor might not be "respectable" by certain mainstream standards, but she is "authentic."

III F. — Case study: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo

What does the case of Las Madres reveal, add to or challenge regarding the theoretical analysis from the chapter? How do Las Madres make use of "character as dramatic persona"?

First of all, the Mothers are an excellent example of Tarrow's "creative disruption." Their situation required them to disrupt business-as-usual in Argentina, since there was no other way for these women to get their message, or information about the disappeared more generally, out to the public. One of the *Proceso* laws issued by the junta on March 24, 1976 stated: "Anyone who through any medium whatsoever defends, propagates or divulges news, communiques or views with the purpose of disrupting , prejudicing, or lessening the prestige of the activities of the Armed Forces will be subject to detention for a period of up to ten years." On April 22, 1976, the law was extended to include mention of "suspects connected with subversive incidents," which included "the victims of kidnappings and missing persons" (Fisher 25). It was thus against the law for the mothers of the disappeared, or anyone else, to discuss the disappearances in public. Human rights organizations in Argentina were virtually silent. Even the group formed in December 1975 expressly to address the issue of "los desparecidos" (a term they coined) followed an approach that was "essentially passive," remaining politically neutral and never questioning government policies (Guest 52). Certainly no groups other than Las Madres dared to take to the streets in Argentina. "Protests were strictly illegal. So were gatherings … [and] the idea seemed fraught with danger" (Guest 53).

Disrupting the silence around the disappearances was not only dangerous but difficult. Even if the police did not seize the Mothers and arrest them, getting the Argentine public to listen to them and to care about their message was a battle. The general public in Argentina had become conditioned to believe that "if one remained quiet and concentrated one's attention on one's personal life, nothing would happen" (Bouvard 43). Argentine society had retreated into a "collective denial" and acted as if nothing "out of the ordinary" were even taking place

amongst them (Robben 274). Not only was the media censured, Argentines did not even dare to "discuss politics openly" (Robben 274). How could a small group of fourteen or so housewives enter such a hermetically sealed public space?

The Mothers' goal was to "force someone into telling them where their children had been taken," but to do this they needed to shake the Argentine public "out of their apathy" (Guest 53). This goal trumped any fear the women may have felt. As one Mother reported to filmmakers Munoz and Portilla: "I said enough of being afraid. I went out into the streets. We went everywhere to make a complaint. Where did we end up? In the Plaza de Mayo" (*Las Madres*). It was in the Plaza that the women could, through creative disruption, finally be noticed. The gathering in the Plaza also allowed for the building of group solidarity and allowed the mothers to be recognized as a group (even if one labeled as crazy) with a collective complaint.

The choices made by Las Madres, in terms of the dramaturgical aspects of their protest, were rhetorically effective. Setting, casting, spectacle and script all worked together to create a whole that was both disruptive and arguably authentic. Likely unbeknownst to Las Madres, their protest actions serve as a perfect example of radical street performance. None of the Mothers came from a theatrical or political background, yet they managed to stage the most important political theatre in late 1970s Argentina in their simple attempt to "break through the wall of silence," to challenge "the appearance of normalcy" and to "find ways to reach other women in the same situation" (Fisher 53). This need for disruption and for group recognition "naturally" led these women to the streets of Buenos Aires and thus to acts of radical street performance. The collective goal of the group might not have been initially a "radical" one, but

soon the weekly protests began to openly question the junta's abuse of its power. Clearly their actions were "expressive behaviors" (grieving, angry accusations) meant for the public, and all of this took place in "the street," public byways.

Yet "the impulse to perform in the street reflects more the desire for popular access than its sure manifestation" (Cohen-Cruz 2). The specifics of the Mothers' protest actions are what allowed for their success. First and foremost among these specifics was the location chosen, the "stage," as it were: the Plaza de Mayo. The choice of the Plaza might have been an accident; it was, after all, the place through which the women would need to pass in order to gather information about their missing children from the Ministry of the Interior. Soon, however, the group made of that accident an intentional choice. When, in late 1979, the mothers of the disappeared officially formed "the Association of Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo," they were making a decision to meet the junta on its own ground. The Plaza de Mayo was "the seat of power in the country, flanked not only by the presidential palace but also by the cathedral and the most important banks" (Bouvard 2). The Plaza was also the location where Argentines first declared their independence from Spain, the "Mayo" of the place name referring to the May revolution of 1810. The Plaza was the political center of Argentina, quintessentially "male" territory. Yet Las Madres chose to label themselves with the name of the Plaza, paired with "Madres"—emphasizing their "female-ness." A contradiction, a disruption, was thus introduced: a group of women claimed their own place in the Plaza every week. Women, products of the domestic sphere, had installed themselves directly in the middle of the public (male) sphere. As Bouvard notes, in choosing the Plaza de Mayo for their protests, the Mothers "claimed the geography of dissent" (60). The chosen stage had tremendous symbolic value, and

the Mothers' presence in that space created the disruption the group required to break through the silence surrounding the disappearances.

In 1977, the junta ordered the Plaza to be remodeled in order to "constrict its open spaces" (Robben 301). In this way, the Plaza would be less hospitable to the staging of the Mothers' weekly marches and make the witnessing of the ritual more difficult for spectators. Still the Mothers persevered, their numbers grew, and they continued to claim the Plaza de Mayo as their own territory until, by 1980, their weekly presence was no longer contested. As one of the Mothers, Aida de Suarez, asserts: "On Thursdays at half past three the square belongs to us" (Fisher 108).

In addition to being disruptive and recognizable, the Mothers' protest actions (at least the earlier ones) can be viewed as spontaneous and therefore "authentic." According to group member Maria del Rosario, "At first we walked around the outside of the square but because there were so few of us we were hardly noticed and we had to make sure the public knew that we existed … So we began to walk in the center of the square, around the monument" (Fisher 54). The Mothers began their walks around the Plaza because they could not legally remain seated, so they walked in small groups to discuss their collective situation and plan next steps. When they realized their very walking could allow them to be noticed, they made a slight shift—to the center of the Plaza—in order to create the disruption they desired. This was actually a spontaneous development in the group's dramaturgy, and spontaneity is arguably "authentic."

In general, Las Madres stressed (preserved?) authenticity in their protests. As noted in Chapter 2, they performed themselves as "mothers." They did not claim to be anything but

what they were. Yet they went further, fully revealing their intimate private selves on the street. In the documentary film *Las Madres*, the camera reveals the Mothers marching around the Plaza, when they spot a foreign journalist. One of the mothers rushes over and cries: "we are desperate because we do not know who to appeal to. Consulates, embassies, ministries, churches, all these places have closed their doors to us … You are our last hope." Through her speech to the reporter, the woman's voice gets huskier and huskier with emotion, her eyes become wider and wider with desperation. This is a "fitting" performance for a mother whose child is missing. It is certainly an emotionally moving performance. Yet someone watching would not consider it "a performance" at all. It is, in fact, a "performance of authenticity," and it is compelling.

The Mothers were revealing their private selves in a public space. This move of "their sorrow from the intimacy of their home" to the Plaza de Mayo "undermined the authoritarian state's control of public space" (Robben 301). In general, all radical street performance has the capacity to undermine state authority. The case of Las Madres, though, emphasizes how authenticity is a particularly effective element in this process. The women were offering public performances of their private selves but without seeming to push their feelings in any artificial way. Watching the Mothers march on video, I am reminded of Stanislavski's emphasis on "concentration of attention" for actors to "live" on stage, needing to exist in their own imagined worlds and ignoring the presence of the audience (*Actor* 70-75). For the Mothers, the public/private barrier seemed to have disappeared.

Actually, the junta itself instigated this collapse between the public sphere and the private sphere. As Diana Taylor notes, "the entire 'private' domain became sucked up into the

proceso" (102), and the "equation between familial and national duties were relentlessly broadcast" (104). The junta claimed oversight of the Argentine home ("Do you know where your children are?"). Domestic life was now implicated in national politics. With the boundary between public and private collapsed from the public side by the state, for the Mothers to cross over from the private side to the public sphere might be seen as a natural next step.

An additional element of authenticity present in the Las Madres protests has to do with the ritual quality of the performance. Especially in the beginning, the women would walk around and around the Plaza in complete silence, simply bearing witness to an injustice. As Richard Schechner writes in *Performance Theory*, ritual has several qualities, some of which are shared with other forms of performance (like theatre or sports), some of which are unique to it. Ritual is "non-productive"; that is, it is not work-related and does not create any tangible object for the economy (11). Ritual is set "apart from everyday life," and "special rules exist, are formulated, and persist" (13). The participants in ritual seem to aim for "self-transcendence" (16). At first, Las Madres "marched as if in ritual procession," moving slowly with "eyes turned upward in supplication, heads covered … rapt, pleading" (D. Taylor 196). The repeated, concentrated action of slowly walking in circles around the Plaza certainly created the sense of ritual.

The public actions performed by protestors should "represent important routines, emotionally and morally salient in these people's lives" (Jasper 237). The public search for their children's whereabouts, the grieving for their absence, even the anger at the government for its refusal to help—all of these elements represent emotionally salient routines in the lives of the Mothers, and their protests in the Plaza reflect this. These actions have "re-fused" a

variety of theatrical elements to achieve a successful balance between "ritual" and "strategy."

According to Jeffrey Alexander in his "Cultural pragmatics: social performance between ritual

and strategy," collective social performances must "re-fuse" a variety of theatrical elements in

order to achieve success. These elements will include actor, audience, script and stage, among

others. If the performance fails to re-fuse these disparate elements, the social action "seems

inauthentic and artificial, failing to persuade" (29). On the other hand, "in a fused performance,

audiences identify with actors and cultural scripts achieve verisimilitude through effective

mise-en-scène" (29). Alexander continues: "To the degree they achieve re-fusion, social

performances become convincing and effective–more ritual-like. To the degree that social

performances remain de-fused, they seem artificial and contrived—less like rituals than like

performances in the pejorative sense" (32). By Alexander's definition, too, the protest actions

of Las Madres achieve "ritual" status. The entire *mise-en-scène* achieves "verisimilitude" and

seems true-to-life, genuine, authentic.

Las Madres were able to capture this same combination of recognition/disruption and

authenticity in protest actions that took place outside of Buenos Aires as well. One example

occurred in the Tucuman province in the north of Argentina. In that area, the local bishop

refused to say prayers for the disappeared children, and this offended the Mothers of that

province. They took action. According to one of the Tucuman Mothers:

> We took them by surprise. First we went to a mass in the cathedral and when we
>
> got inside we put on our white headscarves and prayed in loud voices for the
>
> *desaparecidos*. The next Sunday we went back and they'd brought a choir to
>
> sing loudly and drown out our voices. So we decided to go to a different church

the next week and surprise them, the next week another. (Fisher 100)

The church protest is both disruptive and authentic. The Mothers are indeed churchgoing Catholics engaging in sincere prayer for their children. They appropriately "belong" in the church, yet their particular voices need to be silenced for political (that is, non-religious) reasons. Their disruptive protests of praying loudly actually call attention to the in-authentic quality of the Argentine Church leadership in that province, putting politics before the spiritual needs of its parishioners. It is interesting to compare the way that Las Madres chose to disrupt the church service as a protest to the way that ACT UP chose to (infamously) disrupt the church service in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1989. Some ACT UP protestors staged a "die-in" in the aisles of the church while others tossed condoms to the parishioners (*Stop the Church*). The ACT UP protestors seemed very much an "alien" invasion, rather like the Mothers marching in the Plaza de Mayo: they simply did not "belong" there. Yet the Mothers did "belong" in the Tucuman church and so needed to find another way to disrupt the service without betraying the authenticity of their own collective character. The success for both of these very different church protests required a careful balance between piety and impiety.

Las Madres did not view themselves as political actors, at least not in the beginning. "The decision to install a permanent weekly presence in the Plaza de Mayo was an act of desperation rather than one of calculated political resistance. It was an act of desperation that the women believed only other mothers who had lost their children would share" (Fisher 52). The Mothers were acting as private persons when they installed themselves as a marginalized sub-group (mothers of disappeared children) in the Plaza de Mayo. So was this a "pious" act or an "impious" one? To which "sources of one's being" were these women expressing their

"loyalty"? The Mothers were acting piously as mothers desperate to find their children though impiously as Argentine citizens. Even the junta seemed confused about how to deal with this public dissent. Robben notes that "the emphasis that they were not political actors but just mothers wanting to know about their children made it harder for the military to forbid their public outcries" (306). The women were deemed, foremost, mothers (acting piously) rather than citizens (acting impiously).

Las Madres made themselves emotionally vulnerable, allowing for Natanson's "claims of immediacy." In 1977, the women bought a half-page advertisement in the national newspaper *La Prensa*:

> Addressed to the President of the Supreme Court, the commanders of the Armed Forces, the Junta and the Church, [the ad read], 'The most cruel torture for a mother is uncertainty about the destiny of her children. We ask for a legal process to determine their innocence or guilt.' Beneath were listed the names and identity card numbers of 237 mothers. The newspaper had refused to print the names of their disappeared children. (Fisher 66)

Not only did the Mothers publicly mourn the disappearances of their children in their weekly marches in the Plaza, but even in print they justified their actions through emotion ("most cruel torture"). They also put themselves at personal risk, each one naming herself and identifying herself by her "identity" as Argentine citizen.

Another tactic the Mothers engaged in took place occasionally after the weekly group march. A few of the Mothers would "take a megaphone down a side street and each tell her personal story. They had learned that it was easier for people to understand the horror of one

missing child than to grasp the picture of thousands who had disappeared" (McAllister 29). The boundary between private self and public self was now eradicated. The Mothers revealed their emotional wounds at every turn. After all, it was these emotional wounds that were the key "means of persuasion" (à la Aristotle) that were readily "available" to the Mothers.

The group's protest tactics shifted over time, perhaps due to the fact that their protests were so fraught with real emotion. Gould writes that sometimes it is not the emotions that give rise to the protest actions but the other way around (*Moving* 215). Certainly in the case of Las Madres, various contingencies "on the ground" during specific protest events seemed to have generated new emotional expressions and tactics. Over time, the Mothers' public expressions of sorrow and desperation gave way to anger, and their tactics, at times, became somewhat aggressive. For example, during the 1978 World Cup soccer games held in Buenos Aires, the Mothers persisted in their protests, though by this point they were being criticized "for their stridency and hysteria" even by the general public (Bouvard 82). The disruption at this moment of national pride seemed to further alienate the Mothers' fellow Argentines, yet the same disruption was able to capture recognition from the large numbers of foreign journalists who were present in the city to cover the sports event. When one American journalist tried to interview Las Madres in the Plaza, "two men from the security forces grabbed her tape recorder and passport. As she shouted, the Mothers mobbed the men, pushing them down to the ground and piling things on top of them to keep them down. The Mothers managed to retrieve the recorder and the passport" (Bouvard 82). This act of physical aggression on the part of the Mothers was not planned. Desperate to get the word out to the world about events in Argentina, and seeing that goal blocked in the moment by security officers, the Mothers spontaneously

turned to physical tactics.

Such physical aggression coming from middle-aged housewives was surprising but not an isolated event. According to one of the Mothers, Dora de Bazze, at least one other physical confrontation between the Mothers and the military forces occurred. On the day the Mothers first carried a banner asking "Where are the disappeared?" various military officers surrounded the mothers, began kicking them and broke the stick holding the banner. One officer asked, "What are you going to do with it [the stick] now?" and one mother replied, "Stick it up your … " and the women began to kick back at the officers.. De Bazze continues, "A journalist took a photo which came out in Holland but wasn't printed here [in Argentina]. It was a tremendous thing. Thirty or forty mothers shouting "*Donde estan nuestros hijos*?" and the *milicos* all lined up in front of us with truncheons and machine guns" (Fisher 62). Here some of the Mothers resorted to verbal abuse and aggressive physicality although only in response to similar instigation from the military. The incongruity of the image—housewives threatening military officers who defend themselves with truncheons and machine guns—is rather humorous and was rhetorically effective for Las Madres. The image subverts the reputation of the military, who appear unable to handle a group of middle-aged women without resorting to threats of violence using weapons. Still, the "violence" of the actions by the Mothers was something new, a move away from the former "piety" of the *mater dolorosa*, the mother who suffers in silence.

Change is possible, even necessary. Protest tactics need not be static and, in fact, likely cannot be if the sense of "disruption" is to be prolonged over years or even decades. Still, the case of Las Madres seems to indicate that the collective identity of the protest group itself can metamorphose and mature. Marysa Navarro, a Latin American historian, notes that Las Madres

began their protests with one objective but that this changed over time. She writes, "The marches initially had a very limited and very personal objective and were not considered to be confrontational" (251). Yet, by December 1979, as the junta "made some moves toward democratization," the Mothers found themselves with more freedom to express themselves, and so "the Madres became increasingly militant" (254), with their tactics reflecting this shift from purely personal to (more) militantly political.

Reacting spontaneously to the events on the ground, and also experiencing personal and collective changes over the years, Las Madres changed. They retained their collective identity as grieving mothers but added anger to their repertoire. The Mothers may have been limited by the preconceived/preconstructed *habitus* that dictated what an Argentine mother should be, but only at first. In time, the group outgrew the confines of this construction. Their later tactics, which included yelling in anger and even physical confrontation with authority, point to the fact that protest movements are dynamic even in terms of "character."

The Mothers also experienced a shift over time in their collective self-concept: they began to see themselves as political reformers, eventually advocating for democracy, human rights and government transparency. Prior to their experiences as street protestors, the women would have been content to remain in their homes. But the politics of their disappeared children (many were, indeed, affiliated with progressive political organizations) eventually became their own politics. "It's as if he [my disappeared son] had given birth to me and not me to him," one of the Mothers told an interviewer (*Las Madres*).

If the collective character of protestors may indeed be likened to *dramatis personae*, then it seems that Aristotle's emphasis that the character remain "consistent and the same

throughout" the play (*Poetics* 242) is not applicable to protest movements, at least not to those that endure over a prolonged period of time. The image of the static Classical dramatic personage would need to yield to the image of the dynamic dramatic personage à la Shakespeare. The social role niche filled by the protestors ("recognition" as treated in Chapter 2) can indeed expand and change without the group abandoning its initial collective identity. This organic change over time is also a part of the "performance of authenticity" for marginalized protest groups, though it appears to be a bit of a contradiction. In Chapter 6, I will examine ways in which protest actions themselves, founded as they may be upon a previously established collective identity, can actually enable a change over time in that very collective identity.

I would argue that throughout their protests from 1976 through 1983, Las Madres continued to "perform authenticity." Hebe de Bonafini, spokesperson for Las Madres, said, "What do I need to prepare if I'm here all day? Those who aren't fighting something all day have to write things down … I say what I think" (Fisher 77). This seems to reflect the protest of actions of the Mothers in general. These actions could be described as spontaneous, genuine and rooted in real, personal, felt experiences. This is "authenticity," as opposed to, say, "strategy." The case of Las Madres challenges Jean Cohen's assertion that protestor collective identity is not so much "a matter of *spontaneous* expressivity" but instead "involves *stylized* and *planned staging* of one's identity" (706).

The disruptive and confrontational actions of the Mothers are authorized and authenticated, at least in part, by an "epistemology of provenance." As Kruks explains the term, it "presupposes that knowledge arises from an experiential basis that is … fundamentally

group-specific" so that others "cannot share that knowledge," since they lack the "immediate experiences" (109). "I'm here all day" is a claim to authenticity. "I live the life we are talking about, so of course you can believe I know what I'm talking about." In the case of protest rhetoric, it is not entirely the specific information conveyed (or even its veracity), but the public's perception of the group's authenticity that is compelling, like watching Stanislavski's actors performing "real" lives behind the imagined fourth wall.[14]

III.G. — Conclusion

Las Madres exemplify how various aspects of drama and dramatic character come into play for marginalized protest groups. Protestors must be "recognized," as in "noticed," but the disruptive elements of the protest actions must reinforce, not detract from, the aspects of identity-based recognition covered in Chapter 2 (the *idem* or "categorical identity"). Recognition should also include the protest being recognized as "a movement," seen as something larger than a single, isolated event. Radical street performance is valuable in helping protest groups achieve both of these types of recognition. It is the chosen street theatre tactics that reveal (or potentially contradict) the "authentic" character of the protest group. In this way, framing radical street protest through Stanislavski's lens, with its focus on what is "true" in an otherwise fictional performance, is a useful way of analyzing what theatrical aspects of street protest may or may not prove successful for a given group. The specific performance tactics used by protest groups is, or should be, dictated by the *ethos-logos* connection. When radical street performance tactics are chosen wisely, the collective identity of the group legitimates the tactics used while, at the same time, the tactics themselves "authenticate" the group's identity.

Still, questions arise. One is how any strategy may be perceived as "authentic." I have addressed the tension between authenticity and instrumentality in the preceding chapter, but I have not put it to rest. Perhaps this tension can never be put to rest. Nonetheless, in Chapter 6 (my concluding chapter) I will revisit this issue, asking if rhetoric (necessarily strategic?) and authenticity (necessarily non-strategic?) are indeed theoretically incompatible.

A second question emerges around the changes in protest tactics over time and the accompanying change (it seems) in the collective character of the protestors themselves. Can "identity" change? If so, would this undermine the basis of recognition for the group noted in Chapter 2? In Chapter 6 I will examine this question more fully, exploring how the incongruities introduced through the actions of radical street protest may naturally lead to growth and change for the group's *idem* identity as hegemonic discourses become challenged and as the piety-impiety pairing both reinforces the sense of what "goes with what" and breaks down previous concepts of "what goes with what."

All of this introduces a new wrinkle in the "course of recognition," one that will lead directly to the third question that arises from the analysis of the preceding chapter. Up to now, I have dealt with identity as *idem*, a static category. But as Ricoeur reminds us, identity also has its *ipse* aspect, since identity has a temporal dimension. Over time, the "self" changes, grows, though the *idem* aspect of identity endures. Ricoeur writes that "the proud assertion 'I will do it' expresses in language the risky posture of *ipseity*, as self-constancy that goes beyond the safety of mere sameness" (*Course* 103). Humans have the capacity for choice, and so their actions will potentially go off in many different directions. This allows for the process of "attributing an action to someone as its actual author" (Ricoeur, *Course* 106). If an action may

be worthy of praise or blame, and if that action may be attributable to the actor as its author, then the actor may be viewed as worthy of praise or blame. This introduces the concept of "virtue" being attributable to protest actions, which leads to the third question: does there need to be something more than "authenticity" involved here.

Yes, there does need to be something more than mere authenticity (mere!) for marginalized protest groups to be rhetorically effective. After all, the group might be "authentic," but does that mean the public necessarily believes and trusts their arguments? For example, murderers like the Manson Family might be viewed as "acting authentically" (in keeping with their identity and /or situation), but they have little if any rhetorical impact on a society. Even for those engaged in purely nonviolent actions, protestors need to combat the dominant prejudice against disruptive tactics in general. Usually, the disruptiveness and impious actions played out on the streets would be enough to alienate the broader public. Especially with the state rhetoric working hard to vilify the protestors, the protest actions should be roundly condemned by the public despite the protestors' perceived genuineness. What else is necessary, then, to frame the protest? There must be something involved that allows for the protest group to be "admired" and/or "respected," even if only grudgingly.

Aristotle's *Poetics* points us in a useful direction. Aristotle tells us that the ideal character in drama is not only appropriate (behaving the way a character of their type would behave in real life, according to their social role and status), but that the character is also *good*, that is, enacts society's virtues (242). The "performance of virtue" needs to accompany the "performance of authenticity" in order for marginalized group protest to succeed, and it is the "performance of virtue" that will be the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter Four
CHARACTER AS MORAL JUDGMENT

IV.A. — State Attacks on Protestor Character

When a group protests against state policies, the protest group becomes a political opponent in the state's (or dominant political party's) eyes. A political/rhetorical contest ensues, one that may become dangerously combative. The state proceeds to defend itself (that is, its representatives and its policies) from political opponents who may even be constructed as "an enemy" of the state. For marginalized protest groups who become targets of the state, the attacks typically focus on one or more of three elements: the group's authenticity (they are not who they say they are), the group's rationality (they are not competent to make political arguments), and/or the group's morality (they are "bad" people). I begin this chapter by examining these typical rhetorical attacks that the state levies against marginalized protest groups in its attempt to undermine the credibility of such groups and their claims.

In his book *Constructing the Political Spectacle*, Murray Edelman devotes an entire chapter to what he calls "the construction and uses of political enemies" (66-89). Edelman writes: "When an opponent is an enemy rather than an adversary, it is not the process but the character of the opponent that focuses attention. Enemies are characterized by an inherent trait or set of traits that marks them as evil, immoral, warped or pathological and therefore a continuing threat . . ." (67). Protestors whose group identities are non-dominant may more easily and more readily be viewed as, and certainly constructed as, enemies rather than adversaries. They are not seen as political equals who are mistaken in their political beliefs or

tactics; they are inherently flawed in some way. For the protest group that has embraced the characteristic "marks" associated with the group, this type of attack by the state has already been set up in advance. For the state to construct this marginalized group as "the enemy" is fairly easy, and serves both rhetorical and political uses. Rhetorically, the state undermines the protest group's credibility and its claims. Politically, the state further marginalizes the group by turning other segments of society against the protesting group. Edelman notes how the state frequently divides the opponent's base in order to build its own political coalition and mask the self-serving nature of the political attacks:

> The portrayal of the poor as enemy helps build an alliance of people who resent using tax money for public assistance, who identify poverty with crime in the streets or with radicalism, or who see the poor as a cultural, moral, or genetic threat to the respectable classes. To personify an issue by identifying it with the enemy wins support for a political stand while masking the material advantages the perception provides. (68)

By disturbing "respectable" society, the "marginalized" protestors call attention to themselves as "marginalized", thus making themselves even more vulnerable to the state's political maneuvers.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the state and its mainstream media representatives will frequently challenge the authenticity of the protesting group: "these people are not who they claim to be." Because authenticity is important for a protest group's credibility, and because the state recognizes this, the state will work to undermine an "enemy" group's authenticity. Examples of this crop up repeatedly in my case studies. In 1979, the Foreign Minister of

Argentina accused Las Madres of being other than who they claim to be: "Out of more than

200 mothers, only 25 are legitimate; the rest are crazy. They're mad women who don't even

have children" (Hoeffel and Montalvo 76). This attack on the women's authenticity implies that

they cannot be trusted. *They are not even mothers!* Of course the accusation was utterly false,

as an American human rights investigator who interviewed each of the Mothers was able to

determine (Hoeffel and Montalvo 76).

Similar challenges to group membership authenticity occurred during the homeless

protests of the 1980s. During the 1981 "Reaganville" tent city occupation, mainstream media

fixated on exactly *who* was in the tents. They questioned "the 'authenticity' of the tent cities"

and one report from Houston even suggested "there were no actual homeless people among the

protestors" (Imig 75). Seven years later, *Time Magazine* ran a cover story in their September 5,

1988 edition with the caption: "Are the beggars what they say they are?" The implication was

that many panhandlers were not even homeless and were misrepresenting themselves. With the

charge of inauthenticity leveled, the street people could be ignored in good conscience.

Likewise, the Milosevic regime attempted to undermine the credibility of Otpor and

prior student protest groups in Serbia by challenging their authenticity. A common refrain was

that the students were not enacting their own agenda, but were being controlled by political

interests in the United States or elsewhere. At various points, Serbian state officials

characterized the student uprisings as being organized by outside pro-fascist groups who were

bent on "manipulating children" (Collin 111), or claimed that the students were "traitors and

American spies" ("Serbian Student"). Fortunately, the performances of authenticity that

permeated the entire Otpor protest movement worked to negate attacks such as these; the

group's authenticity was evident. As Serbian commentator Ivan Marovic noted, "[local people saw] that these kids are like 18 to 20 years of age . . . C'mon. This is ridiculous, these kids are not fascists. These kids are just kids" (*Bringing Down*). In general for all of my case studies, the authenticating processes engaged in by the protest groups (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3) tended to deflect attacks upon the group's authenticity.

The state also undermines the credibility of protest movements by attacking the rationality or competence of the protestors. The bias towards the "unmarked" and the "respectable" character that dominates most Western societies underlies such attacks. The glorification of reason in Western thought and in the rhetorical tradition has tended to subjugate non-rational proofs, which become viewed as inappropriate and irrational, and of course disruptive street protest is necessarily categorized in this way. As Iris Marion Young notes, "the norms of deliberation . . . privilege speech that is dispassionate and disembodied. They tend to presuppose an opposition between mind and body, reason and emotion. They tend falsely to identify objectivity with calm and absence of emotional expression" ("Communication" 124). It thus becomes quite easy for the state to construct the emotionally expressive protestors taking to the street as violating norms of political discourse and so as not credible. "Rational" public discourse demands "disembodied" reason. Those of "marked" identities–women, people of color, queers, etc.–need to be excluded from rational public discourse since these groups are "associated with body and feeling," as opposed to reason (Young, *Justice* 97).   Until these eccentric character types can successfully "tame" their bodily and emotional expressiveness they need not be taken seriously as public rhetors.

Since rationality or competence to participate in public discourse is deemed essential for

credibility, the state frequently resorts to challenging a protest group's capacity to reason. The

Argentine junta branded Las Madres as *las locas,* as crazy, irrational women. Later, the junta

labeled the Mothers "emotional terrorists" (D. Taylor 80). The ACT UP protestors were tarred

by the state as irrational and overly emotional, as childish and irresponsible. A spokesperson

for the first President Bush when asked about the protests across the country, dismissed ACT

UP as follows: "They're a nuisance and that's all. They're irrelevant" (Gould, *Moving* 276).

ACT UP's disruptive anger in the streets was constructed as evidence of their emotional

immaturity. Similarly, the Otpor students in Serbia were labeled as either naive children or

irresponsible deviants. The regime claimed that the student protestors were drug dealers

(Ackerman 486), or were "under-aged" and "impressionable" and thus easily manipulated

(Collin 111). The students' very age made them readily viewed as immature, irresponsible, and

so incompetent to participate rationally in public discourse. Likewise, the homeless population

in the United States was largely viewed by the state (and by mainstream society) as composed

of irresponsible people, flawed characters who brought their own misfortunes upon themselves,

thus proving their incompetence. Melanie Loehwing analyzes state and media rhetoric around

homelessness in her article, "Homlessness as the Unforgiving Minute of the Present." She notes

that cultural norms in America frame the homeless "as incapable and unsuited for the future-

oriented collective life of a democratic citizenry" (382). The homeless live in a perpetual

present (with a focus on immediate needs) and so, like children, cannot be responsible citizens

in a democratic state.

All of these marginalized groups were constructed by the state and by society in general

as being incapable of rational discourse and responsible citizenship. Such labeling of certain

groups as incompetent is a tool frequently used by the state when constructing the political

enemy (M. Edelman 72). Nonetheless, the marginalized voice that cannot speak "reasonably"

(that is, according to the decorous standards imposed by the respectable elites of society) may

yet be heard. The use of radical street performance, as detailed in Chapter 3, may successfully

win the protest group recognition and a "hearing" by the public. According to Grimaldi's

analysis of Aristotle's rhetoric, it is not imperative for the *rhetor* to be reasonable, but for the

audience to be: "The act of rhetoric seeks out those factors which lead a reasonable mind to

accept the subject or the problem" ("Studies" 38). Even "unreasonable" rhetoric may be

successful if "it creates an attitude in another's mind, a sense of reasonableness of the position

proposed, whereby the audience may make his own decision" (38-39). It is possible, then, that

the protest message may resonate for some in the mainstream audience, regardless of the

declared rationality of the protestors themselves. Finally, therefore, the state will frequently

construct the marginalized protest group as *immoral*.

State attacks on the morality of marginalized protest group are common. These groups

are framed as debauched, depraved, unpatriotic (even "alien"), addicted to any number of

vices–they are dangerous to "good" society. Attacks against the group's moral character are

already implied in some of the charges levied against marginalized groups discussed above. If a

group is deemed irrational, or as overly emotional, or as falsely representing itself to the public

(hence dishonest), it is already of morally dubious character. But the state attacks on the

group's moral character go further, even to the point where the group may be constructed as

"evil." This is not as unusual as it may seem on the surface. As Murray Edelman asserts, "the

belief that others are evil, even if it seems unwarranted to historians, is not to be understood as

arbitrary, as accidental, or as a sign of inherent irrationality or immorality" (88-89). The

construction of the evil enemy is very valuable for the state in that it mobilizes citizens to

support state policies. Though typically the evil enemy will exist outside of the nation's borders

(i.e. Reagan labeling the Soviet Union as "the evil empire," or Bush's labeling Iran, Iraq and

North Korea as an "axis of evil"), the state may very well label an internal enemy as evil (i.e.

Jews in Nazi Germany, radical subversives in Argentina). Edelman writes that given

"conducive social situations," almost any minority group may be labeled as "enemy", and "the

state repeatedly reflects" the impulse to view "other" as "enemy" (89). For my own case

studies, the state variously framed the groups as anti-patriotic and subversive (Las Madres,

Otpor), as depraved (ACT UP), or as worthless (homeless), and a majority of society's

mainstream citizens readily adopted the state view.

