THE BELOVED COMMUNITY IN SHAW: CONSTRUCTING NARRATIVE
IDENTITY IN THE ANTI-GENTRIFICATION MOVEMENT

By

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Introduction

"Rhetorical beings are as much valuing as they are reasoning animals"
- Walter Fisher

When he originally began to develop a narrative paradigm for human communication in 1978, Walter Fisher argued that narratives construct values that become reasons. These reasons "provide warrants for accepting or adhering to the advice fostered by any form of communication that can be considered rhetorical" (378). In other words, rhetoric is not only a process of constructing a logical proof, or logos, to appeal to the audience and thus sway them. It is also a process of mythos where the narratives we tell simultaneously construct and draw from a value system to validate our words to our audiences. It is through these narratives that we may most readily appeal to our audiences' emotions and morals, locating a rhetorical stasis where we may understand one another, and where the audience may accept the advice of the rhetor. As Joan Didion titled her 2006 anthology, *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live.*

The grounds of social movements have long been fertile for the construction of value making narratives. Social movements rely heavily on the publicly acknowledged moral value of their causes for legitimacy, values often cultivated through identification with existing community beliefs. Likewise, Fisher's paradigm teaches us that narratives are not constantly brand new; they are instead validated and defined in their archetypal elements and in the values those archetypes have repetitively taught us. Scholars of rhetoric seek to develop schemata for the classification of social movements. Closely tied to this quest, the decade and period

of social change now known simply as "the sixties" has become a behemoth in classifying and contextualizing modern movements. Though some might argue the sixties as an exception rather than the rule, the fact remains that this contextualizing process is essential in understanding modern movements; until we know what the movement wants and on what it is built, we cannot dissect its message. My goal is to determine the goals of the anti-gentrification movement and to investigate how those goals are articulated and validated through narration. Specifically I examine the power of the beloved community narrative as an organizing force in the anti-gentrification movement.

Recent upheaval in the mortgage and banking industries stemming from mass defaults on sub-prime loans has reintroduced the struggle of low-income homeowners into the public consciousness. While a majority of the discussion over the housing collapse and subsequent government response is based on reasoning and economic logic, a substantial portion of the debate is centered on fairness for the individuals involved and a visceral public reaction to the sad reality of people losing their homes. It is this "loss of home" or displacement narrative that is instrumental in the construction of narratives surrounding gentrification. Scholars like Mindy Thompson Fullilove have compared gentrification to diaspora in its effect on community members. The collapse of the subprime mortgage industry is not equivalent to an increased prominence of gentrification in urban centers. However, the modern banking collapse has brought new attention to the struggle against gentrification that has been taking place in some form or another since 1961 when Jane Jacobs wrote her *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in opposition to the practices of urban

renewal. The anti-gentrification movement is a dynamic social text positioned at the intersection of social movement theory, race, and narrative theory. Yet despite its critically rich potential, the messages exchanged within the debate on urban community change have yet to be sufficiently treated through the lens of rhetoric.

In this thesis, I will examine narrative identity in one such gentrification story. I will investigate the construction of movement identity through narrative in the case of one particular anti-gentrification group, Organizing for Neighborhood Equity or ONE DC located in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington, DC. I will be using material available publicly from the organization through their website which includes letters to the editor, community newsletters, and public interviews. This information is supplemented by personal knowledge of ONE DC acquired while I was working in low-income housing in D.C. I expect this thesis to address the roles narration plays in social movements with a focus on construction of identity and validation of goals. The trope of the beloved community popularized by Martin Luther King Jr. will serve as a methodology for determining the "good reasons" (Fisher) of ONE DC's narratives.

I will begin by examining the existing literature in communication related to narrative and social movements. Then I will examine existing literature on gentrification across disciplines seeking to use these texts in an attempt to bring into critical focus a movement that has not as yet been studied in the field of communication. The importance of community serves as a recurring trope in narratives of urban change. In her account of "root shock" caused by urban renewal, Fullilove introduces the concept of the beloved community as a description of the

importance of community to African Americans. However, she only devotes about a page to the concept and does little to examine its worth as a trope in the narrative of gentrification debate. I will use the idea of the beloved community as a trope for understanding issues of fidelity in narratives of community in the anti-gentrification movement. Each of these components of my thesis will be treated briefly individually. The primary goal of this piece is to find the space where these various constructs overlap to create an identity for the anti-gentrification movement and its members.

I. Defining Gentrification

"If they really want to integrate, tell them to move out of Westchester and move into our communities." – Stokely Carmichael

As a phenomenon in urban communities, gentrification has been widely debated. The word often suggests an opposition to community change and therefore simply using it can be read as a political statement. Those in favor of the community change often use "urban revitalization" as a euphemism for gentrification. An additional term, "urban renewal" is important in the historical narrative of gentrification. Its use is not as intrinsically political as the other terms discussed, though as a practice it has come to be widely scrutinized. Urban renewal differs from gentrification in that it refers to a specific effort at removing "blight" in low income, often minority communities following the Housing Act of 1949 (Fullilove) The perception of urban renewal as racism codified in housing policy continues to serve as historical baggage for communities seeking to assign value to community change. I chose to use the term gentrification in this case study because I am focusing on anti-

gentrification groups that are oriented specifically towards the goal of organizing community members to prevent the gentrification of their communities through participation in the debate over community change. I am using the language they use.

Lance Freeman offers an understanding of the word gentrification through its root as "the influx of gentry into previously decaying neighborhoods." (2) However, gentrification activists might deny that the neighborhoods were "decaying." In fact Fullilove addresses this understanding of blight in the ghetto. Still, the most important concept to take away from Freeman's understanding of the process of gentrification is that it implies the movement of "gentry" or upper class people into neighborhoods that have traditionally been inhabited by lower class residents. Within the rhetoric of urban renewal, it is perfectly acceptable, even required to see these communities as "decaying" since that is the reason why they are being "revitalized." However, the existing residents of a community are often unlikely to describe their own homes as "decaying" or "blighted." While they might support efforts at revitalization, community organizations located in opposition to gentrification base their tactics on a presumption that these efforts should maintain a more organic origination; thus initiated and supported by community members.

Support for urban revitalization movements depends on a willful ignorance of the simple fact that the city is not the suburbs. Most swaths of land in the city are not vacant. Therefore, the development of a new complex carries with it the implication that other structures will need to be torn down in order to build something new. In the narrative of gentrification, these older structures are often affordable housing complexes and/or traditionally low rent housing options. There is little likelihood

that these affordable housing options will remain after the developer has invested large sums of money in purchasing the land and constructing luxury apartments. Central to the narrative is a mourning of the loss of a community created and maintained by a network of individuals, families, and homes. In addition to displacing those who formerly lived in the community, community change to the scale of gentrification brings in drastically different community member to replace them. This replacement often results in a vast change in the makeup and identity of the community.

To longtime residents, this change may seem to take place over night and out of their control. Therefore, it is important that we distinguish between gentrification and small scale or even gradual community change. A few new neighbors in a tightly woven community is not gentrification. One could even argue that a new apartment complex or the revitalization of an old building does not necessitate the label. Gentrification changes the overall look and feel of a community. One of the most obvious signs of gentrification is the steady displacement of residents, usually for economic reasons. Communities like Adams Morgan in Washington, DC are examples of this sign. As new money moved into the community and retail space began to be purchased by high-end shops and restaurants, existing residents could no longer afford to pay their property taxes, or more commonly their rent. In the Shaw community where ONE DC works, it is common for residents to be displaced from housing because the landlord sells the building to a redeveloper with the goal of turning a building containing a hundred apartments into fifty or sixty high end condominiums.

In the short term this process might be defended as simply an unromantic and possibly unfortunate result of competitive capitalist markets. However, the long-term implications of gentrification are so substantial that they have been documented and debated since the mid 1960s. In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* Jane Jacobs responds to the exigence of urban renewal, discussing the yet un-named phenomenon of gentry-fication. Jacobs explains that as the numbers of community members who have a vested interest in the goings on of the community decreases, its residents police the street less and less. This lack in organic policing in urban communities influences an increase in crime and a further alienation of community members from their neighbors and surroundings. Essentially Jacobs argues that it is the notion of community that maintains order in urban neighborhoods. It is this communal ethos that is lost in the gentrification process.

In addition to Jacobs' analysis of the community impact of gentrification, inter-disciplinary scholars like Fullilove and Freeman have investigated the impact of gentrification on individual community members. Gentrification activists point particularly to Fullilove who hypothesizes that the displacement and anxiety felt by residents of gentrified communities might be comparable to the psychological turmoil of other diasporic communities. It is gentrification's potential as a catalyst for community crisis that merits its attention from community activists as well as our study of the construction of their identity. In many ways this thesis understands the process through the movement. Sides are often so polarized that it becomes difficult to understand exactly what is happening when urban communities change. This project is a small advancement towards that understanding.

III. The Text

Few cities offer such rich grounds for the study of gentrification as Washington, DC. A city composed of four main quadrants divided into smaller neighborhoods; DC has experienced exponential growth in the past twenty years, growth that seems to come faster every year. Perhaps rapper Mos Def said it best at a performance in the city in the summer of 2007: "Last time I was here, D.C was a lot blacker." It is true. Once dubbed Chocolate City, the face of D.C. is more mixed today than at any other time in recent history. This is due in large part to the fact that the once volatile city finds itself in a period of relative tranquility.

In the minds of many of the District's residents this tranquility is not the doing of their neighborhoods' new white and economically comfortable citizenry. In many of D.C's lowest income and most historic neighborhoods, residents have built and maintained homes throughout some of the city's most tumultuous times. Shaw, the neighborhood I will be focusing on for the case study in this thesis, is located in the Northwest quadrant (the largest by far) and is the home to ONE DC. Shaw is a historically black, low-income neighborhood. The neighborhood is the home of the historically black Howard University and borders U Street corridor, former stomping grounds for the likes of Langston Hughes and Duke Ellington. In the 1960s Shaw was a thriving black business district. Unfortunately, the neighborhood bore the brunt of the city's riots following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Following the riots, both mobile blacks and whites fled the city; leaving the neighborhood and the city vulnerable for the crack epidemic of the 1980s. Shaw's story however, is not one of defeat. Although it was virtually ignored by some earlier waves of city

revitalization, the community has managed to rebuild itself and is now home to a vibrant low to moderate income minority-majority citizenry.

Shaw is located in close proximity to the new Walter E. Washington Convention Center. As a result, its community members are particularly vulnerable to the "urban revitalization" that is taking place throughout the district. Rising costs of living, decreases in the availability of affordable housing, and a stagnant employment rate threaten to force Shaw residents out of their community. Without organization, residents would have little chance at participating in the dialogue with city planners and developers.

The threat of gentrification serves as what Lloyd Bitzer calls an exigence in a rhetorical situation to which the organizer is called to respond. Instead of responding with a simple pragmatic approach to fight the power, ONE DC organizers respond by constructing a narrative. This narrative tells a story about where the community has been and where it should go. It follows Fisher's paradigm by working hard to establish fidelity for its audience. Furthermore, it facilitates an appropriate response by the rhetors to the community crisis of gentrification, calling community members and sympathizers to action. One central way organizers establish fidelity for their narrative is through its similarity with the idea of the beloved community. By overlaying the "good reasons" in the narratives constructed by ONE DC on their website and in their printed materials with the values of the beloved community, my thesis seeks to better understand the identity of the anti-gentrification movement.

III. Narrative Identity

Fisher begins his 1984 book *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action* with the proposition of humankind as "Homo narrans," essentially story telling beings (xi). This proposition is in opposition to the supremacy of the rational world paradigm that, Fisher explains, suggests that people are essentially rational and approach the world from a logical perspective that places primacy on good arguments. However, the importance of arguments does not exclude the importance of narration. As Fisher tells us, narrative's primary purpose for human beings approaching the world is the construction of good reasons. The construction of these reasons does not deny the importance of a good argument in our understandings of the world. However, narratives are the molds in which we formulate our reasons and thus validate our arguments.

It is important to note that Fisher was not the first by far to suggest that human beings' understanding of the world, and thusly of the good, be constructed through narration. Aristotle's study of drama and plot gave rise to the legitimacy of the story as art. This art is treated in depth in his *Poetics*. From these classical roots we may find defense for Fisher's treatment of narrative as rhetorical form. Furthermore, we may extend this defense to the narrative of our human history, to the status of paradigm as Fisher does. After all, what is rhetoric if not a story? And what is the rhetor if not a storyteller? We may see the rhetor speaking to her audience as that master storyteller, and in an effort to justify her words and actions through stories she is constructing a parable for her audience. The most effective rhetors construct these narratives not merely *for* their audiences but *with* their audiences. The movement

leader, dependent upon his audience for the success of his movement is called to construct his reasons for action through narratives that are both believable and identifiable. Lloyd Bitzer discusses the exigence of the rhetorical situation. The movement leader is perpetually called to use narratives to respond to the exigence of the situation. He must construct a narrative about the past of his audience simultaneously with a narrative about its future in order to compel his people to action.

Let us examine Fisher's paradigm more closely. In the preface to *Human Communication as Narration* Fisher defines a story as "symbolic interpretation of aspects of the world occurring in time and shaped by history, culture, and character" (xi). This symbolic interpretation leads to symbolic action, action that becomes the methodology of a movement. In order to quantify good reasons, the construction of which Fisher maintains is the purpose of narrative and the quest of human beings, we must investigate narratives based on two principles: probability and fidelity. Probability is relatively simple and deals with the narrative's structure. To be probable a narrative must be coherent, understandable, and constructed with sufficient detail. We learn to recognize coherency as we might learn the grammar of our native language. Is the story clear? Does it make sense?

Fidelity is a bit more complex although it is also a learned tool for analysis that combines with probability to form the rhetorical competence of human beings as audience members. Fidelity relates to whether the narrative is believable, whether it is true. Often the perception of a true narrative depends largely on its degree of similarity to other narratives already woven into our lives. Fisher develops five

criteria for the assessment of narrative fidelity: fact, relevance, consequence, consistency, and transcendence. I will be integrating all of these criteria in analyzing the narrative identity of the anti-gentrification movement through the "good reason" used to legitimize the movement's goals and community identity. However it is important to remember that the attainment of fidelity in a narrative is not merely composed of these criteria. Rather these criteria contribute to the creation of good reasons in the narrative. The values used as good reasons are measured by the criteria in establishing fidelity. While all of these criteria are important to the cultivation of good reasons and fidelity, in the narratives of the anti-gentrification movement, the pre-existing presence of the beloved community narrative as a kind of archetype in the black community adds to the importance of consistency and transcendence in modern narratives describing urban communities facing gentrification.

William Lewis' investigation of narrative form and Ronald Reagan's presidency serves as a helpful model for the critical direction I am seeking in my thesis. Lewis' piece investigates narrative as an important persuasive tool in the creation of a shared identity. When understood as a tool for persuasion, it becomes evident that simply constructing a narrative is not enough within itself, the narrative must be good in order for it to encourage acceptance of the values it is promoting. Therefore, a critical bend will be unavoidable in my analysis of the rhetoric of ONE DC, just as a critical perspective is central to Lewis' article.

In using Lewis' article as a model, it will be interesting to see if narrative functions consistently in the same fashion. For instance, Lewis makes an important distinction in his article between narrative as means and narrative as ends. He argues

that narratives are not merely used to "embellish [Reagan's] ideas, [his] message is a story" (313). Studying narratives as identity formers in the case of community change may complicate this dichotomy between means and ends as the identity of the community, ONE DC's agenda, and the narrative endorsing such an agenda are all inextricably linked. Secondly, Lewis identifies a unique role for the audience in Reagan's stories seeming to argue that audience members have a "special kind of identification" brought on by heightened senses of agency as they are "encouraged to see [themselves] as central actor[s] in America's quest for freedom." (316) It would seem that such a heightened sense of agency would be incredibly useful in community organizing, however I am not sure if it actually exists in the narrative identity implored by ONE DC.

IV.   The Beloved community

"The end is reconciliation, the end is redemption, the end is the creation of the beloved community."   - Martin Luther King Jr.

In his article "Solidarity and the Common Good," William Rehg tells us "the notion of solidarity entered the modern lexicon as a development of the ideal of fraternity involved in the French Revolution" (7). He goes on to elaborate that in associating this idea of fraternity with liberty and equality, French Revolutionaries were able to construct a notion of friendship inextricably linked to feelings of community and solidarity amongst the French people. As virtually all of the literature on movement theory would tell us, one of the most important phases in the life of the movement is its inception or mobilization phase where the movement uses predominately constitutive language to form its identity and to define the identity of

its members (Griffin; Stewart). This is the time where a sense of solidarity is most important and where a sense of fraternity and friendship among members is of dire significance. In this project I argue that this solidarity is not possible without the narratives that compose and illustrate a movement's identity to its current and potential members. Furthermore, I argue that the good reasons that create fidelity are the most important component of this narrative for its utility as an identity builder because fidelity speaks to the extent to which individuals' personal narrative identities align with that of the movement.

If the French Revolution represents the introduction of fraternity and solidarity into the modern understanding of movements, the Civil Rights era in the United States is perhaps the most immediate example of the importance of feelings of community in movement organizing. Beginning early in his career and climaxing during his "I Have a Dream" speech, Martin Luther King Jr. used the existing notion of a Beloved or "Great" Community to incite membership in his movement and to encourage those members to act (Washington 217). With this trope of a beloved community, King drew on New Testament notions of a community of believers invested in agape love and protection of one another to create a hope for the growth of a similar community among Americans. In this way King acted in accordance with Charles Stewart's call that "social movements must alter the ways their audiences perceive the past, the present, and the future to convince them that an intolerable situation exists and that it warrants action." Through a narrative of beloved community repeatedly cultivated in his speeches and writings, King built upon religious and cultural concepts of a Beloved Community that were proliferated

by theologian Josiah Royce as well as a group of 20th century cultural critics including Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and Lewis Mumford (Blake). King's oeuvre began a process of making the prophetic notion of a Great Community popularized by Royce into a more tangible community built on earth. In a time when the black community found itself violently oppressed and scattered, King's message of unity and community building offered a sense of security, common purpose, and most importantly, identity for the blooming Civil Rights Movement.

Charles Marsh describes King's narrative of the Beloved Community and investigates its importance as a bridge between faith communities and social justice movements. He describes King's goal as the "realization of divine love in lived social relation" (2) highlighting the importance of the Beloved Community as a parable serving as a pedagogical techne for movement members and the broader community. Marsh also argues that shared values and tropes originating from King's notion of Beloved Community can be observed today in modern social justice campaigns (7). I will investigate one such campaign. Therefore, I will be helping to further contextualize the beloved community as I am also investigating how the trope contributes to the identity of ONE DC.

The minority majority makeup of most urban low-income neighborhoods allows the opportunity for a strong collective memory of the Civil Rights Movement. If they did not participate, it is likely that residents' relatives or close friends and/or neighbors did. I will study how the narrative identity of an anti-gentrification movement is grown against the backdrop of the beloved community. It is my

prediction that the use of the beloved community narrative as a rhetorical trope in the construction of narrative identity for the anti-gentrification movement continues the idea's transformation from the realm of prophesy into a more reality based and tangible practicum.

