

THE DIVERGENT ARCHIVE AND ANDROCENTRIC COUNTERPUBLICS: PUBLIC
RHETORICS, MEMORY, AND ARCHIVES

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

As a field, Writing Studies has long been concerned with the rhetorical representation of both dominant and marginalized groups. However, rhetorical theory on publics and counterpublics tends not to articulate *how* groups persuade others of their status as mainstream or marginal. Scholars of public/counterpublic theory have not yet adequately examined the mechanisms through which rhetorical resources play a role in reinforcing and/or dispelling public perceptions of dominance or marginalization. My dissertation argues many counterpublics locate and convince others of their subject status through the development of rhetorical resources. I contend counterpublics create and curate a diffuse system of archives, which I refer to as “divergent archives.” These divergent archives often lack institutional backing, rigor, and may be primarily composed of ephemera. Drawing from a variety of archival materials both within and outside institutionally maintained archives, I explore how counterpublics perceiving themselves as marginalized construct archives of their own as a way to transmit collective memories reifying their nondominant status. I do so through a case study that has generally been overlooked in Writing Studies: a collection of men’s rights movements which imagine themselves to be marginalized, despite their generally hegemonic positions. By critically scrutinizing the rhetorical practices of these men’s movements, we come to a more nuanced theory of the rhetorical formation and position of publics. Such work also illuminates the rhetorical practices and arguments of a group poorly represented in academic research. Ultimately, I answer the question of how counterpublics that see themselves as “outside” the cultural mainstream work to convince others of that status and a need to change it.

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INTRODUCTION: A THEORY OF THE DIVERGENT ARCHIVE

“And nothing starts in the Archive, nothing, ever at all, though things certainly end up there. You find nothing in the Archive but stories caught halfway through: the middle of things; discontinuities.”

-Carolyn Steedman, *“Dust: The Archive and Cultural History”*

The Divergent Archive

In May 2015, the first trailer for George Miller’s *Mad Max: Fury Road* was released. For most, the trailer prompted excitement around the film’s explosive action and vehicular stunts. For *Return of Kings* contributor Aaron Clarey, however, the film provoked a very different reaction: the desire to call for a boycott. Clarey, in “Why You Should Not Go See ‘Mad Max: Feminist Road’” (2015) claimed that the film had betrayed the tone, message, and themes of the original three *Mad Max* films, and that *Fury Road* was instead “the vehicle by which they are guaranteed to force a lecture on feminism down your throat” (para. 17). Though it became clear that Clarey had not seen the film, had done little research on it, and was likely unfamiliar with the previous entries in the franchise, the article, hosted by “redpill right,” neomasculinist website *Return of Kings*, stirred a fair bit of controversy. Clarey openly admitted he had not seen the film before writing the article and was not planning to, also referring to *Mad Max* as a “piece of American culture”; The *Mad Max* series has always been directed by George Miller, who is Australian, and has for the most part featured Australian actors/actresses (Mel Gibson was the original Mad Max before Tom Hardy’s recent turn), and has taken place in a post-apocalyptic Australia (para. 16).

The call to boycott was apparently such a good headline that it was reported on by a variety of news outlets, including *CNN* (O’Neil, 2015), *The Guardian* (Wilson, 2015), and *Huffington Post* (Goodman, 2015), though *CNN*’s Lorena O’Neil referred to Clarey as a men’s

rights activist, which, strictly speaking, was inaccurate. Clarey and *Return of Kings* are not technically a men's rights website. Rather, what *Return of Kings* espouses is a "neomasculinist" ideology, which means *RoK* is particularly traditionalist in their beliefs on men and masculinity, rejecting the contributions of women and people identifying as queer, and espousing a return to male dominance and control. They contrast themselves to the Men's Rights Movement, particularly as it shows up in Paul Elam's *A Voice for Men* website, in that they are not interested in gender equality, which is how the Men's Rights Movement attempts to frame their primary agenda.

The founder and head editor of *Return of Kings*, Daryush "Roosh V." Valizedah, responded to this mainstream coverage (2015), decrying the inaccuracy of being labeled a men's rights site and what Valizedah claimed was misleading attacks by "mainstream media," though he optimistically noted that the "*idea* that Hollywood is spreading feminist propaganda has for the first time reached the ossified brains of over one million new people this week, perhaps more" (emphasis original, para. 14). For Valizedah, the exposure *Return of Kings* was granted by these news outlets had the potential to 'spread the message' regarding the supposedly poisonous feminist agenda fomented by Hollywood, ideally culminating in an awakening wherein men would return to the *Return of Kings* website after understanding the 'truth' of its core message.

In a separate corner of the loosely connected group of Men's Movement-related counterpublic websites that has been dubbed "the Manosphere," (Kimmel, 2013, p. 114) men who *did* identify themselves as part of the Men's Rights Movement had a very different take on *Mad Max: Fury Road* and Aaron Clarey's perception of the film as feminist propaganda. As I elaborate throughout this dissertation, there are a variety of imagined and aspirational counterpublic groups that could theoretically fit under the aegis of "Men's Movements." Though

some of the members of these counterpublics vehemently disagree with one another about labels, agendas, and ultimate goals, they are united in two common beliefs: first, that men no longer possess patriarchal privileges in Western nations and are in fact systemically discriminated against by a variety of institutions and social structures, and second, that feminism and feminists are directly responsible for that loss of privilege and the primary source of male discrimination. Because these groups and organizations are united in their reactionary disposition towards feminism and the idea of male discrimination, I refer to them collectively as “androcentric” counterpublics. When I describe androcentric counterpublics, then, I am referring to counterpublics whose primary concerns, beliefs, and agendas revolve around convincing others of the systemic discrimination and oppression of men and male status in Western societies, and their attempts to end that imagined oppression.

