

THESIS

REMEMBRING CAPITALISM: A. PHILIP RANDOLPH, EUGENE V. DEBS, AND THE TOWN OF
PULLMAN

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ABSTRACT

REMEMBERING CAPITALISM: A. PHILIP RANDOLPH, EUGENE V. DEBS, AND THE TOWN OF PULLMAN

Through an analysis of the Pullman National Monument, and President Obama's speech commemorating the town, this thesis demonstrates how the memory of the labor movement within Pullman is framed through a progressive narrative of U.S. history. Throughout the analysis of these artifacts, this thesis examines the material, visual, and textual contours of the public memory surrounding the Pullman town. Building from theories of public address, public memory, public forgetting, and space and place scholarship, my examination of the Pullman National Monument demonstrates the persistence of appeals to liberalism, which actively forgets any alternative to capitalism. This active forgetting serves to stifle the imagination of individuals to develop a working-class politics. Furthermore, in my analysis of President Obama's speech, I offer a theory of the forgetful form to understand how speakers create a desire within the audience to forget problematic elements of the past. Finally, this thesis closes with a discussion of how examining the textuality of a speech, as well as the materiality of a monument together, aid in understanding the public memory of an event.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
Chapter I: Introduction	1
The Pullman Strike of 1894	6
The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters	10
Preserving the Historic District.....	11
Artifacts and Text	13
Analytical Approach	14
Preview of Chapters	17
Chapter II: Literature Review	18
Public Address of President Barack Obama	18
Public Memory	25
Public Forgetting	28
The Forgetful Form.....	30
Space and Place.....	32
Synthesis.....	37
Chapter III: Remembrance at the Monument	38
Remembering Pullman—The Man and The Town	42
Forgetting the Pullman Strike	46
Erasing A Radical Past.....	48
Commodifying Public Memory.....	55
Revisiting the Suburb	60
Conclusion	61
Chapter IV: The Designation of the Pullman National Monument	64
Text and Context	67
Federal Intervention in the Labor Movement	69
Obama’s American Dream	72
President Obama’s Forgetful Form	75
The Video.....	77
Remembering Pullman through the American Dream	79
Conclusion	86
Chapter V: Conclusion.....	89

Materiality and Forgetting	90
Textuality and Forgetting	93
Interanimating Public Memory	97
Contemporary Working-Class Memories.....	98
References	100

Chapter I: Introduction

It's the first day at your new job. You've arrived at your new place of employment wearing the appropriate attire: khaki pants and a dark blue shirt. Since you're new, you are forced to participate in an indoctrination program deemed "orientation." Throughout this process, you are given a blue and yellow badge with your name plastered on the front, along with the word "Walmart," next to a large yellow smiley face. Once the overlord of the operation, the Head of Human Resources, has introduced themselves, it is time to engage in a ritual of humiliation: "The Walmart Wiggle." During the "Wiggle," you are asked to dance, and spell out the name of your new employer. To complete the performance, you and your colleagues yell, "THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT!!!" signaling the end of the ceremony. Next, you are subjected to a daunting series of videos which educate you on how to push a broom, clean up a spill, and smile at "guests" in the store. Before finishing your Walmart education, the Head of Human Resources returns to teach you about the evils of labor unions in the workforce.

Due to the decades-long decline in union households and the distortion and willful neglect of labor history within high-school textbooks and other forms of public discourse,¹ these videos and discussions are likely the first experience that many Walmart employees have with union membership. Walmart's corporatist hegemonic video presentation of union membership as divisive, expensive, and harmful for gainful employment provides workers with a false consciousness about organized labor. Furthering this hegemony are Walmart's strategies for dealing with labor unions throughout their history. For example, Walmart once closed a store in Canada following the worker's decision to unionize.² In another instance, Walmart

banned employees from wearing union insignias in stores across California, which the National Labor Relations Board found in violation of federal law.³ Through the proliferation of anti-union propaganda and their illegal business practices, Walmart has suppressed union membership.

While Walmart employs the most workers in the U.S. private sector by a large margin,⁴ their stance on labor unions is a synecdoche for the broader U.S. workforce. According to the United States Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, union membership reached an all-time low in 2017, at 10.7 percent.⁵ Furthermore, of this 10.7 percent, only 6.5 percent of private sector workers were unionized.⁶ Overall, these statistics represent a decline of nearly 10 percent in union workers since 1983. What's more: this downward trend is likely to continue due to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2018 opinion in *Janus v. American Federation of State County* that ruled all public sector unions must represent non-union members in their collective bargaining, thus disincentivizing union membership and its attendant dues.⁷

Indeed, *Janus* was just the most recent marker in the long decline of U.S. labor. Labor unions were once the bedrock of protection for working class U.S. citizens against encroaching corporate interest. From the late 19th century up to the mid-20th century, organized labor fought to establish reasonable working conditions and set the foundation for many of the rights we enjoy in the workplace today including a minimum wage, the ban of child labor, and requirements for overtime pay.⁸ But while labor union members sat, marched, and rioted for protection against corporations, their power to mobilize and their strength in unity was and has deteriorated. In particular, the Taft-Harley Act of 1947 restricted unions' ability to strike and introduced right-to-work laws that allow non-union members to avoid joining a union and paying member dues. Taft-Hartley thus forced labor unions into a difficult decision: restrict

their solidarity in the workplace by allowing multiple unions to represent the workforce within an organization or allow non-union members to receive the same benefits as union members. Today, twenty-six states in the U.S. now enforce right-to-work laws in the workplace, greatly diminishing labor's historic power. As such, Taft-Harley Act, and the preceding right-to-work laws signaled the beginning of the end for organized labor in the U.S.

In addition to the legal system, education and media institutions contribute to the stymying of labor unions. Public education has suppressed and altered the representations of labor history within textbooks throughout the U.S. For example, *The Albert Shanker Institute* conducted an analysis of high school textbooks which found that “they devote little space to the labor movement and the development of unions generally,” and discussions regarding the Civil Rights Movement and other social movements “often downplay or ignore the important role unions and their members played in these movements.”⁹ Thus, these textbooks stress the progress made throughout the history of U.S. while neglecting many of the organizations and individuals who were involved in these political movements. Absence and distortion are also a strategy incorporated by major news media outlets when reporting on workers' rights issues. Lynn Rhinehart, *Economic Policy Institute* Senior Fellow, has detailed the erasure of union efforts within recent labor disputes. Referencing articles from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, Rhinehart argues that reporters and correspondents forget laws and regulations which were established by the labor movement.¹⁰ Legal, education, and media institutions have largely forgotten the labor movement, and these abeyances are concerning for the contemporary working class.

For people invested in a robust and powerful labor movement, labor's changing fortune's raises several key questions. With the introduction of right-to-work states and the continued assault on organized labor, what opportunities are available for remembering the labor movement of the early 20th century? How do authority figures and texts present the history of unions? What affect do these figures and texts have on the decline of a labor movement within the U.S.? Is there an opportunity for these memories to reinvigorate the working-class and seek solidarity from their companies? If so, what should be remembered and what should be forgotten about the labor movement?

We can begin to consider answers to these questions at the Pullman National Monument, the nation's only current national monument to honor the American labor struggle. Within Chicago, a small town named Pullman became the site of many labor and political struggles of the late 19th and early 20th century; indeed, Chicago was one of the hotbeds for union organization in the beginning of the labor movement. These struggles helped pave the way for the above-mentioned Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as well as the Civil Rights Movement. So notable were the events in Pullman that President Barack Obama declared the historic district of Pullman a national monument on February 19th, 2015.¹¹ Yet the memory of the town and what the labor movement did there is far more complicated than the linear narrative of the United States' liberal history suggests. A town layered with strife and progress, Pullman represents in microcosm both the opportunities and challenges inherent in efforts to remember labor's past to reimagine labor's future.

In this thesis, I explore how the materiality of the Pullman National Monument and the textuality of its founding root our remembrance of the labor movement in a progressive

narrative of U.S. history. Guiding my analyses of these texts are scholarship on public address, public memory, and space and place literatures. Upon visiting the monument, guests are compelled to forget the socialist politics of Eugene V. Debs and A. Philip Randolph. This forgetting makes possible the remembrance of George Pullman and the U.S. government as benevolent agents of progress. President Obama's speech which established the town as a national monument transformed the local public memory into a national public memory by creating a desire within the audience to forget the federal government's involvement in stifling social movements for equality. Both artifacts stress the importance of the progress within Pullman, while conflating these memories with the values of the U.S. Through an examination of these rare occurrences where the U.S. public is confronted with the memory of the labor movement, these analyses demonstrate how we are conditioned to forget the contemporary working-class.

In addition to uncovering the public memories of the labor movement within the Pullman National Monument, my thesis also contributes to three areas of rhetorical scholarship. First, I suggest that rhetorical scholarship interested in memory places attend to how the presentation of objects can compel guests to forget aspects of the past. As the absence of objects does not always constitute forgetting, the presence of these objects does not always evoke memories. Instead, how and where they are displayed within a museum helps explain how audiences are urged to remember and forget. Second, I develop the term the forgetful form to explain how orators create a desire within the audience to forget incongruent aspects of the past which violate the present need. Rather than pointing out the meaningful absences within a textual artifact, the forgetful form accounts for how these texts move audiences to act

in forgetting through arrangement and stylistic choices. Lastly, through an examination of both the symbolic and material dimensions of a public memory, rhetorical scholars are better equipped to provide a holistic account for how audiences experience the past. These claims, as well as the promotion of a progressive remembrance need to be contextualized within the history of Pullman to understand how remembering and forgetting function throughout these artifacts.

The Pullman Strike of 1894

On February 19th, 2015, President Barack Obama commemorated the Pullman National Monument in Chicago, Illinois—a place capable of restoring the U.S. public’s memory of a strong and collective labor movement. The Pullman Strike of 1894 was led by Eugene V. Debs and the workers and inhabitants of the town of Pullman. Labor mobilized in Pullman due to the treacherous working conditions, long hours, and decline of pay. Workers in the factories and shops, as well as on the railways ceased labor, and through unity and organization brought the railroad industry to a halt. This strike lasted several months and was eventually resolved through a federal injunction issued by President Grover Cleveland. National Guard troops invaded Pullman to restore order, ending the strike with the death of over 30 workers.¹² Pullman employees’ efforts to negotiate the working conditions, hours, and pay of employees was ultimately a failure. Despite these shortcomings, the Pullman Strike was an enormous execution of labor unions; however, organized labor did not begin here.

Prior to the Pullman Strike of 1894, several strikes throughout the U.S. took place in rapid succession. However, none were larger than the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. The end of the Civil War in the United States led to an economy increasingly dominated by manufacturing.

Growth in manufacturing necessitated transportation of materials, goods, and people. To accomplish these tasks, a railroad system was built and ran by the greed of entrepreneurs such as Cornelius Vanderbilt, Daniel Drew, Jay Gould, and James Fisk. Together, these tycoons ruled with an iron fist on all matters related to labor and profit. Poor working conditions and low wages led railroad workers to halt work in July of 1877. Yet these strikes would come to an end with the intervention of U.S. Marshals—a strategy which would become commonplace for the U.S. government in dealing with labor unrest.

One place where embattled labor would reorganize itself was in Pullman. Given the high demand of transportation vis-à-vis train car, a new market emerged catering to upper-class citizens. George Mortimer Pullman, an engineer by trade, was determined to take advantage of this market, and in 1858 began designing a train car which would accommodate travelers over long voyages. Several years passed before George Pullman would find any success in his endeavors to make a lavish train car; however, in 1865, President Lincoln's death provided Pullman with an opportunity to showcase his new design. Jimmy Stamp, writer for the *Smithsonian* explains, "After President Lincoln's assassination the government elected to use the luxurious Pullman car for the last leg of his funeral train...The publicity turned the Pullman sleeping car into an overnight success."¹³ This new-found success was also met with a higher demand in production and labor for the sleeping car. Pullman, eager to turn a profit on his luxurious train car, designed a town where citizens could both work and live, and would become one of the most consequential company towns in U.S. history.

Pullman, Illinois would become a historic site, but not for its high-class sleeping cars. Rather, Pullman is known as a pivotal place for its role in the U.S. labor movement. To

understand the contextual dimensions within President Obama's presidential proclamation and the Pullman National Monument, I want to highlight two aspects of the Pullman town: The role that the federal government had in the two major strikes, and Asa Philip Randolph's centrality to establishing the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

While George Pullman built an aesthetically pleasing town for his workers, that beauty came with a cost. Almont Lindsey, a historian of the Pullman Strike, wrote, "George Pullman exercised over the town a control virtually absolute."¹⁴ In maintaining his dominance, Pullman enforced a strict prohibition on alcohol sales and brothels. He ensured that his workers were considered pure by customers who would travel in his sleeping train cars. In addition to his Protestant ethic, Pullman also expressed his paternalism through the ownership of property. Pullman was the sole proprietor of his newly founded company town. He was unwilling to grant home ownership to any of his workers, which caused unrest within the community. While these constraints were a heavy burden for employees to bare, nothing was more infuriating to the Pullman residents than the cost of rent.

High construction costs of the town led George Pullman to seek profit from the real estate in his town. Andrew E. Kersten, biographer for Asa Philip Randolph, claimed, "Pullman made profits not only from his workers' labors but also from the rents they paid to live in his houses and from their purchases in his stores."¹⁵ The rent charged in Pullman's town was exuberantly high in comparison to other cities nearby. Lindsey has provided the exact figure: "Pullman rents averaged 20-25 per cent higher than rents in Chicago or surrounding communities."¹⁶ Through corporate paternalism, Pullman extracted every ounce of profit possible from those who worked for him. His ruthless tactics ultimately led to upheaval.

While the beginning of 1893 proved to be highly profitable, it ended in economic crisis.¹⁷ To continue selling his train cars at a profit, George Pullman had to make a change in day-to-day operations. He could not allow such low profit margins to continue. He saw only one option left: lay off workers and reduce wages. While slashing wages was difficult on workers, Pullman's insistence on maintaining the exorbitant rent was the catalyst of the rebellion. On May 10th, 1894, unified by the American Railway Union (ARU), and led by Eugene V. Debs, the workers of the Pullman Palace Car Company voted to go on strike.¹⁸ With the full force of the ARU behind them, over 18,000 workers refused to work on or transfer any train cars that were associated with the Pullman Company.¹⁹ This unified effort demonstrated the power that workers wielded when collectively organized. Without railroad workers tending to their shifts, mail was unable to be transported across Illinois. With mail services across the mid-western region of the United States halted, the federal government had justification to intervene in Pullman.

At the time of the Pullman Strike, Richard Olney was the attorney-general of the United States. Olney was the chief actor in orchestrating the government against the ARU.²⁰ Olney was able to apply pressure to the ARU by utilizing federal injunctions wherever necessary to free the railroads from striking workers. Lindsey argued, "The injunction was a comparatively new weapon in the strife between labor and capital."²¹ Injunctions allowed for federal troops to be deployed in areas where local law enforcement could not handle the uproar among railroad workers. With federal injunctions on the table due to a distortion of the Sherman Anti-Trust Law,²² Richard Olney had a "guiding hand"²³ in Grover Cleveland's decision to deploy the National Guard in the town of Pullman. With work stopped for just under two months, federal troops were ordered to intervene. The result was a devastating defeat for the people of

Pullman and labor as a whole. Kersten described the aftermath of the intervention: “Within a month, Pullman hired strikebreakers, crushed the strike, and defeated the union. Twenty-five unionists died and more than 406 were injured.”²⁴ In addition to the casualties, the leader of the American Railway Union, Eugene Debs was arrested for conspiracy.²⁵ Both the deaths of the strikers, and the defeat of the ARU rang a death knell for the Pullman Strike. At the core of this defeat was the United States Department of Justice, who kept workers from negotiating with the Pullman Car Company, and enabled Olney and President Cleveland to deploy the national guard. This would be a barrier that Asa Philip Randolph would have to overcome when he established the first Black union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP).

The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

The Pullman Company had a unique tie to African American community. Kersten explained: “By 1915, the Pullman Company was the single largest employer of African Americans.”²⁶ While the Pullman Company offered employment opportunities for African Americans, their working conditions and pay distribution were drastically lower than their white co-workers. As such, workers became unsatisfied with their unequal compensation. So, the workers in the town again went looking for leadership in confronting the Pullman Company. A. Philip Randolph was a perfect candidate for the job. Randolph’s radical publication, *Messenger*, was in wide circulation amongst the Black community, and drew a-lot of attention from labor organizers. As such, Ashley L. Totten, a Pullman porter, approached Randolph with the proposition of starting a union.²⁷ Previous attempts at forming a union were thwarted by the Pullman Company; however, as Randolph was an outsider, he was in a unique position because his livelihood was not at stake with the Pullman Company.²⁸ It was decided and Randolph led

the first meeting of the BSCP in the summer of 1925, with the goal of utilizing the Railway Labor Act to meet their demands.

