

ABSTRACT

The Global War on Terror Memorial and the Rhetoric of Commemoration

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This paper will discuss the rhetoric surrounding the plan to construct a national memorial for the Global War on Terror. It looks at three distinct areas of discourse relating to the project: the congressional debates over the memorial, the principles the memorial foundations declared that they hoped the final project would represent and arguments forwarded by supporters of the foundation regarding the imminent need to honor American veterans. In each chapter I outline the narratives and memory of the conflict being promoted by supporters and argue that these narratives uphold the United States depiction of the war as a instance in which heroic Americans sacrificed themselves in the name of freedom. I also focus on the implications that building a memorial for a war that has not ended has in terms of how practices of commemoration are understood in the post 9/11 era

The Global War on Terror Memorial and the Rhetoric of Commemoration

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	1
The National Global War on Terror Memorial.....	1
<i>A Culture of Public Commemoration</i>	2
<i>The Global War on Terror Memorial Matters</i>	7
<i>Rhetorical Studies and Public Memory</i>	9
<i>Preview of Chapters</i>	12
CHAPTER TWO	21
The Debate That Wasn't House Testimony on Bill H.R.873	21
<i>Collective Memory, Argumentation and War Memorials</i>	25
<i>Epideictic Arguments for the Global War on Terror Memorial</i>	28
<i>United Behind the Military</i>	31
<i>The Global War on Terror as Politically Neutral</i>	36
<i>Conclusion</i>	41
CHAPTER THREE	47
The Principles of The Global War on Terror Memorial	47
<i>McGee's Ideographic Criticism</i>	49
<i>The Ideograph as a Rhetorical Tool</i>	50
<i>The Rhetoric of Resilience and US Victimization</i>	53
<i>Mult-Culturalism and a Diverse Military</i>	57
<i>The Rhetoric of Acquiescence and Commemoration</i>	60
<i>Conclusion</i>	64
CHAPTER FOUR.....	69
Veterans as Argumentative Support and the Global War on Terror Memorial	69
<i>The Myth of the American Soldier as Rhetorical Strategy</i>	72
<i>Maggie Duskin and the Use of Veteran as Telos</i>	75
<i>Veteran Narratives and Critical Witnessing</i>	80
<i>Conclusion</i>	83
CHAPTER FIVE	89
Conclusion	89
<i>The Success of the Memorial and What it Means for Scholars</i>	90
<i>Denaturalizing Stories</i>	95
BIBLIOGRAPHY	98

CHAPTER ONE

The National Global War on Terror Memorial

On August 18th, 2017, surrounded by members of his national security team, President Donald Trump signed his approval for bill H.R. 873 the Global War on Terror Memorial Act. Bill H.R.873 approved the construction of a national war memorial for the Global War on Terror; to be built on federal land in Washington DC.¹ The memorial is meant to join other iconic war memorials on the national mall, such as the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. These memorials, like the proposed Global War on Terror Memorial, are also dedicated to commemorating the service of Americans that fought in armed conflicts. The bill gave the task of constructing the memorial to the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation, the group responsible for initially lobby for constructing the memorial.² The resolution declared that the memorial would function as a means of honoring the “members of the Armed forces who served on active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism.”³

News organizations dedicated to covering U.S. military widely celebrated the approval of the memorial.⁴ They emphasized that the memorial would serve as a space of remembrance for American soldiers that had been killed during the war. Furthermore, they argued that the memorial would function as a communal place of healing for veterans attempting to find their place as they reintegrated into American society.⁵ The original proponent of the project Andrew Brennan noted that with the construction of the

memorial, veterans of the Global War on Terror could have their heroic sacrifices honored in the same way that the heroes of past American wars had been celebrated.⁶

My thesis analyzes the rhetoric used by the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation and the foundations' supporters, in their justifications for the memorial's creation. I also analyze arguments used during legislative hearings over the bill in order to question the significance of the construction of a memorial for the Global War on Terror. What ideologies, memories, and narratives are upheld - or even constructed - when deciding to memorialize a conflict so ideologically driven that even the name "Global War on Terror" carries extensive baggage?⁷ What does it mean to build a memorial for a conflict that is ongoing; how does that change one's understanding of the operation of public commemoration in the United States? How does the foundation's consistent invocation of the sacrifice of veterans and their families in the Global War on Terror shape collective understandings of grieving and mourning? A critical examination of these questions, and analysis of the discourses surrounding the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation, reveals the way that the project of the Global War on Terror Memorial foregrounds an understanding of the war as a just conflict fought by American heroes in the name of traditional American values such as freedom and liberty. Furthermore, it demonstrates that within an era of perpetual war, public commemoration becomes a means of supporting and affirming that conflict.

A Culture of Public Commemoration

The push to construct a memorial for the Global War on Terror is part of a larger trend, an increasing desire to build memorials commemorating American conflicts and tragedies. American public discourse has entered a stage that Professor of American

Studies at Notre Dame, Erika Doss has coined as “memorial mania,”⁸ the perpetual battle over who will be honored within the collective memory of the United States. As a result of this trend, war memorials both locally and nationally are an ever-present part of an increasingly intense American culture of public commemoration.⁹ For example, the construction of memorials at the national level has become a more formalized event, often involving multiple ceremonies and speeches by significant military figures, including Presidents of the United States.¹⁰ In turn, the debates over the role memorials have in shaping understandings and upholding ideologies of American conflict have intensified. Supporters argue that memorials are a necessary form of honoring American soldiers, supporting a patriotic culture and ensuring that veterans and their families have a space for grieving and healing. Critics, argue that memorials serve to normalize American conflicts as moral and American veterans as heroic, downplaying the tragic costs of these wars and the brutality of war experienced by many veterans.¹¹

Scholars have traced the changes in the United States culture of public commemoration to the construction of the 1982 Vietnam Veterans Memorial.¹² The Vietnam Veterans Memorial status as the first major national war memorial meant that the memorials’ construction process was subjected to intense scrutiny.¹³ The memorial became the center of an ideological battleground over how the Vietnam War would be remembered. Groups ranging from Ronald Reagan’s administration and its political opponents, to veterans’ rights organizations and those dedicated to supporting the families of soldiers that died in Vietnam, fought over the meaning of the memorial. Reagan’ himself argued that the memorial was an affirmation of the war, an affirmation that would help the country get over “Vietnam Syndrome.”¹⁴ While others, including

leaders of the VVMF, the organization responsible for the memorials construction, argued that the memorial was not a political statement about the war; rather, the memorial was meant to serve as a space of healing for Vietnam veterans and their families.¹⁵ For them, the memorial served as the first step in healing the divides brought about by the divisiveness of the conflict.

The debates over the memorial had consequences as to how the larger conflict was remembered. As rhetoric increasingly turned to the idea that the memorial should be thought of as a non-political space of healing for veterans, the American public increasingly began to characterize those who criticized the war as hindering the larger project of reuniting the nation.¹⁶ To challenge the memorial, or the memory of the war that the memorial portrayed, was to divide a wounded nation and prevent grieving families from recovering from the losses of the war. Ultimately, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial demonstrated the role that commemorative practices can have in shaping the way that public memory operates.

The United States public culture of commemoration became increasingly expansive following the construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.¹⁷ In the ensuing years, veterans of both the Korean War and World War II successfully lobbied for the construction of national war memorials for both conflicts.¹⁸ While debates over the meaning of the memorials were less intense, both memorials are examples of how commemorative practices can promote specific memories as to how the wars should be remembered. For example, veterans advocating for the construction of a Korean War Memorial argued that Korean War veterans had been erased within American public memory.¹⁹ Thus, the Korean War Memorial served as an argument that veterans of that

war should be understood as heroes worthy of remembrance in the same way that veterans of Vietnam and World War II had been.²⁰ Similarly, the World War II memorial was framed through the idea that the veterans of the “greatest war the world has ever known” deserved to be honored within the American cultural memory.²¹

The expansion of the United States’ culture of public commemoration in the aftermath of the Vietnam Veterans memorial did not limit itself to only memorializing wars. For example, in 1987, a memorial quilt dedicated to those that had died from HIV and AIDS officially began development.²² The AIDS memorial quilt grew massively in scope and is considered the nation’s most prominent memorial for those that died from the disease.²³ Memorials dedicated to victims of terrorist attacks, ranging from the Oklahoma City Bombing to the September 11th memorial and museum became increasingly commonplace.²⁴ Increasingly, not having a dedicated memorial for a war, or public tragedy is seen as unfathomable. Speaking out against the construction of a memorial is marked as explicitly disrespectful to those that the memorial is supposed to honor. None of these examples of commemorative practices even address the controversy over the presence of commemorative memorials and monuments for participants in the Confederacy and the intense debates over their continued existence. The United States culture of public commemoration has developed to the point where disputes over commemorative practices are at the heart of larger conflicts over American public memory. Thus, studying the United States culture of public commemoration is an ever more important task for scholars seeking to understand the way that public memory is shaped and utilized.

These examples all prove that within the United States' culture of commemoration, memorials are not just apolitical acknowledgments of sacrifice or loss, rather they exist at the center of conflicts over how American wars and crisis should be understood. Memorials spur conversations that shape the ideology of the American public.²⁵ A critical investigation of memorials interrogates practices that normalize ideological narrativizes and shape cultural understandings of mourning within the United States. Importantly, memorials should not be understood as being only shaped by discourse surrounding them. Rather, this thesis begins from the premise that memorials convey arguments in themselves. From their design, to where they are placed and who they honor, memorials present enthymematic claims as to how American public memory should operate. The claims forwarded by memorials are very influential, millions of individuals visit memorials such as Mount Rushmore every year and even more are exposed to discussions centered on the need to commemorate American conflicts and the soldiers who fought within them.²⁶ Ultimately, memorials are places that rhetorically call upon notions of identity, traditions, memories, and ideologies to make arguments as to how the world should be understood.²⁷ It is important to understand that the meaning of these memorials is never fixed, rather, they are constantly contested within public and private discourse.²⁸ My thesis focuses on how these conversations occur, and the tactics and strategies used by various groups within this process of memory contestation.

The importance of war memorials in American culture has resulted in a significant amount of analysis by rhetoricians and scholars of public memory of the role that memorials have in shaping American society. For example, scholars such Carole Blair, Neil Michel and William Balthrop have produced an extensive amount of

scholarship on the rhetorical nature of war memorials.²⁹ These scholars have sought to ask questions regarding the ways that memorials leverage memories of past events to influence the present. Other scholars such as Barbara Biesecker analyzed the way that commemorative practices have naturalized a memory of World War II as a noble, just war, whose participants embodied the ideal characteristics of American citizens.³⁰ My thesis follows similar questions, building upon these scholars; while also, studying the influence discourse surrounding the construction of a memorial has on the arguments presented by the memorial as to how conflicts should be remembered.

The Global War on Terror Memorial Matters

The importance that commemorative practices have in shaping American national identity and the uniqueness of discussions surrounding the project demonstrate the necessity of studying the Global War on Terror Memorial. This is especially true for those seeking to understand the impact that the Global War on Terror has had on practices of public commemoration or the effects that practices of public commemoration have had on how the Global War on Terror is collectively understood. The memorial is unique among federally recognized war memorials in that it serves to honor participants in a war that has yet to end.³¹ Gaining approval for the memorial required a bipartisan push from veterans within the United States' Congress. Legislators worked to amend the Commemorative Works Act of 1986 that had explicitly forbade commemorations of wars before ten years had passed.³²

The obstacle of the Commemorative Works Act meant that supporters of the memorial had to draw upon a wide range of arguments to justify the memorials creation. For example, supporters of the memorial argued that since, unlike previous wars, the

Global War on Terror has no clear endpoint, if the United States waited veterans of the war would likely never be honored.³³ In congressional testimony over the legislation, legislators argued that the generation of soldiers fighting in War on Terror are heroes, in the same vein as previous generations that fought in conflicts ranging from World War II to Vietnam in service of the country.³⁴ These arguments, among others, make the memorial a well that scholars of rhetoric and public memory can draw upon in their analysis of commemoration in the era of the Global War on Terror.

My study of the Global War on Terror Memorial should be framed as part of a larger scholarly push to analyze the relationship between public memory and the Global War on Terror. Much of this scholarship has focused on the influence that September 11th has had on American practices of commemoration. These scholars have focused both on the controversy surrounding the construction of a memorial for those that died on September 11th and on the rhetoric of the memorial itself. For example, Theresa Donofrio analyzed the discourse of advocacy groups such as “Take Back the Memorial” and their attempts to shape the narrative of how a ground zero memorial should be understood.³⁵ One common theme in post 9/11 scholarship on the Global War on Terror that this essay draws from is the focus on how Americans have positioned themselves as the victims of the global conflict.³⁶ The increased focus on the violence and tragedy that American veterans experienced in culture, ranging from contemporary war films, to projects like the Global War on Terror Memorial, construct an understanding of the war that casts American veterans as needing to be honored for their heroic sacrifice. At the same time, violence enacted by these soldiers is deemed as necessary or not as important as honoring the sacrifices of veterans.

Even amid this trend there has been limited focus on commemoration's role in supporting this victimization narrative and no scholarship on the project for a national Global War on Terror Memorial. My thesis intervenes here because, as a national memorial that joins the ranks of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the World War II Memorial, the Global War on Terror Memorial will play a significant role in shaping the publics' memory of the Global War on Terror. Thus, the memorial's reinforcement of a narrative that frames the United States as the heroic victims of the Global War on Terror is worthy of attention. Furthermore, the process of gaining approval for the memorial functions as a powerful case study for how commemorative practices operate in the current era and on how the rhetoric surrounding such a process influences how the memorial will eventually be understood. This is especially true given the memorials' position as a national commemoration of a war that many across the world still feel the impacts of daily.

Rhetorical Studies and Public Memory

My decision to focus on the Global War on Terror Memorial positions this paper as part of a larger tradition within rhetorical scholarship that focuses on the study of monuments, memorials and the rhetorical nature of collective memory.³⁷ As Dickinson, Blair and Ott note, rhetorical scholars have broadened their understanding of what rhetoric is to include "a set of theoretical stances and critical tactics that offer ways of understanding, evaluating and intervening in a broad range of human activities."³⁸ This framework has led many to focus their studies on a wide range of texts such as "poetry, tourist sites, photography, sculpture, television programming (from news to situation comedies), music, corporate advocacy, performance art, film (from documentary to

Hollywood drama), advertising campaigns, and architecture.”³⁹ Thus, analyzing the rhetorical nature of memorials, monuments and commemorative projects writ large has become an increasing prominent part of rhetorical scholarship.⁴⁰ These scholars have sought to analyze how monuments and memorials rhetorically function to legitimize specific historical narratives and memories, often at the expense of alternative understandings of the world. My thesis takes up this broadening of rhetoric and focuses on both the discursive nature of the debates surrounding the monument but also upon the ways that memorials in of themselves can be rhetorical. Many of the choices regarding the Global War on Terror Memorial are rhetorical in nature, from where the memorial will be placed, to who controls its construction, and what values the organization claims that the memorial will uphold.

This essay draws upon a definition of public memory forwarded by Blair, Ott and Dickenson. Their definition offers six common precepts used by memory scholars when conceptualizing memory, all of which this thesis uses. First, “memory is activated by present concerns issues or anxieties.”⁴¹ Groups that use memory as form of argument do so in response to present issues. For example, my thesis discusses how the public memory of World War II is leveraged to shore up anxieties about the Global War on Terror. Their second assumption is that “memory narrates shared identities, constructing senses of communal belonging.”⁴² Individuals can draw a sense of community and personal identity from their shared memories. For example, veterans supporting the memorials construction often call upon a shared experience of the war that positions themselves a community fighting for American values. Third, “memory is animated by affect.”⁴³ Our chronicles of memory are not objective, rather they are motivated by forms

of emotional attachment that often mark certain groups as worthy of remembrance. This paper demonstrates the importance of linking affect and memory through its analysis of the way affect is mobilized in conversations surrounding American veterans. Forth, memory is contested, public memories are consistently challenged by alternative memories and ideas.⁴⁴ The dominant understanding of the War on Terror is still within flux, with various incomplete discourses struggling for control as to how the conflict will be interpreted. Fifth, memory is reinforced materially, language, rituals, technologies and architecture all are important in understanding how collective memories are constituted.⁴⁵ For example, the rituals often associated with commemoration are essential in shaping how commemorative practices are interpreted.⁴⁶ Finally, memory has a history, the understanding of the role of public memory in society has changed overtime.⁴⁷ This thesis argues that in the era of the Global War on Terror public memory has increasingly become a force of argumentation. The everchanging nature of public memory lends support to the idea that scholars must continuously interrogate how public memory influences our society.