On *A Voice for Men*, arguably the most visible and mainstream of many men’s rights websites, Redd Fields (2015) articulated his opposing take on *Mad Max: Fury Road*, which vehemently disagreed with Aaron Clarey’s perception of the film. In his article, “Mad Max Fury Road: A Real Men’s Rights Activist’s Review,” Fields argued that Clarey and the *Return of Kings*-led boycott did not represent a true men’s rights perspective, and that Clarey’s take on the movie was misguided. For Fields, *Fury Road* actually *reinforced* and made apparent the systemic oppression of men, commonly referred to as “misandry” by members of androcentric organizations (Fields, 2015). Because the film revolved around Furiosa’s (Charlize Theron) liberation of women kept specifically for the purpose of bearing a despotic overlord’s children, and because men in the film, including Mad Max (Tom Hardy) himself, were constantly beaten, assaulted, and treated as expendable, Fields argued that *Fury Road* depicted women as “insanely valuable,” claiming that “abuse isn’t always misogynistic” (para. 2). Ultimately, Fields asserted

that the film's depiction of the collapse of the matriarchal commune for women that Furiosa has liberated marks the supposedly inevitable failure of feminist-oriented models of society. Thus, Fields argued, George Miller's film had deconstructed its own feminist message, punctuated by the fact that it is Max who suggests that the women overthrow warlord Immortan Joe by returning to the place from which they had come in order to liberate Joe's control over a large reservoir of water. That it is *Max's* plan that succeeds is, to the men's rights activist's (MRA) mind, proof of the film's allegiance to exhibiting the capabilities of male ruggedness as superior to feminist 'machinations.'¹

I open with (and occasionally return to) the controversy surrounding *Mad Max: Fury Road* for a few reasons. First, it highlights the fractiousness and often non-monolithic nature of what has been alternately dubbed the Men's Liberation Movement, the mythopoetic men's movement, the Manosphere, "redpill right," and Men's Rights Movement, which are all conflated and incorrectly assumed to be unified as an imagined counterpublic. Second, it makes clear the deep investment in popular culture texts as arbiters of cultural and social discourses and as a battleground for competing ideologies to androcentric counterpublics. And third, it pinpoints a moment which has become marked for androcentric counterpublics as significant or kairotic, one to which members of these counterpublics will point as evidence of the systemic collusion to

¹ It is crucial, particularly for those who have not seen *Mad Max: Fury Road*, to understand that Fields's interpretation of the film's message ultimately ignores much of how the film positions male masculinity and its role in post-apocalyptic governance, including that at the beginning of the film, Miller makes an effort to position Max as little better than the raiders and warlords who chain him up and use him as a "blood bag." As but one of multiple potential rebuttals to Fields's reading of the film, Fields identifies this material use of Max as a living dialysis machine as an acknowledgment of the way that men become oppressed and utilized from a material standpoint (the imagery of being 'sucked dry' by women who supposedly lay claim to men's hard-earned paychecks is a common trope in the manosphere); however, Fields fails to also acknowledge that oppression in the film, whether suffered by men or women, almost always comes at the hands of other men, as in the case of Immortan Joe and his War Boys. That the film displays compassion and understanding towards the masculine, psychic struggles of male characters like Max and Nux (and that the female protagonists ultimately trust them with their lives) is, sadly, not acknowledged or discussed by Fields.

oppress men, a moment documented and analyzed (however insufficiently or misleadingly) as part of an archive of misandry. What the example of *Fury Road* makes apparent is how these androcentric groups perceive the lessons and cultural baggage of sociocultural artifacts in very different ways from mainstream publics and counterpublics. This memorial difference in public perception of the same texts, and androcentric attempts to convince others of the accuracy of their claims, culminates in a collection of materials and rhetorical processes that I identify as a ‘divergent archive.’

Scholars in the field of writing studies have long based research on the idea that the discourse and rhetoric publics use to communicate conveys a great deal about how those publics view both the world and themselves, what Michael Warner (2002) calls “poetic world making” (p. 82). This means that the discourse and rhetoric utilized by the imagined counterpublics built by and for White, cisgendered, heterosexual men are important clues to how they envision the world and its sociocultural systems. Often, androcentric subpublics (smaller publics with particular, specific unifying interests) enact a version of world-making wherein Western men (particularly White, cissexual, heterosexual, and able-bodied men) are claimed to be systemically discriminated against and oppressed (collectively referred to as ‘misandry’). These notions and the public rhetorics that sustain them are not invoked from thin air; rather, they reflect longstanding wells of memories, language, and perceptions, drawn from in order to convince others of the worth of a supposed counterpublics’ claims to peripheral or liminal identity. Those ‘wells’ rely upon a system of diffuse, tenuously connected archives that serve as memorialization of a counterpublic’s collective memories—what I refer to in this dissertation as ‘divergent archives.’