The Railway Labor Act forced railroad companies to mediate between their employee's concerns.²⁹ Randolph and the BSCP agreed that the aid of the federal government would be the only way to overcome the exploitative nature of the Pullman Company.³⁰ However, the federal intervention board would not arbitrate between the BSCP and the Pullman Company. These callings for arbitration were ignored due to the Pullman Company's corporate union, which privileged white over black workers. Randolph was resilient in his calls for mediation, yet they were never upheld. It was not until the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933 that the BSCP would have a fighting chance. Once this act was passed, Randolph was able to justify an amendment to the 1926 Railway Act which allowed for equality among workers.³¹ Moreover, 12 years following the inception of the BSCP, Randolph and fellow union members became the first Black union to sign an agreement with a corporation in the U.S.³² Throughout Randolph's fight for equality, he struggled against not only the Pullman Company, but also with the federal government for legal recognition. As I have shown, the U.S. government is inherently intertwined with the struggle for both labor and racial rights within the nation. Although the workers fighting alongside Debs and Randolph demonstrated the power which organized labor could wield, nearly twenty-five years following the establishment of the BSCP, the Pullman town would be met with adversity once more.

Preserving the Historic District

Given rising interest in real estate demands within Chicago, the town of Pullman became a target for demolition and redevelopment. From the 1940s-1960s, many whites who

lived in Pullman had moved to the surrounding community of Roseland, while Italians, Polish, and Latinos began inhabiting Pullman. Pullman, Roseland, and Kensington, once interconnected communities, were now disparate and struggling economically. As employment disappeared in Pullman, the inhabitants of these communities were no longer coworkers and became distant from one another. Additionally, the Roseland area built new homes, despite the lack of work within the region. Vanishing industrial work within the suburban area of Chicago led an urban planning committee to create a plan to destroy Pullman and replace it with a new industrial park. Janice L. Reiff, a historian, described the response to this plan within the community, “They reactivated their World War II civil defense organization, the Pullman Civic Organization, and searched for a strategy to block the destruction. Their solution actually grew out of the conceived and perceived notions of the physical space in which they lived.”³³ Drawing on Henri Lefebvre’s triad of space, Reiff’s explanation of the Pullman’s community response underscores the historical significance which the town holds. Further, the community’s resistance and efforts to preserve their past revitalized the memories of Pullman, and in 1970 the site was designated as a National Historic Landmark.³⁴

Found in common throughout these three historic movements within the town of Pullman is the decline of economic sustainability. Within these (not exhaustive, but demonstrative) moments, community members transferred their efforts from workers and inhabitants into activists. These pivotal moments in the town’s history transformed not only the people within the town, but the town itself. As such, Pullman’s establishment as a national monument marks another transitory epoch for the space of the town.

The Pullman Strike of 1894 paved the way for labor unions to organize, mobilize, and negotiate on behalf of workers. Debs, along with fellow ARU members, forced the Pullman Company, and the U.S. government more broadly to recognize the demands of the working class. While it took several decades, and leadership from Randolph alongside the BSCP union members to continue the battle for equality, the historic district of Pullman became a *topos* for labor and civil rights. The historical development of the Pullman town, in addition to the site's establishment as a national monument by President Obama, begs the question as to how the once company-town of Pullman is remembered and forgotten. To investigate these memories, there are two artifacts which are abundant in commemorative properties: The Pullman National Monument Visitor's Center, as well as the accompanying A. Philip Randolph Museum, and President Obama's speech, establishing Pullman as a national monument.

Artifacts and Text

Given the importance of the Pullman Strike in labor history, it has been marked in public memory by two important and related rhetorical artifacts: The Pullman National Monument and President Obama's speech commemorating the events of Pullman at the site. While the historic district of Pullman was built in the 1880s,³⁵ it was not established as a national monument until February 19, 2015 by President Barack Obama. Within the town, there is a Visitor's Center, the *Historic Pullman Foundation*, which is "dedicated to preservation and interpretation of the Pullman neighborhood," and providing visitors with "video, exhibits, and tour programs" to educate attendants about the past of Pullman.³⁶ Additionally, the site includes a museum which preserves the memory of Asa Philip Randolph, the National A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum.³⁷ The stated purpose of this museum on the Pullman

National Monument website is to “educate the public about [The African American Railroad Employee’s] historic legacy and the contributions they made through the study, preservation, and interpretation of their stories that are inextricably intertwined.”³⁸ The Visitor’s Center and the museum present rich texts to uncover material modes of memory surrounding the labor movement. Textually commemorating this site, Obama’s speech serves as an interpretive resource for individuals who engage with the monument materially. Throughout this speech, Obama evoked the American Dream to situate himself, the town, and A. Philip Randolph within a progressive remembrance. Together, the monument and Obama’s speech serve as rhetorical artifacts which recall the past of workers’ rights within the Pullman Town and help us understand how the labor movement is diminished within the U.S. public. To better understand the history which audience members are asked to remember in these texts, I turn to the methods of rhetorical criticism I use to analyze these artifacts.

Analytical Approach

Rhetorical criticism is concerned with the examination of a text or texts, which seeks to promote a more nuanced understanding of how the text has consequences for the audience. While I have used the term “text,” the written or spoken word alone does not account for its definition. Rather, what I mean by text is rooted in how Brian L. Ott and Greg Dickinson define rhetoric, “*any discourse, art form, performance, cultural object, or event that—by symbolic and/or material means—has the capacity move someone.*”³⁹ (their emphasis). For my purposes, text is representative of both Obama’s speech, and the Pullman National Monument, as either has the potential to generate an affective response from the audience. While this is a

broad definition of rhetorical criticism, there are more specific approaches to how I critique these texts.

I adopt three sets of critical tools: the criticism of public address, critical rhetoric, and visual and material methods. Public address criticism is focused on the analysis of discourse which is circulating throughout the public sphere. For my thesis specifically, I use public address criticism to examine President Obama's speech, with attention to the ideas and memories which are evoked throughout the address. My analysis heeds Ernest J. Wraga's call: "There is need for an organized body of literature which places speeches and speaking in proper relationship to the history of ideas." In order to place speeches alongside ideas, I demonstrate the textuality of President Obama appropriating the memory of A. Phillip Randolph for the sake of reconciliation. This further explicates the ideology of liberalism within the United States. Related to this method of analysis by uncovering dominant ideas within authority discourses is critical rhetoric.

Raymie McKerrow's conception of a critical rhetoric seeks to uncover the problematic connection between "discourse and power."⁴⁰ The purpose of this critical rhetoric is "one of re-creation—constructing an argument that identifies the integration of power and knowledge and delineates the role of power/knowledge in structuring social practices."⁴¹ In short, critical rhetoric examines texts with the intent of discovering the underlying relationships of power within their discursive formations. In this thesis, I use critical rhetoric to investigate how the dominant memory of the labor movement functions to subjugate workers. In an examination of President Obama's speech, I argue that he articulates an epistemology among audience members which provides a false consciousness regarding workers' rights. Rather than

championing unions and collectivity which would benefit workers, Obama relies on heroic narratives of individuals to demonstrate the potential of the American dream, which further masks structural oppression.

In investigating how this occurs materially, I use methods of visual/material criticism. To demonstrate how President Obama's speech event transformed the neighborhood into a progressive capitalist culture, I attend to the experiential landscape of the national monument. In doing so, I show how the historic Queen-Anne Style homes provide a stark contrast to the decaying Visitor's Center and inoculate a desire to forget. Further, I also examine the practices of preservation and conservation of the museum, which result in specific "ways of seeing"⁴² the history of Pullman. Finally, I also examine the arrangement of the site, which has the capability to function as a narrative device, organizing a memory to be remembered as a progressive story towards a more perfect union.⁴³

In analyzing President Obama's commemoration of Pullman, I attend to the formal characteristics within speech, as well as the substantive myths of the American Dream. In doing so, I show how the overall stylistic choices create a desire to forget the federal government, and champion the ability for individuals to overcome structural oppression. Within the Visitor's Center, I attend to the remembrance of the strike to showcase the erasure of radicalism through practices of (re) presentation. This point is furthered within the A. Philip Randolph Museum, and its purifying of Randolph's socialist politics. Utilizing the criticism of public address, critical rhetoric, and visual and material methods, I demonstrate the pervasive ideology of liberalism surrounding the Pullman National Monument and the labor movement broadly.

Preview of Chapters

This thesis develops over the course of five chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter Two provides a literature review of public address, public memory and public forgetting, and space and place. Furthermore, I also develop the critical tool of the forgetful form in Chapter Two to explain how forgetting is made desirable in speech texts. Chapter Three analyzes the material dimensions of the Pullman National Monument's Visitor's Center and the A. Philip Randolph Museum to demonstrate how liberalism is made compelling through active forgetting within the presentation of objects and the outlying suburban landscape. This linear progressive narrative of the past further persists in President Obama's proclamation declaring Pullman a national monument, which is the subject of Chapter Four. In this chapter, I deploy the forgetful form to examine the arrangement and stylistic choices of President Obama's speech which urges listeners to accept the federal government as a benevolent agent in the struggle for equality. Chapter Five concludes the thesis with a summary of my arguments in the previous chapters, as well as a reflection on the methodological implications for future rhetorical scholarship. This thesis investigates the remembrance of the Pullman National Monument specifically, and the labor movement more broadly, all for the sake of understanding how the representation of labor unions within the United States has drastically dropped.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Before examining the Pullman National Monument and President Obama's address, I need to contextualize these artifacts and events. In the following chapter, I review the literature of Barack Obama's public address to show the strategies he has used in the past to appeal to the U.S. In doing so, I show how his pragmatic approach to politics enabled him to cast the American Dream as the solution to racism within the U.S. I also show how public memory has been taken up by rhetorical scholars to account as a resource for identity, and how public forgetting can result from formal characteristics within texts evocating memory, which I term as the forgetful form. I do so to show how President Obama created a desire to forget within the audience, and how this is carried over into the Pullman National Monument. Furthermore, I provide a review of scholarship which has attended to the materiality of rhetoric in order to contextualize my analysis of the Visitor's Center at the Pullman National Monument and the A. Philip Randolph Museum.

Public Address of President Barack Obama

Economic crisis, two inherited wars from the previous administration, and negotiating U.S. race relations were just some of the significant challenges facing Obama as President. Throughout his tenure in the White House, Obama navigated this difficult terrain to govern, utilizing carefully crafted rhetorical appeals in his public speeches, statements, and orations as some of his primary tools for success. Some of the most common rhetorical strategies Obama deployed throughout his presidency included maintaining a pragmatic approach to foreign and domestic relations, carefully and selectively addressing racism, and calling upon the American Dream as solutions to both previous strategies. To contextualize Obama's speech at Pullman, I

now demonstrate how pragmatism, strategically addressing racism, and the American Dream functioned as tropes for Obama's presidency.

From the campaign trail of his first election to the end of his second term, President Obama argued for cooperation and practical solutions. Obama highlighted the progress toward equality in the U.S.; however, he always stressed that there is still much work left to complete. To continue this progress, Obama routinely called for unity both abroad and domestically. Following the second Bush presidency, Obama was cognizant of the world's negative image toward the U.S. Addressing these concerns, Obama went on an international tour. In speaking to seven different countries, David Zarefsky explains how Obama navigated the contours of an international audience, "Obama acknowledged errors and imperfections on everyone's part, including America's; he stated that the United States cannot and should not work its will unilaterally; he urged other nations to be genuine partners; he advocated support for international organizations."⁴⁴ In a movement away from American exceptionalism, Obama did not portray the U.S. as a world superpower, but one nation in a constellation of many with a common purpose. Reflecting on the Obama presidency, Robert L. Ivie and Oscar Giner describe Obama's rhetorical construction of the U.S. as "part of a hemispheric culture,"⁴⁵ where democracy should drive all decisions. Obama's foreign policy rhetoric was a stark contrast to the Bush Doctrine, and a step towards a more democratic global landscape. In addition to forging collaborative relations abroad, Obama called for the same attitude towards domestic issues.

Commenting on issues from abortion to the controversy surrounding Reverend Jeremiah Wright, Obama maintained appeals to pragmatism and unity. During a

commencement speech at the University of Notre Dame, Obama drew on this approach to address the controversy surrounding his attendance, as well as the wider U.S. audience. Given Notre Dame's Catholic affiliation, their stance against abortion ran counter to Obama's presidential platform and several high-ranking officials within the Catholic Church raised concerns about his attendance at commencement.⁴⁶ Rather than avoiding the issue, Obama addressed abortion within his speech and used it as an opportunity to demonstrate the power behind democracy. Arguing for this as an example of agnostic democracy, Jay Childers explains how Obama overcame this barrier, "The president presented a democratic public sphere that was an inherently conflictual space, filled with the sound of reason and rhetoric that avoids demonizing others."⁴⁷ Operating as a synecdoche for the wider U.S., Obama's commencement speech at Notre Dame reflects his unflinching commitment to civility and democratic engagement. Indeed, John Murphy has argued for Obama's insistence on these principles, "The president recognizes the debate will not end; he implies the 'winner' will come from tests of practical efficacy and political power. He sees and constitutes a boundary to public deliberation."⁴⁸ Obama's pragmatic ideology is how he has come to construct the U.S. as a constant work in progress,⁴⁹ which requires a commitment to listening to all opinions.

A second significant theme within Obama's public address identified by rhetorical scholars are the ways in which he handled complex issue of race and racism. One of Obama's barriers to office was his status as the first Black president. Obama faced a double bind regarding race: Obama had several African American leaders support him throughout his campaign (i.e. Reverend Al Sharpton, Congress member, John Lewis, and Civil Rights Activist, Jesse Jackson) and needed to appeal to this community. However, as Darrel Enck-Wanzer

argued “if he acknowledges race or claims racism, he (a) risks the charge of racism by violating the rhetorical norms of neoliberalism and (b) risks marking himself further as ‘different’ in the eyes of many voters.”⁵⁰ In other words, Obama needed to appeal to his constituents, while also maintaining the norms of the presidency. Faced with this burden, President Obama opted for unification and turned to his pragmatic outlook.

Following Reverend Jeremiah Wright’s fiery sermon condemning the U.S., then presidential candidate Obama addressed the nation in a speech known as “A More Perfect Union.” Throughout this speech, Obama rhetorically constructed the people of the U.S. as different, but unified. Robert E. Terrill has argued that in this speech, Obama called upon W.E.B. Du Bois’ double consciousness to articulate this mode of citizenship, “Obama’s speech has invited his audience on each side of the color line to view themselves with other’s eyes...”⁵¹ Echoing this point, Derek Sweet and Margret McCue-Enser describe the effects of this unification, “As can be seen, Obama’s rhetoric offers a reconfiguration of responsibility that intertwines the personal with the communal.”⁵² Locating differing individuals within a broad community working towards a common goal enabled Obama to appease his constituents, while also maintaining the status quo of being president. To demonstrate the effectiveness of collectivity, Obama frequently recalled the Civil Rights Movement as a moment in U.S. history where individuals overcame their differences for the greater good.

For Obama, the civil rights narrative functioned as a rhetorical rich resource in unification yet was also an act of public forgetting. Sweet and McCue-Enser make the former clear, “Nowhere is Obama’s conception of unity from diversity more apparent than in his references to the Civil Rights Movement.”⁵³ However, in presenting the Civil Rights Movement

as an exemplar of his pragmatic ideology, Obama purified its memory of any radical activities. Terrill described the substance of this narrative “as an episode in a continuing Civil Rights Movement,” whereby “Obama had to distance himself from some of the perceived political liabilities” inherent within the movement.⁵⁴ Overall, the effect of this was a celebration of Martin Luther King’s early activist career, and a forgetting of Malcom X, Stokely Carmichael, and other Civil Rights leaders whose memories have not be sanitized.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Theon Hill speaks to the problematic nature of radical cleansing, “the movement’s legacy loses the ability to speak prophetically to the present. Civil Rights memory becomes the property of the status quo.”⁵⁶ Although Obama’s evocation of the Civil Rights Movement eased contemporary tensions surrounding his presidency, it also ignored the structural elements of racism. Through both Obama’s pragmatism, and his utilization of this ideology with regards to race, he championed the myth of the American Dream as the primary escape from oppression and despair.

A third major component of Obama’s public address was this use of the American Dream. Throughout Obama’s candidacy, the American Dream myth was a salient theme within his discourse. Mark P. Moore and J. Gaut Ragsdale provide a definition of the American Dream within the context of presidential rhetoric: “In tradition, the American dream is a story about success, prosperity, and a hope for a better life for oneself, one’s children, and one’s future generations.”⁵⁷ Similarly, Jason Edwards describes the American Dream as “the narrative of the United States is that its citizens are constantly working to better themselves, to progress, and to offer themselves as a beacon for other nations to emulate.”⁵⁸ In short, through hard work and determination individuals are capable of overcoming their circumstance for the sake of a

better tomorrow. To demonstrate the potency of this myth, Obama frequently fused his personal story with the American Dream. For instance, commenting on Obama's first campaign, James Darsey argued, "Obama has crafted a campaign in which his personal journey has coincided with America's journey as a nation, especially as that journey involves race."⁵⁹ Furthermore, Sweet and McCue-Esner explain how he achieved this through his address, "A More Perfect Union," "Obama advances the proposition that his own story—a unique story echoing with race, class, and global citizenry—is that of the U.S. people."⁶⁰ By providing his personal story as evidence of the American Dream, Obama offered himself as synecdoche for the broader U.S. Obama's version of the American Dream relies on overcoming issues of race. Yet, Obama was also burdened with maintaining the traditional narrative form of the American Dream, and thus remaining pragmatic, by emphasizing individuals overcoming extraordinary odds to prosper.

