

ABSTRACT

Visual Constitutive Rhetoric and the Transformative Power of Public Art

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In his germinal essay, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québécois*,” Maurice Charland posits that rhetors can call audiences into being to motivate them toward specific goals. Rhetorical critics initially applied this theory to traditional texts, such as speeches. By examining murals in the cities of Lyon, France; Prague, Czech Republic; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, this thesis expands on Charland’s theory by arguing that public art, such as murals, can unite audiences and constitutes distinctive identities through the use of iconographic symbols and certain aesthetic choices. Moreover, this project offers a new method of analysis that can be applied to a variety of murals for future scholarship, an exploration of what makes constitutive rhetoric succeed and fail, and the participatory and inclusive aspects of visual constitutive rhetoric. Taken together, these case studies showcase the breakthroughs and boundaries of the visual form.

Visual Constitutive Rhetoric and the Transformative Power of Public Art

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
DEDICATION	ix
CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction.....	1
<i>Literature Review</i>	3
<i>Justification for Project and Research Questions</i>	14
<i>Method</i>	16
<i>Thesis Structure</i>	19
<i>Notes</i>	22
CHAPTER TWO	27
Les Murs Peints and the <i>Peuple Lyonnais</i>	27
<i>The Lyonnais Identity and its Traditional Roots</i>	28
<i>Holistic Look at Lyon's Les Murs Peints</i>	31
<i>Le Mur des Canuts</i>	34
<i>La Fresque des Lyonnais</i>	42
<i>Conclusion</i>	48
<i>Notes</i>	51
CHAPTER THREE	55
Epic Nationalism: Alphonse Mucha's <i>The Slav Epic</i> and Pan-Slavism.....	55
<i>Pan-Slavism and its Influence on Alphonse Mucha</i>	57
<i>Creation of The Slav Epic</i>	63
<i>The Slavs in Their Original Homeland</i>	65
<i>The Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy</i>	69
<i>The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree: The Slavic Revival</i>	73
<i>The Apotheosis of the Slavs, Slavs for Humanity</i>	76
<i>Audience Reception and Pan-Slavism after The Slav Epic</i>	81
<i>Conclusion</i>	84
<i>Notes</i>	88
CHAPTER FOUR.....	92

Identity Formation and Community Empowerment through Philadelphia Public Art .	92
<i>Social Perceptions of Illegal Graffiti versus Legal Public Art</i>	94
<i>The Rust Belt and the Dawn of the Mural Arts Program</i>	96
<i>Common Threads</i>	99
<i>Welcome to the Neighborhood</i>	103
<i>Aquí y Allá</i>	109
<i>Conclusion</i>	116
<i>Notes</i>	120
CHAPTER FIVE	124
Conclusion	124
<i>Research Questions Revisited</i>	129
<i>Predicting Success and Failure in Visual Constitutive Rhetoric</i>	132
<i>Drawbacks, Breakthroughs, and Future Opportunities</i>	138
<i>Notes</i>	143
BIBLIOGRAPHY	144

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 2.1. <i>Le Mur des Canuts</i>	34
Fig. 2.2. Guignol	36
Fig. 2.3. The Carbonare Family	38
Fig. 2.4. <i>La Fresque des Lyonnais</i>	42
Fig. 2.5. Sainte Blandine	44
Fig. 2.6. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and Le Petit Prince	46
Fig. 2.7. Abbé Pierre	47
Fig. 3.1. <i>Slavs in Their Original Homeland</i>	66
Fig. 3.2. <i>The Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy</i>	70
Fig. 3.3. <i>The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree: The Slavic Revival</i>	75
Fig. 3.4. <i>The Apotheosis of the Slavs, Slavs for Humanity</i>	78
Fig. 4.1. <i>Common Threads</i>	100
Fig. 4.2. <i>Welcome to the Neighborhood</i>	104
Fig. 4.3. Paul Malvey, “Tree Man”.....	107
Fig. 4.4. Fishtown residents.	109
Fig. 4.5. <i>Aqui y Allá</i>	111
Fig. 4.6. <i>Aqui y Allá</i> panels	114

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DEDICATION

To Ginny

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Who or what is the target of the demand/desire/need expressed by the picture? ...What does it need or demand from the beholder to complete its work?”

--W.J.T Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*

When discussing the transformative work of public art, the Global Mural Conference states that murals “have the power to create identities for its citizens, provide a public meeting place for residents and visitors to exchange narratives about their own histories and exhibit the communities’ cultural and historical values.”¹ Some murals, both painted on the exterior of buildings and housed inside museums, possess the capability of uniting citizens and ethnic groups by employing symbols, values, and common histories and thereby constitute distinctive identities. For the artist, educating and bringing together a certain audience can help achieve particular goals. These can include fighting against outside influences, seeking independence, or even fostering cultural pride. These goals are constituted, or founded, by the rhetoric of the mural. In this way, these visual texts are a form of constitutive rhetoric, a concept first articulated by Maurice Charland in his germinal essay, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québécois*.”² Importantly, Charland and other scholars who have written on constitutive rhetoric that typically analyze narratological or verbal texts. This thesis seeks to contribute to rhetorical criticism by augmenting Charland’s theory through the analysis of visual texts. Each chapter critically examines murals in different places around the world: Lyon, France; Prague, Czech Republic; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

By conducting this investigation, the primary goal of this thesis is to build on the theory of constitutive rhetoric. Scholars of rhetoric have significantly and thoroughly expanded Maurice Charland's theory. However, no one has used constitutive rhetoric to grapple with the suasive potential of visual rhetoric or non-narrative texts. By incorporating visual texts into the theory of constitutive rhetoric, critics can discover and analyze how the rhetoric of art can hail a specific audience. Additionally, these texts can help the audience identify with each other through specific, recognizable symbols, and other elements within a painting. These symbols and aesthetics might compel the audience to embody certain characteristics or perform specific actions, thus fulfilling the rhetor's goals in a way that does not necessarily require a narrative text.

This thesis also develops a method to analyze a series of public mural case studies, and to provide a template for future scholarship on this topic. Constitutive rhetoric works differently for visual texts for a variety of reasons. First, the hailing of the intended audience is not narratological. Rather it is created through visual symbols. When the viewer gazes upon the visual text, understands the meaning conveyed by the symbols portrayed, and realizes they are the intended audience, they are increasingly likely to be interpellated by the painting. Second, these texts attract audiences differently. Visuals are often more accessible and can evoke a more emotional response from the viewer as compared to verbal and narrative texts. These differences thus require the modification of constitutive rhetoric as a methodological choice so that the visual texts can be adequately and efficiently analyzed in the coming chapters and in future scholarship.

Literature Review

To successfully contribute to Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric, it is essential to understand the extant literature on constitutive rhetoric. This section will detail the foundation of Charland's theory and scholars who continued to build the theory of constitutive rhetoric in new and formative ways, such as applying it to presidential speeches and hip-hop music. However, because visual texts have not been thoroughly examined, it is necessary to discuss the relevant literature on visual rhetoric. This will allow the reader to see the compatibility of converging these two literature bases to expand Charland's theory. Moreover, because the form of the content is changing from narrative to visual texts, it is important to bring forth literature that discusses the benefits to changing the mode of the text. For example, changing the form of constitutive rhetoric from narrative to visual texts can allow the rhetor greater agency because they are not dependent solely on words to depict the values or beliefs of a group. Another significant change to Charland's theory that this thesis explores is the shift from constituting national identity to that of local identities. Therefore, this literature review reflects this alteration by discussing identity formation. Overall, investigating the scholarship on these topics will allow me to conduct the three case studies of this thesis.

Constitutive rhetoric as a theory is based upon and grounded partly in Kenneth Burke's work on identification. For Burke, "attempts at identification transpire not just between two individuals, but between one individual and a group, or between groups."³ These groups are not identical, but they do possess a consubstantial relationship that allows for an "acting-together" and the sharing of "common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes" with each other and the community as a whole.⁴ Moreover, identification

is successful for these individuals and groups because they are establishing relationships and connections beyond themselves.⁵ Identification can occur spontaneously and unconsciously. However, it is fundamentally predicated on the assumption that division must also exist. Without division, the rhetor would have no need to unite the audience.⁶ This exigency to unite an audience in the face of division is not only what creates rhetoric,⁷ but is also what gives constitutive rhetoric its power. Identification can create the opportunity for an audience to perform specific actions as envisioned by the rhetor, thus proving that using constitutive rhetoric can have material and influential consequences in the public sphere.

By understanding the foundational purpose of identification, one can then grasp the purpose of constitutive rhetoric. Maurice Charland extends Burke's work on identification into the theory of constitutive rhetoric. Not only does rhetoric help people to identify with one another, "it also creates or constitutes the very identities and subjectivities with which it is possible to identify in the first place."⁸ Identity is constructed by weaving together beliefs and values into an identifiable position. For Charland, constitutive rhetoric "calls its audience into being."⁹ This rhetorical construction is not a passive invitation for the audience to join a particular community. Instead, it is actively creating a community as the rhetor engages with the audience.

Additionally, bringing an audience together is dependent on the act of interpellation and the ways symbolic identities are rendered material. Charland's understanding of constitutive rhetoric relies also upon the ideas of Louis Althusser and Michael Calvin McGee. Althusser's discussion of interpellation plays heavily into Charland's work. Because interpellation "occurs at the very moment one enters into a

rhetorical situation, that is, as soon as an individual recognizes and acknowledges being addressed,” constitutive rhetoric invites the audience to identify in a particular way.¹⁰ It is not limited to one discursive encounter; it is an ongoing process through which the subject becomes socialized. This process works by rhetorically crafting a potent, imagined identity. These interpellated groups, according to McGee, “are infused with an artificial identity.”¹¹ This identity may begin as fictional, yet it “becomes historically material and of consequence as persons live it.”¹² For Charland and McGee, rhetoric creates an identity and subjects come to embody that identity over time.

One of the ways that interpellation and thus identification functions is through the use of shared, visual symbols. Symbols often reference public memories, or the “body of beliefs and ideas about the past that help a public or society understand both its past and present, and, by implication, its future.”¹³ The enthymematic understandings constructed from these memories help to (in)form ideologies, which are groups’ explanations of particular events and why these events have occurred.¹⁴ These values and ideologies associated with specific memories can be represented through symbols, which are used to depict and shape identities. For the purposes of this thesis, the rhetor invents visual interpretations of these symbols within murals. When an individual gazes upon the mural and comprehends the significance of and histories behind these symbols, they are encouraged to embody the identity represented by the visual text. Through these enthymematic understandings, the rhetor can use visual texts to cultivate their worldview and goals within their intended audience.¹⁵ In short, public memory is comprised of values and beliefs that help a group, whether they are national, local, or ethnic, formulate their ideologies and identities that can then be depicted by a rhetor through narratives or

visual texts. If interpellation is successful, an audience will be constituted that can then fulfill the rhetor's specific goals.

An important distinction is that, unlike the work of Charland and others, this thesis does not interrogate the formation of national identities, but instead focuses on city and ethnic identities. While the audiences in each case study likely possess national or supranational identities (the Lyonnais are simultaneously French citizens, the Slavs have inhabited the Austro-Hungarian Empire as well as states like the Czech Republic, Philadelphians are also American citizens), they are capable of identifying with smaller groups at the same time. As Josue David Cisneros writes, identities are not "fixed," but fluid subject positions "in and out of which subjects move."¹⁶ Individuals are capable of embodying multiple identities at once and throughout their lifetime, acting upon different ones when necessary or timely. Despite diverging from Charland's theory, this thesis expands upon his work by showing that constitutive rhetoric can be achieved with many different types of identities beyond simply nationalistic positions.

This thesis likewise expands Charland's theory by explicating the constitutive power of visual symbols. To explain his version of constitutive rhetoric, Charland applies his theoretical concepts to the case study of the *Québécois* and their sovereignty movement. The leaders of this movement, known as the *Parti Québécois*, were elected to the Quebec government on the campaign promise that Quebec would become an independent state, with only economic ties to Canada.¹⁷ They drafted a formal policy statement, known as the "White Paper," which crafted a narrative account of their state's history, and articulated that Quebec citizens constituted a *peuple*. Rhetorically, the document invented reasons why the *Québécois* should vote for independence. While the

referendum for sovereignty failed to earn a majority of the vote, 45% voted for independence.¹⁸ According to Charland, this number proved the strength of the rhetorical White Paper, and revealed the power of narrative texts to constitute an identity, who belongs to that identity, and the steps groups should take to legitimate that identity. All of this work, for Charland, was done through narrative and discourse. As such, articulating how visual texts can also fulfill these three steps through public art is a defining approach that will be present throughout the remainder of this thesis.

A central focus of Charland's essay is the notion that constitutive rhetoric is made possible by three narrative ideological effects. These three effects are also present in visual constitutive rhetoric. For Charland, texts bring "paper beings" to life through interpellation and identification by the constituted audience and thus made real.¹⁹ However, murals depicting "painted beings" and iconographic symbols also have such a potential. The first ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric is the process of constituting a collective subject. By depicting a history of certain peoples, the rhetor asserts "a transcendental collective interest that negates individual interest."²⁰ A collective subject does not exist naturally or without rhetoric. Rather, a narrative constructs a collective subject to attain the goals of the narrative.²¹ Second, constitutive rhetoric posits a transhistorical subject.²² The audience has the capability of identifying with the subject depicted in the visual text, even if they lived centuries apart. Because they are of the same collective group, they can have the same hopes and trials and work toward a common goal. Finally, the illusion of freedom is the third ideological effect.²³ Because the audience is a subject within a text, they must fulfill the intended goal of the rhetor to affirm their existence as a unified, collective people. These effects, if fulfilled, create

significant potential for political, social, and economic action, whether they come from a narrative or visual text.²⁴

Many scholars have written on constitutive rhetoric in a wide variety of ways.²⁵ They have applied this theory to traditional narrative texts, such as speeches and legal documents. Kenneth S. Zagacki expanded the concept to presidential narratives by analyzing various speeches by President George W. Bush concerning the Iraq War.²⁶ While Robert Elliot Mills follows Charland by examining legal and political texts, he extended the application by interrogating the constitutive rhetoric of pirates and their quest for sovereignty.²⁷ Similarly, Helen Tate looks at political texts, but through the lens of white, lesbian feminism in pursuit of the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Tate is one of the first to analyze how constitutive rhetoric has the potential to fail to reach its objectives.²⁸ In short, scholarship on the constitutive rhetoric of political and legal texts is vast and thorough, which has allowed scholars to grasp how frequently constitutive rhetoric affects the public sphere every day.

Recently, scholars have started to move away from traditional applications of constitutive rhetoric. Chenjerai Kumanyika critically analyzes the hip-hop lyrics of 1Hood Media to accent constitutive work of their activism.²⁹ By examining the “1984” Macintosh ad, Sarah R. Stein becomes one of the first scholars to use the theory of constitutive rhetoric on both advertisements and cinematic narratives.³⁰ David R. Gruber argues that encounters at the digital and aural experiences at the multi-media exhibition of China’s terracotta warriors are an example of an affective form of constitutive rhetoric.³¹ Finally, Margaret LaWare writes on a similar topic to this thesis, as she evaluates how minority communities use murals to resist racism and injustice and to

reconnect with their shared culture.³² Although she analyzes visual images and symbols that construct cultural identity, her article is not predicated on Charland's work. Fortunately, this growing trend of analyzing unconventional forms of constitutive rhetoric provides additional tools to perform analyses of nontraditional texts for this thesis.

Largely, scholars have failed to discuss the importance of visual texts in reference to Charland, despite the exponential growth of visual rhetoric since his germinal essay. The study of visual rhetoric has developed into a robust division of the field since the Wingspread Conference of 1970, which resulted in the proclamation that the rhetorical critic can study any subject "in terms of its suasive potential or persuasive effect," thus releasing critics from the confines of only oratorical or narrative texts.³³ Visual rhetoric grapples with the suasive power of images for an audience. According to J. Anthony Blair, visual claims "constitute the species of visual persuasion in which the visual elements overlie, accentuate, render vivid and immediate, and otherwise elevate in forcefulness a reason or set of reasons offered for modifying a belief, an attitude or one's conduct."³⁴ In the same vein, this thesis shows that visual texts constitute identities among audiences as successfully as verbal discourses. In fact, images may have the potential to communicate identity more effectively than narrative texts. For example, humans tend to recall pictures more accurately than words.³⁵ Individuals are able to process more images at a faster rate as compared to verbal narratives.³⁶ In addition, using images to constitute a group identity can be more effective for a rhetor because the targeted audience can recognize and process the image associated with the image in a shorter period of time.

For rhetors, choosing visual texts as a rhetorical form can be strategic due to its wide accessibility. They are typically easier to access and speaking to the focus of this study, murals are intended for public consumption on a broad, quotidian scale. Images also possess the ability to convey abstract concepts in ways that the audience can comprehend to a greater degree than if they had to read them in a narrative text. Visual texts can take the beliefs and values that can be difficult to put in words and can express them through an image that is easily recognizable to the targeted audience. Greater accessibility and less dependence on words gives the rhetor a better chance of creating deeper bonds among a larger audience, thus increasing the likelihood of achieving the rhetor's goals.

The most significant tenant of visual constitutive rhetoric that contributes to Charland's theory is the incorporation of iconographic symbols into the mural. By placing these symbols into a visual text, the rhetor increases the chances of calling an audience into being through interpellation. When the audience realizes that because they understand these symbols, they are being addressed, then they will be more likely to identify with the message promoted in the visual text. By identifying with the message, the audience has the potential to achieve the goals envisioned by the rhetor. While narrative forms of constitutive rhetoric have clearly proven their potency, visual constitutive rhetoric also uses the power of cultural tokens to create identity in a way that is efficient for the audience to recognize and internally process.

By changing the form of constitutive rhetoric from narrative to visual texts, the rhetor can increase the likelihood of success in creating change for a certain group. Form, in this instance, suggests that the mural impacts audiences differently.³⁷ It is a form

insofar as it is a styled genre, “a set of conventions that may be deployed across disparate contexts” for a particular rhetorical purpose.³⁸ By analyzing the form of the mural, the rhetor can access greater agency and increase the chances of achieving specific goals. For this thesis, changing the form of constitutive rhetoric from narrative to visual allows the rhetor to spread messages that may be difficult for words to convey. Since murals address an imagined public and can garner stronger emotional reactions from an audience compared to written or verbal texts, the rhetor has a greater chance of tapping into the audience’s emotions and inspiring them to act out the rhetor’s goals.³⁹ Additionally, this change of form allows for more accessibility, which can create a wider audience and amplify the rhetor’s work. These benefits create the potential for the audience to gaze frequently upon the visual texts, continually internalize the meanings behind the cultural symbols, and lead the path toward substantial change.

While the hail of visual constitutive texts is not narratological, the rhetor must rely on the narratives inherent within their iconographic symbols to resonate with their intended audience. As David Birdsell and Leo Groarke note, visual claims rely on enthymeme, and the audience’s understandings of these symbols rely on narratives that they know and understand.⁴⁰ Birdsell and Groarke affirm that visual texts can forward a given claim or agenda in a way that attracts the intended audience toward a certain conclusion.⁴¹ Iconographic symbols contain within them visual premises that can be internally translated by the intended audience through their knowledge of the enthymemes’ narratives or through the identificatory power of the symbol.⁴² As the reader will witness throughout the case studies, murals are heavily dependent on the intended audience recognizing the narratives resting within the symbols incorporated by

the rhetor. By drawing upon these narratives, the audience can derive from the mural the messages and goals that the rhetor wants them to embody and fulfill. While this thesis provides a major contribution to the study of solely visual constitutive texts, it is important to note that the rhetorical success of these works of art is impossible without the aid of common narratives known by the intended audience.

For the purposes of this thesis, the visual texts seen throughout the case studies are three sets of legal public art, represented both as outdoor murals and paintings housed in a museum. Studying public art is significant because it “documents our place in time by visually rendering issues, ideas, traditions, and history. Through visual symbols, signs, and images, it identifies and comments on the challenges that affect us. Public art can be a mirror we hold up to ourselves and a reflection of ourselves we present to the outside...public art is a shared and common experience.”⁴³ These works of art are thus “made to educate and edify the citizens of the present as well as form those of the future by persuading them to live out the virtues of the past.”⁴⁴ In short, murals have the capability of drawing upon a group’s public memory, which can collapse time and draw upon shared connections between the present audience and their past ancestors. The identification that results can lead to action by the audience and the possibility of future change.

To be effective, murals draw upon and influence a vibrant public sphere. Public sphere theory is developed in a wide-ranging set of scholarly works, and argues that publics are formed and shaped by discourses that call them into being and regulate their norms. For the purposes of this thesis, the idea that the public can be shaped by rhetoric matters. In the public sphere, individuals can participate in dialogues and provide social

critiques, which may ultimately encourage successful democracies.⁴⁵ One medium through which the public sphere can express these interests is visual rhetoric. For too long, public sphere theories have emphasized the role of verbal over visual communication. By neglecting visual texts, scholars foreclose the opportunity to understand the constitutive role these texts play in fostering civic identity.⁴⁶ These images can reflect beliefs and values of the rhetor, as well as publics.⁴⁷ In their article on political iconography, Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites summarize the importance of visual rhetorics in the public sphere succinctly:

the public sphere depends on visual rhetorics to maintain not only its play of deliberate “voices,” but also its more fundamental constitution of public identity. Because the public is a discursively organized body of strangers constituted solely by the acts of being addressed and paying attention, it can only acquire self-awareness and historical agency if individual auditors “see themselves” in the collective representations that are the materials of public culture...When the [visual text] shown is itself a part of national life, the public seems to see itself, and to see itself in terms of a particular conception of civic identity.⁴⁸

This thesis illustrates the crucial role visual communication plays in the public sphere by analyzing murals that help constitute citizens and foster dialogue and social critiques. By bringing the study of visual communication in the public sphere to the attention of scholars, there is a greater chance of understanding new ways rhetoric fashions belonging among and within certain groups and identities.

When studying these visual texts, many scholars advise critics not to ignore the active participation of the audience. The audience is not passive, rather, they engage in critical analysis when viewing visual texts. They are capable of recognizing the linkage of rhetorical and aesthetic functions. Thus, it is important for the rhetorical critic to acknowledge that visual texts can inform certain groups of their values and histories and

then inspire them to perform specific actions.⁴⁹ The potential created from considering the audience as active critics is foundational to the methodology and analyses within this thesis, as well as its justification.

Justification for Project and Research Questions

This thesis substantially builds on the theory of constitutive rhetoric by combining two major literature bases in a way that has not been studied previously. Visual texts are particularly powerful modes of public persuasion, and the murals presented in the case studies of this thesis have greater visibility and accessibility due to their strategic location. Every mural that will be analyzed is free to the public. In France and Pennsylvania, they are painted on the sides of buildings and are visible by foot, bike, or vehicle. In the Czech Republic, *The Slav Epic* is housed in Prague's National Gallery, which is free to visitors. Thus, these murals are easily available to the intended audience and speak to identity construction in unique ways. Given their accessibility, these murals have a greater possibility of reaching the intended audience and fulfilling the rhetor's goals. By analyzing these case studies, this thesis provides the opportunity for rhetorical critics to engage with other murals, as well as discover and interrogate the exigencies and desired solutions that first lead to the development of these murals.

The first major question of this thesis is as follows: what qualities make murals constitutive, and how are they distinguished from those that are not? By asking this question, the analyses must illuminate the distinction between art that is constitutive and art that is abstract. This distinction will become apparent by employing the method of analysis. Asking this question means the analyses must consistently identify what the rhetor incorporates into the murals in the hopes to hail and thus create identification

among the intended audience. Typically, a mural of a constitutive nature employs symbols such as familiar historical figures, cultural ephemera, or landmarks distinct to the audience. These symbols are more likely to be recognized and understood by the audience, and thus more likely to create identification among strangers and realize specific goals. The possibilities created by such a mural would be much more difficult to create through abstract art, such as a painting by Jackson Pollack or Mark Rothko, whose constitutive effects might be realizable but perhaps for a narrower audience given their accessibility.

The second question is centered on the analysis of each case study: what is the best and most effective method to analyze visual constitutive texts? Charland performs a textual analysis on a written narrative, and visual texts hail audiences differently. Thus, a new method must be employed for the purposes of this thesis and future scholarship. The method for visual textual analysis involves four essential steps: identify recognizable symbols and their histories as related to the audience, understand how aesthetic choices such as color and perspective help to aid the rhetor in enhancing their argument, uncover the purposes and motivations for employing these symbols, and then determine the qualities the rhetor wants the audience to perform to attain specific goals. Throughout this thesis, each case study will employ this method and discover its efficacy.

The third and final research question is concerned with the implications of this contribution to Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric. Are there significant and positive effects to this contribution? Does it offer rhetorical scholars a new method to go forward and analyze visual texts and rhetoric in a new way? Frankly, this likely is a question that may not be fully answered. That is, while the method helps me analyze

these public images, it is unlikely that one will see any results unless there is further scholarship on the topic. However, given that this thesis offers ample discussion on the first three questions, I hope to have positively contributed to the theory of constitutive rhetoric and will help scholars use constitutive rhetoric on other visual texts.