I consider the divergent archive a useful concept to describe the rhetorical processes of making legible and legitimate particular discourses of collective memory and historical narrative(s) through the collection of materials, texts, and artifacts. Such archives, I argue, are a rhetorical strategy enacted by some counterpublics in the hope that they will prove convincing enough to turn that counterpublics' collective memory into a more widely accepted *public* memory. Divergent archives are generally developed by counterpublics whose primary concerns and agendas are perceived to not be taken seriously, are placed under extreme scrutiny, or face backlash from oppositional and/or competing publics, subpublics, and counterpublics. Divergent archives are constructed because a counterpublic's memorial discourse must be legible and legitimate in order to transform their collective memories into public memories held by other subpublics and publics. Such legibility often requires alternatives to the institutional archives which are traditionally the gatekeepers of public/collective memories' canon and history. These 'divergent' counterpublics thus construct an archive to make their arguments and discourse legible and legitimate: a divergent archive. These archives often exist independently from but may be connected to institutional archives, given that their ultimate goal is to be consolidated into both the canon of mainstream publics' memory and in turn, documented within larger, mainstream, institutional archives.

This dissertation, through the concept of the divergent archive, seeks to theorize these phenomena, their functions, and their rhetorical conditions of development. I undertake this project in order to help a variety of stakeholders (both within the academy and without) understand the rhetorical processes that result in the transmission of collective memories into public ones and archival histories. Such discursive phenomena must be scrutinized if we hope to better understand and dialogue with the divergent counterpublics that build them and for whom

institutional archives seem inadequate. Additionally, this project utilizes its case study of androcentric collectives to examine how subpublics that are not in actuality, subaltern—like the White, cis/heterosexual men (and women) of androcentric groups—co-opt the rhetorical processes of the divergent archive to convince broader publics of their imagined or aspirational ‘counter’ status. However, while androcentric collectives serve as this dissertation’s case study, theorizing the divergent archive can also help to expose the rhetorical processes of collective and public memory and archival history for many groups *actually* facing systemic and cultural oppression. For example, counterpublics like Black Lives Matter, undocumented immigrants, or groups within the LGBTQIA+ community may also develop divergent archives in order to alter public memories that contribute to their discrimination and alterity. It is my hope that theorizing the divergent archive is the first step in better understanding how to incorporate the contestation of counterpublics both into public discourse and dialogue, as well as to explode conceptions of institutional archives as primary arbiters of memory and history.

In the remainder of this introduction, I explain how this project draws from Writing Studies as a field, as well as articulate the contributions this dissertation makes to Writing Studies. After, I detail the conceptual frameworks and theories that enable us to understand the formation and maintenance of divergent archives, as well as the ‘sub-frameworks’ that inform my understanding of my case study, androcentric counterpublics. I then lay out what I call the ‘formative conditions’ for the creation and development of divergent archives in addition to describing my conception of divergent archives more broadly. From there, I explain my principles of selection in choosing androcentric counterpublics as my case study and the constraints and affordances accompanying such subjects. Next, I discuss my methods and data

within the dissertation. Finally, I conclude with an outline of the chapters of “The Divergent Archive and Androcentric Counterpublics”.

WRITING STUDIES AND DIVERGENT ARCHIVES

This dissertation—developing a theory for the rhetorical processes undertaken by both imagined and actual counterpublics to develop an archive that espouses collective memories considered illegitimate and illegible by mainstream publics and institutions—requires an alignment of scholarship and theories not often seen together in Writing Studies. I detail my primary conceptual frameworks—archival historiography, public/counterpublic studies, and public/collective memory studies—below, but here I briefly discuss how and why I see this work as developing out of, and contributing to, Writing Studies as a field.

My project is far from the first to articulate the development and curation of an archive as a counter-rhetorical process of interest to Writing Studies. Three key examples illustrate this: Jean Bessette (2013 & 2017) and KJ Rawson’s (2009) scholarship on queer archives, and Barbara Biesecker’s (2006) presentation of the archive as “scene of invention” (p. 124). Jean Bessette, in “An Archive of Anecdotes: Raising Lesbian Consciousness after the Daughters of Bilitis” (2013) and the subsequent book-length study, *Retroactivism in the Lesbian Archives* (2017), argues that the archive often functions “as a site of rhetorical invention” and that “[c]alls for attention to the rhetoricity of archives extend naturally from the field’s enduring interest in historiography: the relationship between how a history is composed and its rhetorical effect on the politics of the discipline or the social world writ larger” (p. 23). Bessette’s development of the anecdotal and lesbian archives provides my dissertation with a useful framework for identifying how members of groups left out of mainstream discourses (counterpublics) cobble together their own archives on their own terms. Much like Bessette’s arguments for the

Daughters of Bilitis and their book of anecdotes, *Lesbian/Woman*, a variety of counterpublics have found resourceful ways of developing anecdotes patched together through a variety of texts, media, and repositories. The reliance upon ephemera and anecdotes to compose an archive, particularly in the development of history and public memory, as Bessette points to with the Daughters of Bilitis and *Lesbian/Woman*, is a foundational concern for this dissertation, and undergirds much of my rhetorical analysis throughout.