From Civil Rights leaders to newly ordained immigrant citizens, President Obama incorporated heroic narratives of people from humble beginnings working to achieve success within the national landscape. As I have previously described, Obama's portrayal of Martin Luther King as a central figure in the Civil Rights Movement afforded him with a sterilized narrative to discuss race; he also called upon King to discuss the fulfillment of the American Dream. Analyzing the "More Perfect Union Speech," Robert C. Rowland and John M Jones argue:

He accounted for [racial conflict] by first grounding his campaign in progressive myth, then moving to a discussion of how the problem of race reflected a broader failure to achieve the American Dream...And finally moving to a discussion of how the only

possible means of silencing what King called the ‘the jangling discords’ of race was to make the American Dream a reality for all citizens.⁶¹

Here, Rowland and Jones explain that Obama’s solution to the problem of race within the U.S. was to provide more avenues for individuals to prosper within the current structure. Obama extended this trope beyond the Civil Rights Movement and into the contemporary moment by championing immigrant citizens. In most presidential oratory, becoming a naturalized citizen within the U.S. serves “as a source of renewal for America,” and is thus deemed as a practical mode of championing individuals overcoming their circumstance.⁶² President Obama, by contrast, took this a step further by celebrating immigrant soldiers. Jason Edwards explains the potency of this rhetorical maneuver: “they not only overcame many hardships, as other immigrants did, but they placed their lives on the line to serve and protect the United States.”⁶³ Through his exaltation of immigrant soldiers, Obama provided the U.S. public with individuals who exemplified the American Dream, despite the limitations placed on their individual lives. Moreover, Obama’s strategic implementation of both the civil rights and naturalized immigrant narratives afforded him the opportunity to display the American Dream as a pragmatic solution to racism. With this in mind, my thesis contributes to this body of work on two levels.

To date, there is no rhetorical analysis of President Obama’s remarks at the Pullman National Monument. Although this alone is a weak justification for a new analysis, Obama’s consistent use of the American Dream and the conflation of race within it provides further credence to establish the Obama presidency. To this point, given Obama’s political experience within Illinois, this speech marks the bookend to his presidency, and that of his personal journey. The question, then, is how does America’s journey end within this address?

Furthermore, within scholarship regarding Obama's public address, his vision of the Civil Rights Movement has been depicted as cleansed and sanitized of radicalism. Yet, within his speech at Pullman, Obama celebrates A. Philip Randolph, an advocate of socialist policies, who led the March on Washington. With this, how does Obama remember a radical within the Civil Rights Movement? Overall, my thesis contributes to the scholarship on the Obama presidency by exploring how his vision of the American Dream ends with his personal journey, and how Obama remembers radicalism within the Civil Rights Movement. Next, I review the literature of public memory to contextualize President Obama's address at Pullman, as well as the Pullman National Monument.

Public Memory

Both Obama's speech and the monument make rhetorical appeals to memory. To understand how these memories function, scholarship on public memory provides a foundation for these analyses. Public memory, as defined by historian John Bodnar, "is a body of beliefs and ideas about the past that help a public or society understand both its past, present, and by implication, its future."⁶⁴ For the artifacts of the Pullman National Monument, rooting this thesis in public memory explains how these appeals have consequences for audiences today. I have chosen the term "public memory" to guide my analysis over other forms of memory because public memory serves as *topoi* for a broad audience. In contrast to collective memory, Thomas R. Dunn argues public memory, "address[es] entire communities, whether local, national, or worldwide."⁶⁵ Thus, public memory is pervasive in its reach, and effects large segments of the world. For this thesis, I highlight the roles public memory has in constructing identity and its constant state of controversy and competition. However, before turning to

rhetorical scholarship's contributions in public memory, it is necessary to distinguish between psychology's conception of memory and a more humanistic approach to memory.

Of the many forms of memory, public memory requires elaboration due to memory's long association in the West with psychology and the psychological. These disciplines have traditionally viewed memory as occurring within the individual. For instance, memory within the field of psychology, and specifically neuroscience views memory as a biological process, where "certain forms of memory [are] stored in the hippocampus and the medial temporal lobe."⁶⁶ This definition of memory is problematic because it understands individuals as outside of their surroundings and communities, as products of biology alone rather than a complex creation of the natural and social world. Although individuals have memories regarding events and places, these memories are reliant upon their (re)presentation within the public sphere, and therefore require attention.

Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist, recognized the issue with psychology's individual deterministic perspective in regards to memory in the early part of the 20th century, and demonstrated the reliance which memory has on material conditions, particularly other people.⁶⁷ For instance, Halbwachs investigated how memories of the family and social class traditions influenced individual's behaviors.⁶⁸ Environmental factors and exposure to norms within society create structures of memory. These structures are "a product of elite manipulation, symbolic interaction, and contested discourse."⁶⁹ In short, memory is never *only* constructed within an individual's recall; rather memory is reliant upon the context in which it is experienced. The elaboration of conceptions of memory beyond the individual have enabled rhetoricians to explore the consequences of such memories and the practices of their creation.

Indeed, Kendall R. Phillips has claimed as much, “The ways memories attain meaning, compel others to accept them, and are themselves contested, subverted, and supplanted by other memories are essentially rhetorical.”⁷⁰ Public memory as a rhetorical phenomenon is further evidenced by the fact that it is an “expressive form” which requires an analysis of its “textuality.”⁷¹ Regardless of the medium which public memory is presented through, its instantiations heed audience members toward a direction for the future, and have consequence when read. The manner by which these memories are presented, and the substance they contain is what makes them “inherently rhetorical”⁷² and ripe for investigation. The rhetorical study of memory has been a fast-growing sub-field since at least Stephen H. Browne’s call for attention to the textuality of public memory in 1995,⁷³ and this interest continues today. Within this scholarship, the role which public memory has in shaping identity has been heavily investigated.

Public memory functions as an ontological touchstone for members of a collective. The lived and experienced aspect of memory is the fundamental departure from history.⁷⁴ Further evidence of this claim is clear based on the temporal relationship memory has with material reality. Evocations of the past are educative for the present and can offer reassurance in moments of uncertainty. It is widely recognized that public memory is brought forth for the sake of the present, as Michael Kamen has argued, “We arouse and arrange our memories to suit our psychic needs.”⁷⁵ These arousals of memory depict a particular image of the public, but also of the individuals which constitute the public. Bodnar poses the relationship between public memory and identity as an existential one, “Public memory is produced from a political discussion that involves not so much specific economic or moral problems but rather

fundamental issues about the entire existence of a society.”⁷⁶ Public memory raises questions about civilization at large and has consequences for its audience members’ lives. As such, memory images of individuals within the public, whether constructed through text, visuality, or materiality, are resources for constituting the self.⁷⁷ It is in memory that we learn about ourselves, who we ought to be, and how we ought to live.

Given the wide reach of public memory, and the representation it claims of multiple and diverse individuals, it is perpetually in a state of controversy and competition. As Browne has explained, “public memory is always the source, identity, and product of controversy.”⁷⁸ This rhetoricity of public memory indicates the impossibility for a holistic account of the past.⁷⁹ Phillips observes this point contrasting memory with history, “memory, on the other hand, is conceived in terms of multiple, diverse, mutable, and competing accounts of past events.”⁸⁰ Thus, that which is remembered is highly selective and up for debate, as Blair, Dickinson, and Ott explain, “because public memory is definitively partial, it is subject to challenge on the grounds of its nature as such.”⁸¹ Moreover, public memory is likely to be evoked whenever challenges to dominate remembrance occur, as opposed to amnesia in instances of reconciliation.⁸² The partial and selective nature of public memory, as well as its contingent nature, result in constant flux. Memory’s malleability is a consequence of this flux, and at its extreme can lead to public forgetting.

Public Forgetting

The contestation of identity in public memory is resolved, at least in part and temporarily, through public forgetting—defined as the active effort to collectively disregard elements of the past in order to promote a more stable future.⁸³ Further, it is through the

methodical selection and rejection of thoughts and ideas that public forgetting aids in the maintenance of hegemonic narratives. Scholars have described the relationship between public memory and public forgetting in two distinct ways: as a dialectic and as two interwoven concepts. Memory and forgetting as a dialectic view the two as antonyms. This is the kind of view that Kendall R. Phillips has in mind when he quotes Pierre Nora to describe the fluidity of memory, 'Memory is life...it remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting...'”⁸⁴ While designating forgetting as memory's opposite is convenient, it may also be too simplistic. Blair, Dickinson, and Ott contend, “we believe that the remembering-forgetting dialectic has been employed as a stand-in or simplistic restatement of the problem of representation in public memory studies.”⁸⁵ In other words, for the majority of memory studies' scholarship, scholars have declared that which is absent as being forgotten. Yet, other rhetoricians have suggested the dependence that each have with one another, as Bradford Vivian has argued, “We remember because we forget, and we forget in order to remember.”⁸⁶ While establishing that remembering and forgetting are intertwined, it is also important to note that not every absence is a form of forgetting.

When conceptualizing forgetting, there is a wide variance in what constitutes a meaningful absence. Blair, Dickinson, and Ott argue for an approach which removes forgetting from the forefront, and instead focus on the “presence” and “persistence” of some memories over others.⁸⁷ Attention to presence and persistence helps reveal the dominant themes of a specific epoch; however, this method is concerned with that which is remembered, and not forgotten. Greg Dickinson offers a more conscious focus on that which is forgotten. Dickinson explains that a rhetorical critic can analyze acts or places of forgetting by “Carefully attending to

memory texts and contexts” which “can afford critics clues about the specific memories that are pushed aside, are actively made absent, or are repressed.”⁸⁸ In an exploration of megachurches, Dickinson calls for attention to the “experiential landscape”⁸⁹ of the place. An experiential landscape “creates embodied subject position that entail particular modes of looking,”⁹⁰ either towards or away from memories. Through the contextual components of a memory place, a critic can determine the significant components of absence. While experiential landscapes are useful in examining the materiality of forgetting, what can be said for the textual element of forgetting?

Vivian has suggested public forgetting occurs in a “double movement,”⁹¹ whereby, rhetors advocate for a movement away from problematic, or unproductive notions of the past, and towards a new or “profoundly altered”⁹² memory. At the core of these instances of public forgetting are “vivid idioms,”⁹³ which reveal the relationship that audience members ought to form with their communal past for the sake of their future. It is through these idioms, Vivian argues, that rhetorical scholars uncover the practical dimensions of public forgetting. Related to Vivian’s argument, I suggest we uncover instances of public forgetting through attention to the form of forgetting.

The Forgetful Form

Due to the complex nature of the term “form,” my suggestion requires further elaboration. By form, I am not referring to the medium through which a message is delivered (traditionally conceived of as a channel). Although a speech broadcasted on television, viewed on YouTube, or the history which is experienced by a museum visit do alter the audience’s

perception of a memory, referring to these as “forms” conflates the investigative scope of form to the expectations created through the mediated experience.

Instead, my argument is grounded within Kenneth Burke’s conception of form in *Counterstatement*, “form is the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite.”⁹⁴ Through this understanding of form, it is apparent that form extends beyond how the audience *experiences* the message, but also how the message is *presented* through its development. While the medium carries formal characteristics (such as a presidential address broadcasted on television creates an expectation of importance to the nation, or the objects and artifacts presented within a museum manufacture a notion of authority), within the substance of a text there are formal components which create desires within the audience. As such, the desire to forget is a kind of arousal which can only be affectively generated within the audience through form.

Encouraging an audience to disregard a part of their past has a kind of Streisand effect, whereby attempting to obscure information ironically brings it to light.⁹⁵ Vivian explains this irony in Hitler’s urging of the public to forget the Armenian genocide, “asking others to forget something ironically draws attention to, and brings to mind or memory, that very thing.”⁹⁶ For malevolent, rather than productive forgetting to occur, the rhetor cannot ask the audience to forget the past, but must rather create a desire within the audience to do so. Dickinson has explained that forgetting may be a favorable attitude towards the past, claiming, “In short, forgetting can be an object of desire.”⁹⁷ With the inability to openly advocate the forgetting of a history, a rhetor must textually inscribe the desire to disregard painful memories. As Burke claims, “Form in literature is an arousing and fulfillment of desires.”⁹⁸

In my analysis of President Obama's address, I demonstrate how the arrangement, stylistic features, and selective editing of the speech created an appetite to forget the federal government's suppression of civil rights within the audience. Through the organization of commemorative sites within the speech, the synecdochical illustration of A. Philip Randolph as fulfilling the American Dream, and the movement of the camera from Obama as giving a speech, to him as signing a bill during a key turn in the speech, Obama created a desire to forget. This forgetting desire has the potential to result in disregarding the federal government's involvement in maintaining the status quo during the Pullman Strikes, and today. Furthermore, this desire has the capacity to champion individualism and disregard structural oppression. Overall, the formal characteristics of President Obama's address create a desire to forget the working-class' struggle in a capitalist economy. In order to examine the Pullman National Monument's materiality, I will now provide a review of space and place literature.

Space and Place

The study and theorizing of rhetoric, which was formalized within the original trivium of the liberal arts (aside logic and grammar), had been conceptualized within the context of speech. The spoken word in Athens, the origin of rhetorical training and education, was the primary mode of democratic and civic engagement. Throughout the historical development of rhetoric and rhetorical criticism, scholars have devoted their research to speeches, newspapers, and other forms of text. While early scholarship in rhetoric examined a variety of texts, these studies were carried out with an attention to their consequence on people. However, the evolution of rhetoric has resulted in a turn towards the investigation of protests, visibility, and materiality. Greg Dickinson has noted, "Rhetorical theorists have theorized rhetoric through

notions of symbolicity...As rhetorical critics and theorists we seldom pay strict attention to the materiality of the symbol.”⁹⁹ One of the problems with an exclusive focus on symbolicity is it may “obscure the consequentiality of rhetoric.”¹⁰⁰

With this recognition, rhetorical studies has expanded its focus towards space and place. A rhetorical account of materiality is unique not only in object, but also in invention. Through analyzing the material dimensions of our world, we are better able to understand the social relations which constitute our surroundings, as well as ourselves.¹⁰¹ Investigating the modes by which monuments, museums, and everyday spaces condition our bodies to interact with the world around us help us consider how the resources we have influence the construction of our individual, collective, and public identity. Prior to turning to these rhetorical investigations, it is important to draw a distinction between space and place, as these concepts have generated a considerable amount of controversy.

Space and place are interconnected and dependent upon each other yet should not be confounded with one another. The demarcation, and naming, of place is one of the most significant differences between space and place. Places are discrete precisely because they are named, which consequently allows for them to be recognized.¹⁰² We know where the White House is located, and how to get to it because we have designated the site as different from its surrounding space. Michel de Certeau has defined place as “the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence.”¹⁰³ For de Certeau, places are preconfigured, and suggest or imply a kind of action within them. Due to these strategies¹⁰⁴ (in the sense that de Certeau uses the word), places impose power because, “They act directly on the body in ways that may reinforce or subvert their symbolic memory

contents.”¹⁰⁵ Through the arrangement of objects in a place, it materially invites visitors to participate in their own destination for remembering, which affects their memory of the representation. While places may have a designated route for visitors to utilize, there is no way to account for the ways people incorporate this in their use of the space.

Space is open and lived, it is how we “make use”¹⁰⁶ of place. There is no clear boundary for space, it “allows movement,”¹⁰⁷ and is brought into being by performance.¹⁰⁸ Henri Lefebvre compared space to form, “Space is social morphology: it is to lived experience what form itself is to the living organism.”¹⁰⁹ In other words, Lefebvre conceptualizes space as the realm of living and being. We live and exist within space, but we also construct space through our existence. Doreen Massey has argued that “space [is] the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny.”¹¹⁰ While space is an arena for the construction of ourselves, it is also simultaneously constructed through our use. What should be evident following this discussion on the distinction between space and place is that place is defined and specific, whereas space is open and practiced. Now that I have delineated space and place, I turn to their temporal elements.

Much like memory, materiality is temporally defined and constrained. Through their analysis of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr. defined the relationship of time to materiality, “The text of the Memorial changes materially over time. Each addition alters the text, for it focuses on a different individual, a different aspect of the war, or a different meaning a visitor has attached to his/her experience of the Memorial.”¹¹¹ The affect of a space or a place is always in a state of becoming and differs with each individual. In the same vein as Heraclitus’ observation that “man could not step into the

same river twice,” the experience and performance of a space (which may occur within a place) shapes both the individual and the space. With this recognition, it becomes clear that not only does identity change over time, but the spaces which identity is performed within are altered as well. Indeed, Massey has argued that space is “always under construction.”¹¹² The permeant evolution of spaces and places point not only to how temporality affects space and place, but also to how we remember the past.

As places evolve, our remembrance of their past changes, as does the performance of ourselves. There is a pronounced connection between memory, space, place, and identity. Dickinson has articulated the interdependence upon these concepts, “memories are encoded in spatial structures for the purpose of engaging audiences in matters of belief and action.”¹¹³ This quotation demonstrates the rhetorical nature of the intersection between materiality and memory. One of the ways this quadratic relationship emerges is through the arrangement of exhibits in a museum. One strategy which may be present within a place of memory is an invitation of spatial practices, which adhere to a temporal form. In analyzing the Buffalo Bill Museum, Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki describe the presentation of objects in relation to time, “The spatial movement through these three exhibits, then, follows a past, present, past temporal structure.”¹¹⁴ How a museum remembers the past through practices of display evolves as the place is curated, which alters the parameters for ways of being that visitors experience. Furthermore, museums and other places of memory are also significant regarding their touristic practices.