Method

One of the primary challenges of this thesis is finding a balance between many methods of analysis. Because Charland performs textual analysis of the White Paper document, his method is not compatible with the murals in these case studies. Most notably, the hail is not narratological, and visual texts attract audiences differently. Due to these essential differences, it is imperative to create and implement a method more suitable for visual constitutive texts. The ultimate goal of creating a new method here is to analyze visual texts from a wide variety of citizens and ethnic groups from around the world. Given this, the method is simplistic in its nature, but will be adapted to each case study as needed. It is important to note that this will not be the first time a method has been created to analyze visual texts, however this thesis uses constitutive rhetoric to analyze public murals and therefore the method reflects the potentials and limitations of the texts.⁵⁰

One of the first steps in analyzing a visual constitutive text is to identify the iconographic symbols present that the hailed audience would likely recognize. This symbol could be a historical figure, place, object, architecture, or a part of the relevant cultural ephemera. For example, one of the murals in Lyon that will be analyzed contains a puppet by the name of Guignol, who originated from Lyon and is well-known by the city's inhabitants for his rebellious and independent spirit. These symbols are necessary

for the rhetor to employ in order to interpellate the intended audience. By recognizing these symbols, the audience is more likely to identify with the message presented, and thus they can become part of the collective subject, thereby fulfilling Charland's first ideological effect.

After identifying a specific symbol, the next step is to understand and discuss its relevance for the mural in question. To determine its importance, one must uncover the symbol's history. If the symbol is a historical figure that inhabited the city or belonged to the ethnic group, what values did they emulate? What were their main contributions? The second case study, which explores *The Slav Epic*, analyzes a famous Slavic saint who translated the Bible from Greek into the Slavic language, thus preserving the Slavic tongue for many centuries. He inspired the Slavs to take pride in their culture and use their own language as frequently as possible. By understanding the context behind each symbol, one can discover the motivations for the rhetor in creating the mural and the acts they want their audience to perform. Additionally, understanding the importance of each symbol helps to illuminate both the second and third ideological effects. When an individual can come literally face to face with a painted individual, time can be collapsed and the audience can reflect on the values and aspirations of one of their "ancestors," thus creating the potential for identification. If the audience does successfully identify with the mural and its message, the rhetor is a step closer in having the audience fulfill its desired outcome.

Addressing and analyzing the aesthetic choices used by the rhetor are also an important step in this method. Beyond the recognizable symbols, one must take note of how the rhetor uses line, color, shading, and perspective to enhance their argument to the

audience. For example, the rhetor can use lines to lead the audience's gaze to specific symbols, and they can use perspective to make the mural into a lifelike *trompe l'oeil* and thus increase the likelihood of identification. Moreover, certain colors can symbolize specific moods and can help the audience understand the overall message and feelings behind the mural. By analyzing the symbiotic relationship between the aesthetics of a painting and its recognizable cultural symbols, one has a greater likelihood of understanding the motivations that inspired the mural.

After the critic has identified the symbols and aesthetics implemented by the rhetor and has explained why the rhetor may have made these artistic choices, it is essential to analyze the overall purpose of the mural and the rhetor's goals in creating this visual text. A scholar must uncover the qualities espoused by the painting that the audience must embody to truly be part of the collective group. Additionally, the scholar must understand what actions the rhetor needs the audience to perform to fulfill their goals. For example, one mural in Lyon depicts Sainte Blandine, a martyr who died holding true to her beliefs in the face of unimaginable horror. By incorporating her into a mural, the rhetor can motivate the interpellated audience to embody the qualities of Blandine in order to fight against cultural homogenization and perceived oppression from outside forces.

Evaluating the symbols, aesthetics, purposes, and motivations that comprise each mural will help the scholar understand the constitutive nature of the visual text and the implications it may have on a certain ethnic group or set of citizens. Using this method as a basic structure, this thesis analyzes the rhetorical, constitutive work of a selection of public murals.

Thesis Structure

The first case study examines a series of murals in the city of Lyon, France. Home to over 150 murals, Lyon is known as the “European capital of mural paintings.”⁵¹ The city successfully deploys constitutive rhetoric through these murals, also known as “les murs peints,” to continually assert its distinctive identity of French traditionalism in the face of outside influences, as well as to inspire its residents to love where they live and behave in ways that mimic notable Lyonnais that have come before them. These painted walls are visual texts that tell the story of its city and neighborhoods so that the Lyonnais can understand the symbols and values that constitute their identity and push back against the cultural homogenization that stems from globalization, and to take pride in their home. This case study first explores the tenants of French traditionalism and how it influences and comprises the Lyonnais identity. The second section takes a holistic look at Lyon’s “murs peints,” and the people who create and maintain them. The final three sections apply the theory of visual constitutive rhetoric to murals seen around the city, such as *Le Mur des Canuts* and *La Fresque des Lyonnais*.

The second case study is also set in Europe, and it analyzes Alphonse Mucha’s *The Slav Epic*, a cycle of twenty paintings completed in the early 20th century. Raised in the Czech Republic under the Habsburg Empire, Mucha witnessed political unrest, as well as a fervent desire by his peers to fight for political and cultural independence from their rulers in Vienna.⁵² This emphasis on fostering a distinct cultural identity and seeking national independence ultimately inspired Mucha to create *The Slav Epic*. In twenty paintings, *The Slav Epic* showcases the history of the Slavic peoples and their civilization on massive canvases that reach the size of twenty feet by thirty-three feet. This chapter

first explores the history and ideology of Pan-Slavism, as well as the key members of this movement that would later inspire Mucha to incorporate their ideas into *The Slav Epic*. Next, this case study looks at the scholarship on myths to see how they help to enhance Mucha's message to his Slavic audience. Finally, this case study uncovers the stories, symbolism, and moral messages with four selected paintings from *The Slav Epic* to understand the Pan-Slavic ideology and its effects on Mucha's intended audience.

The final case study is set in the United States, and this chapter examines a series of murals in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a metropolis recognized internationally as the "City of Murals."⁵³ In 1983, Mayor Wilson Goode believed rampant graffiti was destroying neighborhoods and preventing business growth, so his administration funded the Mural Arts Program (MAP), directed by Jane Golden.⁵⁴ Since their inception, the MAP is responsible for more than 3,800 works of public art in Philadelphia. The program collaborates with local citizens to create murals that reflect the values, identities, and histories of the communities in which they were painted.⁵⁵ Their murals "express community," and they "provide inspiration, hope, and vision."⁵⁶ This case study analyzes the exigencies that led to the creation of the Mural Arts Program, such as the economic stagnation of the Rust Belt. Second, this chapter examines the Mural Arts Program, its objectives, as well as its goals in constructing thousands of murals for Philadelphia. Finally, the case study evaluates a set of murals and its iconographic symbols deployed by the MAP to create identification among an audience and fulfill specific goals. In so doing, this chapter illuminates the ways public art can empower citizens' participation in the public sphere, beautify their city, and work together to promote a better society.

The conclusion synthesizes and extends the arguments present in the analysis chapters. This final chapter discusses the implications of the analysis for understanding visual constitutive rhetoric. Additionally, the conclusion summarizes briefly the method used throughout the analysis to hopefully provide an alternative path for rhetorical critics to engage with visual constitutive texts for future scholarship. By providing the reader with these elements, this thesis provides new possibilities to interrogate an underdeveloped area of scholarship by combining and building upon the robust literature bases within visual and constitutive rhetoric.

Notes

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² Maurice Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québécois*,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 133-150.

³ Debra Hawhee, “Kenneth Burke and American Studies: A Response to Giorgio Mariani,” *American Literary History* 21 (2009): 125.

⁴ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 20-21.

⁵ Ross Wolin, *The Rhetorical Imagination of Kenneth Burke* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 178; See also Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes toward History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 263.

⁶ Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 301.

⁷ Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 25.

⁸ Bradley Stephen Ludwig, “The Rhetorical Constitution of Online Community: Identification and Constitutive Rhetoric in the Community of Reddit,” (Ph.D. diss., Purdue University, 2014), 6.

⁹ Maurice Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québécois*,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 134.

¹⁰ Charland, *Peuple Québécois*,” 138.

¹¹ Michael C. McGee, “In Search of ‘The People’: A Rhetorical Alternative,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975): 242. For more discussion on the notion that identity is rhetorically constructed see: John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Greg Dickinson, *Suburban Dreams: Imagining and Building the Good Life* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2015); Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, Brian L. Ott, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2010).

¹² Charland, “*Peuple Québécois*,” 136-137.

¹³ John Bodnar, “Public Memory in an American City: Commemoration in Cleveland,” in *Commemorations*, 76.

¹⁴ William V. Balthrop, “Culture, Myth, and Ideology as Public Argument: An Interpretation of the Ascent and Demise of ‘Southern Culture,’” *Communication Monographs* 51 (1984): 343.

¹⁵ Edwin Black, “The Second Persona,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (1970): 109-119.

¹⁶ Josue David Cisneros, *The Border Crossed Us: Rhetorics of Borders, Citizenship, and Latina/o Identity* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2013), 8.

¹⁷ Charland, “*Peuple Québécois*,” 134-135.

¹⁸ Charland, “*Peuple Québécois*,” 135.

- ¹⁹ Charland, "Peuple Québécois," 139.
- ²⁰ Charland, "Peuple Québécois," 139.
- ²¹ Dexter B. Gordon, *Black Identity: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Nineteenth-Century Black Nationalism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 33.
- ²² Charland, "Peuple Québécois," 140.
- ²³ Charland, "Peuple Québécois," 141.
- ²⁴ Charland, "Peuple Québécois," 141.
- ²⁵ See also Franklin Nii Amankwah Yartey, "ACT UP: A Network's Resistance through Constitutive Rhetoric," *First Monday* 20 (2015); Glenn McClish, "The Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric of Martin Luther King Jr. and Frederick Douglass," *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 33 (2015): 34-70; Charles Goehring and George N. Dionisopoulos, "Identification by Antithesis: The Turner Diaries as Constitutive Rhetoric," *Southern Communication Journal* 78 (2013): 369-386; Canchu Lin and Yueh-Ting Lee, "The Constitutive Rhetoric of Democratic Centralism: A Thematic Analysis of Mao's Discourse on Democracy," *Journal of Contemporary China* 22 (2014): 148-165; Gordon, "The Making of a Constitutive Rhetoric of Black Ideology."
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- ²⁷ Robert Elliott Mills, "The Pirate and the Sovereign: Negative Identification and the Constitutive Rhetoric of the Nation-State," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 17 (2014): 105-135.
- ²⁸ Helen Tate, "The Ideological Effects of a Failed Constitutive Rhetoric: The Co-option of the Rhetoric of White Lesbian Feminism," *Women's Studies in Communication* 28 (2005): 1-31.
- ²⁹ Chenjerai Kumanyika, "'We Demand Justice. We just getting started': The Constitutive Rhetoric of iHood Media's Hip-hop Activism," *Popular Music* 34 (2015): 432-451.
- ³⁰ Sarah R. Stein, "The '1984' Macintosh Ad: Cinematic Icons and Constitutive Rhetoric in the Launch of a New Machine," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 169-192.
- ³¹ David R. Gruber, "The (Digital) Majesty of All Under Heaven: Affective Constitutive Rhetoric at the Hong Kong Museum of History's Multi-Media Terracotta Warriors," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44 (2014): 148-167.
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Rhetoric and the Rhetoric of Effects, ed. Amos Kiewe and Davis W. Houck (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015), 31-58.

³⁴ J. Anthony Blair, "The Rhetoric of Visual Arguments," in *Defining Visual Rhetorics*, ed. Charles A. Hill and Marguerite Helmers (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2004), 50.

³⁵ Pauline Dewan, "Words Versus Pictures: Leveraging the Research on Visual Communication," *The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research* 10 (2015): 2.

³⁶ J. Anthony Blair, "The Rhetoric of Visual Arguments," 51.

³⁷ Another way to think about this notion is with the concept of affordances, which are "the unique representational abilities of a mode." By altering the mode, or form, of a text, the rhetor can afford new possibilities and limitations for communication with an audience. When the rhetor chooses the visual form, they can "show" meaning to their intended audience, allowing them to use pathetic appeals that they may not be able to harness as effectively with print or verbal forms. For more on the concept of modal affordances, read Kara Poe Alexander, Beth Powell, and Sonya C. Green, "Understanding Modal Affordances: Student Perceptions of Potentials and Limitations in Multimodal Composition," *Basic Writing eJournal* 10/11 (2012), <https://bwe.ccny.cuny.edu/alexandermodalaffordances.html> (accessed February 2, 2017); Kara Poe Alexander, "Material Affordance: The Potential of Scrapbooks in the Composition Classroom," *Composition Forum: A Journal of Pedagogical Theory in Rhetoric and Composition* 27 (2013), <http://compositionforum.com/issue/27/material-affordances.php> (accessed February 2, 2017); Gunther Kress, "Design and Transformation: New Theories of Meaning," in *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and Design of Social Futures*, ed. Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis (New York: Routledge, 2000), 157; Gunther Kress, "Visual and Verbal Modes of Representation in Electronically Mediated Communication: The Potentials of Forms of Text," in *Page to Screen, Taking Literacy into the Electronic Era*, ed. Ilana Snyder (London: Routledge, 1998), 53-79; Maureen Walsh, "The 'Textual Shift': Examining the Reading Process with Print, Visual and Multimodal Texts," *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 29 (2006): 24-37; David Birdsell and Leo Groarke, "Outlines of a Theory of Visual Argument," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 43 (2007): 103-114.

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³⁹ To see other instances of creating agency and its exponential effects through changing form, read Darrel Enck-Wanzer, "Trashing the System: Social Movement, Intersectional Rhetoric, and Collective Agency in the Young Lords Organization's Garbage Offensive," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92 (2006): 174-201; Erin J. Rand, "An Inflammatory Fag and a Queer Form: Larry Kramer, Polemics, and Rhetorical Agency," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94 (2008): 297-319; Catherine H. Palczewski, "The 1919 Prison Special: Constituting White Women's Citizenship," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 102 (2016): 107-132.

⁴⁰ David S. Birdsell and Leo Groarke, "Toward a Theory of Visual Argument," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 33 (1996): 5.

⁴¹ Birdsell and Groarke, "Outlines of a Theory of Visual Argument," 106-108.

⁴² Georges Roque, "Should Visual Arguments be Propositional in Order to be Arguments?" *Argumentation* 29 (2015): 177-195.

⁴³ Seitu Jones, "Public Art That Inspires: Public Art That Informs," in *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy*, ed. Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster (Washington, DC:

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⁴⁴ Charles L. Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography," in *Critical Issues in Public Art*, ed. Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2014), 72.

⁴⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991). For more, see Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, (Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2002), 65-124; Kristin L. Moss, "Intercultural Communication and Murals: Critical Visual and Discursive Analysis of Cultural Identifications and Representations in Mural Programs in Philadelphia, PA and Chemainus, BC" (PhD diss., University of Denver, 2005), 3.

⁴⁶ E. Cram, Melanie Loehwing, John Louis Lucaites, "Civic Sights: Theorizing Deliberative and Photographic Publicity in the Visual Public Sphere," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 49 (2016): 227-253.

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⁴⁸ Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, "Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of 'Accidental Napalm,'" *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20 (2003): 36.

⁴⁹ Judith Lancioni, "The Rhetoric of the Frame: Revisioning Archival Photographs in the Civil War," *Western Journal of Communication* 60 (1996): 398-99; Sonja K. Foss, "The Construction of Visual Appeal in Visual Images: A Hypothesis," in *Rhetorical Movement: Essays in Honor of Leland M. Griffin*, ed. David Zarefsky (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993). To see how public monuments and graffiti can articulate identities and create active subjects, see Mina Ivanova, "The Bulgarian Monument to the Soviet Army: Visual Burlesque, Epic, and the Emergence of Comic Subjectivity," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100 (2014): 273-302.

⁵⁰ I am drawing a distinction between legally created, visual constitutive texts and those that a state or city government considers illegal, such as graffiti. For analyses and methods concerning illegal graffiti, see Caitlin Bruce, "Public Surfaces Beyond the Great Wall: Communication and Graffiti Culture in China," *Invisible Culture* 15 (2010): 102-124; and Caitlin Bruce, "Modalities of Publicity: Leon's City of Murals Project," in *Inopinatum: The Unexpected Impertinence of Urban Creativity*, ed. Luca Borriello and Christian Ruggiero (Italy: Arti Grafiche Boccia S.p.A, 2013), 45-62. For early methods on evaluating visual imagery, see: Sonja K. Foss, "A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery," *Communication Studies* 45 (1994): 213-224. Foss has been criticized for not giving enough voice the artist and their implementation of certain aesthetics, which I am certain to incorporate in my analysis. For more, see: Valerie V. Peterson, "The Rhetorical Criticism of Visual Elements: An Alternative to Foss's Schema," *Southern Communication Journal* 67 (2001): 19-32.

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CHAPTER TWO

Les Murs Peints and the *Peuple Lyonnais*

“The walls we paint are the skin of the residents who live within them.”

-Gilbert Coudène, founder and joint director of CitéCréation

“It is the superimposed memories which constitute the identity of a place. We try to reveal those memories, to retrace the daily life of an area and build bridges between eras and people in order to nourish, with these permanent renaissances, life today and the patrimony of tomorrow.”

-CitéCréation

Home to over 150 murals, the city of Lyon, France is known as the “European capital of mural paintings.”¹ These painted walls, or “les murs peints,” serve as visual texts that tell the story of the city and neighborhoods. These murals help the Lyonnais understand the symbols and values that constitute their distinctive identity, one based in French traditionalism. They can also be seen as an effort to push back against the cultural homogenization that stems from globalization, as well as inspire the Lyonnais to be proud of where they live. In these ways, the city of Lyon, France successfully deployed constitutive rhetoric through its painted murals by continually asserting its identity in the face of outside influences, and by inspiring its residents to love where they live and behave in ways that follow in the footsteps of notable Lyonnais.

An analysis of the Lyonnais murals contributes significantly to the overall thesis in multiple ways. First, it provides a case study of how Charland’s theory of constitutive rhetoric can be expanded to include public art. Second, this chapter explores how rhetors issue a direct invitation to narrower audiences to constitute successfully a specific vision of civic identity. In short, the rhetors in this chapter create a visual hail for its audience that provides a strict notion of what comprises the Lyonnais identity, who belongs to it,

and the steps that must be taken by the audience to fulfill the rhetors' expectations of civics. The rhetors incorporate iconographic symbols in their murals. Those symbols reference narratives and premises that are recognized by a specific audience who understand the significance of the symbols depicted. Moreover, these symbols and their narratives present the rhetors' vision of what a true citizen of Lyon should look and act like to fulfill the Lyonnais identity. Because these symbols and their narratives are related to the city specifically, most of the audience is restricted to the geographic boundary of Lyon. As this chapter will show, the rhetors have successfully hailed a distinctly Lyonnais audience, put forth symbols that advocate for taking pride in the city and resisting external influence, and inspire them to don these characteristics to be the ideal citizen of Lyon.

This chapter is divided into four sections, the first of which will uncover the Lyonnais identity of French traditionalism. The second part will take a holistic look at Lyon's "murs peints" and its creators, CitéCréation. The final two sections will apply the theory of visual constitutive rhetoric to two specific murals: *Le Mur des Canuts* and *La Fresque des Lyonnais*. These two murals are demonstrative of a larger project of socially constituting a distinct Lyonnais identity, formed in response to outside pressures, and it continues to shape Lyon to this day.

The Lyonnais Identity and its Traditional Roots

To understand the symbols that are present in the Lyonnais murals, this chapter must first discuss the distinct values, beliefs, and attitudes that comprise the city's identity and culture. In *Les Murs des Canuts* and *La Fresque des Lyonnais*, the two murals rhetorically analyzed in this chapter, the symbols underscore an identity rooted in

French traditionalism. This identity is different from the religious French Traditionalist movement of the 20th century, instead this case study is rooted in the longstanding cultural heritage and traditional values that the French have fought and died to preserve for centuries.² While their culture consists of many different beliefs, the three that best inform and maintain the contemporary identity of French traditionalism include the quest for community and regional loyalty, religion, and family.³ As globalization continues to homogenize disparate cultures around the world, the French perceive this as a threat to their identity and they are willing to resist its influences.⁴ By examining the beliefs, values, and public memories that inform France's traditional cultural identity, it will be considerably easier to interpret the symbols deployed in each mural and how they hail Lyonnais audiences.

The cultural belief based around community and regional loyalty is what gives the rhetor power in depicting the ideal version of Lyonnais identity in its murals. The French are devoted to encouraging, maintaining, and protecting their regional differences. They have national pride, but they also place a substantial emphasis on the cultural idiosyncrasies and tokens central to particular regions and cities, such as the creation of cuisines that come from local agriculture, famous residents, or the development of folklore that reflects strongly held beliefs of the region.⁵ When the traditions that extend from regional differences come under threat from the government or exterior forces, the French will often voice their outrage and concerns. For example, the French government attempted to streamline the nation's rampant bureaucracy, and merged its 22 regions into 13 in January 2016. Critics considered this move to be similar to that of "forced marriages," and they feared the homogenization of their regional idiosyncrasies and

differences.⁶ The French identity is notable with its “competing loyalties to village, region, and nation,” and this conviction is apparent throughout Lyon’s murals.⁷

The national religion of France is Roman Catholicism, and while the nation practices *laïcité* (state secularism), their religion still constitutes their values and beliefs. France “on the one hand, has seen its soul as residing in a privileged relationship with Reason,” yet it also “has conceived itself as the eldest daughter of the Church, the Catholic nation par excellence.”⁸ Underneath their claims of Reason and absence of religious involvement in their affairs, French citizens still continue to have Catholic reflexes.⁹ For example, while same-sex marriage has been legal since May 2013, opposition to the change has been intense and sometimes volatile.¹⁰ Additionally, *laïcité* has been used as a tool against French Muslims to aid xenophobic and anti-immigration politicians, such as Marion Maréchal-Le Pen of the National Front, under the guise that France is culturally Christian.¹¹ These views and actions highlight the predominance of Catholic beliefs, as well as a dominant social conservatism.

French families are also known for reflecting a traditional arrangement. For example, there are usually two heterosexual parents and two children on average, and family cohesion is central to the French identity. The French government provides many social programs to help French parents work less to support their family and provide quality life for their children.¹² Moreover, the French government awards the “Medal of the Family” to mothers who raise four or more children of French nationality in “the best possible material and moral conditions.”¹³ In short, the French reward families who raise multiple children through traditional parenting methods to preserve the ideal French society for many generations. It would be impossible to name and discuss every aspect of

the French traditionalist identity, but these three elements help demonstrate its central importance to French citizens and provide a foundation upon which one can understand the Lyonnais identity and how it is depicted in its murals.

While the French have long been stereotyped as being haughty and possessing a cartoonish pride of their culture, more recently globalization has played a substantial role in the strong defense of their identity, and Lyon is no exception. The French have a long history of rejecting foreign elements that do not coincide with their traditional culture, yet globalization challenges their notion of identity.¹⁴ For the purposes of this chapter, globalization refers to “the increasing speed, ease, and extent with which capital, goods...people, culture, information, and ideas now cross borders.”¹⁵ As more people, cultures, and ideas can quickly cross national borders, societies are more susceptible to outside cultural influences, and it has become increasingly difficult for the French to come to terms with the fact that their cultural fate could be controlled more by the outside world rather than strictly from within their borders. While globalization and its effects are unpreventable at this point, the Lyonnais often push back against the increasing globalization to preserve permanently their beloved identity of French traditionalism.

Holistic Look at Lyon's Les Murs Peints

The murals that have become inseparable from Lyon's identity would not be possible without CitéCréation, a cooperative that has been the creative force behind these magnificent works of art. Its story begins in the early 1970s, when a group of Lyonnais art students felt disillusioned with the closed nature of the art world. Art was restricted mostly to galleries and museums, which meant that many of the ideas stemming from these works of art were available only to those who could afford to pay for admission.

The students believed murals would remedy this issue by bringing these forms of expression out of enclosed spaces and into the open air so the masses could have direct access to them. Their journey led these students to Mexico, and they studied modern wall painting where Diego Rivera, the “father of Mexican mural art and the father of modern political art,” gave birth to a new artistic tradition in the 1920s that “modified Renaissance techniques to convey modern political messages.”¹⁶ From there, CitéCréation was born in 1978. The group created their first mural, *Renaissance*, in 1982, and they set up their headquarters in Oullins, a neighboring city south of Lyon.¹⁷ Nearly forty years later, they still operate out of Oullins, and they have designed 600 frescos and *trompe-l’oeil*’s in Lyon, across France, and abroad.¹⁸

When perusing CitéCréation’s website, one can easily grasp their mission as a cooperative and their aims for their art projects. On almost every page, they mention the goals of providing murals to the Lyonnais. For example, their page entitled “Identity Frescos,” states that these frescos “bring memories and history back to life, translate into painted form our daily lives and underpin strong identity...Leading to the pride of the residents and the pleasure of visitors and tourists alike. They contribute fully to the (re)conquest of an area and to...the reinforcement of a sentiment of belonging.”¹⁹ CitéCréation craft these murals specifically to hail a Lyonnais audience so that they come to embody a distinct civic identity. Such an identity encourages unification and seeks to prevent outside influence. Additionally, they want the residents to be proud of where they live. When people are secure in their civic identity, they are more likely to look after their city and maintain its integrity. CitéCréation’s murals continue to produce a sense of belonging and collaboration within a well-defined public sphere.