Specifically, I will focus on how the narrative trope of the beloved community operates to build movement identity through narratives including "good reasons" that resonate with the value framework of the trope. I will focus on how parts of the narratives told about the community idealize the past and (to some extent) present of the community, often by aligning their characteristics with idealizations of the beloved community. Particularly in idealizing the past, movement leaders construct an image of what the future should look like while validating that vision for the future by linking it to the ideal characteristics of a beloved community. This combination of idealizing the past by aligning it with a yet unrealized vision for the future complicates the classification of the anti-gentrification movement. The movement seems to straddle the line between a revivalistic and an innovative movement as defined by Charles Stewart. Stewart tells us that a revivalistic movement seeks reform or revolution of existing norms with ones from a venerable or ideal past whereas an innovative movement seeks reform with new norms from an ideal future. In investigating this problem of trajectorial classification, my thesis will contribute to the existing literature on gentrification by attempting to understand the trajectory suggested by its link to the beloved community narrative.

Central to my analysis of the work of the beloved community narrative in the creation of a movement identity is the cultivation of narrative fidelity and

identification through similarities to the beloved community idea. Similarities to the existing trope of the beloved community have the power to grant fidelity to the narratives told by movement leaders therefore increasing the legitimacy of the identity created through the narratives. My thesis will investigate how this process operates specifically for the anti-gentrification movement. Furthermore, fidelity in a narrative takes on unique characteristics when it is present in narratives that help determine movement identity. Such narratives must also serve to facilitate what Kenneth Burke calls identification. Truly effective narratives extend recognition beyond mere fidelity where community members recognize familiarities with other stories. These narratives reach an additional level of resonance by helping audience members to recognize familiarities within themselves.

V. Methodology/ Incorporation of Movement Theory

Movement scholars have not studied the anti-gentrification movement. When combined with the fact that scholars have consistently challenged the legitimization of movement studies in general (Zarefsky) as well as questioned what constitutes movements worth studying (Griffin; McGee) and how those studied may be classified (Griffin; Sillars; Stewart,) it becomes clear that my thesis will need to include a justification of those engaged in anti-gentrification work as deserving of the classification movement. Some of this defense will be treated more deeply in my thesis; however, it is necessary to discuss some of the scholarly work on classifying movements that has shaped the definition of movement studies under which I am operating with this project.

Essentially serving as the founder of movement studies, Lee Griffin answered five questions central to the methodology of movement studies with his 1952 article. The first and perhaps most useful of these questions was "what should be the point of focus in the movement study?" Griffin is broad in this definition, stating that a movement has occurred when (1) men have become dissatisfied, (2) desired change and therefore acted to bring about that change (3) with that action resulting in either failure or success concerning the desired outcome. Following this broad classification of movement studies, various rhetorical scholars have debated which specific collective social actions warranted treatment as movements. Malcolm O. Sillars responded to this debate, advocating a rhetorical definition of movement that would allow for the widest possible net. His definition classified the movement as "Collective actions which are perceived by the critic. They are defined by that critic in terms of the most useful rhetorical event's conflicts or strategies which will best explain the critic's view of the movement." Sillars' framework validates the investigation of the backlash to gentrification as a movement. Additionally, the members of ONE DC see themselves as activists and thus operate within a mindset and life world focused on participation in a movement, however small.

The recent election cycle made "change" at once a god-term and a devil-term and most certainly an iconic phrase (Burke). Scholars in the future will no doubt study this time as historic socially, politically, and rhetorically. However, it is important to remember that social movements in this country have been calling for change since before our independence. This call for change consistently shares two characteristics: a temporal undertone and a backlash. I feel this project is particularly

kairotic; not simply because it investigates what is happening in our urban communities or because it focuses on those with a social justice bias as a president-elect with a similar bias stands waiting in the wings. This project at its core seeks to understand the problematic nature of change by understanding the identity of a social movement. In the debate over gentrification we can see how one term can be both heavenly and evil to different groups. Social movement leaders respond to the tense relationship of human beings with change by leading communities in determining which change most aligns with communal notions of the good. Anti-gentrification activists deal with this problematic nature of change on a daily and tangible basis with a simultaneous knowledge of the past and a vision for the future. My thesis seeks to understand how community organizers and movement leaders fighting against gentrification mobilize community members through a shared narrative identity grounded in notions of the Beloved Community.

VI. Organizational Overview

In the end, this project will serve four purposes in the scholarly analysis of modern social justice movements. First, it will provide a better understanding of an organization that combines elements of both traditional social movement technique and modern non-profit functioning. Furthermore, it will investigate social justice action in response to gentrification as well as a modern functioning of the beloved community trope. Finally, this project will show how all of these elements might combine in the creation of organizational identity through narrative.

In my next chapter I will provide a clear definition of gentrification for the purposes of this project. As a term, gentrification can be widely disputed. In order to

proceed, chapter one will provide a working definition for the term. The second chapter will then begin our investigation into ONE DC and Shaw, the case study that runs throughout this project, defining the organization as an example of anti-gentrification social action.

The third chapter will delve more deeply into the rhetorical theory I will be using to analyze the narrative construction of ONE DC's identity. In this chapter, I will discuss narrative theory as it is used in this thesis. The fourth chapter will lay out a working definition of the beloved community narrative, identifying a methodology of key value sets that we may use to investigate the good reasons and narrative identity of an anti gentrification movement in the case of ONE DC.

The fifth chapter will focus entirely on our case study, ONE DC. It will investigate the use of the beloved community trope outlined in chapter four as it contributes to the development of movement identity for anti gentrification organizers and activists. Finally, a conclusion will summarize this project and provide a forum for identifying possible next steps for future scholarship.

Chapter One: Whose city is this anyway?
Understanding gentrification in its historical and cultural settings

The title of this chapter pays homage to James Baldwin's essay "Who's Harlem is this anyway?" One of many black artists who helped to revive Harlem's reputation as black arts mecca in the 1960s thus leading to the neighborhood's appeal as a site for gentrification, Baldwin wondered about the true ownership of his black community in this famous quotation. Baldwin's frustrated cry is far from unique. In fact many scholars, particularly historians and anthropologists discuss the ebbs and flows of ownership patterns in the city. Their analysis extends beyond a traditional discussion of Great Migrations and riots; into a study of removal, renewal, and displacement. These historical approaches often reveal a black urban community relatively helplessly subject to the whims of powerful politicians and bourgeois societies, used and abandoned by city power brokers like "a reserve army" (B. Williams, 2002).

Although many scholars and community activists code community change as negative through gentrification, even the term gentrification is complex and the subject to a perpetual fluctuation of value. The main roadblock in writing on gentrification is its vague and debate laden definition. However, this is also the main bonus. In sociology, psychology, urban affairs and anthropology, scholars are still trying to understand this anathema we call gentrification. This project contributes to this process by studying how one group of community activists who perceive the threat of gentrification in their community is responding to that threat. This chapter is meant to grant us a basic working definition of gentrification so that we may then analyze how ONE DC interacts with its presence in Shaw. As I progress through the

chapter I will highlight some of the problems with such a definition, but in the end the overall goal is to understand gentrification as community members and activists might. This chapter will reach a definition of gentrification by understanding the factors that are used to define it (race, class, displacement) as well as those that are interrelated and therefore influence gentrification's valuation as a good or bad community phenomenon (importance/understanding of the value of place, historical background of urban renewal, poverty deconcentration movements.)

If we take a historical approach to an understanding of gentrification, we will see it as a phenomena with changing popular and scholarly definitions, many of which we will discuss later in this chapter. Gentrification's identity as a changing definition is not surprising considering the term is meant to describe the changing look and often identity of a community. The term has been used as both god and devil term throughout its lifetime; thus complicating our search for a finite understanding even more. Perhaps the primary cause for gentrification's troublesome definition is the disputed quality of many of its characteristics. Not only is gentrification's definition disputed, but the characteristics often used to describe it are also disputed. For example, scholars have argued that gentrification results in mass displacement of indigenous community members which then results in physical and mental damage to those individuals. Simultaneously, other scholars claim that displacement is impossible to track, and that many times community change is positive as it allows residents the options of "neighborhood mobility." This difficulty in identifying the causes and results of gentrification contributes heavily to the difficulty in defining the term conclusively. It is largely the result of methodological

challenges and problems that permeate studies on gentrification, regardless of the discipline.

The factors most commonly associated with gentrification are interrelated in the definition process but it is necessary to treat them each individually to allow for the clearest understanding of the ideological and physical processes at work. This chapter will define gentrification by the socio-cultural factors that intersect with it. Certainly there is ample room for future research to discuss these connections further.

This chapter will lead to the next chapter's investigation of the Shaw neighborhood in Washington, DC and lay a foundation for that chapter's discussion of why it is an appropriate location for the study of gentrification as we will define it. Very little has been written about this community and almost none of it has discussed Shaw in the context of gentrification. However, Shaw shares many biographical and personality characteristics with Harlem. Therefore, I will use some of the literature on gentrification and Harlem to understand the possible motivations and results related to gentrification in Shaw. It is important to remember that unlike urban renewal, gentrification is not a sudden occurrence. Instead, it is a gradual community change that often takes place over several years. Occasionally residents do not even realize how events may culminate in gentrification until the process is near its end. Shaw is in the process of gentrification while many argue that other urban neighborhoods like Harlem and, to an even great extent, the Lower East Side (NYC) are now gentrified. Harlem and other neighborhoods' statuses as recently gentrified will help us to understand what may be to come for Shaw. Engaging with the narratives of ONE DC as rhetorical artifacts demands that we also consider the

exigence that community organizers are responding to by organizing in opposition to gentrification. This chapter will provide a solid foundation for my study of Shaw and ONE DC by providing us with an understanding of this exigence.

I. Coding Community Change as Gentrification

> *"A city changes faster than a human heart." Baudelaire*
> (qtd. In Freelander 28)

Baudelaire's observation seems true not only of the city, but also of the description of that changing city within definitions of gentrification. Lance Freeman notes that his and most other scholarship on gentrification raises more questions than it seems to answer. Still, it is essential that we attempt to map out some kind of definition for the phenomena of community change that this project engages. In this section I will do that by starting from the most basic characteristics of gentrification and moving to a review of interdisciplinary definitions of the process. I think we will find that many definitions of gentrification among scholars dealing with the subject are fairly similar though they may differ on its causes and/or effects. For the purpose of this section, we will remain relatively ignorant of the debates that rage concerning gentrifications causes and effects choosing instead to focus on a firm definition of "it."

As referenced in the introduction, Lance Freeman provides for us a beneficial starting place in his definition of gentrification as the sum of its linguistic parts: gentry-fication, "the influx of gentry into previously decaying neighborhoods" (2). Surely, the use of words like 'gentry' and 'decaying' highlight the definition's intersections with race and class. The important thing in Freeman's definition is its relevance to nearly every other definition of gentrification I could find, definitions

that engage gentrification as one group of more well off individuals moving into a previously low income neighborhood in an urban center. J. John Palen and Bruce London in *Gentrification, Displacement and Neighborhood Revitalization* echo this definition. (7) A second quality shared by all understandings of gentrification is that of community change. Scholars agree that gentrification is a way of describing the process occurring in a community when widespread change of identity, appearance, and demographics become evident.

While different scholars approach their definition of gentrification from the language of their individual disciplines, perhaps the best way to gain some holistic understanding of the process that corresponds to this disputable word is to compare definitions provided by scholars of anthropology, urban planning, sociology, and the arts. David Freelander's explanation of gentrification from the outside of academia in American Theatre journal sets a nice tone for our cumulative understanding of the definition of gentrification. In his review of Danny Hoch's 2009 one-man anti-gentrification show *Taking Over*, Freelander begins to define gentrification saying "What is meant by 'gentrification,' a loaded term if ever there was one, is the displacement of poorer, usually non-white residents of urban neighborhoods, either slowly or quickly, by whiter, wealthier, newcomers from other parts of the city or country" (29).

This definition is reminiscent, if far more accusatory, to the definition of gentrification set forth by sociologist Ruth Glass who is credited for first coining the word in 1960 as she sought to describe community change in London:

> One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been
> invaded by the middle-classes- upper and lower. Shabby, modest
> mews and cottages…have been taken over, when their leases have
> expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences…Once this
> process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all
> or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the
> whole social character of the district is changed. (Freelander 29,77)

In his discussion of both the Harlem and Clinton Hill neighborhoods of New York City, Freeman discusses gentrification as identifiable on two fronts: the individual and the aesthetic. The individual evidence of gentrification is the presence of people whose characteristics do not match those of the existing residents of a neighborhood. Aesthetic evidence is a change in housing stock quality as well as diversity and availability of shopping, dining, and entertainment options. Glass's definition of gentrification contains both of these signposts of the process and, in her last sentence, she begins to intone the potential damages of gentrification which scholars emphasize more than 40 years after her use of the term.

Two such scholars are urban anthropologists Gina Perez and Brett Williams. Perez and B. Williams study Wicker Park Chicago and Mount Pleasant D.C. respectively in their analyses of contemporary gentrification. B. Williams expands from Freeman's concern with the symptoms of gentrification to a more political economy oriented explanation of the overarching problem. "Gentrification reflects large-scale economic and political forces, and conscious decisions by people with money and power to reinvest in an urban environment that they once let decay"

("There Goes the Neighborhood" 146). Despite his outrage at the socio-political forces that create it, B. Williams focuses on individuals as consumers of gentrification rather than the agents of it, an approach that resonates with ONE DC's approach to gentrification. This approach diverts attention from an individual blame game, placing the blame on the system and allowing organizers access to a broader group of potential activists uniting against a system rather than bickering with each other about who was there first. Even gentrification scholars like B. Williams recognize the problematic nature of the term "gentrification." He says, "the debate over the consequences of gentrification is reflected in writers' wildly different notions of how to name it" (147).

Perez defines gentrification in close relation to its intersection with place. "A very specific kind of place construction, namely gentrification, is a deeply racialized process that negatively affects poor and working-class families residing in [impacted] neighborhoods. Gentrification…is one of the clearest examples of the struggle between use and exchange value of place" (41). In Perez's focus on place we see similarities to B. Williams' political economy approach as new residents are seen as misled consumers rather than the entirety of the problem. Perez also explains the trendy identities of gentrifying neighborhoods saying they are "predicated largely on the social construction of place, culture and racial/ethnic identity that are packaged for popular consumption" (40).

Much of the research on gentrification is largely anecdotal. Obviously this is somewhat problematic from a methodological perspective. Still, this anecdotal and ethnographic character to gentrification research means that we begin to see a

narrative defining the life cycle of the gentrified or gentrifying community emerge

from literature on the process. This means that investigations of gentrification are

almost inseparable from the contexts of the cities and neighborhoods they study[1]. The

focus of this thesis is not meant to downplay community change that has occurred and

is occurring on the West Coast; however, the biographies and identities of New York

and Chicago are much more similar to my case study in Washington D.C. All three

cities are organized based on a neighborhood system with community members

placing great emphasis on the neighborhood at the expense of their identification with

their city at large (Perez; B. Williams; Freeman). Although neighborhood based

discussions of gentrification can be limited in their external validity, they can prove

instructive to research about gentrification in neighborhoods with similar

characteristics and contribute to the construction of an overall gentrification canon.

　　The primary characteristic of overall scholarly narratives of gentrification is

the description of what B. Williams calls a devalorization cycle in his article "There

Goes the Neighborhood." This cycle has some similarities with Fullilove's

description of urban renewal. The neighborhood is created with high expectations and

relatively upper class ambition and/or beginnings. These initial residents abandon the

neighborhood for some reason or never move there to begin with and it is opened up

to lower-income, minority, or recent immigrant populations. As those populations

stratify, middle class residents (those with means) abandon the neighborhood for

greener pastures, in most accounts around the end of World War II (as the suburbs are

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[1] Certainly there is available information about gentrification in west coast cities, particularly many of the urban centers in California. However, I chose to focus my literature review on the large amounts of information on Chicago and New York City as well as the few articles I could find on Washington, DC.

built). The neighborhood and the city of which it is a part develops a reputation for crime, danger, and general disrepair encouraging and justifying continued disinvestment. Next, low property values draw a mix of blue collar and lower income workers around the time that the middle class is also moving back to the city for jobs, excitement, or culture. Finally, good housing stock plus low property values plus trendy hipsters and artists equals contemporary gentrification (Allen; Freeman; Palen & London; B. Williams).

In the confluence of definitions for gentrification explored above, we see that while some characteristics remain stable, the definition of the phenomena of gentrification may vary depending on the research or biological background of the definer. However, gentrification is often defined and valued by how it affects a neighborhood, what it causes to change. Therefore, an individual's opinion on gentrification's relationship to other mitigating factors such as race, class, and displacement closely impacts how he/she defines and values the process.

II. Race, class component

Lance Freeman comments in his book on gentrification that the placement of his ethnographic research in the Harlem and Clinton Hill neighborhoods of New York City moved his book into an investigation of gentrification as it relates to the "unique circumstances of the black inner city" (4). My focus on a historically black community as a case study in gentrification response grants this project a similar bias. At first I was amazed that Freeman would be surprised by this focus and then I realized that I was projecting my somewhat pop culture and Americanized understanding of the process "gentrification" onto the word "gentrification."

Certainly, gentrification can (and does) take place outside of the black community and outside of the city, in small towns, particularly their downtowns (Phillips; Smith & Phillips). There is also a distinct difference between European urban centers and American thus suggesting a difference in the community change that occurs within them. Some urban anthropology and sociology scholars argue that gentrification is not even the right word for the process that is taking place in the "unique circumstances of the black inner city" where we conventionally place it. Instead, they argue that "gentrification" should be left to its European beginnings, where it more accurately describes the process that is taking place (B. Williams "There Goes the Neighborhood" 147). However, other words proposed by these scholars for the American process of urban community change, like "invasion" or "reinvasion" (Palen & London 9) are even more polarizing than gentrification.

The prevalence of urban and racial undertones in much of the research on gentrification (Freeman; Palen & London; B. Williams) is not simply coincidental. Instead, histories of particularly African American populations in the city are full of incidences that influence the contemporary perceptions of gentrification. Treating this relationship between race and gentrification is necessary for the overall scope of this project for two main reasons. First, the Shaw neighborhood is a historically black community that remains a majority minority community. Second, understanding the "real" or "perceived" racial undertones of the process is essential in understanding the valuation of gentrification by community organizers as well as the way(s) they use this valuation to organize in opposition to gentrification.

Danny Hoch's gentrification inspired play *Taking Over* begins as the actor in the character of Robert a resident of Williamsburg, Brooklyn stumbles onto the stage during "Community Day." Robert engages in a satirical role call of the neighborhood's residents, an homage to those often heard in late night broadcasts on hip-hop radio stations. Freelander summarizes this introduction in his review of the play:

> 'I wanna say Big-Ups to all my Boricua family,'…He goes on to give a welcoming shout to the various ethnic pockets that make up the neighborhood, placing each in their geographic corner…Next, Robert turns his sights on the 'hipsters,' the young newcomers who have been arriving in the neighborhood over the past decade or so. 'What about Ohio? Ohio in the house. Michigan?...Pennsylvania. Arizona. The fuck outta here New Hampshire? I didn't think anyone was actually from there….Well, now that I have your attention, I just want to say that my name is Robert, and I really just want all you crackers to get the fuck out of our neighborhood…GET THE FUCK OUT! GO HOME MOTHERFUCKERS. Why are you HERE? You suck! Nobody WANTS you here!' (27)

In his final line, Hoch exemplifies a popular conception of gentrification in urban communities that is inextricably bound to issues of race. In his demand that all the "crackers" "get the fuck out of [the] neighborhood" Hoch reveals gentrification's place within racial conflicts.