Crucial to understanding how places function as sites of memory is the fact that many of these places are catered to visitors. These places, which have been designated as museums,

memorials, and monuments, are constructed with the notion that people will travel to experience their memories. A unique relationship between place and visitor is formed through this interaction, Blair, Dickinson, and Ott have argued, “The touristic context is rooted in a projected or desired departure from the ordinary.”¹¹⁵ The touristic context is part of what Michael Kamen has deemed the “memory industry,”¹¹⁶ or the “commercialization of tradition and the modernization of national memory.”¹¹⁷ Emerging places have led to an emerging economic incentive; the commodification of memory. An interest in memory has led to the construction of these places, and in turn, these places have constructed memory.

Built environments of memory places interpellate bodies of visitors into specific ways of seeing and knowing. This is accomplished through modes of representation and the form of architecture within the place. Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki have provided insight into how representational strategies operate within museums, “Through their various modes of display, museum curators and designers, interpret artifacts and render them meaningful.”¹¹⁸ Selection of what artifacts to showcase within an exhibit underscores the type of narrative that is invited to be remembered from the memory place. Furthermore, the selection of some objects implies the rejection of others. Places of memory are also significant for the movement they invite within their space. As alluded to previously, the arrangement of representations has consequences for how the audience comes to know about the past of objects. For example, Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki’s exploration of the spatial narrative told by the Local History Room reveals, “The movement from the past to present to past again is virtually seamless and suggests that the qualities embodied in the artifacts of the Local History Room are a product of place, not time.”¹¹⁹ Performing within the space of a museum has a bodily affect upon the

visitor, which functions to reaffirm a kind of memory. In other words, it is not the substance of a museum alone that constitutes a public memory, rather the material context for the substance implies a way of seeing and knowing the content.

While the shift in rhetorical scholarship towards materiality has produced several implications for our field, in my investigation of the Pullman National Monument, I draw on the experiential landscape and practices of (re)presentation to demonstrate how the monument urges an acceptance of a linear progressive narrative. In my analysis, I draw on the experiential landscape as a mode of active forgetting by illustrating how the practices of preservation within the town favor the suburb over the labor strike. Furthermore, engaging with literature regarding the practices of (re)presentation in museums, I argue that the erasure and obscuration of radicalism within the Visitor's Center and the A. Philip Randolph Museum functions to forget the collective efforts of workers during the labor movement.

Synthesis

Within this literature review section, I have demonstrated President Barack Obama's utilization of the American Dream myth, and the post-racial consequences of such a reliance. Further, I have also grounded the theoretical framework of my analysis in public memory, public forgetting, and space and place literatures. In order to examine the rhetorical modes of memory and forgetting within both President Obama's speech, and the proceeding monument, I draw from methods in rhetorical criticism, which I detail in the introduction. In the next chapter, I draw on these literatures on methods in order to analyze the rhetorical appeals to memory made at the Pullman National Monument.

Chapter III: Remembrance at the Monument

Getting to the Pullman National Monument is inconvenient. If you are coming from the airport, or downtown Chicago, you have to drive through the busy traffic of the city to reach the suburbs. Once you have made it to the outskirts of the city, the narrow and winding streets of the town of Pullman lead you to the monument. Without any designated parking on-site, you must leave your vehicle within the surrounding neighborhood before walking up to the monument. After exiting your car, you begin the path towards memory. However, the journey from the car to the Pullman National Monument induces guests with amnesia about the history of labor. Through the aesthetic contradictions between the monument and the surrounding neighborhood, visitors are privy to the mutable properties of public memory.

Upon arriving at the Historic District of Pullman, visitors are greeted by several blocks of Queen Anne Style homes, which are continually refurbished and preserved for the sake of historical accuracy. The *Pullman Homeowner Guide*, located on the Pullman Civic Organization's website, outlines the guidelines which residents are to follow regarding maintenance and repair of their homes. Quoting the Commission on Chicago Landmark's *Guidelines* on historical preservation, the homeowner guide provides readers with advice regarding their houses: "Properly and consistently maintaining significant features [windows, doors, roofs, masonry, etc.] is the surest way of conserving landmarks."¹²⁰ Additionally, the guide explains the regulations of living on a historical landmark, ranging from building permits to services for general repairs. The exterior of the houses which makeup the peripheral of the national monument are meticulously cared for and regulated. Perpetually painted, decorated, and

repaired, the homes and buildings on the walk to the Visitor's Center are visually compelling, and uphold the traditional Queen Ann Style architecture. However, the aesthetic concern for architectural preservation does not carry over to the Visitor's Center.



Figure 1. Historic District of Pullman, as observed via Google Images. Screenshot taken March 22, 2019 by James O'Mara.

Walking from the diligently cared for homes to the neglected Visitor's Center, guests experience the contradictory, contested, and selective presentation of public memory. Designating its place within the totality of the Pullman National Monument's space, the Visitor's Center announces itself on a banner on the outside of the building. Accompanying this banner is overgrown moss and vine, which is discolored and likely dying. Just beneath the banner is an emergency exit door, painted blue with rust stains and visible damage from inclement weather. Located in front of the view of the degenerated structure is a stage with a

damaged supporting foundation, several cracks within the staircase leading up to the platform, and paint peeling from the base of the stage. Rounding the corner of the building to the entrance of the Visitor's Center reveals a collection of decayed plants whose presence is evocative of a forgotten cemetery. Together, these aesthetic and formal presentations found on the exterior of the Visitor's Center produce a neglected attitude towards the preservation of the town's history.



Figure 2. The outside view of the Visitor's Center at the Pullman National Monument. Photo by James O'Mara.

The experience of getting to the Visitor's Center reveals the malleability of public memory and underscores the active forgetting within the monument. In stark contrast to the landscape external to the Visitor's Center, the building itself interpellates guests into a state of

amnesia. Seemingly unrecognizable from the rest of the town, the building's outside aesthetics refuse any appeal to aggrandizement, or any interest in preservation. Memories of the town's past are available to guests, yet they are actively made less desirable to engage with than the neighboring community. The irony between the preservation of the town and the building dedicated to remembering the pivotal moments in the town's past fosters a yearning to forget struggle and activism and remember the progress of capitalism. Presentation, arrangement, movement; materially and visually hinder the remembrance of the town, and the labor movement within the monument. Met with these appeals from the onset of the visit, these are the modes by which the Pullman National Monument participates in forgetting the labor movement.

In this chapter I argue the rhetorical appeals to memory throughout the monument accentuate the progressive aspects of the town, A. Philip Randolph, and the federal government, while actively forgetting socialism and the blockades created by the U.S. in the struggle for equality. To demonstrate how liberalism conceals the radical politics of the town's past, I show how this mode of remembering and forgetting affectively engages guests through invited spatial performances alongside images and exhibits which conform to the narrative of a unified nation. Liberalism permeates the public memory of the Pullman National Monument and dissuades visitors of remembering the ideology and the tactics which led to worker's coalitions and the labor movement.

Remembering Pullman—The Man and The Town

The curation and design of the Visitor's Center urges guests to remember the town within the broader framework of liberalism through persistent appeals to progress and achievement. Moving guests within the space of the Visitor's Center, several exhibits display images of George M. Pullman from family man to entrepreneur, as well as awards and certificates which celebrate the efforts of historical preservation within the town. Located between and outside these exhibits which exemplify progress, there are images and references to the Pullman Strike of 1894. However, these memories are shrouded by and converted into the ideology of liberalism. Masked within this form of remembrance, the Visitor's Center engages in forgetting by stifling the ability to view and read radical critique from the past of the Pullman town.

The most prominent strategy of active forgetting within the Visitor's Center is the promotion of George Pullman and the town over the labor strike. Encountered immediately following an introduction by the attendant, photographs and texts of George M. Pullman are presented to visitors. The largest picture of the exhibit and arranged first within this collection is of George Pullman. This image features Pullman wearing an elegant frock coat and holding a pocket watch in his left hand. Clearly a posed picture, guests are invited to view the man as successful and powerful. Beneath this photograph, the caption reads Pullman as an exemplar in the American Dream, rising from humble beginnings and becoming a successful business owner. Here, the image and the accompanying caption situate George Pullman within a progressive narrative, where guests read Pullman as overcoming adversity, and see the result as success. Personalizing the model-town founder, the images within this exhibit also display his wife, his sons, and his youngest daughter. One photograph pictures the family together at their

vacation home in Thousand Islands. This image frames George Pullman as the head of the house, seated on a rocking chair next to his wife and his children at their side. Rhetorically, this image reflects a traditional family structure, which humanizes George Pullman by underscoring the care he expressed for his family. This exhibit engages in active forgetting by privileging Pullman's work ethic and personable nature, over his tyrannical control over the company. The selection of images and captions within this section of the Visitor's Center acts as a hermeneutic resource for guests to view and read George Pullman as a considerate within the past of the town. Themes of progression and humanization are characteristics of George Pullman further evinced in the exhibit featuring his legacy.

Proceeding throughout the center, George Pullman's contributions to the education system in the town is the subsequent exhibit which constitutes the past within liberalism. Quantitatively and qualitatively, this exhibit is the largest within the Visitor's Center. Expanded over the surface of an entire wall, the exhibit showcases over 20 images of George Pullman's school within the town. The photographs vary between representations of the school itself, the blueprints for the school, and various teachers conducting lessons in their classrooms. Viewed from left to right, the photographs display the progression of the school from abstract space to functioning place. Captions below these images explain that George Pullman envisioned this school as a testament to his patriotism, "he believed that American workers must be well educated to be creative workers and good citizens." Following this caption, Pullman's Will is featured, and explains that the remainder of his estate be dedicated to establishing a school in the town. Here, the presentation of the caption and the Will molds George Pullman's character into a compassionate philanthropist. Appointing this character of George Pullman within the

Visitor's Center elicits a progressive reading of his past, and further promotes the remembrance of the man as humane and generous. These progressive and benevolent depictions of George Pullman frame his public memory within a liberal narrative of the town by emphasizing his congruent characteristics. In other words, these exhibits display the aspects of his past which can be smoothly integrated into a public memory of the town which helped transform the U.S. In this way, the Visitor's Center actively forgets George Pullman's guilt in the strike of 1894 by selecting these images and texts to foreground his remembrance. Furthering this form of forgetting, the Visitor's Center also celebrates the town's achievements.

Featuring well in excess of 50 objects, and presented behind a glass display case, this exhibit selects the elegance and excellence of the Pullman Town for guests to remember. Unavailable to touch, these objects resemble the presentation of fine art.¹²¹ Limiting the sensorial experience to the visual mode, this exhibit reflects grandeur and dignity within each award. The glass display case beckons guests to attend to each award diligently and examine each object closely. Staged in this form, the exhibit urges audiences to view (and only view) these awards with reverence. With this expectation created within guests from the presentation of the awards, the selection of objects grants the Visitor's Center authority to recall the Pullman town's past from a glorified perspective.

The awards in the exhibit situate the town in U.S. history, and further transforms the suburban exterior into a progressive remembrance of the past. Harkening back to the experiential landscape, one award from the *American Society of Landscape Architects* recognizes the Pullman town as a national landmark for its "outstanding landscape and architecture." Here, the award celebrates the suburban scenery within the Visitor's Center itself

and situates the experiential landscape within the narrative of liberalism. Another plaque awarded by Illinois Council of the American Institute of Architects designates the town “as one of the 150 great places in Illinois,” on the institute’s 150th anniversary. These awards, as well as several others, extol the significance of the town on both the national and the state level. As visitors carefully gaze upon each object, they are invited to imagine the town and the preservation efforts extended to the neighborhood as pivotal moments for the development of the U.S. Choosing to present these awards adjacent to the George Pullman exhibit furthers the promotion of a progressive narrative by championing the accomplishments of the preservation efforts over the labor strike. Furthermore, the awards exhibit compels guests to attend to the suburban landscape, and places these appeals within the exhalation of a progressive remembrance. Overall, the awards exhibit actively forgets by contributing to the constant appeals to liberalism.

Together, these exhibits of George Pullman and the celebration of the town actively forget the public memory of the Pullman Strike. Selecting these images and texts in the Visitor’s Center harbor a benevolent remembrance of George Pullman, within the scene of a regal town. Arranged first and featured as the largest exhibits in the Visitor’s Center, materially these exhibits appeal to guests in grand style. George Pullman’s presentation functions as active forgetting by obstructing memories of his past in the involvement of the labor strike of 1894. Similarly, the awards exhibit diverts focus away from this strike, and towards the accomplishments of the town. Driving attention towards George Pullman’s achievements and the suburb’s preservation efforts actively forgets the memories of the unionization, and honors progressive capitalism. Performing forgetting in this way, the Visitor’s Center makes less

desirable the remembrance of wage slashes, rising rent costs, and worker layoffs. In short, the presence and persistence¹²² of liberalism encumbers the memory of atrocity. However, memories of the strike are not absent from the Visitor's Center, but their evocations are consummated through reconciliation.

Forgetting the Pullman Strike

In the only exhibit throughout the Pullman National Monument featuring the Pullman Strike, the Visitor's Center champions Labor Day as the most important achievement from the event. In this exhibit, the public memory of the strike *is* available to visitors, however it is distorted to favor reconciliation. This presentation is made more significant due to its multiple sensorial engagements from audiences. The exhibit is described as "interactive," where six binders lay across a black wooden table for guests to flip through to learn about the strike. In contrast to the awards exhibit, museumgoers are encouraged to touch and participate with these memories. Touching, feeling, and turning the pages of each binder, audiences become active agents in their remembrance of the Pullman Strike. Interacting with matter produces an affect within an agent and has the potential to amplify the resonance of its symbolic contents.¹²³ In other words, in actively engaging with the binders, visitors are more likely to hold the information presented to them with high regard. With guests primed haptically, the exhibit visually delivers liberalism.

Reconciling the strike with the achievements of the town, the images and texts within this exhibit celebrate the establishment of Labor Day. Throughout all the binders, two stories are presented "What could have happened?" and "What actually happened." On the cover of each binder, a different actor in the strike is pictured from George Pullman and the workers to

Illinois Governor John Altgeld and President Grover Cleveland. The first story is always the substitute, followed with reality. Within the substitute, a variety of narratives are presented, and the consequences for these substitutes are explained. For example, from the perspective of workers, the exhibit provides guests with three separate alternative narratives. In one narrative, the workers decide not to strike, and nothing happens. In the next narrative, the strike causes the company to go bankrupt and is bought out by a competitor. In the final narrative, the strike is successful, and workers receive better pay and reduced rent. What is most striking about these narratives is that each alternative end with the conclusion that "THERE IS NO LABOR DAY." In this interactive exhibit, the consequences of any revisionist history are deemed unworthy to the celebration of Labor Day. Thus, the holiday stands in for workers' rights. Exemplifying this is Cleveland's narrative, "What actually happened." Which recalls U.S. troops being sent into Pullman to break up the strike, the story ends with a resolution "Six days after the strike ended, you signed legislation to establish Labor Day as a national holiday." The selection of this interactive exhibit absolves the federal government of responsibility in the Pullman Strike by celebrating the establishment of Labor Day. The public memory fostered by the interactive exhibit contributes to the permeance of liberalism by appeasing an atrocity in U.S. history by aligning it with progress.

The presentation of benevolent memories of the Pullman Town's past over the brutality strike of the strike is one method of active forgetting within the monument. Celebrating both the man and the town for their progressive achievements, the Visitor's Center establishes the past within the frame of liberalism. Furthering this promotion is the interactive exhibit for the Pullman Strike, which highlights Labor Day as a monument achievement for the death of

workers. These choices in public memory hinder the ability for guests to remember the tragedies of the strike, as well as the efforts to organize workers in unions to fight for equality. Another strategy of forgetting for liberalism incorporated by the Pullman National Monument is the erasure of radicalism.

Erasing A Radical Past

Liberalism is made compelling through persistent appeals and co-optation. Within Pullman, co-opting figures such as Eugene V. Debs and A. Philip Randolph meant rejecting their socialist politics for public remembrance. These rejections are found through the presentation of Debs and Randolph, as well as the absence of their politics entirely. I do not mean to conflate absence with forgetting; however, the recontextualization of Pullman from the past to the present and retold within a museum affords curators with the ability to select and reject objects and stories of the past to fulfill their purpose with the exhibition.¹²⁴ Erasing socialism from Debs' and Randolph's memory made possible two compatible characters for liberalism to flow through. To demonstrate how this forgetting occurs, I turn to the Visitor's Center and the A. Philip Randolph Museum.