The two murals presented in this case study are known as *trompe-l'oeil*'s, and CitéCréation's decision to use this style is noteworthy. French for "trick of the eye," this style of painting is an optical illusion that makes the depicted objects look three-dimensional.²⁰ This art technique allows for the audience to be tricked into feeling as if the painting is real. When approaching these murals, it is difficult to comprehend that they are only two-dimensional and that one cannot walk into the *trompe l'oeil*. The murals are massive, and everything appears true to size to the viewer. The realistic nature of *trompe l'oeil* can increase the likelihood of identification for the targeted audience because they will likely feel as if they can truly interact with symbols presented in the painting due to their life-like appearance.

Not only do the *trompe l'oeil* trick the audience, they also "illustrate strong cultural identities and are designed to discover, to embellish, and to bestow a magical aspect upon buildings, neighborhoods...for the dreams, the pleasure and the pride of the general public."²¹ These murals serve as a way to beautify and clean up an area for residents and tourists, and it simultaneously visualizes the city's cultural identity in a way that creates a feeling of belonging and purpose for its residents. It is a constant reminder whenever a Lyonnais resident walks past one of these murals that, despite their own distinct personal identity, they also possess a civic identity with other Lyonnais who might share similar goals and aspirations.

Le Mur des Canuts

Created in 1987, *Le Mur des Canuts*, or “Wall of the Silk Workers” (Fig. 2.1) is one of the most well known “murs peints” in Lyon. The mural was completely funded by seven private patrons who wanted to display the cultural heritage of the neighborhood.²² Located in the neighborhood of Croix-Rousse, this *trompe l’oeil* covers a staggering 1200 square meters, and it is one of the largest in Europe.²³ As a whole, this mural represents



Fig. 2.1. CitéCréation, *Le Mur des Canuts*, 2013. Source: “Zoom sur le Mur des Canuts,” 2014, Digital Image. Available from: Croix-Rousse.net, <http://croixrousse.net/zoom-sur-le-mur-des-canuts/> (accessed November 10, 2015).

daily life in this neighborhood. Croix-Rousse is located on one of the city’s two hills, thus the mural depicts one of the many staircases located in Croix-Rousse. In addition, this mural portrays the local residents as active members of society, with each person doing a different activity. *Le Mur des Canuts* has undergone two renovations by

CitéCréation (1997 and 2013), in which the mural shows how daily life and the residents of the neighborhood have evolved over the decades. By analyzing *Le Mur des Canuts* in accordance with the method outlined from chapter one, one can uncover how CitéCréation fit together aesthetics and disparate Lyonnais symbols to preserve the dominant, heteronormative, and predominantly white society to define a strict notion of who constitutes the Lyonnais identity, and to resist the influences of cultural homogenization and globalization.

In the mural, the symbol that best advocates for maintaining a Lyonnais heritage is the puppet Guignol. At the bottom of the mural is the iconic Guignol puppet theater, accompanied by a young boy and his mother (Fig. 2.2). Guignol is a figure that emerged from the revolutionary era in France. After losing his job as a silk worker during the French Revolution, aspiring street dentist Laurent Mourguet needed a way to attract customers while also distracting them from the pain that comes with a lack of anesthetics, and thus the puppet Guignol was born. Mourguet drew upon his life and surroundings in Lyon to tell Guignol's story. Eventually, Guignol's popularity caused Mourguet to leave his practice and devote his time solely to Guignol, with the puppet shows disseminating the local news to the working class who were unable to read. The shows grew in popularity and spread throughout the city as a source of entertainment. Two centuries since his inception, Lyon's "heritage is kept alive through [Guignol's] performances."²⁴ Contemporary puppeteers must create their own Guignol puppets in the traditional way that has been passed down since the 19th century. Guignol is sculpted from a lime tree, and he must be dressed in leather.²⁵ The continued popularity of Guignol puppet shows

and the maintenance of traditional artistic methods underscore the reverence the Lyonnais have for their heritage.



Fig. 2.2. Guignol. CitéCréation, Le Mur des Canuts. 2013. Source: Jean-Pierre Kosinski, “Le Mur Peint des Canuts à Lyon.” 2015, Digital Image. Available from: Le Blog de Jean-Pierre, <http://jeanpierrekosinski.over-blog.net/2015/11/le-mur-peint-des-canuts-a-lyon.html> (accessed November 10, 2015).

Guignol’s ties to Lyonnais heritage are also bolstered by his determination and revolutionary spirit. For the city, Guignol “represents the ordinary man,” and “he is the righter of wrongs...he will defend [others] against oppression.”²⁶ In a way, Guignol operates as a synecdoche for Lyon itself. According to Andrea Bolitho of *France Today*, “Lyon has a history of rebellion--from the French Revolution to its place as the headquarters of the Resistance during World War II. This stubborn independence is also reflected in Guignol.”²⁷ In his shows, his wit, courage, and rebellious spirit always lead

to an inevitable victory over his foes.²⁸ He is a reminder to be resolute and stay true to oneself while facing difficult situations and outside influences.

The placement of the Guignol puppet theater in the mural is a strategic rhetorical choice by CitéCréation. He is at ground level, and he is in the middle of the mural, as if one could walk right up and watch a puppet show while gazing upon the mural. His presence, as well as the bright red of his puppet theater, cannot be missed by visitors to *Le Mur des Canuts*, and so is his message. Moreover, his location in the mural is easily accessible not only to adults, but also to children. Because of his multigenerational popularity, the figure is able to hail and create the means for identification among the younger Lyonnais, thereby instilling the values of Guignol in adults and children alike. As if to prove this point, look at the painted Lyonnais near Guignol's theater: a young child and his mother. Hypothetically, the parent or elder Lyonnais resident can pass down the story of Guignol to the younger generations and illuminate his associations with courage, rebelliousness, and devotion to heritage. Guignol is a representation of what it means to be an ideal Lyonnais citizen, regardless of age.

As the city has changed, CitéCréation has updated *Le Mur des Canuts* to reflect those changes. One example of this is the evolution of the Carbonare family, a real family in Croix-Rousse who has appeared in all three versions of the mural in one form or another (Fig. 2.3, center right). With the first rendition in 1987, it was solely Mr. Carbonare walking up the grand staircase with his bicycle. By 1997, both his new wife and infant daughter were added into the mural. They had another child a few years later, and he was incorporated into the latest renovation of the mural in 2013.²⁹ This depiction invites locals and tourists alike to see what a quintessential Lyonnais family might look

like: heterosexual and nuclear. The father is devoted to his family, as well as his trusty bicycle (it appears in all three versions as well); the mother, who is photographing both her children, is involved in their lives and is proud of their successes. The young daughter



Fig. 2.3. The Carbonare Family. CitéCréation, Le Mur des Canuts. 2013. Source: Daniel F. Valot, “Les Familles.” Digital Image. Available from: Fresques (blog), http://dvalot.free.fr/pictures/fresques/Canuts_DSD_9066.jpg (accessed November 16, 2016).

is dutiful in her schoolwork, as she is shown studying for the challenging baccalaureate test, and her little brother is shown riding a scooter and being an active and carefree boy. Despite whatever outside influences may encroach upon France, the Carbonare family permanently represents what constitutes the French traditionalist notion of family life: two straight and heterosexual parents enjoy spending quality time away from work with their two children, who are physically active and work diligently to succeed in their studies.

The whiteness of the Carbonare family--and almost everyone in *Le Mur des Canuts* and *La Fresque des Lyonnais*---is also significant. By presenting racial homogeneity among the individuals in the murals, the rhetors are putting forth a very specific vision of how a true Lyonnais should appear and behave. They are ostensibly white, and no one is wearing distinct religious attire or paraphernalia, unless it is Judeo-Christian. The audience will not see any of the figures wearing traditionally Muslim clothing such as a burqa or hijab, despite a significant and growing Muslim population in France. This emphasis on traditionally western clothing underscores the notion that Muslims and non-traditional citizens are excluded from the ideal Lyonnais society. While the French have had a long, tense relationship with Muslims, there has been an increase in anti-Muslim sentiment and hate crimes in recent years.³⁰ As immigration into France continues, there is a concern among many French people that these immigrants, especially those who are Muslim, will not be able to successfully assimilate as ideal French citizens. As a result, this animosity creates disunity and discord among the population.³¹ In Lyon, nearly fourteen percent of its population was born outside of Metropolitan France.³² While this is not a plurality, it is a significant group of people and certainly enough of the population to cause friction between the traditional French and new immigrants. This tension is reflected through the whiteness of Lyon's murals, erasing the non-white population from its constitutive, distinctly traditional French identity.

Thus far, this essay has emphasized how selected figures and symbols in the mural provide a clear delineation of who constitutes the traditional Lyonnais identity, but it is also important to note that certain types of architecture painted within a mural can

also have constitutive effects on an audience. For example, the pink apartment on the right side of *Le Mur des Canuts* and its penthouse is a type of architectural structure specific to Croix-Rousse buildings. Sarah Walters notes that Lyon has “a rich history involving the silk industry that has impacted the architecture of the city and shaped the economy as well. There are many locations still alive today that one can visit to understand the history of Lyon.”³³ Many of the former silk factory sites are now apartment buildings, and they are characterized by their high ceilings and tall windows, as seen in the upper right-hand corner of Fig. 2.1.³⁴ Croix-Rousse was the center of the silk trade in the 19th century, and the silk workers masterfully blended art and technical creativity. However, the workers have often struggled with developments in technology and the prioritization of cheaper labor over individual craftsmanship. Through a series of worker rebellions in poor economic conditions emerged the motto “live through work or die through combat,” which still inspires workers’ strikes and protests in Lyon today for fair benefits.³⁵ When the audience gazes upon the mural, the greenery on the pink apartment draws their gaze up to the penthouse, which has the tall windows and high ceiling. Presumably, the audience will recognize this as a renovated silk factory building, and they will reflect on the artistic abilities, determination, rebelliousness, and strong work ethic associated with the silk workers and their craftsmanship. These qualities that the rhetors wish for the audience to embody reinforce the overarching themes of Lyon’s murals and identity: work hard to preserve the city’s beauty, and rebel when one’s livelihood is threatened by new technology or foreign, often cheaper, laborers.

The symbols within this mural are amplified by its *trompe l’oeil* design. The audience can feel as if they are physically interacting with the mural and entering it as if

it is material reality. They can walk up to Guignol and the Carbonare family, and they can pretend to climb the steps of Croix-Rousse. The interactive nature of *Le Mur des Canuts* and recognition of its symbols and messages can increase the chances of audience interpellation because it tricks their minds into thinking that they already a part of the mural itself. Because this mural is entertaining to engage with, it is also likely that the Lyonnais audience will interact with it more frequently and are therefore able to internalize the narratives presented often. Parents can bring their children to come play and instill the values and beliefs from an early age. In short, the overall aesthetic design of *Le Mur des Canuts* is strategic, effective, and noteworthy.

While this chapter certainly leaves room for the recognition of more symbols, aesthetic techniques, and interpretations for *Le Mur des Canuts* in future scholarship, the analysis presented here helps to bring attention to the significant rhetorical work being done by CitéCréation in bringing together a distinctly Lyonnais audience for further purposes. First, the creation of these murals in general promotes the beautification of Lyonnais neighborhoods and inspires people to love where they live. Moreover, the artistry behind the production of Guignol and the silk industry supplement this argument. Second, each of the symbols presented in this analysis highlight how the rhetors to bring together an audience that tries to preserve traditional French identity against threats to their way of life, especially globalization and increasing immigration. When the audience recognizes these symbols, they fill in the blanks by inserting the narrative they have learned about each symbol and its history, and can then be inspired to embody the characteristics presented. In so doing, they are fulfilling the goals of the rhetor and moving toward sustaining French traditionalism.

La Fresque des Lyonnais

Located in the heart of Lyon is another one of its most famous murals, *La Fresque des Lyonnais*, or “The Lyonnais Fresco” (Fig. 2.4). Commissioned by Lyon’s Mayor Michel Noir in 1994, *La Fresque des Lyonnais* also reflects the cultural life of Lyon and the influences of its past and present residents in the world. The city government funded the majority of this project, with the remaining costs paid by private donors.³⁶



Fig. 2.4. CitéCréation, La Fresque des Lyonnais. 1994, egg tempera on plaster, 800 m². Lyon, France. Source: “Photo Fresque des Lyonnais.” Digital Image. Available from: Places Online, http://www.placesonline.fr/europe/france/rhonealpes/lyon/foto_detail.asp?filename=34844_lyon_fresque_des_lyonnais&wcontent=203033 (accessed November 10, 2015).

Gilbert Coudène of CitéCréation claims that “if you really want to understand the Lyonnais identity, I recommend that you go and see the Fresque Lyonnaise, which depicts all the famous people from Lyon, from antiquity with the Emperor Claudius through

modern times with figures including Paul Bocuse, Abbé Pierre and Bertrand Tavernier.”³⁷ These iconographic figures within the murals possess certain histories, narratives, and characteristics that CitéCréation considers central to the distinct Lyonnais identity that they want their hailed audience to model themselves after. These figures inspire current citizens by demonstrating what they should do to also become quintessential Lyonnais. There are rulers, inventors, poets, chefs, and many more important figures in the mural. It would be unwieldy to discuss all 31 Lyonnais, so this chapter instead focuses on three figures from the mural for their unique and continued importance in Lyon’s history and identity.

In one of the top rows of windows stands Sainte Blandine (Fig 2.5), a Christian martyr during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD). All that is known about Blandine comes from a letter sent from the Church of Lyon to the Churches of Asia Minor. At the time, Lyon (then known as Lugdunum) was part of the Roman Empire, and the Romans were vehemently anti-Christian. Thus, when Christians ventured out into public, they were often harassed. At one point, a military commander and civil magistrate threw a number of Christians into prison on charges of cannibalism. When she stood trial, she did not deny her faith. As a result, she was subjected to a variety of horrifying forms of torture: she was bound at the stake, attacked by wild beasts, whipped, placed on a hot grate, and enclosed in a net and thrown before a wild steer. However, she survived all of these acts, and therefore was finally killed with a dagger.³⁸ Despite her tragic and horrifying death, Sainte Blandine is a widely celebrated figure in Lyonnais history.

Although she lost her life at the hands of outside forces, Blandine remained true to her beliefs in the face of unimaginable terror. Her steadfast devotion to Christian

principles in the face of foreign ideas and demands underpins the Lyonnais identity of French traditionalism. She is symbolic for the Lyonnais who feel as if outside cultures are encroaching upon their traditional way of life in the same way as Blandine. The Lyonnais perceive this struggle as transhistorical, thus they can identify with her regardless of the passage of time. When they gaze upon Blandine in *La Fresque des Lyonnais*, they are reminded of her confrontations with the Roman Empire, and the Lyonnais possess the potential to identify with her valiant efforts against external forces. As the Lyonnais continue to eschew the voices of foreigners in their city, they can associate it with Blandine's battle for traditionalism and Christian principles and feel justified.



Fig. 2.5. Sainte Blandine. CitéCréation, La Fresque des Lyonnais. 1994. Source: Christine Petitjean, Lyon Fresque des Lyonnais Célèbres: Saint Irénée et Sainte Blandine. 2009, Digital Image. Available from: Flickr, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/tissti/3608960130/> (accessed November 10, 2015).

Her bravery and spirit will not be forgotten by the Lyonnais, and serve as a continued promise to stand up and fight against those that invade and seek to destroy their way of life.

Two figures featured together in one of the windows are author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and his famous literary creation, the title character from *Le Petit Prince* (Fig. 2.6). Represented in its traditional cartoonish style, *Le Petit Prince* attracts the eye for its different style in the painting, especially the eyes of children. The style of the image invites viewers to both recognize Saint-Exupéry and be drawn in to this section and his history. Born in Lyon in 1900, Saint-Exupéry dreamed of being a pilot at an early age. He began his career as a military pilot in the early 1920s, and he remained a pilot for the rest of his life. Always daring, Saint-Exupéry attempted to break the speed record for flying from Paris to Saigon in 1935. Sadly, he and his copilot crashed in the Libyan Desert, and they had to trudge through the sand for three consecutive days in order to survive. During World War II, he flew reconnaissance missions for France. He drew upon his experiences during the war to write *Le Petit Prince* in 1943. After crashing a few more times, Saint-Exupéry was forbidden to fly so that he could physically and mentally heal. However, he insisted on flying a mission for the United States. He set out for Corsica in July 1944 in order to fly over occupied France. Unfortunately, he never returned.³⁹

Despite his tragic and untimely death, Saint-Exupéry is widely celebrated in Lyon. Seemingly unaware of the irony, the local airport bears his name. Also, he has a prominent statue located in the city center, a local school named after him, and multiple streets that bear his name.⁴⁰ Clearly, the citizens are proud to call him a Lyonnais, inspired by his tenacity and adventurous nature. He fought valiantly against the foreign invasion of France by the Axis Powers, despite many struggles. Ultimately, he sacrificed his life protecting his home from sinister foreign forces, and is thereby an honorable figure in Lyonnais society. In this mural, the Lyonnais can see Saint-Exupéry donning his

World War II aviator helmet. This accessory reminds the audience of Saint-Exupéry's heroic actions that saved the Lyonnais from defeat by the Axis Powers, and it allows for the audience to identify with his bravery in defending the homeland. His presence within this mural serves to inspire the Lyonnais to protect their home from outside threats.



Fig. 2.6. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and Le Petit Prince. CitéCréation, La Fresque des Lyonnais. 1994. Source: "Il y a du Beau Monde au Balcon Lyonnais." 2011, Digital Image. Available from: Lepetitprince.com, <http://www.lepetitprince.com/2011/08/il-y-a-du-beau-monde-au-balcon-lyonnais/> (accessed November 10, 2015).

French humanitarian Abbé Pierre (Fig. 2.7) was often voted France's most popular man.⁴¹ Pierre has deep roots in Lyon. Born into a prosperous Lyonnais family in 1912, Abbé (christened Henri Grouès) was inspired to follow a religious life. In 1930, he joined the Capuchin monks. He remained in the monastery for eight years, and then he left and became a priest in Grenoble, a city outside Lyon. During World War II, Abbé joined the Résistance movement and hid Jewish members of the community from the Nazis. He was eventually arrested, but he escaped and fled to North Africa. After the liberation of France, Abbé devoted the rest of his life to serving others, especially the homeless. He established a charity, Emmaus, in 1949 that helped the homeless find

shelter. He wanted to be the voice of the voiceless, and to “give back courage and enthusiasm to those broken by the trials of life.”⁴² For the purposes of this mural, when a Lyonnais individual is hailed and recognizes Pierre, they are capable of filling in the narratives they have learned about him. Aware of his generosity and rebel spirit, Pierre motivates residents to fight against external oppression as he did during the Résistance movement. Even after his death, Pierre serves as a role model for many French, especially those in his native Lyon.



Fig. 2.7. Abbé Pierre. CitéCréation, *La Fresque des Lyonnais*. 1994. Source: “La Fresque des Lyonnais.” 2013, Digital Image. Available from: Talpostart.overblog.com, <http://talpostart.overblog.com/de-la-galerie-du-musée-au-trottoir-de-la-rue> (accessed November 10, 2015).

Abbé Pierre’s presence in *La Fresque des Lyonnais* serves an additional rhetorical purpose. What is interesting about his physical location in the mural is that he is standing next to a contemporary young, pregnant woman who appears to be going about her daily routine. This juxtaposition collapses time and allows for the audience to see both past and present Lyonnais intermingling with the other. Moreover, the audience can interact with Pierre as well, much like the figures in *Le Mur des Canuts*. They may have different

backgrounds, fears, and hopes, but they share at least one common thread: they are Lyonnais.

In *La Fresque des Lyonnais*, there are multiple aesthetic strategies used by CitéCréation. First, it appears as if all of these people are living in this apartment building. This implies that Lyon is their true home, just like those who are a part of the intended audience. Regardless of who tries to take credit of their successes, whether it is the state of France or elsewhere, their true home is in Lyon. Second, each of the individuals in the mural is given equal space. They all have a solitary window of a similar size, and no one figure dominates the mural. As a result, their accomplishments and qualities are of equal importance for the Lyonnais. Third, these figures move chronologically from left to right and top to bottom. This creates a chain of succession down to the contemporary Lyonnais standing at the foot of the mural. This supplies the opportunity and space for someone in the audience to join the ranks of those in the mural. To do so, the individual would need to embody the qualities of a true Lyonnais as discussed throughout this chapter. Not only can the audience interact with the mural, they also have the potential to be added to it. These aesthetic qualities help to supplement and emphasize the symbols at work in *La Fresque des Lyonnais* to reinforce the rhetors' message: the Lyonnais are strong, independent, and traditional, and they will stay true to their identity in the face of outside influences.

Conclusion

The citizens of Lyon, France have a distinct identity that is visible in its murals. Throughout its long history, a variety of individuals, cultural ephemera, architecture, and the like have become symbols of who the Lyonnais are as a populace and the values and

beliefs on which they stand. These symbols, in conjunction with aestheticism, are deployed in murals all over the city as a form of visual constitutive rhetoric. *Le Mur des Canuts* and *La Fresque des Lyonnais* are accessible forms of art that directly hail a Lyonnais audience through the recognition of specific symbols and figures. In addition, the murals can lead to identification among the audience when they fill in the narratives accompanied by the symbols, and then can be persuaded to fulfill certain characteristics and actions as envisioned by the rhetor. In this chapter, the rhetors use the symbols to inspire the Lyonnais to live as traditionalists who eschew globalization and encroaching foreign cultures, while also taking pride in their city. By reflecting the past in *La Fresque des Lyonnais* and the quotidian in *Le Mur des Canuts*, CitéCréation can produce a map for the future of their city.

For Maurice Charland, constitutive rhetoric necessitates action, whether it is social, political, or economic. For onlookers, these massive murals are rather unavoidable, and by frequently walking past these images, the Lyonnais are constantly gazing upon what constitutes their French traditionalist identity and makes it distinct from others. One of the two goals that CitéCréation wants the audience to enact is resist outside influences when confronted with them. This goal can be seen with symbols such as Guignol, Sainte Blandine, and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The tension between foreign residents and the Lyonnais is becoming more frequent as globalization and increased immigration have become quite the phenomenon in France. The effects of this tension are evident both in the whiteness of Lyon's murals, and with the rise of anti-Muslim violence nationwide. While these murals are seen in a positive light for many of the Lyonnais, it is

important to note that these works of art are strictly for those who fit within the confines of the French traditionalist identity.

Another one of CitéCréation's main goals is to have the residents of Lyon love where they live, and to have these murals serve as a daily reminder of who they are as Lyonnais. With forty years of hard work and dedication, CitéCréation has transformed the city of Lyon from a bustling and simple metropolis into a unique and beautiful city that allows for its citizens to be proud of where they live and understand who they are as a society through these visual texts. While not every CitéCréation mural is focused on cultural homogenization and globalization, *Le Mur des Canuts* and *La Fresque des Lyonnais* demonstrate clearly that “when people visit the murals, they learn a great deal about the identity of Lyon, its symbols and its values.”⁴³

Notes

¹ Gilbert Coudène, “The Fresco Murals, A Book About Lyon with Huge Pictures,” *Only Lyon: Tourism and Conventions*, September 3, 2011, <http://www.en.lyon-france.com/Discover-Lyon/Architecture-Monuments/The-Murals> (accessed September 24, 2015).

² Mark Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Sedgwick provides a thorough discussion of the French Traditionalist movement of the 20th century.

³ G. H. Hughes, “An Argument for Culture Analysis in the Second Language Classroom,” in *Culture Bound: Bridging the Cultural Gap in Language Teaching*, ed. J. M. Valdes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 166.

⁴ Philip H. Gordon and Sophie Meunier-Aitsahalia, *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), 1.

⁵ Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 66-67; “Food,” *À la Rhône-Alpes* (blog), <https://alarhonealpes.wordpress.com/food/> (accessed December 8, 2015).

⁶ Mary Novakovich, “France’s New Regions: As Borders Dissolve, the Country Faces an Identity Crisis,” *Independent*, January 4, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/a6796026.html> (accessed October 6, 2016).

⁷ Kevin J. Callahan and Sarah Ann Curtis, eds., *Views from the Margins: Creating Identities in Modern France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 2.

⁸ Pierre Birnbaum, *The Idea of France*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (New York: Hill and Wang Publisher, 1998), 10-11; Joseph F. Byner, *Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), xv.

⁹ Jean-Christophe Penet, “The Other from Within: The Catholic Church as the Doppelgänger of French Republican Identity,” *Irish Journal of French Studies* 7 (2007): 107.

¹⁰ “Gay Marriage Around the World,” Pew Research Center, June 26, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/06/26/gay-marriage-around-the-world-2013/> (accessed December 8, 2015).