Similarly, KJ Rawson's work in "Accessing Transgender // Desiring Queer(er?) Archival Logics" (2009) points to the ways in which accessing the archive can be discomfiting, difficult, and demeaning to those who do not see themselves reflected in the construction and context of the archives (in this case, people who identify as transgender). Rawson's observations can extend beyond trans identities to other positionalities, including race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, gender, class, and perhaps most importantly to this project and my case study, sociopolitical beliefs. These barriers to access extend also to material actually located within the archives, as rhetorical historiographers such as Jacqueline Jones Royster (2000) and Anne Ruggles Gere (1997) have noted regarding African American women and clubwomen, respectively. The difficulty in locating rhetors and texts that reflect nonhegemonic groups and the fact that archivists themselves make rhetorical choices in what they choose to include within an archive mark divergent archives as sites of not only history and memory, but rhetorical (im)possibility, as well.

Barbara Biesecker's (2006) discussion of memory, rhetoric, and the archive in "Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention" interrogates the notion that archives are static spaces for the examination of history and memory. Discussing the example of a fraught exhibit dedicated to the flight of the *Enola Gay* and the dropping of the atomic bombs on

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Biesecker indicates that the archive itself is a space of rhetorical contestation and struggle. The struggle over how to recall memories and how to position them rhetorically in a current moment leads Biesecker to suggest that archives are themselves “scenes of invention” subject to all the rhetorical concerns we tend to associate with invention as an act of composition (p. 126). Biesecker’s assertion that archives can function as scenes of invention extends here to my case study. While not technically ‘Writing Studies’ scholarship, Biesecker’s work on the rhetorical processes of archives and their relationships to memory is of great import to Writing Studies researchers interested in such topics. Androcentric imagined counterpublics articulate a memory of Western society where men see themselves as discriminated against on the basis of their gender. In railing against social, medical, and governmental practices like circumcision or the military draft, they invent their own memory/history that attempts to preserve the hegemonic power of (White) male subjects while simultaneously claiming a discourse of marginalization. By claiming such a discourse through rhetorical associations across a number of artifacts and texts—often of their own composition—androcentrics hope to establish an archive that ‘invents’ the concept of “misandry,” or the supposed systemic discrimination against men (Nathanson & Young, 2001).

This dissertation owes much to the work of Writing Studies and Rhetoric scholars like Bessette, Rawson, and Biesecker. Drawing from their scholarship on the rhetoricity of archives and their formative conditions, I argue that bringing a lens informed by their theories to the non-institutional archives formed by counterpublics can tell us much about the rhetoric of those for whom the archive is inaccessible, and what people do in response to these barriers. Though my primary case study is not composed predominantly of queer counterpublics, I draw a rhetorical understanding of archives as acts of composition and invention from Bessette, Rawson, and

Biesecker's arguments and connect their theories to other frameworks within public/counterpublic and collective/public memory studies in order to deepen our understanding of the scope of rhetorical discourse around counterpublics and the resources through which they attempt to turn their collective memories into public ones. One of the most effective—and troubling—elements of hegemonic groups/organizations seeking to position themselves as 'counter' is the ability to co-opt strategies and tactics from the subaltern groups which they dominate. Ultimately, this dissertation is about the rhetorical process of arguing for particular collective memories through the composition, collection, and connection of relevant written texts and composed artifacts (such as articles, pamphlets, newsletters, press releases, and more). By examining how unfamiliar, uncommon, and (often) non-institutional archives are used to make arguments for particular forms of collective memory as deserving to be public, I hope to make the case for how and why Writing Studies can rhetorically intervene in such public discourse—to destabilize the hegemonic, but also to augment and support the subaltern.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

My project pulls from a number of theoretical fields in order to make a case for the existence and importance of divergent archives, but the three primary conceptual frameworks crucial to this project are archival rhetoric and historiography, public/counterpublic theory, and public/collective memory studies.

When I use the term 'archive,' I am describing resources meant to preserve and reify a particular historical and memorial narrative: archives enable those in the present and future to articulate conceptions of the past. I also argue, however, that archives can be messy, diffuse, and cobbled together across a variety of media and resources. In doing so, I draw from Carolyn Steedman's (2001) description of archives: "The Archive is made from selected and consciously

chosen documentation from the past and also from the mad fragmentations that no one intended to preserve and that just ended up there” (p. 68). Though a bit tongue-in-cheek, this working definition is a useful way to describe the concept of the archive both as a space of curation and occasional accident. Archives have historically functioned as arbiters of institutional control, most prominently for the purpose of consolidating collective national memory and the documentation of history relevant to those collective memories (Cook & Schwartz, 2002; Derrida, 1995; Steedman, 2001). As the modern nation-state formed, archives, libraries, and museums came to be crucial to the development of a collective sense of national identity, helping to generate what Benedict Anderson (1983) refers to as an imagined community. As these institutions solidified in their functions, distinctions between archivists sanctioned by the “official knowledge of the discourse of the archive” and the “non-orthodox and unauthorized speakers” have come to render archives and repositories outside of such institutions illegitimate and easy to dismiss, a problem queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz (1996) refers to as the problem of lacking institutional “rigor” (Brown & Davis-Brown, 1998, p. 21; Moore and Pell, 2010; Muñoz, p. 7).