Images and texts of Debs are sparse throughout the Visitor's Center, and these representations uphold the dominant narrative of conflict between worker and company. Guests are first introduced to Debs in the display case of the gift shop at the beginning of the exhibit. A flyer titled "Pullman *The Strike of 1894*," which celebrated the centennial event in 1994, features George M. Pullman and Eugene V. Debs at odds with one another, with the Pullman town pictured in the background. Although neither George Pullman nor Eugene Debs are explicitly named in this flyer, their aesthetic features (Pullman's thick goatee and Debs' thin

hairline and boyish face) demarcate their representations. Presenting Pullman and Debs in opposition to one another functions to forget the federal government's involvement within maintaining the Pullman Company's dominance in the strike. Persistent throughout materiality, visuality, and textuality (which I turn to in Chapter 4), is the incorporation of the Pullman Strike as an event in U.S. history where citizens fought for their rights against an iron-fisted company owner. The narrative presented here is only partially true—what is forgotten is the pivotal role which the U.S. government and the Supreme Court specifically, had in the unrest at Pullman. Refusing to hear the concerns of the Pullman workers, the Supreme Court remained complacent throughout the struggle for rights within Pullman. The flyer presented at the beginning of the Visitor's Center propagates this narrative by positioning Pullman and Debs as enemies and lacking a representation of the federal government. Resulting from this narrative is the atonement of the federal government within oppressive labor relations in the U.S. In addition to this image, Debs is also featured near the end of the tour, flaunting his run for presidency in 1904.

Throughout both the Visitor's Center and the Randolph museum, Eugene V. Debs' campaign poster for presidency in 1904 is the only object which displays socialist politics within the monument. Nearly the final object of the exhibition in Visitor's Center, the campaign poster is framed and features pictures of Eugene V. Debs, captioned with "For President 1904," and to his right, a picture of Ben Hanford as vice president. In a headline above both images are a banner in red font reading "THE SOCIALIST PARTY." Furthermore, the logo for the socialist party, a handshake between two people featured in front of the globe, with the words "Socialist Party," around the peripheral of the image, covers the top left corner of the poster. In

the background of Debs and Hanford, two white men are placing their votes in a ballot box, while other workers are attending to their toil.

The importance of this poster is its authenticity. Featured within the Visitor's Center, this poster interrupts the annihilation of socialist politics and displays an alternative to liberalism. Substantively, a relic of Debs' socialist past featured within a traditional memory institution authorizes the importance of radical politics to the labor strikes in Pullman. Overall, the content of the campaign poster is unaltered and remains true to the memory of Debs and Hanford. However, the formal components of the poster's presentation are the mode whereby the ideology of liberalism reigns supreme.

Located at the end of the exhibition, and cast into the shadows of the Visitor's Center, the socialist campaign poster's presentation forgets the radical past of Pullman. The positioning of the campaign poster is crucial to understanding how public forgetting occurs here. In cognitive psychology, serial-position effect holds that items in a series located at the beginning and the end are more likely to be remembered among audience members.¹²⁵ Although the poster is the second to last object of the exhibit, it is not the final item within the series. Exiting the Visitor's Center, guests pass by the gift shop. Therefore, guests are introduced to Debs' socialist politics following the torrent of liberalism and before being confronted with the gift shop once again. Arrangement also functions to forget socialism by obscuring its presence in relation to the other objects of the exhibition.

Designating the socialist politics of Debs to the exterior of the Visitor's Center obscures its view and allows for the further promotion of liberalism. The campaign poster's position is located away from the center of exhibition and relegated to the perimeter. The consequences

of this arrangement are found within the demeanor of its presentation. Designated to the outside of exhibit, guests are not directly invited to investigate the socialist politics of Debs. As a result of this spatial organization, directly behind the poster is a projector broadcasting a progressive narrative of the history of Pullman on a large canvas. As such, the room is dimly lit and increases the effort required to examine the objects surrounding the video. Here, the liberal narrative of Pullman materially obscures the memory of Debs' socialist politics. While the content of Debs' presidential campaign poster highlights his socialist politics, the presentation of this object functions to forget this aspect of his life. Erasing socialist politics from public memory touches even the museum dedicated to the memory of a socialist—the A. Philip Randolph Museum.

Throughout the tour of the museum, guests must engage in the spatial practices of a progressive past. Upon entering, guests are directed to the top of the museum to watch a video which provides the background of Randolph and the BSCP. After viewing the short film, visitors travel down the staircase to second floor of the museum. Performing the evolution of memory during their visit, guests are guided from the bottom floor, to the top floor, and back to the second floor. These vertical movements are breaks in temporality for both the present and the past. In the present, each floor signifies a different part of the tour. The tour begins at the top and ends at the bottom. For the past, the top floor provides a video which explains Randolph's relevance for today. The second floor is dedicated to Randolph's achievements during the Civil Rights Movement, and the bottom floor presents the memories of the efforts to unionize the Pullman Porters. The arrangement of the tour spatially codes guests with liberalism by having

them move in reverse order throughout Randolph's life. Materially inscribed upon their bodies, guests remember the progressive past of Randolph.

Within this museum, as is true for the Visitor's Center, the absence of socialism makes way for the triumph of a liberal remembrance of the Civil Rights Movement. Victoria J. Gallagher has detailed the consequences of such erasure, "black experiences and history are acceptable to the extent that they emphasize problems of the past in terms of progress rather than current failings."¹²⁶ As the museum is presented for contemporary consumption, the past of Randolph and the BSCP follows this theme identified by Gallagher. Specifically, within the museum the appropriation of Randolph's magazine *Messenger* serves the purpose of positioning Randolph as a liberal hero within the linear narrative of progress in the history of the U.S.

Messenger was a flagship publication within the Harlem renaissance during the early 20th century. In the first essay in the magazine, Randolph made the case for socialism within the Civil Rights Movement. Throughout the essay titled "Our Reason For Being," Randolph urged Black workers to align with the Industrial Workers of the World, and avoid the temptation to unionize under the banner of the American Federation of Labor, who had the "desire to hold back this trend of Negro labor radicalism."¹²⁷ Randolph closed his essay by arguing for radical action in the workplace among the Black community, "we urge the Negro labor unions to increase their radicalism, to speed up their organization, to steer clear of the Negro leaders and to thank nobody but themselves for what they have gained."¹²⁸ What should be apparent at this point is that Randolph's publication of *Messenger* was inspired by socialism, and saw the

issues of race and class intertwined. Yet, the museum's exhibition of *Messenger* is absent of any radical critique.

The museum's spatial arrangement of *Messenger* homogenizes the public memory of Randolph to fit within the narrative of liberalism. Displayed on the bottom floor of the museum, the final stop of the tour, an article from *Messenger* is positioned alongside Abraham Lincoln's emancipation proclamation. Guiding guests from the end of slavery within the Union, to the publication of *Messenger*, visually incorporates radical alternatives as a part of the broader progressive narrative in the U.S. The presentation of a historical continuum here conflates the resistance which Randolph advocated for throughout his life with the reconciliatory memory of the federal government. In short, Randolph is remembered as the product of Lincoln's emancipation. Furthermore, the substance of the exhibition performs the selective recollection of public memory.

Forgetting through erasure is the mode by which the content of *Messenger* within the museum utilizes to maintain the linear narrative of progress within the U.S. Although the magazine ran from 1918-1928, the museum presents the first page of an article titled "The Case of the Pullman Porter," dated July 1925. This article features Randolph as the author and describes the working conditions of Pullman porters. For example, Randolph began, "The Pullman porter is in a miserable and tragic plight. His wages are low. His hours of work are long. His condition under which he works are bad."¹²⁹ Clearly, this article was selected by curators with the intention of providing a historical account of Randolph's involvement with the establishment of the BSCP, however the absence of socialism occurs within the caption of *Messenger* below the framing of the article. Explaining the history of the publication, the

subtitle reads, “The articles in [*Messenger*] helped the porters make their hardships known to the public...One month after its publication the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union was founded.” The purpose which this exhibit serves is to solidify Randolph within the labor movement, outside of the politics which invigorated him to organize the BSCP. Furthermore, the absence of Randolph’s politics serves the greater hegemonic tendency within U.S. public memory to sanitize radical incongruences of the past, to form a more perfect union. These absences are further embraced by the museum in the presentation of Randolph’s memory within the Civil Rights Movement.

Highlighting the role which Randolph had in the March on Washington, an image of Randolph is featured under the banner of “Dedication,” which functions to further obscure his politics. On the second floor, visitors are directed towards an image of Randolph seated with fellow civil rights leaders, Row Wilkins, Rev. Thomas Kilgore, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Additionally, a bulletin explaining the March on Washington is presented, and features the demands being made by the movement. An accompanying placard explains that these leaders met with President Kennedy to discuss racism within the U.S. Robert E. Terrill has explained that the public memory of King within the Civil Rights Movement is canonized and sanitized of any disjuncture from the progressive narrative of the U.S.¹³⁰ Consequently, placing Randolph within the narrative of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 converges his public memory with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s, and effectively presents him as a liberal hero of the U.S. This erases the radical politics Randolph held (as well as King) by selectively remembering Randolph in moments where he had seemingly conformed to an agenda congruent with popular memory. Throughout all three floors of the museum, Randolph’s socialist politics are absent and replaced with

cleansed narratives of progress. The spatial coding renders guests as active participants in this narrative and hinders the remembrance of radical critique within the town.

Erasing the radical politics of the prominent figures within the strikes of Pullman maintains the congruency of remembering the U.S. as always moving toward equality among its citizens. These instances of forgetting socialist politics further evince the Pullman National Monument as a site dominated by liberalism. Cleansing Debs, and more prominently Randolph, of their beliefs allows for the demonstration of their exceptional individualism within the U.S.'s past. The public memories featured throughout the Pullman National Monument align with liberalism by forgetting the very ideology which inspired these individuals to fight for equality and union membership within the U.S. Actively forgetting the Pullman Strike, and radicalism is further reinforced through the souvenirs from the gift shop.

Commodifying Public Memory

Exhibitions of public memory such as museums and monuments are often conceived of not only to tell the story of the U.S. but are also founded on the principle that a profit can be generated from visitation. Museums are deeply rooted within tourism, and the very act of traveling to these places encourages guests to participate in the economy of the memory industry.¹³¹ Yet, the commodification of public memory does not halt at the guest's visitation to the site, it also occurs once a guest has arrived at their destination. Sabine Marschall argues that public memory allows for the commercialization of the past, "the political process of authorizing selected memories – involving careful framing, inspired packaging and symbolic branding – conveniently prepares the ground for private enterprise to step in and appropriate such heroes and famous events for commercial exploitation."¹³² Although Marschall is referring

to the ability for these memories to be appropriated by surrounding businesses, profit is extracted from guests within the museums themselves . For example, museums often charge an entrance fee and afford guests with souvenirs to personalize public memory. Marita Sturken explains that tokens of public memory have implications for citizenship, “Thus, such objects of memorialization encourage particular kinds of political acquiescence.”¹³³ Investing into a museum or monument, both in traveling to the site, as well as making a purchase at the gift shop conditions visitors with guidance for future action. Attending to these objects and their materiality at the Pullman National Monument help better explain how the labor movement is forgotten in favor of liberalism.

Central to understanding how the gift shops at both sites function to reinforce liberalism are the embodied movements which compel guests into purchasing their souvenirs. Moving from the exterior to the interior of the Visitor’s Center, guests are welcomed by a brick wall memorial. Another door separates this memorial from rest of the Visitor’s Center. Within this in-between space, guests are invited to contribute to the public memory of Pullman. This in-between space materially connects present and the past, which directs the gaze of the guest towards a memorial of individuals. Red bricks with black font remember the lives and experiences of friends, family, and loved ones. Individual, yet collectively presented, these memorial bricks enable a participatory remembrance of the Pullman Historic district. Urging guests to cement their lives as monument, this brick wall memorial prepares visitors to pay for memory.

Once guests have entered the Visitor’s Center, they are further interpellated by the tourist industry. Positioned at the beginning of the tour, the attendant welcomes guests into

the center from behind the counter of the gift shop. Ordered in this manner, the first two installments of the Visitor's Center which the guest experience are components of the tourist economy. Consequently, the design of the Visitor's Center frequently prompts museumgoers to examine the contents of the gift shop and purchase a sanitized token of remembrance. Although distinct, these appeals made by the built environment are also found within the A. Philip Randolph Museum.

The architecture of the museum operates with a repetitive form to persuade attendees into making a purchase. First, the arrangement of the gift shop within the museum mirrors the Visitor's Center, as it is experienced by the guest prior to the presentation of an amnesic memory. Walking up the stairs to begin the tour, the staircase briefly halts to display the gift shop. This halt focuses the tourist's vision toward the gift shop and postpones the tour. Rupturing the narrative of Randolph and the BSCP, the liminal space of the staircase creates a yearning for remembering. The interruption of the gift shop within the middle of the spatial narrative functions as a formal characteristic of the museum, which as Burke explains is common within form, "at times [satisfaction] involves a temporary set of frustrations, but in the end these frustrations prove to be simply a more involved kind of satisfaction."¹³⁴ The frustration of delaying the remembrance of Randolph and the BSCP builds anticipation for the consumption of the information presented throughout the museum. Read in this way, the staircase postpones the exposure of public memory to the guest and instills within the audience an appetite to consume this memory once it is available. The experience of moving from the top of the stairs to the ground floor presents a different but connected reading to this one.

Secondly, in addition to the repetitive form between the Visitor's Center and the museum, within the museum the tourist industry experience is repeated. Once the video is finished, guests must travel back down the stairs and pass by the gift shop again to continue the tour. Now with a taste of the history of Pullman and Randolph from the video, guests are once again encouraged to pay for memory. As the gift shop is positioned in the middle floor, attendees are urged to visit the gift shop once again. The persistent display of the gift shop functions both to interrupt the memory presented within the museum, and to invite consumptive subjectivities within guests. With these operations of the gift shop imposed upon the guest in their museum visit, the objects within the gift shops are important to understand the holistic experience of the museum.

The gift shop at the Visitor's Center cleanses souvenirs of the labor strike and promotes a progressive remembrance of the town in its place. Walking through the front door, the exhibit attendant welcomes the guest to the building from behind a glass display case. Within this display case, souvenirs, apparel accessories, and trinkets of the Pullman National Monument are available for purchase. This gift shop provides visitors with the opportunity to take a piece of public memory with them. However, the items included within this display case have been purified of any conflict involving the strikes or workers' rights issues. For instance, lapel pins, cuff links, button sets, and tie tacks reading, "Pullman," are available for purchase. However, these accessories provide no memory of strike, nor signify the town's importance to the labor movement. These pieces of memorabilia limit the potentiality for guests to incorporate memories of the labor movement into their everyday lives. Rather than functioning as touchstones which have the capacity to affectively engage tourists with working-class struggle,

cleansed and commodified, these tokens of visitation promote liberalism within guests by presenting objects which fit within a smooth narrative of progress. The souvenirs of the Visitor's Center eradicate the labor movement from purchase. Bolstering active forgetting upon leaving the monument, these relics deter individuals from remembering either the Pullman Strike or the radical politics of the town. The museum instills liberalism through its presentation of Randolph as an exemplary individual.

The memorabilia presented at the museum for purchase displays Randolph as a liberal hero for Pullman. After learning about the history of Pullman and A. Philip Randolph from the video presentation, tourists who return to the second floor to purchase a piece of memorabilia are presented with cultural artifacts which provide additional representation of the BSCP and Randolph. Again, similar to the Visitor's Center, these objects are presented from behind a glass display case and require permission from the attendant to access. Given the repeated hailing of guests to the gift shop, the selection is unremarkable; featuring only around 10 items for sale. Among these items presented there are three books, one DVD, one design of stamps, and two types of t-shirts. Aside from the stamps, there is no representation of Randolph and the BSCP without alluding to the museum in his honor. For example, one of the t-shirts features Randolph alongside a fellow Pullman porter, with red bold text below reading, "National A. Philip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum." Refusing to celebrate Randolph separate from the museum incorporates his image into the progressive memory of Pullman. Commemorating Randolph in this manner places his past alongside the appeals made throughout the museum to liberalism. These souvenirs mirror the active forgetting in the museum by forging the memory

of Randolph as synecdochical for the town. Active forgetting is also made appealing through the suburban landscape.

Revisiting the Suburb

Forgetting within the Pullman National Monument makes possible liberalism, but also the celebration of consumer culture. Anthropologist, Paul A. Shackel argues, “the labor movement has long been overshadowed by the celebrated innovations and advancements of capitalism and the industrial revolution.”¹³⁵ In other words, forgetting the labor movement has been productive for the praising of progression. At the monument, the labor strike, as well as socialist politics are forgotten for the celebration of suburban preservationist efforts. The formation and cultivation of suburbs are indicative of late capitalism’s advancement of consumer culture. Greg Dickinson argues suburbs are at the site of “economic and ideological transformations of industrial and consumer capitalism.”¹³⁶ Walking through the suburban neighborhood of Pullman and to the monument presents this very transformation. Preserving the suburb over the Visitor’s Center presents guests with the experience of moving from consumer capitalism, and into industrial capitalism. Here, the concern for presenting public memory clearly favors consumerism over industrialism and negates activist efforts of the labor movement which took place in the latter. For the Pullman National Monument, the experiential landscape represents the active forgetting within the Visitor’s Center and the A. Philip Randolph Museum. Furthering this active forgetting are the appeals made within monument to the suburb.

Throughout the Visitor’s Center and the A. Philip Randolph Museum, images and texts of the town reify attention to the outlying suburb. An exhibit titled “The Model Town,” features

several historical photographs of Pullman as it developed. Signifying their authenticity, these images are black and white, and feature accompanying captions which explain the historical development of the various buildings and homes. Similar to the education exhibit, “The Model Town” exhibit is spread across an entire wall and features an abundance of images similar to the one described above. Evincing here again, the presentation and selection of objects within the Visitor’s Center diminishes the memories of the labor movement within Pullman. The celebration of the suburban neighborhood persists within the monument and turns attention to this history over organized labor. Promoting consumer culture through the suburb is also a feature of the gift shop at the Visitor’s Center.