The definition forwarded by Blair et al, ultimately proves that public memory is a rhetorical construct. It is formed through the circulation of various discourses that compete to control narratives. In order to study public memory, one must study the ways that discourses argue for, and reveal the existence of collective memories. Rhetoricians are in a unique space to discuss public memory because rhetorical criticism offers the tools to analyze the ways that certain memories gain purchase over others. This paper takes on that responsibility and analyzes a wide range of discourse surrounding the Global War on Terror Memorial. Specifically, I draw from congressional debates over the

legislation, where veteran congressmen gave speeches in support of the passage of the monument. I look at press releases, videos and published articles by the Global War on Terror Foundation to see the arguments and strategies they used to attempt to persuade both politicians and the general public to approve of such a memorial. Of these articles, I focus particularly on those that either reference or are written by veterans defending the memorial on the basis that it will serve as a place of healing for themselves veterans like them.

My argument is that in analyzing these discourses one sees the process by which a narrative of a justified Global War on Terror, in which, heroic American soldiers give their lives in the name of American values, is created. The body of this essay attempts to deeply problematize the narratives content and the process by which such a narrative is constructed. While, the adaptation of said narrative is not guaranteed, the enthymemes and cultural weight used by supporters on behalf of the memorial function to make challenging the underlying ideology of the project difficult, lest critics be deemed unpatriotic or unamerican. I also argue that this reality subsumes even the more critical aspects of the memorial such as the recognition of violence intrinsic to war and turns them into arguments that support said conflict.

Preview of Chapters

The remainder of my paper consists of four chapters analyzing the implications of the rhetoric used in relation to the construction of the Global War on Terror Memorial. In each chapter, I focus on a different area of emphasis for foundation supporters in their justification for the memorial. Within these three areas: the apolitical nature of the memorial, the principles that the memorial will advocate, and the importance of the

memorial for American veterans, I consider rhetorical texts from the foundation and their supporters that exemplify each respective theme.

The second chapter concentrates on the rhetoric surrounding the passage of Congressional Bill H.R.873 approving the memorials construction. Most of my analysis examines the ceremonial “debate” over the legislation in which members of the House of Representatives that previously served in the military expressed the need for all Americans to come together and support the construction of the memorial. I am particularly interested in the argument that memorializing the soldiers of the Global War on Terror is an apolitical act that transcends political divides. I will argue that claiming the memorial as apolitical is inaccurate and naturalizes support of the Global War on Terror as an act of patriotism. I will also discuss the enthymematic nature of the arguments found within the discourse of these congressional members and the way audiences react to these unstated arguments. This chapter will draw on argumentation scholarship to forward the idea that the public memory of the Global War on Terror is constructed by arguments, while also serving as a form of enthymematic argumentation as to how the Global War on Terror should be understood.

An additional major component of my first chapter is my argument that the debate over the memorial operated as a form of ceremony that Vivian Bradford has referred to as neoliberal epideictic rhetoric.⁴⁸ This rhetorical form is one that forwards ritualized practices such as the honoring of American veterans, as apolitical actions because they draw upon values that are assumed to be universally accepted in American collective memory. Rather than a debate over the construction of the memorial, the testimony at the

House of Representatives acted a ceremonial event for representatives to affirm their patriotic status and the exceptional nature of the United States military.

The ritual is powerful, both because it calls on the collective weight of American communal tradition and because the presentation of such rhetoric as non-political makes challenging the need for the memorial in that moment equivalent to challenging commonsense. However, the call to the value of patriotism and supporting the military means that the ceremony constructed a political narrative as to how the memorial, the larger war, and the American military should be viewed. The epideictic and ritualized nature of this discourse ensures that alternative narratives as to how the Global War on Terror functioned or how the American military operated are actively forgotten on behalf of a narrative that promotes American exceptionalism and valorizes the conflict.

The third chapter of the paper looks at a set of principles that the Global War on Terror Foundation's official website claims the memorial will represent by the end of its construction: Strength, Resilience, Multi- Generational, All-Volunteer, Global, Multi-Cultural, Ongoing.⁴⁹ I draw upon Calvin McGee's conception of ideographs to argue that these individual principles are each informed by a larger collective history that dictates how the terms are understood and thus impacts how the memorial will be interpreted.⁵⁰ The chapter will outline the different forms of erasure and normalization that occur within the values proposed by the foundation. I will argue that the focus on "Strength" and "Resilience" is one that upholds a violent form of exceptionalism that presents the United States as the brave victims of the Global War on Terror while ignoring the violence that the United States preformed. The focus on the "multi-cultural" nature of the war reflects the military's larger emphasis on diversity even as it continues to

perpetuate structural violence. Finally, the principle of “Ongoing” contributes to the rhetorical move to present a memory of the war as perpetual and inevitable. This notion of a perpetual war is one that normalizes everyday violence and limits the possibility for alternative narratives that would challenge the way the war has been portrayed.”⁵¹

A further major theme of this chapter relates to the implications as to how the memorial’s naturalization of perpetual war shapes how commemorative practices are understood. Specifically, I will focus on how the Global War on Terror Memorial presents opportunities for American citizens to participate as patriotic citizens in the war effort, via their support of a memorial for the Global War on Terror. While, previously scholars have discussed the way commemoration of the past is used to influence the present, I will argue that in the context of the Global War on Terror, commemoration has become a present means of patriotic engagement with the conflict. This is problematic because it ultimately implicates those that do not support the memorial as being unamerican and equates civic participation with supporting a war effort.

The fourth chapter considers the use of the figure of the veteran in rhetoric supporting the construction of the memorial, in addition to testimony spotlighted by the foundation supporting the memorial from veterans themselves. Most of my analysis looks at the argument that construction of a memorial serves as a means of honoring the sacrifice of veterans while, also serving as a place of healing for them and their families. My argument is that the narratives of tragedy, loss and the cultural idealization of veterans are used to support memories of the Global War on Terror that limit critical interrogation of the conflict and position the United States as the victim of the Global War on Terror. I will frame this argument in relation to the work of Suhi Choi’s that

outlines the potential for veterans to be critical witnesses.⁵² Choi argues that veterans due to their proximity to the violence of war have a unique opportunity to present narratives that challenge many of the mainstream's ideals that traditionally make up our collective understanding of violence. Ultimately, I argue that veteran witnessing is used instead to push forth a memory of the war that positions the United States enactment of violence as secondary to the project of making sure that the United States honors its veterans.

This chapter will also investigate the ways that discourses surrounding veteran participation in the Global War on Terror implicate our understanding of mourning and grief within this current era. Drawing upon the work of Barbara Biesecker I will argue the foundation's depiction of the memorial as bridging the civil-military divide in order to recover a American greatness that has been lost in the wake of 9/11 embodies the melancholic depiction of commemoration that has characterized much of post 9/11 America. Within this melancholic frame, the foundation's goal of healing the nation through the project operates as an attempt to recover a lost whole that can never actually be obtained. This process is performed continuously through acts of mourning and commemoration and frames the problem of the Global War on Terror as the United States losing a past greatness, as opposed to anything wrong with the United States ideologically. The impact of this commemorative and cultural turn is that reflection on the structural conditions that lead America into the war is pushed aside for a fixation on attempting to recover past American greatness. The memorial project implicitly affirms ideologies of American exceptionalism and strength, even as it attempts to commemorate losses that arose from said ideology.

Finally, the paper's conclusion discusses the implications my study of the Global War on Terror Memorial project has for how memory scholars and rhetoricians should consider their roles as part of the contestation over how memories become normalized. The memorial project demonstrates the changing nature of commemorative practice in the United States and the powerful impact that arguments drawing from collective memory can have. Those studying public memory and rhetoric have an obligation to ask critical questions as to how the Global War on Terror has influenced the way that practices of commemoration and references to public memory are used as a means of affirming hegemonic notions of what it means to be an American. Furthermore, due to the ever-contested nature of public memory, scholars have the opportunity to contest these dominant memories by presenting alternative perspectives and revealing the ways in which these memories are taken up by the public.

Notes

¹ Dianna Cahn, “Trump Signs off on Global War on Terror Memorial,” *Stars and Stripes*, August 21, 2017, <https://www.stripes.com/trump-signs-off-on-global-war-on-terror-memorial-1.483813>

² Cahn, “Trump Signs.”.

³ U.S. Congress, House, Global War on Terrorism War Memorial Act, HR 873, 115th Cong., 1st sess., introduced in House February 6, 2017 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/873/text>

⁴ For a sample see: Shane Leo, “Advocates start work on what — and where — the Global War on Terror Memorial Will Be,” *Military Times* September 24, 2018 <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2018/09/24/advocates-start-work-on-what-and-where-global-war-on-terror-memorial-will-be/>, Richard Sisk, “Trump Approves Global War on Terrorism Memorial DC,” *Military.com* <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2017/08/20/trump-gives-go-ahead-for-global-war-on-terrorism-memorial-in-dc.html> and, Jared Keller, “The Global War on Terror Will Finally Get its Own Monument in DC.” *Task and Purpose*, August 04, 2017, <https://taskandpurpose.com/global-war-on-terror-memorial/>

⁵ Cahn, “Trump Signs.”.

⁶ Cahn, “Trump Signs.”.

⁷Todd, Richissin, “"War on Terror" Difficult to Define,” *The Seattle Times*, September 2, 2004, https://web.archive.org/web/20090114085106/http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/nationworld/20023596_russanal02.html

⁸ Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.)

⁹ Carole Blair, and Neil Michel, "The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Contemporary Culture of Public Commemoration," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2007;2008;): 596

¹⁰ For an example, see the Ground-Breaking Ceremony for the Korean War Memorial, featuring remarks by then President George H.W. Bush. The ceremony was broadcast on C-SPAN 2, one can view the proceedings on their website, “Korean War Memorial Groundbreaking,” C-SPAN Video, 106:09, June 14, 1992. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?26581-1/korean-war-memorial-ground-breaking>.

¹¹ For an example of this debate in the context of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial see: Patrick Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing*, (Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009,)

¹² Bair and Michel, “The AIDS Memorial,” 596.

¹³ Bair and Michel, “The AIDS Memorial,” 597, 602-603.

¹⁴ Hagopian, “The Vietnam War,” 11.

¹⁵ Hagopian, “The Vietnam War,” 10.

¹⁶ Hagopian, “The Vietnam War,” 14-15

¹⁷ Bair and Michel, "The AIDS Memorial," 597.

¹⁸ Bair and Michel, "The AIDS Memorial," 614.

¹⁹ Patrick Hagopian, "The Korean War Veterans Memorial and Problems of Representation," *Public Art Dialogue* 2, no. 2 (2012): 216-217.

²⁰ Hagopian "The Korean War Veterans," 230.

²¹ William V. Balthrop, Carole Blair, and Neil Michel. "The Presence of the Present: Hijacking 'the Good War'?" *Western Journal of Communication* 74, no. 2 (2010): 183.

²² Blair and Michel, "The AIDS Memorial," 602.

²³ Blair and Michel, "The AIDS Memorial," 601-602.

²⁴ Blair and Michel, "The AIDS Memorial," 596.

²⁵ Carole Blair, V. William Balthrop, and Neil Michel. "Mood of the Material: War Memory and Imagining Otherwise." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 13, no. 1 (2013): 6-20.

²⁶ Doss, *Memorial Mania*, 55.

²⁷ McGeough, Ryan Erik, Catherine Helen Palczewski, and Randall A. Lake. "Oppositional memory practices: U.S. Memorial Spaces as Arguments over Public Memory." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 51, no. 4 (2015): 232

²⁸ Blair and Michel, "The AIDS Memorial," 596

²⁹ For additional examples see previously cited work as well as: Carole Blair, V. William Balthrop, and Neil Michel. "The Arguments of the Tombs of the Unknown: Relationality and National Legitimation." *Argumentation* 25, no. 4 (2011): 449-468, Carol Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77, no. 3 (1991): 263-288. "Arlington-sur-Seine: War Commemoration and the Perpetual Argument from Sacrifice." *Proceedings of the Sixth Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argument*. Ed. Frans H. van Eemeren. (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Sic Sat, 2007), 45-51, as a few examples.

³⁰ Barbara A. Biesecker, "Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21st Century," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002): 394-395

³¹ "About the GWOT Memorial Foundation," *Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation*, Accessed November 1, 2018, <https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org/about/>.

³² "Legislative," *Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation*, Accessed November 1, 2018, [https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org/legislative//](https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org/legislative/).

³³ Adam Linehan, "A Global War on Terror Memorial Won't be Built Unless We Take Action Now," *Task and Purpose*, August 11, 2016, <https://taskandpurpose.com/time-start-building-next-national-war-memorial/>.

³⁴ These proceedings can be viewed on C-SPAN's official website, "House Session," C-SPAN Video," 5:41:51, July 28, 2017, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4678661/gwot-memorial-bill-hr-873-debate-passage&start=8924>. 2:31:40-2:32:30

³⁵ Theresa Ann Donofrio, "Ground Zero and Place-Making Authority: The Conservative Metaphors in 9/11 Families' "Take Back the Memorial" Rhetoric." *Western Journal of Communication* 74, no. 2 (2010): 150-169.

³⁶ Mark Christopher. Straw, "The Damaged Male and the Contemporary American War Film: Masochism, Ethics, and Spectatorship," (Ph.D diss., The University of Birmingham 2011).

³⁷ Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair and Brian L. Ott. *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, (Tuscaloosa AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

³⁸ Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 3.

³⁹ Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 3.

⁴⁰ Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 1-2.

⁴¹ Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 6.

⁴² Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 6.

⁴³ Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 6.

⁴⁴ Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 9.

⁴⁵ Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 10.

⁴⁶ Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 7.

⁴⁷ Dickinson, Blair and Ott. *Places of Public Memory*, 10.

⁴⁸ Bradford Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic: Rhetorical Form and Commemorative Politics on September 11, 2002," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 1 (2006): 1-26.

⁴⁹ "Our Principles," *The Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation*, Accessed November 1, 2018, <https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org/about/>

⁵⁰ Michael Calvin McGee, "The "Ideograph": A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, no. 1 (1980): 1-16.

⁵¹ Jeremy Engels, and William O. Saas, "On Acquiescence and Ends-Less War: An Inquiry into the New War Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99, no. 2 (2013): 225-232.

⁵² Suhi Choi, *Embattled Memories*. (Reno NV: University of Nevada Press, 2014.) 91-93.

CHAPTER TWO

The Debate That Wasn't House Testimony on Bill H.R.873

On March 28, 2017 representatives Mike Gallagher and Seth Moulton officially introduced Bill H.R 873 to amend the Commemorative Works Act of 1986 and begin the process of constructing a national memorial for the Global War on Terror.¹ In that opening announcement, Gallagher, a Republican, and Moulton, a Democrat, emphasized the bipartisan nature of the legislation, and the necessity of the American people uniting to support American veterans of the conflict.² For example, Gallagher stated that “Republican or Democrat, it doesn’t matter. Memorializing the service and sacrifice of more than 6,800 fallen United States service members is an American matter, and I’m proud to introduce this bipartisan legislation with my fellow Marine and current colleague, Congressman Moulton.”³ Representative Moulton echoed the bipartisan sentiment, stressing that

It’s so so important, I served in a platoon with marines all over the country, … we came together with remarkably different backgrounds, but we set aside those differences and did what was best for this country and that’s fundamentally what we should do in congress as well… and I have to think that if we brought the same spirit of working across parties as we saw in the Marines to Washington we would make a lot more progress as a nation.⁴

Facing almost no opposition, in the ensuing weeks the bill continued to gain support from members of both parties. As of its passing both in the House and the Senate, the bill had 159 cosponsors, sixty-four of whom were Democrats, 96 of whom were Republicans.⁵

There were no objections and the bill passed unanimously in both the House of Representatives and the United States Senate, further cementing its bipartisan acceptance.