What this means is that as archives have become invested with the political power and prerogatives of the institutions in which they are housed, who does and does not gain entry into the archive has often reflected hegemonic attitudes—by which I mean the prevailing sociocultural values and ideologies of dominant groups (Bates, 1975). The question of who does and does not make the archive, both in the sense of curating it and the sense of being included, has been a topic of interest to a number of Writing Studies scholars (Brodkey, 1996; Dolmage, 2014; Glenn, & Enoch, 2010; Gere, 1997; Logan, 1998; Ramsey, 2010; Rawson, 2009; Royster & Williams, 1999). Much of this scholarship has focused on the exclusion or burying of

marginalized rhetors within the history of composition and rhetoric more broadly as a field. In addressing the (often massive) gaps left in rhetorical history regarding women, African American, Latinx, gay, lesbian, queer, trans, and writers with disabilities, Writing Studies has sought to expand our conception of rhetorical history beyond a White, cissexual, heterosexual, and male-dominated canon. Such scholarship provides this dissertation a framework for considering how to study rhetors who argue that they are not represented within more traditional conceptions of the archive. However, as Charlotte Hogg's (2015 & 2018) "Including Conservative Women's Rhetorics in an 'Ethics of Hope and Care'" and "Sorority Rhetorics as Everyday Epideictic" argue, merely recuperating the archival voices of progressive and marginalized rhetors does not equip us to fully combat conservative ideologies or thoroughly represent rhetorical history. In the spirit of understanding conservative and hegemonic rhetorics, we must also research the archival representations of and rhetorical strategies of groups who are privileged or hegemonic. This project contributes to Hogg's call by articulating how androcentric imagined counterpublics construct archives and deploy rhetorics of victimization as they attempt to legitimize and make legible their collective memories to mainstream publics.

More recently, the function of the archive in the digital age has raised questions regarding both how to make use of digitized archival materials (Enoch & Bessette, 2013; Enoch & Gold, 2013; Haskins, 2007) as well as how to work within and reconsider rhetorical historiography through digital archives, (Cushman, 2013; Solberg 2012; Sternfeld, 2011) concerns which combine with anxiety within public memory studies regarding the state of memory in a digital age and the archive's role (Assman, 2007; Nora, 1989). The role that androcentric imagined counterpublics play in the construction of digital archives—men's movements, including men's rights movements have long utilized digital and internet spaces to organize, archive, and

memorialize—and the ways in which those archives differ from more traditional repositories reflects shortsighted conceptions of what might constitute an ‘archive’. My dissertation works to expand the concept of the archive through the recognition that a number of counterpublics, both actual and imagined, construct extra-institutional and nontraditional community archives as part of their consolidation of collective to public memory. In doing so, I follow in the footsteps of a long line of feminist rhetorical historiographers.

Feminist rhetorical historiography in writing studies has made a priority out of recovering the traces of a variety of figures and groups lost to more dominant conceptions of history. In addition to the work of Bessette, Rawson, and Biesecker, these efforts have been most noticeable in the significant number of scholars exercising the prerogative to analyze and document the actions, ideas, and intentions of rhetors identified as African American (Gilyard, 1999; Kates, 2001; Kynard, 2014), Latinx (Cintron, 1997; Enoch, 2004 & 2005; Villanueva, 1993), LGBTQIA+ (Alexander, 2005; Butler, 2004; Morris, 2006, “Archival Queer”), women (Adams, 2001; Eldred & Mortensen, 2002; Gere, 1997; Gold & Hobbs, 2014), and a variety of intersections between these, among other, positionalities (Enoch, 2008; Pritchard, 2014; Rawson & Williams, 2014; Royster, 2000). These projects have been crucial to the identification and recovery of dozens of rhetors, writers, and figures who had been lost to history or obscured by archives dominated by White, cisgendered, heterosexual, middle-class and upper-class men. Without such a strong—and growing stronger—assemblage of feminist historiography, this dissertation could never have been possible.

This collection of scholarship and the values that helped to create it deeply inform this project and how I scrutinize, analyze, and position the historiographic materials I utilize here. In *Feminist Rhetorical Practices* (2012), Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa Kirsch identify

feminist rhetorical practices as being grounded by a “set of values and perspectives, first of all, that honors the particular traditions of the subjects of study, respects their communities, amplifies their voices, and clarifies their visions, thus bringing evidence of our rhetorical past more dynamically into the present and creating the potential, even with contemporary research subjects, for a more dialectical and reciprocal intellectual engagement” (p. 14). Further, Royster and Kirsch identify as crucial the need to “learn how to listen more carefully to the voices (and texts) that they [modern researchers] study, to critique our analytical assumptions and frames, to critique guiding questions reflectively and reflexively” (p. 14). Royster and Kirsch wrote these words with female rhetors in mind, but I believe that these values and challenges hold just as true, if positioned differently, when studying androcentric counterpublics and male/masculine subjects. Though many members of androcentric counterpublics come from what we would articulate as hegemonic positionalities, it is crucial to understand them in their own words and contexts to allow for honest (albeit critical and scrutinizing) dialogue with the thoughts, ideas, and concepts that spur participation within these counterpublics. If divergent archives, as I discuss below, are marked by dismissal from widespread publics and opposing counterpublics, we cannot hope to open honest dialogue without first seeking to understand what drives the members of androcentric counterpublics to articulate the public memories they espouse in the first place. This does not mean that we suspend critique of androcentric counterpublic discourse; far from it. But we must seek to understand it in its own contexts, whether that is borne out of hegemonic privilege or otherwise.