As I documented in the previous section, the commodification of public memory cleanses radical politics, but it also urges visitors to remember the suburban landscape. The souvenirs at the Visitor’s Center only reference the town as separate from its past. This separation does constitute a progressive remembrance, but what it remembers is the suburban landscape. From this perspective, the absence of labor strike or union organization memorabilia encourages guests to remember the town, but only the town. In other words, the beauty and grandeur of the suburban homes are made memorable within the gift shop by this erasure. Not only are visitors compelled to participate in the commodification of public memory, they are urged to remember consumer culture.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the Pullman National Monument constructs a public memory of the town within the framework of liberalism, which actively forgets the labor strike

and socialism. To support this, I have shown how the experiential landscape indoctrinates guests with a progressive remembrance of the past by favoring the preservation of the suburban neighborhood over the monument. Further, throughout the Visitor's Center, George M. Pullman's memory is presented a benevolent figure and the prestige of the town, and the suburb, suppresses memories of the labor strike. Liberalism promoted through active forgetting is also evidenced throughout the Visitor's Center and the A. Philip Randolph Museum by the erasure of socialism. Additionally, these themes of forgetting are also employed within the souvenirs of the gift shops, which evoke a progressive vision of the town.

Forgetting within this monument is not only evident by the absence of some parts of the past, but also through the presentation of objects. The proximity of Eugene V. Debs' socialist poster to the theater within the Visitor's Center actively forgets this past by ensuring that is difficult to view. Positioning Randolph's contributions to the Civil Rights Movement alongside King functions similarly by aligning his image with the accepted narrative of the struggle for equality. These objects are present, and accessible to guests, but they are made difficult to access, and thus actively forgotten. Absence and erasure are strategies which I have identified in both memory places, but objects which ought to evoke memories of a radical past are presented in a manner which promotes progress and unity within U.S. history. This remembrance is further promoted through the distinction in preservation efforts.

Experiential landscapes provide context to what is forgotten within places of memory, and the intertwinement of their symbolism and materiality can serve as modes of active forgetting. Praising the suburb through careful maintenance of the homes, and the presentation of awards throughout the Visitor's Center hinders the ability to remember the

strike and the radical politics of the town. The accolades of preservation efforts place the suburb within a progressive remembrance, and these preservation efforts themselves serve to celebrate the progressive aspects of capitalism within consumer culture. Dissuading guests to visit the monument by the contradiction in aesthetics, the materiality of the experiential landscape actively forgets the labor movement within the town's past. Once inside the Visitor's Center, although materially manifested, the symbolism of the awards for preservation stifles the ability to remember the labor strike. Together, through the symbolic signification of the experiential landscape through awards, and the material location of the suburb, the labor movement is forgotten in favor of liberalism. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, this form of remembrance is further evinced within the speech which President Obama delivered to commemorate the monument.

Chapter IV: The Designation of the Pullman National Monument

The public memories of a local area are often made to fit the broader narrative of the nation's dominant values. John Bodnar has argued this point, explaining, "Usually it is the local and personal past that is incorporated into a nationalized public memory rather than the other way around."¹³⁷ As these local memories are brought into a wider public frame, a locality's past is commonly situated within a nationalistic context to justify the importance of the memory's publicity. In other words, when a town, or a community is commemorated before a national audience, it is represented as the whole for the U.S.'s values. This chapter argues that the transformation from a local memory rich with resources for contemporary activism to a national public memory appeases the potential for change by promoting liberalism. Frequently, liberalism which advances a progressive remembering of the U.S.'s past is evoked by orators to transform a local place to a national monument.

The promotion of progress from the past to the present within the U.S. functions to remember the nation as constantly evolving towards unification. Public memory rooted in liberalism operates by remembering oppositions to the U.S. as suggestions to improve the nation moving forward. Sacvan Bercovitch argues, "American Liberalism serves to exclude alternatives to the dominant culture by limiting the opposition to terms which are intrinsic to the patterns of dominance."¹³⁸ Remembering previous moments of contestation in the U.S. is driven by liberalism to repurpose the past by celebrating the nation's progress. Furthermore, liberalism appeals to progress within individuals rather than collectives. Ronald Lee and James R. Andrews have argued, "liberalism roots progress in the accomplishments of exceptional

individuals.”¹³⁹ Through the championing of great individuals, orators reinscribe the values of the U.S. in a form which can be emulated. These appeals to great individuals limit the ability for collective action by insisting on personal action from audience members. Emphasizing progress and compromise over dissent was the kind of remembrance which took precedence within the monument.

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how the Pullman National Monument rhetorically appeals to a progressive narrative of the past. Visiting the monument presents public memories which celebrate the compassionate actions of the U.S., and actively forgets the labor strike and the radical politics of the town. These material inscriptions function in the Visitor’s Center and the A. Philip Randolph Museum to forget the dissenting voices of the labor movement within Pullman and reinforce the remembrance of progress through the commodification of public memory in objects and souvenirs. Guiding bodies through spaces which have been purified of socialist politics, the monument produces a canonized memory of Pullman that aligns its past with the progress of the U.S. These modes of forgetting are omnipresent within Pullman and represent the rhetorical appeals traditional memory institutions make regarding the labor movement writ large in the U.S. To extend this claim beyond the monument itself, I explore how this forgetting occurred during President Obama’s announcement of the national monument.

In this chapter, I examine how Obama’s speech establishing Pullman as a national monument transforms the local public memory of Pullman into a national public memory by celebrating the American Dream within the town. Displaying Pullman for a national audience meant distorting its past to better reflect a hegemonic narrative of the U.S.’s contemporary

values. In order to extol this progressive remembrance, Obama's address guided the audience to remember through what I term the forgetful form.

Kenneth Burke argues that form generates an expectation, or an assumption of something to follow, and then delivers on this promise. Form is the development of a text into an understanding of its symbols, which in turn produces desire within the audience to act.

Richard B. Gregg argues that Burke's conception of form accounts for how symbols structure and shape the audience's consciousness, "If [they] are successful in [their] forming of individuated images, then certain ideas or principles are bodied forth in characters [they] develop, and may be seized upon, re-translated, and synthesized by members of the audience."¹⁴⁰ Form is the process of encoding and decoding content, with the purpose of moving the audience. To forget, an orator cannot simply ask the audience to disregard an aspect of the past, for this highlights that very memory. Rather, the text must move, or compel the audience to act in forgetting. Thus, appeals to forgetting are manifested in texts through stylistic choices of symbolic formations. The forgetful form arouses memories of a past which are congruent with the present needs of the moment and makes alternatives to this narrative desirable to forget. Overall, it is through the style and arrangement of content which drives an audience to forget.

Obama's forgetful form and subsequent remembrance of the town's past through liberalism transformed Pullman into a national public memory by erasing dissent in favor of a sanitized narrative where the U.S. government is a benevolent agent for progress. Consequently, remembering Pullman within this narrative of progress represses the radical potential of the town's memory for contemporary change. In this way, both the materiality of

the monument, and the textuality of its establishment forget the foundation of the labor movement, which limits the ability for the public to imagine the U.S. outside of an oppressive economic structure. Before turning to an analysis of Obama's speech, the context of the speech and of the two strikes are necessary to understand how dissent is diminished within this address.

Text and Context

On February 19th, 2015, at the Gwendolyn Brooks Preparatory Academy, President Barack Obama evoked the Antiquities Act of 1906 to establish the Historic District of Pullman as a national monument. The speech lasted almost exactly 21 minutes and marked the finish of the long-standing struggle within Pullman to be recognized as a national monument. Several Chicago politicians, both Republican and Democrat, urged Obama to designate Pullman as a national monument prior to this announcement. Describing the support for this occasion, *Washington Post* reporter, Juliet Eilperin explained, "On Sept. 30, four Illinois Republicans — Sen. Mark Kirk and Reps. Rodney Davis, Aaron Schock and Adam Kinzinger — sent Obama a letter urging him to declare it a national park."¹⁴¹ The designation was also a political move, as the monument designation was near the time of the mayoral race in Chicago. Incumbent Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who served as Obama's chief of staff, was praised for his efforts during Obama's commemoration. In this way, the monument designation served the purposes of remembering the Pullman Town's importance to U.S. history, as well as offering the current Mayor of Chicago a boost in support. In addition to these surrounding elements, the date of the speech was also an important component for the commemorative properties of the address.

On February 19th, 1942 Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. This executive order enabled the U.S. military to forcefully relocate Japanese-Americans as a strategy of war. Following the attacks on Peral Harbor, this invasive relocation method resulted in the internment of around 112,000 Japanese-Americans, the majority of which were considered U.S. citizens. *Politico* contributing editor, Andrew Glass described the effects this internment had on Japanese-Americans, “For the next 2 ½ years, many of these Japanese-Americans endured difficult living conditions and poor treatment by their military guards,” despite the fact that, “About 80,000 were second-generation, U.S.-born Japanese who held U.S. citizenship or third-generation children.”¹⁴² Two years later, in the Supreme Court case, *Korematsu v. United States*, the Court upheld the decision of FDR to issue this executive order, and reasoned that it was constitutional.¹⁴³ This court case has not been overruled since it was initially upheld. Adding to the significance of this date for Obama’s speech is that he also designated an internment camp in Hawaii as a national monument in the same speech. In my analysis section, I show how this contributed to Obama’s forgetful form, and rendered the U.S. government as a good-faith actor in citizen disputes. Another important detail to the development of Obama’s address in Pullman is the video which accompanied the speech.

For a more holistic account of the rhetorical appeals made in President Obama’s speech, I examined the video recording of the address. The video which I analyze was edited by *NWI Times* media company and was uploaded to YouTube the day the speech was delivered. I have chosen this text for two reasons. First, this video was the only text available on YouTube prior to the creation of *The Obama White House* archive on October 27, 2016.¹⁴⁴ Retroactively, *The Obama White House*’s video recording denotes that it was posted on February 19th, 2015,

however this is impossible as the channel itself was not created until the following year.

Uploaded prior to the official archive, the *NWI Times* text provides rich rhetorical resources in understanding how the address transformed Pullman in that historical moment. Secondly, I have chosen this video because it is the most prominently featured result found on search engines. If someone were to try and find a video of the speech on the internet, search queries such as “Obama at Pullman,” “Obama and Pullman,” “Obama February 19th, 2015,” the *NWI Times* video edit is the first result to appear which is relevant to the speech at Pullman.

Consequently, this speech edit is the one most likely to be encountered by internet users interested in viewing the address in the future. In my subsequent analysis of this video, I show how the visual characteristics of Obama’s speech contributed to the foundation of a benevolent U.S. government. To understand the meaningful absences within Obama’s speech, I now turn to a brief description of the history of federal intervention blockading the labor movement in Pullman.

Federal Intervention in the Labor Movement

Throughout the history of Pullman, the federal government has been one of the most significant agents in stifling progress for workers. Significant to understanding the origin of the Pullman Strike is the economic panic of 1893, whereby “six hundred and forty-two banks failed and twenty-two thousand and five hundred miles of railway went into receivership.”¹⁴⁵ This economic crisis led unemployed laborers to seek help from the U.S. government. In March of 1894, thousands of unemployed citizens traveled to Washington, D.C. under the name “Coxeyites” to petition Congress for relief. However, this march had no effect on Congress, and was ultimately ignored by the nation.¹⁴⁶ Neglecting the troubles of workers during this march in

1894 led to further discontent within the nation broadly, and the town of Pullman specifically. With reduced wages and silence from the federal government, workers in Pullman broke out in a strike.

Although town founder George M. Pullman's reluctance to share the burden of an economic recession was the point of contention which led to the strike of 1894, the U.S. government sided with the company against the workers during this struggle. In May, the Pullman employees voted to strike and shutdown railroad transportation across the nation. The stoppage of mail was the most significant consequence for the federal government. Halting mail deliverance led the Federal Court in Chicago to issue an injunction on Pullman, and President Cleveland sent U.S. troops to the town to restore order.¹⁴⁷ Yet, numerous scholars note that violence and riots did not occur in Pullman until after the injunction had been issued. Labor historian Bernard J. Brommel quotes the Chicago Chief of Police at the time explaining, 'It is a notable fact there was no trouble where there were no troops...The U.S. troops came near being held responsible for the entire trouble.'¹⁴⁸ Furthering this point, historian Almont Lindsey argues, "Although delayed, rioting and disorders finally broke out in Chicago, but not until after federal troops had been distributed."¹⁴⁹ Both of these accounts illustrate the centrality which the federal government had to inducing violence within Pullman, and blockading progress for workers' rights. Over thirty years later, governmental barriers would become a chief concern for the establishment of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

Randolph's career as a labor organizer was plagued by federal courts, which stifled the efforts for workers to unionize. The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) stood near 6,000 members strong in 1926, and with the passage of the Railway Labor Act, Randolph and

the Black Pullman workers had an opportunity to be legitimated as a labor union. After being ignored by the Pullman Company president, Randolph took the next step and wrote a letter to the U.S. Board of Mediation to call for a hearing on the dispute between the company and the porters. Labor historian, Andrew E. Kersten explains the fallout from arbitration, “The Mediation Board Investigator Morrow concluded that there was no possibility of a settlement and that the Mediation Board had exhausted its efforts under the law.”¹⁵⁰ Failed negotiations between the BSCP and the Pullman Company led to a drastic decline in union membership. For the next ten years, Randolph struggled to reorganize workers and raise funds to fight on their behalf. Although FDR’s New Deal and the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 were a catalyst for the BSCP to unionize, the prior stance of the federal government stood in the way of progress which had negative consequences for workers over the proceeding decade.

What should be apparent at this point is the crucial role which the federal government had in exacerbating labor relations. Federal courts refused to hear negotiations between the workers and the company on several occasions. This neglect fostered resentment and doubt about the possibility of change for the working-class. The strike in 1894 was a direct result of the indifference the federal government displayed for workers and was ultimately ended by the deployment of troops which injured and killed workers. In this way, the U.S. did not enable citizens a fair shot at success, but instead created structural barriers which aided large-scale companies to continue exploiting their workers.

As I demonstrate below, the U.S. government’s involvement in the development of the labor movement is forgotten in President Obama’s remembrance of Pullman. In place of this absence, the celebration of the American Dream is made possible. This abeyance reframes the

U.S. as a benevolent institution which grants individuals with the opportunity to overcome obstacles. I now turn to the text of Obama's address to examine how the president situated the public memory of Pullman within the American Dream through three modes of remembrance in this speech: Obama's American Dream, the forgetful form, and Pullman as a progressive past for the U.S.

Obama's American Dream

Obama recollected his own path towards success and validated the American Dream for a national audience. His personal remembrance of progress through Chicago projected an idealistic notion of success based on merit, whereby those who work the hardest are afforded the most opportunity. Moreover, Obama's personal narrative of success, from the local place of Chicago to national recognition, imagined a progressive U.S., moving from a problematic past toward a unified nation. As such, Obama's story of success rooted within Chicago invited a remembrance of Pullman as a story where individuals became exceptional citizens. This personal memory contributed to the forgetting within his address by ignoring the systemic inequities faced by many citizens and initiated a narrative for the Pullman Town to be remembered within.

Obama began his address by illustrating the importance which Pullman had to his development as an individual. He established his personal connection with the location he was commemorating, explaining, "It is good to be home. Even-even in February. It's always been a dream of mine to be the first President to designate a national monument in subzero conditions."¹⁵¹ This first declaration was a signal of his investment in the place he was located; Chicago, and by extension, Pullman, is "home" to him. He asked for the audience to imagine

him as a product from the environment which was being commemorated. President Obama continued situating his story within Chicago by providing a vivid description of the surrounding area, “This exit right over here, either 111th or 115th...I took that just about every day for about three years. I drove by this site every day...where my first office of my first job in Chicago was.”¹⁵² This depiction provided Obama with a representation of closeness to the town of Pullman. With his individual recollection of the nearby highways and the Pullman district, Obama demonstrated his personal link to Chicago, which afforded him the authority to speak on behalf of the town. By recollecting his personal history in Chicago as an ordinary citizen, President Obama laid the groundwork for his testament to the U.S. as the land of opportunity. As the audience is aware that Obama is the president, beginning his address by providing his memories of Chicago meant that the rest of his success story was to be expected. Resilience, effort, and resolve are characteristics which Obama attributed to his success and contributed to the development of Pullman's importance within U.S. history as a roadway for the American Dream. In situating Chicago and Pullman within U.S. history, Obama explained the importance of Chicago for his own life.

Transforming from a boy in Chicago, to U.S senator, and finally U.S. president was framed as the result of President Obama’s hard work and determination. In the American Dream myth, the prerequisite for a brighter tomorrow is hard work today. For Obama, Chicago was the place which enabled him to develop a strong work ethic. To introduce his own experience of struggle: “This is the area where I became a man. I learned so much about love and work and loyalty and friendship.”¹⁵³ This recollection envisioned Chicago as the city where Obama overcame adversity and learned what it meant to be a leader. For Obama, becoming a

"man" was the result of developing a strong work ethic and persevering through difficult times. Chicago was the place where Obama was afforded the ability to traverse through adulthood and live the American Dream. Describing the path from boy to man, Obama further recalled his rite of passage from the local to the national, defining Chicago as, "a place where I cut my teeth in getting involved in politics and organizing."¹⁵⁴ Here, Obama directly situated his narrative of struggle and success within Chicago. The personal memory of a humble beginning, which Obama recalled, contributed to his progressive vision of the United States by becoming a synecdoche for the evocation.