Gentrification's place as a racial issue is not unique to Hoch's theatrical display of residents' backlash against the changes in their community. Scholars often code gentrification as a racial issue. Urban communities' relationship to integration and white flight certainly enables this association. B. Williams' definition of gentrification in "There Goes the Neighborhood" is explicitly racial. "Gentrification refers to the process whereby new residents- disproportionately young, white, well-educated, salaried, and professional- move into urban neighborhoods that are often populated by people of color who are older and poorer" (145-146). Freeman echoes this understanding of gentrification. However, he specifies that this understanding of the process is not completely accurate but instead is specific to the term: "the term *gentrification* conjures up images of an influx of whites rapidly displacing poorer minority residents" (48). Still, this moving in process, assigns blacks a "clearly defined role- that of displacees. Like other marginalized groups, blacks are assumed to be priced out of gentrifying neighborhoods" (Freeman 51). Within this definition and its ensuing understanding of gentrification as a process that forces blacks out, the process is inextricably linked to the category of institutionalized racism and therefore elicits a social justice response. In addition to its basic association with black, low-income, urban neighborhoods, gentrification intersects with racial issues as a "solution" to highly prejudiced opinions of the black inner city. These opinions contend that without the white gentry, inner-city communities would remain in squalor.

In "Gentrifying Water and Selling Jim Crow," his description of disinvestment and gentrification along the Anacostia River in Anacostia, DC, B.

Williams makes reference to this sort of prejudiced, blaming the victim opinion of black neighborhoods in the inner city. "This view, that wild and dirty people dirty a dirty river, masks the institutions and processes responsible for the river's terrible pollution" (99). Though it might mask deeper institutions and processes responsible for disinvestment in black communities, the view that "dirty people dirty a dirty river," or block, or boulevard is incredibly persuasive in legitimizing large scale gentrification and, in generations past, urban renewal. Popular support of "Negro Removal" from so called "Black Belts" in inner cities during the Urban Renewal movement of the 1950s and 1960s hinged on an opinion of these neighborhoods as distressed, dangerous, and dirty (B. Williams; Fullilove). As Fullilove argues in her history of urban renewal, many of the communities classified by outsiders as depressed or poverty ravaged were functional and productive centers for black and low-income community and commerce. However, their mere association with a dark and dangerous people during one of the times in American history where racial tensions were highest allowed the communities to be viewed as dark and dangerous and desperate for help. The history of Urban Renewal often "invokes images of gentrification being the postmodern version of urban renewal" (Freeman 51).

Our discussion of scholarly approaches to the intersection of gentrification and race thus far has been fairly comprehensive and a generally logical progression given the racial history of this country. However, absent from our discussion thus far has been consideration of the black middle class. In much of the gentrification research, "black" is included/ seen as an analogous group to "poor" or (in more politically correct terms) "low-income." Certainly, this must be slightly reductive.

What of the black middle class? Are they still in the inner city or did they flee long ago? Many scholars, perhaps most notably William Wilson, have identified the flight of the black middle class from the inner city following the civil rights era (and the widespread riots in urban neighborhoods that accompanied the death of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968) as a leading explanation for the deterioration of the black inner city (Anderson; Freeman).

While he acknowledges this flight as a potential cause, Freeman is not willing to accept the premise that all non-poor blacks have fled the inner city just as he is unwilling to solely blame the white middle and upper classes for gentrifying inner city neighborhoods. Instead, the black middle class occupy a distinct location as both gentrified and gentrifiers; a location that further complicates organization in opposition to gentrification that hinges upon identity politics, making an understanding of gentrification based in political economy ideology more appealing than one that places blame on individual gentrifiers. This complication is particularly relevant to our study of activists in Shaw, particularly ONE DC activists' choice to focus their identity on a beloved community with merely racial undertones and a theoretical rather than individual classist struggle.

III. The Debate over Displacement

Conventional wisdom concerning the gentrification process in low-income communities generally holds that its greatest harm is its proclivity towards displacing indigenous residents of the neighborhood. Research in the fields of housing and homelessness treats gentrification as a substantial contributing factor in urban homelessness (B. Williams, "There Goes the Neighborhood). Housing in America's

cities is becoming more and more difficult to acquire. Low-income housing in particular is scarce considering the combined factors of economic downturn and popularity of city dwelling. One might point to the introduction of new, and therefore additional bodies into a neighborhood that is already at capacity as a central cause of the displacement problem. However, this population growth in and of itself is not that different from average migratory patterns that have occurred cyclically since the creation and growth of metropolitan areas. Such is often assumed to be the nature of rental properties; people move out of an apartment and someone else replaces them. Yet, in studying neighborhood growth in association with gentrification and displacement, we will notice that it is the type of housing and the type of resident that changes as the gentrification process ensues.

It is not uncommon in a city like D.C. for rental properties to change hands yearly. Perhaps a resident, Joe, moves from his apartment and is replaced by another resident, Karen. The cost of the apartment has not changed so we can pretty safely assume that Karen and Joe make a similar yearly income. Perhaps we may also assume that both Karen and Joe have similar tastes, both in apartments and in neighborhoods as there is nothing to prove to us that Joe's moving has anything to do with a changing identity of their neighborhood, let's call it Pleasant Heights. Even if Karen earns a slightly higher income than Joe, this sort of individual gentrification is not really the type organizers address.

Let us go back to Joe. Joe lives in Pleasant Heights in a relatively large, older multi-family dwelling. Joe has lived there for quite sometime. He knows his neighbors and rarely strays from his community except during his short bus commute

to work in the mornings. Joe is not below the poverty line, but his income places him

solidly in the low-income tax bracket. He pays just over 40% of his income in

housing costs which does not allow him much savings after other expenses.

However, his rent is some of the most affordable he is aware of in the area and the

close proximity of the Metrobus station means he does not need to own a car. In the

fall, Joe begins to hear rumblings that a Giant Food store may be built less than 5

blocks from his apartment. The Giant would be a welcome change to the community

as it would offer affordable and accessible fresh vegetables and other food that the

neighborhood is currently lacking. However, Joe's landlord, Ken, also hears about

the Giant. Ken tells Joe he is going to raise the rent because he believes that more

people will be interested in renting from him with the addition of the Giant to the

neighborhood. Joe is concerned about the increase in rent but hopes it will even out

with the addition of the low priced and convenient Giant.

A couple of months after Joe's landlord raises the rent, Joe receives a notice

that his landlord has received an offer on the property. In 3 months, the landlord will

finalize the sale of the multi-family dwelling for $7 million to a new developer who

will gut and redevelop the high rise into individually owned condominiums.   The

developer is particularly excited about the change because of Pleasant Heights'

reputation as an up and coming neighborhood. Since Joe lives in DC, the notification

from his landlord is required by law under the Tenant's First Right to Purchase statute

that allows tenants the opportunity to match a developer's offer for the property they

are renting (Kass). Tenants organizing together to form a coop most commonly do

this. However, that outcome is highly unlikely without some sort of legal and/or financial advising.

So, Joe must find a new place to live. Unfortunately, housing costs are going up all over his neighborhood and an increasing number of formerly low-income dwellings are being purchased and redeveloped for moderate to upper income occupants. Joe does not know where he will move, but it has become increasingly obvious that he will be forced to leave his neighborhood. Thus, Joe is displaced by gentrification.

B. Williams echoes other scholars as he expresses particular concern for elderly residents and single black male populations. Often, these residents are the most harmed by the displacement that often accompanies gentrification. To a large extent, this can be attributed to their undependable or nonexistent employment statuses. Furthermore, both of these populations are less likely to have family members or friends with whom they can double up in order to stay in the community. Even if it is available, this doubling up solution is temporary at best; eventually residents displaced by gentrification will be forced out of the neighborhood barring a dramatic increase their incomes.

Scholars like B. Williams tend to focus on quantitative changes resulting from gentrification, specifically increased homelessness rates and local business failings in and around gentrified communities. However, researchers like Fullilove and Perez are more concerned with qualitative changes to the community. Following the example of Jane Jacobs, Fullilove highlights the ways urban renewal changes the identity of the community. Of course, urban renewal and gentrification at not one in

the same. However, much of the response and valuation of gentrification by community members and activists is deeply rooted in memories of urban renewal. Both Fullilove and Perez mention the quantitative changes a community undergoes as a result of gentrification's displacement, but they highlight the sufferings of individual residents in the changing community. Fullilove and Perez focus on the disastrous effects displacement has on individual and neighborhood identity, respectively. Fullilove likens the psychiatric effects of displacement to those of diaspora. Meanwhile, Perez focuses on the waste laid to the identities of neighborhoods whose residents have been displaced by gentrification. Both authors argue convincingly the subtitle to Fullilove's book: "How tearing up city neighborhoods hurts America…"

Still, those who study the community change do not universally accept the displacement correlation to gentrification. Freeman includes a definition of gentrification from the *Encyclopedia of Housing* that does not even mention the word displacement, revealing an entire population of housing scholars who do no seem to recognize displacement as a major effect of gentrification. The encyclopedia defines gentrification as "the process by which central urban neighborhoods that have undergone disinvestments and economic decline experience a reversal, reinvestment, and the in-migration of a relatively well-off middle- and upper-middle class population" (Freeman 29).

More recently than any other scholar unconvinced by the displacement theory, Freeman challenges the displacement assumption of gentrification researchers on the premise that quantitative data does not prove displacement as a main result of

gentrification.   He is not alone, even B. Williams tempers his discussion on gentrification and displacement by noting that there is little consensus to the answers to the questions of " who has to leave, where do they go, and are they better off when they do?" (B. Williams "There Goes the Neighborhood" 147-148) Still, B. Williams inevitably remains far more convinced than Freeman of the likelihood of displacement resulting from gentrification saying "most writers agree that the lower the income, the more vulnerable the residents" (148).

Freeman distinguishes himself from the bulk of the literature on gentrification, including the large majority of texts discussed thus far, in his willingness to engage in a fact finding mission in relation to the highly politicized concept. This willingness allows Freeman to discuss both those who believe conclusively in gentrification's ability to displace and those who remain stubbornly unconvinced. He openly admits that he expected to find high rates of displacement though his research. Instead, he discovered just how difficult displacement is to quantify. The central problem is " without knowing how much displacement would occur in the absence of gentrification, one cannot assume that any observed displacement is due to gentrification" (Freeman 5).

Regardless of the methodological issues associated with quantifying and proving displacement, it remains an essential component of the definition of gentrification for community members and organizers (Freeman). In the absence of hard numbers, scholars and activists alike use allegorical evidence provided by current and former community members. These residents tell stories about community members and families who were forced to leave because of the changing

identity and price tag of their neighborhoods. These first and second hand accounts

work to mobilize opposition to gentrification because they resonate with the

definition of gentrification that is already popularly held by narrators and listeners.

Still, displacement alone is not enough to convince supporters of gentrification to

change their views. Instead, it is calculated in with other factors in a cost-benefits

analysis as a way of valuing gentrification. Understanding the valuation process of

gentrification is essential to defining the phenomenon.

IV. Valuing Gentrification: Historical Baggage and the Importance of Place

In his review of much of the literature on gentrification, Freeman refers to the

pejorative view on gentrification that he believes dominates much of the literature.

However, the increased occurrence of urban community change in the form of

gentrification would suggest that at least some people view the process as valuable,

even if they are not the ones writing the scholarly articles. One might argue that the

dividing line between pro and anti gentrification folks aligns with division between

community members and corporate interests. In fact, one could argue a dividing line

for gentrification support based on any one of the variable defining factors discussed

thus far. Just as the definition of gentrification cannot be defined by just one of these

characteristics, an individual's feelings on the process are often based on a

convergence of factors.

However, there are two main fronts that heavily affect an individual or

group's pejorative impression of gentrification. Particularly for urban black

communities, gentrification occurs against a racial prejudiced urban history including

most recently the Urban Renewal movement of the 1950s and 1960s. But it is not just the history if injustice that motivates opposition to gentrification. At the very least, most gentrification scholars refer to the importance of place as a potential argument against gentrification. Scholars who promote the displacement theory of gentrification mourn the loss of this place to the displaced, but even more moderate scholars like Freeman acknowledge the potential existential importance of a place to the human beings who occupy it.

If scholars are so disparate in their definitions and assessments of gentrification, it would be fair to assume that the general public is as well. As mentioned before, the public's perspective on gentrification is usually logically assumed to align with what individuals stand to gain or loose from the gentrification of a particular neighborhood. We will therefore conclude our discussion of the definition of gentrification by discussing the historical baggage, as well as the perceptions of the importance of place, that legitimize a negative opinion of the gentrification process.

Fullilove's 2005 *Root Shock* provides a compelling and comprehensive history of the movement for urban renewal "begun under the Housing Act of 1949, and modified under a number of later acts, the most important of which, the Housing Act of 1954, actually introduced the term into law" (57). Fullilove's account reveals a "renewal" that demolished or severely weakened many black urban communities. The book combines her own ethnographic research gathered from former and present residents of renewed neighborhoods with public population and construction records to construct a narrative of the damage done to specific black communities and the

more theoretical "black community" as a result of the urban renewal crusade. Gentrification is not a modern day synonym to urban renewal; assuming so would be equivalent to equating logging with clear-cutting a forest. Still, the history of urban renewal as well as other policy attempts to fix the urban black community is important to understanding contemporary opposition to gentrification.

Under the Housing Act of 1954, metropolitan areas were eligible for federal funding to "renew" areas of blight. As Fullilove discusses, the definition of a blighted area was vague at best. As with the validation of modern gentrification, a neighborhood must be viewed as "blighted" in order to legitimize renewal. More often than not, neighborhoods predominately populated by people of color and low-income residents are stereotyped as dangerous and dirty, blighted neighborhoods. Fullilove describes the problematic nature of the term blight as follows: "Blight, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, and it happened, more often than not, that the part of the city the businessmen thought was blighted was the part where black people lived" (Fullilove 20). Urban Renewal money allowed cities to demolish these neighborhoods in whole or in part. In many instances, this demolition took place to make way for highways that were run through many inner city neighborhoods, dividing once cohesive communities in half. In others, public transportation to these less lucrative communities was discontinued, as happened in the Hill District of Pittsburgh (Fullilove), disconnecting low-income residents without private transportation from the more lucrative parts of the city. This disinvestment validated demolition of housing to make way for strip malls, office complexes, and sports and entertainment centers. Urban Renewal money allowed the city to make itself over for

tourist and replace low income generating neighborhoods with highly lucrative complexes. However, as is often the case with gentrification, this program that renewed the city's appearance conveniently forgot to consider the fate of the blighted neighborhoods' former residents.

Even if the policy of Urban Renewal sought to bring attention to neighborhoods that had been ignored for decades, even if it had laudable goals, the devil, you could say, lay in the details. Those details were often former residents of "renewed" communities. On a similar vein, the poverty deconcentration theories of the late 80s and early 90s and programs that responded in some way to them like HOPE IV and Moving To Opportunity (MTO) contributed to urban housing values with the potential to hurt existing residents in the name of a more appealing inner city (Shroder; Popkin et al). Admittedly, these more recent policies are far more well intentioned and thought out than urban renewal. While urban renewal practiced wholesale disregard of the needs of existing residents in favor of the economic prosperity of the city, HOPE VI and MTO at least claimed to have the best interests of residents at heart. Still, they send a message to inner city residents of low-income communities that they are a problem that needs to be dealt with, a message that does not make members of these communities feel welcome to participate in community change.

By the 1980s many neighborhoods thought of as "inner-city" like Harlem, NYC had poverty levels at or approaching 40%. "This 40% threshold, though arbitrary, has become the demarcation line in social science for distinguishing ghetto neighborhoods from others" (Freeman 27). It was neighborhoods broaching this 40%

threshold that inspired Wilson to talk about an isolated underclass which then inspired

continuing work across disciplines on ghetto poverty. This work blamed the

concentration of poverty for the inner city's ailments, too many poor people in one

place, and encouraged a deconcentration of poverty through 2 main programs: HOPE

VI and Moving to Opportunity (MTO). The thinking behind this deconcentration is

often attributed to well-intentioned neo-liberals. The response to an ailing inner city

was infusing it with capital. It was also class integration (following failed attempts in

racial integration evidenced by the predominately black occupation of blighted areas).

It was the opposite of white flight.

   HOPE VI was directed at the most visible culprit of decay and blight: public

housing projects. In response to their high rates of mortality, crime, and poverty (as

well as the unspoken general distaste for their appearance and reputation) the federal

government's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched

HOPE VI in 1992 with official recognition in the law in 1998. The program was

simple. It made block grants available to cities that wished to transform their worst

public housing projects into mixed- income dwellings (Popkin et al). Well

intentioned as it was, HOPE VI still allowed cities to lose blocks of low-income

designated housing in the shuffle, decreasing the overall availability of low-income

housing and thus displacing residents with very few other options. In the face of

modern day gentrification, HOPE VI is a very recent memory contributing to the

skepticism of residents and community activists who are told by city governments

that low-income housing numbers will be maintained even in the face of

redevelopment. Although they hear them, black community members do not have to

rely upon their parents and grandparents' stories of urban renewal to believe that the

government will cheat and/or neglect their needs once again by refusing to hold city

governments and contract developers responsible for blocks of low-income housing

they misplace in the shuffle of revitalization.

While HOPE VI sought to move higher income residents into the ghetto,

MTO wanted to assist low-income residents in getting out. Though short lived, MTO

(1994-2004) experienced much of its success during the welfare expansion and

reform of the Clinton years. The program assisted Section 8 voucher holders in

finding rental properties in low-poverty neighborhoods as opposed to the

predominately high-poverty properties rented by most voucher holders. Section 8 is a

housing distinction where a landlord or property owner agrees to accept a government

voucher for the tenant's rent. The government essentially pays the tenant's rent for

them. The property owner typically receives some form of tax credit for participating

in the program. Traditionally, urban Section 8 housing is located in high-poverty

areas. MTO offered further incentives to property owners in low-poverty areas who

would participate in the program. The program saw promising results in the time it

took place. Generally, parents were found to have a lower obesity and depression rate

and children were predicted to be more likely to graduate from high school.

(Shroder)

Taken together, the two programs meant well but still reinforced stereotypical

neighborhoods divided by a staunch border; we see neighborhoods that are hopeless

verses neighborhoods overflowing with possibilities. The implication of the

programs' names tells us that inner city neighborhoods' only "HOPE" was in the

introduction of higher income and presumably whiter residents while existing

residents of the inner city's only chance for opportunity was to move away. Again

and again, the ghetto is a place to leave, not a neighborhood to be cultivated or to

truly be renewed (Freeman). It is this perspective of inner city, low-income

neighborhoods that continues to allow gentrifiers to ignore Fullilove's statement that

blight is in the eye of the beholder and to confuse the utility of the place with its

identity (Perez). Both Fullilove and Perez do greater justice to many of the residents

of "blighted" communities as they discuss the potential importance of a place in their

work.

In both of their works, Fullilove and Perez grant legitimacy to the concept of

place articulated by many anti-gentrification activists and community members. This

concept of place is more than just a location, it is a home both physically and

existentially for its residents. Fullilove talks about residents establishing place,

emphasizing the process of creating community in a place as essential to the

opportunity to "be at home in the most profound sense of the word, to be dwelling"

(24). Fullilove insists that "places-buildings, neighborhoods, cities, nations – are not

simply bricks and mortar that provide us shelter" (10). Instead, she goes on to

discuss, these things become imbued with sounds, smells, memories, *meaning* for

those who inhabit them. Through this process, they become communities and they

become organically intertwined with the identity of the individuals who live there. It

is the separation from these places that Fullilove identifies as a shock similar to post

traumatic stress disorder or diaspora: root shock.