To be clear: I am not suggesting that White, cisgendered, heterosexual, middle-class men without disabilities have somehow come to systemically occupy a position of alterity, through either will or hope. Nor do I wish to suggest in my study of the rhetorical attempts to deploy

‘misandry’ as a concept that I believe misandry exists or that most White Western men face systemic or institutionalized discrimination. By almost every measure, being a White man is still the most privileged position in the United States of America. Despite the rhetoric of misandry and victimization promulgated by particular androcentric counterpublics like the men’s rights movement, it is still more advantageous to be cisgendered, heterosexual, male, and White, and though this does not prevent such men from facing adversity, they are both least likely to face such circumstances—particularly after accounting for class—and best positioned to recover from them. Sociologists such as Michael Kimmel (2013) have identified this trend towards articulating White, American maleness as a ‘victimized’ identity, a concept propelled by the media-driven cache of claiming oneself as a victim, regardless of whether or not that is true. Kimmel refers to this claim of victimization, mixed with a grandiose sense of entitlement and deep-seated anxieties regarding expanding conceptions of White masculinity and male gender roles, as “aggrieved entitlement,” the “sense of entitlement that can no longer be assumed and is unlikely to be fulfilled” (p. xiv).

It is this aggrieved entitlement that I wish to understand, confront, and destabilize, while also recognizing and engaging the humanity of androcentric counterpublics’ members and the power dynamics that can lead those in theoretically hegemonic or privileged positions to believe they are systemically oppressed. In this way, I see my research as a response to Charlotte Hogg’s (2018) call to research the rhetorics of hegemonic and dominant ideologies: “in a climate when bridging cultural divides feels particularly challenging, gaining greater insights into groups that sustain and forward dominant ideologies is necessary to our work” (p. 424). Developing a theory of the divergent archive requires understanding the relationships among collectives, subpublics, counterpublics, and publics. To do so, I turn to public and counterpublic (sphere) theory.

Theories of a public and oppositional counterpublics largely originate from Habermas's (1991) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* in which he postulated bourgeois publics in England, France, and Germany formed as counterbalancing responses to state/governmental institutions as well as the 'private sphere,' reserved for commerce/markets, labor, and the space of the home. The public sphere, Habermas argued, provided an outlet for (bourgeois) citizens to critique institutions (most notably the state) and develop consensus on social, legal, and national concerns. Though useful, Habermas's formulation of the public sphere has been considerably refined, critiqued, and expanded since the original publication of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, primarily in its lack of consideration of multiple publics (Felski, 1989; Fraser, 1992), its inability to identify competing and subaltern forms of publics, including counterpublics and enclaved publics (Asen, 2002; Warner, 2002 & 2005; Squires, 2002), and its presumption of those participating in the public sphere as bourgeois, white, and male (Eley, 1992; Fraser, 1992; Landes, 1988). One of the strongest contributions of these critiques was the idea that at any given moment, there are multiple publics operating at once, that certain publics represent a position of alterity or antagonism towards mainstream, dominant, or hegemonic publics (such as they can be identified), and that individuals can be members of multiple publics and counterpublics, even if those publics/counterpublics are in competition or contention with one another (Asen, 2002). It is this relationship between larger publics and their oppositional counterpublics that is most useful for this dissertation.

Robert Asen (2002) identifies a counterpublic as a "kind of public within a public sphere conceived as a multiplicity...counterpublics signal that some publics develop not simply as one among a constellation of discursive entities, but as explicitly articulated alternatives to wider publics that exclude the interests of potential participants" (p. 425). Thus, counterpublics

function to represent members who often feel excluded from, unheard, or silenced in other publics. In “Imagining in the Public Sphere”, Asen (2002) articulates the role of “imagining” in counterpublics as crucial to their actual existence both for themselves and for their recognition by wider publics (p. 358). Attending this element of imagining as the way to identify a counterpublic is also the requirement of exclusion from the discursive arenas of wider publics. Further, as Warner (2002) acknowledges, the existence of a counterpublic hinges upon “awareness of its [perceived] subordinate status,” in relation to a more “dominant” public (p. 86). Membership within a counterpublic is fluid and does not preclude membership in wider, dominant publics; members may even take up positions within competing publics/counterpublics at the same time.

It is crucial to recognize that the formation of a counterpublic, strictly speaking, does not rest upon *actual* exclusion, but rather, the *imagined perception* of exclusion. As I will detail in my discussion of androcentric counterpublics, it seems possible for a counterpublic to be composed of members of dominant, potentially even hegemonic, publics and still have members perceive themselves as being in a subaltern position. Depending on their assumed (outwardly perceived) and affirmed (self-perceived) identities, this perception of subaltern identity may well be true. However, the notion of the ‘counterpublic,’ proceeding from Nancy Fraser’s (1992) coining of the term to describe feminist subpublics that found themselves opposed to broader publics, has traditionally relied upon an understanding of marginalized and minority identities as being part of the ‘counterpublic’ label. For these reasons, and as I elaborate later, when I describe androcentric subpublics as ‘counterpublics,’ there is always a qualification that such counterpublics are “imagined” or “aspirational” in their counterpublicity, rather than traditionally subaltern. This “imagined” element should always be assumed when I am referring to

androcentric counterpublics. Though Asen (2002) suggests that relying on the identity of counterpublic members rather than their discourse in order to classify them as ‘counter’ is a precarious—and potentially problematic—practice, I recognize the fraught political and social implications that come with referring to androcentric groups as counterpublic. Therefore, in order to preserve a distinction between such hegemonic groups and actually subaltern counterpublics, I describe androcentrics as an imagined counterpublic. To fully understand how it is that hegemonic discourse enables such subjects to imagine themselves into a counterpublic position, however, it is helpful to articulate the role that memory theory plays in the formation of counterpublic discourse and the development of divergent archives.