 If "piety is the virtue of harmonious subjects," as Charland tells us ("Place of Impiety"

37), then subjects who violate a society's harmony, a society's piety, are violating a key

societal virtue. "Piety moves toward unity: it seeks wholeness through the denial of difference"

(Charland 37). Piety gets conflated with moral judgment–the word itself implies morality.

Society's marginalized others who embrace their "otherness" become threats to a society's

pious unity, and protestors who publicly embrace behaviors and messages that are "impious"

will be easily constructed as "immoral." However, there is room for rhetorical redemption here.

Edelman notes that there is frequently a sense of "ambivalence" regarding those who have been

constructed as the political enemy: "In every case a minority, usually small, feels so intensely

that there is little occasion for conflicting cognitions; but most of the population displays a

substantial measure of ambivalence. Individuals reflect social currents, even when the currents

flow in opposite directions" (71). So for a few citizens, the impious group is irredeemable; but many in the mainstream may be persuaded to reconsider the group's "enemy status" if prevailing social currents flow in that direction. The marginalized protest group must, therefore, shift the direction of these social currents in its favor and prove its own morality.

It is the concept of the protest group's morality and "performance of virtue" that will be my main focus for the remainder of this chapter. What are the virtues of the good citizen? What does the specific culture, society and/or nation value? And how does the marginalized protest group enact such virtues?

IV.B. — Character and Virtue

If certain protest groups are leading with their collective identity, their very "character," then the group's moral character, their "virtue," must necessarily be a part of the picture. I have previously asserted that protestors might be viewed as dramatic personages. Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, writes that "character is what makes us ascribe certain moral qualities to the agents" (231). "Character" and "morality" seem to be inextricably linked. In common parlance, when a person is declared someone "of character," the meaning is that they are a person of sound moral qualities.[15] An assessment of character requires that some form of moral judgment be passed on said person by the audience. This process is vital for marginalized protest groups in their quest for rhetorical effectiveness.

In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle writes: "Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible. We believe good men more fully and more readily than others" (25). A different translation of the same passage reads

as follows: "A listener is persuaded by *ethos* when the speech is spoken so that a speaker is made to appear worthy of persuasion. For we are persuaded most readily and strongly by those who are of sound character" (Mortensen). In both of these versions, the word "character" implies moral "worthiness" and "goodness." A rhetor is more credible when viewed as a "good" man (or, by extension, woman, servant, youth, etc.). The rhetor's "character" is "sound" when it is morally fitting with the rhetor's given identity. Las Madres, for example, are not just "mothers" nor are they just "good people;" they are "good mothers." This is the "sound character" they present to the public. How is the "sound" or "good" character evaluated, though? To answer that, I will refer to another Aristotelian text, his *Nichomachean Ethics*.

For Aristotle, morality is not a question of creating the greater good (as in Utilitarianism) or of obeying a series of absolutes (as in Deontological Ethics), but is a matter of character-based virtue. In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, he writes, "the virtue of man will also be the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his work well" (29). Virtue is related to character, goodness and action (work). Aristotle lays out several criteria for an action to be considered as "virtuous." First of all, the person performing the act must have "knowledge" and understanding of what he or she is doing. There is an aspect of *reason* that is implied here. Second, the person must "choose" the act; it is not coerced or done unconsciously. Third, the actions "must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character" (27-28). Virtue is thus directly related to, and so relative to, *who* the person is. Not only are virtues states of character related to one's specific disposition (and thus related to one's given identity), for Aristotle virtues lead to performing acts that are "in our power and voluntary" (48). This caveat that virtue may only be linked to acts within one's power further defines virtue as

identity specific. A Supreme Court Justice will have within her power the ability to perform certain virtuous actions unavailable to a kindergarten teacher, and vice versa. We associate specific virtuous actions with these specific identities: the Justice will act impartially and uphold the rule of law; the teacher will keep his students safe and nurture them to learn.

Jasper writes: "Every form of identity – individual, collective, even movement identity – carries certain moral obligations. Indeed, identity is pre-eminently moral" (136). Taylor, in his *Sources of the Self*, concurs: "To know who you are is to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad, what is worth doing and what not . . ." (28). Identity, that is, the *idem* self or the categorized identity, proscribes the scope of moral actions we may undertake if we wish to be considered "good" versions of that identity. These identity-oriented virtuous actions help to reinforce that aspect of authenticity that demands actions which are uncalculated, spontaneous. Such authenticity is vital for protest movements. As Eyerman notes: "Movements must contain non-strategic performances which motivate, move, actors because they believe in what they are doing, that what they are doing is the right (moral) thing to do" ("Performing Opposition" 208). Here, Eyerman makes the link between the authentic ("non-strategic performances") and the moral. "Performances of virtue", may in fact reinforce "performances of authenticity."

But what about Aristotle's second criterion for virtue, that it be consciously chosen? Consciously chosen does not necessarily imply "strategically" chosen. In Aristotle's moral universe, strategy is not key. The goal is not creating the greatest good à la Mill or Bentham. The virtuous action is a choice (we may always choose not to do an action, or to do some other action) that grows naturally, "authentically," from one's character. It is this issue of acting

strategically rather than virtuously that leads Alisdair MacIntyre to condemn Erving Goffman's worldview.

In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre attempts to revive the relevance of virtue ethics in the modern world, building on his own interpretation of Aristotelian ethics. MacIntyre dismisses the merely strategic as being in no way morally worthy. He writes that "the goal of the Goffmanesque role player is [mere] effectiveness" (115) and that such role playing is morally void. "Goffman's world is empty of objective standards of achievement" since "success is whatever passes for success" (115). According to MacIntyre, individual morality cannot be evaluated in any meaningful way in Goffman's world, since for Goffman "the social world is everything [and] the self is therefore nothing at all" (32). Instead, MacIntyre encourages readers to re-embrace Aristotle's Classical view of morality, rooted in individual virtuous action.

For MacIntyre, "to act virtuously . . . is to act from inclination formed by the cultivation of the virtues" (149). There is no disconnect between one's (natural) "inclination" and one's (virtuous) "action." Thus, "strategy" does not enter the picture when it comes to virtue. This is similar to Lionel Trilling's concept of "sincerity." According to Trilling, in the pre-Hegelian age, an individual's moral imperative would be less akin to "be true to oneself" and more akin to "be true to one's role." The moral focus of "sincerity" in the pre-Modern world would have been on embodying the "characteristic manner or style of approved conduct" specific to one's status. "What is in accord with this ethos is noble; what falls short of it or derogates from it is base" (37). "Sincerity" would imply that one acted in such a way that was "pure," or literally "without wax" (12). It actually sounds a lot like Goffman, except it was expected that this was

"sincerely felt" rather than "strategically performed."

For someone whose sole identity might have been "nobleman" or "burgher" or "nun," and who felt perfectly "right" in that role, there would have been no distinction between "sincerity" and "authenticity." Ricoeur makes a similar point in *The Course of Recognition* when he writes, "*Ipseity* totally disappears only if the character escapes any problematic of ethical identity" (103). Individual selfhood and character type may be neatly collapsed together in "sincerity." Such a neat collapse, though, is impossible in a world filled with "problematics" concerning one's ethical identity. MacIntyre, however, refuses to allow the "individual selfhood" component of moral identity to become eclipsed by the "character type" component of identity, and sees in Goffman's theoretical construction of the world an enormous hole where "individual selfhood" should be.[16] For marginalized protest groups, one lesson from all of this might be to embrace Trilling's "sincerity," if at all possible, thus avoiding any problematic disjunction between the role one presents in public (à la Goffman) and the acts of virtue that may gain them the moral high ground. As with the initial phase of recognition, simple is better than complex.

Aristotle writes that the virtues are neither passions nor capacities, but "states of character" (*NE* 29). People may be moved to passion against their better judgment and even against their choice. Capacities are inactive, and do not demand moral judgment. States of character, though, reflect whether "we stand well or badly" (28) that is, states of character allow us to be judged as "good" or "bad." States of character come to be through a combination of agency (conscious choice) and inherited social constraints learned prior to one's conscious volition in this process. Aristotle writes that character is habituated:

> By doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just
> or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and by
> being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly . . . .
> [S]tates of character arise out of like activities. This is why the activities we
> exhibit must be of a certain kind . . .It makes no small difference, then, whether
> we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very
> great difference, or rather all the difference. (*NE* 23-24)

If the habits one is exposed to from a very young age make all the difference in character formation, then collective identity has the potential to dictate much of one's future state of character. For example, the character habituated in a very young inner city impoverished boy will be different in many ways from the character habituated in a very young middle class rural girl. "Street smarts" might be an ingrained habit for the former; "empathy" might be an ingrained habit for the latter. "Character" is socially trained and constrained almost from birth.

Virtue is a distinct "state of character." In Book 2, Chapter 6 of the *Nichomachaean Ethics*, Aristotle tells us: "Virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean" (31). Virtue is not merely constrained, but also requires a display of agency. We choose to be good (or not), but in ways that are specific to the upbringing that has interpellated us as a specific character type. For example, the inner city boy, once grown, might choose to use his "street smarts" to help rid his neighborhood of drug dealers, or to become a dealer himself. The middle class young woman might choose to use her "empathy" to help out at an animal rescue shelter or to manipulate men to buy her things. Both of these hypothetical scenarios are cliché-ridden, but that is the point: the character needs to be recognizably "appropriate," and much of

this recognition comes from inherited stereotypes that, in turn, perpetuate the types of choices that those of marginalized identities might see as being appropriate for themselves.

Aristotle reiterates the identity-specific nature of character and morality in both the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*. Aristotle devotes Chapters 12 through 17 in Book II of the *Rhetoric* to an examination of "the various types of human character, in relation to the emotions and moral qualities" (121), analyzing character traits specific to people of a certain age or social class. In the *Poetics*, he notes that each character type will have his or her own "appropriate" actions and ways of revealing through these actions a "certain moral purpose" (242).

So if moral character is at least in part a "natural inclination" or "habituation" due to one's identity, and if acting in appropriate ways for that character reveals "moral purpose," how is virtue "performed"? And how do "performances of virtue" help marginalized identity groups gain rhetorical traction in spite of state attacks on their credibility and morality? "Performing virtue" convincingly reveals one's virtuous nature. Aristotle connects virtue with action, and it is the action performed that is judged as virtuous or not. Simply stating one's virtuous nature will not convince. As Garver notes, appeals to one's own character stated as arguments are "prone to backfiring, as in the notorious, 'Trust me; I'm not a crook.'" (*Aristotle's* 195). The virtuous character must be enacted. When Las Madres enact the "good mothers" they are embodying a piece of an argument: we are the embodiment of a virtue that you (the public) view as worthy and desirable. The rhetor's character ("mother") plus the appropriate virtuous action ("seeking our children to keep them safe") equals an enactment of "the good." It is the audience, though, that must supply the missing enthymeme regarding the virtue or lack thereof for the action in question. Is it virtuous for mothers to seek their children's safety? Might the

question rather be framed, is it virtuous for Argentine women to publicly challenge the state and support subversives? The key is understanding (and manipulating) how the public judges if someone is indeed doing the "right thing." In order to do that, we must examine how narrative frames work.

IV. C. — Narrative Frameworks

Jocelyn Maclure writes: "Identity is not an objective, natural condition; it is better understood as a narrative project or a 'persuasive fiction.' Thus the definition of an identity (whether individual or collective) cannot be kept separate from its narration" (*Quebec* 9). Maclure is writing about the "Québécois" identity, but his point holds for all collective identities. Identity exists through its narration and requires the context of its narrative to be recognized. As a corollary to this, we can say that the narrative (which is typically pre-existing and thus inherited) implicates the character's identity, instructing specific character types how to act in order to fulfill their narrative's arc. One's character dictates a "role" in the larger contextualizing script, a specific national or cultural narrative, or frequently (as we will see) multiple versions of these narratives. One plays a character and fulfills one's role in the contextualizing narrative, a narrative that is already established, and mostly accepted without conscious consideration (akin to Bourdieu's *habitus*). The "good" character fulfills his/her specific role in the narrative in order to bring about the happy ending for the protagonists of the story. Virtuous actions are thus pre-scripted for specific characters.

People intuitively understand stories, and so narratives are potent tools for meaning creation and for persuasion. Stories or narratives create meaning both for audiences "reading"

or watching the narrative play out, and for those actually living out the action of the narrative themselves. "Performances of virtue" imply both of these aspects of narrative's meaning-making. The latter aspect returns us to Ricoeur's "course of recognition." In Chapter 2, I noted how Ricoeur's course of recognition begins with recognition as identification–"what" are you? For Ricoeur, the next stage in the course of recognition is "recognizing oneself" (69). Ricoeur himself turns to Aristotle and the *Nichomachean Ethics* with its focus on virtue to make the connection to self-recognition (*Course* 81-89). Recognizing oneself requires a "reflexive self [as] implied by the recognition of responsibility" (83). A person becomes responsible when she takes ownership for her own actions, recognizing herself as implicated in a larger narrative (a "plot") that, through her own actions, she helps move along. Something must lead the character to see himself as "whole" over time, so something "encompassing a series of fragmentary actions" is required (99). That something is narrative. Ricoeur writes, "A character is someone who carries out the action in the narrative" and so "the character, we can say, is him- or herself emplotted" (*Course* 100).

Like Ricoeur, MacIntyre links the concepts of individual responsibility and virtue with emplotment and narrative. According to MacIntyre the question "What am I to do?" can only be answered by first asking "Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?" (216). Similar to Ricoeur, MacIntyre's virtuous subject recognizes himself as implicated in a narrative, and this recognition predisposes him to choose a certain action as opposed to another. Recognition of the framing narrative will also allow others to pass moral judgment on the actor, to determine if the actions performed are virtuous or not. As MacIntyre notes, "to adopt a stance on the virtues will be to adopt a stance on the narrative character of human life" (144). Virtuous action can

only be determined in the context of the narrative, both for the doer and the audience.

MacIntyre makes this clear when he writes:

> Each human life will embody a story whose shape and form will depend upon
>
> what is counted as a harm and danger and upon how success and failure,
>
> progress and its opposite, are understood and evaluated. To answer these
>
> questions will also explicitly and implicitly be to answer the question as to what
>
> the virtues and vices are. (144)

The concept of "deserving" or "worthiness" is now introduced. The audience can evaluate the

actions played out by the character in the narrative based on whether they lead to culturally

sanctioned ideas of "success" or "progress." The audience's evaluation of the actions

performed by the character determine the moral judgment the audience will pass on the

character: this is a "worthy" person, a "good" person–or not.

How do we make the determination of who is "good" in the narrative and who is "bad"?

Each nation or culture will have its own narrative that explains its own history and clarifies its

values. The virtues of the polity (society) are already "scripted." Any protesting group hoping

to communicate its own virtuous nature would need to appeal to an established topical

repertoire of cultural values that has been inherited by all in that culture (including themselves).

This would seem to work to the state's exclusive advantage. The historical narrative(s) that

frame a culture's or nation's past are usually hegemonic and function coercively (dictating

actions), especially when these narratives become societally sanctioned as "official." If the state

is truly the guardian and arbiter of the national narrative, then the state does have such coercive

power. As Paul Ricoeur reminds us in *Memory, History and Forgetting*, "the resource of

narrative becomes the trap, when higher powers take over this emplotment and impose a canonical narrative by means of intimidation or seduction, fear or flattery. A devious form of forgetting is at work here, resulting from stripping the social actors of their original power to recount their actions themselves" (448). The imposition of the canonical national narrative is the state's prerogative. In their *Encounters with Unjust Authority*, Gamson, Fireman and Rytina analyze how authority generally relies upon what they call a "legitimating frame," and that this frame is typically "taken for granted" by citizens "under" that authority (122-26). For the state, perhaps the ultimate authority, the canonical narrative serves as the legitimating frame for its actions and keeps its citizens generally compliant. Protest groups who wish to challenge the reigning regime have substantial work cut out for them. Since the regime's "legitimating frame" is generally accepted by the citizenry, and provides them with adequate "reason to be quiescent," protestors against the state are at an extreme disadvantage and "it is a constant, uphill struggle for those who would sustain the collective action in the face of official myths and metaphors" (Gamson, "Political Discourse" 219).

The "canonical narrative" invoked by the state, however, is larger than the state itself. The state does not actually contain (and thus control) the frame, but is contained ("framed") by it. Hugh Duncan refers to "community guardians" whose function is to serve as "protectors of the great principles of social order which sustain the community." These "guardians are the voice of tradition and custom, or of the utopias which lie ahead for all who do their duty" (98). Those "principles of social order" are embedded in the community's collective narrative. The state is the presumed guardian of the community (as nation) and its national narrative, but it becomes possible at times for a protesting group to present itself as such a guardian. A

performance of virtue, specifically invoking virtues inherent in the national narrative, will help to sway the public to a belief that the protesting group may be more "true" to the values of tradition or of progress than the state.

The idea of character, as in role played, presents possibilities for challenging the state's dominance over the interpretation of the national narrative. Characters may exist in multiple storylines simultaneously, with sometimes competing duties in each storyline. For protestors against the state, there might be the conflict between one's role as citizen and one's role as a specific, differentiated group member. All people have their distinct roles to play in a socially differentiated culture, and so the same individual is implicated in/by different, overlapping narratives. For example, at any given moment, President Obama may be playing the role of American champion (on the international stage), or the role of leader of the Democratic party (on the national stage), or the role of prominent black man (against the narrative of racial discrimination in America), or the roles of husband and father (in the nuclear family narrative). Each of those frames or narratives require a different way of interpreting Obama's actions, and as he performs certain actions, the public may re-evaluate the "rightness" of his actions if it comes to see those actions as being framed by one particular narrative frame as opposed to another. The "role" required of a person is not singular. Specific situations will emphasize one role over another, and virtue or vice will need to be considered accordingly, contingently, as it were.

Because of the impiety/piety balancing act necessary for the group (addressed in Chapter 3), the marginalized protest group is able to mobilize competing narratives fairly readily. The group needs to be able to frame its dissenting actions as "virtuous," as actions

required by the "good" character in an eccentric role with his/her own narrative obligations to fulfill. There are competing "pieties" to which the group may appeal. By promoting one piety over another, the protestors may portray themselves to the general public as virtuous players in a particular cultural script.

There are several challenges, however, for protests groups seeking to be viewed as virtuous characters. First is the state's power to mobilize the national narrative as it will in order to condemn challengers. Second is the general public's mostly negative view of protestors in general. This may go back to Classical views of the state and the citizen's role. In the *Nichomachean Ethics* Aristotle writes that it is only the person who "deviates widely" from the established norms of goodness who "does not fail to be noticed" (36). We take for granted that fellow citizens will follow the "mean," deviating neither too much nor too little. But protestors, in order to be recognized, require disruptive actions; they *wish* to be noticed. They are initially noticed, though, as "deviators," even deviants (in the sense of perverted away from the social norm). Such deviant action calls for moral condemnation, not praise. Jasper notes something similar to this for protestors in the United States: "Most Americans have little sympathy for protesters. . . . The news media continue to portray most protesters unfavorably – as eccentric and rude – even when they give a sympathetic hearing to the protestors' issues" (339)*.* Because of their disruptive tactics, protestors are not, initially, sympathetic characters. If protestors come across as eccentric and rude, how can they reframe themselves and the narratives they inhabit in order to appear morally admirable to the general public?

First of all, protest groups must recognize that they are already contained within inherited cultural narratives that will dictate audience interpretation of the protestor actions.

Tarrow writes that in order for a protest group to rework its "collective action frame" (the

"mini-narrative" that explains the movement's actions at that time and place), the group "must

operate within the cognitive and evaluative universe that they find themselves in rather than

create a new one" and any reframing attempts by the group are "constrained by existing

cultural meanings" ("Mentalities" 189). "Evaluative universe" is key here. The protestors will

be evaluated (morally) against a pre-determined backdrop, one that is not necessarily concerned

with the specific politics of the moment. For Tarrow, "the basic problem of using mentalities to

understand collective action and social movements is this: . . . mentalities are long-term,

unfocused, and passive popular beliefs about existing society and are not oriented toward action

in the public arena" ("Mentalities" 181). "Mentalities" are not constructed to enable "practical

wisdom" in contingent situations, but they do serve to frame the evaluation of actions in

contingent situations. Protestors might be claiming that a contingent situation deviating from

the narrative norm has come up, one that demands dissenting action, but that contingent

situation still exists within the larger narrative framework, and must resonate with the

"evaluative universe."

The marginalized protest group may seek to shift the audience's perspective in an

attempt to reframe itself and its dissent in relation to the narrative, framing the state as "failed"

in its obligation to uphold aspects of the national narrative. Gamson, Fireman and Rytina

studied the nature of obedience to authority in general, and noted how this is typically sustained

by an assumption that the authority is upholding the "shared moral principles of the

participants" (123). The authority may be challenged, though, by the presentation of "an

injustice frame" that interprets the actions of the authority in a way that portrays them as

violations of the shared norms (123).

In their essay "Frame Alignment Processes" Snow, et.al. examine the various ways that such reframing by social movements may be done. The authors note how the framing devices, like narratives, help explain to the public "the way" to understand whatever issue is in question. The successful reframing process frequently involves "value amplification." This refers "to the identification, idealization, and elevation of one or more values presumed basic to prospective constituents . . ." (469). Those values, of course, will be imbedded in the national or cultural narrative. The protesting group highlights or amplifies one or more specific cultural values above the rest implicated in the narrative and frames the current situation in such a way that those values are seen as coming under attack. Other group members and the public in general are thus summoned to rally together in order to defend the threatened values. Such framing and value amplification are potential rhetorical weapons for protest groups to use in order to wrest the national narrative away from the state's control.

There also exist cultural narratives specific to one non-mainstream group (as opposed to another) aside from the national narrative that may contain all of the groups. These specific cultural narratives help to foster a marginalized group's collective identity. Gary Alan Fine refers to these as "idiocultural" narratives. In his essay "Public Narration and Group Culture," Fine writes that cultural traditions are passed along through discourse and this legacy of cultural traditions coheres into a set of stories, an "idiocultural" narrative that serves as the group's memory, its informal history (135). The specific "idioculture" provides a shared understanding among group members, allowing them a common touchstone, but also creating a projection onto the rest of the world that group members use to "construct a social reality"(128-

29). The specific cultural narrative works to frame the group's understanding of current events and its own actions vis-à-vis those current events. These idiocultural narratives are distinct from the mainstream, national narrative for the "unmarked citizen."

The marginalized group may possibly invoke its own specific cultural narrative as a new framing device, encouraging the public to consider their collective character-based actions as "virtuous" through the frame of the group's own idiocultural narrative. There is a caveat here, though. Not all cultural narratives, replete with their own images and themes and symbols, will be "equally potent" (Gamson, "Political Discourse" 227). Certain frames will have a "natural advantage because their ideas and language resonate with larger cultural themes" (Gamson, "Political Discourse" 227). The challenge for the marginalized protest group is to highlight or amplify values within its group's own idiocultural narrative that will resonate with the larger cultural/national narrative.

Martin Luther King Jr. has famously noted: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy" ("American Profile"). Herein lies a rhetorical opportunity for marginalized groups. In times of crisis they have the capacity to reframe their collective character as a moral champion, rather than a deviant element of society. If the group can present a narrative framework that portrays them as making the difficult choice to do what is "right" rather than to do what is popular or easy, this will reveal them as virtuous characters, the "good guys" in the story.

The shifted narrative framework becomes possible for the marginalized group because of competing obligations pulling them in different directions. This is tied directly to their

collective identity, or rather multiple identities (i.e. mother and citizen). As Melucci tells us, in situations of crisis "our identity and its weaknesses are revealed" since in such situations "we are subjected to contradictory expectations" (*Playing* 30). When one's identity as mother pulls her in a different direction than her identity as citizen, which action will she choose? This choice will not only reveal "weakness," as Melucci notes, but strength or virtue. The choice of primary allegiance to one collective identity rather than another in a situation of crisis will allow an audience to pass moral judgment on the character, as long as the audience is able to see the character as playing a role in two (now competing) narratives.

Because no certain answer is available in a given situation–that is, a reasonable audience member could not say the action is categorically wrong and that it will lead to certain negative results–the marginalized group may frame its own actions and choices as the "wise" and "virtuous" ones. Jasper writes about "moral shocks" that will trigger certain groups to protest official policies (106). An external shift must occur here, too. The shifted narrative framework needs to be convincingly communicated to the public. Such narrative re-framing (such as introducing the "injustice frame") will allow others outside of the group to share the group's perspective. The original "moral shock" is usually unique to one particular group, like the families of the disappeared in Argentina or those gay men dying of AIDS and their immediate communities in the early 1980s. These groups may choose to bring knowledge of the moral shock to the attention of the larger public, who may or may not eventually come to share the moral outrage. Regardless, the larger public may come to see the moral shock as a justifiable motivator for the group's protest actions, a strand particular to that group's own narrative that contextualizes their actions as "appropriately virtuous" for those characters in that

situation.

The narrative from the margins must live alongside the dominant narrative, but does not need to be subsumed by it. Jasper is right when he writes that the judging the "goodness" of a group's actions must take into account the "broader context of society and its roles, traditions, and social identities" (342). This broader context does not necessarily mean a "universalized" context, though. The reframing narrative must not strip away the specifics of the marginalized group to reveal some generic (read "unmarked") "human." For this reason, Douglas Crimp's objections to PWA (persons with AIDS) portraits in the late 1980s is partly correct, but partly misguided. Crimp notes that the photographers of these exhibits were claiming the photos to be "mirrors" meant to evoke some universalized human empathy. Such an intention, according to Crimp, "denies the difference, the obvious sense of otherness, shown in the photographs by insisting that what we really see is ourselves" (*Melancholia* 88). Crimp is correct in criticizing the artists' stated intent, but he is wrong to dismiss the potential effectiveness of the exhibits themselves. The witnessing of a marginalized other's story may or may not, and perhaps should not try to, elicit an empathic response from the audience ("that could be me"), but such witnessing does enable the audience to understand the "other" as "emplotted," as part of a story distinctly different than one's own. In this way, the audience may view the actions of the "other" as part of "the other's narrative," not one's own and not a universalized narrative. The audience may then appropriately evaluate (morally) the actions of "the other."

The narrative framework implies that there is a finite frame. The creation of the narrative requires a framing in historical time, with a set beginning and a set ending, but this is only possible when looking backward in time, in retrospect. Ricoeur writes in *Oneself as*

Another that "the paradox of emplotment is that it inverts the effect of contingency . . . into an effect of necessity," and that the specific event that in the *then-present* was contingent "becomes an integral part of the story when understood after the fact, once it is transfigured by the so-to-speak retrograde necessity" (142). It is the ending of the plot that implicates the thread of events backward in time, the thread which leads directly to it, the *now-ending*. This ending implies that certain actions were required to have been played in order to bring about the (happy or unhappy) ending, and so the characters who played those actions may now, in retrospect, be viewed as having played actions that were admirable or despicable. For the plot as a whole, its "unity of meaning" results from a "dynamic equilibrium between a demand for concordance and the admission of discordances that, up to the close of the narrative, put in peril this identity [for the character]" (Ricoeur, *Course* 100). An evaluation of the character's virtuous nature, his or her worthiness, must be reconciled with "the ending" of the story.

This focus on the story's ending is a departure from the realm of deliberative or political rhetoric (whose purpose is hortatory, and thus concerned with a future of which no one may yet be certain), but it is an interesting side note for this analysis of narrative framing. For most protest movements, it is the historical narrative that dictates the moral worthiness of the movement, and that historical narrative has already achieved closure. As Gould notes, "Protest politics, such as the sit-ins for civil rights, are sometimes constructed as noble, but in dominant discourses, protest usually becomes noble only in retrospect, if at all, after the movement has disappeared and can be safely idealized" (*Moving* 275). The challenge for the rhetorical analysis of protest movements, at least any analysis like this one that attempts to bring in issues related to virtue, is that the protest needs to be placed into the larger context of a

national/cultural narrative, but the "ending" of the story cannot influence how the players are morally evaluated. So how can the protest be constructed "as noble" even as the protest events themselves unfold in time?

Time itself, even without a clear "ending," becomes an important element to be considered. Narratives contain characters who will unfold over time, allowing for an assessment of how those characters develop, change and grow. The character is not deemed virtuous because of a single snapshot in time that reveals his *idem* identity. Something more complicated is required, and it is the narrative that supports such complexity. Ricoeur writes that the narrative "returns" to the character "the movement abolished in acquired dispositions, in the sediment of identifications-with" (*Oneself* 165-6). Narrative allows for movement and change over time, while making a space for what Ricoeur calls "self-constancy" of character. "Narrative identity gives [to character] the recognizable features of characters loved or respected" (*Oneself* 166). Narrative allows the *idem* and *ipse* aspects of character to come together; allows the audience to recognize both the character as a category/type/role and as a player of actions that move the narrative along. The narrativized character is thus an agent worthy of praise or blame, and this worthiness is a part of the character's *ethos*, and key to the character's rhetorical effectiveness.

In *Sources of the Self*, Taylor writes: "narrative must play a bigger role than merely structuring my present. What I am has to be understood as what I have become" (47). For Taylor, the unfolding over time (from past to present) is imperative for one to locate oneself in "moral space" (47). Yes, this is true for the self, but it is also true for the audience who is seeking to locate the character in "moral space." Conversely, this concept is essential for the

self who wishes to construct oneself as "moral" *for* an audience. Leveraging one's "narrativized self" is imperative for what I am calling "performances of virtue."

IV. D. — Performing Virtue

Performing virtue is not an easy task. Aristotle writes: "to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for everyone, nor is it easy; wherefore goodness is both rare and laudable and noble" (*NE* 36). As Aristotle rightly notes, performing virtue is specific to a particular situation. The guidelines for performing virtue, though, would be fairly well-known for Aristotle's world, where the various social strata all had their roles to play with the common goal of keeping the society on track. Aristotle's concept of virtue was civic-oriented, and thus a conservative force for society, meant to reinforce already established values and social roles. So does Aristotelian virtue allow a space for the marginalized character who wishes to challenge the state? The same question might just as well be posed about rhetoric with its bias in favor of society's mainstream and against society's marginalized.

In "Rehabilitating Rhetoric," Charland makes the point that "rhetoric proceeds within the 'mainstream' . . . . [R]hetorical theory rejects the Foucaultian preoccupation with the other, with the marginalized and the silenced, particularly when their practices reinforce and valorize their marginality" (469). The pragmatic nature of rhetoric tends to dismiss what might be perceived as "ineffective" efforts, and historically efforts on the parts of the marginalized (at least in terms of swaying public discourse via rhetoric) have not been effective. Charland cites Burke as advising rhetors to "rework the discourse from the inside" (470). This is certainly

more easily done for an "insider" who inhabits the center of the society than for an outsider who inhabits the margins. Still, in his essay Charland urges that a corrective to the exclusionary dogmatism of rhetorical theory is necessary, especially to reveal where rhetoric imposes "silences" on various groups of would-be rhetors (472). Charland sees the possibility of such a corrective in critical and cultural theory, and part of the purpose of this thesis is to bring a critical theory perspective to the rhetoric of protest. In this section I propose that it is through recognized performances of virtue that the marginalized are able to gain credibility among the mainstream of society and so more effectively contribute to the "rewording of the discourse." Performances of virtue, which as we will see necessarily imply performances of authenticity, allow the marginalized protest group the ability to participate in civic society as credible rhetors without their needing to disavow or sacrifice their marginality.

Following, I will examine specific criteria for performances of virtue. These are:

1. *Self-recognition and a narrativized identity* – this relies heavily on Ricoeur's concept of self-recognition and identity conceived of as *ipseity*. Protest groups must narrativize their own identities and be seen to be making motivated choices

2. *Evidence of "Heideggerian authenticity"* – we, as human beings, are responsible for our own existence. We are "burdened with deciding and choosing what it means to be a particular type of entity" (Braman 17) and it is this that allows us to claim an authentic existence.

3. *Synergy between "action" and "motion"* – Burke uses the terms "action" and "motion," though Aristotle's "choice" and "habit" can serve just as well. Authenticity necessitates a movement away from simple motion towards chosen

action: agency. However, there exist obvious constraints on the freedom of choice required by authenticity and virtue.

4. *Societal recognition of one or more categorizable virtues* – such virtues may be culturally specific or more universal, but they must be "nameable" for them to be recognized.

Finally, at the end of this section I will take the opportunity to argue against certain aspects of MacIntyre's conception of virtue in an attempt to reconcile Goffman with Aristotle, key to my own concept of "performing virtue."

Self-recognition and a narrativized identity

MacIntyre writes, "Social type and psychological type are required to coincide. The *character* morally legitimates a mode of social existence" (29). An audience demands that the individual or collective character furnish them with "a cultural and moral ideal" and any deviation between individual and their role may create "doubt" or "cynicism" in the mind of the audience (29). The character thus seems trapped in fulfilling Trilling's "sincerity" or else losing credibility. However, time (and narrative, which requires time to unfold) allows for the appearance of deviation between character and role.