Perez is similar to Fullilove in the importance she designates to places in the city. However, her critique of the ideology of contemporary gentrification is far more Marxist than any of the other scholars discussed thus far. Perez's central opposition to this ideology is the transformation of communities into commodities. She quotes Boyd who says "[the city] is no longer a place to be seen, but a product to be sold." (Boyd, qtd. in Perez 107) In this response to the commodification of the city, Perez would agree with scholars like Logan and Molotch who understand that while places satisfy basic human needs, they also "have a certain *preciousness* for their users that is not part of the conventional concept of a commodity" (17). It is this preciousness that risks being lost in the "business of cities" (Zukin 2). Furthermore, it is this preciousness that separates the understanding of the neighborhood by its residents and the understanding of that same neighborhood by outside government officials and developers.

As is true of many gentrified or gentrifying communities (Shaw included), Perez discusses a gentrification of Harlem, The Lower East Side, and El Barrio, NYC as "predicated largely on the social construction of place, culture, and racial/ethnic identity that are packaged for popular consumption" (40). This project focuses largely on this social construction of place but instead of looking at the Shaw neighborhood's construction from the outside, I examine how the neighborhood's identity is constructed from the inside by community organizers to compose a narrative for a beloved community that is worth saving. In her overview of the national fight against gentrification in America's urban neighborhoods, Perez offers us an educational shout out to those working in resistance that very clearly outlines

the difference between the gentrified and gentrifyers as perceived by anti-

gentrification activists:

> In cities like Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, community groups,
> activists, and neighborhood residents struggle to maintain
> neighborhood use value, while city government, private developers and
> other potential interests usually regard the city as a 'growth machine,' a
> generator of surplus accumulation invariably benefitting urban elites.
> (39)

With an understanding of the complexity of gentrification, this project seeks to

understand how one group of the former uses narrative to "maintain neighborhood

use value."

Chapter Two: Introduction to the Case Study
a brief biography of the Shaw neighborhood and ONE DC

In order to understand the techniques of ONE DC, it is necessary to understand its identity and situation in the debate over gentrification. The previous chapter provided us with some basic information about the definition of gentrification as well as the conflict over the term and its connotations. Any activist engaged in activities in relation to gentrification, whether he/she aligns on the pro or con side of the issue, enters into an existing rhetorical environment charged with contestation. It is important that I clarify where activists associated with ONE DC align in the defining ground of gentrification. I will henceforth define gentrification as ONE DC and their activists (which include members of the Shaw community) define it. It is only logical to define the phenomenon this way as I am seeking to understand how community activists and residents use narrative to respond to a very real threat to their neighborhood. After we discuss ONE DC's understanding of neighborhood change in Shaw, I will provide a general biography of ONE DC and the Shaw community. The next chapter will expand on this interaction through a review of the literature on narrative theory.

ONE DC responds to gentrification as a community problem. It is therefore safe for us to align their definition of gentrification with some of the more pejorative definitions from the previous chapter. It is important to note that ONE DC does not mention gentrification in their mission statement, referring instead to their action in response to "neighborhood change." This could be for a variety of political and cultural reasons. However, I have personally witnessed ONE DC organizers talk about gentrification in information sessions and at recruiting events (ONE DC

Gentrification Tour). It is clear by their definition of neighborhood change, and their association of that change with "systematic influences" such as racism, classism, and sexism that ONE DC is talking about the same phenomenon as academics like Perez and B. Williams (ONE DC online "About Us"). Gentrification is a variety of neighborhood change that centers upon the possession and placement of power. As in much of social justice work, this placement of power in the Shaw community is dramatically skewed to the disadvantage of African American and Hispanic residents, the majority of whom have incomes that fall into the low-income bracket and few of whom have been willingly afforded a voice in the neighborhood change by gentrifyers. The image of gentrification in the Shaw community is one that would be easily recognizable to scholars who study the detriments of gentrification in America's urban communities (Perez; B. Williams). It would look particularly familiar to B. Williams, whose work largely focuses on the District's neighborhoods. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, this image of gentrification would even look strikingly familiar to urban renewal historians like Fullilove who study the contemporary phenomenon's historical precedent.

The overall narrative of gentrification in Shaw builds on expectations of displacement and a loss of community that comes with the changing identity of a changing neighborhood. Stories tell of older residents and poorer residents forced to leave their long-rented multi-family and often Section 8 homes only to be replaced with new, more fluid residents with skin a few shades lighter and wallets quite a bit fatter. Previous residents are left with few options, particularly as residents of one of the few low income and therefore low rent neighborhoods left in the city. In the

previous chapter we examined a few of the reasons this process is justified, particularly by well-meaning city counsels and policy makers. From here on however, we will focus on a negative perspective of the process of gentrification with a primary concern for the ways one particular organization, ONE DC, uses narratives to create an identity for Shaw that is worth saving from the dismantling affects of gentrification. But before we investigate this process, some information on the historical background of the Shaw community, a background intrinsic to its identity, is necessary.

I. Shaw, Washington, D.C.

Like Chicago and New York, Washington, D.C. is organized into four geographic quadrants: Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest. These quadrants are further subdivided into neighborhoods, each with its own history, identity, and territorial residents. This "urban parochialism" is a recurrent theme in the Washington City Paper but it was the focus of a June 2008 issue in the cover story "Hoods and Services" where the staff of City Paper renamed and discussed the District's neighborhoods. The outcry following the issue serves as the strongest evidence of District resident's passion for their neighborhood identities (Greenwood et al). Shaw, included in the "Land of the Lofts" described in the City Paper feature, is located in the Northwest Quadrant of the city. It is accessible by Metrorail with its own stop on the Green line and is easily within walking distance of several popular office and entertainment centers. Shaw is also geographically positioned in the midst of several recently gentrified neighborhoods (Carmen).

With some understanding of Shaw's geographical location in the city, let us now turn to a brief recounting of the neighborhood's chronological history. Shaw began as a collection of freed slave encampments shortly following the Civil War outside of what was then known as Washington City. The neighborhood grew and thrived from the late 19th century through the beginning and middle of the 20th century. The neighborhood's story starting at the turn of the century is similar to the more popular story of Harlem although some scholars identity Shaw as a pre-Harlem center for African-American intellectual and artistic life. The neighborhood was certainly home to enough black artists and intellectuals to afford this distinction. Duke Ellington, Carter G. Woodson, and A. Phillip Randolph all made their homes in the Shaw area. During his time at the then-named Howard Theological Seminary, Alain Locke began to develop his idea of "The New Negro." Zora Neale Hurston became a familiar face in the community. Finally, Langston Hughes traveled to Shaw and the nearby U Street to observe and eventually participate in a burgeoning arts movement in the nation's capital (Shaw Main St.; Cultural Tourism DC).

Before integration expanded options for traveling African American tourists in the city, Shaw's rooming houses cultivated an exciting environment, providing shelter for tourists, artists, and black community leaders drawn by Shaw's close neighbor U Street, nicknamed "Black Broadway." In fact, Shaw was the only neighborhood that would house black visitors in the pre-Civil Rights District of Columbia (Cultural Tourism DC, "U Street").

Following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, black communities across the city and the nation bore the brunt of outrage and grief

expressed through riots. The 2007 film *Talk To Me* features a reenactment of the

riots in Shaw after the King assassination. The film also reveals one of the most

damaging after effects of the riots: the fleeing of white business owners and upwardly

mobile blacks from an inner-city now perceived as dangerous and volatile. It is here

that we begin to see most finitely the conception of the inner-city as a place to leave

(Freeman). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the popularity of the suburbs as a

symbol of success broadened in opposition to the dangerous and deprived ghetto of

the inner city. Thus, communities like Shaw continued down a path of disinvestment

reminiscent of B. Williams' devalorization cycle.

Such disinvestment served to make Shaw and other low-income, minority,

inner-city neighborhoods all the more vulnerable to the crack epidemic that would

seize the inner city during the 1980s. Not only was the drug itself responsible for

stagnating users into cycles of poverty because of their addiction, the territorial

violence committed by dealers and producers seeking to capitalize on the power of

crack addiction made neighborhoods where the drug was prevalent genuinely

dangerous to both residents and outsiders. The DEA lists D.C. as one of ten major

metropolitan areas most severely impacted by the crack epidemic, which it describes

as taking place between 1984-1990 (Levitt & Murphy).[2] In addition to its obvious

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[2] Crack was damning to inner-city neighborhoods for several reasons. Certainly, many of the communities' existing disinvestment did not help, as well as their reputations for crime and general danger. However, crack was most damaging for three particular reasons specific to the drug: 1) its highly addictive qualities (crack, especially following its introduction to the market, was more potent and therefore more addictive than cocaine) 2) its very low cost (the DEA reports that during its heyday, one dosage unit of crack could be purchased for as little as $2.50) and 3) its wide accessibility ("DEA History Books").

adverse affects on the people of the inner-city, journalists and scholars have argued that the "crack epidemic" covered and named by the media served to exaggerate the crisis as well as fears of the city and its residents, residents who just happened to be black and poor (Grieder). In other words, in addition to its actual damage to addicts, users, and residents living among them, the crack epidemic also furthered the perception of "dirty people dirtying a dirty city" that contributes to the legitimization for cycles of disinvestment that precede gentrification.

Although the Washington Metro opened in 1976 with its original Red Line, the Green Line that services the two metro stops most accessible to the Shaw community, Shaw/Howard University and U St./African-American Civil War Memorial/Cardozo, was not opened until 1991. The Yellow Line, opened in 1983, now stops at these Green Line stops during non-peak hours, but it did not prior to the green line's opening in 1991.   Prior to the opening of the two stops listed above, the closest stop to the Shaw community was Mt. Vernon Square. (WMATA website) This is important because the broader district's relation to the Shaw community, as well as the ability of the community to be gentrified, has been greatly affected by the existence of Metro service. Most Metro stops in D.C are named for the neighborhoods they serve and neighborhood legitimacy has been tied, for better or worse, to procurement of a Metro stop. While living in D.C., I often overheard residents openly joke (and occasionally seriously debate) the hierarchy of Metro rail lines based on the identities assigned to each line.   One could make the argument that the Green line is, in many ways, the gentrification line: home to Mt. Vernon Square

(and the District's new Convention Center), U Street, Shaw, Columbia Heights, and Petworth to the north to that lynchpin of gentrification, Gallery Place/Chinatown.

The absence of a Metro stop during the most difficult years for the neighborhood of Shaw, those that coincide directly with the crack epidemic, also effected the community's fate by allowing disinvestment and ghettoization. Such separation allowed the District's government and overall culture to separate itself from the disinvestment of the neighborhood. It also made it that much more difficult for residents to access the rest of the city and therefore the centers of power, through public transportation. The exclusion of neighborhoods like Shaw from initial Metro service, though perhaps not intentionally prejudiced, contributed to their perception as dangerous and separate.

As with any change in a dynamic urban neighborhood, the introduction of a Metro station in the early nineties may have served to lessen the ghetto identity of the neighborhood, but it also served as a catalyst for gentrification. Activists and residents still discuss the conspicuous consumption of land in and around the site of the new station in Shaw (ONE DC "Gentrification Tour"). In fact, one piece of land, referred to by ONE DC organizers and city officials as Parcel 33, continues to lay vacant directly adjacent to the Shaw/Howard University station as community members continue to debate the speculative nature of its procurement and ownership. Community memory presents parcels of land like the one above and a historic Hostess factory that sits next to it as evidence of the City Council's desire to gentrify Shaw without regard for its residents. Many residents (including ONE DC activists) claim that the land's purchase by developers with clear ties to the City Council

shortly before its value exploded following the announcement of Green line construction is clear evidence of political handouts and preference for developers over residents in the process of neighborhood change.

Shaw's story corresponds nicely to the devalorization cycle introduced by B. Williams as a major component of gentrification. The 1990s did not merely bring a Metro station to Shaw. As several scholars discuss, the decade coupled economic growth with a liberal priority for "fixing" the inner-city (Freeman; Fullilove). The increased availability of HUD funds, particularly in the form of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to individual developers and Community Development Corporations (CDCs) coupled with the increased pressure on banks to invest in low-income areas through the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) encouraged an increase of funds in neighborhoods like Shaw. However, unlike many of its neighbors, Shaw continues to resist the complete identity change that can come with gentrification.

One of Shaw's most appealing characteristics for potential gentrifyers is its identity as a historic black community. In his discussion of Harlem, Freeman emphasizes the role the cultural capital of a historically rich neighborhood can play in appeal to gentryfiers. Today, Shaw continues to try to maintain their historic identity along with housing for its traditionally low-income residents. As I have mentioned before, this effort is in opposition to the gentrification of neighborhoods that surround Shaw. U Street to the south is another historically black neighborhood, often considered a sister community to Shaw. Since gentrification began there in the 1990s, U Street has become a cultural and entertainment destination. The changes to

U Street correlate to changes criticized by Perez for being based on the

commodification of place. Fortunately, a majority of U Street's attractions are <u>local</u>

bars, restaurants, and clubs. However, as is usually the case in stories of

gentrification, these entertainment destinations have replaced former low-income

housing options as well as affordable entertainment options, no matter how

disinvested some of these options might have become. Further south, Chinatown is

often pointed to by anti-gentrification activists as the example of the process' pitfalls

in large part because of its reputation as a capitalistic aesthetic monstrosity.

Chinatown is a series of high end retail and dining chains, chains that are visually

unappealing and run counter to the indigenous architecture of the area and whose

customers occupy a socio-economic class wholly different from the former residents

of the neighborhood.

To Shaw's west/northwest are the neighborhoods of Dupont Circle and

Adam's Morgan, both gentrified neighborhoods but with somewhat different stories.

Dupont Circle is home to many of the District's embassies as well as headquarters for

several national non-profits. Its housing is now among the District's most expensive,

wholly unreachable to low-income Washingtonians. The neighborhood was

revitalized in large part by the vibrant gay community that still inhabits it. Dupont

has its share of bars and restaurants, but is nothing compared to its slightly northern

neighbor, the behemoth of Adam's Morgan. Adam's Morgan, or A. Mo. as its fans

and residents often call it, is perhaps most famous for its strip of bars, restaurants, and

more bars inhabited by the city's 20-somethings with a penchant for hipster city life

and a little extra money for rent. The neighborhood's group homes rarely cost less

than $800-$1000 per person in an area which used to be primarily inhabited by recently immigrated families.

Finally, to Shaw's north are Columba Heights and Mt. Pleasant, neighborhoods where the recent influx of Hispanic immigrants in the city can truly be felt. Both areas are easily accessible from U Street and Adams Morgan and have helped to absorb some of the refugees from these neighborhoods' gentrification cycles. Despite the construction of a large retail outlet on Columbia Heights' main drag on 16th street, rent has remained relatively affordable. However, it is important to remember that the change is recent and so definitive data on community change is not yet available. Harshly impacted by the 1968 riots, Mt. Pleasant has experienced a contemporary resurgence with housing costs challenging those of Adam's Morgan. Most of Mt. Pleasant is occupied by brownstones and single family dwellings, facilitating conveniently overflow from the more affluent Cleveland Park neighborhood to the Northwest. However, Mt. Pleasant has managed to maintain its local businesses and reputation as "Little Salvador" largely because of its main street Mt. Pleasant Ave, its affordable multi-family dwellings bordering Columbia Heights, and the desire of new residents to preserve its historic reputation.

Shaw finds itself in a unique geographical and rhetorical position in respect to its ongoing battle against gentrification. Certainly, residents and activists are not completely averse to **any** kind of community change. However, the people of Shaw exemplify a desire to find a balance in the community change process; a balance between reinvestment and gentrification, a desire to mediate the wholesale loss of community identity and power often associated with gentrification. ONE DC is the

leading voice for this desire in Shaw. In the following section we will discuss the history of the organization as well as some of the major sites for its anti-gentrification activism.

II. Organizing For Neighborhood Equity (ONE) DC

As I have emphasized, it is acceptable to see low-income communities as "decaying" within the rhetoric of urban revitalization because that perspective validates and even necessitates "revitalization." However, as we have discussed previously, the existing residents of a community are less likely than gentrifiers, developers, and outside entities to describe their homes as "decaying." While they might support efforts at revitalization in the community, organizations like ONE DC base their tactics on a presumption that these efforts should maintain an organic origination. This origin is initiated and supported by community members instead of the gentry pouring into the neighborhood.   Unlike many well-meaning organizations who may enter a neighborhood to assist its residents but instead end up attempting to tell them what they want, the organic origins of ONE DC's rhetoric and the identity that rhetoric creates maintain an honest and community centric and community generated tone. Instead of responding to the threat of gentrification simply as rhetors addressing a crowd, ONE DC organizers respond by instruction, thus creating an army of rhetors prepared to address the changes in their community from their own individual vantage points. Residents tell their own stories as opposed to relying on ONE DC to do this for them. Later chapters will focus on the narratives used to cultivate identity for the organization and the community in respect to their similarity to the narrative of the beloved community.   The next few pages will give us some

insight into the biography of the organization and the specific grounds upon which they oppose gentrification in the Shaw community.

Two years ago while sitting in the audience at the now defunct Fannie Mae Foundation's annual Housing Conference, I listened to a panel of housing experts from the Foundation, HUD, and CDCs across the District debate the legitimacy and import of a recent study that argued that the cost of living in D.C. had risen so dramatically that the majority of people who worked for the District of Columbia (mostly in blue collar jobs) could not afford to live within its boundaries. The panel concluded unresolved on the study's findings, but one thing remained evident: the city once known as "Chocolate City" for its large populations of low-income African American residents was running out of space for them. I tell this story because it is important in understanding ONE DC's place in all of this. ONE DC does not now, nor have they ever worked solely in Shaw, though that is where their office is located and certainly where their operation is based. Their mission is to " exercise political strength to create and preserve economic and racial equity in Shaw and the District" (ONE DC online).

ONE DC grew out of a CDC, Manna CDC, founded in 1997. ONE DC's work centers on community organizing, popular education, and alternative economic development projects (alternative to gentrification.) ONE DC distinguishes itself from other housing organizations and local poverty oriented groups in its expansion outside of service provision. They model their leadership in the community after past organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and other social justice oriented groups. ONE DC considers itself a "radical" community

organizing group. One Shaw resident, Ms. Ella Jo Baker defined this radicalism as follows; " I use the term radical in its original meaning- getting down to understanding the root cause. It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system" ("About Us").

ONE DC organizes its platform around three central stations: ONE Right to Income, ONE Right to Land, and ONE Right to Housing . These central stations intersect in the gentrification process.   In order to control neighborhood change, resident must have access to a living wage so that they may stay in their homes and their neighborhood, a voice in land allocation so that they may contribute to the future identity of the community, and access to safe and affordable housing opportunities so that they not only have the opportunity to stay in the homes they rent, but feel as if they can afford to move within the neighborhood.

The ONE Right to Income station of ONE DC's platform grew out of their parent organization, Manna CDC's program, Shaw Education for Action (SEA). SEA holds developers and community revitalization proponents accountable for the jobs they promise by organizing for targeted hiring and training commitments from new development.   A large focus of this organizing has been centered on the relatively new Walter E. Washington Convention Center and the hotels proposed to support it. The ONE Right to Income project helps to ensure that residents benefit from the construction of the entertainment and business complexes that afford the city handsome tax dollars ("ONE Right to Income").