¹¹ Robert Zaretsky, “How French Secularism Became Fundamentalist,” *Foreign Policy*, April 7, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/07/the-battle-for-the-french-secular-soul-laicite-charlie-hebdo/> (accessed October 12, 2016).

¹² Rochana Kaushik, “French Views on Marriage, Pregnancy, Children,” *French Family Values* (blog), May 9, 2011, <http://frenchfamilyvalues.blogspot.com/2011/05/what-i-am-going-to-talk-about-below-is.html> (accessed December 8, 2015); Rochana Kaushik, “The Role of French Government in Providing a ‘Quality’ Family Life,” *French Family Values* (blog), May 5, 2011, <http://frenchfamilyvalues.blogspot.com/2011/05/role-of-french-government-in-providing.html> (accessed December 8, 2015).

¹³ “Médaille de la Famille,” Service-Public.fr, <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F2124> (accessed October 12, 2016). The quote has been translated from French. The original quote is “Tout parent qui a élevé au moins 4 enfants de nationalité française...et qui a fait un constant effort pour élever ses enfants dans les meilleures conditions matérielles et morales possible.”

¹⁴ Laura Cohen, “The French Identity Crisis: Fending Off the Franglais Invasion,” *Honors Projects* 5 (2012): 6, http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=french_honproj (accessed December 8, 2015).

¹⁵ Gordon and Meunier-Aitsahalia, *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization*, 5.

¹⁶ Nikki Greenhalgh, “Art in America: Diego Rivera’s Murals,” *Patch Media*, September 24, 2013, <http://patch.com/new-york/portjefferson/art-in-america-diego-riveras-murals> (accessed November 6, 2015); Andrea Bolitho, “The Murals of Lyon,” *France Today*, October 23, 2011, <http://www.francetoday.com/articles/2011/10/23/the-murals-of-lyon.html> (accessed September 24, 2015). For the 50th anniversary of Rivera’s death in 2006, the mural painters of CitéCréation paid homage to him by creating a series of murals on the walls of an apartment complex in Lyon that depict historical events addressed by Rivera during his lifetime as an artist. For an in-depth look at sections of these murals, known as *Espace Diego Rivera*, see Fripouille, “Lyon’s Mural Art Tribute to Mexican Artist Diego Rivera,” *Blogspot*, January 12, 2013, <http://www.undertheburningbridge.blogspot.com/2013/01/lyons-mural-art-tribute-to-mexican.html> (accessed November 6, 2015).

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CHAPTER THREE

Epic Nationalism: Alphonse Mucha's *The Slav Epic* and Pan-Slavism

Czech Art Nouveau painter Alphonse Mucha, famous for his commercial art and *The Slav Epic*, spent his formative years surrounded by political unrest in the Habsburg Empire's Austria-Hungary. Born in 1860 in Ivančice, a small provincial town in the region of Moravia (in present-day Czech Republic), Mucha witnessed the people of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia fight for political and cultural independence from their rulers in Vienna.¹ This emphasis on cultural identity and national independence ultimately inspired Mucha to create the world-renowned *The Slav Epic*. A cycle of twenty paintings, *The Slav Epic* depicts the myths and history of the Slavic peoples and their civilization on massive canvases that reach the size of 20 feet by 33 feet. According to Mucha, he “wished to unite all the Slavs through their common history and their mutual reverence for peace and learning and eventually to inspire them to work for humanity using their experience and virtue.”² Alphonse Mucha attempted to foster the Pan-Slavic movement by providing a visual form of constitutive rhetoric that tells mythic Slavic stories and employs symbols that hail a Slavic audience, foster cultural pride, and instill a determination to seek independence from the oppressive forces of Austria-Hungary.

Despite Mucha's desire for *The Slav Epic* to unite the Slavic people, his paintings and the Pan-Slavic movement would have different and unexpected trajectories after World War I. After completing *The Slav Epic* later than expected, only 11 of the 20 paintings would be showcased at its first exhibition, and then some of the paintings would travel frequently to New York and Chicago. During World War II, the paintings

were wrapped up and hidden from the Nazis, and then they would be housed in a chateau in Moravský Krumlov throughout the Cold War. It is only in the 21st century that *The Slav Epic* has been shown in full, nearly a century after their completion. The unconventional, haphazard paths these paintings followed have limited the possibility to constitute a Slavic audience and create an ethno-nationalist identity. Moreover, the popularity of Pan-Slavism died during the mid-20th century, which contributed to the lack of fervor for the nationalist ideas seen in *The Slav Epic*. Altogether, the dwindling support for the Pan-Slavic movement coupled with the disjointed exhibitions of Mucha's paintings led to a failure of constitutive rhetoric.

An analysis of Alphonse Mucha's *The Slav Epic* contributes to this thesis in several ways. Similarly to the Lyonnais murals, it affirms and supplies a second case study of how Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric can be expanded into the realm of public art. However, this chapter diverges from the previous chapter in its second contribution. By examining *The Slav Epic*, this chapter uncovers how rhetors can issue an elastic invitation to a geographically dispersed audience to constitute a vision of ethno-nationalist identity. As a rhetor, Mucha attempted to bring together a Slavic audience that came from many different countries in Central and Eastern Europe. By constituting an ethno-nationalist identity, he dreamed of creating a Slavic nation that would preserve their culture and overthrow the oppressive Habsburg Empire. However, Mucha's efforts were not as successful as those of CitéCréation in Lyon, and *The Slav Epic* fails ultimately to overcome the material and symbolic limitations of its contexts. Mucha's work had to create an elastic invitation that incorporated millions of Slavs who lived in many different countries, their moving borders during the geopolitically turbulent time of

the early 20th century, and their different backgrounds, histories, and myths. The iconographic symbols he included in *The Slav Epic* needed to encompass a diverse, evolving audience and their cultural ephemera. Because of the disjointed and indirect nature of these paintings, Mucha's goal was challenging, and he failed in his rhetorical work. Despite its failure to establish a Slavic nation, Mucha's work provides a substantial contribution to the overall thesis. This rhetorical failure teaches us the limits of constitutive rhetoric, particularly the strategy of unification amongst impassable divisions.

This chapter will explore the visual constitutive rhetoric at work in Mucha's *The Slav Epic*. The first section will delve into the history and ideology of Pan-Slavism, the people within this movement that inspired Mucha to incorporate their ideas into *The Slav Epic*, and how myths shape Mucha's message to his Slavic audience. Next, this chapter will uncover the stories, symbolism, and messages within four selected paintings to understand the Pan-Slavic ideology and its potential effects on Mucha's intended audience. The final section of this chapter will trace the Pan-Slavic movement and *The Slav Epic* since Mucha's death to understand how these material changes can teach the field of rhetorical studies how to use visual texts for the purposes of constitutive rhetoric.

Pan-Slavism and its Influence on Alphonse Mucha

To accurately grasp the burden of elasticity in Mucha's rhetorical invitation, it is necessary to discuss the geographic boundaries of the Slavic people. The Slavs are the largest group of European peoples that share a common ethnic and linguistic origin. They are divided into three main geographical groups. The Eastern Slavic peoples include Russians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians. In the south are the Bulgarians, Serbo-Croatians,

Slovenians, and Macedonians. The Western Slavic peoples consist of the Polish, Czechs, and Slovaks.³ Because Mucha was born and grew up in Bohemia, he was considered to be a Western Slav and was informed primarily by their ways of thinking. The idea of uniting around a common Slavic identity arose as a movement with the Western Slavs.⁴ As a result, Mucha, a Western Slav, spent his formative years entrenched in the ideas of Pan-Slavism, which inevitably served as the inspiration for creating *The Slav Epic*.

The idea of Pan-Slavism “denotes the movement of the disparate Slav people of Europe toward the recognition of their common ethnic background, and their various attempts to achieve a unified front against the dominant nations of Europe through the awakening of their national consciousness.”⁵ Rumblings of Pan-Slavism can be traced as far back as the seventeenth century, but the movement did not establish strong roots until the Romantic period, when the “libertarian ideals of the French Revolution and the nationalistic tendencies sparked by the Napoleonic Wars and suppressed by the European Restoration” emerged.⁶ This movement, led by writers such as Johann Gottfried von Herder, Jan Kollár, František Palacký, and others, called for cultural unity across national boundaries, but the movement was never politically successful for more than a decade. However, understanding their works and methods for achieving Pan-Slavism is necessary to critically analyze the themes and symbols present in Mucha’s *Epic* masterpiece.

To understand these visual representations, it is imperative to discuss the architects of Pan-Slavic thinking. Johann Gottfried von Herder, a German intellectual and prominent figure in the Romantic Period, helped to shape the emergence of Pan-Slavism in the late eighteenth century. In his 1784 book, *Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, Herder “gave the Slavs the consciousness of a unity based upon the community

of high morality and glorious destiny. He proclaimed the Slavs the coming leaders of Europe.”⁷ He praised the Slavs for their nonviolent disposition and their love of music literature. He advocated for the Slavic people to resist the adoption of the French or German language, and instead study their own language and develop their own culture and folklore. More generally, writers on Pan-Slavism were interested in “tracing the awareness of linguistic similarities among the Slavs and in advocating a common Slavonic language, or three basic languages, or at least a Slavonic alphabet.”⁸ By appreciating their own cultural heritage, Herder hoped the Slavs would band together and improve the human condition. His work was rather idealistic and failed to provide any specifics on how to achieve Slavic unity, but he still inspired many Slavic intellectuals to focus on unification.⁹

Influenced by Herder, as well as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant, František Palacký argued for the establishment of independent Czech nations within the Habsburg Empire. In his mind, these Czech nations would counterbalance German and Russian influence in the region. He wanted Slavs to take control of determining their own future. He participated in the Slavic Congress in Prague in 1848, in which 341 delegates gathered to foster cooperation among the Slavs following the revolutions of 1848. This was Palacký’s greatest contribution, yet none of his proposals to create a Slavic federation were ever realized.¹⁰

Jan Kollár studied under Palacký in Bratislava, Slovakia, and he adopted Herder’s view of the Slavs as “the archetype of humanity and Christianity.”¹¹ Inspired by the turbulent history of the Slavic people, he made his greatest contribution to the Pan-Slavism movement by writing the epic poem, *Slávy Dcera* in 1824. In his poem, Kollár

“describes the past triumphs and defeats of the Slavic people along with prophecies of a glorious global future under Slav supremacy.”¹² Kollár emphasized the differences between the Slavic people and their Germanic neighbors to build Slavic solidarity and create a distinct identity separate from the Germans. Moreover, he crafted an ideological treatise that became a manifesto for the Czech intelligentsia. When the intelligentsia turned into Czech political leaders overnight during the 1848 revolution, Kollár’s treatise was a political instrument that ultimately led to the creation of the Slavic Congress in 1848.¹³ While the Slavic Congress did not fulfill expectations or result in substantial political changes, it helped to strengthen Slavic self-confidence and give them hope for future independence and peace with all mankind.¹⁴

In 1867, the Austrian Empire became the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary. Slavs were placed at a disadvantage when Austria-Hungary decided not to grant full legal status to the Czechs and the Slovaks. To confront this setback, the Czechs established their own Czech-language university in Prague. Moreover, Czech was deemed an official language with German in Bohemia and Moravia. As a result, many Czechs formed nationalist organizations that helped to bolster their cultural and political life.¹⁵ In the Kingdom of Hungary, Magyar became the sole official language, with Slovak downgraded to lower-level administrative offices and elementary schools. The Prime Minister of Hungary was determined to turn the Kingdom of Hungary into a Magyar nation-state. By 1874, Hungarian authorities shut down all three Slovak-language secondary schools, which made it more difficult for these Slavs to maintain and preserve their culture. Together, the Czechs and Slovaks worked toward preserving their Slavic languages and the “ideological ticket of Czechoslovakism” against the threat of

Germanization for the Czechs and the Magyarization for the Slovaks in Hungary.¹⁶ The push to preserve Slavic culture and languages in the face of oppression both reflect the beliefs of Pan-Slavism and Mucha's *Epic*.

One of the reasons that Pan-Slavism remained a strong public sentiment in Bohemia during the late nineteenth century was its prevalence in the Czech nationalist press. Newspaper editors both encouraged and performed exchanges of Slavic books and news. In addition, there were many attempts in Bohemia to create and publish Slavic newspapers and journals.¹⁷ These continuous efforts during the late nineteenth century by Czech nationalists and intellectuals to keep Pan-Slavic literature and news circulating throughout the region helped the movement maintain relevance and interest despite the failure of the Slavonic Congress for many Slavic residents, likely including Alphonse Mucha. By the turn of the century, the desire for Slavic unity and the preservation of their culture against Austria-Hungary was a growing sentiment in the region, and it would inspire Mucha to take on his biggest art project yet.

While decorating a set of murals for the Bosnia and Herzegovina pavilion at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, Mucha extensively studied the history of the Southern Slavs. Before he completed these murals, he made up his mind about his next project: *The Slav Epic*.¹⁸ He eventually began to distance himself from the commercial work that made him famous to historical Slavic depictions. Mucha was deeply inspired by the readings of Herder, Palacký, and Kollár, and "he wanted his cycle of paintings to distill the Czech national character in a series of mythological and historical paintings that extolled the best qualities of the Slavs."¹⁹ When Mucha returned to Prague, he decided that he would devote the rest of his life to creating art that would educate the

Slavic people on the ideas of Pan-Slavism so that they would cultivate a feeling of national consciousness.²⁰ Mucha adopted these Pan-Slavic ideas and folded them into *The Slav Epic*, and thus he became the first person to take the values and ideology of Pan-Slavism and incorporate its ideas, myths, and history into a visual text.

With *The Slav Epic*, Mucha uses visual constitutive rhetoric through iconographic symbols to unveil the historical myths of Pan-Slavism and Slavic history. He incorporates symbols that are prevalent in Slavic myths and recognizable for a Slavic audience member. As Robert C. Rowland and David A. Frank note, “Myths are central to identity.”²¹ They tell sacred stories that “can evoke certain feelings in an audience,” especially because myths are “the most important stories that society has.”²² Thus, when a Slavic individual gazes upon these paintings, they are more likely to be inspired to act out the goals Mucha identifies. In these mythic stories, whether told through a narrative or a visual text, the characters must be heroic, that way they can overcome their enemies.²³ And because these myths consist of the stories of heroes “who are larger than life, often operating in special places possessing great symbolic power...at times that are endowed with great meaning, such as the beginning or ending of a culture or a time of great crisis, they provide a ‘transcendent grounding’ for any society.”²⁴ For Mucha, he literally makes these heroes larger than life by painting these myths onto 20 feet by 33 feet canvases. From the origin of the Slavic peoples to the introduction of Slavonic liturgy,²⁵ Mucha uses visualized Slavic myths from their history to hail, educate, and inspire Slavic peoples. Moreover, Mucha advocated for Pan-Slavism and independence from their oppressors. While incorporating myths certainly has its benefits, this chapter

will uncover the tension at play between Slavic myths and histories in *The Slav Epic* and the limitations it placed on Mucha's rhetorical goals.

Creation of The Slav Epic

In 1911, Mucha began to research and plan *The Slav Epic*. He spent a few years traveling with his family across the Balkans and Russia, sketching and photographing different areas. He wanted to identify twenty historically and ideologically important events from the Slavs' past, so that each painting would serve as a chapter of their history. Because Mucha was heavily influenced by his Western Slavic upbringing in Bohemia, ten of the paintings focused specifically on Czech culture, while the other ten depicted scenes from other Slavic nations. He linked these nations together by "emphasizing their shared historical and cultural traits."²⁶ This link may have had productive intentions, but the emphasis on Czech culture proved a detriment to other Slavic nations and Mucha's overall rhetorical goals. The main themes represented in *The Slav Epic* include religion, culture, warfare, and parables. He purposefully selected historical events that would emphasize the Slavs as a peaceful people who contributed to culture and the arts, rather than showcase intra-Slavic discord and fighting.²⁷ During this time, the Czechs and other Slavic nations were struggling to escape from the grips of the Habsburg Empire, so Mucha aimed to visually depict nationalistic themes as well as reminders of heroism and fortitude so that his audience would be inspired to work against their conceived oppressors.

To create these works, Mucha required significant financial support. He found a generous benefactor by the name of Charles Crane, a Czech sympathizer Mucha met while visiting the United States. While he intended to complete *The Slav Epic* within five

years, it ultimately took him sixteen years, between 1912 and 1928. For Mucha, these paintings held grand historical and symbolic significance, and so their size had to be great as well. Each canvas was typically 20 feet by 33 feet. Crane made a deal with the city of Prague that they would build a permanent venue to house these paintings. The city pleaded with Mucha to reduce the size of his works so that the future venue would be more cost-efficient, but Mucha did not relent. To make them smaller, he believed, would diminish their importance.²⁸ While Mucha may have certainly been correct, the overwhelming size of these paintings would make it more difficult to showcase *The Slav Epic* in their entirety, which would later become an obstacle to constituting an ethno-nationalist identity.

Beginning with *Slavs in their Original Homeland* and ending with *Apotheosis of the Slavs*, these twenty paintings depict myriad mythical and historical events, ranging from the introduction of Christianity to the region, the trials and tribulations of settling on land contested by the Germanic tribes, the great Slavic kings, and more. Each of these paintings is referred to as a “cycle,” which invokes the idea of a loop. These visual representations of such events provide an example for the Slavs of how to circle back in time to deepen points of identification with the transhistorical figures represented. Mucha emulates what Mircea Eliade calls “sacred time,” or “a primordial mythic time made present.”²⁹ He created a transhistorical link between the living and dead, so that the living audience can see themselves in the past and thus be inspired to repeat these cultural practices and work toward Slavic independence. The remainder of this chapter will examine four of these paintings. It will discuss the myths, symbols, and messages present

that work to hail a Slavic audience and instill a national consciousness that would ideally lead, in Mucha's mind, to a Pan-Slavic movement.

The Slavs in Their Original Homeland

Mucha's *Epic* story begins with an origin myth of the Slavic people. *Slavs in Their Original Homeland* (Fig 3.1) is important to this analysis because it provides a narrative of how the Slavic community came into being. According to Eliade, "He who recites or performs the origin myth is thereby steeped in the sacred atmosphere in which these miraculous events took place."³⁰ By painting this origin myth, Mucha accomplishes two tasks. First, his visual recitation of this myth affords him the ethos to tell the story of the Slavic people. Second, Mucha's performance of the origin myth "conjures paragons to interpret the community's past and future."³¹ Mucha uses this painting to represent not only the history of the Slavic people, but also to provide insight into what their future holds. By engaging in battle with Germanic tribes (or in his world, the Austro-Hungarians), the Slavs can achieve lasting peace. All the audience must do is gaze upon Mucha's paintings, internalize the symbols and histories he presents, and then go forth to enact a Pan-Slavic identity.

According to this myth, between the fourth and sixth centuries, the peaceful, agricultural Slavic tribes were constantly under threat by nomadic Germanic tribes, who burned villages, stole livestock, and sold women at slave markets. The Slavic tribes, lacking unity, were unable to defend themselves effectively against the Germanic tribes.³² This incoherence in the fourth century mirrors what Mucha witnessed (and wanted to ameliorate) in the early twentieth century and World War I. In the painting, there is a couple hiding in the bushes. The two figures in the foreground are similar to Adam and



Fig. 3.1. Alphonse Mucha, *Slavs in Their Original Homeland: Between the Turanian Whip and the Sword of the Goths*, 1912, tempera with oil details on canvas, 20 ft. x 26 ft., National Gallery in Prague.

Eve, and they underscore the notion of this painting as the genesis chapter of Slavic history. Both possess a typical Slavic visage, which helps to increase identification with Mucha's intended audience. They have survived the destruction of their village by the nomadic hordes. They reflect purity with their white clothing, and their faces show both fear and vulnerability, almost as if they are pleading to the viewer for help. These two individuals do not hold weapons, despite the war raging behind them. Mucha depicts them as a peaceful people who are not quick to violence. This emphasis on purity and peace among the Slavs in the face of invasion is a major theme throughout *The Slav Epic*, and by enacting these characteristics, the audience might align with Mucha's vision for an independent Slavic nation.

Another prominent part of this painting is the three figures floating over the Slavic Adam and Eve. The man in the center is a pagan priest, the figure on the left is outfitted for combat, and the young female on the right is dressed in white with a green wreath on her head, symbolizing peace. The priest has his arms outstretched to the audience, as if he is beckoning the Slavs to embrace him and thus, their future. Mucha, as well as this priest, foretell that the Slavs will expand and achieve independence by necessary war and flourish in peace.³³ Mucha's work suggests to his audience, especially during his time, to recognize the dangers of the present-day Germanic enemy, cherish the Slavs' nonviolent nature, and work toward independence from Austria-Hungary and unite in peace with all Slavs. Later in the twentieth century, these enemies may have represented the Nazis or the Soviets for the audience. Regardless, the imagery invites a Slavic audience to solidify their ethnic identity in opposition to outside forces.

Looking at the entire collection of *The Slav Epic*, it appears that this painting is one of Mucha's best attempts at hailing and representing the entirety of the Slavic population. As the coming analysis will show, that is not the case for the rest of *The Slav Epic*, because each painting speaks to different and distinct Slavic populations. In *Slavs in Their Original Homeland*, Mucha's use of their origin myth and traditional Slavic visage create a basic scene that many Slavs can see themselves as a part of, rather than begin with a scene in Bulgaria or Russia. If he can successfully constitute an expansive Slavic audience at the beginning of *The Slav Epic*, he is more likely to keep their attention when he diverts to the many histories and myths that incorporate Slavic ethnicity in the later paintings. However, the lack of coherence and disjointedness of

Slavic culture in *The Slav Epic* would lead to its failure to constitute a Pan-Slavic audience.

While the incorporation of Slavic myths is useful for Mucha in attaining an ethos for his audience, it also helps secure the failure of his rhetorical work. The origin myth allows for a potential window to see the future of the Slavic people, but it also enhances the disjointed nature of *The Slav Epic*. A handful of the paintings are rooted in Slavic myths, and the rest focus on historical events. At least twelve paintings in *The Slav Epic* are addressed to different Slavic nations and regions, such as Bulgaria, Bohemia, Serbia, and Russia. Additionally, other paintings are focused on historical events like the Battle of Grunewald or defense of the city Szigetvár, Croatia.³⁴ There is a tension between myth and reality across *The Slav Epic*, but also within some of the paintings. In *Slavs in Their Original Homeland*, the viewer sees the historical pillaging by Germanic tribes, but they are also confronted with the floating mythical figures within the same painting. As the audience moves throughout *The Slav Epic*, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to negotiate between real histories and fantasies. The combination of myth and reality into a painting can make it difficult for the audience to distinguish what is true and what is fiction. If there is to be any chance for identification, the audience thus has to be knowledgeable of the intricate and multitudinous histories and myths of a particular culture. For example, there may be Slavs who are not as familiar with the totality of Slavic history and culture, and this tension may confuse them, which decreases the chances of identification. The combination between myth and reality is one of the many disjointed themes seen in Mucha's *The Slav Epic*, and it also helps contribute to its rhetorical failure.

The Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy

In the third painting of *The Slav Epic*, Mucha moves the story and audience along to the second half of the ninth century to tell the history of the introduction of Slavonic liturgy (Fig 3.2). During this time period, most of the territory ruled by the Slavs encompassed the powerful and independent Great Moravian Empire (which comprised portions of present-day Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, and Bulgaria).³⁵ While the empire only reigned for about seventy years, it was the first predominantly Slavic state to emerge in Central Europe.³⁶ During this time, German Christian missionaries led a crusade throughout the Great Moravian Empire. Its ruler, Prince Rostislav, wanted to prevent the Germanization of the converted Slavs, thus he requested missionaries to teach these people in their native tongue and preserve the Slavic language. In 864, Byzantine emperor Michael III sent Rostislav two monks from Salonika, Cyril and Methodius. These two monks adapted the Greek alphabet to the Slavic language and translated the Bible into Old Church Slavonic. As a result, Slavonic liturgy helped Christianity spread quickly among the Slavs. After fierce opposition by German bishops, Methodius traveled to Rome to defend the translation and its interpretation to the Vatican. He successfully defended it, and he continued his work. Methodius ultimately was consecrated as the archbishop of Moravia. Their translation was instrumental in preserving the Slavic tongue for many centuries, and they are considered to be the Slav's most notable and popular saints.³⁷ This desire to preserve Slavic culture in the face of Germanization mirrors the quotidian issues the Slavs faced in Central Europe during Mucha's upbringing.