The static "social type" or "role" cannot be inhabited by dynamic individuals who are capable of making choices. "Identity" as a word is itself misleading. Melucci writes, "It is we ourselves who construct our coherence and recognize ourselves within the limits set by the environment and social relations." For this reason, Melucci finds the word "identity" to be insufficient to the task of discussing collective action taken by dynamic social movements. He suggests that "we should talk instead of *identization* to express the processual, self-reflexive,

and constructed manner in which we define ourselves" (*Playing* 31). Aware of the same inadequacy in the word "identity," Ricoeur speaks of identity as either *idem* (sameness over time) or *ipse* (dynamic selfhood). Both Melucci's *identization* and Ricoeur's *ipseity* permit analysis of collective identity to move beyond the "*what* of the who" (identity categorization) to the "*who* of the who" (identity development over time) and now to the "*why* of the who" (identity linked to motivated action). It is this *why* that situates the character within the narrative as an agent whose actions may be deemed "good" or "bad."

If the self is to claim that its actions are virtuous (à la Aristotle), the self must be capable of responsible choice, and this requires a reflexive self. Ricoeur calls "recognizing oneself" the second stage in his course of recognition (69). For Ricoeur, self-recognition requires that one learn to "narrate oneself" *(Course* 101). To qualify as "ethical," one must act ethically, but these acts are prefaced by what Ricoeur calls "the proud assertion 'I will do it.'" For Ricoeur such an assertion is evidence of "the risky posture of ipseity, as self-constancy that goes beyond mere sameness" (*Course* 103). It is narrativized identity that allows for a bridging between the constant self and the dynamic self.

In the chapter entitled "Personal Identity and Narrative Identity" from *Oneself as Another*, Ricoeur notes that a "character" must simultaneously exist as both an objective immutable self and a living, dynamic being. He asks, "A type?" then answers himself, "[Yes,] but an unsubstitutable singularity" (119). A person's identity does derive from one's character type, but within this type exists a unique individual with her own history and future, capable of abrupt changes that do not disrupt the narrative of the self. Protestors have not *always* been protestors, and frequently their protest actions come about abruptly, seeming almost

incongruous with their recognized social role. It is Ricoeur's "emplotment" of the narrativized self that "allows us to integrate with permanence in time what seems to be its contrary in the domain of sameness-identity, namely diversity, variability, discontinuity, and instability" (*Oneself* 140).

The marginalized protestor himself, in order to be viewed as performing virtue, must be aware of this narrativized identity and make the audience aware of it as well. Performances of virtue for marginalized protest groups require recognition (both self and audience) that the protest actions are logical continuations of the characters' narrative. For MacIntyre, it is the "exercise of intelligence" that "makes the crucial difference between a natural disposition of a certain kind and the corresponding virtue" (154). It is this conscious "knowing" required by virtue that self-narrativization deploys without sacrificing the "authentic identity" of the protestor.

Evidence of "Heideggerian authenticity"

A performance of virtue requires alignment with certain aspects of authenticity as presented by Heidegger. In Heidegger's 1927 *Being and Time*, the author writes that authenticity is born out of an individual's catching sight of his or her "existence" (Heidegger names this process "transparency"). Such "self-knowledge" is a matter of "grasping and understanding the full disclosedness of being-in-the-world throughout all its essential constitutive factors" (137). Heideggerian authenticity requires a perspective on one's life not dissimilar from Ricoeur's self-recognizing, self-narrating individual. For both there is the need to understand the various, disparate threads of the narrative (of one's "existence") that effect the role one is playing in the world.

How might this play out for marginalized populations? Mark Blasius locates the crucial action for coming into an authentic existence for gays and lesbians in the "coming out" process. In his essay "An Ethos of Lesbian and Gay Existence," Blasius writes: "Coming out refers to an ontological recognition of the self by the self" (655). For those in the queer community, coming out is the "rejection of one's own subjection" (655). These linkages among self-recognition, recognition of one's world, and a declared emancipation from subjection, are hallmarks of Heidegger's authenticity. Blasius himself links the coming out process to Heidegger's theory via the concept of *ethos*. Blasius cites Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics,* claiming that an "authentic existence" springs from an *ethos* that denotes "not mere norms but mores, based on freely accepted obligations and traditions" (657).

Such an *ethos* is not arrived at easily. Heidegger's "Dasein" (situated being) exists in an already scripted world: "The They (*das Man*) has already decided the manner in which Dasein should live out its existence" (Braman 10). In *Meaning and Authenticity*, Brian Braman presents the challenges to authentic existence as laid out by Heidegger in his *Being and Time*. Foremost is that Dasein "automatically and unreflectively surrenders its own potentiality for being a true self in order to 'dwell in tranquillized familiarity.'" (11). The world we know is the one we cling to. We are handed a script and told to play it, and we typically do so unreflectingly. The *habitus*, the canonical narrative, or whatever we may name it, largely proscribes our identities and "chosen" actions. For Heidegger, this historical framework that we are handed is "a warped and distorted form of 'tradition'" (Guignon 336). It is inauthentic. It is not the way we were meant to live, and recognizing that is essential in order for us to break from it and live an authentic existence. The authentic person need not reject the modes of

behavior dictated by the *habitus*, but must recognize the *habitus* as dictating those modes. The authentic person may then very well *choose* to engage in such modes of behavior. Dasein must come "to understand that it is responsible for its own being" and come to see itself as "burdened with deciding and choosing what it means to be a particular type of entity" (Braman 17).

Because Dasein is tranquillized by the familiarity of the pre-scripted world, some rupture is required to "jolt [Dasein] out of its lethargy," some experience that reveals "the precariousness of Dasein's own world" (Braman 18-19). Such a rupture might be the "moral shock" that Jasper attributes to jolting some would-be protestors out of their complacency and onto the streets (i.e. the devastation of one's community by AIDS or the disappearing of one's children by the government). Braman calls this "a call of conscience," revealing to Dasein its own responsibility for creating a meaningful existence (19-20). Such a call of conscience may very well lead to actions that one may call "virtuous," rooted in the now self-aware authentic individual's identity. One cannot claim that one is performing virtue without this leap into self-awareness and the embracing of the burden required to make one's own choices *as* an authentic being in this world.

Performing virtue is a chosen life path, and for dissenters/protestors this is not an easy path–but then neither is authentic existence according to Heidegger. In this, Sartre concurs. Sartre offers his own vision of authentic existence for members of a marginalized group (in this case Jews) in his *Anti-Semite and Jew*: "The authentic Jew is the one who asserts his claim in the face of the disdain shown toward him" (91). The Jew who chooses an authentic existence does so despite the difficulty of doing so in a society rife with Jew hatred. Authenticity is

chosen not out of freedom from societal constraint, but despite the societal constraint. In his preface to the book, Michael Walzer notes that "while Sartre always insists that individuals are responsible not only for what they do but also for what they are, it is nonetheless clear that they make their choices under duress" (viii). Authenticity is knowingly recognizing that your choices are highly proscribed and frequently difficult, and actively committing to those choices anyway.

Heideggerian authenticity is necessarily proscribed by aspects of the "thrown" world. As Braman notes, one may embrace "being-one's-self" but within constraints set by "the They" (17). Indeed, "there can be no absolute escape from the they-self to discover one's own possibilities, precisely because the They is the source of all possibilities, whether authentic or inauthentic" (Braman 18). Still, Heideggerian authenticity requires reflection, not mindless appropriation of the inherited "thrown" world.

Synergy between "action" and "motion"

Performing virtue requires acknowledgment that one may be "agent" without being "author." The given-ness of the pre-existing world *impels* the character in a certain direction, but cannot *compel* the character to perform specific actions. As Arendt writes in *The Human Condition*, "the stories, the results of action and speech reveal an agent, but this agent is not an author or producer. Somebody began it and is its subject in the twofold sense of the word, namely its actor and sufferer, but nobody is its author" (184). The actor is not the playwright, but this does not mean that the actor has no sway over the play; each actor's performance will reveal a unique "life" to the audience.

Aristotle presents virtuous acts as emerging from two distinct forces that he terms

"habit" and "choice." He writes that virtue "is a state of character concerned with choice" (*NE* 31). A "state of character" is a static thing acquired passively by "habit." Yet virtue requires "choices" to be made emerging from that state of character. For Aristotle, virtuous actions undertaken by a person will only fall within the scope of "things that he thinks can be brought about by his own efforts" (*NE* 42). Virtuous action is linked to practical wisdom and deliberative thought and since "every class of men deliberates about the things that can be done by their own efforts" (*NE* 43) virtuous actions are similarly voluntary "efforts" but within the bounds of what that particular "class" of character believes he may accomplish. Performing virtue is rather pragmatic, and it assumes that the action undertaken will be framed by the story of one's own particular perspective.

"The virtues are voluntary," according to Aristotle (*NE* 41). Virtue is "closely bound up" with choice, and Aristotle is very specific that virtuous actions are deliberate and thoughtful, not merely spur of the moment reflexes (*NE* 41-42). So Aristotelian virtue is performed by an agent with "knowledge" and by "choice." Yet, Aristotle also notes that virtue must "proceed from a firm and unchangeable character" (*NE* 77-78). One's character is not chosen, though. It is formed by "habit." As Aristotle writes elsewhere in the *Ethics*, "moral virtue comes about by habit, whence also its name (*ethike*) is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word *ethos* (habit)" (23); and again, "we are adapted by nature to receive them [virtues]" (23). *Ethos* is a "dwelling place" where one finds oneself already situated. "Nature" has "adapted" us to be virtuous in ways specific to our *ethos*. This is habit, not choice.

The text of the *Nichomachean Ethics* never comes out and states that the dialectical tension between habit and choice requires a balancing act for performing virtue, but such is the

case. When Aristotle states, "we are ourselves part-causes of our states of character" (48), he is acknowledging we have some element of agency in the self-creation of our character, but we do not have complete agency. This is the "we can be agent without being author" idea offered by Arendt. In *Oneself as Another*, Ricoeur attempts to analyze this habit-choice tension from the *Ethics*. Ricoeur writes that Aristotle "forges the expression 'co-responsible' (*sunaition*)" to express a "synergy" that exists "between our choices and nature, in forming dispositions (*hexeis*) which together form our character" (94). A "synergy between" habit and choice, rather than a "tension between" the two, might be a more useful way to proceed.

Burke offers the terms "motion" and "action" to express something similar in his *Rhetoric of Religion*. A ball rolling down an inclined hill would be an example of "motion"; no volition is required. "Action," however, requires human agency. "'Action' is to 'motion' as 'mind' is to 'brain,'" Burke writes (39). The brain offers potential, a force for possible use, but it is the mind that actually works the brain through an exercise of will. Performances of virtue are "actions," though they springboard from a "motion" beyond (beneath?) one's agency. Burke notes that "'action' implies the ethical" (41). A person reveals herself, her ethical "character" through her actions. "Action involves *character*, which involves *choice*" and, for Burke, "choice attains its perfection in the distinction between Yes and No" (41). Even if the choice of one's actions is highly proscribed (by forces beyond one's control), one can always choose to say" Yes, I will do that" or "No, I will not do that." When protest groups dissent against the state, their "No" is a chosen action that reveals their (potentially) virtuous character. Virtuous character, though, cannot be revealed through sheer "motion," which is non-ethical.

Yet another way to look at this synergy between "action" and "motion" is via

Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus*. In *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu writes that the habitus *"*makes possible the free production of all of the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production – and only those" (55). The phrase "only those" seems to strictly limit human agency, but the scope of the *habitus* is enormous. This is the same concept as one's authenticity being limited by "the They" from Heidegger, but here it comes from the opposite direction, explaining how "freedom" is possible at all in such a constrained world. For Bourdieu, the *habitus* "governs practice, not along the paths of a mechanical determinism, but within the constraints and the limits initially set on its inventions" (55). He continues:

> This infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity is difficult to understand only so long as one remains locked in the usual antinomies–which the concept of *habitus* aims to transcend–of determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and the unconscious, or the individual and society. (55)

Bourdieu's *habitus* allows for human agency, but not human authorship. It attempts to "transcend", or perhaps reconcile, the tension between freedom and determinism. This is another way of figuring the synergy between "action" and "motion," or between "choice" and "habit," the synergy that permits performances of virtue.[17]

Bourdieu notes that the *habitus* requires the subject to engage in "regulated improvisations" that are "both original and inevitable" (*Logic* 57). This phrase might easily have been written by Stanislavski as instruction to his actors as they move through a play on stage, and a slight detour here into the world of the actor may be illuminating. Stanislavski's actor seeks the state where "motion" takes over and dictates (well, strongly informs) "action."

Stanislavski writes that actors should aim to be "carried away" by the playwright's script. When this happens, "they cannot control the muscles of their faces, which oblige them to grimace or mime in accordance with what is being read. They cannot control their movements which occur spontaneously" (*Role* 5). The written word of the playwright takes possession of the actor who becomes the character in the role as written. When an actor is in the right "inner creative state", the "words of another, the playwright, become an actor's own words . . ." (*Role* 95). Stanislavski is overstating the case. The actor still has agency and makes various creative choices, but the goal is for the actor to synergize his or her choices with the many constraints (given circumstances, dialogue, even stage directions) of the playwright's text. Of course, Stanislavski is moving his actors in the direction *away from* "action" (individually chosen and even "contrived" moments on stage) and *towards* "motion" (a larger force located in the text of the play that impels an actor's performance overall). In the world of Stanislavskian theatre, "surrender" to the role becomes the actor's goal. The synergy between "action" and "motion" is what allows for the type of "genuine" or "in-the-moment" performance that Stanislavski valued.

Societal recognition of one or more categorizable virtues

Is "surrender" to one's role in the real world a "virtue" the way it might be for actors working with Stanislavski? Is the acceptance and public declaration of one's given identity itself an act of virtue, as it might be for Sartre's "authentic" Jew? Is denial of or resistance to one's given identity considered a vice? When do we call something "obedience" and when "slavishness"? When do we assign the label "courageous" and when "shameless"? The recognition of virtue is not clear cut; it is situation-specific and open to interpretation.

Nonetheless, successful performances of virtue must be recognized *as* "virtuous." The central theme of the action in question must be framed in such a way that it may be labeled, by mainstream society, as morally praiseworthy, as opposed to blameworthy.

An individual's or group's performance of virtue will be associated with their collective identity/social role. Cultural narratives allow these "identity-tailored" virtues to be identifiable. For example, Bourdieu writes about youth in his society as being its own "class," encouraged (by the larger society) to "revel in the 'specific virtues' of youth, *virtu*, virility, enthusiasm . . . and every form of regulated, ludic wildness . . ." (*Distinction* 478). Young people are not held accountable to the same moral judgments as society may pass on more mature persons. Aristotle analyzes at great length the "moral qualities" of "various types of human character" based on age, birth and fortune (*Rhetoric* 121-28). The wealthy man in his prime will be judged differently than the elderly man of poor means. The individual case studies in this thesis will reveal some of these identity-tailored virtues (i.e. the "virtuous mother" sacrifices for her child, the "virtuous youth" speaks his or her mind). But might there exist "generalizable" virtues that the mainstream societies in the West, at least (one limiting factor of my case studies), will recognize as virtues regardless of who the actor may be?

Two such generalizable virtues emerge: courage and civic-mindedness. Marginalized protestors confront many difficulties because they recognize that they need to be "true to themselves." The consequences they face for such protest (mockery, harassment, violence, arrest, even death) become proof of their courage. By confronting the state they become "citizens" acting out of a more generalizable civic concern. Taken together, these two virtues performed in the public sphere become the recipe for what we might call "heroic."

Butler writes how identity may be viewed as a command: "Girl!" (*Bodies* 237). Bourdieu writes how identity may be viewed as an accusation (*Distinction* 477): "Gay!" By calling out the mark, the stigma, the identifying word has the power to produce a sense of shame. But just as Butler notes how a command allows for disobedience, an insulting accusation that is openly acknowledged, even embraced, allows for the conversion of shame to pride (i.e. "We're here! We're queer! Get used to it!"). This may be seen as a performance of virtue in and of itself, since by owning one's marked self, one displays courage.

In her essay "Bringing the Crowd Back In," sociologist Pamela Oliver notes that social movement activists often come to value the image of themselves as people who "do the right thing" (17). She writes, "the most important thing [a social movement] does is to make 'standing up' positively valued," and to recognize that "the moral or ethical thing to do is to express resistance to injustice "(17). Oliver's interest is in locating those aspects of social movements that might be ignored in the post-"crowd mentality," rationalist approach to social movements. The concept of "virtue" is one of these aspects. It is not a question of strategic aims, but a need to "do the right thing" that motivates many protestors. When the larger society views the group's protest as a resistance to injustice, the protest will be labeled as morally praiseworthy. It typically takes courage to stand up against the state, and so "courage" here is also a key element of "doing the right thing."

Aristotle writes that courage is foremost of all the virtues (*NE* 49). Courage allows "the brave man" to "endure" whatever trials he must in order to achieve the "noble end" he seeks (*NE* 50). Protestors may be labeled as "courageous" as they willingly face police arrests and potential state brutality, even as they endure more general societal condemnation. "Courage"

was ascribed to *Las Madres* repeatedly. For example, McAllister writes of the Mothers' 1979 return to the Plaza de Mayo that "their visible courage was contagious. Onlookers who had been too afraid to stop long enough to acknowledge the women now stood still to applaud the Mothers as they circled the square" (29).

Civic-mindedness is another recognizable "virtue" that may be ascribed to protestors. Charland writes that in order to be rhetorically effective, acts of impious rhetoric must "seek the means to persuade ethical others through an ethical performance . . . the enactment of civic character is key" ("Place of Impiety" 42). The impious action must implicate something greater than the impious rhetor him or herself. "Civic character" or "civic-mindedness" serves as a "corrective" for the initial judgment against acts of "impiety." If the protest movement is viewed by mainstream society as an attempt to improve society as a whole, the protest actions may be viewed as virtuous. For Aristotle, the "end" of politics is "the human good" (*NE* 3). It is the "human good" that also serves as the end for Aristotelian ethics. Aristotle's virtues are meant to support and enrich Greek society; the virtuous actor is implicated in civic society. Conversely, the goal of enriching or improving the whole of society, civic-mindedness, may be viewed as virtuous–even today.

In his essay "Theorizing Acts of Citizenship, " Engin Isin writes that historically significant protest movements like the civil rights protests in the United States were actions that "required the summoning of courage, bravery, indignation, or righteousness to break with habitus" (18). Isin connects the breaking with the *habitus*, an act I have previously noted as a necessary part of Heideggerian authenticity, with the requirement of courage. He then goes on to connect these two virtues with a third, namely civic character: "Without such creative breaks

it is impossible to imagine social transformation or to understand how subjects become citizens as claimants of justice" (18). An "act of citizenship" is one in which the subject-turned-citizen breaks with the established system (i.e. the state) in order to draw attention to an injustice. The act allows for society's transformation. The act of citizenship is a performance of virtue, despite the fact that such a performance may not "be founded in law or enacted in the name of the law" and instead may actually challenge or break the currently standing laws (Isin 39).

Combine "courage" and "civic-mindedness" with performances taking place in the public sphere, and you have a recipe for "heroism." All societies have the narrative of "the hero." According to MacIntyre, "to understand courage as a virtue is not just to understand how it may be exhibited in character, but also what place it can have in a certain kind of enacted story" (125). One of the expectations of the pre-scripted "heroic" narrative is that the main character (the "hero") will display "courage." The hero is then accorded honor by the society for the display of courage, which of necessity would have needed to become widely known. As Charles Taylor writes, "the honour ethic" is accorded most greatly to the one "who plays a major role in public life" (*Sources* 25). Arendt writes something similar in *The Human Condition*: "action needs for its full appearance the shining brightness we once called glory, and which is possible only in the public realm" (180). Glory is bestowed on the hero of the narrative for public acts of courage. Typically we might associate such an act with a warrior or a political leader. But marginalized protestors may just as easily fit the bill, once the framing narrative can recognize this outsider as the protagonist.

Acting courageously in the public realm is something marginalized protestors do, *de facto.* Arendt acknowledges as much (although persons on the margins might not have been on

her mind) when she writes:

> The connotation of courage, which we now feel to be an indispensable quality of the hero, is in fact, already present in a willingness to act and speak at all, to insert oneself into the world and begin a story of one's own. And this courage is not necessarily or even primarily related to a willingness to suffer the consequences; courage and even boldness are already present in leaving one's private hiding place and showing who one is, in disclosing and exposing oneself. (*Human* 186)

Arendt, here seems to capture the essence of any "performance of authenticity." The actor discloses and exposes himself in public. The choice on the part of the marginalized player to insert herself *as* herself in the public realm, a realm that does not welcome such insertion of the private, marked self, is a choice that requires courage. In this foray into the public realm, the marginalized protestor combines the virtues of authenticity, courage and civic-mindedness, and so may be considered "heroic." Far from being mere acts of "identity politics," with its implication of a narrow, self-centered, special interest motivation, pubic performances of virtue by marginalized protest groups are the acts of citizen-heroes displaying courageous civic character and seeking to better society as a whole.

Arguments with MacIntyre and Goffman

Before moving on to an analysis of Las Madres vis-a-vis the issues raised in this chapter, I want to briefly take up an argument with Alisdair MacIntyre over his dismissal of Goffman. MacIntyre writes that the "good" man in a Goffmanesque world possesses "honor", "regard" from others, and this is the only reward he craves (116). MacIntyre rejects this

conception of "good," and claims that Aristotle would have as well since such a conception has nothing to do with virtue. MacIntyre's move to make Goffman and Aristotle incompatible becomes a bit of a stumbling block for conceiving of "performances of authenticity and virtue." My emphasis in this thesis on "performances" attempts to sidestep some of these incompatibility problems; nonetheless, I would like to work out a theoretical reconciliation, if possible.

According to MacIntyre, "In Goffman's social world imputations of merit are themselves part of the contrived social reality whose function is to aid or to contain some striving, role-playing will" (116). One argument here is that we, the people of Goffman's world, are not all so cynical, and can sense the very charge that MacIntyre makes. We can discern what is entirely contrived and artificial and set it apart from what even MacIntyre may concede is "authentic" in the midst of all the role-playing. Stanislavski's actor is a model for this–clearly giving a performance for contrived ends, but with decided elements of the "authentic" embedded throughout.

Another opening for reconciliation with Goffman that MacIntyre offers is when he writes about the Homeric era and heroic society virtues in contrast to the (later) Athenian era with its emergence of virtues à la Aristotle. MacIntyre presents the Homeric virtues as already existing as a part of the given social role. The heroic narrative sets up specific expectations for any character category's behavior; when such behavior is fulfilled, "virtue" may be attributed to that character. MacIntyre distinguishes these heroic virtues from Aristotelian virtue, which requires an internal "telos" towards which the good citizen is perpetually aspiring (184). I would challenge whether or not we have ever moved beyond the "Homeric" in our regard for

virtue, and certainly whether in the era of Aristotle such a clean move away from virtue

categorized by social role was indeed accomplished.   MacIntyre himself notes at another point

in *After Virtue*, in a section regarding the seemingly unfamiliar concept of the self as a unified

whole, that "because it has played a key part in the cultures which are historically predecessors

of our own, it would not be surprising if it turned out to be still an unacknowledged presence in

many of our ways of thinking and acting" (205-06). The same would have to be conceded to

the Homeric virtues, products of a culture which is a historical predecessor of our own. We are

still, at least in part, viewing virtuous action in our world through the lens of the heroic

narrative, even if unconsciously. Goffman's theory of playing the role of oneself fits quite well

with such a world view.

    MacIntyre objects to Goffman's theoretical perspective on everyday life because of

what MacIntyre claims is its moral vacuity. If the "social world is everything" then the self is

"nothing at all" and so no personal moral codes are possible (32). MacIntyre writes: "The goal

of the Goffmanesque role-player is effectiveness and success in Goffman's universe is nothing

but what passes for success. There is nothing else for it to be. For Goffman's world is empty of

objective standards of achievement" (116). Morality in Goffman's world is merely "contrived"

and something like "virtue" is unavailable except as a recognizable "performance." However, I

would argue that the Goffmanian desire "to seem" leads to an act of "doing," just as the

MacIntyresque need "to be" leads to that same act of "doing." Over a sustained period of time,

can't we attribute an evaluation of moral character to the doer in either case? If Aristotle

specifically ties virtue to action, not thought (*NE* 24, 28), as long as the doing of the action

stems from the actor's "character" (role being as satisfying a synonym for this as "moral

framework" would be), then Aristotelian virtue can exist quite well in a Goffmanian world.

Goffman and Aristotle can co-exist quite well theoretically, but it seems to me that Aristotle's *Poetics*, and not his *Ethics*, is best be able to subsume/frame Goffman's approach to sociology, without losing the valuable concept of virtue. Aristotelian drama is actually Goffmanesque, relying as it does on the Homeric notion of characters judged against the horizon of their social role. Perhaps for this reason, ultimately an aesthetic framing (something that Goffman and Aristotle's *Poetics* share) of "virtue" will be more useful and satisfying (for the current purposes of this thesis, at least), although such an aesthetic framing is one that MacIntyre would reject.

This is not to say that Goffman does not present problems for theorizing performances of authenticity and virtue. For example, Goffman might be overstating the gap between what he calls "real reality" and "fostered reality" (*Presentation* 65). When he writes that a person is so conscious of his performance that "instead of merely doing his task and giving vent to his feelings, he will express the doing of his task and acceptably convey his feelings" (65), this strikes me as more the exception to "everyday life" than capturing its essence. The act of "telegraphing" or "indicating" one's actions and/or feelings is universally condemned among Stanislavski-trained actors. So is Goffman suggesting we all engage in "bad acting," which at best would be convincing but inauthentic, like a con-man's performance? It is interesting that Goffman allows that the "representation" of an activity is not the same as the "activity" itself: there is a gap. Such a gap is something that performance scholars like Richard Schechner recognize. The gap allows for the potential insertion of a commentary (*Between* 9), which may be valuable if one is trying to create dissonance between activity and representation of activity,

but seems less valuable if consonance is what the performer is after. I would instead try to view

the gap created by "representation" as Gadamer might when he writes about performance as the

"bringing forth" of an essence, the producing of something even "truer" (114). In this way,

might not the representation be even more "authentic"?[18]

IV.E. — Case study: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo

How does the case of Las Madres make use of "character as moral judgment?"

Certainly the Argentine junta repeatedly attacked the collective character of the Mothers,

attempting to brand them at different times as either irrational or immoral or inauthentic. The

most widely known attack on the character of Las Madres was the label of "*las locas*."

Although the label helped to protect the protestors (how do arrest a mother who is mad with

grief?), it also categorized them as irrational and thus not credible. The effect of the labeling

was that the Mothers found themselves increasingly isolated, the women noting the withdrawal

of friend and family support at this junction (Bouvard 79).

By 1978, though, the attempt to dismiss the women as "merely crazy" was no longer

sufficient. Their continued existence as a group was challenging "the very basis of the

military's system of repression" (Fisher 70). At this point, the junta began to frame Las Madres

as a threat to the stability of Argentina. General Ramon Camps speaking to the media warned

the country: "Don't forget that these ladies are continuing the subversive activities begun by

their children" (Fisher 70). The Mothers were no longer irrational and dismissable; they were

dangerous and enemies of the state.

Finally, in 1980 to 1982, the state attempted to question the very authenticity of the

Mothers, claiming repeatedly that the women were really the tools of foreign terrorists. Such accusations either described Las Madres as being "unwittingly exploited" by such foreign groups (Schumacher A2) or pointedly asserted that the protests were being "financed by terrorists" from outside of Argentina (Guest 349). This accusation that the Mothers were not who they claimed to be, that they were motivated not by their children's welfare but by foreign money, is yet another attack on the women's collective character.

The group's collective identity as "mothers" carried a lot of moral weight in Argentina. Moral character is implicated in the role itself. The junta could mock women in the streets as crazy, but such mockery could not extend to "mothers." What Fabj calls "the myth of the good mother" (7) allowed Las Madres to use their role as mothers strategically, foremost to substantiate their collective moral character. One mother interviewed by Munoz and Portilla told of how she overcame her terror of state reprisal and continued to return to the Plaza to march because, as she phrased it, "of our obligation" (*Las Madres*). The role of the mother requires that one go out and search for a missing child; this is a moral obligation, one that Las Madres took seriously.

By comparison, others in Argentina failed to rise to the moral obligations inherent (or so I would assume) in their respective roles. Judges in the country, for example, failed to adhere to legal procedures in order to give the junta a clear berth to proceed as they would (Guest 26-7; Bouvard 41). Among those who failed to live up to the moral demands of their collective role were the officials of the Catholic Church in Argentina. Many Church officials were already politically aligned with the new conservative junta who were seen to be bringing Argentina back to traditional values. Those Church officials who dared to speak out against the

"excesses" of the junta's methods were swiftly punished. In August of 1976, a particularly outspoken Bishop was killed in a "suspicious car accident," and after this event, "the intimidation of the Argentine Church hierarchy [was] successful" (Robben 287). That the Church lacked the moral courage to continue to speak out because of their own fear of reprisal is a moral shortcoming. Rita de Krichmar, one of the Mothers, opined, "the Church was the worst of all. They were more terrible than anyone could imagine considering that they say they believe in the good of humanity" (Fisher 22). Unlike Las Madres, the Church (inside of Argentina, as a whole) failed to live up to the virtuous expectations of its role as moral beacon and guardian for Argentina.

In order to convincingly claim moral character in their role as mothers, Las Madres needed to work within various Argentine cultural narratives, emphasizing certain aspects of these narratives and reframing other aspects. The Argentine junta itself also needed to work within the constraints of these Argentine cultural narratives. One such cultural narrative strong in Argentina–this one supporting the junta's actions–had to do with national pride in the Argentine military and strong sense of "patriots" in Argentina supporting their military leaders. This is one reason why the junta chose to invade the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands in 1982. General Galtieri's "gamble" initially paid off quite well due to this cultural tradition: "his early appearances from the presidential balcony were triumphant" (Guest 341), despite the almost complete collapse of the Argentine economy. Even the labor unions announced at this time that they would "put aside differences with the government" in order to support "Argentina's historic claim to the Malvinas" (Guest 341). In converse relation to the renewed popularity of the military government in this time of war, the Mothers' weekly vigils in the Plaza de Mayo

grew increasingly smaller (Guest 341). During the Falklands conflict, even the Mothers claimed "patriotism." According to a *New York Times* article of May 31, 1982: "They are Argentines, the marchers say, and naturally support the war for the land they believe is theirs. But they also remind the military Government that they still need to know the fate of their loved ones . . . 'We are patriots,' said a short stocky woman wearing an overcoat against the fall chill. 'This is like fighting on the front–a different front'" (Meislin A5). The narrative of patriotism required all to support their military forces during a time of international conflict, even those who had become highly critical of the military government. Las Madres needed to conflate the narrative of patriotism to include their own actions, marching in the Plaza. "We are fighting on a different front" is one attempt to reframe the patriotism narrative, although not very convincingly. Of course, the Falklands conflict lasted only 74 days, and following Argentina's defeat, the public's emotional investment built up by the call to patriotism easily turned against the seemingly inept (economically and now also militarily) junta.

Four years earlier, the patriotic citizen narrative also came into prominence, due to the World Cup tournament being held in Buenos Aires in June 1978. The challenges to the Mothers' true patriotism, however, met with a more defiant response from the Mothers at this time. The Mothers were repeatedly and openly criticized by passersby in the Plaza "for damaging Argentina's reputation" in the eyes of the international community and so "for being unpatriotic" (Robben 307). The Mothers kept marching, unapologetically. According to one mother, Aida de Suarez, "People said we were unpatriotic because we were giving the country a 'bad image.' . . . What about the image I would give as a mother sitting in my home with no right to go out and look for my children? While the murderers were killing Argentines and

throwing them into the sea?" (Fisher 73). If the "fighting on a different front" argument from 1982 seems to imply that the duties of the mother in Argentina coincide with those of the patriot, here the argument states that "the mother" has other unique duties that in this case trump those of "the patriot." Of course when Suarez was actually interviewed (in 1985), the end of the *desaparecidos* narrative had become known, the existence of the dumped corpses having been revealed. The "fact" that the junta were "murderers" gives a moral legitimacy to those who would speak against them, but such moral legitimacy was not a given from 1977 to 1982 when Las Madres were struggling to be heard, and heard as *credible*, by the public.

The most significant cultural narrative for the case of Las Madres is the narrative of "the Argentine family" and in particular, the role of "the good mother." The good mother strand of the narrative, however, does not stand alone and is intertwined with a variety of other cultural narrative strands, namely those dealing with "machismo," "marianismo" and "the good father." Burke writes that "only those voices from without are effective which can speak in the language of a voice within" (*RoM* 39). In terms of narratives of gender and family roles, Las Madres spoke the same "language" as the junta in many ways, and the acceptability of these cultural narratives for mainstream Argentine society allowed for Las Madres to have an effective, competing voice alongside the junta. Because Las Madres as mothers were already implicated in the cultural narrative "the Argentine family," a narrative repeatedly deployed by the state to justify its own actions, and because the Mothers themselves more or less accepted the elements of that narrative, they were able to speak to their fellow Argentines, now programmed to view reality through the junta's framing narrative, and still be heard.