This bipartisan acceptance, the notion that the task of constructing a memorial transcended traditional American political boundaries, became a major talking point for supporters of the project.⁶ The bipartisan nature of this position expressed itself most clearly during the congressional debates over the legislation. The congressional debates functioned purely as ceremony. No debate over the details of the bill occurred and no one spoke in opposition to the legislation. Instead, multiple representatives that served in the Global War on Terror, spoke on the urgent need to construct a memorial. These veterans included Republicans and Democrats that frequently praised the other party for coming together on behalf of the memorial project. The congressional representatives spoke emotionally about their personal experiences serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. They focused on the loss of friends that the war inflicted and the sense of duty they had to those that sacrificed their lives on behalf of the country. The congressional testimony also served as an opportunity for the representatives to affirm their patriotism and total commitment to the American military. These affirmations came continuously, even as representatives claimed their speeches to be more important than political gestures. For these representatives, and other supporters of Global War on Terror Memorial, supporting the project functioned not as a political decision, but as a performance of civic duty; a duty that they sought to convince all Americans to embrace.

This chapter seeks to analyze the implications of the argument that supporting the Global War on Terror Memorial functioned as a civic duty and the larger belief that the commemoration of the Global War on Terror is an act that transcends political divisions.

The chapter begins from the premise outlined by Blair, Ott, and Dickerson that narratives of collective memory are shaped materially by discourse and through ritual performances, such as the congressional debates over the Global War on Terror Memorial.⁷ Thus, if one is to understand how the Global War on Terror Memorial is being positioned in the dynamic contestation over the collective memory of the Global War on Terror, they must study the discourse surrounding its construction. Studying these arguments is also important because the congressional debates demonstrate how collective memory can be leveraged as enthymematic argument, even in supposedly non-political rhetoric.

My claim is that the argument positioning the obligation to support the Global War on Terror memorial as exceeding traditional political divisions, functioned at both the level of form and content, as what Bradford Vivian describes as neoliberal epideictic rhetoric. For Vivian, neoliberal epideictic rhetoric refers to epideictic or commemorative rhetoric that characterizes itself as non-political and non-ideological; while the very form of the commemorative event affirms an interpretation of political ideals, such as freedom, democracy and civic performance, that is drawn from a historical and ideological framing of those ideals.⁸ Neoliberal epideictic rhetoric is used as a means of affirming an argument for narratives of history and present events that support dominant ideologies through the rhetoric's characteristic invocation of traditions and collective ideals that are characterized as universal and non-political.⁹

In the context of the Global War on Terror Memorial congressional debate, representatives characterized their arguments as more important than politics, despite their ritualistic commemoration of those that served in the conflict and the military as a

whole. The representatives presented a narrative of the Global War on Terror and the United States military as heroic, honorable and ultimately, as embodying American values. The collective memory conveyed by the representative's argumentation actively forgot historical and contemporary violence performed by the United States military in favor of a neat and palpable depiction of the Global War on Terror that affirmed the exceptionalism of American ideals and equated being American with supporting the military. Although, representatives rarely explicitly made these arguments, a rhetorical analysis demonstrates that the claims of moving beyond politics and references to the long history of all Americans supporting veterans functioned as enthymemes. Their arguments carried the implicit premise, supported by the weight of ritual and historical tradition; that if one did not support the war, they were anti-veteran, anti-American and their criticisms should be dismissed as divisive.

I begin the chapter by outlining the two key frames of my position, first, collective memory is argumentative in nature, it is shaped by arguments and used as a form of argument. Second, the collective memory promoted by the congressional debates reflects Vivian's articulation of neoliberal epideictic rhetoric. In each section, I define what I mean by my fundamental claim, relate it to previous scholarship and explain its implications in the context of both the Global War on Terror Memorial and general scholarship revolving around collective memory, war memorials and commemoration. The second part of the chapter considers the congressional debate through these frames. I focus on two distinct themes, the representative's emphasis on the duty Americans must come together to support the military and the description of the Global War on Terror as a heroic form of service by a courageous generation. In each section, I outline the

collective memory that is being enthymematically argued for through the use of neoliberal epideictic rhetoric. I also interrogate how the content and form of the arguments constructed a narrative of history that serves to erase past and present forms of American violence through the invocation of a universal American subject and the heroic acts of American soldiers. Finally, I argue that the representatives claim of non-ideology masks a larger political narrative that presents the American military's actions in the conflict as heroic, defines civic participation as supporting the war, and ultimately dismisses criticism of the United States and its foreign policy as problematic and divisive.

Collective Memory, Argumentation and War Memorials

A central claim of this chapter is that collective memory is both constructed by argument and functions as a form of enthymematic argument in contestations over present narratives. Memories are leveraged by those seeking to influence how the past should be read into the present. They function as powerful arguments because memories carry the weight of tradition and collective notions of community with them.¹⁰ Audiences that identify with these collective ideals are expected to fill in the premise implied by the choice of specific memories and narratives. For example, when Representative Moulton refers to the soldiers that served in the Global War on Terror as being like the American soldiers that fought in World War II¹¹ he is drawing upon an entire cultural understanding of how the United States' collective memory of World War II has been shaped. One that he presumes his audience will be able to relate too and conclude that the soldiers that fought in the Global War on Terror are as heroic as those that fought in World War II. Recognizing the contestation over the meaning of memories and how they will be read

into the future is essential to understanding the persuasive ability that the leveraging of collective memory can have.

In recent years many rhetoricians and scholars of argumentation have forwarded the understanding of public memory as being intertwined with argument, seeking to study the way in which notions of public memory interact with and function as argumentative strategies. For example, Blair, Michel and Balthrop extensively analyzed the argumentative aspects of commemorative places such as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.¹² Their analysis focused on the memories that the decisions to construct memorials for “unknown soldiers” that fought in World War I conveyed. They argued that those memorials function as an influential form of visual rhetoric and argumentation.”¹³ Another prominent example is the work of McGeough, Palczewski, and Lake focusing on the way that memorial sites often act oppositionally to refute the memories argued for by another memorial.¹⁴ In these examples the authors focus on the specific visual rhetoric forwarded by the memorial themselves. However, there is less analysis of the discourse surrounding the memorial and the way that the argument conveyed by the memorial was constructed in the first place. Therefore, I turn to the articulation of narrative and memory outlined by Suhi Choi in their book *Embattled Memories*.¹⁵

While, not directly citing argumentation scholarship, Choi’s work emphasizes the role that the contestation over discourse has on the construction of memories and the ideologies that these memories argue on behalf of. Choi’s analysis focuses on the United States’ collective memory of the Korean War and how in various discursive areas the memory has been constructed as to promote the United States official version of the war

at the expense of alternative critical memories offered by many in South and North Korea. Choi believes that the role that memory studies has is “analyzing varying degrees of discrete tensions that arise in memory construction,”¹⁶ and that “narratives are often constructed in such a way as to naturalize the arbitrary selection of memories: what to forget and what to remember.”¹⁷ Choi’s line of thought is confirmed and extended in this chapter as I attempt to identify the means by which a memory of Global War on Terror is being constructed by the arguments and narratives surrounding it. Ultimately, argumentation present in the congressional debate over the Global War on Terror Memorial forwards a memory the Global War on Terror that positions the memorial as an argument for the ethical nature of the conflict and as supporting a narrative that the narrative of the Global War on Terror presented by the American military.

The discursive contestation over the memory and narrative that will be forwarded by the memorial is especially important given the influence that war memorials have on the way national memory is understood. As Choi argues, war memories are “highly instrumental in forging national myths, narratives,”¹⁸ therefore, it is essential to analyze the ways that those memories become constructed. War memorials are instrumental in the contestation of that memory. They present narratives and ideologies that argue as to how a nations collective identity and role in the world should be understood. Thus, they also generally reinforce narratives and memories that frame public’s collective understandings of institutions such as the American military.¹⁹ Given, the significance of war memorials, memory scholars have an obligation to study how the contestation over their meaning occurs.

While, many scholars have investigated the visual rhetoric forwarded by individual memorials, there has been less direct scholarship on the discourse surrounding the construction process and the influence that discourse has. One such example is Donofrio's article, which focuses on rhetoric used by conservative groups in their attempts to argue for how the 9/11 memory in New York City should be understood.²⁰ These groups attempted to shape a narrative of the memorial as being above politics and as an act of remembrance to those that had lost their lives in the attacks. This chapter follows Donofrio's focus on revealing the way that rhetorical physical spaces such as memorials become imbued with meaning and applies its frame to the Global War on Terror Memorial; arguing that the belief that the memorial transcended ideology positioned the memorial as a celebration of a just war that all Americans must choose to stand behind.

Epideictic Arguments for the Global War on Terror Memorial

The memory expressed by the argument that the Global War on Terror Memorial transcends ideology operates as what Vivian refers to as neoliberal epideictic rhetoric.²¹ For Vivian neoliberal epideictic rhetoric represents a form of discourse found in epideictic performances such as eulogies, commemorative events and civic rituals, that is defined by its "celebration of presumably fundamental political principles in an ostensibly nonpolitical idiom highly conducive to corporate media dissemination."²² Which is to say that neoliberal epideictic rhetoric functions as a means of presenting political ideals as normalized and non-political. The ideals presented by neoliberal epideictic rhetoric are supported by the weight of historical traditions and notions of

collective memory, meaning that neoliberal epideictic rhetoric draws upon public memory as a form of argument.

Vivian's essay observes how epideictic form is leveraged in the context of rituals and other forms of civic performance as a method of conveying interpretations of events such as the 9/11 attacks. These interpretations generally reflect dominant American ideology because their ritualistic nature calls to a collective sense of what it means to be an American that many in the audience can relate to. The affective appeal to shared tradition and historical understandings is often used to "unite an otherwise fractured citizenry" behind shared ideals.²³ Vivian uses the example of a series of ceremonies in New York City after 9/11. The Mayor of New York City Michael Bloomberg explicitly stated that he wanted the ceremony to avoid politics. As such, Bloomberg ordered that speakers at the ceremony not read original speeches but instead read from historical texts such as the Declaration of Independence or the Gettysburg address.²⁴ Vivian argues that the speeches still affirmed a collective community that could recognize themselves as being part of a shared American history. Furthermore, the speeches still argued for an interpretation of being an American that foregrounded ideals such as democracy, liberty and freedom. The use of notable historical texts served to add gravity to the event and its call to embrace these values as fundamentally American. The speeches also functioned to "unite an otherwise fractured citizenry in a dynamic affective experience."²⁵ Rather than neutral articulations of American history, neoliberal epideictic rhetoric functions as a strategy of argumentation over how American history, tradition and culture should be performed.

Vivian outlines two clear implications for the strategy that relate to my analysis of the arguments used in the Global War on Terror Memorial congressional debate. First, in constructing a community based on a shared understanding of citizenship, neoliberal epideictic rhetoric also creates an outside to that community.²⁶ The outside of the community consists of those who do not share the same affective history and these bodies become marked by their perceived failure to perform as Americans. That marking manifests in the argument presented by the representatives because their valorization of those that support the memorial as being non-divisive and true Americans implies that those who would oppose the memorial are divisive and un-American. The second implication outlined by Vivian is the fact that neoliberal epideictic rhetoric is depoliticizing.²⁷ The ritualistic nature of epideictic neoliberal rhetoric places faith in the vague idea of being an American as opposed to specific political actions that could challenge the status quo. Or, the ritual of holding a debate where there is no opposition presents the affirmation of the memorial as a mere ceremonial formality as opposed to a true political issue. The debate operated as a ritual ceremony that allowed the congressional representatives to affirm a standard of being American that required individuals to embrace the American military as heroic and the Global War on Terror as justified.

In the end, reading the argument that affirming the memorial transcends ideology through the frame that Vivian sets out demonstrates the utility of analyzing the rhetoric of political ceremony beyond the surface in challenge the underlying ideologies, narratives and memories promoted by such rhetoric. Such a reading confirms the argumentative principles that underlie the effectiveness of neoliberal epideictic rhetoric. Such rhetoric

functions enthymematically. Within neoliberal epideictic rhetoric “the premises are given by the audience,”²⁸ the audience fills in unstated arguments about American nationalism or American identity with their own views. Given the argumentative nature of public memory outlined above, the representatives discussing the Global War on Terror Memorial are forwarding an argument that functionally positions the memorial to advocate as a form of neoliberal epideictic rhetoric. The next sections will outline the problematic nature of the specific memory forwarded within the arguments expressed.

United Behind the Military

Representative Tom McClintock’s opening remarks introducing the legislation make it clear that supporting bill H.R 873 is an act of patriotism. “But one thing is far above and beyond any debate, that is the heroism, selflessness devotion and patriotism of the men and women of our nation who stepped forward from the safety and security of hearth and home into harm’s way when our nation called.”²⁹ From the very beginning of the testimony representative McClintock represents the act of affirming the memorial as one that all true patriots, regardless of their political views would engage in. Furthermore, McClintock’s opening implicitly affirms supporting the memorial project as equivalent to supporting the heroic American military. The focus on uniting on behalf of the military is further reinforced when representative Mike Gallagher states:

while we don’t agree on everything , we always look for ways to work together, it is my belief, listening to these speeches, particularly from the veterans who served in congress, there is so much that that we can work together There are forces that are trying to divide us but there is so much we can agree upon, might seem like a small step I would submit that this is big.³⁰

From the opening remarks, both congressional representatives advocated for the memorial to represent the country uniting behind their military. Yet, both also, made sure to demonstrate that their arguments weren't affirming a specific political ideology or interpretation of the Global War on Terror. Rather, they were affirming values that all Americans could support.

Representative McClinton's and Gallagher's remarks, as well as the other and the other representative's description of necessity of supporting the American military functions as neoliberal epideictic rhetoric at multiple levels. First, the affirmation of the United States military functions similarly to a ceremony or ritual. It is important to note that there is no actual controversy or debate occurring on the question of supporting American veterans. No one disputes McClinton's or Gallagher's description of the military. Instead, similarly to the example Vivian outlines in which political figures affirmed their credentials as true Americans by reading famous texts from American history the congressional representatives also use the moment to demonstrate their status as Americans. Their civic performance is powerful because it presented the argument that true Americans such as McClinton and Gallagher would affirm the American military. Importantly all the testimony is simply presented as a given because the ceremonial nature of the rhetoric means that no one challenges any of the representative's depictions of the American military. The ceremonial nature of the representative's arguments also gives performative weight to their arguments. For example, Representative Keith Rothfus's promise to "reflect upon the sacrifice on the transcendent ideals upon which this country was founded"³¹ or representative Mike Gallagher's description of the

moment as a “call to action”³² for the living all point to the urgency of supporting the military.

The second way the representative’s call to unite behind the military functions as neoliberal epideictic rhetoric occurs through their articulation of the military as a universal and undivided institution. Each representative that speaks makes a note of their service in the military and their pride in working with other veterans despite their political divisions and different backgrounds. In one notable moment Representative Gallaego notes that Americans from “all walks of life” served in the military, including members of indigenous nations.³³ The move to characterize the military as a unified force that moves beyond both background and politics reflects Vivian’s argument that neoliberal epideictic rhetoric operates by “acclaiming the historical transcendence of the nation’s freedoms over historical crises, the citizenry’s presumably essential socioeconomic solidarity to the exclusion of its constitutive political differences.”³⁴ In other words, the language used by representatives depicting a united American public as coming together to support their military the various political and social differences and their implications are deemed unimportant compared to their position as an American that supports the military.

Both examples indicate that the memorial is enthymematically being positioned to advocate on behalf of the American military. The representative’s articulation that Americans that support their country would support the project to honor their military articulates an understanding of civic performance that asks one to prove their position as Americans by supporting the military. The collective memory of American tradition and history of honoring American soldiers is leveraged to depict those that would present

alternative understandings of what it means to be an American as deeply problematic.

The frame also shapes the memorial as supporting the larger American military. The Global War on Terror memorial is marked as an expression of American patriotism, a value that is intimately tied with supporting the American military. The impact of tying the memorial to an expression of patriotism is the normalization of a memory of the Global War on Terror, and American history in general, as a display of heroic sacrifice and American bravery. The representatives can present the narrative of the Global War on Terror in such a way that the military is characterized as heroic and in need of valorization.