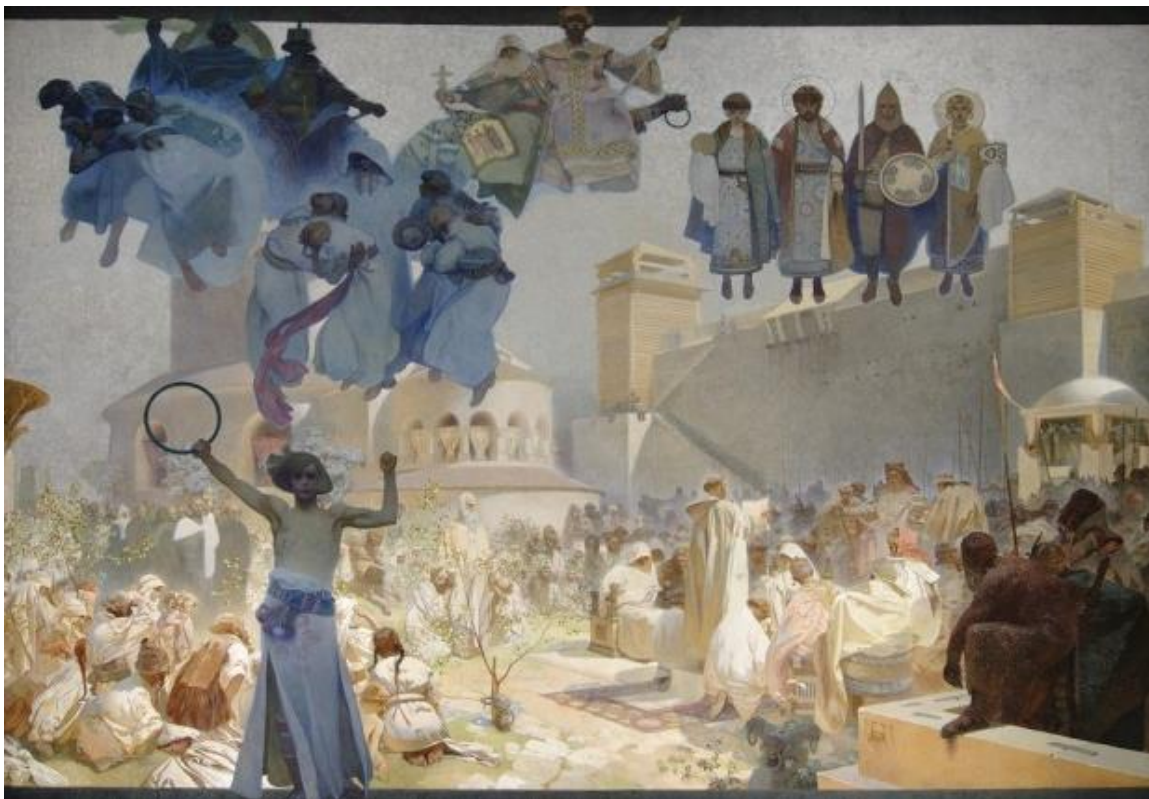


Fig. 3.2. Alphonse Mucha, *The Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy: Praise the Lord in Your Native Tongue*, 1912, egg tempera on canvas, 20 ft. x 26 ft., National Gallery in Prague.

In this painting, Mucha incorporates both historical and symbolic tokens that his audience might recognize. Much like *Slavs in Their Original Homeland*, this painting succeeds at representing a majority of the disparate Slavic population due to the Great Moravian Empire's massive geographical range. Thus, the symbols should be recognizable to many within the Slavic audience. *The Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy* takes place in the open court of Velehrad, the fortress and capital of Great Moravia. Mucha depicts the triumphal return of Methodius to Great Moravia from Rome. He is the bearded figure to the left of center, supported by two of his followers. He is shrouded in sunlight and looking to his left, which both help to illuminate and lead the eye toward the activity on the right side of the painting. A priest reads the papal bill to Prince Svatopluk, Rostislav's successor. The figures surrounding Svatopluk are German

priests who wished for the ties of the Czechs and Moravians with the Eastern Church to be temporary, and that the joyous Slavs seen throughout the open court would be converted back to Catholicism. The right of the painting is contrasted by the dark figures, who are guards.³⁸ They, like the German priests, represent the establishment, who wished to maintain their hegemony. Mucha symbolically contrasts the light Slavs in this painting with the dark, brooding Germans to create another sense of distinction from these enemy forces who often want to diminish Slavic unity.

The darkened, floating figures seen in the painting serve as iconographic symbols that advocate for the preservation of Slavic culture. The center left shows a group of frightened pagan women. Understandably, these women are likely fearful of the changes taking place both on a religious and cultural level. However, they are being comforted by Cyril who, while wearing his monk's hood, embraces them. He assures them of the religious shift that is occurring as they are converted from paganism to Christianity. In addition, Cyril encourages them to preserve the Slavic language.³⁹ Despite the uncertainty of their future and freedom, this painting implies that it is necessary for the Slavs to prioritize their culture. Like Cyril, Methodius, and the Slavic writers of the Romantic period, this painting might inspire the audience to resist adopting other languages so that the Slavic language does not fade from relevance.

To the upper right of the painting are the figures of Boris of Bulgaria, Igor of Russia, and their wives. Painted in the Byzantine style, these two rulers supported the spread of Christianity in the Slavic language.⁴⁰ Boris's greatest legacy as a ruler was the eschewing of Catholicism and the adoption of the Eastern Orthodox rite for Bulgaria. In the late ninth century, he provided refuge for Methodius and his followers who had been

driven from Moravia by ongoing Roman persecution. They brought with them the Slavic Cyrillic alphabet, which freed the Southern Slavic Bulgarians from their dependence on Greek as a written and liturgical language. As a result, Bulgaria became a center of Slavic Christian culture.⁴¹ By incorporating Boris and Igor, Mucha presents to the audience the necessity of Slavic state leaders in working with Christian leaders to preserve their religion and language.

In the foreground a Slavic youth stands as arguably the most prominent figure of the painting. His left arm is flexed, while his right arm is outstretched and holds a circle high in the air. Serious and determined, his flexed arm and the circle he holds symbolize the strength and unity of the Slavic people. As seen in the first painting of *The Slav Epic*, Mucha addresses both the Slav's past and present. Cyril and Methodius' efforts to introduce Church Slavonic as a liturgical language not only spread throughout Great Moravia and beyond, but central to the survival of the Slavic tongue for centuries to come.⁴² This painting signifies the distinction of the Slavic culture from other predominant cultures at this time, such as the Latin or Greek peoples. By articulating their culture through the creation of liturgy and the preservation of the Slavic language, Mucha shows his Slavic audience the importance of creating cultural works representative of the Slavs to maintain their ethnic distinctiveness. By achieving this uniqueness, they might come one step closer to achieving independence from other empires or other peoples.

The disjointed nature of aesthetics in *The Introduction of Slavonic Liturgy* is an obstacle to Mucha's overall goal of constituting a Slavic audience. For instance, the aesthetic tension between the floating and grounded figures is significant for multiple

reasons. First, the color shifts between blue and warm colors in this painting are jarring and create a confusing distinction. The shifts in color make it appear as if these are two separate paintings grafted on top of one another, and it is likely that only an individual who is informed deeply of the histories and symbols at work in this painting would know that this painting represents a single narrative. Additionally, the blue figures stand in contrast to the warmer figures in the background. For example, Boris, Igor, and their wives are painted in a medieval style, and it is as if they were copied out of another painting completely. The harsh, disconnected relationship between the colors and styles in this painting can disorient the audience. It is unclear which symbols and characters the audience should focus on, and that makes the task more difficult because there is less for them to grasp for constitutive purposes. Overall, the aesthetic incoherence is contributory to the rhetorical failure of *The Slav Epic* because the two distinct sections of this painting compete for the viewer's attention and distract them from the message of preserving Slavic language and culture. This example is one of many that showcase the limitations of constitutive rhetoric and how it affected the potential success of *The Slav Epic*.

The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree: The Slavic Revival

The Oath of Omladina (Fig. 3.3), the eighteenth painting in the cycle, incorporates mythic figures such as the goddess Slavia with contemporary Czech nationalist groups, who directly refuted Austria-Hungary. The work was likely intended to evoke a nationalist consciousness in Mucha's audience. It is Mucha's only unfinished painting in *The Slav Epic*. If one looks closely, the standing figures on the left and right sides are incomplete. During Mucha's lifetime, this painting was never featured in exhibitions along with the others.⁴³ While it is unclear why Mucha was unable to complete this work,

it still maintains significance for the Pan-Slavic movement. With this painting, Mucha brings the audience (and the *Epic*) into the nineteenth century right before the outbreak of World War I. Omladina was a Czech nationalist youth organization created in the 1890s. The group was defined by its patriotic, liberal, anti-Austrian, and anti-clerical tendencies. At the turn of the century, there was a nationalistic revival gaining momentum against the Habsburg Empire, and Omladina played a large role in this movement. By 1904, Omladina's leaders were arrested, prosecuted, and sent to prison, most likely for disturbing the peace.⁴⁴ However, their presence and platform are immortalized in this work of art.

In the center of the painting are a group of youths kneeling in a circle and holding hands. The bright light in the middle of the circle both connects the figures and draws attention to the goddess perched above them. They are pledging allegiance to the goddess Slavia, who sits in the linden tree, a symbol of divination.⁴⁵ Jan Kollár wrote a poem in 1824 entitled "Daughter of Sláva," in which he praised Slavia and her benevolence, as well as her determination to watch over the Slavic people and bring them strength and unity in the future.⁴⁶ Both the tree and Slavia are sacred, and they are symbolic references to the revival of Czech nationalism. This led to the formation of nationalist organizations like Omladina, and later to the struggle for national independence during World War I. These youths hold up their hands and pledge to Slavia that they will defend Slavic ideals. Surrounding the youths in the outer circle are members of various patriotic and political organizations, who hold their hands up in solidarity with both the youths and the Pan-Slavic movement.⁴⁷ Not only does this scene depict the strength of the movement, but it also showcases the unity and coherence of the Slavs.



Fig. 3.3. Alphonse Mucha, *The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree: The Slavic Revival*, 1926, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 13 ft. x 20 ft., National Gallery in Prague.

In the forefront of the painting are individuals who are dressed in historical folk costume. They represent the Slavs as a whole, and they create a transhistorical moment for the audience gazing upon the painting. These traditional Slavs surround the other individuals in the painting, and some of them gaze upon Slavia, the linden tree, and the nationalist organization members. For an individual gazing upon the painting, they would be interacting with three different points in time: historical Pan-Slavism, the nationalistic events of World War I, and the present. All of these points in time exist together, and the audience might be able to conceptualize themselves as part of the painting. They can honor and repeat the cultural practices of the traditional Slavs and simultaneously pledge to uphold Slavic ideals, or even help preserve Czech national consciousness.

Yet, this painting is one of many within *The Slav Epic* that is historically disjointed. As mentioned previously in this chapter, many of the paintings in this cycle depict specific Slavic nations or events, rather than speaking to the totality of the Slavs within each painting. While there may be strengths in addressing specific audiences, it also reduces the potential of bringing together a disparate audience for the purposes of furthering the Pan-Slavic movement. It is likely that only Czech audiences would recognize the Omladina organization. For Slavs that live in Bulgaria or Russia, Omladina's nationalist goals may be foreign and unknown, and thus this painting is unlikely to constitute and motivate a majority of Mucha's intended audience. Interestingly, this painting both addresses and ignores Mucha's broader audience, depending on who gazes upon it. Much like a dozen other paintings in *The Slav Epic*, *The Oath of the Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree* is limited in its historical scope and thus fails to hail a Slavic audience and establish an ethno-nationalist identity. While historical disjointedness may not be a serious issue in another case study it leads to the rhetorical failure of *The Slav Epic* compounded by the other limitations present in this analysis.

The Apotheosis of the Slavs, Slavs for Humanity

The last painting of Mucha's *The Slav Epic* is by far the most symbolic and powerful. Mucha's overarching purpose for *The Apotheosis of the Slavs* (Fig 3.4) was to combine all of Slavic history into one monumental painting that celebrated their final victory of independence. This painting is divided into four color sections: blue, red, black, and yellow, with each color representing a successive period in Slavic history.⁴⁸ Unlike previous paintings in this cycle, the color shifts strengthen the argument in *The*

Apotheosis of the Slavs rather than weaken it. While the aesthetic arrangement of colors is certainly jarring, it helps to define each scene by associating them with a distinct tone and emotion. Additionally, by incorporating each of these colors, the final painting of *The Slav Epic* series sets itself apart from the first painting, which was simplistic, and also physically and symbolically dark. Through ethnic unity, peace, and devotion to their culture, the Slavs can triumph over the trials and tribulations from invasive forces.

In the lower right corner is the blue section, which represents the mythical beginnings of the Slavs. The use of blue by Mucha echoes back to the first painting, in which the mythic of genesis of the Slavic people heavily incorporates the color blue to symbolize the dark sky and the Slavs unknown future. Moving forward in time, the upper left corner depicts the Middle Ages in red. Mucha emphasizes the Hussite Wars (1419-1434) in this section, with the bold red color encapsulating the gory nature of war seen during that time period.⁴⁹ These wars were fought between the Protestant followers of Bohemian priest Jan Hus of the Hussites and monarchs who wanted to preserve and enforce the Roman Catholic Church.⁵⁰

The black in the upper middle of the frame creates a contrast with the rest of the bright colors by casting a dark shadow. This section signifies the enemies attacking the Slavic tribes.⁵¹ The enemies are hard to distinguish, but their anonymity allows for Mucha and the audience to visualize their own contemporary enemies. As a result, an individual gazing upon this painting can imagine myriad adversaries, whether they are the Germanic tribes seen at the beginning of *The Slav Epic*, the Habsburgs and Austria-Hungary, or whomever the individual may be confronting in the present. Despite their



Fig. 3.4. Alphonse Mucha, *The Apotheosis of the Slavs, Slavs for Humanity*, 1926, egg tempera on canvas, 15.75 ft. x 13 ft., National Gallery in Prague.

presence in this painting, these enemies are overwhelmed by the bright hues surrounding them that draw the viewer's eyes elsewhere.

Finally, the yellow seen in the center is used to depict freedom, triumph, and everyone who helped to achieve it. Most notably are the Czech and Slovak soldiers who are returning from World War I, stoic and dignified. Behind them are the flags of countries that helped these soldiers return victoriously and establish the independent Czechoslovak Republic, such as the United States, Italy, France, Russia, and others. The presence of these soldiers additionally represents the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the ushering in of a new age for the Slavic people. In the bottom left are young boys who

wave green branches to celebrate the generations of soldiers (both living and dead) who helped to preserve their freedom. These younger generations of Slavs in the bottom left represent the present, as they are separated from the soldiers by the large, billowing white cloth in the middle of the frame. The contemporary figures are closest to the audience, which makes it simpler for them to feel interpellated by the painting. Other symbols are present in this section, such as a woman holding a green wreath, symbolizing Slavic unanimity. Standing next to her is a man holding a carved dove, standing with his family. The dove is a symbol of the peaceful Slav, and it makes many appearances in other Mucha creations.⁵² While the combination of different colors can create aesthetic incoherence, the four color sections in *The Apotheosis of the Slavs* is successful in creating a potential hail for Mucha's audience. These colors help the audience associate distinct moments in Slavic history with certain emotions, which they can draw upon once they are separated from *The Slav Epic*.

Dominating the frame is a strong, bare-chested male figure standing tall above everyone else in the painting, as well as the audience. Holding two wreaths of red flowers--which symbolize freedom--and wrapped in streamers, this gentleman embodies the birth of the new, strong and independent Czechoslovak Republic established at the end of World War I. This figure literally rises above the enemies who threatened to tear apart Slavic solidarity, and he triumphs in victory over them. Behind him is Jesus Christ haloed by a rainbow. Here, Christ issues a gesture of benediction and helps to guide and protect the new republic.⁵³

This painting is especially important because it is, according to Mucha, a cumulative representation of all of Slavic history. In each of these divided, colored

sections, Mucha references certain historical scenes or symbols seen in previous cycles of *The Slav Epic*, such as the wreaths of peace and the early Slavs in the bottom right corner. This final painting in the cycle is powerful, and its diverse activities provide many different options for an individual in the audience to perform. One can identify with overcoming an enemy, coming back from war, or simply celebrating one's ethnic heritage and nation. Mucha ensures that the individual has one last look upon the myriad symbols and events that comprise Slavic history before they exit the exhibition and walk back into reality.

Overall, *The Apotheosis of the Slavs* succeeds at representing the totality of the Slavic audience. Mucha combines different histories and symbols that millions of Slavs would recognize, much like the first two paintings in *The Slav Epic*. Ideally, this would be the final attempt to hail the disparate Slavic audience, create an ethno-nationalist identity, and inspire them to preserve their culture. Unfortunately, this would not be the case throughout the 20th century. This painting was completed in 1926, which was much later than Mucha intended. As a result, *The Apotheosis of the Slavs* would not be included in the first exhibitions of *The Slav Epic*. Its first appearance was in 1928 in Prague, which coincided with the demise of Pan-Slavic movement, thus the message of the painting missed its mark. While the final painting had ambitious intentions, its tardy debut enhanced the failure of Mucha's rhetorical work because it was presented to the intended audience at an inopportune time. Moreover, since the painting was not exhibited with the rest of *The Slav Epic*, it was more difficult to hail an audience because they could not draw upon the messages present in the other paintings. When a visual text is displayed for

constitutive purposes yet lacks context or does not reflect quotidian sentiments, it is highly unlikely that the rhetor will excel at hailing their audience.

Audience Reception and Pan-Slavism after The Slav Epic

The history of *The Slav Epic* after its completion has been anything but ordinary, and these material changes can help the field of rhetorical studies understand the limitations of visual constitutive rhetoric for a massive, disparate ethnic population. Mucha originally intended to complete *The Slav Epic* within five years so that he could hand them over to the city of Prague as soon as possible. However, they were not relinquished from his possession until 1928, sixteen years after he began the project. Eleven canvases were showcased in Prague's Klementinum in 1919 after World War I, which drew thousands of visitors. The overwhelming majority of visitors are reported to have strongly identified with Mucha's depiction of the Slavs, and many expressed their appreciation and gratitude for taking the ideas of Pan-Slavism and creating a visual representation of those ideas and Slavic history.⁵⁴ While many Slavic visitors admired the paintings, the disjointedness of the exhibition due to the paintings' massive size in a small space and Mucha's delayed completion schedule constrained the constitutive potential of *The Slav Epic*. For visual texts to be successfully constitutive, it is helpful if they all are showcased together, and that the texts speak to the totality of the intended audience as frequently as possible. If *The Slav Epic* had been displayed all together in the same exhibition and better represented the disparate Slav population, it is more likely that the audience would understand the overall message of the paintings and would feel as if they constitute Mucha's intended audience.

Another important factor that enhances the success for visual constitutive rhetoric is the incorporation of a movement that is both feasible and sustainable. By the time Mucha was able to showcase *The Slav Epic* in full, the Pan-Slavic movement had subsided. After the end of World War I, there was little talk or desire for Pan-Slavism or any kind of Slavic solidarity as seen before 1914. As a result, Mucha's audience had become separated from, and thus could not identify with, the themes and messages as fully as they had during the throes of World War I. Moreover, visual constitutive texts must stay in circulation so that the public may access these texts when necessary. These paintings have rarely stayed in one place for more than a few years at a time. Parts of *The Slav Epic* were displayed in New York and Chicago in the early 1920s.⁵⁵ Once they were completed, the paintings were showcased for the first time at the Trade Fair Palace in Prague in 1928. However, infrequent showings and the lack of a full exhibition were problematic for constitutive rhetoric. The nomadic nature of *The Slav Epic*, coupled with the demise of the Pan-Slavic movement, resulted in the inability of these paintings to serve as visual constitutive texts.

However, Pan-Slavism did witness a brief period of political relevancy when a Pan-Slavic committee formed in Moscow after the German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941. Members of the Russian intelligentsia worked together so that "each Slavonic nation may be entitled as the other nations are, to a free peaceful existence, that the culture of our nations may flourish without restraint."⁵⁶ As seen throughout the long history of the Slavic people, these Russian Slavs wanted to fight against the German enemy and encourage all Slavs to mobilize and sabotage Germany's efforts. Additionally, a monthly periodical emerged in Moscow entitled *Slaviane* (The Slavs), and special

committees backed by the government worked with Slavic youth, scholars, and women. Slavic scholarship and publications also appeared around this time, and Pan-Slavic propaganda made its way to countries like Canada and the United States.⁵⁷ This circulation helped maintain the Pan-Slavic movement in Europe, and connected potentially with the Slavic diaspora in the Western Hemisphere. Though there is no evidence that the paintings did connect with this brief Pan-Slavic moment.

With the outbreak of World War II, the paintings were wrapped and hidden from the Nazis in an undisclosed location. Once the Soviet Union defeated Nazi Germany in 1945, they annexed the lands of all the Slavic peoples and called them their own. A Pan-Slavic Congress met in Belgrade in 1946, with Marshal Tito's Yugoslavia being confirmed by Stalin as the second ranking Slavic nation behind the Soviet Union. For the first time in Pan-Slavic history, this Congress was government-sanctioned rather than just a private cooperative. They wanted to contribute to world culture, and to foster Slav cooperation. However, this Congress "represented the crest of the Pan-Slav tide after World War II. Its resolutions, plans and hopes came to naught as had those of all the previous Congresses."⁵⁸ The resurgence of Pan-Slavism after World War II came to an end after the meeting in Belgrade, and Pan-Slavism in the Soviet Union transitioned into a strong urge for Pan-Russism and Soviet patriotism.⁵⁹

As the desire for Pan-Slavism faded after World War II and the Communist takeover occurred with the Czechoslovak coup d'état in 1948, Mucha's *The Slav Epic* came to be considered an outdated work of art. Moreover, the Czechs came to see Mucha as a bourgeois artist who was out of touch with socialism. As a result, his paintings were taken out of hiding and housed in a Moravský Krumlov chateau until 2010.⁶⁰ However,

with the Velvet Revolution and many other protests and demonstrations against the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in December 1989, there was a renewed interest in the ideas of Pan-Slavism as seen in Mucha's paintings.⁶¹ It was with these events that the city of Prague entered into the legal battle to obtain *The Slav Epic* and promote the paintings to a wider and newer audience in the twenty-first century.⁶² Presently, *The Slav Epic* is housed in Prague's National Gallery.⁶³ With a revival in the ideals of Pan-Slavism and a (likely) permanent exhibition site that can present the entirety of *The Slav Epic*, Mucha's goals have increased in their rhetorical potential nearly a century after their completion. Overall, these factors create the potential to successfully use visual texts for constitutive purposes. However, these promising circumstances will struggle to overcome the rhetorical limitations of the images themselves, especially the disjointedness of the works. As such, Mucha's rhetorical aims will likely continue to fail as time passes.

Conclusion

This chapter explored and analyzed the myths, symbols, and messages in four paintings from *The Slav Epic*. Each painting chosen represents certain goals of Pan-Slavism that Mucha may have inspired his audience to enact: nonviolence, the preservation of language and culture, creation of a nationalist consciousness, and to overcome oppression and seek an independent Slavic state. The first painting serves as an origin myth that depicts how the Slavic community came into being, and it provides insight on their peaceful future should they seek independence from the violent Germanic tribes. Despite its emphasis on all Slavs, the tension between myth and reality creates confusion for the audience not only within this painting, but across *The Slav Epic* as well. To distinguish fact and fiction, the audience must know enough history to identify with

the symbols, thus limiting its rhetorical potential. This example of disjointedness is one of many present in Mucha's *Epic*, and would contribute to its overall failure.

The second painting in this chapter represents the history of how Slavonic liturgy came into existence. Mucha relies on symbols such as Saints Cyril and Methodius, two celebrated monks in Slavic culture who helped to introduce the Slavic language into religion, and they aspired for the community to preserve their culture and language rather than adopting others. However, the stylistic incoherence limits the rhetorical potential for the intended audience as well. The color shifts between the blue figures in the foreground and the warm figures in the background create a harsh discord that distracts from the overall message of culture preservation. It becomes difficult to comprehend what symbols the audience should grasp onto for the creation of an ethno-nationalist identity, thereby restricting the rhetorical potential for another painting in *The Slav Epic*. Here, it is evident that disjointedness in aesthetics can affect the success of visual constitutive rhetoric in ways that verbal and written texts may avoid. In short, this painting highlights a significant limitation to constitutive rhetoric: disjointed imagery can be a distraction for audiences and fails to create unification.

The third painting depicts Czech nationalist organizations and traditional Slavic peoples who are praising the goddess Slavia, sitting in a linden tree. While Slavia may be recognizable to many Slavs, the Omladina organization is meant specifically for a subset of Mucha's intended audience. This limitation contributes to the failure of *The Slav Epic* significantly. It ignores a vast majority of the Slavic population by focusing solely on the Czechs. This problem is magnified by the many other paintings in this cycle that act similarly for other Slavic nations. Had Mucha created paintings that addressed a wider

Slavic audience, he may have been more successful in hailing a larger group of people to preserve their culture. The disjointed histories present in many of *The Slav Epic* paintings, coupled with the incomplete exhibitions clearly made Mucha's goal more difficult to attain.

The final painting of this chapter--and *The Slav Epic* more broadly--incorporated symbols such as the Slav's past and present enemies, soldiers and allies who have fought against those enemies, trials and triumphs from the Hussite Wars, and symbols of peace. It is a cumulative representation of Slavic history, and provides many transhistorical moments for the audience to identify with Slavs throughout history and relate past struggles to current troubles. Additionally, this final painting depicts the birth of the Czechoslovak Republic at the end of World War I and the (short-lived) victories of Slavic nationalism. Mucha provides the audience with one last look at everything the Slavs have experienced so they can be proud of their heritage and preserve it for future generations. The emphasis on all of Slavic history is notable and productive, but its delayed debut diminished the overall significance of Mucha's project because the audience could not view it until the Pan-Slavic movement ebbed into irrelevance. It is only in the 21st century that it is most potent, yet it still must overcome the multitude of limitations in the present.