The concept of "machismo" is fundamental to the Argentine family narrative.

According to Fisher, "Machismo emphasizes a division of functions, capacities and qualities between male and female that seeks to confirm the superiority of the male" (5). The acceptance of such a gendered division and inequality was prevalent throughout Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s. The Argentine cultural tradition of machismo was extended by the military junta into the political realm and informed how they chose to frame the actions of the state. Diana Taylor writes that "the junta leaders fetishized male virility into a model of authentic Argentineness" (62). They were, above all else, powerful *men*. The junta's rhetoric represented an intertwining of those values associated with masculinity, military might, the traditional family and conservative Christianity. The Argentine military promoted themselves "as the only ones capable of defending the values of Christianity and the family in the face of the 'Marxist subversives,'" and this gave them "moral authority" among the Argentine people (Fisher 60).

If the role of men in Argentina was to protect their homeland (*la patría*) and their women, the women of Argentina had their own role to play. The complement to *machismo*, the cultural tradition of "*marianismo*" required feminine passivity, purity, and an inner moral (as opposed to the masculine outer physical) strength (Bouvard 184). The women of Argentina were the idealized guardians of the home and the nation's children. Las Madres, at least initially, unquestioningly accepted their part as women in the cultural narrative. Francesca Miller, who has studied feminist movements among Latin American women, notes that "rather than reject their socially defined role, Latin American feminists may be understood as women acting to protest laws and conditions which threaten their ability to fulfill that role" (quoted in Fabj, 6). Las Madres were no exception. They were mothers first and foremost, with no interest in altering "the politics of the home, for example, the gendered division of labor" (D. Taylor

192). Even by 1980, once "their fame had spread sufficiently" for Las Madres to send delegates to international conferences on women and their issues, the Mothers found themselves "profoundly uncomfortable with some of the demands being made by radical Western delegates" (Guest 54). Las Madres were not "feminists" in the Western European or North American sense of the work; the cultural narrative of *marianismo*, which they embraced, did not permit it.

These same Argentine cultural values supported Las Madres in their self-presentation as self-sacrificing and long-suffering mothers. As a pious Catholic nation, Argentines revered the image of the suffering mother (the *mater dolorosa*). "As the secular expression of the homage rendered to the Virgin Mary, *marianismo* holds the woman as morally superior to the man on the basis of her humility and self-sacrifice" (Bouvard 184). Once their marches grew in size and the mothers themselves became more vocal, they used their suffering and cries to evoke Mary, the archetypal mother: "The Madres' wounds were their instruments. By exposing themselves . . . they sought to expose the violent politics the military tried to cover up" (D. Taylor 198). The junta attempted to label the mothers as "emotional terrorists" (D. Taylor 80), but the mothers' methods of public grieving were in keeping with what *marianismo* permitted.

The junta's political program emphasized the central importance of "the nuclear family" and "paternal authority" (Robben 179). Las Madres accepted the importance of both of these as well. What happens, though, when the "paternal authority" expands to the point that it infringes on the role of the "mother"? The junta positioned itself as the head of the household, "the father," for the collective Argentine family. In his 1976 Christmas address to the nation, General Videla spoke of "a shared and indispensable sacrifice" that military personnel and

civilians alike had undertaken, whose overall end was "the essential theme of the great

Argentine family" (Graziano 191). The metaphor of "the family" worked well for the junta,

since the military leaders themselves were in the position of the all-powerful father. "The junta

co-opted the language and space of domesticity. The Motherland was the 'house' in which the

military had to establish order" (D. Taylor 102). Not only did the junta think of the nation as

the home that needed to be protected and re-ordered, they thought of each individual household

in the nation as a reflection of the national "home." And so the government had every right to

monitor–and if need be, enter and "correct"–the doings in every Argentine home. General

Massera defended the junta's draconian methods by claiming that they needed "to fight against

an enemy disguised as a brother" (Graziano 170). The enemy was inside the national "house,"

seemingly a part of the Argentine family. The military father needed to step into the sphere of

the mother, the home, and set things in order.

For the junta, Las Madres were "bad women" and, even, "bad mothers." Certainly, "the

mothers of the Plaza de Mayo were cultural transgressors. They overstepped the gender

divisions of traditional Argentine society, in which the public arena was a male and the house a

female space" (Robben 304). Of course, the military had similarly overstepped those gender

divisions when it left the public arena to enter the private domestic space. But for the junta, the

purpose of the home was to breed order for the nation. The state-controlled media reinforced

this rhetorical construction of "the home."   Print ads featuring clean-cut young people painting

a house proclaimed "Order begins at home" (Taylor *Disappearing* 104). Domestic order

required that children know their place in the family hierarchy and behave obediently to their

elders.   During the Dirty War, rules set and published by public Boards of Education,

explicitly warned young students, "It is prohibited to make any comment that affects the principle of authority and hierarchy" (D. Taylor 105). If there were "bad" children who needed to be punished for their transgressions, that was their own fault, or, according to junta logic, the fault of the parents, and especially *the mother,* of the household. According to Antonius Robben who had interviewed the retired military leaders, several military commanders "wanted to punish the parents for not instilling [in their children] patriotism, Christian values and obedience to authority" (280).

Official state-controlled media campaigns offered the public such slogans as: "How are you raising your child?" and "Do you know what your child is doing at this precise moment?" (Robben 272). The Mothers were to blame for not raising their children properly, for not keeping a closer eye on their subversive activities. Text for a government sponsored ad in newspapers and magazines read: "*Señora, ¿sabe Ud. dónde están sus hijos?"* (Madam, do you know where your children are?) (D. Taylor 88). The disappeared children were not the fault of the government who kidnapped them (and then denied doing so); "good" mothers would have known where their children were at every moment, in effect reigning in any potentially "subversive" activities. The junta effectively turned the key slogan used by Las Madres in their weekly marches ("Where are our children?") against the mothers. Las Madres were bad mothers who violated the moral demands of character inherent in their role as mothers according to the Argentine cultural narrative (as spun by the junta).

Las Madres were able to reframe this cultural narrative to challenge the junta's version and claim their own moral worthiness as mothers inhabiting that narrative. In this they were aided by something that Burke discusses: the directionality of language (*RoM* 15; *Religion* 180-

196). Directionality is an essential aspect of language, and it is impossible to control. For example, the junta sets up "*la patría*" as the ultimate organizing term, the title of titles. A hierarchy comes into play: *patría*-father-home-mother-children. The hierarchical chain implies that each subsequent word in the chain must serve the preceding term(s). When the junta asks the mothers of the country, "Do you know where your children are?" they intended the question as a reinforcement of this hierarchy. Children exist to serve the nation. But what if this hierarchy were reversed? What if "children," the culminating term in the chain, became the organizing principle? In this way, Las Madres' cry of "where are our children?" becomes an indictment against the "father" who has not protected the "children," rather than an indictment of the mother who has not done her part to serve "la patría." In this way, Las Madres were able to present themselves as "good mothers" who needed to combat the "bad father" who was willing to sacrifice the children of the nation. As Bouvard notes, such a conversion of motherhood from being "in the service of the state into a . . . claim against the state" was nothing short of "revolutionary" (62).

In all of their public "performances," the Mothers embodied the role of keepers of the Argentine home. They were the guardians of the nation's children, the mothers who sacrificed all for their young. They were "good mothers" and, as such, they were a significant force to be reckoned with. The junta's actions and rhetoric actually provided the women, as mothers, with an opening to justify their protests and their transgression into the gendered public sphere. As Diana Taylor asks, "what happens to the mothers who, by virtue of the same responsibility to their children, must go looking for them outside the home and confront the powers that be?" (185). The mothers of the disappeared children were obliged to enter the public sphere to right

the wrong done to them in the private sphere (in their homes), to reclaim their disappeared children and reclaim their own roles as mothers. Their weekly marches became proof of their moral character, obeying, as they were, the imperatives of the good mother narrative.

The rhetorical battle between Las Madres and the Argentine junta, over who is performing virtue and who is not, stems from what Duncan has referred to as the role of "community guardians" who are charged with guarding the "principles of social order" which are embedded in the community's collective narrative (98). During the Dirty War, both the junta and Las Madres vied for the position of true community guardian. Both had a claim to that title, in their respective roles of "Father" and "Mother," and as willing participants in the narrative of the Argentine family. In some ways, their rhetoric was remarkably similar. Las Madres, "like the military, also stressed universal, immutable, and eternal values. They represented motherhood as something forever fixed" (D. Taylor 200). Both sides saw the issues effecting Argentina as moral ones, rather than economic or even political ones. At the end of 1981, with the re-emergence of some political parties, Las Madres tried to keep the opposition focused on the disappeared and in an ad in *La Prensa,* they reminded readers that "the county's crisis was above all moral" (Bouvard 118). Both sides were steeped in traditional Argentine values and despite certain differences between them, they agreed on the overall narrative: "The junta might be performing the authoritarian father while the Madres took the role of the castrated mother, but both parties were reenacting the same old story" (D. Taylor 205). The main difference is that the key terms of the story pointed in one direction for the junta and in the opposite direction for the mothers.

Of course, knowing "the ending" of the story also helps to clarify who is the virtuous

actor in the story and who is, indeed, the villain. Iain Guest, in his analysis of the Dirty War, describes the initial gathering of the Mothers in 1977 in dramatic terms: "The following Thursday the small group of fourteen middle-aged housewives began to confront the all-powerful military Junta" (54). He is setting up a dramatic narrative, a story already framed in dramatic terms possible only because the ending is known; the story exists as a "whole." Each of us who analyzes the case of Las Madres may choose a distinctly different endpoint to the story. I have chosen the following moment in December 1983 that Guest describes to end "my version" of the Las Madres story: "The newly elected Chamber of Deputies had the immense satisfaction of abolishing the Junta's self-amnesty as its first official act. Upstairs in the gallery, the Mothers watched and applauded, still wearing their white scarves" (Guest 356). In the end, the Mothers triumph; the "good guys" win.

I am not alone in using the ending to explain the narrative thread as it emerged all along. In October 1982, following the revelation of mass grave sites, the Mothers were "joined by a huge throng" during their march. "The chief of police held up traffic and the Mothers were publicly applauded" (Guest 348). Certainly the newly emerged knowledge of the atrocities perpetrated by the junta helped convince Argentines that the Mothers had been right all along, but there is a moral need being expressed here, too. As Guest describes it, "plagued by self-doubt and desperate for proof that someone had resisted the Junta during the dark days, Argentinians turned to the crazy Mothers" (Guest 348). The retrospect view from 1982 requires the narrative to be recast, to allow that the actions of the Mothers had been morally correct all along. In the midst of all the horror and denial, there was moral decency and brave resistance going on the whole time. The narrative, with such an ending, becomes the story of the "real"

and virtuous Argentina triumphing over a false and treacherous Argentina, with the virtuous

heroes (Las Madres) triumphing over evil (the junta).

Las Madres were indeed "performing virtue" even from their first forays onto the streets

of Buenos Aires. Their actions were marked by the standards of Heideggerian authenticity,

breaking as they were with a *habitus* that would have kept these women off of the streets. The

women were making authentic choices, difficult ones that came from a sense of duty to their

own selves. As Bouvard writes: "The act of reaching out to one another was the first of a

continual series of choices that transformed them from victims into self-confident political

activists. For it is choice that makes the difference between surrendering to tragedy and using

tragedy as a stepping-stone to growth and new meaning" (80) As the months went by, the

Mothers became increasingly self-aware, able to see their actions in the fuller context of

Argentine society. In her preface to *Mothers of the Disappeared*, Jo Fisher notes that the

women she interviewed had grown and changed immensely because of their experience with

Las Madres. The women's "participation with the Mothers forced them to modify their

traditional role as mothers, and changed their perceptions of their roles within the family and

society" (xi). Bouvard concurs, noting how the journey of Las Madres, especially in the early

years of the group's formation, was one of "redefining their sense of self, analyzing their own

situation as part of a broader pattern of repression, and discovering their own inviolable dignity

and worth" (79). The women learned about national politics, about which they had previously

been almost entirely ignorant (Fisher 42). They also grew to understand and even embrace the

"subversive" ideas that many of their children had died for: "Now I'm proud of what they [the

disappeared children] did. My only regret is that we didn't understand them before" (Fisher

50). In the course of the Mothers' struggles, Heideggerian "transparency" (catching sight of the full reality of existence) was thrust upon them.

By 1979, the Mothers' collective perception "of the society they lived in and of their place in that society had changed. Their search for their children was becoming a permanent struggle against injustice" (Fisher 90). The women were enacting what Isin calls "acts of citizenship. There was a move away from "my child" and towards "our children," which in turn led to a civic-minded concern for "our nation." As group leader Hebe de Bonafini reported, "We began to realize we had to move outside our own families and struggle for all the people who had disappeared, that the explanation for the disappearance of our own children could only be found in the explanation for all the disappearances" (Fisher 30). The women became motivated by doing the "right thing" for the country as a whole, and not just a "selfish" desire to find each one's own child (if a mother's selfless sacrifice for a child may ever be termed "selfish"). They were enacting civic character, responding to a growing awareness of the moral threat to the country.

Las Madres' collective performance of virtue was finally marked by courage, especially surprising given that these were middle-aged women inculcated by the culture of machismo. As a comparison, it is useful to note that the vast majority of those families who had disappeared children did *not* participate in any public protests. Robben writes that unlike Las Madres, the far more common path of action on the parts of "tens of thousands of relatives" was to put in an inquiry or two after the abduction and then spend "years of silence in fear" (262). Intimidated and afraid, most simply concealed the disappearance entirely (Robben 273). Only "after the regime's fall" did they make any "public testimony" whatsoever (Robben 263).

The women who became "Las Madres" were a different sort. Not only did they go public with the news of their children, they faced tear gas, night sticks and the threat of arrest (McAllister 29) in order to get the word of the disappearances out to the rest of Argentina and to the world. One mother reported that when the police would occasionally arrest the women, "they held us until two or three in the morning and then released us one at a time in deserted places to frighten us, but, well, you have to get over all that" (Fisher 108). That a woman who would rarely have ventured out of her home two years earlier became able to shrug off the police's frightening intimidation tactics is certainly a testament to her bravery. By May of 1979, the Mothers had become determined "that they'd never again retreat into silence and shadows," and their act of "visible courage" began to spread to others (McAllister 29). As one of the Mothers, Maria del Rosario said: "At the end of 1979 we decided that even if they took us prisoner, even if they killed us, we would return to the square" (Fisher 108). These were no longer, if they ever had been, acts of "rashness" or irrational "impulsiveness," categories that Aristotle would preclude from being considered virtuous. These were deliberate, considered actions. "It is for a noble end that the brave man endures and acts as courage directs," according to Aristotle (*NE* 50). Ironic that his statement excludes women, for when Aida de Suarez says, "At first I felt afraid . . . but how can you be afraid when you are fighting for a just cause?" (Fisher 29), what is she describing except the virtue of courage à la Aristotle? Patricia Derien, President Carter's Undersecretary of State commented that "the courage to say 'No, this is wrong'" is difficult and important, and she attributes such courage to Las Madres (*Las Madres*). The protesting Mothers were fighting for "the right" (against "the wrong") in Argentina. Their pubic performances of virtue were surprising acts by marginalized citizens

displaying civic character and courage.

IV. F. — Conclusion

The case of Las Madres exemplifies how "character as moral judgment" may play out in a protest by a marginalized group. The protestors needed to come to a place of "self-recognition" in order to make deliberated choices regarding actions in pursuit of "the good," and they needed to be recognized by society as doing so. Las Madres engaged in "performances of virtue" that were read against the horizon of their specific collective character as set in their inherited cultural narrative. Such performances gave the group moral credibility which contributed to their rhetorical credibility.

Is such a theoretical framework applicable in other cases, though? In the following chapter, I examine three different case studies: Otpor, ACT UP, and protests by the homeless. My goal will be to see how these cases extend, or challenge, some of the theoretical models I have been applying so far in this thesis, more or less exclusively, to the case of Las Madres.

Several concerns of a theoretical nature still arise at this point, however. One is a question, once again, about the charge of "essentialism." Collective *ethos*, via cultural narratives and/or the inherited traditions of the *habitus*, does preexist any specific individual's texts. The marginalized person inhabits a "role," a "character." That character makes *demands* on a person's actions, but *does not determine* the person's actions. The moral qualities of the real-world character as played out through their actions are not an essential aspect of the person pre-determined by their birth into a marginalized group, but rather represent a choice, a "virtue." Because virtue is not an "essential" aspect of character, it is more apt to describe the

character as "performing virtue" rather than as "virtuous," although ultimately the distinction for rhetorical effectiveness is nil.

A new charge, though, may be raised: that of oversimplification. "Character" is embedded in a narrative, or a rhetorical situation, and there exist complexities to that situation that cannot all be comprehended, let alone presented. A contrived simplicity of some sort is required for the audience to experience a sense of recognition. I discussed this issue in Chapter 2 in terms of the need for the audience to immediately categorize the protestors, a process which also requires an oversimplification that some theorists might object to.

A second concern raised by issues in this chapter is around the nature of the *habitus*. Is it ultimately a trap? Does performance of authenticity perpetuate a closed cycle, reinforcing an already marginalized identity? Bourdieu writes that "commonplaces and classificatory systems are the stake of struggles between the groups they characterize and counterpose, who fight over them while striving to turn them to their own advantage" (*Distinction* 477). This was certainly the case with Las Madres's rhetorical struggles against the Argentine junta, but are the classificatory systems themselves prisons, preventing characters from "breaking out"? Giddens tells us that "human social activities" are "recursive," that is they are continually re-created by the actors (2). The system perpetuates itself, though in an iterative way; these iterations allow for the occasional "prison break" (I examine this idea more closely in Chapter 6).

There does seem to be a closed rhetorical cycle of authenticity. The performance of authenticity is *valorized* by the audience as "true," as "brave," as "heroic," as "virtuous." Their valorization of actions and virtues already valued by the narrative further cements the *habitus* and its imbedded values. The marginalized rhetor who "performs authenticity" is *legitimized* as

"real," as "credible." The rhetor is complicit in accepting as "legitimate" the attributes of his/her "authentic" self, and further cements the *habitus* and its values. So there may be self-recognition occurring (à la Ricoeur), but it appears to be the same old narrative. Does obedience to the role merely perpetuate the current state of things, a state replete with injustice? In some ways this may be the case, but in other ways progress is made. As the analysis of "performance of virtue" shows, this is not a selfish path, and not merely a cul-de-sac either; it is a future-oriented road these rhetors are on, though the road is so vast that one's immediate progress along it may not be apparent. As Sartre writes about the authentic Jew living in a society rampant with anti-Semitism: "The authentic Jew simply renounces for himself an assimilation that is today impossible; he awaits the radical liquidation of anti-Semitism for his sons" (150).

Ricoeur also points to such a future path in his *Course of Recognition*. He suggests the possibility of moving beyond recognition as "other" altogether, calling such a final stage in the course of recognition "mutual recognition" (21). Ricoeur calls this "our most authentic identity, the one that makes us who we are, that demands to be recognized," functioning as it does by increasing our "liberation" from the burden of "being known" in ways that heretofore were necessary for being recognized in society (21). He writes, "At the final stage, recognition not only detaches itself from knowledge, but opens the way to it" (21). The boundaries of the character get larger, and perhaps, over time, may shift altogether. In his review of "the course of recognition," Ricoeur notes that the move from "something" to "someone" and "oneself" will culminate in "one another" (250). I examine this idea more fully, as well, in Chapter 6.

<u>**Chapter Five**</u>
PERFORMANCES OF AUTHENTICITY AND VIRTUE IN ACTION

My purpose in this thesis to this point has been to develop a theory of "performances of authenticity and virtue" that may explain the rhetorical success of marginalized identity groups in their confrontations with the state. I have so far used the case of Las Madres as a way to apply this theoretical framework to protest actions in the real world. In this chapter, I will examine three case studies–Otpor, ACT UP, and CCNV and NUH–in light of the theoretical issues and question raised in the preceding chapters. Can "performances of authenticity and virtue" be applied in a variety of marginalized group protest cases? As I stated in the introduction to this thesis, my primary interest here is to draw larger conclusions around the ways that marginalized group protests function and how they may be effective in shaping public discourse and ultimately work to change state policies and structures that are perceived as unjust.

In the following section, I will examine the case of Otpor as a way "to test" the theory of "performances of authenticity and virtue" I have developed, applying the theory to a case distinctly different from Las Madres. After that, I will focus on two specific theoretical challenges and examine a specific case study to help understand each of those challenges. The first challenge is what happens when a dominant cultural narrative deems a group "immoral," entirely excluding them from the capacity for "virtue"? I will use the case of ACT UP to analyze this challenge. The second challenge is what happens if competing groups protest for the same cause, both challenging similar state policies that affect a specific marginalized population? Who has the right to speak "authentically," and what are the implications for

"performing virtue" here? I will use the case of homeless protests in the U.S. to help answer these questions.

V.A. — Otpor

Three separate waves of Serbian student street protests against the policies of the Milosevic regime arose in 1992, 1996-1997 and 1998-2000, centered primarily on Belgrade. The last series of protests was led by a student group called Otpor (Serbian for "resistance"), which eventually gained international renown. The case of Otpor and the antecedent Serbian student protests presents many similarities to the case of Las Madres, most significantly a collective identity established for an "accepted," though politically marginalized, cultural group, and a need for disruption due to an authoritarian regime's control of the national media. Yet there are differences worth noting. The vast majority of the anti-Milosevic student protests employed humorous and ironically irreverent actions to make their points–as opposed to the solemn and occasionally angry tactics employed by Las Madres. Another key difference in the case of Otpor was the presence of established opposition politicians. In Argentina, the junta forbade all opposition parties. Milosevic, mindful of the rest of Europe, permitted a veneer of democracy, winning his power through elections. The Milosevic regime kept the opposition parties well-divided, and used tactics other than overt force to retain its own power, namely the state-controlled media, economic pressure and rewards, "and the tactic of selective arrests" in order to intimidate the opposition (Silber 3). Otpor, founded in October 1998, came into being largely "because of the lethargy of opposition political parties." As one Otpor spokesman noted, "if they were doing something we wouldn't have to exist" ("All Things Considered").

Protests led by Serbian university students first erupted during the summer of 1992. These protests were declared "a demonstration against the injustices of the system, personified by Slobodan Milosevic's despotic personal rule" (Prosic-Dvornic, "Topsy Turvy" 122). These protests were shut down fairly quickly through the passage of new laws, and the 1992 protests never got any traction with Serbian citizens outside of Belgrade University. Five years of relative quiet among the students followed (many of this generation chose to leave the country during these years).

The elections of November 1996 provided the next catalyst for student protests. The state annulled the election results in several regions in order to retain its own party's power. Within days of the election, 15,000 students were protesting in Belgrade, and within two weeks these protests had swelled to 150,000 people (Savic 30). The protests continued for almost three months until Milosevic agreed to partially restore the November 1996 election results. A few weeks after that, the pro-government rector of Belgrade University resigned – a key demand of the student protestors – and so "the students concluded their protests" (Collin 129). Many students, however, accused their own leaders of being co-opted. These leaders joined official political parties, something the students had resisted doing during the protests. By end of June 1977, the allied political opposition had collapsed (Collin 129); once again, Milosevic and his party had relatively free reign to do as they wished.

In October 1998, a new student movement, Otpor, emerged "as a spontaneous response by Belgrade University students to repression by the deans at some colleges" ("Serbia" BBC). The students protested the growing "government direct control over the university," which included requiring "oaths of loyalty" from faculty and "a purge" of those who refused. Otpor

was first founded by 15 friends at the university (Collin 175) but quickly grew to include other university students. By the second half of 1999, following the NATO bombings of Serbia, the Otpor protests had begun to spread beyond Belgrade University students. While many people in Serbia regarded Otpor "as a movement of arrogant rich youths from nice families" it surged in popularity in 1999 and 2000 due to the general population's "disappointment with [the current] generation of political leaders, who [had] failed during the last decade to bring down Mr. Milosevic" (Erlanger A6). On October 6, 2000, Milosevic finally resigned his office after army and police officers refused to continue to support him against the growing protests in the country. The goal of removing Milosevic from power, first begun by the student protestors in 1992, was finally achieved.

Collective identity: "just kids"

Serbian cultural commentator Ivan Marovic's observed of Otpor: "These kids are just kids" (*Bringing Down*). And it was this recognizable "just kids" collective identity that the group leveraged for the majority of its public protest actions. Indeed the protestors were "just kids" in terms of chronological age. Observers of the '96-'97 student protestors reported that "most of them [were] no older than twenty" (Collin 101). According to Stanko Lazendic, an Otpor activist, when Otpor first formed in October 1998, the majority of its members were "boys and girls 18 and 19 years old" (Ackerman and Duvall 485). In the summer of 2000, once Otpor had expanded its membership significantly, the average age was still only 21 ("Fresh Air"). Otpor members met in clubhouses "where young people would go and hang out, exercise, and party on the weekends," or more often they met for planning sessions in "dining

rooms and bedrooms of activists' homes"(Ackerman and Duvall 485), a not-very-formidable infrastructure, but one that would be expected of teenagers still living at home with their parents.

The media and cultural critics reinforced the "just kids" image with their choice of language when writing and speaking about the protests: "intelligent and capable young people" (Prosic-Dvornic, "Enough!"); playing "pranks" (Rozen); "kids" ("Fresh Air") – not "activists" or "demonstrators". An international reporter attended a meeting of 30 regional Otpor activists in 2000 described the group as follows: "The kids are in their 20s, have spiky haircuts and flick cigarettes into soda bottles" ("All Things Considered"). Even Milosevic's own Socialist party helped reinforce the "just kids" *ethos* of the protestors with its responses to the earlier waves of demonstrations. Party officials characterized those student uprisings as being organized by outside pro-fascist groups who were bent on "manipulating children." Student protestors seized upon this remark, embracing it and satirizing it simultaneously, holding signs that read "I have an under-aged, retarded, impressionable, seduced, manipulated, pro-fascist temperament" (Collin 111).

The students were determined to keep their identity "pure," and successfully undermined any attempts to re-categorize them as anything other than "just kids." One advantage of the "kids" label was related to what might be called "the hip factor." Young students protesting against and even mocking the older generation, and the government in particular, were viewed with admiration by other young people, who flocked to be part of the trend. By summer of 2000, Otpor numbered 20,000 activists, growing from a mere 30 or so just eighteen months earlier. "Otpor had become a political youth cult and its advance was

unstoppable . . . In short, identifying with Otpor was cool" (Collin 208).

Another advantage of the "kids" label is that it permitted the student protestors to publicly embrace their "kid-ness" by playing pranks and telling jokes, though these pranks and jokes were at the expense of the Milosevic regime and were thus quite political. According to Otpor member Sveta Matic, "We're a generation that likes to play jokes, to laugh all the time, and that is our secret weapon" (Rubin). This was true even during the 1992 student protests in Serbia. During one 1992 protest called "Washing Up," students brought their last toiletry supplies from home (despite UN sanctions at the time causing a shortage of such supplies) and left them in front of the Serbian National Assembly building. Unamused, one member of the parliament ran out of the building waving a gun, threatening to shoot the protestors, who started tossing bars of soap at the incensed gentleman (Knezevic 55-56).

The students were acting authentically in such public performances. As jokesters and pranksters, these "kids" were merely acting out their "being." The individuals involved were remaining "true" to themselves in that they were known, and wanted to be known, as a generation of jokesters. Even amongst themselves, joke telling and ironic framing were the norm. When a group of students accessed an internet site that had posted a list of the world's 20 top dictators, with Milosevic at number 14, one of them commented, "He should definitely be in the top ten" (Collin 101). In 2000, the Otpor students sent a brief message to the Ministry of the Interior, in honor of Serbia's official State Security Day. The note simply read "Congratulations," acknowledging the Ministry's successful efforts at arresting and incarcerating Otpor's own members (Rozen). The humor helped create a sense of solidarity among the group. One regular protester in Serbia reported, "It made you realize you weren't the

only one who was miserable, there were other people and you could have a laugh with them about it" (Collin 127). Otpor's shared humor, though distinct from the shared grief and anger of Las Madres, serves a similar function of helping to create group solidarity.

The fact that the student protestors were "just kids" also allowed them to emphasize their relationships with the audience, namely their parents and neighbors. Audiences would see the students' humorous antics and react on several levels: as readers of the state-run media, as citizens of Milosevic's Serbia, and as family to the protestors themselves. "Passersby who saw the protests (and spread the word) debunked the media portrayal. 'They're our kids having fun and, you know, they're right about Milosevic!'" (Lakey). During the 1996-97 protests, state rhetoric attempted to cast blame upon the political opposition. However, the students were more or less exempt from such blame. According to Serbian cultural critic Mirjana Prosic-Dvornic, the students were perceived as "OUR [Serbia's] children and it was impossible, or at least counter-productive to proclaim them 'our enemies' or even different from US. That was why they were represented in the regime-run media as a small group that had unfortunately fallen into the trap of the 'violent, pro-fascist demonstrators' as the President of the Serbian Assembly phrased it" ("Topsy Turvy" 128).

By the time of the 1999 protests, the state had changed its tactic, branding the Otpor protestors as criminals and arresting them. This, though, worked to reinforce the parental bond, and thus undo the very attempts to label the students as dangerous elements of society. Parents might have been ambivalent about Milosevic and his policies, but most were content to maintain the status quo. But when they "saw their kid taken to a police station and tortured Gestapo-style just for wearing an Otpor t-shirt, it became more personal." (Collin 210).

The students knew that the parents were an important target audience, and the protestors exploited the blood bond. "First parents, then Milosevic supporters," is how parents viewed themselves, and the protestors worked to emphasize this view. With each student arrest the student cause won over "three more students and two more parents" ("Fresh Air"). By summer of 2000 there were several chapters of "Mothers and Grandmothers for Otpor" and media reports indicated that "at least a dozen Otpor moms [had] been arrested alongside their kids" (Rubin). For parents, the government's actions only served to reinforce a particular framing of events that encouraged sympathy with the students: "We are your innocent children. Watch us being brutalized by the government. How can you continue to support Milosevic?" Even as early as 1992, though, long before the brutal government crackdown, the students realized that their own parents were the very people they needed to influence, and effectively exploited their familial bond for rhetorical ends. One student in these early protests carried a written message to his father: "Dad, do I have to get killed to make you come to your senses?" (Prosic-Dvornic, "Enough!").

Beyond their own parents, the student groups worked to reinforce their relationships as "neighbor kids." What could be more innocent than the boy or girl next door? In particular, Otpor recruited "local kids, well known in their neighborhoods" in order to pass out leaflets, put up posters, and take to the streets (*Bringing Down*). The neighborhood youths would "try to cajole their elders" into joining them in their acts of "civil disobedience" ("All Things Considered"). Over time, such efforts were quite successful. Video documentation from 1998 through October 2000 shows not only growing crowds at the student-led protests, but increasing numbers of elderly and non-urban types (farmers and miners), evidence of Otpor's

great success at winning over neighbors outside of the student group's own demographic (*Bringing Down*).

The government's crackdown on Otpor did not sit well with much of Serbia, because they were "just kids." As one opposition party leader opined, "such a crackdown on Serbia's children" had significant consequences for the regime in power. Seeing the "children" of the nation being incarcerated incensed many: "People are very angry." (Erlanger A6). Ultimately Otpor's emphasis on their collective identity as kids, and on the concomitant familial and neighbor relationships with their audience, helped Otpor bring down the Milosevic regime without any bloodshed.   During the final October 2000 "coup," army and police commanders never ordered their men to fire into the protesting masses at least in part because "they knew their own kids were in that crowd" (*Bringing Down*).

The ethos-logos connection: humor as disruption

The Otpor protestors needed to break through both public ignorance and public apathy. The Milosevic regime had imposed "an information blockade" on the media in order to keep "Serbia in the dark" (Savic 30). The state-run media barely mentioned any of the protest actions in order to contain the spread of the protest. As well, even the majority of those aware of the protests expressed apathy. In general, the Serbian electorate felt "disillusioned by bickering opposition leaders and exhausted by a struggle to makes ends meet" (Dinmore 1). During the early months of protests in 1998, Otpor even faced apathy from fellow students at the university. One student remarked, "It's useless to take part . . . We tried two years ago and now we think that was a waste of time" (Dinmore 1).

The student protestors used humorous street theatrics to pierce the veil of ignorance imposed by the regime's media control and undo the sense of hopelessness among would-be anti-Milosevic voters. Such humor reflected the authentic character of the group itself. One of Otpor's street actions took place during a lunar eclipse. The protestors set up a makeshift telescope on the streets of Belgrade and invited passersby to view the lunar eclipse. The passerby would then be confronted by the image of a semi-eclipsed Milosevic in the viewing scope. Otpor activists would tell the viewer that this is the type of eclipse they have in mind (*Bringing Down*).