The normalization that equivocates patriotism with supporting the Global War on Terror is dangerous because ideologies that could potentially challenge these narratives are easily marked as being against the military or against veterans. There is historical precedent for the problem of depoliticizing support of the American military. During the construction of the Vietnam Veterans memorial significant discussions occurred over the morality of building a memorial for the Vietnam War.³⁵ Among anti-war protestors and those that were generally critical of US foreign policy there was a significant push against the memorial. However, supporters of the memorial presented a narrative of the memorial as being non-ideological and meant to unify a divided country behind the nation's soldiers.³⁶

The argument that regardless of the ethicality of the conflict that the nation should unite behind its military became increasingly influential and narratives that were critical of the Vietnam war were marked as inappropriate and politically divisive.³⁷ The memorial became a national unification project that took the memory of the Vietnam war

which “threatened to divide Americans into hostile camps and to undermine Americans’ willingness to stomach future wars”³⁸ and replaced the narrative where “critics of the war’s morality were, in contrast, marginalized”³⁹ and “moral condemnations “of the Vietnam war “became anathema.”⁴⁰ The same narrative is playing out in the context of the Global War on Terror Memorial as the claim that the project of the memorial and support for the United States military is apolitical is used as an argumentative justification even as the narrative presented by congressional representatives ultimately affirms a memory of the war that upholds the United States characterization of the war as a heroic effort

The articulation of a military that transcends traditional political and cultural divisions affirms a memory of the United States military that erases structural violence both in and outside of the military. The representative’s reference to the military’s acceptance of Americans from every race and all walks of life portrays the military as an inclusive institution that sees beyond race and only cares about one’s relationship to patriotism. The impact to the erasure of how structural differences such as race shape populations relationship to the military is that the military affirms an American subject that assumes everyone has equal access to being read as American. The assumption that there is equal access to the idea of being Americans ignores the reality of American history, that many different populations have been and continue to be denied access to that position because of their racial or class identity. The position of who is counted as an American has always been one dictated by notions of whiteness and civility, a pattern that the rhetoric used in the debate ignores completely.⁴¹ Furthermore, by naturalizing the notion of a unified melting pot that comes together, the rhetoric used by congressional

representatives forwards a memory of the war that forgets uncomfortable facts such as the disproportional amount of violence that black and brown people face in relation to serving in the military.⁴² The understanding that to be an American is to be above race and class also actively forgets the present reality that the nation is clearly divided along racial lines, having just elected a President that actively flirts with white supremacy. The nation is divided upon race and class lines, yet the rhetoric here indicates that the Global War on Terror Memorial will reinforce a narrative of recent American history that is colorblind and functionally dismissive of the struggles that many non-normative bodies are currently facing in the United States.

Fundamentally, the argument that Americans should ignore political differences and unite behind an institution in the military that affirmed true American values is an essential part of how the memory of the Global War on Terror is being contested. The argument relies on their audience's enthymematic relationship to American history and the tradition of supporting the military. Accompanied by the weight of a cultural memory that emphasizes the need to honor the military, the rhetoric used by representatives' pressures American citizens to view supporting the military as a civic duty. By extension, the argument positions the memorial as an affirmation of the civic duty to support the military and understanding of the American military as heroic and worthy of honoring.

The Global War on Terror as Politically Neutral

The second major theme I will focus on in this chapter is the way that the Global War on Terror memorial is described as being ideologically neutral. Representative McClintock give two clear examples of argument that describes the Global War on Terror as ideologically neutral that can be seen to mask an underlying ideology. First,

when he states “We can and should debate the policies that have prolonged this war and denied our troops the full might and resources of our nation”⁴³ before remarking that the memorial itself is beyond politics. The phrasing implies that the reason why the United States is still fighting is because the U.S. has failed to be militaristic enough is not a neutral ideal, rather it is one that is clearly arguing for an approach to foreign policy that would see the United States be more aggressive in foreign affairs.

Likewise, in later remarks, McClintock notes that this memorial is the start of a project to defend western civilization from the barbarism that is radical Islamic terrorism.⁴⁴ Marking the enemies of the United States as barbarians, and the use of the phrase “radical Islamic terrorism” both function as enthymematic arguments. The audience is meant to understand that Western civilization is something to be celebrated and that it is the United States that defends those ideals. Additionally, his use of the language of barbarism in the context of discussing Islam and people of color in the Middle East has the historical weight of the way those populations have historically been marked. A second example of the memorial being portrayed as ideologically neutral comes from Representative Gallagher who argues that the memorial isn’t about the political ideology of the Global War on Terror, rather that it functions to “continue to pass the torch of democracy from one generation to the next.”⁴⁵ Again, representative Gallagher downplays the political significance of the Global War on Terror Memorial in relation to the conflict itself and instead focuses on the memorial and an example of democracy. An example that he frames as an act that moves beyond any traditional political disputes.

The depiction of the Global War on Terror memorial as ideologically neutral is a powerful example of the neoliberal epideictic rhetoric of the representative's arguments. One of the central themes of Vivian's articulation of neoliberal epideictic rhetoric is that it presents ideologies that have been promoted within civic performance as natural and neutral.⁴⁶ Vivian's analysis focuses on concepts such as democracy and liberalism, however, the argument applies very well to representative McClintock's articulation of Western civilization. McClintock gives no description of what civilization means in this instance, relying on his audience to fill in the gap. As Vivian argues, the process of fill-in can never be neutral, rather it is conditioned by a life time of civic performance conditioning as to what western civilization means. Furthermore, the way that fill-in occurs is shaped by his later description of the United States opposition as barbarians.

That notion of barbarism can be directly compared to his rhetoric of saving western civilization to imply that those that the United States fights are not worthy of being civilized. The rhetorical implication of the memorial cannot be separated from these arguments because how the Global War on Terror is positioned intrinsically shapes how the memorial will be understood. Representative McClintock's depiction of the war as a clash of civilizations frames the memorial as being a celebration of those who sacrificed themselves on behalf of western civilization in opposition to the evil barbarians. Representatives Gallagher's comments engage in a similar form of political dismissal. Gallagher's willingness to look past various political implications of the Global War on Terror because he believes that affirming notions of American democracy is more significant reflects how the cultural ideals Vivian describes can prevent individuals from critically questioning the policies their ideals support. The question of

the Global War on Terror and its ethicacy becomes secondary to the memorials support of democratic institutions.

In both instances the memory of the Global War on Terror, supported by descriptions of the memorial as transcending ideology, uphold the dominant story of how the Global War on Terror is positioned within discourse. Rather than a vastly complex network of conflict and struggle between the United States and various groups, the Global War on Terror is simply reduced to either a clearly knowable and defined conflict between western civilization and barbarians, or a lesson for the United States in democracy promotion. The actual fabric of the narrative of the Global War on Terror is untouched and described as not ideological. The description of the Global War on Terror as a clear knowable conflict is ahistorical, for example, even the very name the Global War on Terror proves the ambiguous nature of the war. It is not clear which conflicts the Global War on Terror includes, nor is its clear what “Terror” even represents. The congressional representatives take the fixed meaning of these terms for granted. The Global War on Terror foundation is slightly more critical, however, ultimately argues that they simply use the “neutral” Department of Defense’s definition of the Global War on Terror as referring to the United States military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴⁷

This definition of the Global War on Terror presents the conflict in a neat way that ignores forms of conflict that problematize the definition of the war as only involving those countries. For example, under this frame, CIA black-sites or lone “terrorist” attacks are not viewed as being part of the Global War on Terror. Given the political nature of even the very name the Global War on Terror, it is impossible for McClintock’s articulation of the memorial transcending political conflict to manifest. Similarly,

Gallagher's focus on the memorial as a democratic gesture ignores complications such as these. Accordingly, these other forms of violence are disconnected from the neat narrative of the Global War on Terror. Instead the memorial affirms a narrative of the conflict depicted by the United States Department of Defense as being unworthy of challenge.

The articulation of the memorial as transcending traditional political divides, also ultimately allows racist views of the Global War on Terror such as those expressed by Representative McClinton to go unchallenged. In his remarks, the representative functionally referred to Islamic people as barbarians and the enemy of western civilization. Yet, no other representative in the room spoke out against him or pushed back against the narrative that the war was about defending western civilization. In fact, they did the opposite, praising him for his willingness to support a bipartisan project. The claim that this memorial is more important than political issues, leads to an acceptance of a racist characterization of the narrative of the Global War on Terror as natural. The lack of contestation allows the narrative that remembers the Global War on Terror along these racial lines to gain purchase and become part of the dominant discourse.

The naturalization of a racialized narrative of the Global War on Terror occurs at the expense of narratives that position the United States as perpetrators of racialized violence in countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan. As public memory is a question of discursive contestation, it is dangerous to allow such rhetoric to be viewed as not truly political. The danger is even more pronounced when such rhetoric is shaping how the Global War on Terror Memorial is to be viewed. The advocacy articulate by Representative McClinton envisions the memorial as promoting a memory of the war

that affirms racialized violence by the American military against radical Islamic” barbarians.”⁴⁸

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the necessity of understanding public memory as both a form of argumentation and as produced by the arguments forwarded in public discourse. Groups, such as supporters of the Global War on Terror Memorial foundation, invoke memories as a form of enthymematic argument, supported by the collective traditions and beliefs of past generations of Americans. Moments of ceremonial speech, like the debate over the memorial, position the audience to complete arguments related to ideals of patriotism and civic duty. The views of said audience are also influenced to uphold normative ideologies by epideictic performances of commemoration because ceremonies present these ideas as commonsense. How these questions are discussed provides the grammar for individuals to articulate their relationship to these ideals. As such, the presentation of ideas such as democracy or freedom, as non-ideological within this congressional debate imbues these values with power and a sense of inevitability.

The representatives created a ceremony, disguised in the form of a debate, that affirmed a vision of the Global War on Terror which reinforced the view of the war as a heroic act on behalf of the United States military and western civilization. Additionally, the epideictic rhetoric used during the debate argued on behalf of the United States military. The representative’s constant praise of the military placed the institution as being one that any true American would support. The connection between supporting the military and the United States articulated here is dangerous in that it casts those who would oppose the military or point to the violence it commits as unamerican and divisive.

The rhetoric used in these conversations argues for the idea that there is an authentic American, as opposed to groups who cannot meet this standard and are marked as lesser.

Understanding the function of neoliberal epideictic rhetoric is also significant because it partially shapes how the Global War on Terror Memorial itself will be read. Even though the rhetoric of the representatives may be limited in reach, as institutional supporters of the memorial they do have an influence on how the project of the memorial is ultimately actualized. Particularly, this debate sets up a framework for what the memorial is supposed to affirm. Thus, rather than being an inconsequential moment of rhetoric, representatives can influence how the project of the memorial will move forward. Given, the importance and scope of national United States' war memorials, the ideas of these representatives do have a much longer, if diluted reach. The meaning of war memorials is not fixed, rather they are constantly contested as part of a larger battle over how memory is deployed and shaped by the rhetoric used to describe its purpose. Rhetoricians have a duty to attend to this contestation and interrogate how different institutions and ideologies such as the military and American exceptionalism interact with the contestation over the meaning of American memorials. Such a responsibility extends beyond the realm of war memorials to other forms of commemoration such as the honoring of confederate figures or memorials dedicated to other controversial historical figures. All these forms of commemoration rely on modes of argument and on the American audience's enthymematic knowledge of American history and tradition, Therefore, all these forms of commemoration are relevant to rhetorical study and attempts to outline how hegemonic memories and narratives are naturalized.

The interrogation of the Global War on Terror Memorial's, and the general focus on portraying the project as apolitical or objective in nature, is one such area that rhetoricians should intervene. Rhetorician's interrogation of how underlying ideologies are conveyed, even unintentionally, through the words and forms of rhetoric one uses is perfect for challenging the idea that memorials, especially war memorials could ever be apolitical or transcend ideology. Disrupting this strategy, of arguing that a memorial is apolitical, is key to both recognizing the ever-contested nature of public memory and being able to undermine rhetoric that argues for the heroic nature of the Global War on Terror. Such a recognition understands that claims that memorials are non-ideological are both ahistorical and operate as a rhetorical strategy meant to present the memorial's ideas and arguments as objective givens. Such a recognition also offers a point of intervention of rhetoricians in order to expose the ideological nature of many of these concepts that have been ritualized into our understanding of American identity.

Notes

¹ The bill was announced as a press release by the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation, Congressmen Gallagher and Congressman Moulton, see: “Press Release: GWOTMF Announces H.R.873 Alongside Vsos and Congressmen Gallagher, Moulton,” *Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation*, March 17, 2017, <https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org/news/press-release-gwotmf-announces-h-r-873-alongside-vsos-and-congressmen-gallagher-moulton/>.

² “Press Release: GWOTMF.”

³ “Press Release: GWOTMF.”

⁴ “Joint Press Conference to Formally Announce H.R.873,” *Facebook Video, Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation*, 29:35, March 17, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/gwotmf/videos/joint-press-conference-to-formally-announce-hr-873-a-bipartisan-bill-co-sponsore/1274075139367371/>

⁵ For general information regarding the timeline of the bill see: “Congressional Chronicle, Bills in the 115th Congress H.R. 873,” CSPANN, last modified, August 18, 2017, <https://www.c-span.org/congress/bills/bill/?115/hr873>.

⁶ See the previous quote by representative Moulton as a reference for how this argument was usually articulated.

⁷ Dickinson, Greg, Carole Blair and Brian L. Ott. *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010),10.

⁸ Vivian, Bradford. "Neoliberal Epideictic: Rhetorical Form and Commemorative Politics on September 11, 2002." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 1 (2006): 3-4.

⁹ Vivian, “Neoliberal Epideictic,” 4.

¹⁰ Vivian, “Neoliberal Epideictic,”4.

¹¹“These proceedings can be viewed on C-SPAN’s official website, “House Session.” C-SPAN Video,”5:41:51, July 28, 2017, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4678661/gwot-memorial-bill-hr-873-debate-passage&start=8924%202:31:40-2:32:30>

¹² Carole Blair, V. William Balthrop, and Neil Michel. "The Arguments of the Tombs of the Unknown: Relationality and National Legitimation." *Argumentation* 25, no. 4 (2011): 449-468.

¹³ Blair, Balthrop and Michel, “The Arguments of the,” 450

¹⁴ Erik Ryan McGeough, Catherine Helen Palczewski, and Randall A. Lake. "Oppositional memory practices: U.S. Memorial Spaces as Arguments over Public Memory." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 51, no. 4 (2015):231-254.

¹⁵ Choi, Suhi. *Embattled Memories*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2014)

¹⁶ Choi, *Embattled Memories*, 12.

¹⁷ Choi, *Embattled Memories*, 13.

¹⁸ Choi, *Embattled Memories*, 76.

¹⁹ Choi, *Embattled Memories*, 7.

²⁰ Donofrio, Theresa Ann. "Ground Zero and Place-Making Authority: The Conservative Metaphors in 9/11 Families' "Take Back the Memorial" Rhetoric." *Western Journal of Communication* 74, no. 2 (2010): 150-169.

²¹ Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic," 3.

²² Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic," 3-4.

²³ Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic," 15.

²⁴ Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic," 9.

²⁵ Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic," 15.

²⁶ Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic," 18-19.

²⁷ Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic," 19.

²⁸ Fisher, Walter R. "Uses of the Enthymeme." *The Speech Teacher* 13, no. 3 (1964): 199.

²⁹ "House Session," C-SPAN Video, 2:26:00-2:26:30.

³⁰ "House Session," C-SPAN Video, 2:46:35-2:46:57.

³¹ "House Session," C-SPAN Video, 2:40:00-2:40:07.

³² "House Session," C-SPAN Video, 2:34:00-2:34:10.

³³ "House Session," C-SPAN Video, 2:48:25-2:48:35.

³⁴ Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic," 4.

³⁵ For a detailed history of this debate see: Patrick Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing*. (Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009).

³⁶ Hagopian, "The Vietnam War In," 201

³⁷ Hagopian, "The Vietnam War In," 12.

³⁸ Hagopian, "The Vietnam War In," 201.

³⁹ Hagopian, "The Vietnam War In," 16.

⁴⁰ Hagopian, "The Vietnam War In," 16

⁴¹ Micah E. Johnson, "The Paradox of Black Patriotism: Double Consciousness." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41, no. 11 (2018): 1974-1975.