While many rhetorical scholars have spoken on the impressive capabilities of constitutive rhetoric to unite audiences and propel them to engage in certain actions, this chapter has exposed the limitations to constitutive rhetoric, especially with visual texts. First, elastic imagery must be flexible enough to include disparate peoples into a singular identity. If it fails to do so, certain audiences that the rhetor wants to hail may feel excluded. Additionally, the audience needs to be familiar with the history behind the

symbols. If not, they will be unable to discern myths and reality, and may become confused. Moreover, disjointed imagery can be a distraction for audiences who may not find a common point of identification. Finally, compositions that work out of time can constitute failure should exhibiting contexts shift radically. If a visual text presents a message that no longer resonates with the sentiments of the audience, the rhetor limits their capability of persuading the audience to carry out outdated goals. By analyzing these rhetorical failures, this chapter contributes to the overall thesis by articulating the possible limitations to constitutive rhetoric.

Between 1912 and 1928, artist Alphonse Mucha dedicated over ten years of his life to create *The Slav Epic*, a series of twenty massive paintings that depict the history of the Slavic peoples and their civilization through the use of visual constitutive rhetoric. Alphonse Mucha's *The Slav Epic* is important because he was the first individual to turn the ideas of the Pan-Slavic movement into a visual form. He used iconographic symbols and Slavic myths in an attempt to call a Slavic audience into being and inspire them to action. He wanted his audience to learn about their common history, preserve their culture, and seek independence from Austria-Hungary. However, his efforts to constitute an ethno-nationalist identity through Pan-Slavic imagery failed to overcome the material and symbolic limitations of the times. Fortunately, this rhetorical failure contributes significantly to this thesis by teaching rhetorical scholars the limits of constitutive rhetoric, particularly the strategy of unification amongst virtually impassable divisions.

Notes

¹ Jana A. Brabcová-Orlíková, “Mucha: Bohemia and Paris,” in *Alphonse Mucha: The Spirit of Art Nouveau*, ed. Jane Sweeney (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 1998), 16.

² “Slav Epic,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/slav-epic/> (accessed March 5, 2016).

³ J. Mackenzie, ed., “Slavs,” in *Cassell’s Peoples, Nations and Cultures* (London: Cassell, 2005).

⁴ Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953), 5.

⁵ Katharina Krosny, “Pan-Slavism,” in *Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era, 1760-1850*, ed. C. Murray (London: Routledge, 2003), http://literati.credoreference.com/content/entry/routromanticera/pan_slavism/0 (accessed March 8, 2016).

⁶ Krosny, “Pan-Slavism.”

⁷ Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology*, 1.

⁸ J. F. N. Bradley, “Czech Pan-Slavism before the First World War,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 40 (1961): 187.

⁹ F.M. Barnard, *J.G. Herder on Social & Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7; Carol Pech, “Pan-Slavism,” in *World History Encyclopedia*, ed. Alfred J. Andrea (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), http://literati.credoreference.com/content/entry/abccliow/pan_slavism/0 (accessed March 8, 2016).

¹⁰ Pech, “Pan-Slavism.”

¹¹ Krosny, “Pan-Slavism.”

¹² Krosny, “Pan-Slavism.”

¹³ Bradley, “Czech Pan-Slavism before the First World War,” 188.

¹⁴ Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 81

¹⁵ T. Kamusella, *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe* (New York: Springer, 2008), 554.

¹⁶ Kamusella, *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe*, 553.

¹⁷ Bradley, “Czech Pan-Slavism before the First World War,” 190-191.

¹⁸ Anna Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” in *Alphonse Mucha: The Spirit of Art Nouveau*, ed. Jane Sweeney (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 1998), 96.

¹⁹ Erin Dusza, “Pan-Slavism in Alphonse Mucha’s *Slav Epic*,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 13 (2014), <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring14/dusza-on-pan-slavism-in-alphonse-mucha-s-slav-epic> (accessed March 8, 2016).

- ²⁰ Alphonse Mucha, quoted in Jiří Mucha, *Alphonse Maria Mucha: His Life and Art* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), 145.
- ²¹ Robert C. Rowland and David A. Frank, "Mythic Rhetoric and Rectification in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Communication Studies* 62 (2011): 41.
- ²² Robert C. Rowland, "On Mythic Criticism: The Conversation Continues," 282, 289.
- ²³ Rowland, "On Mythic Criticism," 104.
- ²⁴ Robert Rowland and Kirsten Theye, "The Symbolic DNA of Terrorism," *Communication Monographs* 75 (2008): 58.
- ²⁵ Slavic and Slavonic are interchangeable, but during the research process, Slavonic was typically used when describing Slavic liturgy so the chapter will proceed as such.
- ²⁶ Dusza, "Pan-Slavism in Alphonse Mucha's *Slav Epic*."
- ²⁷ Dvořák, "The Slav Epic," 100; Dusza, "Pan-Slavism in Alphonse Mucha's *Slav Epic*."
- ²⁸ Dvořák, "The Slav Epic," 102; Dusza, "Pan-Slavism in Alphonse Mucha's *Slav Epic*."
- ²⁹ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1961), 68.
- ³⁰ Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), 18.
- ³¹ Michael J. Lee, *Creating Conservatism: Postwar Words that Made an American Movement* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), 28.
- ³² Dvořák, "The Slav Epic," 107; "'The Slav Epic' cycle No.1: The Slavs in Their Original Homeland," The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/212> (accessed March 8, 2016).
- ³³ Dvořák, "The Slav Epic," 107; "'The Slav Epic' cycle No.1: The Slavs in Their Original Homeland," The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/212> (accessed April 15, 2016).
- ³⁴ "Slav Epic," The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic> (accessed December 3, 2016).
- ³⁵ "The Slav Epic' Cycle No. 3: Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy in Great Moravia," The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/213/> (accessed April 16, 2016); "Great Moravian Empire," Slovak-Republic, <http://www.slovak-republic.org/history/great-moravia/> (accessed December 3, 2016).
- ³⁶ Petr Drulák, "Czech Geopolitics: Struggling for Survival," in *The Return of Geopolitics in Europe? Social Mechanisms and Foreign Policy Identity Crises*, ed. Stefano Guzzini (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 91.
- ³⁷ "The Slav Epic' Cycle No. 3: Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy in Great Moravia," The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/213/> (accessed April 16, 2016); Dvořák, "The Slav Epic," 108.

³⁸ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 3: Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy in Great Moravia,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/213/> (accessed April 16, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 108.

³⁹ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 3: Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy in Great Moravia,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/213/> (accessed April 16, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 108.

⁴⁰ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 3: Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy in Great Moravia,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/213/> (accessed April 16, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 108.

⁴¹ Richard B. Spence, “Boris I of Bulgaria,” in *Great Lives from History: The Middle Ages*, ed. Shelley Wolbrink (Hackensack, NJ: Salem, 2005), <http://online.salempress.com> (accessed April 16, 2016).

⁴² “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 3: Introduction of the Slavonic Liturgy in Great Moravia,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/213/> (accessed April 16, 2016).

⁴³ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 18: The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/229> (accessed May 4, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 120.

⁴⁴ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 18: The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/229> (accessed May 4, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 120.

⁴⁵ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 18: The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/229> (accessed May 4, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 120.

⁴⁶ Edmund Gosse, ed., “The ‘Daughter of Sláva,’” in *Short Histories of the Literatures of the World* (London: William Heinemann, 1899), 380-381.

⁴⁷ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 18: The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/229> (accessed May 4, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 120.

⁴⁸ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 20: The Apotheosis of Slavs, Slavs for Humanity,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/231/> (accessed May 5, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 122.

⁴⁹ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 20: The Apotheosis of Slavs, Slavs for Humanity,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/231/> (accessed May 5, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 122.

⁵⁰ Miloslav Polivka, “Hussite Wars and Leaders,” in *Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Robert E. Bjork (London: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁵¹ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 20: The Apotheosis of Slavs, Slavs for Humanity,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/231/> (accessed May 5, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 122.

⁵² “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 20: The Apotheosis of Slavs, Slavs for Humanity,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/231/> (accessed May 5, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 122.

⁵³ “The Slav Epic’ Cycle No. 20: The Apotheosis of Slavs, Slavs for Humanity,” The Mucha Foundation, <http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/themes/theme/slav-epic/object/231/> (accessed May 5, 2016); Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 122.

⁵⁴ Dvořák, “The Slav Epic,” 100.

⁵⁵ Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 20.

⁵⁶ Alexei Tolstoi, quoted in Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 232.

⁵⁷ Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 232-233.

⁵⁸ Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 237.

⁵⁹ Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 238-239.

⁶⁰ Rob Cameron, “Czech Battle Over Art Nouveau Epic by Alphonse Mucha,” *BBC News*, August 11, 2010, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-10929889> (accessed May 5, 2016).

⁶¹ Ondřej Konrád, “Slovanská epopej v mlhách (Slav Epic in the Mists),” *Český rozhlas (Czech Radio)*, July 26, 2010, http://www.rozhlas.cz/cro6/komentare/_zprava/763677 (accessed May 5, 2016).

⁶² Rob Cameron, “Czech Battle Over Art Nouveau Epic by Alphonse Mucha.”

⁶³ National Gallery in Prague docent, in discussion with the author, January 2016.

CHAPTER FOUR

Identity Formation and Community Empowerment through Philadelphia Public Art

In the early 1980s, Philadelphia mayor Wilson Goode grew concerned that rampant graffiti was destroying neighborhoods and preventing the growth of businesses. To ameliorate the perceived blight of graffiti and illegal art, his administration funded the Mural Arts Program (MAP), directed by Jane Golden.¹ Since their inception, the MAP has sponsored more than 3,800 works of public art in Philadelphia, and the city is now internationally recognized as the “City of Murals.” According to the MAP, the murals “express community [and] provide inspiration, hope, and vision.”² The program is inclusive, and they collaborate with local citizens to create murals that reflect and inform the values, identities, and histories of the communities in which they were painted.³ For example, they incorporate the community through public paint days, as well as the decision-making process. The participatory nature of these murals increases the MAP’s chances at rhetorically constituting their audience. By participating in the mural’s creation, the audience is encouraged to identify with the community writ large and with *all* community members. Analyzing several community murals, this chapter argues that the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program provides a visual form of constitutive rhetoric to hail a Philadelphian audience and create identification among members of the target audience. From there, these murals can inspire an audience to take pride in their city, create new channels of dialogue and understanding among community members, and participate in the city’s revitalization efforts. Unlike the previous two chapters, these

murals offer a more inclusive vision of community that broadens the reach of constitutive rhetoric.

An analysis of several of Philadelphia's murals contributes to this thesis in several ways. First, it exemplifies how Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric can include public art, as seen in the previous two chapters. However, it builds upon the first two case studies by successfully incorporating the strengths of Lyon's murals and *The Slav Epic* while managing to ameliorate some of their shortfalls. The Lyonnais murals offer a strict invitation that often ignores persons of color, those who identify as LGBTIQ, and non-Christians. In *The Slav Epic*, Alphonse Mucha's invitation to the Slavic peoples of Central and Eastern Europe is too aesthetically disjointed and cannot adequately hail a dispersed audience. On the other hand, Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program offers a direct, yet elastic invitation centered on openness and inclusion for the city's 1.5 million citizens, who represent many different ethnicities, sexual identities, and religions. The MAP has a specific vision of how they want to improve both the physical and social landscape of Philadelphia, one that encourages the participation of the entire community. Moreover, they avoid the pitfalls of *The Slav Epic* by working with a smaller and more geographically concentrated audience and avoiding a disjointed aesthetic style. The MAP relies on the citizens' willingness to work together, generate dialogue, and to seek unity and equality. As this chapter will show, the MAP has used these objectives to successfully hail a diverse audience for the purposes of community pride, identity formation, and physical and social revitalization.

This chapter explores the visual constitutive rhetoric at work in Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program over the last thirty years. First, this chapter will uncover the racially

charged social perceptions toward illegal graffiti and legal public art that have allowed the MAP to be so successful in Philadelphia. Second, this chapter will delve briefly into the exigencies that led to the creation of the Mural Arts Program, such as the economic stagnation of the Rust Belt, as well as the MAP itself, its objectives, and its goals in working with local artists and citizens in constructing thousands of murals for the city. Next, this chapter evaluates three murals and their iconographic symbols deployed by the MAP to create identification among an audience and thereby fulfill its specific goals. The murals I analyze are significant insofar as they are three of the most circulated murals within Philadelphian newspapers, websites, and blogs, thus these murals contain a wealth of contextual information that allow for a richer analysis. As a result, the reader will be able to understand how public art can empower citizen's participation in the public sphere to take pride in themselves and their community, and to work together for a better society.

Social Perceptions of Illegal Graffiti versus Legal Public Art

One of the beneficial aspects of the MAP is their use of community participation, which attempts to create identification among community members, and amplify the voices that are often ignored by society. However, this situation is rather nuanced. It is imperative to note that their success is partially dependent on the racialized, hegemonic views of traditional public art at the expense of graffiti. Graffiti is often considered to be a blight and an eyesore that inhibits economic growth. For many, graffiti "is seen to spoil and desecrate public space doubly...it ruins the quality of the experience of that space and thus devalues the commodity of urban life...Graffiti is generally seen as an act of defacement that disorders a space and as such elicits a type of dread in the observer that

they feel when they encounter disarray or filth.”⁴ Graffiti has been rhetorically constructed as distinct from art, where it is perceived as aesthetically undesirable rather than for its beauty or political importance. As this chapter will elaborate shortly, the City of Philadelphia felt similarly, and these sentiments served as the exigency for creating the Mural Arts Program.

Since the rise of modern graffiti in the mid-20th century, many cities have outlawed it, including Philadelphia. The city considers graffiti to be “vandalism,” and those who are caught “Damaging, Defacing, and Interfering With” property can be slapped with a \$300 fine, community service, or even imprisonment up to 90 days. Moreover, the city requires vendors to keep spray paint containers and markers in an enclosed device to prevent free and easy access to the public and minors.⁵ This criminal act is compounded by the fact that it is associated with “DJing, hip-hop, and black culture generally,” thus it is imbued with a racial notion in that it is viewed as an activity performed by racially marked bodies.⁶ As Leslie Hahner and Scott Varda argue, these associations with black culture,

laid the groundwork for public understandings of the art form as both a pathologically criminal enterprise as well as an area dominated by black and brown bodies. This understanding of paint graffiti modifies how the public values aesthetically the works that are produced. As such, positive assessments of the art frequently rely upon a dichotomy between ‘street art’ (practiced by black and brown bodies) and ‘real art’ (practiced by trained professionals and white bodies).⁷

The dichotomy present between the criminalized graffiti and aesthetically pleasing public art allows for programs such as the MAP to exist. While they certainly work to improve the physical and social landscapes of Philadelphia, their popularity with the white, hegemonic structures of the city allow for them to project a “privileged interpretation

onto how a space should look and how the city should operate.”⁸ However, the MAP appears to welcome artists of all races and ethnicities to create murals. As a result, persons of color can project their voice through art, but often it can only be through a form accepted by the hegemonic structures of society: in this case, murals. So, while these murals replace unsanctioned art, the MAP’s use of community participation helps ameliorate some of these problematic elements.

The Rust Belt and the Dawn of the Mural Arts Program

As noted earlier, one of the primary exigencies for Mayor Goode to fund the Mural Arts Program and spearhead revitalization efforts in Philadelphia was the emergence of poor economic conditions popularly coined as the “Rust Belt” and the negative effects it had upon the city. During the 1970s, the formerly dominant industrial region of Pennsylvania “became noted for the abandonment of factories, unemployment, outmigration, the loss of electoral votes, and overall decline.”⁹ Globalization and foreign competition pushed the nation toward a service economy, and Philadelphia suffered economically.¹⁰ In North Philadelphia, the post-industrial landscape included crumbling, old factory sites, and empty lots where buildings once stood. Moreover, the north and west areas of town became notorious for increased crime rates and drug-related problems, as well as the escalation of gun violence.¹¹ All of these problems were compounded by “decreased federal spending on essential social programs under the Reagan administration...[and] the introduction and spread of AIDS.”¹² As a result, individuals who felt the burden wrought by economic downturn were more likely to use graffiti art as an avenue to voice their struggles and lived experiences to the organizing forces of

society.¹³ With the rise of economic stagnation and social issues came the rise of malaise across the city of Philadelphia.¹⁴

With public sentiment opposed to the increased amount of graffiti, the mayor's office pushed for an increase in public art. Mayor Goode feared that the illegal art was ugly, destroying neighborhoods, and preventing businesses from setting up and counteracting the effects of the Rust Belt. In 1984, Philadelphia's Department of Recreation began the Mural Arts Program to combat graffiti and beautify the city, which would hopefully encourage business and social investment into the city.¹⁵ Initially, these murals were created solely for the purpose of beautification. However, as Philadelphia began the transition to a post-industrial economy, the MAP shifted in the late 1980s to begin working against the social malaise rooted deeply in its citizens. The MAP aimed to create pride in Philadelphia's communities.¹⁶

When she is asked about the MAP's purpose and goals, director Jane Golden consistently answers that "art ignites change," and that they "create art with others to transform places, individuals, communities and institutions."¹⁷ While the idea of transforming places and institutions through public art is rather straightforward, its ability to transform individuals and communities is best understood through the lens of constitutive rhetoric. To achieve this goal, the MAP uses many of their creations to represent the identities, residents, and heroes of different neighborhoods through the implementation of symbols. By recognizing the histories, cultural ephemera, and values associated with the symbols in the mural, the audience becomes hailed by the rhetor. From there, they are more likely to identify with those in the mural and its message, especially if they pass by and engage with the mural often. By gazing upon such a mural,

the audience can feel a sense of community with those who have come before them. The people represented in the murals are “offered as someone to admire and emulate,” and through the process of hailing and identification, Philadelphians are likely to understand and embody the characteristics and values displayed.¹⁸

When the audience identifies with the murals and ultimately embodies the beliefs and values represented in the mural, they are more likely to enact the goals envisioned by the MAP and the communities who came together to participate. By creating a visual autobiography of the city, the MAP is developing a map for their future.¹⁹ The MAP sees their work as a “powerful tool for generating dialogue, building relationships, empowering communities, and sparking economic revitalization.”²⁰ They want their art to help citizens engage in discussing critical issues that affect them, to seize their own future, and to take pride in where they live.

One of the ways in which these goals have come to fruition is through audience participation. The Mural Arts Program is unique in that it actively involves members of the community to suggest future neighborhood murals, as well as participate in the making of the mural itself. Before a mural comes to fruition, the community has to come together and make a formal request, and then they must decide on the images they want to depict.²¹ Neighbors and friends can come together and make a material impact on the community, rendering this creative process as remarkably inclusive compared to the other case studies in this chapter. While the MAP is the leader of the mural initiative, the fact that the community has a say in the process is significant. They are capable of deciding how they want to portray their public memories and beliefs so that they can articulate how they want to be remembered and what values they want to instill for future

generations to embody and emulate. The community itself is author of their story for the past, present, and future.

Because Philadelphia is home to over 3,800 murals, choosing three to analyze for this chapter was not simple. The first mural that will be discussed, *Common Threads*, was chosen primarily because of its widespread popularity. *Welcome to the Neighborhood* and *Aquí y Allá* are newer creations, yet they share a key similarity with *Common Threads*: they are all well circulated. One of the necessities for analyzing public art is to understand its story. To provide a comprehensive analysis, it is helpful to know certain contextual information about the mural, such as the artist(s), their motivations and goals in creating the mural, the creation process, any possible effects, and more. These three murals benefit from a wide circulation of such context, through newspapers, blogs, and other websites by Philadelphians and other citizens nationwide. By incorporating this information into this thesis, the reader can better grasp the theory of visual constitutive rhetoric, its method of analysis, and the impact that public art can have on its intended audiences.

Common Threads

An analysis of Philadelphian murals must begin with *Common Threads* (Fig. 4.1). It is arguably one of the city's most famous murals.²² Creator Meg Saligman, working with the MAP, says her "inspiration came from noticing commonalities between the hairstyles of her African American students in North Philadelphia and those of her grandmother's figurines, prompting her to create the threads symbolizing human similarities across times and cultures."²³ Saligman's primary goal in creating *Common Threads* was to encourage pride among minorities in Philadelphia, and to inspire them to

become active members of their communities. To craft this mural, Saligman used photos that she took of students at a neighborhood school. Additionally, she enlisted the help of student painters, many of whom are depicted in this mural.²⁴ This inclusivity is constitutive in nature because it calls community members into being so that they can articulate how they want to be portrayed, both in the present and for the future.



Fig. 4.1. Meg Saligman, *Common Threads*, 1998, Nova Color acrylic paint. Source: Meg Saligman, “Common Threads,” Digital Image. Available from: <http://www.megsaligman.com/common-threads/> (accessed February 11, 2017).

Additionally, it can allow for a better understanding among the community because public paint days allow for increased dialogue among its diverse members. In *Common Threads*, Saligman crafted a work of art that harmonizes symbols and aesthetics to give representation and motivation to many Philadelphians.

The primary symbol on display in this mural is Tameka Jones, the African American female in a pink coat at the top of the pyramid. During the mural-making process of *Common Threads*, Tameka was a student at the Philadelphia High School for Performing Arts. While she was not famous or well-known at the time of the painting, she represents what the MAP and Saligman want the city to value and embody: a local who is commanding and proud.²⁵ Moreover, her presence is bolstered by the other contemporary North Philadelphians represented throughout the mural. They are young, of different races, and as such give a voice and presence to those in the community who are often underrepresented and marginalized. These contemporaries mimic the third set of symbols, which are the white figurines depicted throughout the mural. There are “Victorian ladies, ancient heroes, historical gentlemen, and past imagery in all forms.”²⁶ They represent the dominant representations of beauty, success, and heroism throughout history. Both the Philadelphian contemporaries and Victorian figurines are wearing similar colored clothing, and are making the same poses throughout the mural. Whether dominant or marginalized, Saligman wanted to illuminate the common threads that unite all humans, regardless of what time period or culture from which they come.²⁷ These symbols create a transhistorical aspect of the mural by creating identification between historical and contemporary groups. In so doing, Philadelphians can realize that their identity and motivations are validated and important, regardless of what society deems beautiful, successful, or heroic.

The aesthetics of this mural work symbiotically with the symbols to create a stunning expression of self-love and pride. First, the mural itself possesses elements that look realistic. These aspects create a perspective that makes the mural look like it has

come to life. By making elements of the mural look real, it appears as if the figures depicted could walk right out of the mural and on to the street. This allows for a greater chance of identification, because the viewer feels as if they too could step into the mural and be incorporated into it. Moreover, if it looks real, the viewers are more likely to believe that it can become material. Second, the figurines form a pyramid. This draws the viewer's gaze upward to Tameka, who stands comfortably at the top. She is the central part of the mural, and she is the largest figure. Also, she has no past figurine to mimic. She is unique, and she is in control of how she wants to represent herself. As Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen note, because she gazes upon the viewer, she "demands" you to look upon her.²⁸ She is not to be pushed aside for another beautiful European contemporary. She is equal to them and demands to be seen as such. This equality is seen throughout the mural: each figure in the pyramid (except Tameka) has a partner in which they mimic, and this can be seen with each painted window, which contains figures on the left side that are copying the poses of those directly across from them on the right side. These minority contemporaries are beautiful, successful, and heroic, too, and Saligman wants Philadelphians to realize this and embody these characteristics of confidence and control over oneself.

Saligman's underlying motivation for creating this mural was to shake up the prevailing social order and give representation on a massive scale to young minorities and the homeless to show that they are important and command attention.²⁹ She wants her work to validate their presence, identity, and worth even when they experience trials and tribulations in their community. According to Jane Golden, more than 5,800 citizens walk by this mural every day on their way to school and to the transit station.³⁰ When

these students and other Philadelphians interact with this mural on a daily basis, they are consistently able to identify with those depicted in it, and they are more likely to understand the messages presented and fulfill such messages. For instance, Tameka Jones was interviewed a few years after the completion of this mural, saying it had material effects on her life: “It was just unbelievable. I thought, this is just the beginning. This is an omen of what you are going to become--the beginning of what I believe I’m going to accomplish.”³¹ She graduated high school and earned many scholarships for college. This mural is one of many in Philadelphia that inspires the transformation of individuals who are not necessarily heard or understood into active, successful community members who feel equal to other local citizens.