Such a lighthearted piece of political street theatre was typical of each of three waves of Serbian student protest. In 1992, for example, students staged an action called "Coffee with the President." Students in Belgrade walked 10km to the Presidential residence (Milosevic's home). They "decided to visit him at his home, greet him with flowers, have a coffee with him (a traditional sign of Balkan hospitality) and hand-deliver a list of their demands–the first point in which was a call for his immediate resignation." The procession was stopped by the police, though not before attracting a lot of attention from passing city residents. The action was so successful that the students recreated it a few days later, ending this time with a theatrical performance by an actor playing Milosevic, who graciously agreed to the student demands for his resignation (Knezevic 56). During the 1997 protests, students created protest events using the university's rector, Dragutin Velickovic, as their key target of satire. The student's "stunts" (Barber 13) frequently played on the fact that Velickovic kept a very low profile despite the political uproar that surrounded him. Therefore the students "went looking for him in Belgrade zoo, peered through telescopes in the city's observatory in case he was in outer space, and

fished for him in the Sava River using a red Socialist Party card as bait" (Barber 13).

As in the case of Las Madres, the connection between the student protestors' collective identity ("just kids") and their choice of disruptive street tactics (humorous ones, for the students) served a double rhetorical function: the collective identity of the group legitimated the tactics used, while at the same time the tactics authenticated the group's collective identity. In many of the protest actions, the Serbian students reinforced not only their identity as joking kids but as students in particular. For example, during the 1997 protests, students marched with humorous placards, with specific slogans tailored to match the particular students' program of study: philosophy student placards announced, "I think therefore I don't watch state television," while economics students carried signs that read, "Milosevic, you have used all your credits" (Silber 3). In 1992, Serbian students staged a protest called "Prisoners of Shortsightedness." In order to "to answer the charge that student protest 'must have been organized by someone else,' not by the students themselves, the students pinned prisoners' numbers onto their shirts and walked with one hand holding their student identification cards high in the air, the other covering their eyes" (Knezevic 55). Such an action worked effectively on several different levels. One, the action directly defined the protestors as young people (students) which they verified by holding their cards. Two, the *logos* of the action (the specific "arguments" chosen) served to reinforce their youthful *ethos*, both in its creative theatricality and in its commentary on the status of students as prisoners of an older establishment. Three, the action refuted the official state position on the protests by taking the very words of the officials and satirizing them. Given the students' self-stated character as "just kids," what type of actions would they use if not such "childish" ones?

In contrast, such antics were not available to the established opposition politicians, to Milosevic's Socialist party officials, nor to Milosevic himself. These older, "responsible" professional politicians had their own *ethos* to perpetuate. Their roles dictated very different rhetorical strategies, namely "pious" ones.   The professional politicians could never get away with the irreverent exploits of the student protestors without coming off as buffoons, or else as very petty (in their mockery of the student actions). Their pious sense of "what goes with what" required that the politicians opposed to Milosevic play politics as usual, organizing typical political rallies and offering "lackluster" political speeches (Collin 105). For some Belgrade residents, who had become accustomed to the unorthodox actions of the student protestors, even though the politicians were proponents of regime change, they were viewed as "increasingly bleeding the fun out of the proceedings," insisting upon marches to "the same old place" to hear "the same boring speeches" (Collin 127). The rhetorical "weapons" yielded by the young protestors had their roots "in the practice of comedians, clowns and rogues, rather than in the arsenal of professional politics" (Jestrovic 45), and so were not appropriate or "proper" for the professional politicians themselves to use.

Otpor activist Marija Baralic posed the question, "Why should he [Milosevic] bother with us? We were just funny little students doing funny little things" (Collin 209). Those "funny little things," though, were in fact deeply–and effectively–subversive. The student actions violated established conventions and forced audiences to question the status quo of Serbian society. This was a real threat to Milosevic and those in power who benefitted from the unthinking and unwavering obedience of the general populace of Serbia.

The students' impious actions included such juvenile jabs at Milosevic as those that

have sexual connotations: "When the ruler is impotent only the people arise." (Collin 106).

Others condemned government corruption through satirical allusions to Serbian pop culture:

after Spain defeated the Yugoslav football team in 1996, one student placard read "Yugoslavia

beats Spain 2-0. Signed the Supreme Court of Serbia" (Collin 106). In general, the student

actions were intended ironically and employed humor that was "inappropriate" for "mature" or

"reasonable" public discourse, but which was perfectly in keeping with the protestors'

collective ethos.

One particularly amusing and ironic action produced by the students was in August

1999. Otpor staged "a mocking celebration of President Milosevic's birthday . . . [P]articipants

were invited to write birthday cards on a board behind the President's chair or to bring him

presents that included handcuffs, a one-way ticket to the Hague and a straitjacket" (Jestrovic

44). This mock birthday party worked brilliantly as impious rhetoric on several levels. First, it

dealt with Milosevic without fear, nor any apparent rancor, refusing to respond to Milosevic

"appropriately" as the big bad "Butcher of the Balkans." Second, the event amused audiences

through its ironic tone, in that the gifts and birthday wishes were anything but kindly intended.

Finally, each gift had its own symbolic meaning, "arguing" for a certain view of Serbia's

leader: Milosevic should be in jail, he should be on trial for war crimes, he should be

committed to an insane asylum. Such incongruous birthday presents would certainly bring

about laughter, but more insidiously they manipulated the audience into taking a new

perspective on Milosevic, the object of their impious rhetorical ridicule.

As with the case of Las Madres, the impious rhetoric (both in content and form) that

Otpor and the other student protestors deployed appeared to be an authentic extension of their

collective identity. Impiety is the marginalized group's "piety," expression stemming from "the sources of the group's being" (Burke, *Permanence* 69).   In the case of Serbia in 1999 and 2000, not only did the impious message spread, eventually contributing to the overthrow of the regime, the impious, humorous tone of the rhetoric also spread among groups who would not previously have acted in such ways. Impious comedy at Milosevic's expense even managed to enter the Serbian media in the last days of Milosevic's reign. In September of 2000, a TV commercial aired during the elections (at least on some select stations) as part of the opposition party campaign. The ad depicted an ordinary housewife trying to remove a nasty stain from a shirt, something she says she has been trying to do for 10 years. The ad then shows a picture of Milosevic on the shirt. The housewife happily proclaims that there's a new product that can help, and she throws the shirt in the washing machine. It comes out clean; the stain is finally gone. A voiceover then offers the TV ad's final slogan: "*Gotov je*" or "He's finished" (*Bringing Down*). This was Otpor's slogan, to be found on stickers placed all around the country. Milosevic had been reduced to a stain, one that could be washed away with a bit of effort.

When Milosevic lost the 2000 election, according to outside neutral observers, he refused to honor the results. Strengthened by the growing impious rhetoric around them, crowds of Serbians felt empowered enough (or saw Milosevic and his regime as sufficiently disempowered) to wave baby rattles in the air during protests, in order "to ridicule Milosevic for not conceding" (Ackerman and Duvall 488). The students' impious humor had effectively spread throughout the Serbian population. As Burke notes, "Humor specializes in incongruities; [and] by its trick of 'conversion downwards,' by its stylistic way of reassuring us in dwarfing the magnitude of obstacles or threats, it provides us relief in laughter" (*Attitudes* 58). All those

years of "funny little things" had ultimately achieved their aim by October 2000. Those

impious actions, relying on humorous incongruities, had succeeded in converting Milosevic

from an object of respect and even terror, to one of scorn and mockery, finally nothing more

than a baby who refused to play by the rules of the game.

Performing virtue: Innocence and patriotism

Similar to Las Madres, the student protestors in Serbia needed to combat state attempts

to undermine their credibility. During the 1996-97 protests, the Milosevic regime worked "to

discredit and disparage" the protests by labeling them as "foreign" and "imposed," challenging

their authenticity (Prosic-Dvornic, "Topsy Turvy" 128). The students were framed as "a

handful of manipulated kids," and this image was supported by cropped camera shots in the

state-run media (Prosic-Dvornic, "Topsy Turvy" 128). In 2000, government officials attacked

the Otpor students as "fascist hooligans" and "terrorists" (Erlanger A6). Additionally, the

students faced the challenge that as "kids" they were not to be taken seriously in the realm of

state politics.

Certain cultural narratives, however, supported the student protestors in their own

attempts to be viewed and heard as credible rhetors. In Europe, generally, "since the late

Middle Ages, universities have become important in the social economy of cheekiness and

kynical intelligence. [These school years] were for the students a time when they could defer

the serious things in life, when they could take liberties before going on to careers and an

orderly life" (Sloterdijk 117). This European tradition offered the student protestors the luxury

of indulging in satirical antics, since such "liberties" went hand-in-hand with their status as

students. Moreover, as university students, the quality of "progressive" was ascribed to them as well. Habermas notes in *Toward a Rational Society* that university students in economically challenged countries (like Serbia in the late 1990s) would "understand themselves as the future elite of the nation" and "the university itself [as] an agent of social change" (13). That Milosevic was seeming to interrupt this tradition was problematic for the accepted "university student narrative." As one Serbian cultural critic notes, since the late 1960s in Yugoslavia in particular (due to certain statements of former ruler, Marshall Tito), students were viewed "as a really progressive part of society, so when they protest against something they must be right . . . . This public myth about students having the right to protest about 'irregularities' in society remained" (Collin 42). Again, the very status of being students served not only to deflect any potential criticism regarding the propriety of their actions, but to raise their collective credibility in the eyes of the Serbian populace.

The protestors' status as "kids" also led to a presumption of "innocence" for most Serbians. The student groups worked to reinforce an image of themselves as untainted by the corruption of politics or the compromised, mercenary choices of so many adult Serbians. One Belgrade University scholar opined: "Students are the only generation who cannot be held responsible even indirectly, for the fighting in ex-Yugoslavia. Anyone else can be asked what they did to stop it" (Silber 3). If many adult Serbians were unhappy with the conditions in their country, it could not be blamed on their young people, who remained "above" the ugliness of the past.

Still, the young protestors needed to actively frame themselves and their disruptive actions as, ultimately, "virtuous." Part of this was emphasizing their own competence to make

informed choices; they were, after all, not "just" kids. In 1998, Otpor spokesperson Boris

Karajcic stated that "Otpor is a non-party patriotic movement of students who strive for the

autonomy of the university, modern and good-quality education and a strong state of Serbia"

("Serbia" BBC). These values were perfectly in keeping with the values inherent in the Serbian

national narrative. The protests were being framed by the students as "acts of patriotism," and

were not anti-Serbia as the Milosevic regime was working to frame them.

Otpor stressed that they were civically-concerned but not "politically embroiled,"

insisting that "their protests would be non-partisan and have nothing to do with party politics"

(Collin 129). The students consciously set themselves apart from the established politicians,

whatever their credo, through "official" policy. Otpor worked hard to "maintain [its] clean,

uncorrupted image" and part of this was the group's refusal to align with any particular Serbian

opposition party (*Bringing Down*). Although the actions of the protest groups certainly helped

to add fuel to the pro-democracy movement, and so to the opposition politicians' own

campaigns, "the students insisted they were in thrall to no one, even politicians who preached

democracy" (Collin 106). This freedom from any burden to present a viable political agenda

(other than ridding the country of Milosevic) not only allowed the students to focus simply on

pointing up the problems of the current regime, it helped reinforce their "we're-not-politicians"

ethos.

In their publicly stated reasons for engaging in their protest actions, the Serbian students

continually emphasized their collective concern for doing "the right thing." Students lamented,

"They stole our votes. It's not like we were taught" and "I don't want to live in a country where

there is no freedom" (Collin 101). They claimed the Milosevic regime's nullifying election

results was "an attack on basic human rights and principles" and asserted, "there is no future for us here if the regime can do what they want" (Savic 30). The students were protesting for traditional values ("like we were taught"), for "freedom," for "basic human rights," and for the "future" of Serbia. These are all virtue frames. The protestors presented themselves as the "good guys" in opposition to the villainous regime. Ultimately such a narrative had credibility since these young people *were* authentically concerned about their own futures in Serbia. So when they claimed that their protests were expressions of "our anger at President Milosevic for taking away our youth and dreams of a normal life," these claims were believable ("Serbian Student" 11).

Another ethical challenge for Otpor arrived with the NATO air strikes against Serbia between March 1999 and June 1999. This challenge was not dissimilar from the one faced by Las Madres during the war over the Falkland Islands. The Otpor students needed to frame themselves as Serbian patriots first, even if NATO's goal was also to undermine the Milosevic government. In April 1999, an Otpor spokesperson accused NATO of "betrayal" for attacking Serbia. He did not let the Milosevic regime off the hook, though, finally framing himself as "the victim of a poor excuse for a country surrounded by an irresponsible international community" ("Serbian Student" 11). Another Otpor student stated, "We were against NATO but we had the sense that NATO wasn't our business; there was something nearer that was our responsibility – the regime which let NATO bomb Serbia" (Collin 176). Otpor quite astutely reframed the narrative of the NATO bombings in such a way that their protests might be viewed as acts of Serbian patriotism, since the Milosevic regime was bringing the nation to the brink of ruin.

Ultimately, Otpor was perceived as performing virtue, even by the Milosevic regime itself, which sensed that the student group (unlike previous protestors) could not be coopted. The leader of the opposition New Democrat Party observed, "They have, if I may say so, the innocence, the Otpors . . . . Milosevic is afraid . . . afraid of them because there is not an easy way to corrupt them" ("All Things Considered"). Otpor spokesman Milan Samardzic went further, saying: "The regime senses the danger that we don't care a lot about anything else other than taking them down . . . . We're not in it for power or money, unlike many of the opposition politicians. We just want change. The idea of resistance itself is very powerful" (Erlanger A6). The students saw themselves, and were seen by others, as idealists, fighting the "good" fight, incorruptible.

Otpor realized that the public generally did not trust politicians, the opposition party politicians in particular. "But we do deserve the people's trust, so far," stated an Otpor spokesman (Erlanger A6). After the NATO bombings, almost 50% of the adult population in Serbia was unemployed and 70% were living on the edge of poverty (Collin 170). The people were obviously unhappy with the regime. The opposition politicians attempted to capitalize on this widespread discontent and also sought to remedy the country's ills. In September 1999, opposition parties formed an alliance and began a series of protests in Belgrade. More than 60 of these opposition protestors were injured in beatings, and many more were convicted and fined by the regime. The opposition party leaders were "demonized as foreign spies and Clinton's puppets" (Collin 174). By December of 1999, the opposition alliance was "exhausted and unhappy," their protest marches around Belgrade "had dwindled to mere hundreds, and were eventually canceled" (Collin 174). At this same time, the Otpor student movement was

continuing to gather force and they, by contrast, were considerably "less easily intimidated" (Collin 174).

Indeed, the opposition politicians served as a convenient foil for Otpor's performances of virtue, in particular highlighting the youth's specific virtues of courage and civic capability. Even international journalists were able to make the comparison between the youthful protestors and the established opposition politicians, with the politicians coming off less favorably: "Otpor is clear about what it wants, a change in government. And unlike opposition politicians, its members seem focused on concrete protest actions toward that end" ("All Things Considered"). Not only was Otpor more focused and competent in its anti-Milosevic protest messaging, the students exhibited a courage that was frequently lacking among the opposition and its leaders. When the leader of the opposition Serbian Renewal Movement went into hiding for a while after a major government crackdown, Otpor spokesman Milan Samardzic publicly commented: "People assume [he] is afraid. Well, so are we all. But he's not selling popcorn– he is a political leader" (Erlanger A6). The Otpor protestors were perceived as courageous since they continued to speak out. Their continued humorous street actions contributed to their air of courage, with the irreverent humor at the government's expense (especially in the midst of the escalating government crackdown on protests), "drap[ing] on the nonviolent activists the mantle of confidence" (Ackerman and Duvall 486).

Ultimately, the Otpor protestors were giving performances of virtue, virtues rooted in their collective identity as young people and aligned with the virtues of accepted Serbian cultural values. As the leader of the opposition Social Democrat party said: "Otpor matters . . . They have energy and the innocence of youth, and they are uncompromising and unyielding . . .

. These students feel they have no future, no employment . . . They can't travel and work. So they are fighting for their own future, which is also the future of the country" (Erlanger A6).

Protesting against "type"

There was one significant action created by the Otpor protestors which notably violated the expectations of their previously established collective ethos. It was an action held, ostensibly, to celebrate the new millennium. According to Srdja Popovic, between 20 and 30 thousand people gathered in Belgrade Square to ring in the year 2000. People were searching for fun. At first Otpor provided rock music and lively drumming, getting the crowd in the party mood ("Fresh Air"). At midnight though, rather than continuing the celebratory tone, Otpor organizers played a four minute film of Serbia's horrific, bloody recent history on a huge screen. Then they announced, "Serbia doesn't have any reason to celebrate anything, not even the new millennium," and sent the crowd home (Collin 177). Popovic called this "the most risky action" that Otpor had ever orchestrated ("Fresh Air").

In the documentary film *Bringing Down a Dictator,* video of this New Year's "party" shows just how unsettling this action was for the huge crowd in attendance. After all, this was Otpor, those fun-loving kids, who were sponsoring the party. Also, this was the Orthodox New Year, a holiday traditionally celebrated with a full night of festivities, often lasting into the early morning. According to all reasonable expectations, this Otpor event should have been the biggest party of them all. Instead, Otpor chose to violate expectations. As the clock struck midnight, a video played: stark, black and white images of Serbians killed during the course of the Milosevic reign. A male voice clinically announced each of the dead's names and the

names also appeared on the screen, next to a picture of the Cross. The crowd became hushed and uncomfortable. They had come looking for fun and instead they found themselves confronted with the harsh truth that there is nothing comic about the situation in Serbia, no reason to celebrate anything. The crowd then dispersed and left the site of the aborted festivities (*Bringing Down*).

This event, like others that Otpor had created, was certainly disruptive, but in a new and unexpected way, and one that seemed to belie the group's established identity as a band of merry pranksters. By the year 2000, the student protestors had firmly established their collective *ethos* as kids and comedians in the greater Serbian consciousness. Because of this, the New Year's Eve event provided them with an opportunity to finally play "against type" and stage a serious, "mature" action without any humor. In doing so, they were not so much betraying their comic *ethos* as indicating that they were more than "just" kids. The event signaled a growth, an expansion, of the student group's arsenal of tactics and therefore of their own identity. Yes, they were still "kids" but even kids grow up. By the year 2000, the kids had sufficiently grown up to realize that as students, they were also able to teach, and as pranksters they were also able to mourn. There is, perhaps, a parallel here with the actions of Las Madres when they became physically aggressive with the police, unexpected actions given the women's previously established collective identity and tactics. In Chapter 6, I will further explore this idea of "playing against type" and how the metamorphosis of a marginalized group's collective identity may be brought about, perhaps counter-intuitively, through identity-based protests themselves.

V.B. — ACT UP

The case of ACT UP presents similarities to the cases of Las Madres and Otpor, but also presents significant differences. Like Las Madres, AIDS protestors in the U.S. during the 1980s and early 1990s held vigils for their dead/missing loved ones. Like Otpor, ACT UP frequently relied on humor for their actions. Like both groups, there seemed to be a clear connection between the group's *ethos* and its choice/s of *logos*, and so performing *authenticity* was not particularly problematic. However, unlike the previous cases, ACT UP was not challenging the nature of the state by working within the dominant cultural narrative, but rather challenging the dominant narrative being deployed by the state in order to change state policy. ACT UP presents a case where *performances of virtue* are particularly difficult to discern. The queer community at the center of ACT UP was generally deemed immoral by the larger society, and in particular, the protestors had to contend with a visceral hatred of gays felt by a significant portion of the public. How can "virtue" be performed in such a situation, when the marginalized group is basically excluded from the dominant culture's narrative except to be labeled as "immoral"?

The ACT UP case presents a tension between the embracing of the dominant hetero-normative values and the embracing of the disruptive "queer" label with its distinct set of values. Somewhere in the balance of the two, the voice of this despised marginalized group was able to become heard and influence public policy related to AIDS. This case of the queer community coming to be recognized as credible, overcoming deep-seated prejudices and overt attempts by the state to discount them on the basis of their (perceived) immorality, offers new insights into how the theory of performing authenticity and virtue works in action.

ACT UP, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, was founded officially in March 1987 in New York City, already six years into the "AIDS crisis." The group evolved out of the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) group that had been founded in New York City in 1982. Co-founder of both organizations, Larry Kramer became impatient with GMHC's lack of commitment to political work, and so ACT UP from the outset had a more radical protest agenda. Deborah Gould (correctly, I think) locates the shift in AIDS-focused activism in the June 30, 1986 Supreme Court Ruling known as Bowers vs. Hardwick: "comparing gay sex to 'adultery, incest, and other sexual crimes' and noting that 'prescriptions against [homosexual sodomy] have ancient roots,' the Court upheld, by a five-to-four majority, a statute that denied homosexuals the right to engage in consensual sex in the privacy of their homes" (*Moving* 121). Following the ruling, the gay community and its supporters arose in protest in cities around the U.S. According to Gould, "the shock of Hardwick heightened the salience for many lesbians and gay men of their gay identities to their own self-understandings" (*Moving* 135). This heightened salience of one's gay identity contributed to the formation of ACT UP and affected the group's choice of tactics.

ACT UP began with about "three hundred lesbians, gay men, and other sexual and gender outlaws" attending a meeting called by Larry Kramer to create "a self-described organization of people united in anger and committed to the use of civil disobedience and direct action to fight the AIDS crisis" (Gould, *Moving* 130-31). Within two weeks of this March 1987 inaugural meeting, the first ACT UP protest shut down Wall Street, tying up traffic for hours, and resulted in the arrest of seventeen ACT UP members (Gould, *Moving* 131). The tone for their ensuing protest actions had been set. By the end of the decade, ACT UP had established

itself as a major "player" in the arena of AIDS-related public policy. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported in December of 1989, "in just two and a half years, [ACT UP had] transformed itself from a small hit squad of angry men to a guerilla army with real political clout" (Crossen A1).

I need to note here two other organizations that spun off from ACT UP who also produced protest activism among members of the queer community during this same time frame. Gran Fury was a collaborative of artists and designers who worked in tandem with ACT UP between 1988 and 1992. Queer Nation was founded in New York in April 1990, with an aim to "extend the kinds of democratic counterpolitics deployed on behalf of AIDS activism for the transformation of public sexual discourse in general" (Berlant and Freeman 198). Although the three groups were distinct from one another they worked in close proximity and had roots in the same community. All three groups worked to fight homophobia and catalyze the queer community, targeting, in particular, official policies and unofficial attitudes that they perceived as aggravating the AIDS epidemic. The AIDS epidemic "required a continual vigilance against secrecy, shame, and repression, the hallmarks of that same (perhaps bourgeois) privacy that polices homoerotic desire" (Yingling 304). The activists of ACT UP, Gran Fury, and Queer Nation realized that "private" responses to AIDS (such as the care giving groups that had sprung up in the early 1980s) were ineffectual when it came to addressing and affecting the entirety of the AIDS crisis. Individual, isolated responses to the crisis were also ineffectual. What was needed was a very public, group response that refused to be shamed back into the closet; "out of the closets and into the streets" was the call (and warning) of one Queer Nation slogan.

Queer-ness embraced and performed

Although AIDS is a disease that can affect anyone, during the 1980s (and perhaps even today in some communities), the disease was "identified nearly irreversibly" with gay men (Roman xxii). If collective identity for a marginalized protest group needs to be representable by a "character type," protests created by people with AIDS depended heavily (at least in 1980s America) on the image of the gay man, an image that needs to be "unpacked." Lee Edelman writes how AIDS, due to the historical context surrounding its appearance in the U.S., was a medical syndrome uniquely positioned to "distinctively engage identity as an issue" (96). Since the conflation of AIDS in America with the very identity of gay men is a controversial assertion (for some), I will linger a bit on this point.

In *Melancholia and Moralism*, Douglas Crimp writes:

> What is far more significant than the real facts of HIV transmission in various populations throughout the world is the initial conceptualization of AIDS as a syndrome affecting gay men. No insistence on the facts will render that discursive construction obsolete . . . The idea of AIDS as a gay disease occasioned two interconnected conditions in the United States: that AIDS would be an epidemic of stigmatization rooted in homophobia and that the response to AIDS would depend in very large measure on the gay movement. (60)

Not only was AIDS perceived as being a "gay man's disease," thus bringing with it all the homophobic baggage that American society carried at the time, but it was the gay community that found itself alone needing to respond to the epidemic, thus further cementing the perception that AIDS was, indeed, a "gay" disease. Certainly the numbers of acknowledged

AIDS deaths in the 1980s seemed to confirm the identification between disease and community. By the middle of 1986, "the number of AIDS cases had surpassed thirty thousand, the majority of whom were gay and bisexual men, and more than half of them had died" (Gould, *Moving* 137). When Larry Kramer sought to rally the troops in March 1987, to create the ACT UP organization, he, too, invoked the specter of gay male identity: "If what you're hearing doesn't rouse you to anger, fury, rage, and action, gay men will have no future here on earth" (DeParle B4).

Of course this does not mean that only gay men were susceptible to AIDS or that only gay men participated in the work of ACT UP and its affiliated protest groups. The February 2012 issue of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* was devoted to "Remembering ACT UP," and a large number of the eight essays dwell on issues of racism, privilege, and exclusion (all identity-related issues) in ACT UP during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Alexandra Juhasz writes, "When ACT UP is remembered, it is most typically thought to be the home of privileged white gay men. And that was the majority of who was there–at least as I remember it–although, of course, I am a woman and I was often in the room" (71). Juhasz interviewed various women of color who had been involved with ACT UP. Most noted that as AIDS activists they felt detached from their primary identity communities: "My community did not think the issues referred to them. Blacks, Puerto-Ricans, Women were never going to get AIDS" (71). Gay men of privilege (typically white) dominated the numbers in ACT UP as it was their community that initially founded the group and felt most implicated by the epidemic. If ACT UP became a powerful "source of collective power" for many of its members, it also had "the opposite effect: to exclude, to divide, and to marginalize," with various ACT UP

members reporting that they felt "discounted as women, as hetero- or bisexuals, or as racial or class minorities" (Rand 77).

Perhaps it is the *New York Times* that, surprisingly, dealt with the collective identity issue of ACT UP most objectively when it reported in 1990 that ACT UP is "predominantly gay, white and male, though heterosexuals, blacks and women are also found within its ranks . . . . Whatever their background, almost all share a personal relationship with the epidemic that has killed 67,000 people in the United States" (DeParle B1). The middle-class gay white man might have been the public face for AIDS, and not entirely by choice, but all members of ACT UP shared an authentic emotional connection to the epidemic. When Larry Kramer said, "I don't think anyone can understand what life is like for us unless you're one of us" (DeParle B4), that "us" also implicated those in ACT UP who were not gay men, for whom AIDS was not just some "abstract menace" but rather "a series of funerals–a procession of friends, relatives and lovers given over to painful, protracted deaths" (DeParle B1).

Still, for the vast majority of the American public in the 1980s, AIDS (and so a group like ACT UP) conjured up the idea of gay men and homosexuality, even if ACT UP was actually more complicated and more heterogeneous than this idea implied. As with other marginalized protest groups, an oversimplification of collective identity, especially in the early stages of the protest, becomes a requirement for "recognition" (as in "categorization") to take place.

In contrast to the tactics of Las Madres and Otpor, AIDS activists in the gay community embraced their "non-normative" status and exaggerated it for themselves and for the public. They labeled themselves as "queer," with that term catching on by 1990 for members of ACT

UP and, obviously, for the members of Queer Nation. Such self-labeling "valorized non-normative sexuality and suggested the positive role of gay male sexual culture in the AIDS epidemic" (Gould, *Moving* 262). Calling themselves "queer" created "forceful feelings of solidarity within the movement" (Gould, *Moving* 262). As one Queer Nation activist explained, within the community of gays and lesbians, speaking the word "queer" to one another was "a way of suggesting we close ranks and forget (temporarily) our individual differences because we face a more insidious common enemy" ("Queer Nation").   Their use of the Q-word "invited and intensified [their] recognition of one another" (Gould, *Moving* 256).

The use of the label also connected "queers" in their anger and defiance against the "straight" world that condemned "gay difference" (Gould, *Moving* 256). The label intentionally set them apart. By claiming themselves as queer, ACT UP and other activists at the time "catapulted their proud sexual difference into the public realm, challenging the tendency of the gay establishment to downplay gay difference in a bid for mainstream social acceptance" (Gould, *Moving* 257). Group solidarity was being built, at least temporarily, at the expense of mainstream social and political acceptance. Still, for the purposes of protests under the mantle of "performances of authenticity," the playing out of "queer-ness" also served to reinforce the public's recognition of ACT UP and Queer Nation as "queers" in all their stereotypical "otherness."

According to gay activist Michelangelo Signorile, the ACT UP folks "were the most out-of-the-closet, in-your-face people in the world" (Gould, *Moving* 261). They trumpeted their queer identities to the world, despite/because of the stigma society attached to homosexuality. ACT UP's key slogan was "SILENCE = DEATH." If silence equals death, then ACT UP's

"noise" trumpeted life to all who would (willingly or not) hear. Each of their public actions was both an act of transgressing limits and a source of self-validation and celebration, and in both of these ways the actions worked to revitalize the queer community itself. One of Queer Nation's central ideas was that "being queer is not about a right to privacy: it is about the freedom to be public" ("Queer Nation"). The protestors refused to be invisible any longer.

Such visibility, though, was risky, especially due to the newly added stigma of AIDS associated with the gay male community. In 1989, Susan Sontag noted that AIDS had surpassed cancer as "the stigmatized term par excellence" (Yingling 292). Writing in 1991, Thomas Yingling observed that AIDS "provides only negative structures of identification" (293). Because of the conflation of AIDS with gay male identity in the public mind during the 1980s, the stigma attached to AIDS reinforced the already established "negative structures" of being identified as a gay man. According to a June 1983 article in the *New York Times*, one woman in Denver called health authorities to "ask how she should fumigate an apartment she bought from a homosexual" (Clendinen A1)–note "homosexual," not "person with AIDS." During this same time period, a spokesman for the Moral Majority stated, "Homosexuals should be banned from giving blood by requiring them to identify themselves on pain of law" (Clendinen B4). It was gay men in the 1980s who were viewed as guilty of bringing AIDS to America, and this was "expressed through a unique language of identification: gay cancer, gay related immuno-deficency . . . or GAY: Got AIDS Yet?" (Christiansen and Hanson 160-161). Because of the inseparable association between AIDS and gay identity, to claim gay identity publicly in the 1980s (as in claiming the label "queer") inevitably invited the added stigma of "those people with AIDS."

Still, a large number of ACT UP and affiliate groups' protest tactics unapologetically "performed queer identity," in particular by focusing on the queer body and its sexual nature. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the US federal government and various elites (like Church officials) wanted to focus on the moral aspects they saw as inherent in AIDS, with the "lesson" to be learned that gays and IV drug users were immoral. AIDS activists insisted on keeping the discussion about the body itself. This was an "impious" tactic in America where sex and the human body could be referred to privately but not publicly. The concept of prurience had taken hold, and certainly the Church had played a role in this process. In 1990, Gran Fury made the public statement that "the Catholic Church has long taught men and women to loathe their bodies and to fear their sexual natures" (Meyer 76). In "perverse" response to such teachings, Gran Fury and other queer groups made the human body and its sexual nature front and center in their public actions. These groups' rhetorical and theatrical uses of the body served several purposes: the public performance of the private body became an "authentic" revelation of the private self; the impious performances of the body disrupted (even shocked) mainstream society and so got the groups' messages heard (if not heeded); and since the particular acts and images of the body being performed and/or presented were clearly marked as "queer," they reinforced the loop of "recognizable collective identity" acting to legitimate the group's tactics which in turn served to authenticate the collective identity.

Queer Nation publicly presented text and images of the body's genitals, portraying them as "not just organs of erotic thanksgiving, but weapons of pleasure against their own oppression" (Berlant and Freeman 208). Queer Nation realized it was impossible to truly discuss gay and lesbian issues without acknowledging the very source of the group's

marginalization, namely their sexual practices. It is certainly a symptom of societal repression,

what Bakhtin calls "chamber intimacies behind a curtain" (105), that such sexual practices

could not be acknowledged frankly in "polite" society. Queer Nation tore down the "chamber

curtain" with a series of posters featuring artistic renderings of male and female genitals with

captions that read "I praise life with my vulva" and "I praise God with my erection" (Berlant

and Freeman 203-204). These "prayers" not only forced audiences to confront the human body

and its biologically sexual nature, but also the very nature of prayer and religion, which tend to

exclude parts of the body that are given to us by "God." These prayers "counter[ed] the

erotophobia of gay and straight publics, who want to speak of 'lifestyles' and not sex" (Berlant

and Freeman 202). Queers are labeled as such because of their sexual practices and these

practices, rooted in the human body, should not be hidden away in shame.

Less sexually graphic, but possibly more subversive, were the public actions known as

"kiss-ins." These ACT UP and Queer Nation actions were a specific, simple, and publicly

doable (if only for legal reasons) performance of the queer body: same sex couples *en masse*

kissing their partner in full public view. In April 1988, ACT UP staged a kiss-in outside of New

York's City Hall and offered a handout called "Why We Kiss" to observers (Roman 101).