⁴² "Minorities Continue to Pay a High Price for Iraq," *The Philadelphia Tribune*, March 24, 2013. https://www.phillytrib.com/news/minorities-continue-to-pay-a-high-price-for-iraq/article_80d3ee27-ef47-56c9-926a-c2c613cbdd72.html

⁴³ "House Session," C-SPAN Video, 2:26:45-2:26:00

⁴⁴ "House Session," C-SPAN Video, 2:28:05-2:28:15

⁴⁵ "House Session," C-SPAN Video, 2:34:25-2:34:40

⁴⁶ Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic"7-8.

⁴⁷ Rodriguez, Michael. "Why Are You Called the GWOT Memorial Foundation When That Term Has Been Politicized?" GWOT Memorial Foundation. Accessed April 26, 2018.
<https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org/faq/why-are-you-called-the-gwot-memorial-foundation-when-that-term-has-been-politicized/>.

⁴⁸ House Session," C-SPAN Video, 2:28:05-2:28:20

CHAPTER THREE

The Principles of The Global War on Terror Memorial

The Global War on Terror Memorial foundation's website features a prominent section that outlines the principles of the memorial.¹ Placed next to an area describing the story and tenants of the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation, the principles section consist of a series of one, or two-word phrases, said to represent the values the foundation hopes the memorial will eventually convey.² Recognizing that they are still "at the early stages of designing" the site indicates that the principles are ones that "should be represented in the final construction."³ The organization lists: "Strength, Resilience, Sacrifice, Multi-Generational, Selfless Service, All-Volunteer, Global, Multi-Cultural, Ongoing," as the principles that they intend for the memorial's design to represent. Importantly, despite their prominent placing on the website, there is little actual description from the foundation as to what specifically these principles are supposed to mean. Nor is there any discussion of how the foundation plans to represent any of these ideals. The question of how a memorial is supposed to represent "strength" or its "multi-cultural" nature is tellingly left unanswered.

Even when the principles do appear in media discussing the project, they are rarely described beyond a couple of sentences that touch on the overall message of the memorial. One such article focuses on the principle "ongoing," praising the foundation for recognizing the reality that the Global War on Terror has no end in sight but discusses none of the other ideals.⁴ Ultimately, for principles that are supposed to guide the

memorials message, there is a lack of any meaningful articulation as to how these often referenced principles will actually be represented, or even a justification from the foundation as to why these values were identified as needing to be represented by memorial.

This chapter analyzes how these principles are deployed as a rhetorical strategy to support the Global War on Terror Memorial, as well as the ideologies and forms of public memory that are promoted through the emphasis on such principles. Particularly, I focus on the nebulous nature of the meaning of said principles, plus the lack of articulation as to how they will be represented by the memorial. My argument is that the ambiguity surrounding the message the memorial is meant to convey allows for the dominant ideologies and histories behind these terms to control how the memorial is ultimately understood. Under this frame, the use of cultural signifiers such as “strength” and “resilience” to depict values the memorial should represent, functions as a rhetorical strategy that ensures that the memorial promotes the dominant ideologies that have constructed the dominant meaning of these words.

My analysis reads these terms through Calvin McGee’s notion of ideographs. I argue that these one- and two-word statements that “signify and contain a unique ideological commitment” are essential in constructing the ideology promoted by the memorial.⁵ I will also claim that the principles the foundation argues the memorial should represent position the memorial as a symbol that promotes an understanding of the Global War on Terror where the United States is the victim of the conflict and needs to embrace traditional American values in order to move past the violence the country has experienced. Second, I will argue that the idea that the memorial should represent a

“multi-cultural” and “global” ideal is emblematic of a larger push by the American military to center the diversity of the military even as the United States continues to perpetuate structural forms of violence against foreign populations and minorities domestically. Finally, I contend that the emphasis that the memorial should represent the “ongoing” nature of the war ultimately reinforces the idea that the Global War on Terror is an inevitable and unending conflict. The acquiescence to the rhetoric of perpetual war numbs American citizens to the violence of the War on Terror that occurs both at home and abroad.⁶ The memorials advocacy for the “ongoing” nature of the Global War on Terror also impacts how scholars should view modern American commemorative practices. The Global War on Terror Memorial demonstrates the act of commemoration is not simply a question of affirming specific memories of the past, rather, it has become a question of performing contemporary American citizenship.

McGee’s Ideographic Criticism

Before proceeding, it is necessary to briefly outline McGee’s conception of the ideograph. First, I will highlight McGee’s emphasis on the role that these words can have in building ideology and use it as a frame to understand the ways that the Global War on Terror Memorial foundation deploys these signifiers in their attempt to construct the desired message of the memorial. Second, I will interrogate three groups of principles advocated by the foundation, in each section I describe how the ideograph has historically been deployed in the context of discourses surrounding American militarism and the Global War on Terror. Finally, I will outline the narratives and ideologies that are promoted by the strategy of having the memorial convey these messages as well as the

memories and ideologies that are erased by the message the Global War on Terror Memorial forwards.

I begin by analyzing how the rhetoric of “resiliency” and “strength” promoted by the foundation convey a narrative of United States victimhood and exceptionalism that minimizes the violence that the country has committed and continues to commit. Then I focus on the foundation’s emphasis on the multi-cultural and global nature of the conflict, arguing that the nature of the memorial prevents any engagement with ideas of multiculturalism and diversity beyond the shallow forms of neoliberalism promoted by the United States military. Finally, I focus on the message that the war is “ongoing”, a principle that is often referenced by supporters of the Global War on Terror. Using Jeremy Engels and William Sass’s notion of rhetorical acquiescence I argue that the promotion of war being perpetual has subscribed to a memory of the war that sanitizes the conflict and accepts the “ongoing” violence perpetuated by the United States. I also argue that the focus on the war’s inevitability shapes our understanding of how commemoration functions as a civic practice. In the conclusion of this chapter I argue that ideographic analysis plays an important role for rhetoricians attempting to understand how public memory is contested. I also argue that, the engagement by rhetoricians with ideographs such as those used by the Global War on Terror foundation offers an opportunity for rhetoricians to question and challenge the way ideographs promote ideology.

The Ideograph as a Rhetorical Tool

McGee’s 1980 article “The Ideograph A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology” introduced the concept of an ideograph to rhetorical studies.⁷ Responding to those that

argued that rhetoric had no bearing on conceptions of ideology McGee sought to develop a frame that could articulate the influence that rhetoric has on ideology. He defined an ideograph as a “ordinary language term found in political discourse” that is “a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal.”⁸ For McGee, ideographs “reflect an ideology and, in doing so, also indicate how actions should be viewed.”⁹ Ideographs also “provide a vocabulary for citizens to understanding their social reality and feel a sense of belonging to the society.”¹⁰ McGee’s analysis used examples such as “equality” and the “rule of law” as instances of rhetoric that gain their meaning from the weight of history and collective memory.¹¹ These terms are clearly abstract in nature, they do not have a set material meaning in of themselves, as McGee stated, “no one has ever seen equality strutting up the driveway.”¹² Yet, the signifier of equality is constantly referenced within American discourse as an ideological goal that society should strive towards. The term equality becomes part of vocabulary that participates in the contestation over how Americans understand their society. Importantly, McGee demonstrated that these terms prove that the rhetoric does have a material impact as to how ideology is understood within American society. As McGee states, these ideographs serve as the “building blocks of ideology” and their significance should not be understated.¹³

Since the original publication of McGee’s essay on ideographs many rhetorical scholars have used his framework to interrogate how rhetoric produces ideology. Scholars have followed his call to trace the history of specific political terms that “become precedent, touchstones” for judging current uses of the words.¹⁴ They have also engaged in forms of synchronic analysis, asking how the language is used in current

moments to reinforce ideology. One such example in the context of the United States' War on Terrorism is Heidi Hamilton's analysis of the ideograph of patriotism and how patriotism has been deployed in relation to anti-war on terror movements.¹⁵ Dana Cloud's essay focused on how visual forms of media covering the conflict operate as visual ideographs is another example.¹⁶

In framing the principles the foundation hopes the memorial to convey as ideographs I seek to continue to study the implications that ideographs such as "strength" and "resilience" have on the American understanding of the War on Terror and how the events of recent years have impacted our understanding of ideographs themselves. The principles the foundation wants the Global War on Terror Memorial to convey operate as a useful text to study because they embody the high ordered abstraction McGee outlines as a fundamental quality of an ideograph, allowing the audiences to complete the message based on how these terms have been historically constructed. Additionally, because the instance of the Global War on Terror Memorial is unique enough to challenge traditional paradigms of commemoration and civic engagement, it is necessary for scholars to study the ideologies being promoted by the memorial project. Ideographic analysis provides a frame through which to perform that analysis.

This chapter focuses on the synchronic nature of the ideographs used by the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation. While it is impossible to perform a synchronic analysis without reference to the historical uses of ideograph to understand its modern use, I focus less on the etymology of the ideographs I analyze and more on the ways they are deployed in the current era of the United States' Global War on Terror. While, I analyzed the terms in grouped sections, it is important to note that ideographs

gain meaning in relationship to the other terms that are being used.¹⁷ Thus, the reading of terms such as “resilience” and “strength” cannot truly be considered absent the reading of terms such as “ongoing.” Fundamentally, my argument is that the ideographs used in the principles of the Global War on Terror Memorial forward an ideology that advocates the memorial represent the Global War on Terror as being a just undertaking, by an ethical institution that now must be respected in order to honor the deserving veterans of the conflict.

The Rhetoric of Resilience and US Victimization

The first two words listed as principles that the Global War on Terror Memorial should represent are “strength” and “resilience.” The memorial is meant to convey that the United States and individual soldiers have exhibited courage and the ability to face the violence that the war has perpetuated. The notion that the United States has been resilient in face of the violence of the Global War on Terror is one that is commonly expressed in various media published both directly by the foundation and in articles published by other media outlets supporting the construction of the memorial.¹⁸ For example, the foundations released talking points for those hoping to discuss the memorial with their families, included speaking to the “strength, efficiency, and resiliency of the people who wear the uniform.” A resiliency proven by the length and difficulty of the Global War on Terror. The memorial is advocated as a way of demonstrating that in spite of the losses and violence that soldiers and Americans in general have faced in response to the war, the memorial is an opportunity to demonstrate that the American people, the American military and generally the American nation have continued and will continue to be strong in the face of those losses.

The ideograph of “resilience” has always been a major trope in discourse that deals with American notions of citizenship facing tragedy.¹⁹ As Nicolas Paliewicz argues the idea of a resilient American populace has been frequently “used to elevate American citizens during times of adversity.”²⁰ Furthermore, as a rhetorical trope “resilience” has historically been used to explain how “citizens may learn to empathize politically and morally with others who have known loss.”²¹ From the Cold War to the American revolution, across all of American history the term “resilience” draws upon memories in which Americans have come together in order to respond to adversity and loss. The term “resilience” is deployed as a means of indicating that the nation needs to be united in response to a perceived loss. “Resilience” functions as an ideograph because it articulates a vague notion of bravery or strength in response to loss. However, there is never a clear articulation of what it means to be resilient. Instead “resilience” operates as a signifier that calls to a need to recover from violence without indicating what recovery looks like. The means by which resilience can be expressed becomes a question of the way larger ideologies regarding proper American citizenship and patriotism construct “resilience.” The increasing reference to the rhetoric of resiliency in discussions of the War on Terror in the post 9/11 era has demonstrated the influence that ideology has on how the value of “resilience” is understood by Americans. For example, Paliewicz essay demonstrates the integral role that modern notions of “resilience” have had in framing the message of the 9/11 memorial/museum. In that instance the rhetoric of “resilience” framed the 9/11 memorial as a “coping mechanism” that “encourages subjects to move forward.”²² Paliewicz’s essay focuses on the positive aspects of “resilience,” particularly its ability to promote an ideology that pushes Americans towards political actions, and to

give a grammar for Americans to respond to the violence of the Global War on Terror.²³ However, in the context of the Global War on Terror Memorial the ideograph's positioning of the United States as the victim is deeply problematic. The idea that the United States should be portrayed as "resilient" in the face of the Global War on Terror centers the losses that the U.S. has experienced as the primary things that needs to be memorialized. A memory of the war is affirmed that allows for a heroic American population to recover from the violence they have experienced. The memorial's message that the United States is the victim is also dangerous because it undermines structural challenges to the violence committed by the United States during the war. Rather, then focusing on the fact that the United States invaded multiple countries, or the civilian deaths brought about by the war, the ideograph of "resilience" invites the memorials audience to center their memory of the Global War on Terror on what the nation lost and how the nation will recover. The move to center the losses of the United States indicates the reality that the memorial will always be about honoring American soldiers and American lives, never other victims of the Global War on Terror, because their memories and stories get pushed away in favor of a narrative in which the United States memorializes those American's deem as "resilient."

A further problem with affirming this ideograph is that the term "resilience," implies that there will be a form of recovery. The message conveyed that while the United States has been damaged by the war, the nation will persevere, and acquire "strength" again because the American population is brave and "resilient." The assurance that the nation will become a great power again belies the fact that the United States need to be strong played a role in creating the War on Terror in the first place. The message

conveyed by the memorial gives Americans the ability to comfort themselves with the thought that the nation will eventually gain power again. The palpable narrative of American redemptive contrasts with a description of the war that could force the United States to confront the loss and violence resulting from the war without the possibility of an American redemption. However, the use of “resilience” as an ideograph indicates that the foundation is advocating a narrative in which the problem is not American ideology, it is that the United States did not properly embody that ideology and through the resilient nature of the population the nation will recover again.

Fundamentally, the foundation’s centering of “resilience” as a quality the memorial should embody pushes the Global War on Terror Memorial towards becoming another cultural piece in post 9/11 America that recognizes that the United States has suffered from the Global War on Terror, but ultimately, refuses to confront that loss, in favor of an ideology that assumes the United States will recover and that the nation is inherently strong and valiant. The centering of the message of “resilience” reflects a larger cultural shift, as media has increasingly produced narratives of “resilience,” particularly in the context of American war films.²⁴

As Mark Straw has argued there has been an increasing wave of films, such as: Zero Dark Thirty, American Sniper, Black Hawk Down, The Hurt Locker, Behind Enemy Lines, that have emphasized the violent nature of the conflict by presenting gritty depictions of the Global War on Terror that attempt to authentically reproduce the violence of the conflict. Yet, in the film genre Straw identifies as the “contemporary American war film,” the United States has consistently been positioned as an innocent victim that must heal from wounds inflicted by the conflict.²⁵ Such, a cultural trend

demonstrates the significance of focusing on the “resilience” of the U.S. in conversations as to how the Global War on Terror should be remembered. The term, and more importantly, the ideology of American victimization underlying the term, spread across other forms of popular discourse and become more engrained within the nation’s collective memory.

Many contemporary war films, such as Zero Dark Thirty, are popular and present themselves as realistic in their depiction of the war on terror. However, these films also, promote the similar idea of “resilience” and American recovery, through their depictions of American soldiers facing the violent experiences of said war. It is the cultural and ideological impetus to protect the American soldiers bravely enduring the brutality of war that the ideograph of “resilience” and the larger memorial project gestures to. The memorial becomes the latest means of recognizing that American soldiers have faced violence in these conflicts and thus need recognition for their bravery. However, the recognition of the soldier’s “resilience” functions as a gesture that makes the Global War on Terror Memorial more about the necessity of supporting veterans and the nation in general healing. The focus on national healing comes at a direct cost to challenges to the violence that the American military has committed in these wars.

Multi-Culturalism and a Diverse Military

From the beginning of the project the Global War on Terror Memorial foundation has emphasized the “multi-cultural” nature of the memorial. For supporters of the memorial, service in the American military transcends all racial and cultural differences. The projects’ emphasis on its “multi-cultural” nature can be seen from the congressional testimony referenced in chapter two, where each congressional representative lauded how

those they served with came from all backgrounds, or in articles such as the Washington Post opinion piece written by an retired general and advisor for the foundation that promised that the memorial would honor those that “volunteered from every race, creed and religion.”²⁶ Advocates for the memorial have been quick to use the “multi-cultural” nature of the effort to push back against criticism of the Global War on Terror as racially motivated.²⁷ For them, a diverse military demonstrates that this conflict is a question about embodying American principles as opposed to a conflict impacted by traditional racial hierarchies.