Within this introduction to President Obama's address, the American Dream is celebrated and located within Chicago. Tracing his roots from Illinois, to his destination in Washington D.C., this personal story narrates the rise from an ordinary person to riches and displays how even the President of the U.S. had to work hard to become successful. This recollection positions Pullman within the national public memory by serving as the origin for the first Black President. Obama's vision of his past appealed to the patriotic values of American meritocracy and identified Chicago—and by extension Pullman—as the site for his milestones. In short, Obama's story is a synecdoche for the larger U.S.'s progressive memory of the past. As I demonstrate below, this narrative structure is reflected within Obama's remembrance of Pullman. This structure promotes the town as an exemplar in the American Dream and forgets the inherent discord of the labor movement with the U.S. Prior to cementing Pullman within national public memory, Obama delivered a forgetful form to make appealing the absence of remembering the injustices committed by the federal government.

President Obama's Forgetful Form

Through the forgetful form, Obama pointed to Pullman as a place where citizens of the U.S. could learn about the values of the nation. Chief among these values is the American Dream. Throughout Obama's address, he constituted a public whose success is based on a meritocracy, which is afforded to individuals through a benevolent government. Consequently, the amnesia of Obama's address contributes to the contemporary Pullman monument by excluding an alternative ideology to the social and economic structures of subjugation and exploitation. Through the arrangement of monument commemoration, the editing of the video that accompanied the speech, and the selection of public memory, Obama forged a desire to forget the federal government's involvement in the denial of labor and racial rights and contributed to a liberal history of progress for the U.S.

Forgetting Internment

Obama's selection of February 19th to announce the founding of three new national monuments promoted a desire to forget the U.S. President's agency in disrupting civil rights. The speech was made on the 73rd anniversary of Executive Order 9066, where President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the military to capture and imprison Japanese-Americans. Despite the significance of this date, Obama does not acknowledge it throughout his designation of the internment camp as a national monument. The abeyance of this recognition allowed for the remembrance of the U.S.'s violent past, while also forgetting the primary figure responsible for the violation of civil rights-President Franklin Roosevelt. The rhetorical effect of this selective amnesia rendered the ceremony as reconciliation, which prepared the audience to view Obama as a stabilizing actor, moving from a problematic past and towards a more progressive future. The choice of the date and the subsequent absence of signifying this anniversary cleansed the

presidential role of malpractice in the U.S.'s past. Following this purification, Obama reconstituted the memory of the Japanese-American internment camp to substantiate a linear narrative of progress for his presidency and the broader U.S., which exemplified the American Dream.

The arrangement of this commemoration in the address served to position Obama and the U.S. as a continual work in progress. This form of remembrance became the scaffolding for which Obama would incorporate into his narrative about the town of Pullman. Cementing himself within Hawaii to provide the locus of his origin, Obama explained "Now, first, we're announcing a new park in my home state -- before I was adopted by Illinois -- my home state of Hawaii."¹⁵⁵ Here, audience members are invited to read Obama's personal story as advancing towards national significance. His life began in Hawaii, he moved to Chicago, and through hard work and determination, overcame adversity, becoming the president of the U.S. As has been a trope throughout his presidency, Obama collapsed his own personal story into the broader narrative of the American Dream to bolster an evolving image of the U.S., from troubled past to hopeful future. By transference, Obama's address also depicted the theme of progression within the U.S. as central to Hawaii.

The commemoration of an internment camp for Japanese-Americans in conjunction with the town of Pullman acknowledged a travesty on behalf of U.S. and satiated a yearning for justice regarding the obstruction of civil rights. As this commemoration is located prior to the celebration of the Pullman town, the confession here functions to forget the president's role in disrupting labor rights in Pullman. In other words, by first condemning the U.S. for the relocation of Japanese-Americans, and then remembering Pullman, the arrangement of this

address alleviated the need to hold the federal government accountable for their actions in stifling labor relations. Reconstituting the internment camp, Obama explained, “Going forward, it’s going to be a monument to a painful part of our history so that we don’t repeat the mistakes of the past.”¹⁵⁶ Obama’s remembrance of the Honouliuli internment camp turned attention away from the atrocities of the federal government in Pullman, and towards those in Hawaii. Obama’s designation of the internment camp in Honouliuli as a national monument created a place to project the blunders of the federal government. This projection selected the site of remembrance for national contestation which aided in the selective amnesia of federal intervention in Pullman. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of an internment camp within this commemoration demonstrates the kairotic nature of public memory.

The recognition of a Japanese-American internment camps pointed to a past which the U.S. had infringed on the civil rights of U.S. citizens, and transformed these memories to serve the present need of showcasing the transformation of the nation’s values. Rather than casting the memory of confined Japanese-Americans into oblivion, Obama utilized the announcement of the national monument to contrast the actions the federal government had previously carried out, with the current actions the federal government has pursued. Thus, within Obama’s specific remembering of the internment camp, audience members view Obama and the U.S. as emerging from a past to create a more progressive future. The forgetful form of Obama's address is further evidenced through the selective editing in the speech video.

The Video

The video recording uploaded by *NWI Media* of Obama’s address invited a remembering of the U.S. where the executive branch intervenes for the good of its citizens. Throughout the

entirety of Obama's speech in Pullman, which lasted nearly 30 minutes, the video recording made one edit.¹⁵⁷ The significance of this edit is its conversion of Obama's image from ceremonial figure head to policy maker. The moment where this edit occurs is near the beginning of the speech, following Obama's discussion of the importance of place in national identity. He claimed that Pullman, as well as other national parks, are "places where history happened," and that we can learn a lot from these places. During this assertion, the video recording cut to President Obama signing the bill which would establish Pullman as a national monument. The movement from Obama as a president addressing the nation, to a president performing an executive duty shifts the viewer's focus away from the problems of the U.S. and towards resolution.

The editing of the address distorts the image of the president, and by extension, the federal government as an entity which solves problems. This viewing signifies the reconciliatory function of the address. Shifting the audience's view of the President and seeing Obama as performing an executive duty contributed to the selective amnesic properties of the speech by creating an expectation of the President to fulfill their duties as a legislator. Rhetorically, this shift in view functions by forgetting the role of the government blockading progress at every instance of labor and civil rights disputes in the U.S. By shifting the focus towards the signing of a bill, audience members' attention turned towards reconciliation, and away from the struggle involved in fighting for progress. Viewing Obama as signing a bill which would make Pullman a national monument reinscribes the image of the U.S. President acting on behalf of citizens and promotes the importance of Pullman to the U.S.'s history.

The forgetful form found within President Obama's address prepared audience members for the consumption of the historical revision of Pullman by a national audience. Here, the forgetful form operated by celebrating the establishment of a Japanese-American internment camp and erasing the executive branch's role in disrupting civil rights. This erasure made way for the promotion of the American Dream and made appealing the forgetting of the federal government's role of obstructing civil rights in Pullman. Furthermore, the forgetful form also functioned by shifting the image of the President from ceremonial figure head to legislator, which advanced a reconciliatory role performed by Obama. This shift in view has the rhetorical effect of creating an expectation of the federal government to intervene in circumstances which benefit the citizens of the nation. Together, the establishment of an internment camp as a national monument, and the change in view of Obama, the forgetful form made the federal government's role in disrupting civil rights desirable to forget. Furthermore, the forgetful form prepared audience members for the consumption of a narrative about the history of the Pullman town which exemplifies a progressive remembrance of the U.S.'s past.

Remembering Pullman through the American Dream

President Obama's recollection of Pullman positioned the town as a place where the values of the U.S. evolved to fit the founding citizen's vision. In beginning his discussion of Pullman, Obama exhibited the national significance of the town. Obama argued, "what makes Pullman special is the role it's played in our history...This place has been a milestone in our journey toward a more perfect union."¹⁵⁸ Here, Obama defined Pullman as a place of U.S. history, which is an exemplar in the narrative of progress. This quotation marks the beginning of

Obama's memory of Pullman to be a place where progress has happened. Indeed, President Obama evoked the Declaration of Independence in proclaiming Pullman to be a "milestone" towards a "more perfect union." Converging Pullman with the Declaration of Independence functions to align the various social movements which occurred in the town with a public memory goaded by liberalism. This evocation invited the audience to remember Pullman as a place where social transcendence took place, and framed the town within the broader discourse of progress in the U.S. For progress to have occurred in Pullman, there needed to be an obstacle to overcome. In Obama's revision of Pullman, the creator of the town became the barrier for union organizers to overcome.

Once Obama had established the ideological importance of Pullman to the larger U.S., he declared George Pullman as the contrast to the U.S.'s progress. Obama charged George Pullman with violating the American Dream, "Mr. Pullman and the other tycoons of that period, the Gilded Age, they weren't always that keen about making sure their workers were able to live out the same promise."¹⁵⁹ Through this depiction, Obama draws a comparison between George Pullman and other entrepreneurs, whom act only out of profit motives. Furthermore, Obama's presented public memory of George Pullman and fellow tycoons of the late 19th century were in direct violation of the American Dream. Obama further illustrated this claim when explaining the exploitative nature of Pullman, "Pullman slashed his workers' pay, some saw their wages fall dramatically. Pullman didn't take a pay cut himself and he didn't lower the rents in his company town."¹⁶⁰ This quotation operated as an antithetical memory of Obama's American ideal. Rather than conserving and passing down, George Pullman only protected his own interests. George Pullman became the evil other to the U.S. memory of progress. For

Obama's purposes, George Pullman functioned as a scapegoat for the ailments of the United States. George Pullman's contrasted character contributed to Obama's imagined history of working towards a more perfect union. Following his othering of George Pullman, President Obama addressed the other agent involved in halting the Pullman Strike— the federal government.

Guided by his previous establishment of the federal government as reconciliatory actor, President Obama recalled the intervention in Pullman by the U.S. military. This was the only time in Obama's address where he acknowledged the federal government's involvement with the Pullman Strike. He explained, "A strike started here in Pullman, and it spread across the country. Federal troops were called to restore order; and in the end, more than 30 workers were killed."¹⁶¹ The arrangement of this quotation is crucial to understanding its effect. This acknowledgement acted as a bookend to the othering of George Pullman. In chronological order, George Pullman was remembered as an evil capitalist whose greed resulted in a strike, which led to the intervention of the federal government and the death of over 30 workers. In the only acknowledgement of the military's intervention in Pullman, there is no guilt assigned to the federal troops. Enthymematically, the onus is placed upon the audience to assume who was the responsible agent. In place of this absence, the workers' deaths were presented as a consequence of restoring order. Indeed, as is commonplace throughout this address, the U.S. government is presented as having reconciled the situation.

Resolving the memory of the federal intervention during the strike, President Obama recalled the establishment of Labor Day as an appeasement to the unsuccessful strike. Immediately following the recollection of the federal intervention, Obama explained, "And so

just six days after the strike ended, an act of Congress established Labor Day -- a day to honor working men and women of America."¹⁶² In other words, the death of 30 workers vis-à-vis federal troops was absolved through the federal government recognizing a national holiday. The resolution to the death of United States workers through a national holiday mirrored the vision audience members were granted in the video of the speech. This vision is one where the U.S. government acts as a reconciliatory agent, rather than a catalyst for violence. Moreover, Obama completely dismissed the various efforts by which workers sought to protest peacefully and had only reacted violently following federal intervention. Although it is impossible to remember the entirety of an event, the selective amnesia of federal troops' escalation in Pullman casts a widely different narrative. Rather than perpetuating the problems of the workers, Obama envisioned troops cleaning up after Pullman's greed, and restoring stability to the nation. Furthering the liberal narrative of progress, Obama recalled A. Philip Randolph's fight for union representation in Pullman.

Confining A. Philip Randolph's public memory to serve the purpose of espousing the American Dream, President Obama detailed the perseverance of Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP). To begin his recollection of A. Philip Randolph's BSCP inauguration, President Obama explained the details of black porter workers. Obama described the working conditions, "they worked as many as 20 hours a day on less than three hours' sleep just for a couple dollars a day."¹⁶³ Additionally, "Porters who asked for a living wage, porters who asked for better hours or better working conditions were told they were lucky to have a job at all."¹⁶⁴ These depictions illustrate the dire conditions that black porters were subjected to, which were far different from the privileged white workers. However, as is

consistent throughout Obama's remembrance of Pullman, the past was representative of the progression in the United States. President Obama explained A. Philip Randolph's eventual triumph over the Pullman Company, "12 years to the day after A. Philip Randolph spoke in that hall in Harlem, they won, and Pullman became the first large company in America to recognize a union of black workers."¹⁶⁵ Obama's remembrance here exalted the success of a labor and racial movement to provide further evidence of the American Dream. For Obama, A. Philip Randolph and the BSCP became a synecdoche for the result of determination to a cause. However, this public memory of the BSCP leaves absent the U.S. courts' involvement in stifling success for over a decade. There is no mention here of the Department of Justice's unwillingness to hear cases of arbitration regarding the BSCP members and the Pullman company. Instead, only the narrative of progress is stressed, and a belief in the American Dream is further demonstrated to lead to success. Randolph's public memory is further celebrated on the national scale by Obama through his recollection of the March on Washington.

The March on Washington was a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement, and Obama utilized Randolph's involvement with the March to further his vision of progress. Obama tied Chicago, and specifically Pullman to the national significance of the March on Washington, "It was those porters who helped lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott, who were the central organizers of the March on Washington."¹⁶⁶ Again, Obama permeated the fight for social justice in Chicago with the national movement for equality. Here, Obama synthesized the memory of Randolph with the canonized memory of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. By associating Randolph and the BSCP with the "King-Centered"¹⁶⁷ public memory of the March on

Washington, Obama presented a narrative of the Porters which was, as Robert E. Terrill explains, "idealized in the misty past, forgotten just well enough so that it can be productively partially remembered."¹⁶⁸ In Chapter 3, I explained how this occurred visually within the museum, but here Obama evokes this memory to later locate himself within. The production of this memory is the annihilation of Randolph's and the broader labor movement's socialist politics; in favor of a cleansed memory of national progress. The sanitization of Randolph's radical past in Obama's speech was the cost of recognizing the Pullman town nationally. In finishing his commemoration of the BSCP, Obama collapsed the two synecdoches of himself and Randolph.

For Obama, both himself and Randolph began in Chicago and found their destination in national reconciliation. The synecdochical characters of Obama's remembrance posited a distorted view of the U.S.'s history. Whereby two Black men, whose lives began in Chicago, overcame structural inequality for the sake of the nation. To complete their stories, and his remembrance of the BSCP and Pullman, Obama quoted Randolph, 'A massive, moral revolution for jobs and freedom.' "And that's not just the story of a movement, that's the story of America."¹⁶⁹ This quotation repurposes Randolph's words to align himself, and the Civil Rights Movement to fit within the frame of liberalism. The rhetorical effect of citing Randolph here displays the U.S. as a constant march toward progress. Liberalism as the theme for Obama's speech is further evidenced in his conclusion of the story of the BSCP, "And that's why, throughout our history, we've marched not only for jobs, but also for justice; not just for the absence of oppression, but for the presence of opportunity."¹⁷⁰ Here, Obama's construction of U.S. public memory praises the advancement of the nation by ambiguously referring to various

social movements. What is telling within this quotation is the conclusion that Obama comes to in this ambiguous memory; the goal for these movements has been opportunity. In other words, the goal for each social movement in U.S. history has been to afford the American Dream to more individuals. In synchronization, Obama's quotation of Randolph and the construction of U.S. public memory of past social movements served to unify the radical past of Pullman with the contemporary needs of celebrating the town for exemplifying the national values of the American Dream. To bring his address full circle, President Obama demonstrated how his presidency has continued to struggle for the same values which Randolph fought for in his life.

In attesting to Pullman's emblematic illustration of the U.S.'s struggle towards a more perfect union, President Obama recalled civil rights which have been afforded to various identity groups. Referencing his previous quotation of Randolph, Obama argued, "Eventually, that principle would be embraced on behalf of women, and Latinos, and Native Americans; for Catholics and Jews and Muslims; for LGBT Americans; for Americans with mental and physical disabilities. That's the idea that was embodied right here."¹⁷¹ This quotation establishes the town of Pullman as the origin for advocacy based on identity. Again, Obama cements the legacy of the town within the U.S.'s history of progress. Furthermore, this quotation served Obama with the purpose of setting up his contributions to the nation and continuing the American Dream exhibited in the town of Pullman.

President Obama conflated Randolph's call for a moral revolution with his persistent fight for equality. Continuing the chronicle of finetuning the nation, Obama explained, "That's why we have acted to give our citizens a measure of protection from the cruelties of fate with

Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid and, yes, the Affordable Care Act.”¹⁷² Obama’s call for the alignment of Randolph with his own policies oriented his administration as marching towards the same goals as the BSCP, and the Civil Rights Movement. Demonstrating the enduring character of progress, Obama explained how he continues the fight, “It’s why we keep fighting to help working families feel more secure in a constantly changing world with child care and equal pay, a higher minimum wage, and paid sick days.”¹⁷³ Showing his own commitment to a fairer U.S. system evidences the struggle towards the American Dream. The homogenization of Randolph’s fight for unionization and Obama’s reformist efforts obliterates the socialist politics of the BSCP for the sake of unifying the U.S.