Same sex kissing is both an authentic expression of the queer self and, at least in public, a

disruption (whereas non-queer kissing is merely every-day, thoroughly unremarkable). The

simple tactic of having several same sex couples kiss in full public view worked to gain

recognition for the queer assembly (step one: notice; step two: identify) and wrested the public

space, at least temporarily, from the prurience of homophobic officialdom. The theatricality of

the kiss-in, with its shameless embracing of the queer stigma itself, would certainly be

disruptive for a 1980s audience looking to pursue "business as usual."

Charles Morris and John Sloop co-authored a 2006 essay entitled "What Lips These Lips Have Kissed: Refiguring the Politics of Queer Public Kissing." They examine just how deeply subversive to straight society the queer kiss is. Such a kiss "constitutes a 'marked' and threatening act, a performance instantly understood as contrary to hegemonic assumptions about public behavior" (2). Back in 1988, ACT UP seemed to know this. Among the reasons enumerated in the "Why We Kiss" handout were the following: "We kiss in an aggressive demonstration of affection; We kiss to challenge repressive conventions that prohibit displays of love between persons of the same sex; We kiss as an affirmation of our feelings, our desires, ourselves" (Morris and Sloop 12). Public same-sex kissing is simultaneously an act of affection (with one's partner) and an act of aggression (against a repressive society). Queer kiss-ins not only celebrate and liberate, they also accuse. They disturb heteronormative spaces (any public space, generally) and thus heteronormativity itself, calling attention to the "otherness" existing in the midst of the presumed "straight" world. And by calling attention to society's homophobia in the "Why We Kiss" handout, ACT UP linked fear of queer love with the ongoing lackluster political responses to the AIDS crisis and the ever-growing number of deaths in the queer community.

ACT UP also presented the queer body in its death as a political act. In October 1992, ACT UP invited members to "carry the actual ashes of people we love in funeral procession to the White House," where the ashes would hopefully be strewn across the White House lawn. This "act of grief and rage and love" was intended "to bring AIDS home to George Bush," whose AIDS-related policies to date, in the eyes of ACT UP, were woefully inadequate,

murderous even, in their negligence (Gould, *Moving* 230). In November 1992, ACT UP carried

the corpse of deceased member Mark Fischer in funeral procession through the streets of New

York City, with the final destination being the Bush-Quayle re-election campaign headquarters.

Jennifer Romaine writes, "the display of Fischer's dead body as the centerpiece of the

procession gave it a breathtaking, almost supernatural quality. At the same time, the presence

of the corpse told the public that this performance was a true story. Death from AIDS was

really real" (4). By 1993, ACT UP was planning for at least thirty other "political funerals" that

individuals who were then living with AIDS had "committed their corpses to perform"

(Romaine 9). Like the kiss-ins, the political funerals performed by ACT UP protestors were

impious and authentic and disruptive rhetorical acts. The presentation of the queer corpse,

despite the impious contrivance of the performance, was "authentic," as the body itself, clearly

marked by an AIDS-related death at a premature age, gave evidence of an undeniable reality.

The challenge of "virtue"

The greatest difference between ACT UP and my previous case studies, at least in terms

of my theoretical framework, involves the group's "performances of virtue." AIDS was literally

a matter of life and death for the gay community in the 1980s and early 1990s, and preserving

one's own life and the lives of one's loved ones should be viewed as a "virtuous" act. But

things were not this simple for the gay community. For mainstream society, the very real

question: were gay men "deserving" of life? Groups like ACT UP faced a steep challenge to

demonstrate their "worthiness" in the eyes of a majority of Americans. This pressure to appear

worthy, forced many in the queer community to comply with heteronormative narratives, and

chose to emphasize responses to the AIDS crisis that included caretaking and "responsible" sexual behaviors. Many members of ACT UP, however, refused to comply with such norms.

As with previous cases, ACT UP needed to confront attacks by the state and other elites on their credibility. But ACT UP faced a new and different charge: that they were debauched, perverted and "ungodly." Cory Servaas, an appointed member of Ronald Reagan's Presidential AIDS Commission told the public, "It is patriotic to have the AIDS test and be negative" (Crimp, *Melancholia* 35). Senator Jesse Helms in October 1987 addressed the U.S. Senate on the subject of funding for AIDS education. Specifically, Sen. Helms railed against a graphic comic book produced by the Gay Men's Health Crisis as a means of educating the gay male community about safe sex practices. According to Helms, all those Senators who had seen the book "without exception . . . were revolted" with the content they were made to witness "under the pretense of AIDS education." Helms reported to his colleagues, "every Christian, religious, moral ethic within me cries out," and he insisted, "we have got to call a spade a spade and a perverted human being a perverted human being" (Crimp, *Melancholia* 70-71). Such attacks against persons with AIDS and against queer activists were, of course, tied up with the fundamental homophobia in American society. It was generally accepted and communicated by the U.S. federal government in the 1980s that the gay community was perverted, immoral and ultimately "un-American."

For Las Madres and Otpor, the protestors were able to locate themselves in existing national and cultural narratives in such a way that they could claim they were enacting the role of the "good" mother or "good" youth/student. There existed no "good" gay character in any American national/cultural narrative during the 1980s. In fact, as the AIDS epidemic spread,

the character of "innocent victim of AIDS" emerged, but this character was, without exception, heterosexual. During the same October 1987 Senate debate over AIDS funding in which Sen. Helms railed against the gay community as ungodly and perverted, Sen. Chiles of Florida actually presented a more "moderate" voice in the debate. Sen. Chiles' argument in favor of supporting the funding for AIDS education was based on the following statement: "I like to talk about heterosexuals. That is getting into my neighborhood. That is getting into where it can be involved with people that I know and love and care about . . ." (Crimp, *Melancholia* 73). Despite the overwhelming numbers of non-heterosexuals dying from AIDS, it was only the heterosexuals that the senator could claim to care about. Gay men were not worth caring about, as they were morally unworthy of such care on the part of their government.

The tragedy of AIDS was constructed as an extension of the sickness that was homosexuality. As Michael Callan, spokesperson for the People With AIDS Coalition, remarked in 1986: "The stigma I have suffered as a gay man with AIDS has been an exaggeration of the stigma I have suffered as a gay man. The imagery and language of sickness–mental, moral, and medical–link the perception of AIDS and gay maleness" (Crimp, "AIDS" 165). Lee Edelman offers an intriguing analysis of the American AIDS narrative as one clearly framed from the white heterosexual male viewpoint. For Edelman, "the ideological subject as white male heterosexual elicits from 'AIDS' a discourse of crisis through which to affirm his privileged standing" (101). Because the straight male can "choose" to abjure the condemnable act of passive anal intercourse, the AIDS crisis discourse from the 1980s, with its (horrified) focus on the act of gay male anal penetration, serves to "reaffirm" that it is the white male heterosexual who is "uniquely autonomous in his moral agency" and who is "in himself

sufficient to stand because also free to fall" (101). Thus, only the respectable, dominant identity in American society could perform virtue adequately.

American public discourse was fundamentally and virulently homophobic. "Gay" implied guilt and shame. And because public discourse was dominated by homophobia, the gay community had no "right" to challenge this discourse, that is, "to produce a non-homophobic public discourse on homosexuality" in the U.S. (L. Edelman 87). As Edelman notes, the U.S. Supreme Court in a 1977 ruling permitted censorship of any positively framed public discussion around being gay, and equated homosexuality with a "disease" that public officials had every right to "quarantine," even intellectually (87).

The result of all of the above? In 1989 Wall Street traders voiced their opinions about gay men with AIDS: "those people deserve to die" (Crossen A9).

As mentally and morally "sick," the gay man (whether or not he had AIDS) could not claim "moral agency" in any American cultural narrative, at least *as* a gay man. As gay men, this marginalized group did not even have the right to *live* in the eyes of many fellow Americans. Did the gay community, like the marginalized groups from the previous case studies, need to frame their actions as "virtuous" as a way for their political activism to gain mainstream traction? If so, how was this accomplished? It seems that "performances of virtue" on the part of the gay community in 1980s America were largely manifested by the group's public participation in "heteronormative narratives."

Early responses to the AIDS crisis (prior to the formation of ACT UP) revolved around caretaking, and the social movement (if it can be called that in these early years) was marked by "quiet" politicking and organizing (with the main goal of getting more moneys for AIDS

research and health care). In the pre-ACT UP era, gay men facing AIDS wanted to do so

"respectably" and because this was defined in heteronormative terms, "the pride that emerged

during this period was premised . . . on a disavowal of gay sexual practices and cultures" (Rand

76). The heteronormative narrative condemned gay men for their sexual practices, and even

within the gay community itself many people accepted (at least in these early years) that it was

their "shameful" sexual practices which had brought about the AIDS infection (Rand 76). The

values of "normal society" had been internalized by much of the gay community, and such

values "authorized and validated reputable activism, such as provision of services, caretaking,

candlelight vigils, and tactics oriented toward the electoral realm, while delegitimizing and

thereby discouraging less conventional political actions that might jeopardize gay

respectability" (Gould, *Moving* 90). Gay men developed a sense of pride around their "ethos of

caretaking" in response to AIDS (Rand 76), since such a sense of pride was supported by

mainstream values–taking care of one's own community was deemed "worthy." At this time,

pride in being gay *as distinct from* straight society was not something publicly trumpeted by the

community, and likely not even felt by the majority of its members.   On the other hand, "the

gay community's responsible efforts against AIDS" provided a much "easier alignment with

mainstream norms" (Gould, *Moving* 90). These "responsible" efforts, however, created no real

"disruption." The candlelight vigils might have been "protests" but they were easily ignored.

There was a significant shift in attitude in the gay community following the Hardwick

decision in late June 1986. In that Supreme Court decision, the state ruled that consensual

homosexual acts in the privacy of one's home could be decreed illegal. Homosexuality was

affirmed as "criminal." The ruling reverberated through the gay community of America and

caused a shift in the nature of gay activism, including activism centered on the AIDS crisis. Following Hardwick, San Francisco activist John Wahl instructed the gay community as follows:

> We need to become aware of our own worth, and that means absolutely dumping the mental and psychological restraints we have adopted [from] conditioning by a culture that puts down same sex affection . . . . You have to absolutely never accept second class humanity or second class citizenship for any reason whatsoever, not even for tactical reasons . . . . (Gould, *Moving* 128)

The new call for pride in gay difference was tied to a new narrative framework, one that focused on gays *as American citizens* who should be able to claim the same rights that all Americans claim. Such a narrative embraced mainstream ("heteronormative") values of a political nature, even as it rejected mainstream values of a social/sexual nature.

In her essay "ACT UP, Racism, and the Question of How to Use History," Deborah Gould writes that since the majority of ACT UP members were white and middle-class, "men who had this sense of privilege," when the state basically told them (through its neglect and its homophobic policies) "we don't care if you die," there was a sense of shock, even moral outrage (58). The queer members of ACT UP members began to see themselves as "a despised minority, literally fighting for their lives" (DeParle B1). Their right to life was now seen as the most basic of human rights, and as American citizens who could claim the rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," the gay community became enraged and hence "acted up."

Still there remained an ambivalent wavering between the proclaiming of gay difference

from, and gay similarity to, "mainstream" society and its values. The shift in the gay

community after the Hardwick decision and half a decade of state neglect regarding the AIDS-

related deaths decimating their community, brought about a new call for visibility *as* gay, as

"queer." At the same time ACT UP and other queer activist groups insisted that gays were

indeed a part of America with the same rights of citizenship as others. Queer identity was

"other," but "queers," especially the majority of ACT UP's members, were educated,

economically well-to-do, politically savvy American citizens whose sense of privilege aligned

with them with a majority of "non-other" (that is, mainstream) American values.

In *Moving Politics*, Gould addresses this dialectical tension regarding ACT UP's

collective identity of ACT UP. However, her decided emphasis on the alignment of the gay

men who were the majority of ACT UP with mainstream, privileged identities is overstated and

leads to her overlooking other attributes that allowed for ACT UP to succeed as a protest

movement. Gould writes: "most confrontational activist movements in the United States simply

do not garner much acclaim. ACT UP did" (295). Gould then asks why this was the case, and

offers three key explanations. One, ACT UP received acknowledgment of its effectiveness

from high-profile sources (for instance, TV news anchor Dan Rather crediting ACT UP with

forcing the price drop for the drug AZT, or chief AIDS scientist Anthony Fauci crediting ACT

UP with bringing about new medical protocols). Two, there were "shared interests" between

ACT UP and more "mainstream" supporters of government deregulation (for instance, those

seeking to release experimental treatments for Alzheimer's disease). Three, "the perception that

ACT UP's membership was white, male, and middle-class helped the movement to draw

mainstream support" (295-96). Each of these three reasons required an alignment between ACT

UP activists and mainstream society. Gould locates the source of this alignment in the privileged aspects of the group's collective identity. She concludes that similar recognition would not have been forthcoming for "a defiant, direct-action AIDS movement perceived to be populated by African-Americans, or on any confrontational activist group made up of people of color, women, poor people, young anarchists, or any combination of such marginalized groups" (296). Yes, there is something about alignment and identification with mainstream values that is required for activism to succeed. But such alignment is not solely due to dominant identities; instead, the focus should be on the group's "fit" with the dominant cultural narrative/s and the values implied therein. Gould's assertion that other marginalized protest groups, those not led by white, middle-class, adult males, would not receive the recognition that ACT UP did is simply not true, as I hope the variety of case studies presented in this thesis demonstrates.

The most significant result of ACT UP members' sense of "entitlement" as citizens and persons "of privilege" was their narrative framing of events: the state became constructed as the villain of the story. Queers in America pointed up the "disjuncture between American rhetoric and reality." America was the "Land of Equality and Justice for All," that is, except for queer people (Gould, *Moving* 136). Many in the gay community felt a shocked "indignation" that "their rights could be so thoroughly abrogated" (Gould, *Moving* 136). Ultimately, "the state had relinquished its responsibility to its citizens" (Gould, *Moving* 138). Thomas Yingling notes, the rhetoric of AIDS activism charged the government "with criminal neglect of its people" and this "invocation of crime" made sense in the context of the greater American narrative based on "the liberal philosophy that has historically constructed the nation-state as protector of citizen's rights by law and citizen's property and health through institutional intervention" (295).

By framing the state as the villain, ACT UP turned the tables, rhetorically, in quite dramatic terms. It was not the queers in society who were the "evil" ones; it was the state that was "evil." As the *New York Times* reported, "rarely are ACT UP's adversaries seen as well-meaning people working in a complicated world. In ACT UP's eyes they are liars, hypocrites – even murderers" (DeParle B4). At the October 1988 display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, an enormous patchwork featuring many of those whose lives were lost to AIDS, ACT UP members staged a protest. They passed out leaflets that read, in part: "SHOW YOUR ANGER TO THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED MAKE THE QUILT POSSIBLE: OUR GOVERNMENT" (Gould, *Moving* 225). ACT UP activists were suggesting that the quilt be viewed not simply as a memorial to lost lives, thus resulting in mourning, but as a "chronicle of murder" resulting in anger and acts of defiance against the state (Gould, *Moving* 226). Four years later, at Mark Fischer's "political funeral," an ACT UP member told the crowd: "It was [Mark's] wish that we deliver his body to the doorstep of the man who murdered him. . . George Bush, you killed Mark Fischer through your murderous neglect, by ignoring the AIDS crisis" (Romaine 7). If the state is the murderous villain of the AIDS narrative, then dramatic anti-state tactics become needed; "anger and defiant activism targeting state and society are not only necessary, they are legitimate, justifiable, rational and righteous" (Gould, *Moving* 226).

For many Americans, including the majority of conservative/Republican politicians, their version of the "American narrative" was impervious to the criminal charges being leveled by the queer activists. In contrast to the "liberal" conception of the state as guaranteeing individual rights, the "republican" (in its classical sense) conception of government stressed the collective good of the state and so implied a certain homogeneity among its citizens. Yingling

notes that it is "crucial" for scholars analyzing AIDS activism in America to acknowledge the

"tension in American political and institutional life between the nation-state as a political entity

and 'America' as a term that ceases to designate the state and signifies instead a Platonic ideal

of social consensus, homogeneity, and historical transcendence" (296). Because of this tension,

conservative politicians could "ignore the need for the nation-state to respond to population

groups not visible within 'America,'" and to go even further, they could "cast those needs as

anti-American, as a danger to rather than within the state" (Yingling 297).[19]

Still, for a growing number of fellow Americans, the ACT UP framing of the narrative

("citizens betrayed by the state") gained traction through the early 1990s. There was a growing

sense of identification with the AIDS activists from mainstream society, "especially when

[AIDS activists] articulated their grievances and demands in terms of a sense of entitlement as

U.S. citizens" (Gould, *Moving* 296). As Burke tells us, "identification" creates a sense of

"consubstantiality" which is the essence of persuasion (*RoM* 20-23).[20] Even at the highest level

of politics, the argument came to be made that gays were indeed citizens who had the same

rights as other Americans (though exactly where the boundaries of these "rights" is located is

still a subject of controversy). Bill Clinton accepting the Democratic Party's Presidential

nomination in July 1992 told the world:

> . . . for too long politicians have told the most of us that are doing all right that
>
> what's really wrong with America is the rest of us. Them. Them, the minorities.
>
> Them, the liberals. Them, the poor. Them, the homeless. Them, the people with
>
> disabilities. Them, the gays. We've gotten to where we've nearly "them"ed
>
> ourselves to death. Them and them and them. But this is America. There is no

them; there's only us. One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty, and

justice, for all. ("Wikiquote")

Gays are not "other," they are "us." What this means is not only that gays may/should be

accepted as citizens (ACT UP's rhetorical point), but that gays may (should?) be assimilated

into the American mainstream narrative.

The implication of the above is crucial for the queer community in America to consider

as it continues to grow and "mature." The fork in the road, as it were, seems to have occurred

during the outbreak of queer activism in the late 1980s and early 1990s. If queers in America

want to participate in the "American cultural narrative," then do queers ultimately need to

become "assimilationist"? Douglas Crimp takes up this argument in his 2002 *Melancholia and*

Moralism. From that point of retrospect, Crimp looks back on the emergence of the AIDS crisis

and notes how a new brand of "moralism" emerged in the gay community at that time,

especially among gay men. Crimp labels this new moralism as "dangerous" (8). That new

moralism was nothing other than the mainstream American cultural narrative being extended to

"explain" the AIDS crisis and to offer a framework for gay men to emerge as "virtuous" by

mainstream, "respectable" standards.

Even as early as 1983, the seeds of this moralism can be seen. As one *New York Times*

article reported that year, "AIDS is torturing not only its victims but also the whole ethic of 'the

gay life style,' which roughly translated, has meant the freedom to live as one felt, openly, and

to seek sex as one wished" (Clendinen B4). A gay man with AIDS interviewed for the article

stated that AIDS was having an impact on the gay male community: "I think one thing it may

lead to is a more responsible way of handling that [sexual] part of our lives" (Clendinen B4).

The previous sexual "freedom," was, by implication, "irresponsible."

Crimp uses Andrew Sullivan's "conservative" values to make his own argument about the dangers of this moralism. Sullivan is an HIV-positive gay man, a generation younger than Crimp, who is a high-profile spokesperson regarding gay issues. Crimp attributes the following "narrative" to Sullivan and his fellow conservatives in the gay community:

> Prior to AIDS, gay men were frivolous pleasure-seekers who shirked the responsibility that comes with normal adulthood–settling down with a mate, raising children, being an upstanding member of society . . . . Then came AIDS. AIDS made gay men grow up. They had to find meaning in life beyond the pleasure of the moment. They had to face the fact that fucking has consequences. They had to deal with real life . . . So they became responsible. And then everyone accepted gay men. (*Melancholia* 4-5)

It is, of course, not just Sullivan and self-proclaimed conservatives in the gay community who might embrace the above narrative. Even the gay man interviewed by the *New York Times* in 1983 alluded to the above narrative as a work in progress. For Crimp, one implication of this moralistic narrative is that queer activists (like those in ACT UP and Queer Nation) become framed as engaging in "childish liberation politics" (5), since asserting queer difference and its sexual nature was ultimately irresponsible. Crimp asserts that it is "insulting" for gay men to be "recruited as the foil" for Sullivan's "moralistic" narrative (6). This narrative, though, was created by gay men (and women) themselves, at least by those who sought and/or seek to fully join mainstream society, "respectable" and "unmarked."

In his essay "The Mirror and the Tank," Lee Edelman makes a similar argument as

Crimp. He writes that in the light of AIDS, the ethos of queer "erotic abandon" would need to yield, "depending on the stripe of the narrative, to death, as a recognition of the wages of sin; to monogamy, as a recognition of the immaturity of promiscuity; or to 'activism,' as a recognition of the political folly of defining gay identity through sexuality alone" (115). Edelman cautions the gay community against succumbing to these "internalizations of dominant logic" (116). But resisting the dominant cultural narrative is a very difficult thing to do, and it is unclear whether or not it is the *right* thing to do. In Chapter 6, I will probe a bit more into this pressure for marginalized groups to assimilate themselves to mainstream society's values.

V.C. — CCNV and NUH

Protests by and on behalf of the homeless in American during the 1980s and 1990s present many similarities to the case studies presented previously in this thesis: the use of creative disruption, a correlation between the group *ethos* and their chosen tactics, and a struggle to be perceived as "worthy" in the eyes of mainstream society. The case of the homeless protests, though, presents a notable difference that I would like to focus on. A major share of the protests were organized by "housed advocates" *on behalf* of the homeless. Should others have the right to speak for the homeless, and if others do speak for them, can these advocates be deemed authentic and credible? Also, what are the implications here for "performances of virtue," when the groups in question have identities embedded in distinct cultural narratives?

An example of the tension existing between the housed advocates and the homeless population happened on October 7, 1989. On that date, a huge and diverse crowd led by media

celebrities attended the "Housing Now!" rally in Washington, D.C. Homeless activists, many of them members of the National Union of the Homeless (NUH) were in attendance and became increasingly angry at the rally. These homeless activists claimed they came to D.C. "not to listen to no movie star politicians" who "had no intention of letting us [the homeless] speak." Eventually the homeless group took up the chant "The Homeless can speak for themselves!" until one of their spokespersons was allowed onto the stage (*Take Over*). Even neutral observers at the rally "questioned the appropriateness of celebrities leading the march instead of homeless people" (Parker 11).   However, when one TV actress's speech introducing all of the Hollywood folks present at the rally was interrupted by chants from the homeless ("TV later, housing now!"), one of the rally organizers told the crowd: "This march would not have happened without those celebrities" (Parker 11).

The same tension between the (apparent) need for high-profile, mainstream ("housed advocate") support for their cause and the desire of the homeless to speak for themselves was apparent in other situations. In San Jose in 1990, the Help House the Homeless group of community advocates came to be at odds with the local homeless population's voiced desires around trespassing laws and refusal to be a part of the official homeless shelter system. The homeless voices went more or less unheeded (T. Wright 222). In Chicago in 1991, there was a conflict between an advocacy group, the Mad Housers, and the local homeless population. City officials limited direct communication about the housing projects to conversations with the advocacy group, while the homeless claimed "we could tell them for ourselves" (T. Wright 247).

Over the course of the 1980s, the issue of the growing homeless population in American

urban centers had become a more and more visible issue. During this time period (under the

Reagan and first President Bush administrations), homelessness became "a particularly graphic

problem, dramatically thrusting the poor into public consciousness in a way that chronic

poverty alone fails to do" (Imig 71). Protest events addressing issues for homelessness became

increasingly common. Between January 1980 and December 1992, there were seventy-five

such protest events noted in U.S. newspapers (Imig 71). Twenty-one of these protest events

targeted President Reagan directly (Imig 74). The Community for Creative Nonviolence

(CCNV) protests garnered a majority of the publicity surrounding these events.

CCNV began in the early 1970s as a Christian group opposed to the Vietnam War. By

1977, however, the group's focus had shifted to "the task of securing adequate, accessible

space, offered in an atmosphere of reasonable dignity, for every man, woman, and child in need

of shelter" (*CCNV* website). The group's focus on charitable work on behalf of the homeless

population in Washington, DC, found increasing urgency following the election of Ronald

Reagan in 1980. Reagan's budgets and policies adversely affected the homeless in ways that

alarmed the advocates. A 1981 CCNV public statement to President Reagan spells it out in no

uncertain terms: "What you have proposed is the legalized assault and rape of our nation's most

vulnerable and defenseless citizens" (Hombs and Snyder 18). CCNV's "Reaganville

shantytown" protest, in which tents were installed in Lafayette Park across from the White

House, lasted for four months, from November 1981 through March 1982. In 1984, CCNV

leader Mitch Snyder undertook a public fast to protest the Reagan administration's policies

regarding the homeless. Both of these events attracted a lot of media attention. Other CCNV

protests during the 1980s included a wide variety of creative theatrical events, including sleep

outs, public funerals, and disruptions of Church-sponsored events.

Though CCNV's tactics were fairly startling, their basic *ethos* was typical of charitable advocacy in America at the time. Wagner and Cohen observe that the New Social Movements of the 1970s and after have frequently been "moral social movements," mostly populated by the middle class who feel they are the ones who must defend that which is otherwise "defenseless," such as the environment, or animal rights (545)–or, in the case of CCNV, the homeless who were framed as the nation's "most vulnerable and defenseless citizens." For Hetherington, such social advocacy had its historical precedent in America with the Prohibition movement, being performed by society's self-styled "moral elect" who feel they are "able to speak on society's behalf" (145). One result of this middle-class "moral" urge to remedy society's ills was that the vast majority of organizations in the 1980s and 1990s that were fighting for the rights and welfare of the homeless in America were directed and staffed largely by "housed advocates" (Rosenthal 201). Homeless people themselves were typically seen as "object[s] of study" or a "client population," not as agents (Kawash 321).

While CCNV and most other homeless rights groups were made up mostly of housed advocates, other groups during this same period consisted of actual homeless people, and the distinction between the collective identities of the membership comprising these different types of groups raises questions for performances of authenticity. Among the groups made up of the homeless themselves, the National Union of the Homeless (NUH) is the most significant. In 1983 in Philadelphia, a group of homeless men led by Chris Sprowal founded the Committee for Dignity and Fairness for the Homeless. Sprowal had become "angry at the conditions at the shelter where he lived" and so he and two other shelter residents opened their own homeless

shelter in 1984, "the first shelter to be operated by homeless people" (V. Williams). This effort

spread, and in April 1985 NUH held its founding convention. By 1986, organization chapters

had sprouted up around the U.S. and the organization officially became known as the National

Union of the Homeless, electing officers and developing a national strategy policy (*Homeless*

Union website).

The NUH slogan became "Homeless Not Helpless" and in contradistinction to the calls

from housed advocates for increased funding to homeless shelters and food programs, the NUH

were making demands for permanent housing, work and healthcare, so that homeless people

could integrate back into society. In 1988, NUH sponsored housing takeovers to protest cuts in

the federal Housing and Urban Development budget. At this time, NUH had a new affiliate,

Dignity Housing. Dignity Housing was established in 1988 "as the first housing and social

services program in the nation founded and guided by homeless people and activists," and the

group publicly proclaimed "the limitations of [current] shelter services" (Dignity Housing

website). Dignity Housing and NUH saw it as their mission to directly "rally local governments

for affordable housing and supportive services for the homeless" (*Dignity Housing* website),

without the need for housed advocates as "middle man."

In 1989, NUH adopted the slogan "Up and Out of Poverty Now." In October that year,

representatives from the group met with Jack Kemp, Secretary of Housing and Urban

Development. At that meeting, supposedly, Kemp promised that 10% of HUD housing would

go to the homeless beginning in 1990, to be rehabilitated and managed by the homeless

(*Homeless Union* website). On May 1, 1990, citing Jack Kemp's promise from the year before,

NUH coordinated takeovers of empty federally-owned houses in New York, Minneapolis,

Detroit, Los Angeles, Tucson, Oakland, Chicago and Philadelphia (*Take Over*). NUH's protest actions brought into focus the continued and growing tension between the work of housed advocates on behalf of the homeless and the demands of the homeless themselves. Despite some common ground, these two groups were distinct. Each had different goals, distinct rhetorical frameworks, and each employed protest tactics that were most "fitting" for the group itself.

Authentic and inauthentic performances

The connection between *ethos* and *logos* is particularly evident in the case of the homeless protests. Certain protest tactics are appropriately available to certain groups and not to others. A hunger strike, for example, might be an appropriate choice for a housed advocate who typically has enough food available to him so that abjuring it becomes a startling disruption. A housing takeover by the homeless themselves makes the point that these people really need homes; if housed advocates were to occupy vacant homes it could be dismissed as a "merely rhetorical" act. Occasionally, especially among the housed advocates for the homeless, certain protest tactics did have the air of artificiality, even pretentiousness, due to a disconnect between the identities of the protestors and the tactics used.

This artificiality was often associated with the actions of high-profile "legitimizers." In *Persuasion and Social Movements*, Stewart et. al. write that social movements typically seek the support of "legitimizers" who are "social opinion leaders" like politicians, executives, sports figures and entertainers. Such people "can help legitimize a movement in the eyes of the public by appearing at rallies, marching in demonstrations, speaking in favor of the cause,

donating money, and so on" (75). The 1989 "Housing Now!" rally was an example of a protest event where the celebrity legitimizers were such a dominant presence that the homeless themselves protested against the protest event. In 1987, pushing for passage of the McKinney Act that would federally fund a spectrum of services for homeless Americans, a dozen members of Congress along with a handful of movie stars slept out on the steam grates of Washington, D.C. in what was called "The Grate American Sleep-Out." The protestors' purpose was to raise awareness about the plight of the homeless prior to the McKinney Act vote, and their sleep-out tactic was a way for these well-off individuals "to demonstrate their solidarity with the homeless" (Imig 80). Texas Democrat Mickey Leland told the media, perhaps a bit defensively, "We're not being pretentious." These high-profile legitimizers felt there was the need to keep the issue of homelessness before the public and so they spent one night sleeping out on a grate before a dozen TV cameras "to illustrate the plight" of the homeless ("Homeless" 37). "Illustrating the plight" of a group is not the same as "assuming the identity" of a group, or even of experiencing "solidarity" with that group. Tilly writes that frequently, the "collective identities that people deploy in the course of contention correspond to *embedded identities*, those that inform their routine social lives" (219). For the homeless, it is their embedded identities that are always in evidence on the street. Being an ally of the homeless is a "stance," not an "identity." It is a role that the privileged person may *choose* for whatever period of time she wishes. It becomes a fine line for housed advocates when they attempt to empathize with the homeless by assuming their "identities" for a limited time: are they trying to better understand the plight of the homeless or are they merely "pretending" for the sake of politics?

Among homeless advocacy groups in the 1980s, a typical "protest" tactic consisted of organizers attracting groups of homeless by providing their typical relief services (like a soup kitchen), but in "unusual locations" that would create more visibility among the public (Imig 88). In some ways this is an "authentic" protest tactic since the advocacy groups are doing what they typically do, just making it more "disruptive." However, the invitation to the public "to look upon" the homeless is at odds with that part of the advocate's mission that charges them to respect the dignity of their homeless clients. These protest events sometimes did more to raise the profile of the advocacy groups themselves rather than serve the interests of the homeless population, and the public and/or media could detect the "inauthentic" disconnect in such cases. For example, CCNV's occupation of D.C.'s National Visitor Center in 1979 came across as quite "staged" (Rader 117). A *Washington Star* editorial claimed, "There is a disconcerting odor of artificiality about this affair"; the *Washington Post* labeled the action a "stunt" (Rader 121). The very media exposure that CCNV hungered for in the takeover made the homeless themselves very uncomfortable and defensive, and so they stopped coming to the new shelter (Rader 119). The occupation ended after a mere ten days.

On the other hand, many CCNV protest actions qualify as "performances of authenticity." For example, during the winter of 1980-1981, CCNV's Mitch Snyder and Harold Moss took to living on the streets in D.C. for over one hundred days and nights. They stated their reasons for this action as follows:

> Meaningful advocacy stems from authenticity and proximity. We had been
>
> speaking for the homeless, and we realized that the time had come for us to
>
> reduce further the distance that still lay between us. It was necessary that we

share for an extended period of time, the experience and the life of people who

call the street their home. In so doing, it was hoped that we would add depth and

legitimacy to our advocacy and we would help focus attention on the existence

and plight of the homeless. (Hombs and Snyder 108)

The CCNV advocates craved "authenticity," both to be credible spokespeople for the homeless

and to better empathize with their client population. At the same time, the action (played out

publicly) continued to focus attention on their cause. According to Rader, "living on the streets

gave Snyder a new legitimacy to speak for the homeless" (114). Snyder was able to claim "the

authenticity" of "past experience" (Rader 142).