Again, the term “multi-cultural” functions as a powerful ideograph because there is no clear idea or expression as to what a “multi-cultural” interpretation of the Global War on Terror could look like. How does one construct a memorial that is “multi-cultural?” The foundation’s emphasis on the term instead represents a more general claim that the contemporary American military represents all Americans. This sentiment mirrors the general push by the military to portray their actions in the war on terror and the institution in general, as embodying American values. Therefore, the foundation’s emphasis on the “multi-cultural” nature of the memorial participates in the larger ideological project of associating the military with diversity, inclusion and American values. My argument is that this project is a deliberate strategy by the military and supporters to equate the military with American values.

The strategy to place emphasis on the diverse and “multi-cultural” nature of the military is not a tactic that is unique to the Global War on Terror Memorial foundation. Achieving a “multi-cultural” and diverse military has been frequently cited as a goal of the United States armed forces in the post 9/11 era.²⁸ The argument goes that a military

which draws from all walks of life would properly reflect American values and function more effectively.²⁹ The military's active push towards diversity has resulted in many recruiting campaigns that focus on the military's representation of "multi-cultural" values.³⁰ The trend of focusing on the "multi-cultural" elements of the military should be framed as part of a larger push in a post-cold war America that has recognized that difference rather than something to be excluded, is something that can be marketed too and used on behalf of state institutions, such as the military.³¹ Since it is no longer explicitly ethical for the military to engage in forms of blatant racial discrimination, the military instead portrays itself as an institution that is functionally post-racial or colorblind. However, as Favara argues the narrative that the military is "multi-cultural" serves to rehabilitate the military as an institution that transcends racial and class divides. One such way this rehabilitation manifests is through the description of the military as inclusive and exceptional due to its practices of tolerance.³² "Multi-cultural" as an ideograph is constitutive of a larger ideology that advocates for the military on behalf of its now diverse nature. The framing that the military is good because it is diverse reflects the worst forms of neoliberalism, in the sense that it posits individual representation within problematic institutions as a form of progress, ignoring the very violence that those institutions promote. Even more problematic, messages that center the "multi-cultural" nature of the military function to portray the military as an ethical institution, for in the modern United States multi-culturalism is assumed to be a value worth striving for.

The "multi-cultural" ideograph portrays the memorial as embodying the ethos of post-racial American neoliberalism. The foundation argues that the memorial must

emphasize the military's "multi-cultural" roots because that ensures every American who fought in the Global War on Terror, regardless of their position will be honored.

However, analysis that assumes those who serve in the military embody the same social location ignores many of the structural racial and class issues that are intrinsic to both the military and the nation as a whole. For example, the reality that a disproportionate number of U.S. soldiers fighting and dying in the Global War on Terror are poor black and brown people is papered over by the narrative that the "multi-cultural" military is all in this together.³³

The second clear implication of the ideology affirmed by the principle of multi-culturalism is the focus on the individual frame of diversity as opposed to structural ones. While, the Global War on Terror Memorial promotes its space and by extension the military as embodying all Americans, there is the reality that often the military has enacted racial violence internationally. The military only values multi-culturalism insofar as it relates to those who serve in the armed forces. In other instances, that multi-culturalism, at the level of race, gender, sexual orientation and disability is leveraged as a justification for why the United States military is exceptional and should take the lead in controlling other nations.³⁴ The advocacy that the Global War on Terror Memorial depicts the "multi-cultural" nature of the military and war is less meaningful when one considers the various forms of racial and classed violence that occurred due to the United States' military actions.

The Rhetoric of Acquiescence and Commemoration

One of the central arguments for the Global War on Terror Memorial is that the Global War on Terror has no clear end point, which is to say that because there is no

clear end in sight for the war it means that a memorial *should* be built, or the veterans of the Global War on Terror will never be honored. The theme emerged at the very beginning of the campaign for the project. The initial leader of the project, Andrew Brennan, explicitly stated during the press conference that he intended to make sure his generation had access to a war memorial.³⁵ Even in documentation published by official representatives of the United States military, there is an increasing recognition that the war is unconventional enough to be potentially unending.³⁶ The desire to have the memorial advocate a message of “ongoing” war works as an acceptance of such as paradigm. In fact, it indicates that the Global War on Terror’s “ongoing” nature is intrinsic to how the war should be understood as it is commemorated. While it is not clear how the memorial is meant to represent the wars “ongoing” nature, “ongoing” “functions as an ideograph because that opaque nature allows for the larger framework of the inevitability of the Global War on Terror to influence how that message will be read.

The theme of an “ongoing” Global War on Terror appeared in the immediate years following 9/11.³⁷ As Engels and Sass note, one sees the theme of an “ongoing” conflict in President Bush’s speeches in the aftermath of the attacks.³⁸ Engels and Sass argue that the belief that the Global War on Terror is inevitable represents an acquiescence to the rhetoric of perpetual war.³⁹ It has become accepted, even promoted, that the violence in which the United States is engaging has no determinate end. For Engels and Sass the acceptance of that reality normalizes the violence performed by the United States, both domestically and abroad as something that is inevitable and simply part of the “ongoing” conflict.⁴⁰ Engels and Sass also argue that such an acquiescence depoliticizes civic protest because those that would challenge the necessity of the war are

depicted as not recognizing the new realities of American conflict.⁴¹ Having a key message of the Global War on Terror Memorial affirm this acquiescence demonstrates how the memorial advocates on behalf of dominant understandings of the conflict.

The ideology being promoted by the Global War on Terror Memorial's focus on "ongoing," is the idea that there is no end to the war in sight, that the violence will continue, and that we must always alter the memorial to respond to that reality. The Global War on Terror Memorial is functionally presenting the rhetorical acquiescence that Engels and Sass discuss as a principle that must be affirmed through the construction of the memorial. An important implication of the belief that the war will never end is that it undercuts the Global War on Terror foundation's attempt to use the memorial as a message that honors the sacrifice of American soldiers because the acceptance of an "ongoing" war is an affirmation of the very ideology that continues to ensure that those soldiers will experience that violence. The acceptance of an "ongoing" war also, intrinsically reinforces the necessity of a memorial, because if the war will not end then it is urgent that the memorial becomes constructed. Those that potentially speak out against the memorial are characterized as speaking out against an inevitability. By its very principle, the Global War on Terror asserts the naturalness of its own existence.

In addition to accepting the inevitability of violence, a second important implication of use of the ideograph "ongoing" relates to the way it shifts American understandings of commemoration. The focus on the "ongoing" nature of the war, and the "ongoing" nature of the memorial, indicates that in the context of the Global War on Terror, commemoration is viewed as an act that is constantly being performed. Traditionally, commemoration has focused on the relationship that memorialization has

had to past events and how those past events can be used in order to shape current public discussions.⁴² Yet, here the principle that the Global War on Terror is “ongoing,” yet, still to be memorialized, alters this framework. In the context of the Global War on Terror Memorial, commemoration serves as an active form of civic participation in which Americans can participate by supporting the construction of the memorial as a means of honoring those serving in the “ongoing” war. The foundations sentiment is best expressed in a press release that stated ”our nation no longer asks patriotic Americans to purchase war bonds to fund our wars, but supporting the GWOT Memorial is a fitting way to support our Veterans and their families.”⁴³ Supporting the memorialization of the ongoing war is equated to the direct act of supporting World War II and the fight against Nazi Germany.

The rhetoric used by the foundation describing supporting the memorial as a part of the war effort demonstrates that the Global War on Terrorism is reframing how civic commemoration is viewed. While, there has been certain practices of commemoration of ongoing violence such as the Aids Memorial Quilt,⁴⁴ there has been an increasing trend of the gap between the event occurring and memorialization shrinking. Blair and Michel in their analysis of said decrease note that often there is no distinction being made between past and present events in the context of commemoration.⁴⁵

Practices of commemoration don’t just shape how the memory of the Global War on Terror is viewed, they actively participate in supporting the war effort. The importance of commemoration is significant, because commemorative practices, such as honoring fallen soldiers, hold historical and persuasive weight. They draw upon centuries of tradition and the gravity of honoring those that sacrificed themselves for the nation.

Thus, affirming commemoration as a form of supporting a war effort is implicitly placing that communal history and recognition of the role that the United States behind the support of the war. To challenge the Global War on Terror is to go against a history that supports the ongoing conflict as ethical. This naturalizes an ideology that sees the inevitable and never-ending war as being supported by centuries of American history and ideology. The Global War on Terror Memorial serves as an active tool in affirming the necessity and ethicality of the continued war.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have employed McGee's concept of the ideograph to examine the key principles that undergird the advocacy surrounding the Global War on Terror Memorial. Specifically, I have argued that the foregrounding of ideologically-laden terms like "resilience", "strength", "multi-cultural", and "ongoing", is designed to engender a particular response from the public audiences, that sees them supporting narratives that uphold the American military and the Global War on Terror as ethical and American. Fundamentally, the foundation emphasis that the memorial conveys these principles displays the political nature of such a project. The memorial, if not explicitly, is clearly making arguments by drawing on particular histories and ideologies in their depiction of how the memorial will be understood.

The importance of this form of ideographic analysis should not be downplayed. It is easy to miss the weight that terms such as "resilience" or "ongoing" can carry when reinforced by larger ideological projects. In analyzing the larger question of how the memorial participates in the larger contestation of the memory of the Global War on Terror, an ideographic analysis of the foundations message helps reveal the ideological

scaffolding that supports the greater project. The meaning, or interpretation of these terms are not fixed, the vague nature of their description allows for significant interpretation as to what the message is supposed to mean. However, that interpretation should never be understood as neutral. Rather, any analysis of the contestation over memory must recognize the way that history and ideological tradition such as how the term “resilience” has generally been viewed, ultimately impact how these ideas are understood by many individuals that see themselves as part of that larger ideological tradition.

Thus, while rhetoricians can never completely predict the way that ideographic terms will be interpreted, there is still value in understanding the message that is intended by those that use the terms. Such analysis allows rhetoricians to trace how larger ideological frameworks are both produced and argued for. Furthermore, as in chapter one, such analysis presents opportunities for rhetoricians to intervene in how such words and ideas become viewed as ideologically neutral or normalized. In the instance of the Global War on Terror Memorial such an intervention involves challenging how the messages of the memorial are presented as ideologically neutral and critical of the Global War on Terror. Due to the fact that such messages implicitly uphold a narrative of the Global War on Terror that supports American hegemony.

Notes

¹ "Our Principles, About the GWOT Memorial Foundation," *Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation*, Accessed November 1, 2018 <https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org/about/>

² "Our Principles."

³ "Our Principles."

⁴ TheResurgent. "Build The Memorial: Why The Global War on Terror Deserves a Memorial." TheResurgent.com. June 05, 2017. Accessed April 26, 2018.
<https://www.themaven.net/theresurgent/contributors/build-the-memorial-why-the-global-war-on-terror-deserves-a-memorial-bZPwLqn-N0G2vLrhJ9By4w>.

⁵ Michael Calvin McGee. "The "Ideograph": A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, no. 1 (1980): 7

⁶ Jeremy Engels, and William O. Saas. "On Acquiescence and Ends-Less War: An Inquiry into the New War Rhetoric." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99, no. 2 (2013): 225-232.

⁷ McGee "The "Ideograph": A Link," 1-16.

⁸ McGee "The "Ideograph": A Link," 15.

⁹ Heidi Hamilton, "Can You be Patriotic and Oppose the War? Arguments to Co-Opt and Refute the Ideograph of Patriotism," *Controversia* 8, no. 1 (2012): 15.

¹⁰ Hamilton, "Can You be," 15.

¹¹ McGee "The "Ideograph": A Link," 7.

¹² McGee "The "Ideograph": A Link," 10.

¹³ McGee "The "Ideograph": A Link," 8.

¹⁴ Hamilton, "Can You be," 16.

¹⁵ Hamilton, "Can you be," 13-35.

¹⁶ Dana L. Cloud, 2004. "To Veil the Threat of Terror": Afghan Women and the (clash of civilizations) in the Imagery of the U.S. War on Terrorism. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (3): 285-306.

¹⁷ Hamilton, "Can you be," 16.

¹⁸ For some of the many examples see: Tony Cordero and Bonnie Carroll, "Families of Fallen Carry On Tradition of Resilience on Memorial Day" *Military.com* 21 May, 2018, "17 Years Later The War in Afghanistan Rages on: What Veterans Have to Say About it," *The Boot Campaign*, October 6, 2018, <https://bootcampaign.org/the-war-in-afghanistan-rages-on-what-veterans-have-to-say-about-it>, Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation, President George W. Bush Takes on New Role as the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation's Honorary Chairman, *Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation*, August 13, 2018.

¹⁹ Nicholas S. Paliewicz, "Bent but Not Broken: Remembering Vulnerability and Resiliency at the National September 11 Memorial Museum." *Southern Communication Journal* 82, no. 1 (2017): 1-14.

²⁰ Paliewicz, “Bent but” 3.

²¹ Paliewicz, “Bent but” 1.

²² Paliewicz, “Bent but” 11.

²³ Paliewicz, “Bent but” 11.

²⁴ Mark Christopher. Straw, "The Damaged Male and the Contemporary American War Film: Masochism, Ethics, and Spectatorship.,," (Ph.D diss., The University of Birmingham 2011)

²⁵ Straw, “The Damage,” 19-20.

²⁶, George Casey, “The Mall needs a Memorial for the War on Terrorism, *Washington Post*, July 21, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-mall-needs-a-memorial-for-the-war-on-terrorism/2017/07/21/f30fc422-61cb-11e7-8adcfea80e32bf47_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.81f4e4510493

²⁷ Paul Springer, “The Time has Come For a Global War on Terrorism Memorial,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/09/the-time-has-come-for-a-global-war-on-terrorism-memorial/>

²⁸ Carissa Wyant, “Who’s Joining the US Military? Poor, Women and Minorities Targeted.” December 18, 2012 <https://www.mintpressnews.com/whos-joining-the-us-military-poor-women-and-minorities-targeted/43418/>

²⁹ Springer, “The Time has..”

³⁰ Jeremiah B. Favara, "Recruiting for Difference and Diversity in the U.S. Military."(Ph.D diss., University of Oregon, 2017) 254-256.

³¹ Neda Atanasoki, *Humanitarian Violence The U.S. Deployment of Diversity* (Minneapolis MN, University of Minnesota Press 2013).

³² Favara, “Recruiting for,” 3-5.

³³ “Minorities Continue to Pay a High Price for Iraq,” The Philadelphia Tribune, March 24, 2013. https://www.phillytrib.com/news/minorities-continue-to-pay-a-high-price-for-iraq/article_80d3ee27-ef47-56c9-926a-c2c613cbdd72.html

³⁴ Springer, “The Time has”.

³⁵ Booker, Brakkton, “Advocates Push For A ‘Global War On Terror’ Memorial” *NPR*, September 9, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/09/09/549690189/advocates-push-for-a-global-war-on-terror-memorial>

³⁶ ³⁷ Jeremy Engels, and William O. Saas. "On Acquiescence and Ends-Less War: An Inquiry into the New War Rhetoric." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99, no. 2 (2013): 225-232.

³⁸ Engels and Sass “On Acquiescence,” 227-228.

³⁹ Engels and Sass “On Acquiescence,” 226.

⁴⁰ Engels and Sass “On Acquiescence,” 230-231.

⁴¹ Engels and Sass “On Acquiescence,” 231.

⁴² Carole Blair, and Neil Michel. "The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Contemporary Culture of Public Commemoration." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2007;2008;): 597

⁴³ Brian Fitzpatrick, "Op-Ed: War on Terrorism Memorial will honor veterans of America's longest conflict," *The Intelligencer*, April 20, 2017 <https://fitzpatrick.house.gov/media-center/in-the-news/op-ed-war-terrorism-memorial-will-honor-veterans-americas-longest-conflict>

⁴⁴ Blair and Michel "The AIDS Memorial," 597.

⁴⁵ Blair and Michel "The AIDS Memorial," 620.