Conclusion

On June 27, 2018 the Supreme Court ruled on *Janus v. AFSCME*, and voted in a 5-4 decision to side with Janus, which made non-union members eligible to receive union benefits in public-sector unions.¹⁷⁴ Although the ramifications of this bill have yet to be realized within contemporary workers, right-to-work laws have severely damaged the working-class’ agency to fight for livable wages and reasonable working conditions. Obama’s designation of Pullman as National Monument presents one of the few moments in contemporary politics where the federal government recognized the accomplishments of union organization for the U.S. However, the public memory presented by Obama within this address illustrates the need for scholars and activists alike to confront the hegemonic discourse circulated by elites regarding the labor movement.

This speech functioned by transforming a local place, with a unique cultural history, into a national monument by forgetting the incongruent components of the American Dream. This

myth is founded on the principle that opportunity is available to every citizen within the U.S., and the only perquisite to success is that individuals take advantage of this opportunity. For Obama in this speech, the American Dream manifested in his own past and in A. Philip Randolph's life within Pullman. These narratives were foregrounded by preparing audiences to forget the structural inequality maintained by the federal government. In this chapter, I have coined the neologism the forgetful form. This term describes the process by which orators have the capability to create a desire within the audience to forget the problematic elements of a public memory which would otherwise violate the values being celebrated. Through the creation of a desire to forget the systemic racism and classism within the United States, Obama was better able to appeal to the American Dream. The affect this desire manifested within the speech was the integration of the Pullman town's public memory of union organization to fit neatly into the linear narrative of progress. Therefore, within Obama's speech, Pullman became a town which epitomized opportunity and justified belief in the American Dream. Extending beyond this analysis, rhetorical critics are better equipped to address the degenerative tendencies of public forgetting by attending to the form of an oration.

Connected to the forgetful form, this chapter also demonstrates how the erasure of alternative politics has consequences for contemporary organizers. Within this speech, Obama constructed a public whose success in promoting equality for the nation is based upon the heroic achievements of individuals. Both himself and A. Philip Randolph were framed as having overcome obstacles to level the playing field for the U.S. Although Obama does celebrate the founding of the BSCP, he does so to demonstrate the effect which Randolph had on the U.S. In other words, the first Black union in the U.S. was an achievement based on Randolph's

individual merit. For contemporary activists who fight for solutions which address the systemic issues of the U.S., patronizing individuals as heroes to emulate obstructs the possibility for collective action by placing the onus of change on a personal level. Overall, underscoring the labor of individuals in the fight for progress over unified groups functions to repress memories of subaltern and oppositional movements, which operate counter-hegemonically to the United States' dominant themes. In the final chapter, I synthesize the findings of my previous two analysis chapters to illustrate how the forgetting which occurred in the monument and in Obama's speech are but two stars in the constellation of the U.S.'s stance towards workers' rights.

Chapter V: Conclusion

The Pullman National Monument marks an important moment in the development of workers' rights within the U.S. As I described in the first chapter, two strikes were initiated by disgruntled workers who sought collective recognition and fairer working conditions. The strike of 1894, led by Eugene V. Debs and Pullman Company workers, was both antagonized and thwarted by the U.S. Government, ending with federal troops killing 30 workers. No union was established, Debs was charged with conspiracy, and Labor Day was recognized as a national holiday. While organized labor in Pullman was seemingly dismantled, 30 years later the town would be at the epicenter of another movement. The second strike, which was to be led by A. Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1928, was intended to force federal courts to rule on discrepancies in pay between white and Black workers at the Pullman Company. Despite threats of a strike, courts did not intervene, and Randolph halted the call for work stoppage. Although the strike in 1928 was never realized, 10 years later the BSCP would sign a contract with the Pullman Company to be recognized as a union. As the location of these strikes has been memorialized and recognized as a national monument, it serves as an indication of how the U.S. imagines the contemporary struggle for workplace rights. Guided by scholarship on public memory, materiality, and public address, this thesis examined how the U.S. public is invited to remember and forget the labor movement within Pullman.

In the second chapter, I reviewed relevant scholarship to examine the textuality and materiality of the Pullman National Monument. I began with President Obama's public address literature to demonstrate how his presidency has depended on strategies of pragmatism and

the American Dream in order to ease racial tensions within the U.S. To illustrate the rhetorical appeals to memory made throughout these texts, I showed how public memory functions as a resource for the construction of identity but is also contested by the public. One way in which this contestation is resolved is through public forgetting, either through selective amnesia or by absence all together. In reviewing literature on space and place scholarship, I discussed how places are demarcated space, and how these places invite spatial performances upon their guests. Furthermore, I also illustrated how museums are memory places which represent the past to serve present needs, and how the experiential landscape of these places guides a guests' remembrance.

To conclude this thesis, I discuss the importance of my analyses for future rhetorical scholarship in public memory and public address. First, I review my chapter on the materiality of the monument and explain how attending to the experiential landscape and modes of active forgetting help account for a place's rhetorical appeals to memory. Second, I review my chapter on President Obama's speech to layout the methodology of the forgetful form and describe why examining the symbolic components to evocations of public memory get at how an orator can make certain aspects of the past desirable to forget. I close this thesis by discussing the theoretical and methodological implications of examining the textual, visual, and material components of a public memory together.

Materiality and Forgetting

In the third chapter, I argued that the built environment of the Pullman National Monument invited a progressive remembrance of the past, which favors liberalism over radical critique. Throughout this chapter, I demonstrated how the Visitor's Center and the A. Philip

Randolph Museum compel guests to move throughout their spaces alongside images and texts which emphasize the progressive aspects of the town's past. Additionally, the design and layout of these memory places actively forget the socialist politics of both Eugene V. Debs and A. Philip Randolph. The placement and presentation of these images within the monument make memories of their radical past difficult to access or absent all together.

The relationship between remembered and forgotten labor pasts is reinforced by the monument's surrounding neighborhood. Traversing through the Queen-Ann Style homes of the surrounding neighborhood introduces guests to the contestation between progressive remembrance and a radical past. The experiential landscape refigures visitors' experiences of museums and memory places as being one destination within a larger material and cognitive journey.¹⁷⁵ Not only do guests have biases about a site before visiting it, their interpretation of a monument is further coded based on the process of traveling to a memory place. Based upon the trip from beautiful and meticulously cared for homes, to a decayed and forgotten Visitor's Center, the selection of preservation favors the comfort of suburbs over the critique of systemic oppression. The experiential landscape of the Pullman National Monument participates in the obliteration of remembering radical politics for the sake of liberalism by dissuading guests to enter the Visitor's Center. Rather than simply understanding one memory site, the analyses in this thesis chapter have insight for future rhetorical criticism.

Active forgetting within the memory places of the Pullman National Monument guides scholarship to attend to the presentation of seemingly antithetical objects within museums and memorials. Several critics have argued that memory and forgetting do not represent a dialectical relationship but are rather intertwined and animate one another.¹⁷⁶ As rhetorical

critics, our interest in forgetting lies in how we are urged to disregard the incongruent components of a past and how this has consequences for today and the future. In accounting for what is actively forgotten, this thesis has shown how radical images and texts are made obscure for the remembrance of a progressive narrative. Rhetorical scholars interested in the intersection of forgetting and materiality ought to attend to the modes by which museums make present these conflicting elements of a past. Examining the display, arrangement, and quantity of these objects helps us understand whether these memory places implore guests to overlook or conceal these memories of a radical past. Although a museum may represent the dissenting views of a past, as is the case with the Pullman National Monument, the presentation of these memories constitutes the capacity for guests to remember these elements. Appeals to remember and forget begin with the foray to the museum and are evident here within the experiential landscape.

The suburban experiential landscape as progressive remembrance helps explain how sites of public memory convert radical aspects of their past into a unified present. Suburban spaces in the U.S. create a sense of community and belonging within their inhabitants. Greg Dickinson argues that these spaces offer resources for individuals to envision “hope for finding comfort in a difficult world.”¹⁷⁷ However, the history of the suburb is rife with systemic oppression. George Lipsitz demonstrates that racism and discrimination has been at the forefront of suburban development since its inception. Writing about this history, Lipsitz explains the attitude of whites in suburbs, “Concentrated residential segregation enacted in concrete spatial form the core ideology of white supremacy— that Black people “belonged” somewhere else.”¹⁷⁸ Indeed, suburbs have been ripe with strategic and systemic racist practices

of exclusion such as redlining. This is the context which the Pullman National Monument is situated within. Electing to preserve the suburban neighborhood over the built environment dedicated to remembering the past urges guests to forget dissent. Joan McAlister argues that the social covenants of these suburbs “create the semblance of unity out of disunity, community out of chaos.”¹⁷⁹ Materially demonstrated at Pullman, assent conceals critique of these pasts, and makes possible a progressive remembrance. In an investigation of megachurches, Dickinson explains that experiential landscapes are one way to uncover acts of forgetting.¹⁸⁰ In Pullman, the suburb functions to cleanse radicalism and remember progression. This thesis contributes to work on experiential landscapes as indicative of forgetting by illustrating the potential for these contexts to embody the ideology evoked within memory places and forget that which is incongruent to the dominant narrative. Themes of a progressive remembrance of the monument are also textually evident within President Obama’s speech.

Textuality and Forgetting

In the fourth chapter, I argued that President Obama’s establishment of Pullman as a national monument transformed the local memory of a town into a national public memory by appealing to a cleansed narrative of liberalism. Throughout this chapter, I demonstrated how Obama’s speech urged an acceptance of the U.S. federal government as a benevolent agent of change and forgot the dissenting voices of the social movements in Pullman. The recollection of both himself and A. Philip Randolph as exemplary figures of the American Dream cemented the public memory of the town within national prominence. Remembering Randolph resulted in the erasure of his socialist politics, and forgets the systemic barricades maintained by the U.S.

government in stifling progress. Additionally, I argued for the forgetful form as a method to examine how public forgetting can occur in a degenerative manner. The observations and arguments made throughout the fourth chapter of this thesis have heuristics for scholarship regarding the Obama Presidency and rhetorical studies of public memory.

The implications this chapter has for the Obama Presidency is evident in his mode of remembrance for a radical of the Civil Rights Movement in A. Philip Randolph. Scholars such as Robert E. Terrill and Theon Hill have illustrated how Obama's selection of civil rights memory is almost always based on acceptable figures and moments for white audiences.¹⁸¹ For example calling upon Martin Luther King Jr. during his speeches at Selma and during "A More Perfect Union," as well as lauding nonviolent protests and sit-ins, Obama was able to talk about race to a unified audience. These memories of the Civil Rights Movement represent the canonized past for the U.S. public, and are agreeable for nearly everyone.¹⁸² However, in his speech at Pullman, Obama violated this trend by extolling A. Philip Randolph—a largely forgotten icon of the Civil Rights Movement, and an avid socialist. Publicly remembering Randolph has the potential to provide the U.S. with a mnemonic resource of Black radicalism, and critiques of the broader system of oppression. Hill explains that many political pundits, viewed Obama's second term as a "Bullworth moment,"¹⁸³ in addressing issues of race. Yet, Hill concludes, as do I here, that this reading is too optimistic and ultimately misguided. Although the public memory of Randolph does fall outside of the canonized memory of civil rights, Obama's style of remembrance remains committed to tropes of unification and an absence of critiquing the system of racism.

Obama remembered A. Philip Randolph through rhetorical appeals to the American Dream and disregarded the critiques Randolph levied against the U.S. Rhetorical scholars have

demonstrated Obama's reliance on the American Dream as a solution to the racial tensions within the U.S. For instance, Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones argued that in the speech "A More Perfect Union," Obama's vision for the future of the U.S. was more access and opportunity to the American Dream for citizens to prosper.¹⁸⁴ In the commemoration of Pullman, Obama returned to this myth in order to celebrate the achievements of Randolph. The narrative structure of Randolph's rise to union organizer and civil rights leader within this speech portray Randolph as a heroic citizen who worked hard to achieve change in the U.S. Abeyant from this commemoration are Randolph's political beliefs, and his critique of the racist and classist system deeply imbedded within the U.S. While Obama does publicly recognize Randolph within a national context, this remembrance perpetuates the dominant narrative of gradual progress, and leaves absent any substitution. Another contribution this chapter has made to rhetorical scholarship is the adoption of a new method for uncovering forgetting in the forgetful form.

The forgetful form provides rhetorical scholars with another method in examining occurrences of public forgetting by attending to the style and arrangement of public memories within textual artifacts. Instances of public remembrance invite audiences to remember the past for guidance in future action.¹⁸⁵ The impossibility of recalling every person or event means that a-lot of the past remains absent from public memory. Public forgetting is not merely absence from representation but occurs when what remains absent would violate the ideals being espoused from a rhetor. Uncovering these meaningful absences is tricky and requires attention to details aside from content alone. In the previous section, I explained that an experiential landscape is useful to accounting for how forgetting occurs within a memory place.

Although this was useful for uncovering the active forgetting at the Pullman National Monument, this approach is difficult to take with regards to textuality. Instead, in this thesis I have argued that rhetorical critics should examine the form of an artifact to examine how forgetting is made desirable.

Bradford Vivian argues that forgetting can be desirable for “maintaining cultures of memory that serve the needs of the present,”¹⁸⁶ and attending to the form of forgetting allows for critics to examine how this desire can be issued in a speech. In using the term form, I have referred to Burke’s oft-cited use of the word, “the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of the appetite.”¹⁸⁷ The forgetful form creates an appetite within the audience to forget a troubled aspect of the past, and the rhetor leaves absent this aspect in their oration. For Obama’s speech, he made desirable forgetting the U.S. government’s involvement in the denial of equality and civil rights, and then left these components of Pullman’s past out of his address. This desire was manifested by the ordering of the monuments, and the selective editing of the address to display the U.S. government as a benevolent actor. Satisfying this desire, Obama delivered his remembrance of the Pullman town by neglecting to attend to the government’s involvement in antagonizing the strike, and the injunction of federal troops which killed 30 workers. Future rhetorical criticism would benefit from implementing the forgetful form in analysis by uncovering not only what is absent, but how these absences are made compelling to be forgotten by the rhetor’s use of style and arrangement. This thesis has also made contributions to scholarship by attending to multiple artifactual modes of a public memory.

Interanimating Public Memory

This thesis has examined the public memory of the Pullman National Monument from a variety of methodological approaches to account for a more holistic understanding of the dynamic character of memory. Public memory is an ongoing and constantly evolving concept. John Bodnar explains this point, “because numerous interests clash in commemorative events, they are inevitably multivocal.”¹⁸⁸ As such, tracing a public memory throughout its multiple evocations is paramount to providing a more accurate description of its representations. Michael Calvin McGee argues that discourses are constructed through scraps and fragments, “The apparently finished discourse is in fact a dense reconstruction of all the bits of other discourses from which it was made. It is fashioned from what we can call ‘fragments.’”¹⁸⁹ Attending these fragments enables critics to make a more accurate description of a discourse. My multi-methodological approach allowed for me to uncover how the fragment of the labor movement’s public memory within President Obama’s speech is also persistent throughout the monument. Liberalism pervades both the materiality and the textuality of the Pullman National Monument. Although my thesis is limited in that it has only examined two fragments of this memory, future rhetorical scholars interested in public memory ought to attend to how themes persist through both the symbolicity and materiality to better account for how we are invited to remember the past within a fragmented culture. In addition to accounting for more a comprehensive discourse, this multi-methodological approach has enabled a more nuanced understanding for the consequentiality of these texts.

Attending to both President Obama's speech and the rhetorical appeals of the monument highlights how symbols have material consequences. Commemorative events function as hermeneutic resources for audiences who visit memory places. V. William Balthrop, Caolre Blair, and Neil Michel argue this point, explaining that ceremonies honoring the establishment of a new monument or memorial guide audiences in how they interpret their material existence.¹⁹⁰ The rhetorical strategies utilized by Obama during his address coded audiences to forget systemic oppression and remember progress. Examining the speech and the monument together demonstrates how these artifacts function in tandem and articulate a similar remembrance. Although there is distance between a sign and its signification, symbols rely on materiality for their signs, and materiality relies on symbols for their signification. For future rhetorical criticism, interanimating our analyses on public memory through speeches and places allows for us to examine how audiences may have their cognitive landscapes shaped before experiencing the memory proffered by a place.

Contemporary Working-Class Memories

The Pullman National Monument stifles memories of a past where labor strikes were wielded by organized workers to fight against structural oppression. President Obama's speech encouraged listeners to embark on their individual paths toward greatness, while ignoring the systemic barriers many people face to live an ordinary life. These texts are but one ember within an inferno that immolates the resurgence of a labor movement. What is at stake in publicly forgetting the efforts of workers to organize and strike is not just an accurate description of historical events. The consequences of forgetting these pasts is the limitation of envisioning, and fighting for, a less oppressive economic system. Sites such as the Pullman

National Monument do represent monumental achievements within the U.S., but not because the events which took place here fit within a progressive narrative about the past. The Pullman Strike and the establishment of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters were the result of actions from dissenting individuals organized within collectives. For the working-class and contemporary activists of workers' rights, these memories provide no ideological grounding to dismantle the foundation of their toil. Memory is the living and experienced past, which provides us with context for future action. Without these recollections for the present, the working-class is forgotten.

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