The ONE Right to Land Initiative was formerly known as the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI). This initiative has extended outside of Shaw and is

also involved in the Anacostia neighborhood. ONE Right to Land seeks to ensure

that the development of the neighborhoods' public land serves the needs of all of the

communities' members, rather than just a few. The primary goal of this initiative is

to make sure that residents have a seat at the table when discussions about the

development or redevelopment of public land in their neighborhoods occur. This

initiative boasts one of ONE DC's most impressive and notorious victories: the

development of Parcel 33 and Parcel 42 and the associated Community Benefits

Agreement (CBA.) After almost 3 years of organizing to be heard by City Council

members making decisions concerning the redevelopment of these two pieces of

prime real estate in the Shaw community, ONE DC succeeded in getting the District

to sign the first ever CBA. Essentially, the CBA means that Shaw residents had a seat

at the table with developers and the National Capitol Revitalization Corporation

(NCRC). This alone is impressive, but the agreement is more than merely a voice, it

is a milestone for anti-gentrification community organization. Parcel 33 and Parcel

42 are two prime real estate holdings for the District of Columbia that could have

been very easily developed into in-demand middle to upper-income housing and

commercial space. Because of the CBA, Parcel 33, the new home for Radio One Inc.,

will feature 3,000 sq. feet of retail space designated for community run businesses.

The developers have hired a local group to screen and recruit residents to work on the

construction crews and in the completed development. 10% of its condominiums will

be low-income accessible.   Finally, $750,000 of the development proceeds will go

into a fund controlled by EDI members to support future work ("ONE Right to

Land"; "Community Benefits Agreements").

The Parcel 42 success is a nice bridge between the ONE Right to Land and the ONE Right to Housing aspects of ONE DC's platform. Because of the CBA, 100% of Parcel 42 development will be considered affordable. While the definition of affordable housing in DC is often debated ("The DC Politics Hour"), this means that the housing will be accessible to households making less than $50,000 a year and less than $25,000 a year. This final arm of ONE DC's platform is often the one most readily associated with anti-gentrification activism. Since displacement is one of gentrification's primary adverse effects, it is logical that anti-gentrification movements are associated with the maintenance of housing options for low-income residents in gentrifying neighborhoods.

As an expansion of Manna CDC's tenant organizing work, ONE Right to Housing does just that. In addition to success in the development of new housing, ONE Right To Housing also organizes tenants in their existing residences, educating them on their rights and power as residents and community members. Low-income communities' susceptibility to the displacement that comes with gentrification can be attributed to the high number of renters in urban (particularly low-income) areas, among other factors. Often, the misconception is that renters do not have a right to claim their homes and their communities because they do not "own" them. However, ONE DC has found success through educating and organizing tenants to use D.C.'s Tenant's First Right to Purchase laws. Under these laws, relatively unique to the District, a landlord is required to give his or her residents notice when considering selling the building. The landlord must officially file initial offers on the property and residents then have a predetermined amount of time to match the offer. ONE DC

has used this law to organize co-ops in low-income multi-family dwellings threatened with sale and redevelopment. The best example of such success is the Martin Luther King Jr. Latino Cooperative (MLKLC) where residents facing the sale of their building took out individual mortgages on their apartments and were able to purchase the building as a co-op, maintaining a large block of low-income housing and an important community center in Shaw ("Martin Luther King Jr. Latino Cooperative (Plymouth)").

Now that we have discussed why and what ONE DC does, we will spend the rest of this project investing how the organization works in opposition to gentrification in the Shaw neighborhood. In the next chapter I will discuss some of the literature that investigates the narrative paradigm and one particular rhetorical trope, the beloved community. This discussion will lead back to a discussion of ONE DC. I argue that the narrative paradigm is not only a beneficial tool for understanding social movements, but the beloved community trope is particularly useful for understanding how one organization presents good reasons through narratives to cultivate an identity for their movement and the community in which it exists. For ONE DC, community narratives with similarities to the beloved community associate Shaw with an ideal and rare notion of community that is worth fighting to save.

Chapter Three: Social Movement Communication as Narration
Investigating the foundations of Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm

To consider that public-social knowledge is to be found in the stories that we tell one another would enable us to observe not only our differences, but also our commonalities, and in such observation we might be able to reform the notion of the "public." -Walter Fisher

One must look no further than popular cinema and television to realize our society's love for the narrative form. Whether they are recited, sung, acted or imagined, it would appear that we do in fact "tell ourselves stories in order to live," and live fully.   Stories move us emotionally, in the form of anecdotes they legitimize arguments; parables teach us morals and occasionally whole value systems. The great religions of the world are built on collections of stories in the Qur'an, the Bible, and the Torah. The study of this storytelling and story-making process is not limited to critiques of the stories themselves in departments of English or Film Studies. Sociologists and Anthropologists study the cultural forces at work in the production of narratives as well as use those narratives to create a broader narrative of the human race. Religious scholars and philosophers are concerned with how narratives shape our values. Even Economists and Political Scientists engage with stories in their work, seeking to understand how a corporation or nation constructs its identity through the narratives it produces and proliferates about itself.   The interconnectivity of scholarly engagement with narration is not novel, rather Walter Fisher himself acknowledges the potential for interdisciplinary approaches to the paradigm. "The narrative paradigm provides a ground where human scientists can and do meet,

however they pursue their individual projects" (*Human Communication as Narration* 86).

In this project we are not particularly concerned with these other disciplines' engagements with the narrative form, except perhaps tangentially. Here we are concerned with the narrative form as an identity making process intrinsic to human communication. Walter Fisher was concerned with this same question in the 1980s when he built his narrative paradigm through a book and several articles. Here I will extend Fisher's work on understanding human communication through narration. I will discuss the potential for the narrative paradigm to help guide our understanding of identity formation in social movements using two of the paradigm's key concepts: good reasons and narrative fidelity. In chapter five we will return to these concepts to dissect some of the narratives of ONE DC. First however, I will establish a working understanding of Fisher's narrative paradigm, discussing some of the scholarly work used to validate it as well as narrative scholarship from other disciplines.

I. Towards a Narrative Based Communication Paradigm

Fisher's narrative paradigm is based on the simple premise that all human communication can and should be conceptualized as stories. Fisher's primary question of "how do people come to believe and act on the basis of human communication?" (*Human Communication as Narration* ix) lies at the center of the majority of communication inquiry and thus the center of this project. Fisher believes his paradigm "synthesizes two strands of rhetorical theory: the argumentative, persuasive theme and the literary aesthetic theme" ("Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm" 1). Though Fisher contends that his paradigm is

not to replace the established rational world paradigm, his belief that this new

paradigm should subsume such an established paradigm places a burden on Fisher to

defend such usurpation with the work of other recognized scholars. Fisher does so

using the diverse work of Alasdair McIntyre, Kenneth Burke, Ernest Bormann, and

two theologians: Michael Goldberg and Stanley Hauerwas among many others. We

will discuss Fisher's paradigm as it relates to communication theory (Burke and

Bormann) later in this chapter and as it relates to theology (Goldberg and Hauerwas)

in preparation for the next chapter discussing the beloved community.

Fisher's notion of human communication being story gains support from

Alasdair MacIntyre's book *After Virtue:* "man is in his actions and practice as well as

in his fictions, essentially a story telling animal" (201). If in fact storytelling is so

central to the nature of the human being, we must have a clear definition for the story.

Fisher defines stories as "symbolic interpretations of aspects of the world occurring in

time and shaped by history, culture, and character" (*Human Communication as*

Narration xi). Therefore, just as stories are essential in shaping our understanding of

and communication about the world around us, the storytelling process, narration, is

dependent on the history, culture, and character of the storyteller and the community

in which he or she is situated. As Fisher defines it, narration is merely the extension

of isolated stories into an overall theory of human communication. "Narration refers

to a theory of symbolic actions-words and/or deeds that have sequence and meaning

for those who live, create, or interpret them" ("Narration as a Human Communication

Paradigm" 2). It is no surprise that Fisher's definition of narration and the stories that

accompany it are dependent upon the personalized experiences of rhetors (also known

as storytellers) and their communities (or audiences); his goal in pursuing the narrative paradigm is, after all, to uncover an understanding of communication more dependent on values and morals than the rational world paradigm. This value-laden approach to human communication could indeed prove problematic to many, however it is indelibly appropriate within the context of social movements and community identity.

As I discussed in the Introduction, Fisher's paradigm includes two central ingredients: probability and fidelity. Probability is based in questions of fact. Does the narrative make enough sense, is it coherent enough to be true? Fisher's description of narrative probability (also referred to interchangeably as coherence) reveals his belief that the narrative paradigm for understanding and communicating with the world is more natural to human beings than the taught rational world paradigm. Fisher suggests that human beings are capable of assessing narrative coherence without a deep thought process; we recognize inconsistencies within stories in an almost visceral way that does not rely on persuasion so much as it relies on the consistency of a narrative. Though it is often used interchangeably with coherence, narrative probability is not a black or white issue. It does not ask simply is the story true, but is it probable that the story is true. Fisher argues that this initial reaction to a narrative is ingrained in our communication habits as human beings, that all human beings have the potential for judging the probability of a story's occurrence. Most movie productions have script supervisors, people whose jobs it is to maintain consistency throughout a filming. When a story is improbable or contains elements that are not coherent, Fisher believes the listener reacts as an audience might

if the color of a character's shirt changed from shot to shot in a scene; we become painfully aware of the "story" we are watching and can no longer focus on or accept as probably the values expressed through the narrative. Before we delve too far into the definition of fidelity perhaps the simplest way to distinguish between probability and fidelity is in the two ways to answer the question: is the story good? On the one hand, one might answer such a question from a formal perspective and discuss the narrative's probability, coherence, or technical truth. On the other hand, one might engage a substantive, contextual perspective, discussing the narrative's fidelity.

As it is relative to a substantive approach to narrative criticism, it is logical that fidelity be a bit more complex. This construct builds on the initial reaction embodied in probability to determine whether the story is believable in relation to other narratives in the individual or community's life. Fidelity helps us to understand why certain narratives are more persuasive than others. Most importantly for this project, narrative fidelity helps to explain why narratives told by ONE DC that share characteristics with the beloved community trope might be particularly useful in the construction of a community identity for Shaw. Although Fisher at times seems wary to describe the narrative paradigm in terms of a methodology for analyzing communicative texts, the five criteria of fact, relevance, consequence, consistency, and transcendence afford us an accessible methodology arising from the paradigm. The concept of good reasons is closely related to fidelity, so much so that Fisher uses the two terms synonymously at times in his writings. We will return to good reasons as part of a discussion of the narrative paradigm's relationship to the value judgments that arise from the narrative of human communication. For now, the most important

thing to note about good reasons is that they contribute to our understanding of narratives as validating for a movement in their creation and substantiating of the values upon which a social movement is based.

The five criteria (*Human Communication as Narration* 109) listed above for analyzing the fidelity of a narrative are also useful in determining the good reasons presented as a part of the narrative. Fact asks what the values presented in the narrative are. Relevance questions ask whether or not the values presented in the narrative are relevant to the decisions present in the narrative. Are the values that are seemingly validated by the narrative actually relevant to the story that is being told? Consequence questions the external consequences of adhering to the values presented in the narrative, thus revealing the internal and external focuses of narrative fidelity. Consistency will be discussed much further in the context of our case study as it focuses on the fidelity creating ability of good reasons that are consistent with existing archetypes like the beloved community. Questions of consistency ask whether or not the values presented in the narrative are confirmed by personal and/or community experience. The question of consistency also ties in directly to the basic definition of narrative fidelity which questions whether the narrative is validated through similarity with other stories in the audience's experiences. Finally, Fisher's paradigm expands to a more existential level with the criteria of transcendence. Assuming all of the above criteria are met, are the values heralded by the narrative as "good reasons" those that, in the estimation of the narrative's audience and critics, contribute to an ideal conception of human conduct? Are they truly good reasons that teach the audience convincingly what it means to be good?

Although Fisher spends most of his writing assuming the similarity between narrative fidelity and good reasons, I believe this is because of his overwhelming desire to make a case for the acceptance of his narrative theory as a paradigm for defining human communication and existence instead of merely a mode for understanding such communication. Fisher's desire to legitimize the narrative paradigm's place as the existential theory of human being and morality causes him to discuss every prong of his paradigm as it relates to human conceptualization of the good. While very closely related and interdependent, fidelity and good reasons are two separate constructs. While fidelity helps us to understand why certain narratives are persuasive, it does so by discussing the ways in which such narratives are validated through their similarities with other narratives. Fidelity is the overarching believability of a narrative based on the five criteria. Good reasons, while often contributive towards narrative fidelity are more concerned specifically with the values present in a given narrative. In fact, good reasons could be said to be the values present in a narrative.

It is important to clarify that good reasons do not mean legitimate or persuasive reasons, though they may certainly be these things as well. Good reasons are a narrative's reasons linked to notions of "the good." Here we are conceptualizing "the good" as it has been debated in political theory by scholars like John Rawls and Jurgen Habermas. Fisher is clear to explain that good reasons are not necessarily persuasive but they are always value laden. As we can see when we consider the construct of good reasons together with the five criteria, good reasons may not need to be persuasive in order to exist, but they must certainly be persuasive

(easily measured through the methodology of the five criteria) if the narrative is to have a high level of fidelity. In our case study we will seek to define what the values or good reasons present in ONE DC's narratives are and then use the trope of the beloved community to consider whether or not they are persuasive.

II. Intersections with other scholarship

Fisher discusses his theory in relation to a variety of other recognized scholarship. The narrative paradigm's relationship to the work of two very different communication scholars, Kenneth Burke and Ernest Bormann, offers a better understanding of the paradigm as well as its instructive relationship with social movements through identification and social convergence. Finally, Fisher's work as it intersects with the scholarship of theologians like Michael Goldberg and Stanley Hauerwas serves as a helpful bridge between this chapter and the next on the beloved community.

Burke

In the monograph that preceded his full book on the narrative paradigm, Fisher is deliberate in identifying his theory's critical connection with Burke's dramatism developed intensively in 1955's *A Rhetoric of Motives*. As I have mentioned already, Fisher's haste to classify his narrative theory as paradigm instead of mode prohibits it being named "narrativism" and/or being understood as a methodological approach. However, this thesis treats narrative as both mode/techne and paradigm so narrativism might actually be an appropriate way to define Fisher's theory as it is expanded in this project.

The use of a name like Kenneth Burke in the validation of one's theories is not the panacea one (like Fisher) might hope. Instead, we are required by Burke's legacy to question Fisher's claim to theoretical lineage. Fisher argues in both his monograph and full book that his definition of human beings as *homo narrans* is an extension of Burke's 1968 definition of man as a "symbol-using (symbol making, symbol-misusing) animal" (16). Fisher's compelling argument allows us to understand his description of human beings as story telling beings as an extension of the symbol making beings described by Burke. Another similarity between Burke and Fisher is their focuses on the importance of rhetoric for the cultivation of good reasons or motives for human moral action. Finally, Fisher's conjuring of Burke is particularly helpful for this project because of the importance both scholars place on the value of symbols in human communities.

> The idea of human beings as storytellers indicates the generic form of all symbol composition; it holds that symbols are created and communicated ultimately as stories meant to give order to human experience and to induce others to dwell in them to establish ways of living in common, in communities in which there is sanction for the story that constitutes one's life… And one's life is, as suggested by Burke, a story that participates in the stories of those who have lived, who live now, who will live in the future. ("Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm" 6)

Burke's discussion of the "unending conversation" is adequate for understanding the importance of Fisher's fidelity construct. Burke implies the importance of the

archetypal narrative through this metaphor of the unending conversation into which we are born, participate in, and then depart from. Without archetypes like the beloved community the conversation between generations concerning "the good" or the moral would not be possible.

Bormann

In mentioning the name of Ernest Bormann, Fisher takes us in a different though related direction from Burke to continue to validate his paradigm. Bormann is the author of several theories instrumental to the fields of group communication and interpersonal communication. While Fisher argues that some of the lackings in Bormann's theories necessitate the narrative paradigm, Bormann's ideas on corroboration, social convergence, and fantasy themes are useful for this particular project's understanding and use of narrative theory. Bormann's work is particularly useful for this project because Fisher seems hesitant to extend his work on narrative to focus on the broader cultural acceptance of the narrative. He wants to avoid "getting into the problem of how group generated stories become public stories" ("Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm" 7).

Fisher notes that Bormann's theories of social convergence and corroboration might in part be capable of helping us to understand narrative fidelity. Both of these concepts concern how people come to believe and/or adhere to certain stories. Corroboration is very closely linked to Bormann's later and more famous theory of social convergence. Both deal with Bormann's overall work in fantasy theme analysis (Fisher "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm"). Corroboration occurs when the story told or developed by one member of a group can be legitimized

or corroborated by the experience of another group member or by evidence from the past (Bormann "The Tentative and Certain in Rhetoric"). The concept takes it origins from the tradition of corroborating evidence in the law and is essentially a less formalized occurrence of a corroborating witness. Corroboration is closely linked to Fisher's concept of narrative fidelity because the facts and values of a story must resonate with the existing facts and values known to the audience in order for the narrative's good reasons to be accepted.

Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) discusses the ways that members of a shared group create rhetorical fictions about a given subject (Bormann, "Fantasy Theme Analysis"). Much like the narrative paradigm, Bormann believes that morals and values are present in the process of ordering and making sense of a shared experience that takes place in human group communication. Bormann focuses on a blurred line between myth and reality when he discusses the convergence of symbols through group communication much like the blurring of logos and mythos called for by Fisher. SCT extends Bormann's ideas on corroboration of narratives proposing that through SCT members of a community combine or converge individual narratives about a shared experience into a unified narrative. SCT's relationship to the narrative paradigm enriches the paradigm's application to understanding anti-gentrification community narrative identity.

Finally, both of these concepts are developments of Bormann's overall construct, known as both rhetorical visions and fantasy themes. According to Bormann, fantasy themes arise "in group interaction out of a recollection of something that happened to the group in the past or a dream of what a group might do

in the future" (Bormann "Fantasy and Rhetorical Visions" 398). These themes woven together establish a kind of identity or "rhetorical vision" for the group. Fisher extends this idea of rhetorical vision into his narrative paradigm, removing the aspect of fantasy and arguing that "each of these concepts [rhetorical visions] translates into dramatic stories constituting the fabric of social reality for those who compose them" ("Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm" 7). They are thus as Fisher calls them "rhetorical fictions, constructions of fact and faith having persuasive force, rather then fantasies" (Fisher "narration as a Human Communication Paradigm" 7).

It is not a far stretch to understand how these concepts relate to the formation of social movements particularly during the cultivation period at the group's creation as it tries to establish an identity. What are social movement identities if not a collection of rhetorical visions developed into rhetorical fictions about where the group has been and where it will go? Anti-gentrification activists' narratives embody Fisher's concept of rhetorical fictions as they simultaneously valorize the past and idealize the future; particularly as these groups' narratives interface with a trope like the beloved community narrative. Rhetorical fictions are simply collections of narratives used for a movement's identity formation. They therefore depend upon the probability, fidelity, and good reasons of the individual narratives that promote the movement values and goals upon which the movement's identity is advanced through rhetorical fictions.

Karl Wallace once said, "One could do worse than characterizing rhetoric as the art of finding and effectively presenting good reasons" (248). More than any

other forum, the social movement is dependent upon the finding and presenting of

good reasons if it is to gather a following or achieve any sort of success. In essence,

this project is about how we might understand the social movement's attempt to do

this through narratives.