Similarly, Snyder opted to put his own body on the line in 1984. Protesting Reagan's re-

election bid, and demanding that the federal government fund the renovation of CCNV's

homeless shelter (then the largest in the country with 1000 beds), Snyder fasted for 53 days

(Rader 218-19). Media attention was lavished on Snyder's body, with a typical *Washington

Post* headline reading: "Mitch Snyder Weakens as Protest Continues" (Rader 228). Shortly

before the election, the President capitulated. A November 11, 1984 *New York Times* article

announced in its title, "Fast Serves Its Purpose," and reported that Snyder's hunger strike had

caused the Reagan administration to "break down" and commit funds to renovate the shelter

(A8). During his hunger strike Snyder had lost 62 pounds and his health was seriously

threatened. It was the drama of "the body" that focused attention, though in this case, the

hunger strike tactic seemed authentically appropriate for a housed advocate like Snyder, who

could *choose* to starve himself.

Snyder rightly realized and acknowledged that there was a difference between his

choosing to live on the streets or fast and the emotional experiences of the homeless. "Poverty cannot be chosen," Snyder said, as he acknowledged his "privileges and prerogatives" even as he chose to live on the streets (Hombs and Snyder 118). It seems only the experiences of one whose very *identity* has been, or is, "homeless" may be viewed as "fully authentic." On their website under "governance" they provide a link to the biography of Rico E. Harris of the CCNV Board of Directors. No links to any other directors' bios are available. Harris is a homeless man. His bio states: "Currently I am homeless; my mental disability is stable through psychotherapy and medication. I am the Executive Director of the largest homeless shelter in the country – The Community for Creative Non-Violence." For groups of housed advocates, "legitimizers of authenticity" are as necessary as Stewart's celebrity legitimizers are for other groups.

For those groups comprised of and led by the homeless themselves, the protestors came to realize that "disruption of other people's lives [was] their greatest weapon" (Rosenthal 207). The presence of homeless people on the streets is already "disruptive" for some people, so the assembly of larger groups of homeless people in specific public spaces more pointedly disrupted the daily routines for many housed and working people. For "street populations" in particular, such organized disruption tactics "capitalize[d] on the resources at hand–their bodies, their free time, and their willingness (especially in winter) to be arrested" (Rosenthal 208). Because of the disruptiveness of their mere "presence," even as isolated homeless individuals, during the 1990s many American cities, from Orlando to San Francisco, banned any panhandling on the streets. Without their ability to keep the issue of their poverty and homelessness "in people's faces" through their physical presence and encounters, the homeless

were due to lose what little "political agency" they might have had (Arnold 110).

NUH organized homeless protestors to occupy not just public spaces (like parks) but to "take over" federally owned houses that were currently empty. NUH claimed that "in the land of plenty" the homeless are denied their "basic needs for survival," and these needs include housing ("Voices"). In May 1990, NUH coordinated simultaneous housing takeovers in seven cities across the U.S. (*Take Over*). Such a protest tactic seemed a "fitting" extension to NUH's rhetoric. The event spurred further dialogue between government officials and the homeless themselves, and the passage in November 1990 of the National Affordable Housing Act, allowing housing subsidies for able-bodied, non-elderly singles (Burt 215) was likely a result of the state listening to the voices of the homeless themselves.

Competing cultural narratives and their inherent virtues

Since protest groups must narrativize their own identities and be seen to be making "virtuous" choices, in the case of homeless protests is it the housed advocate who is virtuous or the homeless person herself? To be seen as "performing virtue," each group requires a different narrative framework, and the two compete with one another. Actually, there appear to be three competing cultural narratives available to Americans in the 1980s and 1990s through which they could frame the issue of homelessness. The "American work ethic" narrative (anyone should be able to pull oneself up by one's own bootstraps) led most Americans to narrativize the homeless as "lazy bums." The homeless were dependent and non-productive adults, contemptuous objects from the viewpoint of the American work ethic narrative. In contrast, there was the narrative of "Christian charity." CCNV and other housed advocates used this

narrative to frame the homeless as "victims" who were "incompetent" and in need of "pity" (Rosenthal 208). The advocate urged Americans to enact the virtue of charity along with them by helping the less fortunate. Finally (in a move similar to the one employed by ACT UP) there was the "American citizen" narrative employed by NUH and other homeless activists. They framed themselves as "normal Americans victimized by macro-level processes beyond their control" (Rosenthal 208). As citizens, they had a legitimate claim to rights, which included housing.

The "Christian charity" narrative found traction in the typical homeless advocate's tactic of "providing traditional relief services in unusual locations and incorporating charity into protests," which at the same time worked rhetorically to create "powerful images of need, hopelessness and despair" (Imig 88). Key here was instilling a sense of "shame" in audiences. These homeless "visibility" actions in the 1980s were meant to "garner public sympathy and support," and such actions "carried an implicit claim on the morality of the viewers," implying that the homeless situation was "shameful" in comparison with the relative comfort of other Americans' lives (Rosenthal 207). CCNV made this point quite clearly and "demand[ed] that the public face up to the shame of homelessness" during their protest actions from 1978 into the 1980s (Baumohl xiv).

CCNV's history tied it to a version of Christian beliefs. The group was founded in the early 1970s by Father Guinan (a Catholic priest) and his students "as an expression of both faith and moral outrage." They opened their first soup kitchen in 1972 and in 1976 worked to secure a shelter for the homeless (*CCNV* website). Between 1978 and 1981, CCNV became more politically activist and their tactics more disruptive, but these remained rooted in their

collective Christian faith and consistently reflected Christian symbolism. After St. Matthew's

Cathedral officials in D.C. refused to open their sanctuary to the homeless during a winter

snowstorm (during which two homeless people died), CCNV protestors poured blood on the

cathedral's altar (Hombs and Snyder 100). CCNV illegally handed out copies of Christ's

Beatitudes at the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference in an attempt to encourage the Church to

be "more responsive to the needs of the poor." The CCNV protestors were arrested (Hombs and

Snyder, 100). On the Christian Feast of the Holy Innocents, CCNV planted a field of crosses

in Lafayette Park across from Reagan's White House (Hombs and Snyder 100). CCNV

members were narrativizing themselves in the role of "virtuous Christians."

Mitch Snyder took this role even further. His willingness to live on the streets during

the winter of 1981 was "a move from empathy for the homeless to directly taking on their pain"

(Rader 137). The Christ imagery in this statement is fairly clear. After his 1984 fast for 53 days,

Snyder told the media, "I wondered if I was going to die before seeing it work out" ("Fast"

A8). The media focused on "the profound personal sacrifice endured" during these long-term

"personal" protests of Snyder's (Imig 77). The Christian virtue of "sacrifice" for a charitable

cause was embraced by the media, and at least on one occasion, the "performance of virtue"

was immediately rewarded (i.e. the Reagan administration relented and funded the CCNV

shelter to end Snyder's fast).

Nonetheless, some homeless activists charged "advocates with helping to maintain the

social relations that create homelessness in the first place" (Rosenthal 203), by presenting them

through paternalistic and/or medicalizing frames. The Christian charity frame contributes to the

image of the homeless as "unfortunates" who need to be pitied. This common advocacy

strategy throughout the 1980s seemed essential to the advocates themselves: "the public

presentation of a group to be pitied and who pose no social threat," as opposed to the public

framing of the homeless as "a group marked by anger or political unrest" (Wagner and Cohen

544). For the housed advocates' narrative framing to work, the homeless could not be viewed

as "competent citizens."

Over the course of the late 1970s through the 1990s, anti-homelessness movements

tended to (slowly) shift their rhetorical stance, "from demanding a right to shelter for

unfortunates to a right to housing for citizens" (Rosenthal 209). This shift seems to be mirrored

in the language around homeless identity employed by the media. In 1979, the media labeled

homeless people as "vagrants," "panhandlers," "indigents" and "derelicts" (Rader 121). It was

not until 1984 that "reporters referred to people without homes as 'the homeless,'" a more

"respectful term" (Rader 223).[21]

The growing "respect" for the homeless was helped by some homeless activists

choosing to speak out for themselves and being heard by the public. In *Damaged Identities,*

Narrative Repair, Hilde Lindemann Nelson discusses what she calls "counterstories." These act

to combat the dominant culture's "master narratives" that deny certain marginalized groups an

identity as "competent" moral agents. The counterstory aims "to re-identify" these damaged

people "as competent members of the moral community" (xii-xiii). These stories of "self-

definition," expressed by those with "damaged" identities, aim to "morally re-reorient" the

master narrative, thus "allowing the counterstory teller to dissent from the interpretation and

conclusion [the master narrative] invites" (8). For the homeless to narrativize themselves as

"virtuous" such counterstories became necessary.

A 1986 *People* magazine feature on nine homeless people and their stories included NUH's founder Chris Sprowal. Sprowal's interview provided one example of a well-publicized "counterstory" about/from the homeless. Sprowal was a college graduate with a happy family and a secure job. In 1981, however, Sprowal lost his job, went broke and his marriage ended. He was soon living on the streets. In 1983, "he organized Philadelphia's street people to protest their 'biased and demeaning treatment' in city shelters." In the interview Sprowal insists that the homeless must seek to exercise their rights: "People shouldn't be happy being homeless . . . They should be mad as hell. We're asking them to take their destinies into their own hands" ("Street Angels"). In February 1987, Sprowal and NUH helped sponsor the "Homeless Speak Out" series in seven cities across the U.S.   Members of the homeless community appeared before "tribunals" in these cities and told their stories. In Boston, about 50 homeless people spoke out, describing "their frustration and anger at being homeless" and "the image of second-class citizenship they believe they have" (Bicklehaupt 37). These first person accounts helped define the homeless, both for themselves and for the public, as a group of individuals with lives and concerns, who were trying (as Sprowal had urged) to "take their destinies into their own hands."

If performances of virtue tend to rely on the virtues of authenticity, courage, and civic character (see Chapter 4), it is the virtue of "civic character" that seems most challenging for the homeless to "perform." Political science professor Leonard Feldman asserts, "The one thing that the homeless are not recognized as, is citizens" (21). In "Homelessness as the Unforgiving Minute of the Present," Melanie Loehwing notes that cultural norms in America emphasize a responsible attitude towards the future, and this concern with the future is deemed necessary for

the democratic citizen. The homeless, however, are repeatedly framed "as incapable and unsuited for the future-oriented collective life of a democratic citizenry" (382). State and federal policies in the U.S. arrange to give billions of dollars, indirectly, to America's poor, through housing subsidies, food stamp programs and the like, but "the common denominator in all of these examples is that we don't trust the poor with our money . . . . [T]hey would spend it on frivolous things . . . [and so] we create a vast cadre of middle-class bureaucrats" to protect the poor from themselves (J. Wright 137). The homeless poor are not "responsible" and so cannot be considered as having "civic character." Both the American work ethic frame (viewing the homeless with contempt) and the Christian narrative frame (viewing the homeless with pity) share in a similar "underlying rhetorical articulation between democratic citizenship and the triumph over present-centeredness" (Loehwing 399). Both of these cultural narratives, in effect, condemn the homeless to "non-citizen status." A new frame/narrative was thus required for homeless activists who viewed themselves, and wanted to be viewed, as political agents.

In 1987, members of the Philadelphia chapter of NUH presented themselves before their local legislators and told them: "The days of sitting in shelters and depending on someone else are over" (Collins B11). During the summer of 1990, NUH along with its affiliate the "Up and Out of Poverty Campaign" organized a "Survival Summit" in Philadelphia, at which homeless participants discussed how best to politically organize themselves and what actions (legal and otherwise) to take. Their stated goals were "to get heard" and "to get out of poverty" (*Take Over*). Such tactics showed the homeless asserting their "civic character" on their own behalf.

On a 1994 flyer distributed on the streets of American cities, NUH made the following

statement: "We [the homeless in America] are under attack and we are forced to fight back.

Throughout the country poor and homeless people are attempting to organize, collectivize, and

give voice to the struggle for their lives" ("Voices"). NUH's rhetoric functions as a form of

constitutive rhetoric, calling the "politicized homeless" into being, as it were. NUH's

constitutive rhetoric also offers a new narrative for/about the homeless, one in which the

interpellated subject "is constrained to follow through, to act so as to maintain the narrative's

consistency" (Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric" 141). The poor and the homeless *will* organize

and fight back. Such rhetoric is not just for the sub-group in question (homeless NUH members

and those homeless not yet "politicized"). The statements are also for mainstream audience

consumption, encouraging them to view the homeless as an organized, politicized collective, as

"citizens," through the lens of this new narrative.

As a corollary to the "homeless fighting back" narrative (and similar to the case of ACT

UP) is the invocation of the state as "villain." The fault lies not in the homeless character at all;

it is the "the politicians," according to NUH, who "are attempting to deny us [the homeless] the

right to determine our own destiny" ("Voices"). The NUH narrative also reframes the housed

advocates who, supposedly, work on behalf of the homeless. Both the state and the advocate

groups prevent the homeless from becoming the mature citizens they wish to be: "Everywhere

they are attempting to speak for us, make decisions for us, and 'lead' for us" ("Voices").

In some ways, the NUH and affiliate homeless activist group efforts at political

organization helped to transform the identity of the homeless in America. Their very

"politicization proved their competence" as citizens (Rosenthal 208). By the 1990s, it became

clear (to many) that the homeless were capable of civic character. Furthermore, a majority of the politically vocal homeless actually claimed their desire (demand) to participate in the American work ethic narrative, to become "productive" members of society. As Royal Chambers, a Philadelphia shelter resident, told his legislators at an open forum: "Just give me the opportunity to prove myself without the stigma [of being homeless] hanging over my head" (Collins B11).

An extension of the homeless' assertion of their collective identity as citizens was the "rights" that come along with citizenship. Barry Zigas, coordinator for the 1989 housing march and rally in D.C. told the crowd, "Housing is a right and not a privilege" (Parker 11). The opportunity to work in gainful employment was another "right" many of the homeless claimed. This, however, leads to a new issue for the protest case studies I have been examining: what happens to a collective identity that nobody wants to perpetuate?[22] If "housing is the solution" according to the homeless themselves (Collins B11), if homeless men and women become housed, "productive" citizens, then they will no longer be "homeless." The identity is a transient one for individuals, though the collective identity of "homeless" will likely continue far into the future (others will become homeless, "taking the places" of those who move "up and out of poverty").

The case of the homeless protests ultimately raises several questions. Is it possible for individuals to "exit" a stigmatized identity, and if so, should this be a goal for those who are part of a social movement based around that identity? Instead, should the goal be to erase the stigma from the identity? Or might the goal even become to erase the identity entirely? Perhaps this gets back to the problem of "essentialism" from Chapter 2. If "homeless" is a "status" and

not an "essential" identity, then erasing the existence of such a status might not be problematic (at least in theory; in practice, such an erasure might simply be undoable).

The homeless protests from the 1980s and 1990s do seem to show a co-optation of the mainstream American work ethic narrative by the homeless, but perhaps this is rather a co-optation of the homeless by the narrative. As was the case with the queer community's tensions over accepting mainstream moralistic attitudes, might there be a final demand that marginalized groups move to an acceptance of mainstream culture's values and lifestyles? If so, wouldn't the groups cease to be "marginalized," and possibly even cease to be "groups" at all?

V.D. — Conclusions

Based on the case studies from this chapter, the theoretical framework of "performances of authenticity and virtue" as I presented it in this thesis may be applied in a variety of marginalized protest group situations. The theoretical framework offers insights into how these protest groups have each managed to challenge the state. Though each case presents its own complexities, and numerous differences exist, there are common denominators. For example, though each group's protest tactics vary greatly, there is always some connection between these tactics and the collective identity or *ethos* of the group.

The authenticity of the body is something that has emerged as an element in several of the protests. This had been implied already, perhaps, in the public rituals of mourning "bodily performed" by Las Madres, but the rhetoric of the body becomes a more prominent issue for the queer and homeless protestors. Radical street performance, as a live event using "actors," of course involves embodiment and bodily presence. All street protest involves those aspects of

immediacy and "danger" attributed to live theatre by Artaud. The complement to this fear of danger, and presenting another form of vulnerability, is the act of becoming "open" to another being, and recognizing that other being's humanity. Iris Marion Young writes (after Levinas) about how the "recognition" of another produces a "claim" upon me: "The sensual, material proximity of the other person in his or her bodily need and possibility for suffering makes an unavoidable claim on me, to which I am hostage" (*Inclusion* 58). I will explore this idea more fully in the following (final) chapter of this thesis.

The issue of multiple identities has also come into play several times in a variety of the cases. The marginalized or oppressed group may still invoke one or more "dominant" identities according to the society's cultural narratives. The invocation of the "citizen identity" appears particularly useful in a democracy (or more precisely, a "democratic republic") like the U.S. Such invocations of more mainstream identities may indicate that some marginalized groups in their rhetorical encounters with the state, rather than reifying their group identities along some "essentialist" lines, move towards embodying mainstream values and lifestyles, in effect "de-marginalizing" themselves. I will explore this idea more fully, as well, in Chapter 6.

Chapter Six
IDENTITY AND CHANGE, RHETORIC AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY

VI. A. — Summary and beyond

I began this thesis by asking what means of persuasion might be available to marginalized identity groups who cannot, or will not, be "heard" by the state and the mainstream public through any official or institutional means. In the bulk of the work, I have attempted to construct a theoretical model I am calling "performances of authenticity and virtue" to explain how these marginalized groups may (and do) leverage their very identities to make claims against the state and help create social and political change.

Several foundational questions, representing the intersection among the disciplines of rhetoric, theatre and sociology, led me to and through my investigation. I asked: Can marginalized identity groups, *as* identity groups, make claims against the state and how may they effectively make such claims? Can, and if so *how* can, one's very identity as "marginalized other" be leveraged rhetorically for such claim-making? Does the choice of street protest represent a best option for marginalized identity groups when confronting the state, and if so, why? Three hundred plus pages later I arrive at this point. Yes, marginalized identity groups can and do confront the state *as* marginalized others, and at least one way for such groups to do this is through performances of authenticity and virtue. These performances find the protest groups harnessing the power of radical street performance. Because of the theatricality of the protest, a focus on "character" rather than "identity" seems more appropriate.

Since this is the conclusion to a dissertation, and as such it seems to demand a final

"summary," let me offer one here–but then move beyond.

Performances of authenticity and virtue depend upon a series of "recognitions" by the audience and a framing on the part of the protestors that they are indeed fulfilling the demands of their "role" in society. In Chapter 2, I focused on recognition as identification by an audience, a categorization. Since recognition is actually "re-cognition," knowing something "again," it became clear that a familiar category of identity or an available trope of identity somehow needs to be involved.   A protesting group's collective identity should be representable by a recognizable character-type.   It is the "how" of public performance that is key here – the "doing" needs to takes precedent over the "being." I have relied on Stanislavski's concept of tactics in pursuit of an objective and Goffman's dramaturgical frameworks of daily life performances to explain this process. It is "performances of authenticity," rather than "authentic performances," that are imperative for marginalized group protests to succeed. The protestors' tactics must (at least in part and at least in the early stages of protest) consist of embodied tropes, recognized images of how marked group members *should* or *do* act.

In Chapter 3, I focused on recognition as "being noticed," examining the need for disruptive actions by protestors. Such disruption includes the theatricality that is street protest. These disruptive aspects of recognition should reinforce the aspects of identity-based recognition treated in Chapter 2, and Burke's concept of impious rhetoric proves useful here. Acting out in disruptive ways is impious, from one perspective, but since these protestors come from society's margins, their protest actions are "pious" at the same time, since groups protesting *from* their collective identities are conforming to their very "otherness," to the

sources of their being (as distinct from the sources of the dominant group's being). Regardless of the theatrical style and specifics of performance adopted by a protest group on the streets, I argue that all radical street performance can be re-framed in Stanislavskian terms. The very choice of street theatre tactics reveals the true self, the "authentic" character of the protest group. There is a connection between *ethos* and *logos*. When radical street performance tactics are chosen wisely, the collective identity of the group legitimates the tactics used, while at the same time, the tactics themselves "authenticate" the group's identity.

In Chapter 4, I examined recognition of character in terms of *moral* character, with a particular focus on the need for protest groups to be seen as enacting "virtue." The marginalized group members are playing a role in the larger context of a cultural narrative and it is the cultural narrative that gives us our conception of what is the "good" character. The protestors need to frame their actions as virtuous according to the narrative, but first they must recognize themselves as virtuous players in the larger script. Protest groups must be seen to be making choices, not just impelled by forces beyond their control, and in this way they may claim to be "authentic" humans (à la Heidegger) taking responsibility for their own being. Ultimately their protests may be framed as the acts of courageous citizens displaying civic character.

In Chapter 5, my focus on three case studies revealed several new points. The case studies reveal that over time there may be changes in the tone of protest tactics and, so by extension, in the publicly presented group identity itself. Additionally, there exists a tension between certain mainstream cultural values and some specific marginalized "lifestyle" choices, and so there is a pressure for the marginalized person to assimilate to the mainstream norms.

Finally, the case studies reveal a specific emphasis on protest tactics as focused on the human body, something that creates an authentic immediacy beyond "mere" emotion.

The prior chapters have also raised several questions and theoretical tensions that, up until this point, I have chosen to defer answering. Group identity issues from Chapter 2 raised questions regarding essentialism.   I have so far deferred weighing in "definitively" on this point, since the *actual source* of a group's marginalized identity did not seem to be vitally important in terms of the group's rhetorical effectiveness. At several points in this thesis, I have raised the question as to whether a collective identity need be seen as reified and permanent (as the word "essential" seems to require), or if we might rather allow for collective identity to vary from situation to situation and to change over time. If collective identity is subject to change over time, then does the marginalized identity ultimately move towards a "dissolving" in society's mainstream (as cases from Chapter 5 seem to indicate)?

In addition to these unresolved questions around identity issues, this thesis has raised questions around the nature of authenticity and even the nature of rhetoric itself. So far, I have offered authenticity as a performance strategy, a *topos* available for rhetorical audiences. But is there a "real" authenticity?   If so, how could it be used as a strategy, as the "art" of rhetoric seems to demand? Is it possible (or necessary, even) to expand the possibilities of what "rhetoric" can be, specifically allowing rhetoric to exist happily alongside a view of communication as intersubjectivity?

I do not hope to fully resolve these areas of inquiry here in these final pages, but I do wish to "probe" just a bit more into the above questions, perhaps offering future scholars a first few steps along a path that they might wish to pursue further.

VI.B. — Identity, again

Is it possible to forge new "identity territory"? That is to say, can marginalized groups expand "what" they are allowed to be beyond the current constraints of their categories? If at least the initial stage of protest and disruption requires the group to be "recognizable," can a protest group move beyond this? Do "performances of authenticity" perpetuate a closed cycle, reinforcing an already marginalized identity? Does "consistency of character" equate to "unchanging character?" Let me try to address this slew of questions briefly.

In his *Ethics of Identity*, Appiah writes that "the personal dimensions of identity work differently from the collective ones" (108). There needs to be a distinction made between the way that collective identity may be and should be mobilized and the way that personal/individual identity may be and should be mobilized, and the mutual effects between the two need to be recognized as well. The danger of collective identity mobilization and recognition on individual identity is something Appiah calls "the Medusa Syndrome" since "acts of recognition, and the civil apparatus of such recognition, can sometimes ossify the identities that are their object" (110). There is a tension between the demands for consistency across collective identity by those who would politicize such identities (as I have in this thesis) and the freedom of individual expression demanded by many who actually inhabit the identity. I would argue that there is room for both of these positions and that the tension is not an unresolvable one.

Nancy Fraser, in her "Rethinking Recognition," may be one of the most articulate opponents of a "politics of recognition." She asserts (correctly, I think) that an emphasis on collective identity for political claim-making may have the effect of displacing different efforts

at redistribution in society and correcting problems of economic injustice (108). She also

asserts an objection that emphasis on collective identity creates "the problem of reification"

(108). This second assertion of Fraser's is one that I wish to examine. Fraser writes that the

identity politics model of recognition stresses the need to "display an authentic, self-affirming

and self-generated collective identity," which then "puts moral pressure on individual members

to conform to a given group culture. Cultural dissidence and experimentation are accordingly

discouraged" (112). This argument is valid to the extent that there is the tension, noted above,

between the collective identity and the individual expression of identity. However, "cultural

dissidence" on the collective identity level is not necessarily discouraged by a politics of

recognition; in fact, such dissidence may be more powerfully enacted on the group level.

Fraser goes on to claim that proponents of "identity politics" tend to "strip

misrecognition of its social-structural underpinnings and equate it with distorted identity"

(110-11). But this is not true, at least across the board. There is no way to "strip" the *habitus*

("underpinnings") away except by calling attention to it, and there is no reason why a politics

of collective identity (or a "politics of character" as I have argued for in this thesis) cannot do

just that. Fraser persists that the "status model" she is in favor of does not depend on

"free-floating cultural representations or discourses" for the perpetration of its political agenda,

but instead relies on "institutionalized patterns" (114). But are "cultural representations" and

"discourses" not an integral *part of* and *reflection of* "institutionalized patterns"? I am not sure

how Fraser can detach one from the other. It seems that Fraser is playing a shell game here by

suggesting that "misrecognition as status subordination" is a more appropriate approach than

misrecognition as identity-based, arguing that a "status insubordination" focus does not merely

concern itself with the group being "thought ill of, looked down upon or devalued in others'

attitudes, beliefs or representations" (as, she implies, identity-based misrecognition does).

Instead, the focus on status concerns itself with "institutionalized patterns of cultural value that

constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect or esteem" (113-14). A "politics of

recognition" can also acknowledge that groups who are marginalized are subject to

constructions of "unworthiness" due to institutionalized cultural values, as I believe I have done

in the majority of this thesis. Which collective identity groups would *not* be included in

Fraser's concept of the "status subordinated"? WASP men in the U.S. perhaps? The Québécois

in Quebec, maybe (since it does seem that Fraser is arguing, in many ways, against Charles

Taylor in particular)?

My greatest difference with Fraser in her objections to the "politics of recognition"

model is her statement that there is a distinction between "valorizing group identity" (the

identity-politics approach) and seeking to "establish the subordinated party as a full partner in

social life, able to interact with others as a peer" (Fraser's status subordination model) (114). I

do not see how it is possible for a subordinated group to emerge as "full partner" and "peer"

without some process akin to valorizing the marginalized identity, unless Fraser is suggesting

that the marginalized groups "erase" their group identity entirely (or at least

publicly/politically), thus opting for some form of assimilation to the "unmarked."

Because, as we have seen, the "valorizing" of marginalized identity (via performances

of authenticity and virtue) is imperative for certain protest groups, I am more interested in

finding ways to allow for such group valorization without a "reification" that would "lock in"

or coerce the individual expression of these group identities. Judith Butler expresses a similar

concern in her essay "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." Butler writes:

> That any consolidation of identity requires some set of differentiations and
> exclusions seems clear. But which ones ought to be valorized? . . . There is a
> political necessity to use some sign now, and we do, but how to use it in such a
> way that its futural significations are not foreclosed? How to use the sign and
> avow its temporal contingency at once? (19)

Butler is aware of the rhetorical usefulness of signs that represent marginalized group identity, but allows that such signs can change and grow over time. Thus she envisions a procedure or model that permits the "avowal" of the collective identity's "strategic provisionality (rather than its strategic essentialism)," so that the collective identity "can become a site of contest and revision" at some point in the future (19). What procedure or model will fit Butler's vision? Certainly her own theory of "performativity" comes to mind.

A focus on "role" as opposed to "identity" helps to separate "strategic provisionality" from "strategic essentialism," and thus lessens the likelihood of identity ossification and Appiah's Medusa Syndrome. The role may yet be compulsory as Fraser complains, at least for successful "performances of authenticity"; at the very least, the role (rooted as it is in the *habitus*) is constraining. But, as Butler's theory of performativity notes, performances in any given role are also iterative, and it is this iterative quality that allows the role to develop and change. Moreover, the act of public protest itself may accelerate (rather than retard) this process of change and development.

In her essay "The Aristotelian Topos: Hunting for Novelty," Carolyn Miller writes that the rhetorical *topos* functions "as a conceptual place to which an arguer may mentally go to

find arguments" (132). Marginalized identity groups protesting on the streets frequently go to the conceptual place or *topos* of their own collective identity in order to create elements of their protest actions, whether consciously or not. Miller, though, notes that such *topoi* present us with a paradox in that they "serve both managerial and generative functions," that consideration of the "commonplace" (*topos*) can actually lead to something new, a transformation of the familiar (132). She writes: "To be rhetorically useful . . . novelty must be situated. Rather than offering the radically new, it must occupy the border between the known and the unknown. It will be just that which cannot be defined or specified beforehand but which can be recognized and understood afterward" (141). The procedure of transforming the familiar occurs in a region that Miller calls one of "productive uncertainty" (141). The disruptive incongruities required by radical street performance may naturally lead to growth and change for the marginalized group's "idem" identity, as the groups challenge the pious sense "what goes with what" and proceed through a region of "productive uncertainty."[23]

Performance of one's identity, of one's role, of one's *self*, is iterative. Even the concept of *habitus* allows for such iteration and so the possibility of change over time due to these iterations. Gould emphasizes the "malleability" of *habitus*. She writes that although the *habitus* tends to be "more or less stable," since it is "constituted through human practice" there must, of course, be something dynamic in it, "always subject to alteration" (*Moving* 36). Bourdieu himself writes that the *habitus* "can be the source of misadaptation as well as adaptation, revolt as well as resignation" (*Logic* 62).[24] Public protest is an opportunity for both such revolt and resignation when it comes to collective identity issues.

The transformation of collective identity can only occur due to insubordination. When

the labeling of "queer!" comes at me, the subordinate response would be to hide "in the closet," to attempt "to pass" as straight, to deny the identity-attached stigma and achieve "respectability" at any cost. To act differently is to say that mainstream society's definition of "respectability" is not one that I share. Transformations of respectability take time and require courage on the part of the insubordinate challengers. Protestors tend to be insubordinate challengers. They "act out" on the streets and these public acts offer plenty of opportunity for transgressing one's identity-label imperative, with the rest of society as audience. Some groups engaged in public protest create "meta-incongruities" through the mere act of public protest: gay men publicly protest because they are "out" and "proud"; Argentine women protest and prove they can be public rhetors; homeless Americans protest and demonstrate that they are politicized democratic citizens. The public streets become a crucible for the transmutation of the (perceived) collective identity, the protestor's actions *as* protestors serving to challenge previously held assumptions by society about what people of this collective identity can be.

For political protest to succeed, I have argued that marginalized groups need to obey the identity imperatives of their society, in order to be "recognized" and deemed "authentic." But there is also the opportunity for insubordination in radical street performance. Las Madres exemplify a group that challenged certain elements of their identity imperative, while remaining quite obedient to other elements of that imperative. The simple move from passive sufferers to vocal sufferers was acknowledged by elite observers in Argentina. The Church, which had at first remained quiet about the women's public "mourning," became critical of Las Madres when they were perceived as becoming more strident and assertive, pushing past the traditional bounds of the suffering mother role. One well-placed Argentine cleric commented,

"I can't imagine the Virgin Mary yelling, protesting and planting the seeds of hate when her son, our Lord, was torn from her hand" (D. Taylor 196). But Las Madres showed the Argentine public that women and mothers *could* be angry in public, even if this was "inappropriate" behavior for this group.

The Mothers also went through an important metamorphosis in terms of their political identities during the course of the Dirty War. Through 1979, Las Madres continued to petition the various Argentine authorities believing that "because their children were innocent they would be returned . . . . The Mothers were not rebels but good citizens and churchgoers" (Bouvard 78-79). The Mothers continued to buy into the concept of "subversives" that the junta was selling to the nation, but assumed that these subversives did not include their own children. This eventually changed. Over time, the Mothers "concluded that the young people must indeed have been involved in something–that regardless of their varying affiliations, their children were political reformers who wished to create far-reaching social changes" (Bouvard 176). By the end of the Dirty War, the Mothers themselves had become the champions of political reform in Argentina (fighting for democracy, human rights and government transparency). Prior to the disappearances of their children, the women would have been content to remain in their homes, but a change occurred.   "It's as if he had given birth to me and not me to him," one of the Mothers told an interviewer (*Las Madres*). The act of public protest helped to transform the women's collective self-concept: Argentine housewives *could* be public rhetors and champions of political causes. This transformation played out on the streets of Argentina, under the gaze of the Argentine public, and helped *to expand* (rather than merely reify, or, perhaps worse, undermine) the public conception of this particular

marginalized identity. I have traced similar "expansions" of collective identity for other case studies in Chapter 5.

Hebe de Bonafini, the main spokeswoman for Las Madres, said, "My life had been the life of a housewife–washing, ironing, cooking and bringing up my children, just like you're always taught to do, believing that everything else was nothing to do with me. Then I realized that that wasn't everything, that I had another world, too" (Fisher 91). As a matter of fact, all marginalized identity group members have the potential to partake in multiple "worlds" and identities; we all do. Frequently, the marginalized/oppressed group members may still invoke one or more "dominant" identities (for instance, gay but male; woman but married and middle-class; homeless but citizen). Because these multiple identities exist and may be claimed, several questions arise. Is the marginalized identity one that ought to be embraced and "valorized"? Or instead should such marginality be denied and/or downplayed? Should we consider "marginality" something to overcome and be rid of? Does a collective move on the part of the marginalized towards claiming, accepting and embodying mainstream values and lifestyles, in effect, result in them "de-marginalizing" themselves? And is this a positive trend or a dangerous one?