I use collective memory to refer to the concept of how people as a group understand, reflect upon, and memorialize (or not) particular narratives and representations of what has happened in the past and how those events should be remembered. As Barbie Zelizer (1995) defines it, “collective memory refers to recollections of the past that are determined and shaped by the group. By definition, collective memory thereby presumes activities of sharing, discussion, negotiation, and, often, contestation” (p. 214). In this dissertation, I map ‘collective memory’ as proceeding from potentially smaller networks, like subpublics and counterpublics, and ‘public memory’ as being the memory circulated by the much larger networks of individuals that we refer to as publics. However, there is generally not a clear or well-understood framework for how a particular form of memory is related to, for example, theories of communicative and rhetorical networks or the public/counterpublic sphere. The terms “collective memory,” “cultural memory,” “popular memory,” and “public memory” may all refer to the same rhetorical constructions of memory or radically differing ones, depending on whose memories and what memory is being described. In general, it seems that memory studies scholars utilize whichever

term's genealogy is most familiar and/or comfortable for them or their field. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to fully and completely account for the differences and similarities between all of the competing terminology in scholarship on memory studies, which is partially a product of the interdisciplinary nature of the subject. I do attempt to differentiate between the rhetorical construction of collective memory—which I suggest develops among generally smaller groups, like subpublics and counterpublics—and public memory, which I attribute to the much broader and more loosely defined 'publics.' My reasoning: Because publics tend to be less easily identifiable, it seems reasonable to consider them a kind of 'collective of collectives,' wherein an array of collective memories are "consolidated" into the much larger collective of a public; a process I detail more fully in Chapter 3 (Anastasio et al., 2012, p. 71).

Aleida Assman (2010) articulates the role of memory in the formation of both the "canon"—the active element of memory that is actively and publicly represented and recycled—and the "archive," which is the repository from which the canon is retrieved (p. 99). These elements of memory are formative in establishing Assman's concept of cultural memory, those texts and referents that are identified as cultural touchstones and recirculated in public discourse so as to retain histories that privilege dominant narratives relating to the public, collective, or culture in question.

Central to concerns of collective/public memory is the rhetorical function of the archive, which is "the basis of what can be said in the future about the present when it will have become the past" (Assman, 2010, p. 102). Collective and public memory articulate the archive broadly as the boundary of what is capable of being said about both the past and present, and that they make possible notions of the future (Agamben, 1989; Assman, 2008; Derrida, 1995; Farge, 2013; Foucault, 1969; Nora, 1989; Ricoeur, 2004). Thus, our ability to argue for certain collective and

public memories relies upon the presence and maintenance of archives that enable the possession of such collective/public memories. Though many of the scholars above are addressing memory in relationship to traumatic events, such as war, genocide, the (often bloody) formation of the modern nation-state, and economic violence, theories of memory are also useful for examining smaller-scale formations of collective and public memory that contribute to larger discourse on traumatic events. For example, androcentric counterpublics have worked hard to tap into discourses that prefigure them as victims within an uncaring and unheeding cultural atmosphere privileging women at the expense of men, and which has thus supposedly transformed into a “gynocentric”—that is, hegemonic for women—society among Anglophonic Western nations (Nathanson & Young, 2001).

For divergent archives, the function of archives in shaping and allowing for the argument of ‘history’ is different than the function of the archive in the recall and promotion of memories. Some institutional archives function primarily as markers of logistical ‘fact,’ for example, when a meeting was held and how long it may have been. Other documents in an archive, and particularly those in divergent archives, are shaped primarily not to record historical occurrences (or not solely for that reason) but instead to make apparent certain collective memories, whether in reference to broader memories—an example from androcentric counterpublics is feeling ‘discriminated’ against as a man in a supposedly feminist society across many years—or particular events, as in the controversy for androcentric counterpublics surrounding high-profile rape cases, such as Emma Sulkowicz’s (Farrell, 1993; Harlan, 2015). It is this function of the archive, as a potential resource on which to articulate collective memories and transmit them to other publics, which is most relevant to the divergent archive of a counterpublic, though the recording of history is also important.

In their description of what they refer to as “autonomous archives,” Shaunna Moore and Susan Pell (2010) identify the intersection of archives, counterpublics, and public memory in local community archives generated in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Canada, drawing examples from the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, the Hope in Shadows project, and the Friends of Woodward’s Squat. Examining how these local, community-based archives formed by emergent publics (a kind of nascent counterpublic) attempt to intervene in public memories and discourse of Downtown Eastside Vancouver makes clear the importance of identifying archives that form outside of sanctioned institutions and how they may impact our understandings of history, politics, culture, and identity. My project builds upon and extends the work begun by Moore and Pell (including complicating what I see as limiting elements of their theorization of autonomous archives²) in more concretely theorizing how counterpublics undergo the rhetorical process of developing archives in order to expand collective memories into public ones.