The cultivation of good reasons is a familiar occupation to those in the

business of faith. Knowing this, Fisher uses the work of theologians like Stanley

Hauerwas and Michael Goldberg to further justify the implications of his paradigm

for human communication. Fisher's reason for choosing Goldberg as a validating

source is clear: he makes the very same arguments about the primacy of narrative as

Fisher does, only in the context of a theologian not merely a rhetor. Goldberg

highlights the importance of narrative to the theologian saying:

> A theologian, regardless of the propositional statements he or she may
>
> have to make about a community's convictions, must consciously
>
> strive to keep those statements in intimate contact with the narratives
>
> which give rise to those convictions, within which they gain their
>
> sense and meaning, and from which they have been abstracted. (35)

Goldberg grants a helpful bridge between the importance of narrative and the

cultivation of shared convictions within a community of faith. Hauerwas continues

this thought process, providing a clear connection between Fisher's narrative

paradigm, and the importance of community generating good reasons in religious

dialogue. Through his work on the community of the church, Hauerwas teaches us

the importance of narrative to the development of a social ethic both inside and

outside of the church. "Every social ethic involves narrative, whether it is conceived

with the formulation of basic principles of social organization and/or concrete alternatives" (9).

The works of Goldberg and Hauerwas and their relations to Fisher are particularly instructive for us as we begin to think about Fisher's narrative paradigm within the context of a movement that uses good reasons closely tied to a religiously inspired narrative trope. The next chapter will provide some background on the beloved community idea, a story of idealized community with roots in early Christianity and contemporary ties to the black church and the civil rights goals of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. After discussing some of the historical significance and archetypal status of the trope, we will move on to our fifth and final chapter where I will engage the narrative paradigm to rhetorically critique several community narratives used by ONE DC to define and promote both a community and a movement identity in Shaw.

Chapter Four: The Beloved Community

"The end is reconciliation. The end is redemption. The end is the creation of the beloved community."   *-Martin Luther King Jr. (1956)*

On April 3, 1968, the evening before he was assassinated, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a sermon to the congregation at the Mason Temple in Memphis, TN proclaiming that he had "been to the mountaintop" (qtd. in Washington 286). This metaphorical journey conjured up images of King following in the steps of Moses, meeting God for counsel. This counsel revealed to King the image of a beloved community in the form of a dream, a community where "the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners [would] be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood" (qtd. in Washington 219). Although King's vision for the beloved community was most famously articulated in the 'I Have a Dream' speech, it was not originally presented there, it was not even original to King's cry for justice and civil rights in 1950s and 60s America. Instead, the beloved community trope both preceded and followed King's infamous speech in the rhetoric of social justice movements. Though a common trope in narratives of the Civil Rights movement and social justice campaigns since, the beloved community's definition remains vague, even for those who use it as an ideological basis for social action.

In this chapter I will use several scholarly works that discuss the beloved community to break down the idea into the values that both define it and are promoted by it. I will intermingle this review of past implications of the beloved community with pieces from King's I Have a Dream speech to help us understand the image of the beloved community created during the Civil Rights Movement. Although there is not one authoritative source who outlining the characteristics of a

beloved community, several scholars have highlighted various aspects of the concept

in their application of the beloved community trope to cultural, religious, and social

issues. By comparing each of these understandings of the beloved community we can

find several reoccurring values central to the idea. In the next chapter we will discuss

the presence of these values in ONE DC's narratives. This presence in ONE DC's

identity-cultivating narratives legitimizes the organization, the movement and its

goals through association with the beloved community ideal. Before we begin

looking at conceptions of the beloved community associated with King's vision, let

us discuss the historical roots of such an idea.

I. A Notion of Community Preceding King's

Conventional knowledge holds that Martin Luther King Jr. drew much of his

inspiration and validation from the Judeo-Christian religious tradition and the culture

and values of the African American religious community in particular. As Charles

Marsh says in his *The Beloved Community*, "Biblical religion offers peacemakers and

activists much more than pep talks and consolations, indeed [it is] a potent arsenal for

imagining freedom, energizing social reform and forging solidarity with the poor"

(5). In addition to his religious upbringing, King was also highly educated. When he

arrived at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala. in 1954 to become

their full time pastor, King was completing his dissertation to earn a doctorate in

philosophical theology from Boston University. In order to get to such a phase, King

had completed comprehensive exams in which he summarized modern religious

philosophy from Kant to Hegel and discussed them within the context of classic

Greek thought (Marsh). Therefore, it is safe to assume that King was most likely

familiar with the conception of "beloved" and "great" community present throughout

religious philosophical thought. Though there is no direct proof of this, it is also

possible that King was familiar with the idea of the beloved community present in

early 20th century American cultural criticisms. Regardless, a more in-depth

discussion of these historical foundations of the beloved community is necessary for

our understanding of the trope and its contribution to King's dream for America and

(eventually) the world.

In his book *Beloved Community*, Casey Nelson Blake discusses the cultural

criticisms of a group of early 20th century Americans. The "Young Americans," as

Blake refers to them wrote primarily on the creation of an ideal community in

America. Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and Lewis Mumford

insisted that the search for self-fulfillment was inseparable from the search for

communities that cultivated individual growth in the civil identity of a democratic

culture. The Young Americans focused their criticisms towards the end of cultural

renewal, a renewal often in opposition to the increasingly industrialized environment

of early 20th century America. This target of the Young Americans might not make

them unique or significantly similar to King's own ideal community vision. They

certainly were not alone in their visions of an ideal community based in civic

responsibility and interconnection. Many Progressive circles prominently influenced

by Protestantism around the turn of the twentieth century shared what Blake refers to

as the Young Americans' "synthesis of romantic and republican anti-capitalism" (4).

Blake goes on to list an extensive list of the most prominent members of these circles

including Josiah Royce, Jane Addams, and Edward Bellamy.

Despite a few differences, the Young Americans' beloved community has many similarities to King's vision. Blake quotes a statement by Bourne from 1916 that is startlingly similar to the quotation by King at the beginning of this chapter. "All our idealisms must be those of future social goals in which all can participate, the good life of personally lived in the environment of the Beloved Community" (2). Like King, Bourne does not view the beloved community as merely a pleasant ideal for virtuous human society, it is the end of such a just community. But what was this Beloved Community to the Young Americans? Their conception of the beloved community differs from King's in its isolationism. It had more to do with the cultivation of a great society through small independent and self-sufficient communities than through large scale national changes. The ideal America of the Young Americans was pastoral, composed of strong civically minded communities instead of the growing urban landscapes of an industrializing nation. Therefore, Young American critics placed a greater emphasis on ideal communities rather than the cultivation of a broad scale national public sphere.

While this local focus differs from the universal right focus of much of King's thinking, it does not directly conflict with King's ideas of the beloved community because the technicality of community is so vague for King. He does not specifically propose localized and tangible "beloved communities" but he also does not refute their existence or import. Though the Young Americans' focus on local communities might somewhat differentiate their vision of the beloved community from King's, the values promoted as central to the identity of such a community are similar. The Young Americans' beloved community was conceived as a place of

shared cultural tradition, mutual aid, and a sense of the common good. Both

conceptions rely upon a sense of "organic mutuality" (Blake 4) where the root of

civic life is involvement with others. These secular roots of the trope intersect with

older religious precedents to enrich a notion of beloved community prophetically

nurtured by King.

In the book of Acts, the Bible introduces readers to the concept of *koinonia*,

the ideal church community based on mutual care. The word *"koinonia"* translates

from the Greek as care. Diane Winston says *koinonia* has come to represent the ideal

Christian community and the "foundation for the beloved community" (975).   She

defines the beloved community as an intentional commitment to reconciliation and

redemption, two values that surface over and over in readings of the beloved

community trope as well as the description of different "beloved communities."

Winston is one of the few to discuss the beloved community as a religious trope,

often operational in tandem with the idea of the Promised Land. She argues that

King's reference to the beloved community was often in close proximity to his

discussions of the Promised Land, or a promised land of racial equality, making it

appear as if the two might be one and the same. However, there is a distinct

difference between the Promised Land also thought of as paradise, and the beloved

community.

An understanding of the beloved community as rhetorical trope helps us to

understand its use as a driving force behind the creation and values of various

religious communities. Winston lists the Moravians, the Shakers, the Latter Day

Saints, the Oneida, the Amana, New Harmony community, and Brook Farm as people

and communities driven to search for a promised land or separate themselves into self-sufficient communities because of Judeo-Christian religious tropes of the beloved community and the Promised Land.[3] Although the media often portrayed the members of these communities as either fanatics or martyrs, the foundations of their communities were based on strivings toward a beloved community founded on the principles of *koinonia* and agape love (Winston). Like *koinonia*, this definitive value of love expressed through care of one another was essential to the above-mentioned Christian communities' understandings of beloved community.

With its ties to early Protestant thought, it is no surprise that the beloved community's roots are evident in the historically Protestant vision of America. As Winston notes, John Winthrop's idea of America of the "city on a hill" is closely tied to King's notions of an exemplary beloved community in the United States' formerly most harshly segregated and hateful regions like "the red hills of Georgia," "Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice," and "Alabama, with its vicious racists" (qtd. in Washington 219). In fact, America's religio-historic conception as that city on a hill aligns with the reconciliation of beloved community by the ringing of freedom from "every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountaintop" (qtd. in Washington 220).

II. The Values of a Beloved Community

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[3] The Koinonia Community in Georgia at first seems an odd omission from Winston's group considering its direct motivation towards the interracial beloved community of King's vision. However, she probably excluded them because of her paper's main focus on the unfair treatment of such communities by the media.

Analyses making use of the beloved community idea tackle such varied topics as Sesame Street (Mandel), higher education (Locket), and literary criticism (Romero). Although many articles deal with the idea of the beloved community as a rhetorical trope in their analyses of various texts, their definitions of the beloved community remain vague. Preston Williams offers perhaps the most in depth definition and understanding of King's beloved community in his "Analysis of the Conception of Love and its Influence on Justice in the Thought of Martin Luther King Jr.", particularly in relation to conceptions of love and justice, recurring themes in the discussion of beloved community.

P. Williams discusses the ideal or beloved community envisioned by Martin Luther King in terms of a love-justice dialectic. He argues that King believed that human beings were intended to live as members of communities because of their innately social nature, realizing the perfection of human being lie in perfecting the human social condition through the beloved community. Because of humans' social nature, King came to believe that "salvation itself [was] social" (19). Central to this salvation was justice sought as the embodiment of love. P. Williams describes the beloved community almost exclusively through the lens of love, an appropriate one considering his argument that love was central to the philosophy and goals of King. In defining the beloved community, P. Williams says, "All persons were ideally to live in a society characterized by loving relationships among individuals and groups because they were the creation of a God who was power and whose power was love" (19). It is important to note here that love, power, and justice are not just vague ideas to P. Williams as he does not believe them to have been vague ideas to King.

Although they might sometimes be dismissed as value-laden yet empty philosophical markers, King, like theologian Paul Tillich who he greatly admired, saw the three deeply rooted in reality (Tillich; P. Williams). For King, the interaction of love, power, and justice could be seen in everyday human spiritual, interpersonal, and civil interaction.

Perhaps the greatest theological construct contributing to King's conception of beloved community is the doctrine of *imago dei*. P. Williams calls this doctrine the ontology behind King's understanding of love, power, and justice. He explains *imago dei*, literally the image of god, as the thinking that "persons are created in God's image and that they possess dignity and inalienable rights as well as the capacity to choose their own destiny" (21). All of these values possessed in human being are essential to the necessary characteristics of a beloved community where the image of God in man and woman is to be cultivated and expanded. As P. Williams argues however, in all of this love is paramount; love is the beloved community because love is human being, human being is defined by the building of community, and community is perfected in the beloved community.

Most of the scholarly writing concerning the beloved community uses the values of the community to define the relationship of the trope to a text, program, or group (Lockett; Mandel; Marsh; Romero.) These values are particularly instructive for our understanding of the beloved community because of the methodology of the case study in the following chapter. The values reoccurring in different scholars' conceptions of the beloved community can be used in the next chapter as good reasons present in the narratives of ONE DC; the presence of which legitimizes and

grants transcendence to the stories, the organization, and the broader movement against gentrification.

Scholars use some combination of the following values to talk about the beloved community: interdependence, interconnectedness, dignity, freedom, citizen participation, capacity to choose one's own destiny, love, agape, understanding, creativity, goodwill, struggle, work, reconciliation, redemption, inclusion, acceptance, renewal, cooperative, egalitarian, tolerant, open mindedness, goodwill, respect, human interaction, and economic self sufficiency. I believe all of these values can be organized under a framework of five value sets: 1. Cooperative; 2. Agape; 3. Struggle; 4. Renewal; and 5. Self Sufficiency. These value sets are not exclusive to one another nor are they meant to imply that the values I include in the sets are synonyms for the title values. They are merely to serve as a framework to allow for our better understanding of the beloved community and of the relationship of the trope to the narratives and legitimacy of the anti-gentrification movement through ONE DC.

1. Cooperative

The Cooperative value set incorporates values of interdependence and interconnectedness as well as the importance of human interaction in explaining the necessity of the beloved community. P. Williams links King's belief on the importance of interconnectedness and interdependence to his commitments to *imago dei* and equality. Therefore, the Cooperative value set also includes values of egalitarianism and goodwill. These values are necessary to the set in order for the cooperation of community members to thrive and build the beloved community. The

cooperative value set does not just mean that members must cooperate in order to succeed. Instead, it highlights the essential nature of interconnection to the beloved community; without the interconnection of beloved community members, the community will fail.

Inclusion and acceptance are also values included in the cooperative value set. In her discussion of beloved community in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*, Channette Romero defines King's vision of beloved communities as "inclusive, accepting communities" (415). Furthermore, the former convent that becomes the staging ground for the creation of Morrison's beloved community is a full cooperative, introducing this tangible image of coop living to the conceptualization of the beloved community.

Finally, the cooperative value set is one of the most historically prevalent value sets that define beloved community. Cooperation is truly the nature of *koinonia* societies, the premise upon which past attempts at beloved community has been built (Winston). It is this image of the interconnected society of individuals, mutually dependent upon each other for success and survival, that is most prevalent in African American post Civil Rights conceptualization of the beloved community (Lockett). In her call to cultivate beloved communities on Historically Black College and University (HBCU) campuses and Predominately Black College and University (PBCU) campuses, Gretchen Lockett highlights the role of such institutions to advance human interaction in teaching the value of interconnectedness as embodied in the beloved community. Lockett seems to find the values of the beloved

community analogous with the values of the black community, the supreme of which

is interconnection.

2. *Agape*

The value of Agape is one deeply rooted in Christian theology and yet still

recognizable and valuable to secular groups. As I have discussed already, many of

the scholars agree that love was a central tenet in King's understanding of the beloved

community. But, the Agape value set is more than just the word's translation from

Greek. The Agape value set is very closely related to the Cooperative value set,

though slightly different. While Cooperative values talk about the importance of

human beings working together and connecting within the framework of the beloved

community, Agape values inform how those interactions should take place and the

type of love human beings in the beloved community should have for each other.

The Agape value set includes values of dignity, goodwill, understanding,

respect, tolerance, and acceptance. To a large extent, truly agape love helps to

prevent discrimination that may be present in the creation of a beloved community

when it is misinterpreted as a paradise (Romero). As a component of the beloved

community commitment to social change, Agape values are particularly relevant as

they dictate the ways in which activists should interact with opposition forces (P.

Williams). In the application of agape love to an instructive beloved community like

Sesame Street, Jennifer Mandel highlights the importance of Agape values to the

stories and interactions of characters in the community. She explains the show's

deliberate attempts to highlight tolerance of each other, goodwill and open

mindedness, respect, and understanding in accordance with their perception of King's beloved community (3) .

3. *Struggle*

The importance of the beloved community idea to the Civil Rights movement lends an automatic connection between the trope and the value of struggle. The Struggle value set also focuses on work, a similar though slightly different value than the value set's namesake. This value set encourages members of the community to see importance and value in the struggle for the creation and continuity of the community. It also reflects the importance of continued work to maintain the community's stability. This value set is perhaps the beloved community's greatest defense against accusation of utopian idealism because it forefronts the difficulty of creating and maintaining the community. At the same time, it is almost Marxist in its valorization of the working process both for the benefit of the community as a whole and the well being of individual workers.

P. Williams discusses struggle as ordained by and with God in his explanation of King's beloved community. He quotes King: "[The Bible] says to those who struggle for justice, 'You do not struggle alone, but God struggles with you'" (P. Williams, p.26; see also King, 14). This passage also reminds us of the emphasis King placed on the struggle throughout his discussion of the beloved community. King did not deceive his followers into thinking the achievement of the beloved community would be easy but instead valorized the struggle and work it would require. The importance of work features prominently in Romero's discussion of Morrison's beloved community constructed in *Paradise*. In the convent where

beloved community is being built, members are constantly physically and spiritually working, As Romero states in describing *Paradise*, "This 'paradise' involves 'endless work' to be done not on some transcendent plane, removed from the earth, but instead 'down here' in building more benign communities" (423). The beloved community as defined through the Struggle value set also includes the capacity to choose one's own destiny, a choice then acted upon through work. King continued to highlight the importance of work in the "I Have a Dream" speech, linking it all the while with the Cooperative value set saying: "With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day" (Qtd. in Washington 219).

4. Renewal

The renewal value set is both tangible and ideological. It includes the values of reconciliation and redemption essential to an understanding of the beloved community. Reconciliation and redemption are repeatedly discussed by King and others as both the goals and precursors to the beloved community. King's 'I Have a Dream' highlights the importance of racial reconciliation with his images of "sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners [sitting] down together at the table of brotherhood" (qtd. in Washington 219). Throughout the "dream," King links this idea of redemption through reconciliation to the renewal of spaces formerly contaminated by hatred and racism.

As a tangible value, renewal describes the process of change in a community as it transforms from ruin to a beloved. This is why King says, " …one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountaintop shall be made low, the rough

places shall be made plain…" (qtd. in Washington 219). Scholarly focus usually highlights the significance of King's prophetic verse during this portion of the speech. However, equally as significant is King's proclamation for change in every landscape, specifically landscapes familiar to his audience as racist and hate-filled, revealing to us a beloved community that is not "out there" in some transcendent promised land, but renewed from squalor "down here."

This theme is particularly prevalent in two of the scholarly case studies discussed here: the beloved community of Sesame Street and of Morrison's *Paradise*. As a children's television show, Sesame Street obviously did not display with complete realism the dirt and grime associated with urban life. However, producers' set design of an urban city block reveal this same idea of beloved community "down here." As Mandel discusses, producers wanted to create a beloved community in an environment recognizable to their target demographic: low income minority children.

In *Paradise,* Morrison constructs a beloved community that is intentionally different from the archetypal Promised Land. In fact, the settlement of Ruby initially seems to be this Judeo-Christian notion of the Promised Land with an all black and self-sufficient makeup. However, Morrison creates her beloved community vision out of the convent outside of the town where town members seek haven after being excommunicated from Ruby. This beloved community is created from those seen as unfit by the "perfect community" of Ruby. As is common in many of her novels, the values of reconciliation and collective redemption from hatred and pain feature prominently in Morrison's beloved community. Furthermore, in one of the visions of paradise we are given in the novel, we see paradise "recycled from the broken and the

discarded, a place where the spiritual intermingles with the material" (Romero 423).

It becomes clear that the beloved community is not a prophetic Promised Land.

Instead, it is a renewal of that which is broken and discarded here. It is redemption

through true revitalization.

5. *Self Sufficiency*

The final value set of the beloved community is Self Sufficiency. The Self

Sufficiency value set includes the values of economic self-sufficiency, the capacity to

choose one's own destiny, dignity and freedom. It might at first seem that the value

of self-sufficiency runs counter to the Cooperative value set. In fact, they operate

together. Self Sufficiency does not imply the "rugged individualism" of Americana

but instead refers to the ability of the community members to take care of themselves

and each other (co-op).