CHAPTER FOUR

Veterans as Argumentative Support and the Global War on Terror Memorial

Any analysis of the rhetoric surrounding the construction of the Global War on Terror memorial would be remiss if it failed to address supporters' frequent references to the memorial's potential to serve as a space of healing for veterans of the Global War on Terror and their family members. Indeed, the desire to provide a space of healing for American soldiers served as the impetus for the project.¹ Andrew Brennan conceived of the memorial after observing a group procession of Vietnam Veterans traveling to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Brennan found the moment emotionally powerful and decided that he wanted his generation of soldiers to "experience that group healing that the Vietnam era-veterans have seen."² For Brennan, the necessity of a space of healing for veterans of the War on Terror came from the fact that these veterans had no guarantee that the war would end in time for them to experience this form of communal healing.³ From that point almost every form of media produced by or about the Global War on Terror foundation has stressed the need to honor the sacrifice of American veterans and their families.⁴

The desire to provide a space of healing for veterans played a central role in both the Congressional debate discussed in chapter two and my analysis of the principles upheld by the memorial in chapter three. Ultimately, if one attempted to identify a thread that ran through all parts of the rhetoric used by Global War on Terror memorial foundation and their supporters, they would see the invocation of the sacrifices made by

veterans for the United States and the desire to create a space of healing for them and their families as the central theme running through all these conversations.

This chapter attempts to engage rhetoric that is both forwarded by and centered on veterans in deliberations over the need for a Global War on Terror Memorial.

Specifically, I discuss the implications of using the need to honor veteran sacrifice as an argument for the memorial's construction. I focus on how one should understand the role of veterans in the contestation over the public memory of American military conflict writ large. I also examine the significance of framing the memorial as a space for the healing of veterans and their families. I argue that rhetoric centered on the sacrifice of veterans is invoked in order to grant legitimacy to the foundation and their supporters' arguments as to how the memorial should be understood ideologically. The necessity of a memorial for the Global War on Terror is supported by the appeal to the affective weight of the grief of families and the heroic sacrifice of veterans. The appeal to the heroic sacrifice of veterans reflects a general trend in American politics identified by Achter, of using the bodies and lives of veterans for "a strategic telos or purpose."⁵

Additionally, my chapter contends that the prioritization of constructing a space of healing for veterans ultimately centers the nation as the victim of the war and engages in a version of mourning that attempts to reach back to a point of national wholeness that never actually existed at the expense of truly grappling with the impact that the war has had on American lives.⁶ Finally, I detail how the deployment of veteran narratives of heroic sacrifice often serves to undermine the narratives of veterans themselves. Veterans are placed in a unique position of witnessing the realities of war first hand. Thus, as Choi argues veterans often can serve as a "critical witnesses,"⁷ subverting dominant narratives

as to how conflict developed. However, in the context of the Global War on Terror memorial the narratives of veterans are used to maintain traditional understandings of the Global War on Terror as a heroic and noble conflict. Thus, rather than serving as critical witnesses' veterans of the Global War on Terror are positioned as advocates for hegemonic narratives of the conflict. The positioning of veterans is significant because it shows how conversations surrounding veterans are used to push the Global War on Terror memorial to represent a memory of the war that reinforces the narrative of heroic American sacrifice and American loss, at the expense of alternative narratives that could challenge the way that war has been conceptualized within American public memory.

My chapter begins by discussing previous literature involving rhetorical study and veterans. I focus on Ivie and Giner's work demonstrating the deep reaching power that the legend of the heroic veteran has in American culture.⁸ I also analyze Achter's discussion on rhetoric's role in the strategic use of veterans and their bodies in order to advocate for specific political strategies.⁹ I conclusively agree with Ivie and Giner, and, Achter's belief that rhetoric surrounding veterans has a significant impact on how social understandings of American foreign policy and memories of conflicts are constructed. I attempt to extend their analysis to the Global War on Terror and to conversations about how said conflict should be commemorated.

The body of this chapter has three sections, the first, analyzes the foundation's use of veteran sacrifice as an argument on behalf of the memorial. I consider a video produced by the foundation featuring the testimony of a spouse whose husband died in the Global War on Terror on the need for a memorial. I examine the way that grief and loss are used to give authenticity to memorial supporters' view of how the project should

be understood. The second section of the chapter focuses on articles written by foundation members and supporters that equate creating a space of healing for veterans of the Global War on Terror to creating a space of healing for the nation. Using Biesecker's analysis of melancholia in post 9/11 US mourning in the United States. I suggest that the rhetoric used by the foundation is part of a larger trend in American discourse that sees the nation looking for a lost conception of a whole America that never existed. My third section centers on narratives of veterans being released by the foundation that support the construction of a memorial based on its ability to give the veteran community a space to grieve. Here, I outline how these narratives demonstrate the possibility of challenging the general narrative of the "War on Terror" but are ultimately undermined by the desire to avoid politicizing the need for veterans to have spaces of healing. I use Choi's analysis of critical witnessing to argue that the veteran supporters of the foundation are denied their subversive potential and used to support the United States' narrative of the war.

Lastly, my chapter concludes by depicting the significance that this chapter has for how memory scholars should engage with the rhetoric surrounding veterans. Using the work of Ivie and Giner again, I discuss how the narratives of veterans can be rearticulated as to engage in what Ivie and Giner refer to as "waging piece."¹⁰ Such rearticulations are one way that memory scholars can follow Choi's call outlined earlier in this thesis for memory scholars to uncover and forward alternative narratives and memories that disrupt hegemonic narratives.¹¹

The Myth of the American Soldier as Rhetorical Strategy

Both rhetorical strategies that call upon Americans to honor the nation's veterans and strategies that rely on narratives from veterans themselves are essential tools in

contestation over the public memory of American conflicts. As Ivie and Giner argue “the figure of the soldier carries mythic force in political discourse.”¹² For the figure of the soldier also holds “the ethos of the nation- its character, guiding beliefs and moral sentiments.”¹³ The mythic force associated with soldiers and veterans means that constructing one’s rhetoric as to place one’s self on the side on the side of American veterans is a powerful strategy for granting legitimacy to one’s ideology. That legitimacy is reinforced by a long history that has valorized the sacrifice of American veterans and treated soldiers as heroes.¹⁴

The articulation of a political choice as best for veterans has historically been a powerful strategy in shaping how the larger American public should relate to American foreign policy decisions. For example, in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, much of the debate over the ethicality of the war manifested in a debate over the appropriate way to treat the soldiers coming home.¹⁵ Those that were critical of the war tended to speak out against directly honoring Vietnam veterans for their service, choosing instead to actively speak out against projects such as the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial.¹⁶ These critics were directly opposed by groups that demanded the country move past the divisive nature of the Vietnam War and focus on affirming political projects, such as the construction of the memorial,, that would bring the nation together through their provision of a space of healing for both veterans and the country’s political divides.¹⁷ The strategy of advocating for the nation to come together, and the leveraging of a call to honor America’s military veterans, found great success and shifted the conversation about the aftermath of the Vietnam war to a question of how to best honor the veterans of the conflict as opposed to a conversation about the structures that lead to the conflict in the first place.¹⁸

The significance of rhetorical tactics relating to veterans is even more evident when one considers the role that veterans themselves have in shaping how memories of war are constructed. As Choi argues soldiers have access to a view of war and conflict that is unique to those directly embedded in the conflict due to their immediate exposure to the brutality of war.¹⁹ The uniqueness of the perspective soldiers have is further amplified in the context of wars fought overseas as American civilians are physically and geographically separated from the conflict. For Choi, the experiences of veterans mean that they have the possibility to serve as critical witnesses of conflicts like the Global War on Terror.²⁰ Since those that serve in conflict often most directly experience the most violent and brutal moments of war, soldiers can convey those experiences to Americans back home disrupting the sanitization of said violence. Choi contextualizes their analysis to American veterans that fought in the Korean War and the ability of veterans of that conflict to challenge the status of the Korean War as a noble war in America's collective memory.

However, Choi notes that in the context of the Korean war, official commemoration projects such as the construction of memorials and the emphasis on constructing spaces of healing for veterans moved the conversation away from the fundamental violence of the Korean War to a focus on ensuring that American veterans gained recognition in American collective memory.²¹ The call to properly honor the veterans of the Korean War operated as a means of rerouting the criticism of veterans that served in Korea.²² This example illustrates the importance of studying how rhetorical strategies that take advantage of the status of veterans in the American mythos can be used to uphold normative understandings of conflict, even in the face of alternative

narratives from veterans themselves. Arguments centered on and produced by veterans influence how the narratives of memorials and conflicts writ large get coded into collective memory. Any attempt to study how the collective memory of the Global War on Terror is being constructed requires an analysis of how the mythic figure of the veteran is being deployed rhetorically. The next sections of the chapter attempt to express the way that deployment is taking place and the collective memory of the war being forwarded by supports of the memorial project.

Maggie Duskin and the Use of Veteran as Telos

One of the common strategies used by the Global War on Terror Memorial foundation is the use of testimony from “Gold Star Spouses” that supports the memorial.²³ “Gold Star Spouses” are those whose spouses died in military service.²⁴ These advocates for the memorial argue that the project’s construction is necessary to help themselves and their families deal with the loss they have experienced. Perhaps, the most powerful example of such testimony comes from a video narrated by Maggie Duskin titled “Why do We Need a GWOT Memorial?”²⁵ In the introduction the graphic makes it clear that Duskin is a “gold star” wife.²⁶ With somber music in the background, Duskin, nearly in tears, describes the healing that a memorial for her husband could bring to her. She focuses on her family, referring to the service of both her husband’s and son’s service in Afghanistan as being deserving of remembrance.²⁷ She wants the memorial to be a space where families like hers can come to remember and grieve for those that have died. The music then swells and cuts to the director of the foundation stating that the memorial will provide a “point of healing that the veteran community needs.”²⁸ The video is rhetorically powerful and conveys a sense of urgency. There is a clear sense that

a memorial must be built now because those that have experienced loss from the war need a space of reflection. The power of such a video also comes from its leveraging of the sacrifices of both Duskin and her husband on behalf of the country. The idea of a patriotic veteran that gave his life for his country becomes an argument on behalf of the memorial because that memorial is positioned as honoring his legacy and serving his family.

The strategy of using the sacrifice of veterans as an argument on behalf of the memorial positions the foundation and its supporters to control the narrative that the memorial will convey. Also, this strategy allows the foundation to present a narrative of the Global War on Terror that focuses on individual loss as opposed to larger structural questions, a narrative that is seemingly beyond reproach. In framing the project as a form of honoring Duskin, her husband, and the families of other veterans, the act of commemoration is given significant cultural weight. Additionally, by portraying the commemoration of the war as being about honoring the sacrifice of the Duskin family, the foundation is able to push aside questions such as: why was the United States fighting in the Middle East in the first place, or what does it mean for the director of the foundation to end the video by reminding his audience that their freedoms have been “given to them” by the veterans that the memorial is honoring?²⁹ Those questions do not have clear answers; however, they do complicate the narrative of the memorial that the foundation is forwarding in videos such as these.

Yet, implications of these questions do not have to be addressed because as Donofrio argues, narratives such as the one in the Duskin video shape who is given authority over “place-making.”³⁰ While Donofrio’s analysis is in the context of those that

lost family members in the September 11th attacks, her recognition that norms of grief and bereavement allow the family members that experienced the loss to push forward a reading of the memorial applies well to the foundation's utilization of Maggie Duskin's, story.³¹ Duskin's, and by extension the Global War on Terror Memorial foundation's invocation of the sacrifice of veterans as an argument for the memorial, functions to mark the foundation's narrative of the war as legitimate, at the expense of "alternative means of understanding traumatic events,"³² and the ways such understandings may complicate the memory of the Global War on Terror memorial forwarded.

The use of Duskin's husband as an argument in favor of the memorial also reflects a larger trend in the way that veteran's narratives and bodies can be used on behalf of a "telos" that "helps to maintain support for US foreign policy at home."³³ As Achter argues, discourses serve to domesticate "veterans bodies by ascribing a strategic telos" or endpoint to them.³⁴ Domesticate, in this instance, means to ensure that the representation of veterans ultimately serves the goal of promoting mainstream narratives of how the Global War on Terror operates. While, his analysis is in the context of visible bodily injury, Achter's argument also works well in the context of the Duskin video. The Duskin video demonstrates that the rhetorical use of veteran bodies isn't just a question of using depictions of the physical body to advocate for certain memories, rather, even after death, the story of the veteran and their heroism can still be used as a form of domestication. Here, their death is leveraged to promote a vision of the Global War on Terror that reflects traditional understandings of the war as a heroic effort by heroic American soldiers that must be honored.

The veterans honored in these instances are never portrayed as not brave, or as doing anything that could be seen to make them less worthy of remembrance. Such a depiction would undermine the narrative that the death of veterans is being used for, mainly, to convey the idea that the American military is heroic in nature. Instead, the Global War on Terror foundation makes sure to emphasize how brave Dushkin's husband is. Fitting him into the narrative of the heroic military the foundation hopes to convey and using his death as an argument for the telos of promoting the memorial.

The Global War on Terror Memorial and Healing a Nation

The focus of foundation members on the potential that the Global War on Terror memorial has for healing does not stop at the level of individuals or their families. Rather, prominent foundation members such as the director of the organization, Michael Rodriguez, have emphasized the memorial's ability to heal the nation.³⁵ Rodriguez's claim is still centered around the memorial's relationship to veterans. Here, Rodriguez and other members making similar arguments call upon the mythic American soldier as a point of unity that all Americans can get behind. For Rodriguez, the veteran is assumed to be a heroic embodiment of patriotism that every American should want to honor regardless of political views.

For Rodriguez, supporting the construction of the memorial and by extension supporting American veterans, acts as the starting point for healing the nation, at two levels. First, uniting to support veterans begins the healing of the political split within the nation. While there is never an explicit articulation of this supposed political split, Rodriguez refers to the increased division between those that have supported the American military, the Global War on Terror and those who have not supported the

conflict.³⁶ For Rodriguez, the heroic status of veterans means that Americans, regardless of their support for the war, can come together to honor these soldiers. The second area of the nation that needs to be healed per Rodriguez is the civil military divide. He argues that due to the long nature of the war, the American civilian population has become disinvested from the conflict and is unable to relate to those that have served.³⁷ The major impacts that Rodriguez outlines are that citizen's lack knowledge as to how the military operates, leading civilians to not properly support the war effort and making society inaccessible for returning veterans. This vision of healing presents a memory that argues that by moving to honor the mythic figure of the veteran the nation can begin to recover from the damage that it has experienced as a result of the Global War on Terror. Yet, such an understanding of healing positions the United States as the victims of the War on Terror and calls upon the nation to go back to a previous state in which the nation was not divided over the military conflict and civilians engaged with the military properly.

The desire to heal the nation through the commemoration of the Global War on Terror is indicative of Biesecker's analysis of "post-9/11 patriotism" acting as a form melancholy.³⁸ Biesecker frames melancholy as a response to a perceived loss that seeks to recover a sense of wholeness. However, a central characteristic of Biesecker's definition of melancholia is that this wholeness can never actually be recovered because the wholeness never truly existed. Biesecker's analysis focuses on the September 11th attacks and how American citizens in the aftermath of September 11th have sought out the recovery of a "democratic way of life" perceived to be lost, even as American citizens continued to sacrifice rights in the name of achieving that democratic way of life.³⁹ The understanding of healing forwarded by Rodriguez and other supporters mirrors

Biesecker's description of melancholia. There is a clear loss expressed, in this case, the loss of civic cooperation, both between the military and citizens and between those with different opinions on US interventionist policies. For both instances there is an assumption that this loss can be overcome by embracing the unity promoted by the Global War on Terror memorial project. However, the idea that the nation/military can make itself whole again assumes that there was a point in which this civic military gap did not exist, or at the very least that it is possible to move past said gap.

Both my analysis of Choi's study of the Korean War memories and Hagopian's analysis of the Vietnam Veterans memorial project provide examples in which there was a clearly disconnect between the civilian population and those that served. In fact, as Hagopian argues the main warrants for the creation of the Vietnam Veterans memorial centered on the need to heal the divide between citizens and the military.⁴⁰ Even if the gap fluctuates, it is clearly not a phenomena unique to the Global War on Terror. Rather, than helping to make the nation whole, Biesecker's analysis indicates that the fixation on this recovery is politically paralyzing in so far as it prevents the actual moving on required to challenge other issues. In the end, the call to unite around the common cause of honoring veterans to heal the nation functions as a form of melancholic rhetoric that attempts to perform a mythological past America rather than coming to terms with the losses that have been experienced as a result of the Global War on Terror.