Welcome to the Neighborhood

Located in east central Philadelphia, the neighborhood of Fishtown is home to one of the city’s newest murals, entitled *Welcome to the Neighborhood* (Fig. 4.2). Nestled on the banks of the Delaware River, Fishtown is a distinctively white, working-class neighborhood whose name is derived from its history as the epicenter of the shad fishing industry. Most recently, the area has experienced significant gentrification as younger generations of Philadelphians have settled down and established bars, restaurants, music venues, and galleries.³² As a result, there is increasing integration between the new young professionals and the neighborhood’s long-time residents, which has led to some minor tension between the two groups. These conflicts are mostly cultural and generational differences, which are often discussed by Fishtown’s older residents. However, the primary narrative is that the Fishtown community is resilient, they treat one another like family, and they adapt to overcome adversity and preserve its distinctive identity.³³ While

there are also discussions of blue-collar residents who have felt left behind by Fishtown's good fortunes and economic prosperity,³⁴ the narrative of a strong, cohesive community prevails and is captured in the *Welcome to the Neighborhood* mural and its creative process.



Fig. 4.2. Jeffro Kilpatrick and Brad Carney, *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, 2016, acrylic paint. Source: Max Pulcini, “Welcome to the Neighborhood: PFCU, Mural Arts Unveil New Public Work as a Tribute East,” 2016, Digital Image. Available from: <https://spiritnews.org/articles/welcome-to-the-neighborhood-pfcu-mural-arts-unveil-new-public-work-as-a-tribute-east/> (accessed February 11, 2017).

From its inception, the creators behind *Welcome to the Neighborhood* emphasized the community. In 2015, the Philadelphia Federal Credit Union (PFCU) and the MAP held a public contest to design a mural for Fishtown. PFCU gifted the mural to the neighborhood, saying that it “celebrates the colorful legacy of the neighborhood and is a symbol of all that the community can accomplish in the future.”³⁵ The residents had the opportunity to vote for the artist and the design concept. Fishtown artists Jeffro Kilpatrick and Brad Carney won the contest, and collaborated to create a mural that would best represent the identity of Fishtown and its inhabitants. The mural’s design borrowed heavily from Kilpatrick’s *Sketches of Fishtown* series, which featured drawings of various community members. *Welcome to the Neighborhood* features a mixture of Fishtown residents and landmarks, both new and old.³⁶ This mural, at its simplest, was

created to draw upon the neighborhood's defining characters and characteristics to create community empowerment.

This emphasis on the residents is also reflected in the creative process of the mural. Three public paint days were held during the mural's construction, which allowed neighbors and friends in the community to come together and leave their mark on the city.³⁷ As mentioned earlier, this inclusive aspect encouraged by the MAP is notable in that it allows for creative collaboration and teamwork among community members, and it also creates the opportunity for the public to have a say in how it wants to see itself for present and future generations. For a community that can often have tensions between the young professionals and blue-collar veterans of Fishtown, public paint days can help to alleviate such tensions by coming together and learning more about one another during the artistic process. The collaborative process of this mural calls its audience into being, and through dialogue, they can identify not only with the history and individuals depicted in the mural, but they can identify with one another and fulfill the wishes of the artists and act like a community.

Because the mural was designed to celebrate the community and inspire its members to feel empowered and work together to achieve its goals, the primary symbols depicted in *Welcome to the Neighborhood* are past and current residents of Fishtown. These residents "are part of the fabric of this artistic community, including sculptors, screen printers, dancers, and metal workers who have made the community what it is today and what it will be in the future."³⁸ These people, despite their divergent careers, backgrounds, personalities, and personal needs all identify as community members of Fishtown and are willing to set aside their differences to make their neighborhood better

for themselves and others. Carney and Kilpatrick recognized this fact, and they created an exhaustive list of Fishtown residents that they thought should be included in the mural due to their notoriety and love for the community.³⁹ By incorporating them into their mural, the artists are visually portraying the ideal behaviors that true Fishtown residents should embody. When gazing upon this mural and understanding whom these recognizable figures are and the values that they stood for, the audience may be more likely to admire such individuals and try and mirror their characteristics.

One of the residents symbolized in *Welcome to the Neighborhood* is Paul Malvey (Fig. 4.3). Known affectionately as “tree man” by those who knew him, Malvey “safely removed some of the troublesome, gigantic trees...around the neighborhood.”⁴⁰ Located on the right side of the mural, Malvey can be seen planting a new tree. He lived his entire life in Fishtown, and he worked tirelessly to revitalize the neighborhood and beautify it. His presence and location in the mural is interesting: he is not in the middle of the action and excitement. He is to the side, working alone and quietly. However, he is still involved and doing important work to make a positive impact upon the community. He listened to the concerns of other residents and removed trees where necessary to make their lives better, and he also added trees for environmental and beautification purposes.

In front of the mural are several full-grown trees, so it is entirely possible Malvey’s young tree in the mural could be one of the real trees on the street, thus symbolizing the commitment and investment Malvey had in the aesthetic improvement of the community. During the mural-making process, Malvey’s section was reserved so that his family members could paint him. This interactive experience helps to ensure that Malvey’s values could be discussed and passed down to younger generations of his

family. Despite his recent death, Malvey was considered to be an ideal community member of Fishtown, and through this mural, his legacy will continue.

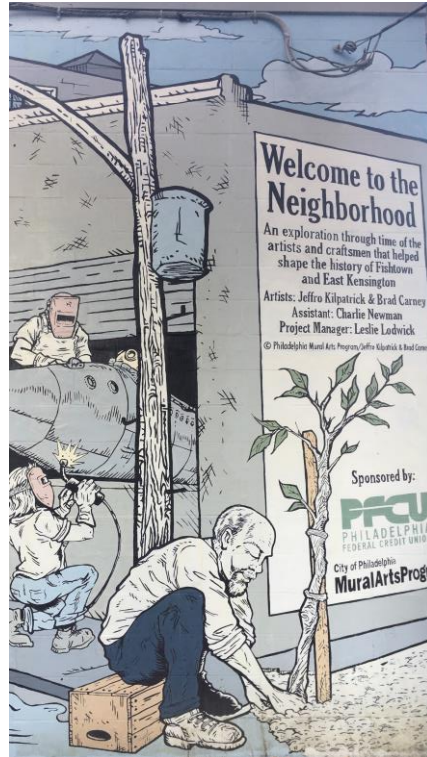


Fig. 4.3. The man planting the tree is Paul Malvey, affectionately known as “Tree Man” by Fishtown residents. Jeffro Kilpatrick and Brad Carney, *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, 2016, acrylic paint. Photograph taken by the author.

While there are other recognizable locals in *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, such as gym owner Darla Jackson and sign painter Sean Gallagher, what is notable about many of these citizens is that they are not famous. Instead, they simply symbolize quotidian Fishtown community members (Fig. 4.4). From the artistic man on the stoop playing the guitar, to the young boy eating popcorn, to the group of diverse individuals working together on a table, the residents depicted represent a variety of ages, races, and livelihoods. While the audience can gaze upon the mural and recognize Malvey, Jackson, and Gallagher, they are also able to see themselves in the mural. This increases the

potential to be hailed, and to identify with the mural. Also, they are witnessing these figures--regardless of careers, race, and age--living and working together in harmony in a productive way that serves for the betterment of the neighborhood. Additionally, no single person in the mural is garnering the most attention. When one looks at the mural, they will see a plurality of people; they are equal in the eye of the beholder, and they complement each other instead of leading one's gaze to a central figure. Seeing the positivity in the mural exemplifies to the audience the good that can come when the community works together despite their differences. This is the message and identity that the artists, the MAP, and PFCU want the audience to internalize and embody when gazing upon *Welcome to the Neighborhood*.

The style of *Welcome to the Neighborhood* is significant as well, and it separates itself from a majority of other murals in Philadelphia (that often use realism). The mural in Fishtown is in the style of a cartoon and uses bright colors, and there may be more than one reason behind this aesthetic choice. First, Kilpatrick is known for his *Sketches of Fishtown* series, which are painted in the cartoon style.⁴¹ Likely, this may be the style he is most known for and is thereby implementing it as his stylistic signature. Second, the cartoon style possesses childhood associations with humor, happiness, and fun.⁴²

Individuals may look at cartoons and feel nostalgic for the carefree days of watching Saturday morning cartoons and reading newspaper comic strips. There is an innocence and positive association with cartoons, which can enhance the message of this mural. There is nothing sinister or negative at work. The artists, the MAP, and PFCU want the audience to associate the mural's message of cooperation and fellowship with positive, virtuous emotions. The style of *Welcome to the Neighborhood* works symbiotically with



Fig. 4.4. Fishtown residents depicted here are diverse, yet living together symbiotically. Jeffro Kilpatrick and Brad Carney, *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, 2016, acrylic paint. Photograph taken by the author.

the iconographic symbols to constitute a diverse Fishtown community that will come together as a unified whole and improve the neighborhood.

*Aqui y Allá*⁴³

As seen with the other murals in this chapter, Michelle Angela Ortiz's *Aqui y Allá* ("Here and There") mural aims to foster dialogue within a diverse community and create tolerance, as well as give a voice to those who are often ignored by the hegemonic structures of society. *Aqui y Allá* (Fig 4.5) brings together a Hispanic, primarily immigrant, population in the neighborhood to create pride and understanding within the community. This mural is located in South Philadelphia, which has seen a significant rise

in the Hispanic population over the past several decades.⁴⁴ Because there has been an influx of immigrants from Mexico into South Philadelphia, Ortiz wanted to explore “the impact of immigration in the lives of Mexican immigrant youth in South Philadelphia in connection with youth in Chihuahua, Mexico.”⁴⁵ Ortiz, who received her training at a fine arts college, believed that there was another way to create artwork and find value in arts and culture than what one sees in museums. She said she “began to question who the artwork in museums is accessible to,” believing that this was not “the best way to communicate with people.”⁴⁶ Thus, she decided to create art centered on the community that everyone could access. After completing similar projects in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Juarez, Mexico, she saw how both the mural-making process and the finished project strengthened the community, so she decided to do a mural for the community of South Philadelphia.⁴⁷ Thus, Ortiz resolved to incorporate the community as frequently as possible throughout the creation of *Aqui y Allá*.

What is perhaps most fascinating is that this was a transnational public art project.⁴⁸ Ortiz attempts to hail youths in both Philadelphia and Mexico, whose lives are impacted and shaped by immigration. Michelle Ortiz wants her audience,

to discover that they are not alone and that others also suffer from the impact of immigration and violence due to the lack of resources and racial and ethnic intolerance. The goal of the *Aqui y Allá* project is to empower youth through this exchange so they can find a common bond and have their voices resonate in the artwork we create together.⁴⁹

Additionally, Ortiz engaged with youth in the community who helped create the mural themselves. Four artists and community leaders from Colectivo Madroño in Chihuahua City and Colectivo Rezizte in Juarez collaborated with young people in Mexico. They helped create parts of the *Aqui y Allá* mural on fiber cloth panels that were then

transported to Philadelphia.⁵⁰ Supported by the United States Consulate in Juarez, the four artists (David Flores, Oscar Gallegos, Antonio Leal, and Juan Carlos Reyes) traveled to Philadelphia to work with Ortiz. The creation of this mural showed positive support by the community, and it was sponsored by the MAP (who provided scaffolding and paint), the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures, Leeway Foundation, Hispanics in Philanthropy, and individual donors.⁵¹



Fig. 4.5. Michelle Angela Ortiz, *Aqui y Alla*, 2012, acrylic paint and fiber cloth panels, 30 ft. x 67 ft. Source: “*Aqui y Alla*,” City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. Available from: <https://www.muralarts.org/artworks/aqui-y-alla/> (accessed February 11, 2017).

Looking at the mural itself, the female in the right circle immediately grabs the viewer’s eye. She is larger than life, and her presence dominates the mural. She is a Hispanic immigrant living in Philadelphia, as evidenced by a map of the city directly behind her. From her earrings to her blouse, she is clothed in traditional Mexican dress, thereby showcasing her pride for her homeland. Additionally, this emphasis on her heritage serves as an opportunity for the intended audience to identify with the woman in

the mural. Analyzing her facial expression is rather challenging. She gazes upon the viewer in a similar fashion to Tameka in *Common Threads*, but this female's expression is more ambiguous. The ambiguity appears to be intentional, as if Ortiz wants her audience to map their own thoughts and feelings onto this young woman. She is a blank slate that her audience can project their feelings onto, whether they are resilient, anxious, weary, or inspired, and they can take those feelings and find their voice within the community and city. Not only can they find their voice, but they can also feel empowered by the young woman's presence in their neighborhood, as well as fellowship. Her presence serves as an artistic support system: she understands the trials and tribulations that immigrants in the neighborhood have experienced since their move to Philadelphia, and by gazing upon her, the audience can see a visual reminder that the community acknowledges and validates those struggles.

After the audience sees the young woman, their eyes are guided to the younger boy in the left circle of the mural. Unlike the young woman, he still lives in Mexico, with the map of Juarez behind him.⁵² In contrast with the young woman, he is not staring directly at the audience. Instead, he is gazing at her. He is almost wistful, as he longs for family and friends that may have left for America. They are altogether different: their coloring, size, and facial expressions contrast each other significantly. Moreover, they are separated by space, both physically on the mural and in real life. Despite all of these contrasts, they still share the same heritage, homeland, and mural. The bonds created by their similarities and experiences are stronger than their differences, and they serve as reminders to the audience to stay proud of their heritage regardless of where they may live.

An intriguing facet of *Aqui y Allá* is the panels that surround both circles. Ortiz teamed up with the four artists from Juarez in “conducting a series of writing, street art, and mural technique workshops with Mexican immigrant youth in South Philadelphia.”⁵³ They hosted an eight-week summer program sponsored by the MAP for local teens from Furness High School. These teens, as well as those in Juarez and Chihuahua, created the panels that serve as the border for both of the large circles. The Mexican teens filled the panels for the circle on the left, while those in Philadelphia completed panels for the circle on the right.⁵⁴ Ortiz wanted to engage “the voices of many teens in similar situations, who feel torn between two countries.”⁵⁵ She developed curriculum for the program that included journal writing, communal discussions, and “creating a safe space in which to share thoughts, fears, and sufferings.”⁵⁶ Additionally, they studied political posters from both the Civil Rights and Puerto Rican independence movements. Ortiz wanted “to show the kids how it is that these works of art were able to compel the community.”⁵⁷ The students answered questions such as “Who am I?”, “What do I want to say?”, and “Where do I come from?” in their journals.⁵⁸ These writing sessions, coupled with discussions and art history classes, helped the students craft each of the panels on the mural.

One of the Furness High teens, Fredy, created two of the panels seen on *Aqui y Allá*. He immigrated to the United States from Mexico at age 10, leaving behind his grandmother so that he could live with his mother in Philadelphia. One of his panels (see Fig 4.6, right) shows a man holding a shovel with the caption “We are Workers, Not Criminals,” which was “inspired by the prejudice he experienced after he began working as a young teen.”⁵⁹ His second panel (see Fig. 4.6, left) is dedicated to the memory of his

deceased grandmother. In it, she stands in the center, with roots spreading out from her feet. Metaphorically, these roots represent how families grow and spread over time.

While Fredy may be separated physically from his family in Mexico, he will always be connected to them. This notion rings true for many of these immigrants in Philadelphia, which helps to aid the process of identification for Ortiz's audience. These are just two of the many panels in *Aqui y Allá*. While there are certainly differences in aesthetics and symbols, the themes are the same. As artist Oscar Gallegos said, "The problem of immigration is the same, so you see a lot of images of arrows, birds, and walls. The youth are the same youth except that the ones in Mexico stayed. They are mirror images."⁶⁰

Each of these panels gives a voice to the youth that painted them, and to those who gaze upon the mural. By identifying with the symbols and sentiments expressed in the panels, the audience is more likely to feel empowered and take pride in their heritage.



Fig. 4.6. Two of the panels used in *Aqui y Allá*. Source: Rachel Heidenry, "Beyond the Wall: *Aqui y Allá* Gives Voice to Teens in South Philly and Mexico," Artblog, August 29, 2012. Available from: <http://www.theartblog.org/2012/08/beyond-the-wall-aqui-y-alla-gives-voice-to-teens-in-south-philly-and-mexico/> (accessed February 11, 2017).

The aesthetics of *Aqui y Allá* work together to enhance the overall message of the mural. First, it is inspired by the Aztec calendar.⁶¹ The hailed audience will likely

recognize that the two circles look exceptionally similar to the Aztec calendar, especially the shape and the symbols that adorn the left side of the larger circle.⁶² The notion of a calendar works seamlessly with the colors seen within *Aqui y Allá*. Unlike those seen in *The Slav Epic*, these colors blend well together and are not disjointed in any way. Warm, golden hues surround the young woman, who represents the present situation of the audience. As the eye moves to the left circle, one sees the colors change into cool greens and blues. The blue encompasses the young boy. For the audience, he represents the past and the life that they left behind. Moreover, the leaves in this mural support the metaphor of time. They are falling and changing colors as the eye moves toward the golden hues, suggesting to the audience that they must keep moving forward and chasing the future they have in Philadelphia.

As mentioned earlier, Ortiz had several goals in creating *Aqui y Allá*. First, she wanted to provide a voice and outlet for the Hispanic community in the neighborhood who is often discriminated against by the hegemonic structures of society. Second, she wanted this mural to foster dialogue and break down barriers in the community to ameliorate racial and ethnic intolerance. Perspectives have already started to change. According to David Flores, a neighbor who had been asked about the mural and originally stated that he “hate[d] Mexicans,” is now their “number one fan.”⁶³ Additionally, shop owners in the neighborhood provided free breakfast for the artists, and an Italian immigrant who owned the wall voiced his connection with the teens’ stories of immigration and their cultural identity.⁶⁴ While this mural may not single-handedly solve race relations in South Philadelphia, it is evident that murals can be catalysts for small changes, which may lead to greater positive benefits for future generations.

Aqui y Allá is a powerful mural that, like the other murals analyzed in this thesis, is a masterful blend of aesthetics and iconographic symbols to constitute a specific audience. Creator Michelle Ortiz worked in tandem with the MAP, local residents, and artists from Mexico to hail Hispanic immigrants in South Philadelphia for the purposes of fostering dialogue among the entire community and creating understanding among its newer and long-time residents. The young female and male in the mural serve as blank slates that the intended audience can project their feelings onto while also taking pride in their heritage. Additionally, the panels help to normalize immigrants within the community. The inclusive, creative process to craft these panels by local teens helped physically constitute an audience, fostered dialogue, and gave them a voice within the community. Aesthetically, the colors blend well and create movement that draws the eye toward specific parts of the mural symbolize the passage of time for the audience. This mural is successful in its rhetorical work, as noted by several promising quotations throughout the analysis that speak to a greater understanding over time among the community in South Philadelphia. *Aqui y Allá*, as well as the other murals in this chapter, should serve as a blueprint for future rhetors that want to use public art for constitutive purposes.

Conclusion

Since the creation of the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program in the 1980s, the city has seen an unbelievable devotion to the spread of public art as a way to initiate positive change in how the city sees itself and how it inspires citizens to take pride in their community and form their identities and ideologies. As this chapter has argued, these murals serve as a visual form of constitutive rhetoric that hails a specific audience,

creates the possibility of identification among one another, and inspires each community to embody certain characteristics. By implementing a method that analyzes the usage of symbols, the aesthetic choices used by the artists, and the overall motivations and purposes for creating these murals, this chapter can serve as a springboard for future scholarship on how visual texts can successfully incorporate a diverse range of individuals toward similar goals.

While it would be impossible to analyze all 3,800 works of Philadelphia public art sponsored by the MAP, *Common Threads*, *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, and *Aqui y Allá* are useful entry points into the study of successful visual constitutive rhetoric. In *Common Threads*, the rhetor created a mural that gives representation to minority communities who are often not given a voice by the hegemonic structures in the city and society itself. The individuals depicted are partnered with European figurines, thus symbolizing that regardless of race or social status, everyone in this mural--and thereby Philadelphia--can be seen as beautiful, heroic, and successful. The artist shakes up the social order and validates the identities of minorities, which can inspire them to take action in their community and demand the voice they deserve. In *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, the artists blend famous and common residents of the Fishtown neighborhood with a cartoon style to depict the ideal community in which neighbors of different ages, races, and careers can work together to make Fishtown a better place to live. Everyone is equal, and they each have talents to contribute to the betterment of the community. In *Aqui y Allá*, the artists attempt to connect with residents in both South Philadelphia and Mexico to foster dialogue and inspire community members to find their voice and push against racial intolerance. These three murals are addressed to very

diverse audiences, yet they all promote a specific vision: challenge inequality, take pride in the community, and create understanding and dialogue among one another.

This case study is particularly notable because of the MAP's inclusive, participatory mural-making process. Not only does director Jane Golden affirm that the murals can ignite change among the public, but she also contends that the creative process can transform people as well. This notion adds an interesting addition to the theory of visual constitutive rhetoric, because it allows for the planning and execution of the mural to bring together the intended audience before the symbols and aesthetics have a chance to hail the individuals. Each of the three murals in this case study, as well as other murals in Philadelphia, held public paint days throughout the mural-making process, which constituted the rhetor's audience and allowed for discussions to take place that often helped to achieve their goals before the mural was completed. The opportunity to foster dialogue allowed for an inclusive and participatory environment that typically made the audience more likely to take pride in their community and become active participants within it. The community itself can become an author for its own story and work toward the betterment of Philadelphia as a united group.

With the murals of Philadelphia, the MAP succeeds at bringing together the community to ameliorate the effects of the Rust Belt. However, it must be acknowledged that their existence and ultimate successes are dependent on the way society negatively perceives graffiti. Often considered as an activity dominated by black and brown bodies, the MAP can then push its agenda and vision for how the city should look aesthetically. If the community wants to decorate the city and execute a mural, it must be done through the MAP. While anyone can create public art, it can only be through the proper channels,

where it is scheduled, organized, and approved. Once this is achieved, rhetors can hail audiences through recognizable symbols, allow for identification, and depict certain qualities in which they want the audience to embody to become the ideal citizen. By interrogating the ways in which a rhetor uses non-narrative forms of constitutive rhetoric to enact change through the analysis of Philadelphia's public art, this chapter seeks to further the study of visual rhetoric and constitutive rhetoric by opening new avenues to understand the material consequences public art can have on a community.

Notes

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⁷ Hahner and Varda, "Yarn Bombing and the Aesthetics of Exceptionalism," 312.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

“Whether in painting or city planning, poetry or pottery, music or mosaics, the subject of criticism is always some harvest of the human imagination. There are no critics of stars, however beautiful; there are only astronomers. The subject of criticism consists exclusively in human activities and their results.”

--Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*

Since Maurice Charland’s germinal article “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Québécois*” was published in 1987, scholars have observed how rhetors can call specific audiences into being to motivate them toward identified goals. Rhetoricians initially examined traditional texts, such as speeches and legal documents. As time has passed, scholars have expanded their focus to include a greater variety of works, such as music lyrics, television commercials, and museum exhibits. Despite this growth, there has been little scholarship on how public art, such as murals, can unite audiences and constitute distinctive identities. As this thesis demonstrates, public art serves a constitutive function, and thus builds on the existing scholarship of both visual rhetoric and constitutive rhetoric. By analyzing murals in Lyon, France; Prague, Czech Republic; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, this thesis posed new questions for the field of rhetoric, discovered the limitations and gains to the topic, and opened the door for future scholastic inquiry.

The idea for this thesis began several years ago in Lyon, France while staring at one of Europe’s largest murals, *Le Mur des Canuts*.¹ After studying abroad in Lyon for seven weeks, conducting an independent study on these murals, and interviewing several residents, it felt necessary to continue researching and writing about the material effects

of public art. This initial inquiry made evident that many Lyonnais citizens identify with the public memories, histories, and values symbolized in these murals. The identity linked with these symbols is rooted in French traditionalism. This means the Lyonnais value community loyalty, secularism, social conservatism, and heteronormative family arrangements. Their worldview is shaped by their rejection of foreign elements in their society, which has increased since the rise of globalization. The promotion of a French traditionalist identity throughout these murals has the potential to motivate the Lyonnais to take pride in their city and resist cultural homogenization.

Le Mur des Canuts and *La Fresque des Lyonnais*, both created by CitéCréation, address different public memories, yet they both work toward similar goals. *Le Mur des Canuts* represents daily life in the neighborhood of Croix-Rousse while simultaneously sustaining the status quo of heteronormative, white society. The mural uses symbols such as the famous puppet Guignol, notable architecture elements, real individuals from the neighborhood, or other features to draw the eye or invite the viewer to engage more closely. In so doing, CitéCréation relies on well-known narratives within these iconographic symbols to hail their audience. The rhetors, in creating *Le Mur des Canuts*, want to inspire their audience to beautify Lyonnais neighborhoods and preserve the traditional French identity by eschewing foreign influences. *La Fresque des Lyonnais* depicts famous people from Lyon over the past millennium. These figures, despite their different life experiences, are instrumental in shaping Lyon's history and traditional identity, which informs the identity of its intended audience. For these Lyonnais citizens, Sainte Blandine, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Abbé Pierre, and the other figures in the mural represent the battles for French traditionalism, anti-globalization efforts, and

encourage them to resist external oppression. While it is certainly an exclusive audience, CitéCréation achieves their rhetorical goals. By employing the iconographic symbols, the intended audience recognizes narratives expressed in the mural. From there, they have the potential to identify with messages behind the mural, and are then more likely to enact the particular goals of the rhetor.