Several scholars talk about the importance for self-sufficiency in the beloved

community, but the value features most prominently in Romero's and Lockett's

works. In Morrison's beloved community in the convent, the value of work is highly

acclaimed because of its goal of self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency brings with it

freedom, dignity, and choice in one's destiny. In her more contemporary discussion

of the beloved community within HBCU and PBCU, Lockett emphasizes the

importance of teaching the value of economic self-sufficiency to generations of black

students. This self-sufficiency frees members of the community to consider

"microscopic solutions to macroscopic problems" (4). Lockett's view of the beloved

community member is often inseparable from conceptions of good citizenship in a

democracy. Self-sufficiency is viewed as essential to the cultivation of beloved

community members who are "active and responsible for their own lives and for their communities" (14).

III. Criticisms: Utopian fantasy and/or separatist paradise?

Despite their overall positive views towards the idea of the beloved community, scholars recognize the potential flaws in such a trope as the goal for national and international reconciliation. Elements of utopia and separatism are the two largest criticisms of the beloved community ideal. As P. Williams discusses, the notion of the beloved community as an ideal, particularly a religious and prophetic ideal, makes it problematic as a realizable goal in the real world. It is for this reason, among others, that the notion of beloved community had all but vanished from Civil Rights discourse by the late 1960s (Romero; Winston). This fear of utopianism is validated in part because of the close association of the beloved community and visions of the Promised Land (Winston). A utopian beloved community hurts the power of the idea to influence community building and values in the real world. At the same time, a utopian beloved community is somewhat allowable when the beloved community is framed as a goal of existing communities rather than a new Promised Land in the future.

Association of the beloved community with an idealized future Promised Land hurts the power of the idea by associating it with a separate place in the future instead of the renewal of present communities. Though allusion to biblical notions of Paradise and the Kingdom of God may support the notion of beloved community to members of a Judeo-Christian tradition, it can also be ostracizing to potential community members outside of that tradition. Furthermore, an association with

paradise raises issues of separatism associated with paradise. As Morrison says "Our view of Paradise is so limited: it requires you to think of yourself as the chosen people- chosen by God, that is. Which means that your job is to isolate yourself from other people. That's the nature of Paradise: it's really defined by who is *not* there as well as who is" (Romero 419). In Ruby we see the construction of an ideal community "based on separateness and distinction [demanding] that there be those who will be viewed as inferior and, consequently, either oppressed within the community or violently excluded from it" (Romero 421). Although she is critical of the potential of a paradise to be separatist, Morrison provides an important refutation of this separatist problem in her distinction between an ideal community (in Ruby) and the beloved community that grows organically in the convent outside of Ruby. In Morrison's vision of the beloved community of the convent, we see a realistic beloved community that is neither utopian nor separatists but instead embodies the values of inclusion, acceptance, and reconciliation. It is this realistic beloved community ideas that organizers must pay homage to if they are to capitalize on narratives' abilities to provide good reasons.

Chapter Five: The Beloved Community as Narrative Trope in the Discourse of ONE DC
ONE DC builds identity through community stories

"Our lives end the day we become silent about things that matter."
-MLK Jr. as quoted on the ONE DC website

In her book on the psychological impacts of urban renewal, Fullilove paints a picture of community after community still mourning the loss of their identities. Fullilove's interviewees recount story after story of communities based upon values of interconnectedness and mutual aid. As the author herself notes, these stories resonate with ideas of a beloved community of the past, predominately black urban communities influenced and inspired by King's dream of the ideal community.

Though different from urban renewal, community members in gentrified community often mourn idealized notion of past community in similar ways. In analyzing ONE DC's publicly available material, the rhetorical trope of the beloved community is a reoccurring theme. The organization does not explicitly state that they are seeking to build a beloved community in Shaw. However, their constant reference to the importance of building community and consciousness of Civil Rights organizing and values would suggest that they are aware of King's view of the ideal community in their work. In this chapter, we will examine the organization's definition of community as a goal for their activism. By using the lens of the beloved community value framework to study the community narratives, we will investigate how the organization cultivates an idea of Shaw as a beloved community thus enriching the importance of their activism. The narratives portray a beloved community by featuring prominently in the creation of an identity for ONE DC and the Shaw community.

I. **Narratives of Community for ONE DC in Shaw**

ONE DC declares its mission to "build sustainable community capacity" ("About US") Included in this goal is the vision of a community free of racism, classism, sexism; one that seeks to "advance racial and economic justice" ("About Us"). This mission is closely aligned with King's vision of the beloved community. Though often culturally remembered as a movement for racial equality, economic self-sufficiency has been central to the Civil Rights movement since its first phase led by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois. Decades later, King described the beloved community at the March on Washington, a "March for Jobs and Freedom." ONE DC's coupling of racial and economic equality in the creation of a beloved community is a continuation of this historic partnership.

ONE DC has three fronts on which they tell their story to the public: in person, through their newsletter The Word on the Street, and on the internet. In person, ONE DC makes their presence known in the community and the District overall through a combination of marches, community events, trips to City Hall and Planning Board meetings, and courses on gentrification and activism through partnerships with community education groups like Teaching for Change and the Social Action and Leadership School for Activists (SALSA). I was introduced to ONE DC through a 'gentrification short course' offered through SALSA where we toured the Shaw neighborhood, learning about the impact community change had already had on the neighborhood as well as the impact it could have. Certainly I could have gained a unique perspective of ONE DC and the Shaw

community had I based my research solely off of "live" interactions with ONE

DC activists and organizers. However, I believe using the public face of the

organization as cultivated through the website minimizes bias while still

maximizing my exposure as a researcher to the identity ONE DC is creating for

itself.

Through their newsletter, The Word on the Street, ONE DC profiles

community members and activists. These profiles allow for the community generated

priorities and arguments of ONE DC to be expressed by members of the Shaw

community. Additionally, the newsletter allows residents to attain practice in using

the voice for change that ONE DC has helped them to develop. ONE DC teaches

rhetorical competence with The Word On The Street, seeking as much community

member generated content as possible. This goal distinguishes ONE DC from other

community organizing groups who seek to tell communities what they want and need.

As perceived user generated content, The Word on the Street endows the message of

ONE DC and the stories it is telling with the appearance of an organic, fully

community driven movement. The title of the newsletter itself promotes this image,

suggesting that the change in the community being confronted by ONE DC is central

to the concerns of the Shaw residents, that gentrification is "the word on the street."

Considering the importance of the newsletter to the image of ONE DC, it might be

surprising that my analysis does not focus on it. However, in comparing past issues

of the newsletter to web content, I have found that the newsletter is more of an

egalitarian outreach tool than a site for material that is wholly unique from web

content. This makes sense as many of ONE DC's target audience may not have

internet access. The newsletter provides them with locally accessible, paper versions of the organization's news and identity. The Resident Profile section is the only aspect of the newsletter that is not virtually identical to ONE DC's website. Though quotations from the profiles are featured prominently on the website, the profiles are not reprinted verbatim in any sort of cataloged format on the website. In discussing the stories of individual residents I may refer to *The Word On The Street* for supplemental information.

ONE DC's internet presence is the most accessible and complete expression of the organization's identity and work out of their three communication fronts. Like most organizations in the 21st century, ONE DC uses their website as a clearinghouse for information concerning their recent victories and struggles, needs, and general identity. The website, onedconline.org has a decent catalogue of recent press releases stretching as far back as 2004. Furthermore, it links to audio archives of interviews with Shaw residents and ONE DC activists like Pat Penny on the Kojo Nnamdi Show. The seemingly endless space of the internet allows ONE DC room for photo archives and links to partnering organizations, providing the viewer a crash course in the organization's identity.

I recognize that at points it may be difficult to determine if I am differentiating between the overall internet messaging and identity of ONE DC and the individual narratives told by residents and community groups. The internet has allowed groups like ONE DC to expansively tell their stories without differentiating between traditional stories or testimonials from residents and general organizational news. Also, the level of emersion in the Shaw community maintained by ONE DC makes it

difficult to completely distinguish between the narratives built from ONE DC news and general community news and narrative. In the coming pages, I will use the individual stories of residents and groups of Shaw residents to discuss the presentation of good reasons through narratives but I will also occasionally merge those narratives with the overall rhetorical presence of ONE DC. I believe this is necessary as all of these smaller, more traditional stories and the overall messaging of the organization combine to create a broad narrative that defines the identity of ONE DC as an organization active against gentrification in Shaw. In the remainder of this chapter, we will discuss the good reasons in ONE DC narratives as they relate to the value sets established in the previous chapter as integral to the framework of the beloved community idea as well as the use of that idea as a fidelity granting rhetorical tool. In the overlap between ONE DC's good reasons and the beloved community's value sets we can see the functioning of the beloved community as a rhetorical trope cultivating fidelity in ONE DC's narratives.

II. Towards a Beloved Methodology

As I discussed in chapter three, Fisher's understanding of narrative fidelity is closely tied to the presence and persuasiveness of "good reasons" or reasons justifying the narrative's definition of "the good." The values of a beloved community move us towards a framework of those values that might be considered good reasons within narratives supporting a social justice agenda. A community where love and justice dominate was the goal and embodiment of the beloved community as expressed through Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement. Therefore, modern narratives that allude to the movement by their

inclusion of the same good reasons as those of a beloved community are strengthened and validated by this association. This strength grants power and legitimacy to the movement and the organizations that work as a part of it. In dealing individually with how each value set is integrated in the various narratives selected by ONE DC as representative of their organization and the community's identities, we will seek to end with a better understanding of the ways the good reasons of narratives cultivate a movement's identity.

1. Cooperative

The Cooperative value set includes the values of interconnectedness and interdependence, values that lend themselves to the importance of inclusion and acceptance among community members. All of these values reoccur in narratives as reasons supporting the good of cooperation in an image of ideal or beloved community. Narratives discussing the cooperative values of the community both praise the community as it has been (thus implicitly arguing that it should not change) and provide validation for ONE DC's vision of the community as it can be in the future (thus implying that ONE DC and their community supporters should define any future change.)

ONE DC's establishment of co-ops as a solution to gentrification in Shaw mirrors the importance of the Cooperative value set as a component of the beloved community. One of ONE DC's earliest and most decisive victories was the creation of the MLKLHC in 2006. ONE DC organized the predominantly Latino Plymouth Tenet Association at 1236 11th Street NW to purchase the building through a loan

from the Department of Housing and Community Development and found the

MLKLHC ("Martin Luther King Jr. Latino Cooperative (Plymouth)"). The

cooperative not only ensures seventy-three units of affordable housing in a building

that risked being redeveloped into "mixed-income" housing, it plans to create a

community that will provide gathering space for residents, child-care, a community

garden, and a credit union. The story of the success of the MLKLHC has served a

dual purpose for ONE DC. First, it shows that their tactics work, and that the kind of

community they envision for Shaw is possible though hard work and activism.

Secondly, the victory allows ONE DC a "teachable moment."

As it continues to grow, the narrative of the MLKLHC supports the vision of a

beloved community in Shaw through the good reasons of interdependence,

interrelatedness, and cooperation. In describing the Co-op, ONE DC highlights its

priority to "create building policy based on *shared needs* not individual greed"

("Martin Luther King Jr. Latino Cooperative (Plymouth)"). Co-op members echo the

narratives in Fullilove's description of the beloved community eradicated by urban

renewal. For instance, Abelina Lopez talks about why she values coops saying "I

don't like to hoard things. I wouldn't want someone to deny one of my sons

something to eat. It's not right to hoard things people need to survive" ("Martin

Luther King Jr. Latino Cooperative (Plymouth)"). Here we are presented with the

image of a community where once children might have once gone hungry because of

isolationism and greed but now where residents live among each other in the beloved

community's spirit of interdependence and mutual aid. Lopez's comments also

suggest a counter narrative that highlights the danger of the alternative to this beloved

community. These counter narratives are essential to the good reasons presented in the narratives the community because they suggest that without action, gentrification could create a community devoid of the values of the beloved community; a community where children go hungry and people base decisions on "individual greed."

In addition to narratives that feature the Cooperative value set in relation to the community being built by ONE DC's anti-gentrification action, narratives that mourn the loss of community brought by gentrification serve as warnings with a dual purpose. While they serve to demonize gentrification and further establish it as something to be acted against, these mournful narratives also serve as cautionary tales for what the future could be without action. The mournful tale about the past is particularly prevalent in Fullilove's account of urban renewal programs, particularly in reference to the Cooperative value set. Former residents of the Hill District of Pittsburgh in particular tell of a time in the past when a family who had fallen down on their luck could still expect their children to fed and clothed by neighbors. Similar types of narratives can be found in the catalogues of ONE DC, often framed by residents who feel the cooperative environment of Shaw will soon be lost due to increased gentrification.

On its website's "In the News' section", ONE DC links to a January 2006 <u>Washington Post</u> article "Hoping to Own the Run-Down Place that is Home." The article chronicles the plight of the tenants of a predominately Ethiopian 31-unit building located at 1107 11th St. NW, actually about a block from the current site of the MLK Jr. Co-op. The tenants are being evicted after the government has decided

to foreclose on the property. In reporter Debbi Wilgoren's interview with one

resident, we can see very clearly a mournful depiction of the loss of the Cooperative

value set in his narrative of the building and his argument for why the tenants want to

stay. The article summarizes his description saying:

> When someone needs help translating English-language documents,
> they can usually find it right down the hall. This Friday, the Feast of the
> Epiphany… as many as ' 9, 10, 11 people will gather' in some of the
> building's cramped apartments to dine on spongy injera bread and spicy
> lamb or chicken stew. (Wilgoren C04)

Here we see a simple but powerful narrative that relies upon the good reasons of the

Cooperative value set for strength. The cooperation, interdependence, and

inclusiveness of the Ethiopian community at 1107 11th St. are being threatened by

gentrification and thus action must be taken.

These stories serve to highlight how far from the idealized path Shaw has

come and offer ONE DC's organizing against the culprit of this change,

gentrification, as the solution to further community deterioration. Although not

unique to community change based activism, stories of a idealized path are

particularly persuasive within this context. Disinvested urban communities can often

refer to a time in the past when things were better, or when residents have been told

things were better. This memory serves a double purpose of re-energizing pride in

the residents and convincing them that the neighborhoods negative changes are not

their fault because, obviously, they were also there when things were better. The

Cooperative value set cultivates an image of an idealistic future often based on the

image of an idealized past that is particularly persuasive in recruiting activists in

social movements reliant on a cooperative format for organizing to the goal of a

cooperative good of the future. In other words, residents will work together to

achieve a beloved community if one of the greatest values of that community of the

future is living in harmony through cooperation.

2- Agape

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the Agape value set is very similar to

the Cooperative value set because of Agape's emphasis on mutual care. Because of

this, many of the narratives that cultivate good reasons aligning under the

Cooperative value set overlap with the Agape value set. However, where the

Cooperative value set focuses on interrelatedness and human connection, the Agape

value set dictates how those connections should be made and maintained. The Agape

value set can be more difficult to identify in narratives because the values it includes

are less associated with human actions and more associated with the attitudes that

accompany those actions. However, there are occasions when ONE DC's narratives

reveal Agape values like tolerance, respect, acceptance, goodwill, and individual

dignity. In addition to these narratives, ONE DC emphasizes the importance of these

values to its identity on its website's "About Us" page.

The personal narrative of Urica Lewis serves as an example of how ONE

DC's incorporation of the values included in the Agape value set into the overall

narrative and identity of the Shaw community. As a native, third generation Shaw

resident, Urica Lewis is one of many residents profiled at different places on the ONE

DC website (Willis). These profiles do not merely focus on residents' relationships

with the organization or the anti-gentrification activism in which it is engaged.

Instead, by also providing residents with a forum in which to share their personal

narratives, these profiles imply that the residents interviewed are representative of

Shaw community members and therefore contribute to an overall narrative identity of

the community. This is somewhat problematic because residents who are interviewed

are obviously involved with the organization in some way and are certainly very

active in their community. This may or may not mean they are a representative

sample from the "real" Shaw. We are interested in the narrative identity of Shaw

cultivated by ONE DC and in that capacity, the personal narratives displayed by the

organization as exemplary yet typical Shaw residents are instructive.

Urica Lewis' narrative is somewhat different from most of the personal

narratives found on the website because she no longer lives in the community.

Although Lewis grew up in Shaw and both her mother and grandmother lived there,

she was forced to move because she could no longer afford living in the area.

Although much of Lewis' narrative is intertwined with personal commentary about

mayor Adrien Fenty's classifications of "affordable housing," she also uses her

personal story to espouse the values of the Agape value set, particularly tolerance,

respect, and goodwill. When discussing the positive changes that occurred in Shaw

near the beginning of the gentrification process, Lewis says "I started to see different

people, white people walking their dogs, Ethiopians along 9th St NW…" (Willis).

Lewis' opinion of increased diversity as one of the primary positive changes resulting

from gentrification reveals community values of tolerance and goodwill towards newcomers.

This view runs counter to some more stereotypical views of existing resident and activists in gentrifying areas. As we discussed in chapter one, it is often assumed that residents are opposed to community change because they are opposed to white people or wealthy people, a view which would typically run counter to themes of integration and acceptance embodied by the beloved community ideal. However, Lewis's opinion of this change as positive shows that this is not the case, that both she and ONE DC as an organization welcome integration just not replacement. It reemphasizes the reasoning behind the ONE DC tactic of targeting the corporate and governmental causes of gentrification as opposed to individual gentrifyers.

3. Struggle

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the relationship between the beloved community and the Civil Rights movement lends a logical connection to the Struggle value set. Likewise, the Shaw community's historical relationship to the Civil Rights movement and the overall struggle of its historically black residents links the community, and organizations active in the community, to struggle. The Struggle value set also includes the value of work as good reasons in a narrative. In its overall identity, ONE DC makes constant allusion to the struggles of the past, quoting Civil Rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., citing SNCC (the Student Nonviolent

Coordinating Committee) as an inspiration, and even building on Civil Rights tactics like the Freedom School, reaffirming the importance of past struggle.

The Struggle value set is a reoccurring theme in the narratives of ONE DC, particularly those that tell the stories of ONE DC's campaigns. The story of Parcel 42, the MLKLHC, and the Kelsey Gardens Tenants Association are just three campaigns where struggle and hard work in the achievement of a beloved community is featured prominently. Out of these three, Parcel 42 is perhaps the most dramatic and best example of the Struggle value's potential for granting fidelity to a narrative and, as a result, to a cause. The Parcel 42 narrative is complicated and long, spanning at least five years. The complexity and length of the ordeal only adds to the Struggle value as the prominent good reason in the narrative.

Parcel 42 is a vacant lot of land owned by the District government located at the corner of 7th St. and Rhode Island Ave., NW. While there are several other plots like 42 in the District, Parcel 42 is unique because of its placement in the Shaw neighborhood, a neighborhood desperately trying to hold on to its affordable housing options in the face of gentrification in the neighborhoods on every side. The first chapter of the Parcel 42 narrative concluded in 2003 when ONE DC and Shaw residents built on a previously agreed upon Community Benefits Agreement with a written commitment from the NCRC to build very affordable housing on the property. In 2007, the property had still not been developed. During those 4 years, ONE DC continued to organize residents to ensure that development of the land would be true to the initial agreement. The NCRC was taken over by the office of the Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development. In 2007, ONE DC

demanded that the government subsidize the project, the major roadblock in fulfilling

the city's promise for affordable housing, ensuring that housing would be affordable

for low-income residents making $25,000 to $50,000 a year.   In November 2007,

ONE DC won a major victory when Mayor Adrien Fenty announced that his

preferred development plan for the land was the same as ONE DC's. This meant that

the land was going to be developed meeting the specified guidelines of the CBA

discussed in chapter two, guidelines including provisions for blocks of low income

housing, local business, locally hired workers, and a community trust fund from a

percentage of development profits ("Victory for Permanently Affordable Housing in

Shaw").