Veteran Narratives and Critical Witnessing

The Global War on Terror Memorial foundation's website contains a section that features testimonials from veterans associated with the foundation describing their own reasons for desiring the construction of the memorial.⁴¹ These desires range

significantly, from the belief that the memorial will grant closure to those that lost friends and family in the conflict, to a belief in the memorials ability to serve as a space of personal reflection that will assist veterans in comprehending their experiences of violence.⁴² The narratives forwarded by the foundation are very clear about the material risks and psychological difficulties that go with serving in the War on Terror.⁴³ For example, an article by a former soldier, now a family psychologist and advocate for the Global War on Terror memorial Matt McCallum, describes the physical and psychological stress he experienced while fighting in Afghanistan. He describes his time in Afghanistan as “seven months of chronic stress, high demands, limited resources, physical danger, frequent tragedy, limited grieving opportunities, moral ambiguity.”⁴⁴

The narrative presented by McCallum, exemplifies the tension found in many of the testimonials presented on the foundation’s website. There is a clear acknowledgment of the violent nature, both physically and psychologically, of the Global War on Terror. Furthermore, there is even an acknowledgement of the unnecessary violence the United States has committed towards civilians throughout the war. As Choi observed in the context of Korean war veterans, it is clear that many of the Global War on Terror veterans have experienced war in such a way that they are positioned to speak out against said violence.⁴⁵ McCallum’s description of having PTSD many years after his service, is one example of a narrative that doesn’t sanitize the violence enacted by war. Yet, McCallum’s narrative of the difficulty of fighting in the Global War on Terror is positioned as secondary in his article to his desire to have a place of recognition for himself and his fellow soldiers. A position that continues to center Americans as the victims of the war on terror and valorize the heroic nature of said veterans.

The value of Choi's notion of critical witnessing is from its consideration of the potential for veterans such as McCallum, to provide an account of war that differs from many of the mainstream articulations that Choi have traditionally been erased. For Choi these narratives have been pushed out of public memory by the centering of the United States as the victim of the conflict and by the glorification of war in general. Forwarding the messiness inherent within this conflict is a powerful way to demonstrate the complications intrinsic to fighting such a war and point attention to the lack of clarity behind the conflict. These narratives could also potentially challenge the paradigm behind atheconflict as indicated by McCallum's own declaration that he is not sure what they are fighting for in the Global War on Terror. Whereas the rest of the articles and arguments by the foundation present a narrative in which US soldiers are protecting America overseas McCallum's statement indicates the possibility for self-reflexivity.

Yet, this reflexivity does not materialize in the foundation's rhetoric or actions. The memorial is still ultimately affirmed, because as McCallum argues, the foundation believes honoring veterans takes priority to interrogating the politics of the conflict. For McCallum, the honoring of veteran sacrifice is important enough to accept the memorial, even as that memorials valorization of veterans and the conflict uphold a narrative that directly contradicts his earlier criticism of the war. As Choi notes, the move towards official acts of commemoration serve to undermine the ability of veterans to serve as critical witnesses; because in the end, they accept the narrative of the war promoted by the memorial because that space of healing is more important than challenging the underlying logic of the narrative of the war. Furthermore, the narratives of veterans and their need for healing are explicitly used to forward these problematic narratives. These

narratives are far more palatable to audiences because they don't demand a fundamental questioning of the root of violence veterans experience. Instead they offer the promise of a fix, and a general positive narrative of healing. The subversive potential of veteran stories is turned into one of the most powerful forms of evidence in favor or the necessity of the Global War on Terror Memorial because the framing that the memorial will help veterans heal can be used to present a sanitized narrative in which the nation can recover. The narratives of veterans play an essential role in the construction of memories of conflicts and in shaping how memorials for those veterans are understood. In the context of the Global War on Terror memorial veteran advocates for the memorial strategically use their experiences of the conflict and their positions as heroic veterans to argue on behalf of the construction of the memorial and the commemoration of the Global War on Terror.

Conclusion

The figure of the soldier and the veteran plays an almost mythic role in American discourse.⁴⁶ Arguments about what strategies are supported by or best support veterans, dominant discourse as to how American conflict is understood. The discourses surrounding the construction of the Global War on Terror memorial and the war in general are dictated by conversations about veterans. Supporters of the foundation invoke that mythic image and history of the American soldier through arguments about the memorials role in providing a space of healing for veterans and their families. They use the death and sacrifice of veterans as a rallying point for those supporting the memorial to unite behind, and as a form of legitimacy for their claim as to how the memorial should be understood.

The narratives of veterans themselves also play an important role in the contestation over the role of the memorial. The testimony of a soldier who served in the war, and who directly experienced violence, is weighted more heavily than other narratives that either support or oppose the Global War on Terror memorial. Narratives like Matt McCallum's are potent because they acknowledge the problems with the violence and the Global War on Terror, while, still ultimately arguing for the memorial regardless of those issues. The word of veterans is used to push past the structural problems inherent in commemorating the Global War on Terror. For example, the basic assumption of the memorial, that the project is about honoring American veterans that served their country in the war, is one that promotes an understanding of loss that is American centric and minimizes the violence experienced by various groups of non-Americans, such as civilians caught in the conflict. The significance of honoring veterans is used by the foundation and its supporters to simply move through such conversations because those deliberations will never be seen as important as supporting the troops.

Along these lines, scholars hoping to understand how the public memory of war is created must study the way the figure of the veteran is deployed rhetorically. Such an analysis shows the power that the figure of the veteran has in shaping discourse but also reveals the way in which narratives of veterans can challenge dominant narratives. As Ivie and Giner argued in their analysis of Veterans for Peace, a group of American veterans dedicated to struggling for peace there is power in the ability of veterans to use their status and experience to rearticulate how wars should be understood.⁴⁷ While Ivie and Giner are clear that their description of veterans as “waging peace” does not fully disinvest from militaristic rhetoric it does gesture to the possibility of veterans subverting

traditional notions of conflict. A focus on how narratives such as Matt McCallum's can be rearticulated against the heroic vision of the Global War on Terror promoted by the memorial and mainstream discourse is a useful starting point for responding to Choi's call to forward alternative understandings of public memory that contest and unsettle the dominant narrative.

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²⁶ “Why do we need,” 0:00-0:10.

²⁷ “Why do we need,” 0:35-0:45.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

The central claim of this thesis is that public memory is never fixed, rather it is continuously shaped by an evolving contestation of narratives, ideologies, and argumentation. The rhetorical strategies used to advocate for certain practices of commemoration, or choices made to influence the messages spaces like war memorials convey, all play an important role in that contestation. The previous sections of my thesis have analyzed an example of such contestation, the advocacy for a national memorial dedicated to the Global War on Terror. Each chapter analyzed a rhetorical strategy used by the foundation and their supporters, exposing the narratives and ideologies their rhetorical strategies promoted. Chapter two analyzed the rhetoric of congressional debates over the official legislation to approve the memorial, focusing on how the rhetoric of unification and transcending ideology functioned to mask the intrinsically political nature of the project. Chapter three argued that an ideographic analysis of the principles that the foundation hoped the memorial will eventually convey demonstrated the foundations investment in producing a memorial that served to sustain an understanding of the Global War on Terror in which the United States was the main victim of the violence of the conflict. Chapter four interrogated the foundation's reliance on rhetoric discussing the sacrifice of veterans as a persuasive strategy, arguing that the strategy weaponized the death of veterans on behalf of the memorial's construction.

Ultimately, I argued that the foundation, and their supporters used various rhetorical tactics to advocate for the construction of the national memorial, ranging from

the emotional testimony of veterans, to arguments centering on the unifying nature of the memorial. In doing so, they advocated for a memory of the Global War on Terror that upheld an ideology of American exceptionalism, the unavoidable nature of the conflict, and the ethical nature of the United States military.

These rhetorical strategies directly competed with narratives and discourses that were positioned to potentially undermine the sanitized narrative of the war that saw the United States as the primary victim of the conflict. For example, my analysis of veteran testimony in chapter three demonstrated the way that their critical narratives of the war were ultimately deprived of their structural implications and turned towards supporting the project and the American military writ large. Additionally, advocates also took rhetoric regarding the perpetual nature of the war and used it as a justification to support the construction of the memorial, rather than a larger criticism of the American military. In the end, from the early congressional testimony about the necessity of the memorial, to foundation media asking for support from the American people, the advocacy of the foundation consistently turned rhetorically powerful strategies towards supporting narratives that functioned directly or implicitly to characterize any subversive discourse as either less important than honoring American soldiers or as politically divisive and unpatriotic.

The Success of the Memorial and What it Means for Scholars

There can be no doubt that the discourse generated by the advocates for the Global War on Terror memorial has been incredibly successful at this point. The legislation to approve the memorial passed unanimously in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The foundation has gotten massive amounts of support,

including a direct endorsement by former President George H. W. Bush.¹ At the same time, there has been little direct criticism of the plans for the memorial, even as criticism of the conflict itself continues to be pervasive in American society.² The success of the endeavor gives weight to the need to analyze the strategies that the foundation has used and continues to use, that make their arguments persuasive. This thesis argued in each chapter that the success of the foundation's advocacy is a result of the strategy of using forms of argumentation that either directly or implicitly appeal to forms of tradition and ideology that are marked as explicitly American. From, the representatives' appeal to a united form of patriotism in chapter two, to the foundation's invocation of the mythic figure of the veteran, discussed in chapter four, the Global War on Terrorism memorial foundation consistently looked to appeal to commonly held interpretations about what it means to be an American. This pressure, to embody American ideals, made it extremely difficult politically to speak out against the memorial, because to do so would be seen as speaking out against American values.

This study enriches the field of public memory and argumentation scholarship by highlighting the ways in which American identity is performed. Mainly, my analysis demonstrates the power that invocations of public memory and tradition can have as a strategy of persuasive argumentation, particularly, in discussions over American collective memory. While, it is clear that these strategies are never entirely effective, there are always those who are unable to identify with these types of appeals; this thesis indicates that understanding the strategic nature of appeals to American tradition is useful because appeals to American values do have significant influence and their strategic nature does help to explain the support that this memorial project has received.

The impact that the prevalence of this strategy has is that it creates a standard as to what it means to be a true American. A standard that is attached to their support of projects such as the Global War on Terror memorial, or for future American military interventions. Those that support the memorial and the Global War on Terror can stake claim to a true notion of patriotism that excludes Americans who challenge these ideals. Over time, the association of being American with serving the military and supporting the Global War on Terror will continue to shift the meaning of ideals like patriotism towards actions and beliefs that align with supporting the American military. This shift is even more insidious because these claims of patriotism are presented as common sense or non-ideological, even as they express an understanding of patriotism that is inherently exclusionary and violent. The presentation of these values as commonsense ideals leads to their normalization and demonstrates how militarized ideologies become institutionalized in discourse as acceptable.

The normalization of such violence demonstrates one of the most important implications of the acceptance of the narrative that the Global War on Terror is a perpetual war. The United States invaded Afghanistan shortly after September 11th 2001, and then Iraq in 2003.³ Neither of those conflicts are over, and the War on Terror in general has continued to expand. Yet, that violence, the reality that the United States is going to be fighting in other countries, against other populations has increasingly become more accepted. The fact that groups close to the military are accepting and planning in response to this new reality,⁴ should be deeply disturbing in its implications for the inevitability of American imperialist violence. These are the types of questions that are ultimately at stake in conversations about the Global War on Terror memorial. How will

the actions of this conflict be viewed, both historically and within contemporary discourses about the war? The purpose of this thesis is ultimately to interrogate the role that rhetoric and argumentation serve in driving people towards an understanding of the Global War on Terror that accepts the imperialist violence of the United States as natural.

A second example of the importance of accepting the narrative of the Global War on Terror being perpetual is seen in chapter three's discussion of how the commemoration of an ongoing war demonstrates the shifting nature of beliefs about how commemoration and mourning are actualized. The Global War on Terror memorial is an example of a modern commemorative practice that has explicitly associated the act of commemoration with supporting the larger effort of the Global War on Terror. For the advocates of the memorial, supporting the memorialization of soldiers is a way for civilians to indicate their support of the war and patriotism in general. Commemoration becomes a form of advocacy that directly supports the conflict, while opposing the act of commemoration is easily characterized as not supporting the American military. This evolution of commemorative practices, and the changes in how memorialization is discussed, is one area that rhetoricians and other scholars of public memory should continue to pursue. Commemorative practices, particularly in the context of the United States' military, are constitutive elements of American society and thus, a paradigmatic change in how these practices are discussed is worthy of further analysis. Particularly, scholars should analyze the tendency to describe supporting commemoration as a form of supporting a war effort and the implications this strategy has on how commemoration can function to offer citizens a means of participating in larger conflicts.

This starting point might offer scholars of public memory a point of intervention into how such ideals become normalized. Particularly, rhetorical scholars can push back against descriptions of commemorative practices or acts of memorialization as being ideologically neutral and beyond critical reproach. A belief that the act of commemoration could be beyond ideology ignores all the underlying history, tradition and ideals that have shaped our view of how commemoration functions. Similarly, the idea that acts of memorialization should not be criticized or challenged because they serve as a point of healing for veterans also functions to push away criticism of these acts, an exclusion that helps latent violent ideologies and beliefs go unchallenged. Rhetorical intervention is helpful in such instances because scholarly focus on the constitute power of language and visual rhetoric serves as an effective tool in revealing how these latent ideologies are formed.

A second area where scholars might choose to build off the reinterpretation of commemoration is to draw more connections between the understanding of commemoration argued on behalf of the Global War on Terror memorial and the tactics and conversations surrounding other prominent discussions of public memory in the United States, such as, the disputers over the continued presence of forms of commemoration for confederate figures. Scholars might ask, are there connections between the strategies used in advocating for the Global War on Terror memorial and those that advocate on behalf of the preservation of confederate memorials? Such an analysis might demonstrate the connections between strategies that promote dominant notions of American exceptionalism and those that uphold symbols of white supremacy. Furthermore, a discussion of these together could reveal how the changing interpretations

of how commemoration operates as a political practice impacts our understanding of the importance of conversations centered on the continued presence of confederate memorials in civil society.

Finally, scholars would do well to identify alternative areas where the memory of the Global War on Terror is being contested. The perceived perpetual nature of a war that is said to not have any clear end offers a unique opportunity for scholars to interrogate how the memory of the conflict is both created and constantly shifting. While this essay focused on the national memorial project due to the significance of a national memorial, there is plenty of room to look at the development of memorials and other forms of commemoration at local levels. An analysis that focuses on more local forms of commemoration could better analyze the often heterogenous nature of public memory in the context of conflicts such as the Global War on Terror. While, an analysis of a national memorial reveals larger frames of memory construction, more instances of localized analysis could attend to the nuances in the way memory manifests differently, in relation to different experiences with the conflict. Furthermore, the study of local instances of memory formation could push rhetoricians to expose the counter memories and framework that memory scholars like Choi argue are necessary to uncover should one want to challenge the dominant narrative of conflicts such as the Global War on Terror.

Denaturalizing Stories

In conclusion, I echo Choi's articulation of the role of the memory scholar as being to cultivate critical questions as to the "way certain stories get told" and what "stories have been (de)selected to accommodate a certain narrative, ideology, identity in hegemony?"⁵ The way memory is performed matters, for contestations over public

memory dominant public life. From disputes over the promotion of memories of white supremacy by monuments to confederate figures, to the decision to advocate for a memorial for a war that has not ended; how public memory is constructed, and deployed memory fundamentally shapes how narratives, ideologies and collective discourses become naturalized. This is uniquely true in the context of war memorials, where public deliberations over what story will be told, serve as part of a contestation over how nations remember and respond to instances of past violence. Recognizing that the acceptance of rhetorical strategies is one way in which Choi's words stories become selected to accommodate these narratives, reveals the role that rhetoricians can and should play in these conversations,⁶ a role, that involves the critical interrogation of how memories and stories that promote hegemonic ideals are constructed and the revealing of alternative narratives that challenge such ideals.

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