Different theorists have different answers for the questions above, and I would like to "survey" those answers here. Goffman notes that marginalized group members should avoid "militancy," since, he explains, if "the ultimate political objective is to remove stigma from the differentness, the individual may find that his very efforts can politicize his own life, rendering it even more different from the normal life initially denied him" (*Stigma* 114). Edward Said writes that "marginality and homelessness are not, in my opinion, to be gloried in; they are to

be brought to an end, so that more, not fewer, people can enjoy the benefits of what has for centuries been denied" ("Politics" 31). Of course, we may await such "an end," the radical liquidation of biases against identity categories of ethnicity, class, gender, sexual identity, etc. In the meantime, though, might there be virtue in bravely embracing and judiciously displaying the marks of one's marginalization, or is the better path one of intentional assimilation and adapting oneself to the mainstream?

Taking a contradictory stance to both Goffman and Said, bell hooks writes about her own marginality as a positive place of power. She writes that rather than giving up her marginal status (as woman, as black) in order to "move into the center," she clings to her marginality "because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds" *(Race* 207). Elsewhere, hooks labels marginalized identity as a "site of resistance" and notes that "this marginality" serves as "a central location for the production of counter-hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives" ("Marginality" 341). So should at least the *option* to remain marginalized (due to one's identity) remain a viable one for some?

Jocelyn Maclure, in his writings on Québécois identity, suggests an interesting way that a group identity may remain "true" to its roots and previous definitions while, at the same time, allowing itself to grow due to its encounters with other group identities. He writes that a "recasting of our [Québécois] identity does not necessarily imply a cutting of ties with memory and the past, but it may imply a different relationship to history. Above all, it demands the emergence of new narratives, new ways of talking about and representing ourselves . . ."

(*Quebec* 65). Maclure seems to be suggesting that those currently living with the identity label of Québécois be empowered to shape their own identity as something emerging from past representations, thus necessarily shaped by such representations, but not limited to such representations. Collective identities need to be dynamic and their group narratives need to be(come) porous. Society is an "agora" (to use Maclure's metaphor), a place of exchange and a place of possibility. According to Maclure, "a plurality of authenticities meet and interpenetrate on the public square" (134), and such interpenetration is not something to be defended against. The "by-product" would be "a new political identity built out of respect for alternative or even contradictory narratives of identity, which can emerge from this dialogue held under human--all too human--conditions" (*Quebec* 134-5). Maclure is very clear, though, that the identity rooted in being "other" (Québécois inside Canada, in this case) cannot be lost altogether, pressured by the dominant culture to assimilate to the mainstream. This is a delicate balancing act.

As I conclude this revisiting of collective identity, I would like to end with two caveats and a procedural recommendation for future scholars who probe into these issues around marginalized group identity. The first caveat deals with hegemonic discourses or frames. Gamson writes that when a hegemonic frame is encountered, "would-be challengers face the problem of overcoming a definition of the situation that they themselves may take as part of the natural order" ("Social Psychology" 68). Nelson makes this same point in her discussion of counterstories and master narratives: "Counterstories are up against a formidable foe. The master narratives they set out to resist are capable of hiding what ought to be opposed" (164). There are elements of the hegemonic that enter into discussions of marginal identities and

issues affecting these marginalized groups. The issue of private property itself is never considered in discussions about homelessness; it is a taken-for-granted in America. Debate over the right for gays to marry assumes that marriage itself is a "good" that all (or only some) should have the right to choose. I suggest that protest situations involving marginalized groups are potentially ripe opportunities to examine the typically unexamined hegemonic assumptions in the discourse.

The second caveat deals with romanticizing the marginalized. I find that my own "character" – that of "hyper-educated politically liberal middle-class gay male" – has fostered a certain view of various marginalized group members as "admirable" and even "heroic." Clearly my theory of "performances of virtue" has been colored by such a view. But I am mindful of Diana Fuss's warning:

> Any misplaced nostalgia for or romanticization of the outside as a privileged site of radicality immediately gives us away, for in order to idealize the outside we must already be, to some degree, comfortably entrenched on the inside. We only have the leisure to idealize the subversive potential of the power of the marginal when our place of enunciation is quite central. (*Inside/Out* 5)

So when Lee Edelman celebrates the 1969 Stonewall Riot drag queen who repeatedly struck her arresting cop with her purse as a "potent image of the unexpected ways in which 'activism' can find embodiment when the dominant notions of subjectivity are challenged rather than appropriated" (113), I need to be mindful that Edelman is offering a fascinating insight into the potential power of embodying one's marginalized identity *and*, at the same time, that Edelman is a professor at Tufts University. It is relatively easy for someone like me, a privileged

academic, to urge on the marginalized character in my constructed drama about the march towards political progress, or whatever one might call it; clearly it is more difficult for the truly marginalized to celebrate their own status as oppressed.

Finally, I offer a procedural recommendation for future scholarship in the field of marginalized group identity, one that comes from Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" She writes, "What I find useful is the sustained and developing work on the mechanics of the constitution of the Other; we can use it to much greater analytic and interventionist advantage than invocation of the authenticity of the Other" (90). After all, it is the dominant group in any society who gives shape to its "Other." Future research should shine the spotlight on the very mechanics of this shaping process. I'm not certain I have done so sufficiently in this thesis as I repeatedly invoke the "authenticity of the Other."

VI.C. — What can a "rhetoric" be?

In their *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory,* Lucaites, Condit, and Caudill write that given such a wide range of possibilities in the field of rhetoric, rather than ask "what is rhetoric" it would be "more productive to ask the more inclusive and proactive question "What can a rhetoric be?" (19). I ask the same question here, as I wrestle with some of the tensions arising around what I have presented rhetoric "to be" in this thesis, and what it might "possibly be" to accommodate certain points also presented in this thesis that are not, nominally, "rhetoric-friendly." For instance, is "real" authenticity a possibility? Since the "real-ness" of authenticity has been immaterial to my central thesis questions, I have worked with the concept of authenticity as a construction, a useful rhetorical *topos*, and as something to be "performed"

(whether genuine or fabricated, it makes no real difference as long as the audience does not see through the act). But here in my concluding chapter, I would like to grapple with the possible "real-ness" of authenticity and its potential value for rhetorical theory.

Iris Marion Young represents the view that "the self is a product of social processes, not their origin," and so there can be nothing "autonomous" or "self-made" about the self, certainly nothing "outside of and prior to language" (*Justice* 45). Though Young comes from the field of political science, such a view might very well be shared by most sociologists and rhetoricians. Such a viewpoint forecloses any possibility of "the authentic self." Fine. But what about examining "authenticity" as something that happens *between* people? Can we focus on the "authentic encounter?" Might performance itself, so frequently assumed to be "mere performing" and so in-"authentic," be a vehicle for authenticity?

While writing this thesis, I received the following fortune in a fortune cookie: "character is who you are when no one is watching." Whether this statement is true or not I do not currently wish to argue, but I will argue most strongly that the inverse of the statement is *not* true. Just because someone is "watching" you does not mean that what you show/perform/*are* is not your true character. Goffman's dramaturgical model has its limit, as Giddens points out when he writes, "It is precisely because there is generally a deep, although generalized, affective involvement in the routines of daily life that actors (agents) do not ordinarily feel themselves to be actors (players)" (125).   I would go further and say the actors (agents) interacting with others in life *are not* merely actors (players), if that implies a necessary inauthenticity. As Giddens notes a bit further on, the sense of the "facade" implied by the dramaturgical model, the facade that is "inherently inauthentic," is inadequate to

describe human interaction (125).

Peggy Phelan in her *Unmarked* writes that "performance implicates the real through the presence of living bodies" (148). Does "humanness" imply "authenticity" to some degree? Aren't there "flecks" of authenticity in any live "performance," regardless of the performance's instrumentality or lack thereof, regardless of the performance's polish or lack thereof? Artaud is correct when he frames the live encounter between two living beings as one of danger, presence and possibility (*Theater* 42, 79), and what else is Artaud doing but calling our attention to the potential for "authenticity" in all live performance?

Public rhetoric relies, at least in part, on elements of performance. Does live performance itself (as a medium) offer something "authentic"? Gadamer writes that the process of representation "not only implies that what is represented is there . . . but also that it has come into the There more authentically. Imitation and representation are not merely a repetition, a copy, but knowledge of the essence. Because they are not merely repetition, but a 'bringing forth,' they imply a spectator as well" (14). Performance of "the self" brings "the self" to "the There" in a way that is "authentic," perhaps even *more authentic* for its being a performance. The sharing of essential "knowledge" with a spectator or audience implies that there is, potentially, rhetorical work being done–and this work is, according to Gadamer, "necessarily revelatory" (114). The spectator is being *persuaded* of something as this new revelation occurs.

The neat division between communication meant solely for expressive purposes and communication with a rhetorical "agenda" is arbitrary and, ultimately, does a disservice to rhetoric. So can rhetoric ever allow for "real" authenticity as it is allowed for in various phenomenological traditions? And if so, what would be the value to rhetoric for proceeding in

such a way?

To begin, if rhetoric is necessarily strategic communication and authenticity need be defined as non-instrumental, then are the two simply incompatible? Authenticity is "effortless" and rhetoric is "artful." But can such totalizing divisions be made, and are they useful for practical purposes? According to theorists who accept authenticity as "real," any intentional employment of a strategic "means" precludes such "real" authenticity. Gadamer writes that the world of "play" (which allows for performance to be authentic) needs to be sealed off from "the world of aims" (107). Buber warns us that "every means is an obstacle" to the authentic I-Thou meeting (12).   The phenomenologists (I will use that term for convenience) are likely overstating their case against instrumentality and, by extension, rhetoric.

Certainly, there are existing tensions between the rhetorical and phenomenological traditions. From a phenomenological perspective, rhetoric may be accused of approaching all communication as strategic and thus preventing the possibility of authenticity. Rhetorical theory may accuse phenomenology of fabricating a myth of "authenticity" that has nothing to do with actual communication between people. Is a reconciliation possible? Perhaps the concept of "the meeting" can allow for a peaceful co-existence between phenomenology and rhetoric. Can we not conceive of communication as both artful and intersubjective, as a meeting between two people which "opens" one to the other, producing a mutual "claim" one upon the other?

The concept of "testimony," some sort of personal revelation, seems essential to "authentic" meeting. During his "para-theatrical" period during the 1970s, Grotowski became focused on creating "authentic" encounters between performers and audiences, and found that

those very words became obstacles. Grotowski writes: "What matters is not how to secure the audience's approval . . . The very word audience, for that matter, is theatrical, dead. It excludes meeting . . ." ("Holiday" 222). Grotowski was attempting to discover ways to create communion between people, one that could be harnessed for the theatre, and though he gave up this line of experimentation by 1982, he found certain elements that seemed integral to such communion. The performer (no longer an adequate word) must "reveal" him or herself to the spectator (again, no longer an adequate word) for the performance (now, an "encounter") to be authentic. Schechner writes that Grotowski's para-theatrical work aimed "to dissolve the masks of imposture most people wear as their ordinary social selves and, in a spiritually vulnerable mode, to communicate directly face-to-face," and that it was Buber's "I and Thou" concept of the authentic encounter that helped guide these paratheatrical experiments (*Grotowski Sourcebook* 211). Grotowski equates the process of "revealing oneself," of becoming vulnerable, with "giving testimony" ("Holiday" 223).

Let me contrast this with Spivak's analysis in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" of the case of Hindu widows in India who "chose" to self-immolate. Spivak notes that the "voice" of the widows themselves is conspicuously absent from the historical record. Instead, we have the voices of the white (male) colonizers who frame the case as showing the need for white men to save brown women from brown men, and the voices of the native men who assert "the women actually wanted to die" (93). The women themselves remain rhetorical constructions. There is no "I" extant in the case. And for Spivak, this is a shame. She writes, "One never encounters the testimony of the women's voice-consciousness. Such a testimony would not be ideology-transcendent or 'fully' subjective, of course, but it would have constituted the

ingredients for producing a countersentence" (93). The "counterstory" is missing, and so no aspect of authentic encounter can enter into the case to influence (muddy?) our opinion of it.

Nelson notes that "counterstories" by marginalized persons are typically not offered rhetorically, but expressively. Still, they may *function* rhetorically in that they may be quite persuasive. She writes that the testimony, or counter-story, of the marginalized other provides an "opening" from which one may begin to dismantle the master narrative, revealing the "gap" between what a master narrative declares as true about certain marginalized groups and what those people "actually do or are" (165). This is clearly rhetorical work. Yet Nelson notes that "because the purpose of a counterstory is to repair an identity, the resistance it offers must, at a minimum, aim to dislodge some portion of a master narrative from a person's understanding of who she herself is, even if there is no attempt to push the counterstory into the broader community" (169). The counterstory begins for oneself, perhaps with no intention whatsoever of persuading the "broader community." This attempt to reveal the true self (perhaps to constitute the true self) *to* the self is work that one may declare "authentic," without a rhetorical agenda (at least for any external audience). But if this counterstory happens to be introduced into the broader community it becomes the "testimony" that Spivak notes and Grotowski seeks. When Las Madres mourn for their disappeared children outside the Casa Rosada, or when a Serbian student declares in the street, "Dad, do I have to get killed to make you come to your senses?" (Prosic-Dvornic, "Enough!"), they are drawing the public into an immediate "I-Thou" encounter by giving personal and authentic "testimony." This is both "authentic" and "rhetorical," and arguably more rhetorically effective for its being authentic.

Another concept rooted in phenomenological theory that may yet be useful for rhetoric

is "the claim" that one human may make from/against a fellow human. Such claim-making is variously framed, depending on the theorist: political friendship for Garver, a part of the parrhesiastic game for Foucault, the giving of the "ultimate word" about oneself for Greg Nielsen. I will briefly examine each of these theorists below. All of them, to some degree, whether they are conscious of this or not, rely on Levinas's conception of "the gaze" and "the nakedness of the face," something which allows for, and demands, generosity between human beings (*Totality* 75). The making of "the claim" and the receiving of "the claim" is predicated on the ethical dimension of communication, a dimension that rhetoric certainly allows for.

Gadamer writes that there is an "essential difference" between the audience member who "gives himself entirely" to the performance and the audience member "who merely gapes at something out of curiosity" (122-23). The mere object of curiosity has "no significance" for the spectator, but the "giving of oneself" to the performance produces "the permanence of a claim" (123). The spectator is no longer merely "spectator," as Grotowski asserted, but becomes implicated in the work. The same is true for communication to an audience that may or may not be intended rhetorically–an audience member may find herself implicated in the discourse, and not merely because of the discourse, but because of a "connection" with the speaker; that is, because of an ethical relationship that has come about.

In *Aristotle's Rhetoric: An Art of Character*, Garver writes that "without ethos, argument will be pure calculation, and an art of argument nothing but technique" (184). Garver does not support such a view of argument. For Garver (and according to him, for Aristotle), rhetoric requires an ethical relationship between speaker and audience. Elsewhere Garver associates this with the concept of "friendship." He writes: "The friendlier we are, the more our

emotional and ethical appeals are rational and argumentative rather than irrational appeals to personal experience or authority" (*Argument* 27). Garver believes that "political friendship," a possible form of relationship between rhetor and audience, allows rhetoric the mighty goal of aiming "at truth" while at the same time staying "committed to public argument" because "ethical arguments" are more powerful than those derived from reason alone (*Argument* 27). The very "scope of rationality" expands if there is a relationship of friendship between speaker and hearer (*Argument* 28). When communicating with "a friend", one's "formerly irrational pleas become reasonable proposals" (*Argument* 28). Rhetoric becomes all the richer for friendship. Gadamer echoes these sentiments when he writes, "both the person asking for advice and the person giving it assume that they are bound together in friendship. Only friends can advise each other or, to put it another way, only a piece of advice that is meant in a friendly way has meaning for the person advised" (320). A "friendly" relationship will more likely affect future behaviors and choices made by the audience in a way coinciding with "the advice" of the speaker/friend.

But perhaps this friendship model is not viable for rhetoric as a whole. In his *Norms of Rhetorical Culture,* Farrell writes that rhetoric "creates and evokes emotions (pathos) not so much as a vehicle of proper audience cognition, but rather as an affiliative bond between perfected action and human response" (137). Picking up on this concept of the "affiliative bond," Charland, in his response essay "Norms and Laughter in Rhetorical Culture," writes: "I grant that once rhetoric is given the heady task of managing the affairs of the polis and its citizens are charged with seeing themselves within each other, Farrell's conception of the norms of rhetorical culture follows without great difficulty" (342). However, it goes almost

without saying, citizens in the modern world are not so "charged." Nonetheless, I do not believe this means that rhetoric cannot entertain *the possibility* that certain civic encounters *may* result in citizens seeing themselves within each other. And when this affiliative bond, this political friendship occurs, it enriches the rhetorical exchange. In fact, the creation of such affiliative bonds are an "available means" for persuasion, and are thus very much a part of rhetoric, even if many (most?) rhetors are incapable of creating such bonds between themselves and their audiences.

Foucault suggests another type of claim-making relationship between the speaker and hearer who partake in what he calls the "game" of parrhesia. By speaking truth to power at one's personal risk, one makes a claim on the listener, which may or may not be accepted. "The person to whom this parrhesia is addressed will have to demonstrate his greatness of soul by accepting being told the truth. This kind of pact . . . is at the heart of what could be called the parrhesiastic game" (*Courage* 12-13). Foucault frames such a parrhesiastic "pact" as utterly anti-rhetorical. He writes, "The practice of parrhesia is opposed to the art of rhetoric in every respect." For Foucault, rhetoric attempts "to establish a constraining bond between what is said and the person or persons to whom it is said," whereas parrhesia requires a "strong, manifest, evident foundation between the person speaking and what he says" and "exposes to risk the bond between the person speaking and the person to whom he speaks" (13). So it seems for Foucault, rhetoric creates a relationship between message and audience, but is empty of any relationship between speaker and message or between speaker and audience. Is this accurate? Are rhetors necessarily conveyors of messages that they themselves have no stake or belief in? Do rhetors risk nothing of themselves in terms of their relationship with the audience?

Foucault writes that "parrhesia is not a skill; it is something which is harder to define. It is a stance, a way of being, which is akin to a virtue" (14). Rhetoric is a skill, an art. But does that mean "virtue" has no relevance for rhetoric? I might argue that the performances of authenticity and virtue which I have presented in this thesis are also not exactly "a skill" but "a stance." Still, such performances are very much rhetorical. Foucault, at least here in his *Courage of Truth,* offers a troublingly limited view of what a rhetoric can be. When Foucault notes that parrhesia moves us from the realm of the "polis" to the realm of the "psukhe" or "soul" (64-65), he is implying that parrhesia somehow "transcends" rhetoric. Rather than viewing parrhesia as somehow transcendent of rhetoric, I suggest we view parrhesia as introducing the "psukhe" into the realm of the "polis," thus enriching the nature of political communication (rhetoric).

In his "Answerability with Cosmopolitan Intent," Greg Nielsen writes, "to make an enduring and convincing argument work in an act of citizenship the speaker and listener first have to take each other's discourse seriously and give each other access to an ultimate word about themselves" (272). A civic argument requires some form of personal revelation for it to be "convincing" and "enduring," that is, for it to present the power of "a claim" upon the audience. Nielsen contrasts this with "the blasé": "the blasé's attitude is uncommitted to any political project of citizenship or ethical stand whatsoever, even when the citizen is surrounded–as in almost any street–by political and ethical messages" (276). Gadamer's spectator gaping with curiosity is stuck in the blasé, as opposed to the audience member who becomes immersed and finds herself implicated in the work. For Nielsen, the offering of one's "ultimate word" creates a relationship between speaker and audience that is qualitatively

different than the more typical "blasé" speaker-audience relationships. The revealing of the ultimate word about oneself has the power to instill concern, to create a claim on the other. This "ultimate word" is akin to Levinas's idea of the face revealed.

According to John Wild in his Introduction to Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas is critical of the typical (perhaps "blasé") "egocentric attitude" among individuals that treats other individuals (or groups) "as alien objects to be manipulated for the advantage of the individual or social self" (12). Such manipulation for personal advantage (or even for the greater civic good) is frequently designated as "rhetoric." Levinas offers something different, something that Wild calls "the phenomenology of the other" (12). This phenomenology of the other allows for "an escape from egotism" and is predicated "on an initial act of generosity, a giving of my world to [the other] with all its dubious assumptions and arbitrary features" (14). Again, it is the exposing of the self that produces a claim on the other.[25]

Such exposure and vulnerability are not alien to rhetoric. Iris Marion Young writes about the power of Levinas's concept of "Here I Am" when she highlighted the value of "greeting" for political communication: One party "responds to other person's sensible presence, by taking responsibility for the other's vulnerability" which in turn establishes "the bond of trust necessary" to allow for serious discussion about the "issues that face us together" (*Inclusion* 58). The purpose of deliberative rhetoric is such discussion of issues that face us together, to determine the best course of future action. The "bond of trust" is useful, if not vital, for rhetoric to be effective, and this requires that the rhetor to make him or herself vulnerable.

Levinas himself, however, seems to disagree. He writes that in rhetoric, one "approaches the other not to face him" but ultimately to "solicit his yes" (*Totality* 70). For

Levinas, this is very different from a discourse grounded in the phenomenology of the other. Here "the face has turned to me–and this is its very nudity. It is by itself and not by reference to any system" (*Totality* 75). The claim made by the revealed face of the other in "its very nudity" produces "a relationship between me and the other beyond rhetoric" (*Totality* 75). Nonetheless, if as Aristotle notes, rhetoric is concerned with the "available means of persuasion" in any given situation, might not the choice/ability/obligation to reveal one's face in its very nudity be such an available means that may indeed persuade? Levinas writes that rhetoric is "absent from no discourse" (*Totality* 70). Might the same be said of the phenomenology of the other? Might it, too, be present, at least as "flecks" or "embers" of authenticity, in every discourse? And if so, would not any nominally "rhetorical" discourse be the richer for fanning the flames of such authenticity?

VI. D. — The value of the "inauthentic"

In *Alterity and Transcendence*, Levinas writes of the authentic encounter between people, that from such an encounter, "there emerges, from that fear for the other man, an unlimited responsibility, one that we are never discharged of." Levinas notes that certain traditions term this "love of one's neighbor" (30). In his *Course of Recognition*, Ricoeur calls the final stage of recognition "identity in mutuality," and at this stage we no longer see merely "the other" but the "one another" (250). This corresponds well to Levinas's idea of "one's neighbor."

Ricoeur, though, takes issue with Levinas (and Husserl) specifically at the end of his *Course of Recognition*. Ricoeur's "course" has ultimately moved him into a similar territory as

the phenomenologists and Ricoeur seems to become wary. He issues "a warning" to would-be phenomenologists who extol "the primacy of reciprocity over the alterity of the protagonists in an exchange with each other" (262). Ricoeur insists that there exists a "dialectic" here, that the *dissymmetry* between me and the other cannot be resolved into the "mutuality of our relations" (263). Ricoeur continues: "The one is not the other. We exchange gifts, but not places" (263). By acknowledging the dissymmetry, our "different places," and taking this as a given in all human relations, we protect "mutuality" against what Ricoeur calls "the pitfalls of a fusional union, whether in love, friendship or fraternity on a communal or cosmopolitan scale" (263). He then concludes: "A just distance is maintained at the heart of mutuality, a just distance that integrates respect into intimacy" (263). Ricoeur, though not explicitly so, is making an argument for rhetoric and for the value of the "inauthentic."

Burke writes that "rhetoric is concerned with the state of Babel after the Fall" (*RoM* 23). The story of Babel is the story of division. Human beings speak different "languages" because we all occupy "different places." Communication is subject to misunderstanding. Intersubjective connection ("mutuality") may indeed be something that, temporarily, transcends division between people, but such transcendent moments need not be and cannot be something to rely on for the practical work of getting things done in our world. Rhetoric is the tool for such practical work. Ricoeur's "just distance" allows the space for intimacy and mutuality, just as it creates the space and need for rhetoric, a type of communication that might very well be seen as "inauthentic."

Nielsen ponders what happens when the "boundaries" of "blasé" street culture are transgressed: "the meaning of walking or standing in the street is . . . transformed into a

subjective state such as confrontation, fear, anxiety, collective solidarity or euphoria" (276).

This Artaudian subjective state may very well be an immediate (un-mediated) "authentic"

experience, but it is not one to be perpetuated endlessly. In fact, the authentic experience is so

powerful due to its fleetingness. Nielsen draws a clean line between "acts of citizenship at the

emotionally engaged moment when rights or obligations are publicly claimed," those

"authentic" moments on the street when the blasé is blasted through, and "situations in which

administrative or juridical actions define citizenship in the neutral disengaged language of

right, membership, policy or law, as defined after the fact" (276). These latter "juridical

actions" are not "authentic," but they are necessary.

Authenticity exists in the here and now. That is why it is not burdened by the concept of

instrumentality. Rhetoric persuades for a future course of action. "Authenticity" may fit into the

scope of rhetoric (I have argued so in this thesis) but it cannot *replace* rhetoric. Authenticity is

ultimately anti-social, with its reference to oneself or one's own group, rather than to one's

audience (unlike Trilling's "sincerity"). In this way, performances of authenticity and virtue

may be especially effective as part of a protest against accepted social norms or political

policies, but in the aftermath of the protest there emerges a need for some sort of "fitting

together" that requires a common audience-directed language, something that moves beyond

performances of authenticity and virtue.

As Buber notes, the world of "institutions" and politics requires a "well-ordered

structure" that is firmly in the realm of the "It," not the "Thou," and as such, it is "inauthentic"

(43). Practical-oriented discourse requires individuals to share a common "center", a *lingua*

franca (though we should all be aware that this common center should not be the exclusive

domain of the dominant groups in a society, requiring that marginalized groups move themselves to the already established "center").

There may be some danger in valorizing "authenticity" as something more than fleeting or "flecked," at least in the realm of practical, deliberative discourse. Authenticity balks at social conformity and yet language itself requires such conformity. Language presents us with a series of intricate rules that we obey. This is how we make ourselves comprehensible to others. To communicate with others requires a domain whose "clamor" has been "pacified into words," to use Derrida's phrase (240). Language is a ready-made system, and as such, is inauthentic. If we want to live as fellow citizens with others we must share pre-fabricated systems of language and institutions, engage in the realm of "It," and see the value in the inauthentic, even as we allow for authentic experiences to enrich our practical discourses.

Endnotes

1: Presidential candidate Michael Dukakis learned this the hard way. During the October 1988 Presidential debate, Dukakis was asked if his wife were raped and murdered, wouldn't he himself support the death penalty for the rapist/murderer. Dukakis responded no, he would not. Dukakis was highly criticized for his answer.

2: I realize the databank of articles is in itself skyrocketing, and so a search for many words might reveal a rapid expansion of "interest." Nonetheless, the connection between "virtue" and "authenticity" appears to remain a territory relatively neglected to date.

3: Burke imagines the ever-so-proper Matthew Arnold trying to fit in with crude "gashouse gang" loitering on a street corner. The gang's vulgarity becomes the definition of "proper" behavior in this situation.

4: "Expressive behavior" may be considered as leading to an "aesthetic" experience for the audience. Habermas notes in his *Theory of Communicative Action* (Volume One) that an aesthetic experience may be evaluated in part based on their perceived "authenticity" and that "expressive" behavior may be evaluated on the basis of its "sincerity" (20-21).

5: I offer one final note on my methodology, which included a rather "different" approach. As part of the thesis writing process, I constructed various pieces of what has now become the thesis you are reading as "performance monologues." For example, the analysis of the mother before Solomon was related by a guardian angel; the overview of case studies was presented by a self-declared "protest groupie." I performed these character-based monologues for an audience of fellow faculty over a period of four months. In this way, I was able to

experience my own arguments from an imbedded (granted, a fictionally imbedded) context. I was able to get immediate (pre-verbal) feedback from my audience in a way that can only happen in live performance: what amused them? what confused them? At the end of each performance session, there was time for formal feedback on the arguments I presented. These post-performance Q&A sessions were as valuable as the experience of inhabiting my characters in the live performances.

6: My analysis of Las Madres is based in English-only literature. Some of my research sources do cite excerpts of interviews or written texts in Spanish (and I will translate those in throughout the thesis as I make use of them), but my fluency in Spanish is limited and so I have relied on English language texts.

7: My analysis of Otpor and the other Serbian student protest movements relies exclusively on English language texts, although many of these are written (or spoken, in the case of recorded interviews) by Serbian nationals who, happily, are also fluent in English.

8: I return to this question in Chapter 6, as further interrogation of the potentially "essential" nature of identity yields several interesting possibilities for future investigation.

9: Such "identity camouflage" was also available to and used by gay male ACTUP members, most notably during their September 1989 Stock Exchange protest.

10: Another example would be the few human rights groups that continued to function in Argentina between 1976- 1981. These groups, like the HRC also tried to be "respectable" and not disruptive. Such tactics of aligning with "normal" allowed them to exist, but their efforts were quite ineffectual.

11: Established political figures are also burdened by Burke's "trained incapacity;" their

many years of experience doing things a certain way prevent them from even seeing the possibility of new, impious linkages (*Permanence* 7-8).

12: In Chapter 6, I will grapple with the question of whether or not there is such a thing as "true authenticity" and whether or not rhetoric can find itself embracing such authenticity.

13: Again, I will pursue this further in Chapter 6, specifically the notion that personal risk is involved in performances of authenticity, a risk akin to elements of "parrhesia" as treated by Foucault (in his *Courage of Truth*).

14: Does this mean that those who do not share the marginalized group identity cannot "authentically" participate in the protest movement? The question of "who has the right to speak on behalf of the group?" is a particularly contentious one for many protest movements. This was an issue in ACT UP when those who were not themselves queer or infected with AIDS chose to join the ranks of the protestors. I will explore this challenge in Chapter 5 when I specifically examine "housed advocates" protesting on behalf of the homeless population.

15: There is a distinction between the moral and the ethical. "Moral" implies obedience to moral laws (as prescribed by religion, perhaps). "Ethical" implies accordance with one's nature. In the modern world, though, the two terms are usually conflated.

16: I do not think that MacIntyre's view is entirely correct. I see Aristotelian virtue being quite compatible with Goffman's sociological view, if framed correctly. I will address this point and attempt to resolve the tension at the end of Chapter 4.

17: Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration may be applied here as adjunct to Bourdieu (or in place of Bourdieu). Giddens' theory posits a relationship between the constraints of societal structure and an individual's agency in that society. Though perhaps not

as constraining as Bourdieu's *habitus*, structuration theory still presents a balance between "action" and "motion."

18: I am going out of my way to make Goffman "palatable" for competing theoretical frameworks like phenomenology and virtue ethics. This is because Goffman is so valuable for theorizing performance and rhetoric and I believe performance and rhetoric are eminently compatible with these other ways of theorizing communication and human interaction. In Chapter 6, I will revisit this effort to make rhetoric and phenomenology compatible.

19: Even today in America 2013, this tension over what "America" stands for continues to stoke debate over gay-related issues, most notably the recent controversial rulings about the right for gays to marry.

20: "Citizen" cannot exist merely as an abstract category for identification to do its work. The members of ACT UP and other queer protestors were not "citizens" in the abstract, but flesh-and-blood human beings with a variety of contingent identities in addition to "gay man": these were people's sons and brothers, war veterans, community leaders, the terminally ill, and various other "identities." For non-queer members of society, many of those who had been touched by diseases other than AIDS (like Alzheimer's) would have been able to "identify" with the PWA as having been "abandoned" by their government to some sort of "medical oblivion."

21: My own search of *Time Magazine* articles from the late 1970s onward revealed that terms like "derelicts" and "bums" were still commonly used through July 1982. Up until that point, "homeless" was used to designate foreign refugees or victims of natural disasters. February 1982 marks the first appearance in *Time* of the term "homeless" applied to Americans

living on the street. By December 1983, "the homeless" seems to have become the common term employed for street people.

22: It is certainly true that all of the protest groups I am studying want to "end" their current status: childless mothers seek the return of their children, people with AIDS seek a cure and treatment. Once the group's goal is achieved, the collective disperses. The issue of homelessness, though, introduces the issue of a protest group wanting to banish the very identity *from which* they are protesting.

23: Compare this to Schechner's point that any performer "acts between identities" and in this way performance is a "paradigm of liminality" (*Between Theater & Anthropology* 295). Performing one's identity for the purpose of public protest puts the protestor/performer in this position of "liminality" and the identity itself in the potential position of "productive uncertainty."

24: Giddens allows for something similar. His structuration theory is premised upon the "recursiveness" of human social activities. He writes: "Human social activities, like some self-reproducing items in nature, are recursive. That is to say, they are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors. In and through their activities agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible" (Giddens 2). Such recursiveness also provides the opportunity for iteration, and leaps in the "evolution" of a group's *idem* identity.

25: Maurice Natanson's "claims of immediacy," as discussed in Chapter 3, are yet another example of this.

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