In accounts of the Parcel 42 saga, ONE DC repeatedly praises the "hard work

of Shaw residents" ("Victory for Permanently Affordable Housing in Shaw"; "ONE

Right to Land"). Almost every account highlights the importance of the work of

Shaw residents who attended City Council meetings, attended Freedom Schools to

learn increased rhetorical competence, and continued to "keep the pressure on" for

more than five years. ONE DC could choose to merely report the news of their

impressive victories to preserve affordable housing and employment victories in the

city, making change look easy and fun to potential members and supporters.

However, their choice to foreground the value of residents' working to achieve a

consistent voice in land and housing development reveals the importance of the

Struggle value set to the perception of an ideal, perhaps even beloved community in

Shaw.

4. Renewal

Gentrification narratives' relationship to the Renewal value set is complicated. The historically problematic association of gentrification with torrid images and narratives of urban renewal do not bode well for a positive relationship between ONE DC narratives and the value laden term "renewal". At first glance, promotion of renewal as a good reason in ONE DC's narratives is predictably absent. As an organization contingent upon the pride residents have in Shaw as it is, narratives that emphasize the need to change or revitalize a blighted community would either be ineffective or have a negative effect on residents' views of ONE DC and Shaw.

Still, the Renewal value set is important to the idea of the beloved community. Therefore, it is important that we take a second look at the value set in relation to ONE DC's narratives. The value set is not just about renewal in the aesthetic or urban renewal since of the term. The Renewal value set also includes several values that are central to Martin Luther King Jr.'s beloved community idea. It includes values of reconciliation and redemption fore-fronted by King as essential to the vision for a future, beloved America. As is evidenced in Morrison's *Paradise*, discussed in the previous chapter, tangible reconciliation of our daily lived-in space is an essential application of the Renewal value set (Romero). The beloved community is not to be created somewhere out there, but down here in communities that have suffered oppression and are now renewed by the reconciliation of oppressors and oppressed.

With its history of race related violence and its historically black past, Shaw would seem a prime locus for the sort of redemptive renewal that is central to the Renewal value set and is both the goal and the initiator of beloved community. Like

Morrison's convent and even the streets of Sesame Street, Shaw is a historically

appropriate place for King's dream of redemptive community to rise from squalor,

blight, and disinvestment. However, this value set is underutilized if used at all in the

narratives of ONE DC and the Shaw community. In Urica Lewis' story she mentions

that the Parcel 42 development would allow her the opportunity to return to the

community she was raised in but could not longer afford (Willis). However, the

theme is not further developed and does not feature prominently in any of the other

narratives on the ONE DC website. Perhaps it is because ONE DC chooses to focus

more on the struggle than on reconciliation. It is also possible that ONE DC assumes

the association of their actions with reconciliation and therefore does not feel the need

to highlight this value set. Perhaps they have not considered extending their focus on

cooperation and agape love to a resulting reconciliation and renewal. Regardless of

the reason the Renewal value set does not feature prominently in the narratives, ONE

DC would do well to make it a more central focus of its narrative identity. The

Renewal value set is powerful as a good reason because of its centrality to a shared

memory of King's vision of the beloved community.

5. Self-Sufficiency

Though often forgotten, the March on Washington in 1963's subtitle was "for

Jobs and Freedom." King's perpetuation of the beloved community ideal as the end

of the Civil Rights movement in his "I Have a Dream" speech given as the

culmination of that march reveals the linkage between economic self-sufficiency and

civil freedom within the construct of the beloved community. Lockett's call for

creation of a beloved community that is largely predicated on a taught self sufficiency

in HBCU and PBCU continues this theme in contemporary dialogue about equality and civil rights.

The Self-Sufficiency value set includes values of economic self-sufficiency, the capacity to choose one's own destiny, dignity and freedom. Dignity and freedom are seen to be the greater, more transcendent values in the set, inalienable rights that are enabled by self-sufficiency and the capacity to choose one's own destiny. Virtually all of ONE DC's messaging includes the Self-Sufficiency value set in some capacity. The ONE Right to Land, One Right to Income, One Right to Housing organization structure of ONE DC's activism presents three key components of economic self-sufficiency as goals for the organization. ONE DC's priority for the self sufficiency of Shaw and other low-income communities is further evident in their name. Organizing for Neighborhood Equity reflects the importance of economic resources that contribute to the availability of self-sufficiency, the capacity to determine one's own destiny, and therefore dignity and freedom in low-income communities.

The increased ability of Shaw residents to be self-sufficient reoccurs repeatedly as a good reason in ONE DC narratives. The value is a central good reason in stories about the MLKLHC where residents' abilities to become self-sufficient are presented as a central reason in support of the Co-op. Although initially counter-intuitive, the self-sufficiency value system often serves as a good reason along side of the Cooperative value system in narratives like that of the MLKLHC. Here we read a narrative about a place where, because of their ability to be self-sufficient and choose their own destinies, individuals choose to cooperate together to

create the best possible shared destiny. The coupling of these two value sets as good

reasons in a narrative also reveals to us a beloved community that is not merely

created out of necessity, but out of choice. This sort of community is more ideal

because of the freedom value. Freedom as a good reason means that those

communities created by completely free and unburdened members are more beloved

than those created by members with no other choice.

ONE DC narratives highlighting individuals also often rely upon the self-

sufficiency value set as a good reason. In the personal story of Abelina Lopez, one of

founders of the MLKLHC, access to resources that would allow her to be self-

sufficient is a continual thread. The narrative that ran as a Resident Profile in The

Word on the Street juxtaposed her lack of resources in Pochucla, Mexico, her

birthplace, with the resources of the MLKLHC. In the website's reference to Lopez's

story the goal of self-sufficiency features prominently. "Membership in the co-op

gives Abelina and her neighbors increased self-determination over their community.

Since buying the building, security and maintenance have improved, housing costs

have decreased" ("Martin Luther King Jr. Latino Cooperative (Plymouth)"). Here we

see an example of the direct relationship between economic stability and self-

sufficiency and self-determination. The importance of all of these values to the

positive success narrative of the co-op makes the Self-Sufficiency value set a

prominent good reason in the narrative.

We have only discussed a few narratives as examples of the use of good

reasons tied to the value sets of the beloved community but these relationships exist

throughout the narratives used by ONE DC to create an identity of the organization,

anti-gentrification, and Shaw. The relationship of the good reasons in ONE DC

narratives to beloved community value sets is clear. Let us now revisit some of the

ideas about social movements initially presented in the introduction to discuss how a

firm narrative identity constructed through resonance with the good reasons of an

established rhetorical trope might contribute to the power of a movement for social

justice.

III. Narrative that Legitimizes Activism

Charles Stewart classifies movements based on the chronological situation of

their idealistic visions. Revivalistic movements seek reform or revolution of existing

norms based upon an ideal past. Innovative movements seek these reforms of current

norms based on a vision of an ideal future.   In its use of the beloved community trope

as a source for reasons for the good in its narratives, the anti-gentrification movement

as embodied by ONE DC's work in Shaw transcends chronological categories by

involving them together. By engaging revivalistic and innovative components

together, the anti-gentrification movement maintains an identity grounded in powerful

conceptions of the past with a strong, almost utopian vision for the future.

The movement is revivalistic in its homage to the Civil Rights movement and

its values by adopting the good reasons included in one of the time period's central

tropes: the beloved community. This revival of Civil Rights Movement memory

elicits images of a cooperative and divinely ordained struggle for freedom in the not

so distant past. As an idealized past, even the struggles and injustices of the Civil

Rights Movement are painted in a valuable and transcendent light. Past struggle is

compared to present struggle, thus forcing the comparison of past success to present

(and future success). But in calling on the beloved community trope, anti-gentrification activists are not merely reminding their audience of the Civil Rights Movement, they are also bringing to mind other attempts at beloved communities past, a striving ingrained in the legend of Americana and the American identity.

No matter how rosy the present might paint the past, the battle for civil rights in the United States is not all victory and pleasant memories. The cohesive black communities that occupied historically black neighborhoods in urban areas like Shaw and Harlem were often not present by choice. Instead, many of these communities were the products of segregation, disinvestment, and mutual need. Such communities of necessity might have allowed for cultivation of *koinonia*, a community based on mutual care. However, they could not rightfully have been called beloved communities because they often lacked the external self-sufficiency, self-determination, and overall resources to be truly ideal. The anti-gentrification movement is not entirely revivalistic because it does not completely rely upon the valorized image of Civil Rights era community although it does rely heavily on the image of community developed by King during the era.

ONE DC's rhetoric and the anti-gentrification movement of which it is a part is innovative in its motivation towards an ideal image of beloved community in the future. Like King before them, ONE DC activists use narratives to construct an image of an ideal community in the future. This community is not wholly different from the one they inhabit in the present. Instead, it is built from the imperfect conditions around them and from the imperfect community of which they are a part. The vision of ideal community articulated repeatedly through ONE DC narratives

about the Shaw community, residents, and victories maintains a connection to the values of King's beloved community, a trope already known by residents as a part of their shared cultural heritage. Most innovative movements fail in their tendency towards utopian visions for the communities where they work. In anchoring their vision of the future in the idealistic visions of past victories as well as the narratives of present struggle, anti-gentrification activists like ONE DC resist the temptation towards a utopian future and instead concentrate their communities on a realizable beloved community.

Conclusion

"The end is reconciliation, the end is redemption, the end is the creation of the beloved community."

When Martin Luther King Jr. first uttered these words towards the beginning of campaign for civil rights, it is unlikely that he realized just how formative they would become for members of the movement and for future social justice activists and their movements. Like individual visions of Paradise, the details of individual groups' conceptions of beloved community may differ. However, texts that engage the trope in cultural texts find similarities organized by five value sets: Cooperative, Agape, Struggle, Renewal, and Self-Sufficiency. These value sets are methodologically useful in the study of the beloved community's use as a trope and legitimization of good reasons in the narratives of contemporary social movements.

In proposing narrative as his paradigm for human communication, Walter Fisher strives to make is theory ontologically significant. The importance of good reasons to a narrative's fidelity is the primary construct for this striving. Good reasons serve a dual and rather circular purpose, both granting fidelity to the narrative and using the narrative to validate the conception of the good included within it. A recognized and respected trope like the beloved community can serve as a catalyst in the analysis of a narrative's probability and coherence. This in turn expedites the process of identification necessary in the formative stage of a movement.

The widely contested phenomenon of gentrification in America's urban communities is expanding as a subject for scholarly investigation as an increasing number of low-income neighborhoods face "revitalization." At its most basic, the term gentrification refers to neighborhood or community change, traditionally

understood as an increase of middle to upper income residents in previously low-income neighborhoods. However, the politicization of the term both for those who support the changes and those who oppose it is evidence of the highly contested and political nature of the process itself. This thesis begins the task of confronting the complex definition process of gentrification with a more in-depth investigation of the process and particularly of the response to it by community activists and residents.

This project investigates one particular way community activists respond to a particular brand of community change they understand as gentrification. This brand often consists of a changing identity of historically lower income communities as they begin to be perceived as hip, therefore drawing a wealthier and more privileged population of residents. Often these new residents are also drawn to the increased investment in the neighborhoods usually included but not limited to, upscale shopping, dining , and entertainment options. This change is often coded by anti-gentrification activists as negative because it displaces existing residents by replacing their low-income housing options with new and costlier housing and entertainment to draw in new residents. It also replaces older private and community owned business with chain stores that are more upscale, less connected to the neighborhood, and financially out of reach for existing residents.

My research is particularly concerned with the messages constructed by activists to engage community members in their fight to maintain control over the destiny of the neighborhood. Residents may be opposed to the changes, but how do community groups compel them to dedicate their time and energy to action that opposes or seeks a voice in the changes? Through the case study of ONE DC, and

Shaw community I argue that community organizers use narratives about the community to idealize it and therefore, argue for its salvation.

Communication theorist Lloyd Bitzer argues that a rhetor must respond to an exigence, or situation that calls for action, in order to be necessary and therefore compelling to his or her audience. Through the community narratives they tell, anti-gentrification activists reveal the dire importance of the salvation of the community. Walter Fisher proposes that narratives must have fidelity in order to be convincing. Fidelity is the feeling that a story one hears is true because it is similar to other stories they are familiar with, like an archetype. This project argues that the similarity of community narratives used by anti-gentrification activists with the trope of the beloved community grants them fidelity with community members. This fidelity motivates community members to join organizers in acting for a voice in their community's "revitalization." Much of the research on gentrification is from anthropological or urban studies fields and focuses on the phenomenon itself. In seeking to understand the message that may serve as a rallying cry in response to the phenomenon, my thesis builds on existing inter disciplinary work and expands work from other disciplines into the field of Communication.

Within the context of a lack of interdisciplinary scholarly understanding of gentrification, this project opens the possibility for future scholarship in many directions. Additional scholarship studying displacement in gentrified communities is necessary if we are ever to gain a more complete understanding of the phenomena. This research must rely on quantifiable and externally valid data on displaced families and persons rather than merely anecdotal references. Along these same lines, more

research like Freeman's should be conducted to determine the real opinions of residents of gentrified communities concerning the changes in their communities so that we do not have to rely on the outside observation and estimation of scholars. This research, along with all of the other information on community change must be conducted with as little bias as possible in the selection of survey questions and participants, otherwise there is no way we can guarantee any sort of legitimacy to the findings.

There was only room in this project for a percentage of the complex linguistic history of gentrification. Throughout my research I found a valuation of the term that moved back and forth between god and devil term. Future research must investigate this linguistic history further. The life cycle of the term gentrification and both its scholarly and public perception could prove to an example case for the life cycle of other politicized and value-laden terms.

The relationship between Social Convergence Theory and social movements was a relationship that I only began to engage in this project. Future research might further engage this relationship, both theoretically and through case studies. These case studies should investigate both contemporary and past social movements in this country and abroad to test the relationship between SCT and social movement identity between movements that are differentiated by time and location. The narrative paradigm would provide an interesting lens through with to study this relationship, a study that might advance the importance of Fisher's theory and/or increase its accessibility.

Still more research is needed into the use of the beloved community as rhetorical trope. Although there are several examples of case studies that engage the trope, there has been very little finite work done to construct a definitive understanding of the beloved community. The methodology developed here of the five value sets that define the trope still needs far more testing. Study of the beloved community trope could prove particularly instructive for movement studies. Within such a context, the beloved community trope might prove enlightening in investigations of the exact components of idealized communities and the potential relationships to both the past and the future.

This project sought to contribute to the areas of movement studies and communication by engaging them with a cotemporary movement primarily located outside of the discipline. Hopefully, a continued study of both rhetoric and gentrification will enhance our understanding of both.

APPENDIX A

Map of Washington DC courtesy the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority

(WMATA.com)
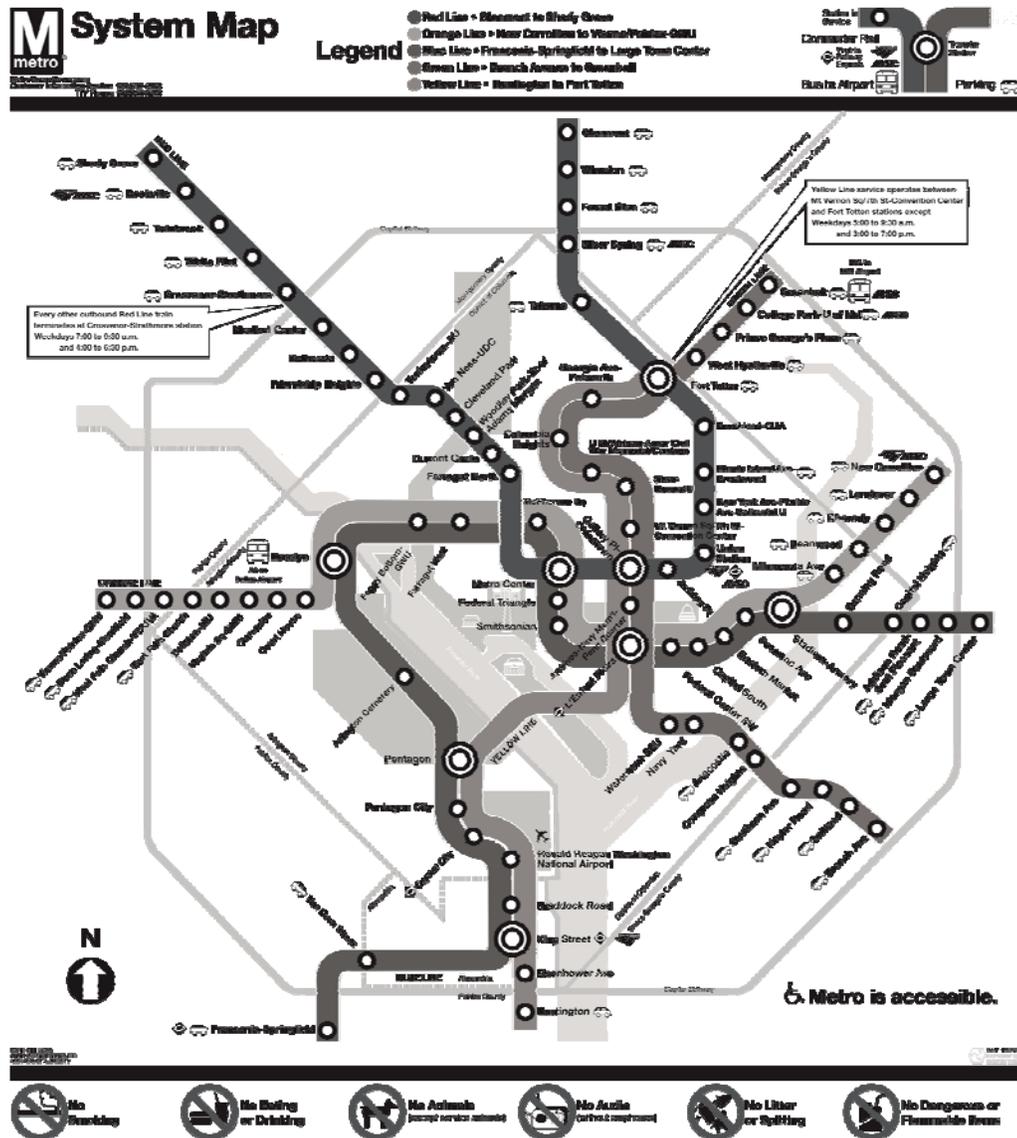
ABBREVIATIONS

CBA- Community Benefits Agreement

CDBG- Community Development Block Grant funds

CDC- Community Development Corporation

CRA- Community Reinvestment Act

EDI- Equitable Development Initiative

HBCU- Historically Black Colleges and Universities

HUD- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

MLKLHC- Martin Luther King Jr. Latino Housing Cooperative

MTO- Moving To Opportunity

NCRC- National Capitol Revitalization Corporation

ONE DC- Organizing for Neighborhood Equity, District of Columbia

PBCU- Predominantly Black Colleges and Universities

SALSA- Social Action and Leadership School for Activists

SCT- Symbolic Convergence Theory

SEA- Shaw Education for Action

SNCC- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

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