After observing Alphonse Mucha's *The Slav Epic* at the National Gallery in Prague, it became apparent that visual constitutive rhetoric was not simply limited to the murals in Lyon, but could be applied to case studies worldwide. Despite attempting to constitute a Pan-Slavic audience to foster cultural pride and attain sovereignty from the Habsburg Empire, *The Slav Epic* is most noteworthy because of its overwhelming rhetorical failure. In this cycle of twenty paintings, Mucha issued an elastic invitation to his dispersed Slavic audience. They lived in many different countries across Europe, with political borders that were moving quite often throughout the 20th century. The large and diffuse audience comprised different histories, values, and beliefs. These inconsistencies, coupled with a disjointed effort at incorporating different symbols and aesthetic choices, resulted in failure for Mucha's rhetorical work. For example, there are tensions throughout *The Slav Epic* between myth and reality, cool and warm colors, countries that are over- and underrepresented, and more. These paintings are consistent in their disjointedness; nearly every painting in this cycle suffers from aesthetic or symbolic incoherence. In the end, these factors were instrumental as to why Mucha could not create identification among his massive audience.

The unconventional path taken by *The Slav Epic* after its completion also contributed to its failure to constitute a Pan-Slavic audience. There were exhibitions in

Prague and around the world, yet *The Slav Epic* was rarely presented in its entirety. By the time that the cycle was exhibited in full, the Pan-Slavic movement had subsided. Later, these paintings had to be hidden away from the Nazis during World War II. Throughout the Cold War, *The Slav Epic* was housed in a chateau in the Czech countryside, rendering them inaccessible to the public. Today, the complete cycle of paintings is showcased at the National Gallery in Prague, but legal proceedings between the city and Mucha's family have created an ambiguous future for *The Slav Epic*. Over the past century, it was infeasible for Mucha's work to constitute an audience of any considerable size given its nomadic history. Without accessibility or the circulation of texts and people, it becomes challenging to hail an audience and inspire them to action, especially when the paintings are inarticulate and disjointed. However, as this conclusion will later explicate, these failures can teach rhetorical and visual scholars inherently valuable lessons about the theory of visual constitutive rhetoric. For example, failures underscore the limitations of constitutive rhetoric that rhetors must heed when creating their work of art. These shortfalls expose some of the necessary components for rhetorical success, such as physical accessibility to the murals. As the Philadelphia case study reveals, a rhetor that creates a participatory, yet clearly defined audience that can access the murals will result in wider success.

Internationally recognized as the "City of Murals," it would have been a disservice to this thesis to omit Philadelphia as a case study. It is a city that uses public art as a tool for education, healing, and inspiration for the community. In the 1980s, mayor Wilson Goode funded the Mural Arts Program (MAP) to rid the city of graffiti and spur economic growth. While his anti-graffiti stance was problematic, the implementation

of the MAP proved productive. The MAP works with local citizens to create murals that “empowers artists to be change agents, stimulates dialogue about critical issues, and builds bridges of connection and understanding.”² Through their murals, the MAP issues a direct, yet elastic invitation that values openness and inclusion for the city’s inhabitants. Murals such as *Common Threads*, *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, and *Aqui y Allá* attempt to hail a Philadelphian audience for the purposes of fostering community pride, identity formation, and understanding between the city’s diverse residents. In so doing, not only does the city become unified, but the MAP also helps to revitalize the city’s economy.

Despite the well-meaning efforts and beneficial effects that may stem from the Mural Arts Program, it must remain clear that their mission is not wholly benevolent. Graffiti had been on the rise throughout the city during the 1980s, and the negative social perceptions that were attached to graffiti art were central in leading to the inception of the MAP. These views on graffiti art are rooted in the idea that it is a criminal activity committed by black and brown bodies, thus delegitimizing graffiti and any positive effects it may have on an audience. On the other hand, popular opinion often holds murals and other legal forms of public art in high regard. It is assumed that they are created by white individuals and trained artists, and thus privilege this form of artistic expression over others. As a result, the MAP benefits from the popular perception of public art that is created by the city. This allows the group to directly influence how the city will look. However, their desire for widespread public participation in the mural projects is still valuable because it is aimed at fostering new forms of identification with all community members. Neighbors and friends alike can come together and make a

material impact on the community, rendering the mural-making process as incredibly inclusive compared to those in Lyon and Prague. In sum, the MAP project is successful in its attempts for inclusivity but is nevertheless predicated on exclusion. While their work is beneficial in many ways, scholars cannot discount the program's inherent discrimination entirely.

Taken together, these three case studies showcase the diversity of public artworks. They represent different creative processes, they exhibit varying levels of inclusion and exclusion, and they present examples of success and failures. Despite their differences, the case studies taken together provide significant contributions to the field of rhetorical studies. First, they demonstrate the capability of public art to create identities, bring an audience together, and compel them to fulfill the goals of the rhetor(s). Second, this project incorporates a new method of analysis that can be applied to a variety of murals for future scholarship. Additionally, these case studies show what makes constitutive rhetoric succeed and fail, and how this knowledge can aid rhetorical scholars. Finally, this thesis illuminates the participatory and inclusive aspects of visual constitutive rhetoric, and the ways in which this variable can increase the chances of success for a rhetor. These breakthroughs will be discussed in greater detail throughout this conclusion, tying together the interwoven nature of success and failure in constitutive public art.

Research Questions Revisited

In the introductory chapter, this thesis set forth two goals. First, it aimed to build on Maurice Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric by adding a visual component. Second, this thesis sought to develop a method to analyze the murals seen in the three

case studies. To render a judgment on whether or not those goals have been achieved, it is best to first return to the research questions that guided this project. By pushing at those questions, one can better understand the efficacy of this thesis in attaining its goals.

The first major research question of this thesis contains two parts: what qualities make murals constitutive, and how are they distinguished from art that is not? To answer the first part of the question, this thesis employed a method of analysis used to identify the constitutive features of the mural in terms of its intended audience. Looking at these case studies as a whole, it is clear that artists who use visual constitutive rhetoric rely on two tools to achieve their goals: iconographic symbols and aesthetic form. These symbols incorporate public memories and histories that can be recognized by the intended audience, and can be cultural ephemera, famous individuals, and more. When an individual gazing upon the mural realizes that they understand the symbol and the meaning behind it, their chances of identification with the message of the mural increases. The aesthetic choices made by the artist can also enhance the power of the symbols. By using perspective, line, and shading, for example, the gaze of an individual can be drawn toward specific symbols, thus emphasizing the message to be brought forth from the mural. These two artistic tactics interact with one another, generating the potential for significant constitutive force.

These case studies illuminate this distinction by identifying the differences between constitutive and abstract public art. First, it is imperative for the rhetor to incorporate symbols that are recognizable to the intended audience. As it has been shown repeatedly throughout the case studies, the audience cannot identify with the mural's message if they are unable to understand the histories, public memories, and values

resting within the symbols. Second, constitutive public art relies on the hailed audience to fill in the narratives that correspond with the symbols. If they gaze upon the symbol but do not derive any meaning from its existence in the mural, it will be nearly impossible to create identification for the purposes of achieving the rhetor's goals. As the symbols become increasingly abstract and more intellectually demanding on the audience to decode their meanings, the chances of identification with the message decrease. While this may be intentional for artists like Jackson Pollack, artists who want to reach a wider audience should be wary of the symbols they choose. For city murals that are designed for a larger community, the more popular and recognizable the symbol is, the more likely it is that the artist will attain their goals.

To analyze these symbols, this thesis had to craft a new method, which brings the reader to the second research question: what is the most effective method to analyze visual constitutive texts? While Charland performs a textual analysis of the "White Paper" document, it is incompatible with the murals throughout the case studies because constitutive rhetoric works differently for visual texts. The hail is not narratological, and non-narrative texts attract audiences largely through symbols. There are other methods for analyzing visual texts, but constitutive murals required a new path.³ This thesis needed a method that employed four steps: identify recognizable symbols and their histories as related to the audience, understand how aesthetic choices such as color and perspective help to aid the rhetor, uncover the purposes and motivations for employing these symbols, and then determine the actions the rhetor wants the audience to perform to attain specific goals. The analyses in this thesis followed this method closely, allowing the rhetorical power of these texts to become self-evident. One of the method's strengths

rests in its flexibility. Rather than attempt to map strict meanings onto the symbols, this method allows the context to dictate the interpretation of the rhetor's message. This avoids overly narrow understandings of particular symbols, giving unique latitude to the rhetorical critic. This offers the critic a framework from which to work without dictating the outcome prior to understanding each specific context. As a result of this flexibility, the method will aid future scholarship because it can be implemented with a wide variety of visual constitutive texts.

The final research question requires the reader to look to the future: what are the implications of this contribution to Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric? First, this provides a new method for analyzing public art that can be applied in the future. This contribution accomplishes the secondary goal of this thesis. It offers rhetorical scholars a new way to analyze visual texts and rhetoric in a way that had not previously been done. Second, it exposes a topic that is not often discussed in constitutive rhetoric scholarship: potential failures. Chapter three offers insight into the causes and effects when an audience fails to identify with a rhetor's message. Additionally, this thesis illuminates the consequences when constitutive rhetoric is both exclusive and inclusive, and how both can still render rhetorical success. As a result, it is undeniable that this thesis attains its primary goal of offering a significant contribution to the field of visual rhetoric.

Predicting Success and Failure in Visual Constitutive Rhetoric

This thesis has hinted at what contributes to the success and failure of visual constitutive rhetoric, but it is necessary to consider those broad factors in greater detail before examining the results of the case studies. The metrics identified in this thesis are necessary but not sufficient determinants of success and failure. Moreover, they are

uncertain and constantly changing metrics, so while this project provides a useful list, there will always be new factors to consider. As a result, a continued rhetorical investigation into such characteristics remains prescient for the field. One of the first criteria to consider is the willingness of the intended audience to engage with the rhetor's goals. While the symbols in the mural can hail an audience, that audience can just as easily reject that hail. If the rhetor wants to bring together a disparate group, it is essential that they recognize the interpellation in the first place. There must be a latent desire by the audience to accept the hail, and then to engage with the symbols and fill in the narratives enthymematically. If the audience is uninterested, the rhetor cannot persuade them to perform certain actions, thereby leading to a rhetorical failure.

The ability to be interpellated works symbiotically here with the notion of *kairos*, or the timeliness of an argument.⁴ While a rhetor may present a visual argument that attempts to inspire an audience to join a specific movement, its success is dependent on if the argument fits within the exigencies of the time. For example, if the rhetor wants to compel their audience to advocate for an ethno-nationalist movement, the artist's goals must coincide with the desires of the intended audience and what they feel is necessary at that moment in history. If there is incongruence between any of these factors, the chances for successfully constituting a group decrease. A desire to be hailed and the relevance of the visual argument are key contributors of success and failure, and must be considered as such by rhetorical critics. This demonstrates that the content of the rhetorical text is a crucial determinant of success, and is vital to the audience being willingly interpellated by the hail of public art.

Another factor that can determine success or failure is the accessibility of the visual texts. To hail an audience and create the means for their identification with the message of the mural, the rhetor must make the text available for their audience. They must either paint the mural on a building in an area that is accessible by foot, bike, or car. If the artwork is in a museum, it is useful if the price of admission is free or very affordable for the intended audience, so that they can visit as often as possible. The more frequently the audience can gaze upon the mural, the more likely they are to connect with the mural's message, which can also increase the chances of fulfilling the goals of the rhetor. As this thesis exemplifies in each case study, accessibility of the visual texts is a key factor in contributing to the success and failure of constitutive rhetoric.

The accessibility of meaning in the symbols incorporated into a mural is also a strong determinant of success and failure. As the rhetor must choose their words carefully, so must the artist use their symbols with discretion. If the rhetor wants to inspire the audience to enact particular goals, they have to comprehend the public memories, histories, and values that support the symbols themselves. If the audience can understand the narratives at play within the mural and how they enforce a certain message, then the chances of rhetorical success are greater for the artist. If the intended audience gazes upon symbols that pertain to a narrow audience, then the stories and messages may be unfamiliar to them, and the potential for action is lost. Additionally, the form and composition must be accessible for the audience. The aesthetics of the mural must enhance the symbols and bring forth their message, while avoiding confusion for the viewer. The composition must work in tandem with the narratives at play, rather than detract from them. If the colors do not blend well with one another, or if the audience

spends too much time trying to decode the meaning behind the aesthetics, it can deter from the overall message of the mural. When creating a mural for constitutive purposes, the rhetor must consider the accessibility of both the form and content of their artwork. Should the artist fail to do so, their chances of rhetorical success will become incredibly challenging.

Accessibility can be viewed in a variety of ways, and this thesis uncovers how each understanding of this term contributes to the success and failure of visual constitutive rhetoric. One of the central discussions woven throughout the analyses is what factors contributed to the success or failure of certain mural projects. By exploring the relationship between success and failure in close detail, this thesis can offer a greater understanding for rhetorical scholars who want to investigate this topic. Additionally, it can provide insight and advice for those who may be interested in creating a work of public art that employs the methods of visual constitutive rhetoric as seen throughout this project. Both projects in Lyon, France and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania experienced success, while Alphonse Mucha's *The Slav Epic* failed in its rhetorical efforts. Despite the differences in these results, each case study can teach rhetorical scholars more about the theory of visual constitutive rhetoric as a whole.

While the cities of Lyon and Philadelphia both experience success in their attempts to constitute audiences through public art, they each achieve this goal in wholly opposite ways. CitéCréation's rhetorical efforts in Lyon are successful *because* of their exclusivity to certain audiences. The artists rely on what Philip Wander calls the "third persona," which includes individuals "whose presence, through relevant to what is said, is negated through silence." These people "exist in the silences of the text [and] the

reality of oppressions.”⁵ Throughout their murals, CitéCréation issues a strict invitation to emulate the ideal Lyonnais citizen as very heteronormative, white, and traditionally French Catholic. In so doing, this identity shuts out a variety of populations. This silences, for example, persons of color, those who identify as LGBTIQ, and the growing Muslim immigrant population in the city. As chapter two consistently shows, the French are well-known for their xenophobia and their derision of anything outside the realm of French traditionalism. As a result, CitéCréation’s murals are widely successful throughout the city. However, their exclusion of many identities precludes universal popularity. The symbols both target a specific group and constitute them as a collective that exists entirely separate from the other members of Lyonnais society. This dissociation is not simply a denotation of difference, but an active attempt to erase those outside this identity from the public writ large. It is what makes this constituted identity quintessentially French. Moreover, these Lyonnais murals have existed for several decades, with *Le Mur des Canuts* making its debut in the 1980s. As a result, the audience has had the opportunity to interact with the murals as frequently as possible for a considerable number of years. This frequent circulation, plus its popular message, makes CitéCréation’s endeavors in visual constitutive rhetoric incredibly successful. Despite their different historical contexts, messages, and artistic choices, these underlying threads of audience desire and accessibility are woven throughout the case studies in Prague and Philadelphia as determinants of success or failure.

Alphonse Mucha’s *The Slav Epic* saw the exact opposite outcome as compared to the successes of the Lyonnais murals. While CitéCréation offered a strict invitation to a limited audience, Mucha decided to cultivate a massive, dispersed audience. They

comprised different histories and desires, yet Mucha envisioned that he could constitute an ethno-nationalist identity and create a Slavic nation for them to all occupy together. Unlike in Lyon, Mucha's audience possessed varying goals and dreams that a cycle of twenty paintings could not encompass. Even so, by the time *The Slav Epic* could be presented as a complete exhibition, the Pan-Slavism movement had come to an end. Mucha missed his kairotic moment, and his message became obsolete and incompatible for his intended audience. His paintings were whisked away from the Nazis shortly after the exhibition, thus limiting its accessibility. For nearly fifty years, they were out of the public eye, thus Mucha's audience could not visit the paintings and identify with his message. In Lyon, the audience could interact with the murals frequently, even multiple generations of audiences. It was not until the demise of the Soviet Union and the revolutions in present-day Czech Republic that Mucha's audience could identify with the Pan-Slavism movement. Around this time, *The Slav Epic* entered once again into the public eye and is now on full display in Prague. The potential for the cycle's rhetorical success is now growing, due in large part to the compatibility of goals between the rhetor and their audience, as well as an accessibility that *The Slav Epic* now possesses.

While the Mural Arts Program's projects experience great success, they do so in a way that is more inclusive than those in Lyon. First, the MAP often uses community members to create the murals. For example, the group held several public paint days while creating *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, which allowed the community to come together, foster dialogue, and create understanding as an audience. Second, these murals are inclusive because they attempt to speak to many diverse audiences. In chapter four, the three murals hail audiences who represent different ethnicities, religions, sexual

identifications, among other identity categories. The Philadelphian murals distinguish themselves from their Lyonnais counterparts due to their inclusivity. Additionally, the MAP's community murals are exceptionally accessible. The artists place their murals in the neighborhood in which their intended audiences reside, thereby making the art attainable by foot. As the audiences interact with the murals repeatedly over time, they can learn of the MAP's inclusive message, and are thus inspired to promote a better society within the city of Philadelphia.

Despite the differences in locations, audiences, and histories, similarities can be drawn from the three case studies in Lyon, Prague, and Philadelphia that determine a constitutive mural's rhetorical success or failure. First, the rhetor must possess, or at least present, compatible values, beliefs, and goals with their audience. If they value inclusion, then the rhetor must make the mural reflect that notion. Second, the murals must be accessible to the audience. If the mural is too far away from them or require a fee to view, then it will be increasingly unlikely that the viewer will be able to gaze upon the mural such that they can identify with it and thus fulfill the rhetor's goals. By paying attention to these two steps, the rhetor will increase their chances of constituting their audience.

Drawbacks, Breakthroughs, and Future Opportunities

Before discussing the contributions and opportunities for future scholarship on visual constitutive rhetoric, it is important to mention the limitations of this thesis. First, each mural was selected because it had a wealth of information available to the public. For example, personal websites of the artists and news sources provided context such as who created the mural, what their goals were, how the mural-making process worked, and what the public reaction was after the mural was created. Additionally, this thesis

benefitted from personal visits to almost every mural that was analyzed, as well as interviews conducted with several members of the intended audiences in Lyon and Prague. Without this accessibility, it would have been challenging to provide a well-rounded analysis of each of the nine murals in this thesis. As a result, future scholarship will have to rely on similar methods when choosing murals to analyze, or critics will have to devise a new path that is less reliant on context provided by others.

The second limitation of this project is the knowledge of art history and artistic styles possessed by the author. While these analyses present a good faith effort in uncovering aesthetic choices used by the mural artists, there are gaps that may remain for a more finely trained eye. With this in mind, scholars may contribute greatly to the theory of visual constitutive rhetoric by employed broader knowledge about artistic styles. In so doing, one potentially uncovers more information regarding the aesthetic choices of the artist. These revelations could serve both to enhance the argument and to provide new contributions to the theory of visual constitutive rhetoric. A significant portion of this thesis relies on the aesthetic choices made by the rhetor, and how it affects the potential for identification of the audience. Scholars with a greater level of understanding of art history and artistic styles may better articulate the rhetorical impacts of specific symbolic choices. These contributions could exist in a variety of areas, and may include new insights into the rhetorical significance of perspective, color, line, and more.

Despite its limitations, this thesis offers several breakthroughs and contributions. As mentioned earlier, there is a significant addition made to Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric by incorporating public art. Few scholars have used constitutive rhetoric to grapple with the suasory potential of visual rhetoric or non-narrative texts. Art

is a remarkable part of the human experience, and public art has the potential to be transformative. As this thesis has demonstrated, murals can create identities, display an audience's beliefs, histories, and values, and can even inspire them to fulfill the goals envisioned by the rhetor. Ignoring this notion is a disservice to rhetorical studies. Moreover, this thesis displays how visual texts can also produce the three ideological effects seen in Charland's article. The murals in this project constitute collective audiences, posit transhistorical subjects, and provide the illusion of freedom. These effects, if fulfilled, create significant potential for political, social, and economic action. By forging the beginning of this path, this thesis illuminates for scholars another way that rhetors can hail and constitute audiences, and are then able to persuade them to enact particular goals. If rhetorical critics examine the constitutive properties of public art, they have the potential to expand upon Charland's theory in new ways.

Rhetorical scholarship can also be furthered by the second major contribution of the thesis, which is the implementation of a new method of analysis. While this is not the first scholarly project to analyze public art, it is one of the first to offer a new method for identifying and interpreting specific symbols. The method is simple in nature, which allows for a wide application of murals for future scholarship. Additionally, the method provides a flexible structure for the rhetorical critic. While they can follow the steps in a particular order, the critic has more freedom to interpret the text outside the confines of a rigid, pre-established system. It is important to note that this thesis does not disdain methods, past or future, that have been employed in this area of scholarship. Instead, this thesis offers a clear path forward for rhetoricians to see and critically engage public art in a new ways and with renewed vigor.

A third contribution offered by this thesis attends to what makes constitutive rhetoric fail. There is no dearth of scholarship on constitutive rhetoric as a whole, but there is little academic inquiry to date that grapples with how public art can fail to bring an audience together for the purposes of identification.⁶ Without a well-rounded understanding of constitutive rhetoric's limitations, this can paradoxically prevent scholars from comprehending all of this theory's possibilities. This thesis offers scholars insight into what makes visual constitutive rhetoric succeed, but also how these factors intertwined with the potential for failure. There may be gaps in this understanding, but the analyses illuminate several examples throughout Alphonse Mucha's *The Slav Epic* that can help rhetorical scholars in the future.

The final contribution that this thesis advances is the participatory and inclusive aspects of visual constitutive rhetoric. As chapter four analyzes, the Mural Arts Program is successful in part because it works to constitute the entire community not only through the physical murals, but throughout the planning and creative activities as well. Because the audience is often welcome throughout the entire mural-making process, the rhetors can hail and bring together their intended audience before the symbols and aesthetics are applied fully to the mural. In fact, the audience can often choose these aspects and how they should be incorporated, which allows for them to be the authors of their own message to the community. Through planning and public paint days, the audience can also come together and provide a vision for their future. As a result, the rhetor can achieve their goals of instilling pride and understanding among their audience from the beginning of the mural-making process. This increases the chances of identification among the audience, and it raises the likelihood that the rhetor will be successful in their

constitutive endeavors. In so doing, they serve as a model for future rhetors who want to accomplish similar goals.

Throughout the three case studies, this thesis has explored three cities, nine murals, and a multitude of histories, values, public memories, and audiences. The ultimate goal was to use constitutive rhetoric to understand public art. As chapters two and four show, there is concrete evidence and testimonies that murals can succeed in constituting a specific audience and inspiring them to forward the goals of the rhetor. In chapter three, the reader witnesses the shortfalls and limitations to visual constitutive rhetoric; sometimes it is more fruitful for the rhetor to reign in their goals and pay greater attention to the wishes of their intended audience. Overall, this thesis provides a foundation for future rhetorical studies and for the theory of visual constitutive rhetoric. With a new method in place, this project suggests that scholars explore public art in new cities, including art that require ethnographic or other kind of research to grasp fully. It may be useful to view the murals in one's hometown, because the contextual knowledge may reside within the scholar's memories. Additionally, there is plenty of room for the field to explore instances of failed constitutive rhetoric, especially those with a visual component. Constitutive rhetoric remains powerful and important. Now, more than ever, scholars should attend to its nuances and the boundaries that can be pushed through the visual form.

Notes

¹ “Mur des Canuts,” Lonely Planet, <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/france/lyon/attractions/mur-des-canuts/a/poi-sig/417282/359234> (accessed January 21, 2017).

² “Mission,” Mural Arts Philadelphia, <https://www.muralarts.org/about/mission/> (accessed January 22, 2017).

³ For other methods of visual textual analysis, see Caitlin Bruce, “Public Surfaces Beyond the Great Wall: Communication and Graffiti Culture in China,” *Invisible Culture* 15 (2010): 102-124; Caitlin Bruce, “Modalities of Publicity: Leon’s City of Murals Project,” from *Inopinatum: The Unexpected Impertinence of Urban Creativity*, ed. Luca Borriello and Christian Ruggiero (Italy: Arti Grafiche Boccia S.p.A, 2013), 45-62; Sonja K. Foss, “A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery,” *Communication Studies* 45 (1994): 213-224; and Valerie V. Peterson, “The Rhetorical Criticism of Visual Elements: An Alternative to Foss’s Schema,” *Southern Communication Journal* 67 (2001): 19-32.

⁴ University Writing Center, “Logos, Ethos, Pathos, Kairos,” University of Louisville, <https://louisville.edu/writingcenter/for-students-1/handouts-and-resources/handouts-1/logos-ethos-pathos-kairos> (accessed February 5, 2017).

⁵ Philip Wander, “The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory,” *Central States Speech Journal* 35 (1984): 210.

⁶ For several examples of failed constitutive rhetoric, see Helen Tate, “The Ideological Effects of a Failed Constitutive Rhetoric: The Co-option of the Rhetoric of White Lesbian Feminism,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 28 (2005): 1-31; Kenneth S. Zagacki, “Constitutive Rhetoric Reconsidered: Constitutive Paradoxes in G.W. Bush’s Iraq War Speeches,” *Western Journal of Communication* 71 (2007): 272-293.

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