Choosing to use androcentric counterpublics as the case study for this dissertation has required additional conceptual frameworks for the analysis and understanding of how androcentric counterpublics function in relation to other counterpublics. Without this second set of conceptual frameworks, detailed below, I would not be able to articulate how to position the members and arguments of androcentric counterpublics against non-androcentric, competing

² There are multiple reasons I differentiate divergent archives from Moore and Pell’s autonomous archives. First, Moore and Pell are concerned with theorizing particular, local place-based community archives in Vancouver, Canada, which they acknowledge may not be applicable to wider contexts or examples. Second, Moore and Pell only identify progressive organizations as capable of developing autonomous archives, a move which I see as an oversimplification of the use of archives by counterpublics, and which contributes to the continuing lack of attempts to dialogue with and destabilize more conservative, traditional, and entrenched counterpublics. Moore and Pell also approach the subject of autonomous archives from the standpoint of heritage studies, and do not (understandably) scrutinize the rhetorical processes that I see as crucial in understanding the development of non-institutional archives. Last, autonomous archives are theorized as perpetually wanting and needing to remain outside of institutional influence, while (as I argue below) divergent archives are marked by a desire to supplant, supplement, or become a part of the institutions to which they form in response.

counterpublics. These frameworks are especially useful in recognizing the role of whiteness, masculinity, and maleness and in understanding the androcentric counterpublics' bases as gendered, raced, and for many members, claiming a particular vision of hegemonic, Western, white masculinity and maleness. These 'sub-frameworks' are primarily made up of feminist rhetorical historiography, queer studies/theory, and whiteness and critical race studies.

Many androcentric counterpublics, like the men's rights movement, symbolize a desire to return to trenchant, 'traditional' conceptions of masculinity and maleness, hoping also to hearken back to the romanticized gendered roles of Western society with men as the breadwinners and authoritative figures of the family, and women the caretakers of children and domestic laborers.³ Other androcentric counterpublics, like the profeminists (men who identify as feminist) seek to destabilize what they see as the toxic attitudes and behaviors promoted by traditional conceptions of masculinity and maleness. This project's framework for understanding gender and the constructions of gendered identity so crucial to androcentric counterpublics draws primarily from queer theory. Rather than assuming that the White masculinity and maleness certain androcentric counterpublics so nostalgically long for were ever innate elements of Western masculinity and male gender roles, I instead rely upon Judith Butler's (1990) theories of gender performance to understand gender as a fluid set of constructions attached to particular gendered identities, which are constantly in flux and always under attempts to be shored up and (re)asserted as natural. This project also draws from Eve Sedgwick's (1990) concept of nonce taxonomies, to describe the

³ The primary exception here are profeminist counterpublics, which (as I discuss below) I include as androcentric counterpublics because of their proximity to discursive focal points maintained by other androcentric counterpublics (things that include the sociocultural challenges men face in relationship to particular issues, a focus on the male element of gender relations in Western, Anglophonic nations, and the potentially destructive forces present in masculinity), but which articulate their relationship to gender politics in ways drastically different than the rest of the androcentric counterpublics—most notably in their adoption of feminism rather than its rejection, which defines profeminist counterpublics.

way that sociocultural determinations of what a particular gendered set of behaviors or performances looks like is constituted by a list that is nowhere codified but is instead made apparent when ‘we see it’ in action. Such nonce taxonomies are crucial to understanding the contradictory set of assumptions and ‘demands’ made by many androcentric counterpublics regarding gender roles, as when, for example, they want women to simultaneously help pay the bills, while demanding women stop taking ‘their’ jobs (Kimmel, 2013).

My analysis of Western masculinity and maleness is also influenced by Jack Halberstam’s (1998) theories of female masculinity. Though androcentric counterpublics are largely composed of White men and women, they often draw upon rhetorical strategies that vilify the same masculine characteristics these men idolize amongst themselves—qualities like aggressiveness, dominance, and a disregard for dialogic criticism—when they occur in women. When these masculine qualities are apparent in women, they become most threatening, frequently expressed in the figure of the ‘castrating Feminazi.’ Curiously, such behaviors employed by men are often valorized, even when members of androcentric counterpublics are at the receiving end of the ‘castration’ in the form of economic, governmental, and cultural policies that eradicate jobs, erode broad civil rights, and argue for altering male gender roles. For these reasons, queer theory is a crucial lens for understanding the cultural construction of White male masculinity undergirding the rhetorical strategies and literacy practices that mediate so many androcentric counterpublics’ relationships to the divergent archive.

Analyzing the gender politics among androcentric (imagined) counterpublics requires more than gender/queer theory. Since members of these groups are overwhelmingly White in addition to being male, I utilize a framework to acknowledge the role that Whiteness and the racial makeup of androcentric counterpublics can play in the formation of their divergent

archive(s). To do so, I draw from Whiteness and critical White studies, which articulate the hegemonic means through which Whiteness is positioned as lacking a race or being ‘race neutral,’ rather than a socially constructed racial identity that confers a variety of privileges and advantages in everyday situations (McIntosh, 1988; Wildman & Davis, 1995). Though various androcentric counterpublics position themselves as ‘raceless’ or ‘color-blind’ organizations, the social realities and political agendas of their members tend to make clear the groups’ commitments to causes that serve a largely White, cisgendered, heterosexual, and middle-to-working class agenda⁴. Moreover, androcentric imagined counterpublics’ performances of Western masculinity are only made possible through their Whiteness. That is, they enact a form of masculinity and maleness—particularly regarding their supposed victimization—that is only rhetorically possible due to the hegemonic position their Whiteness affords them. To better understand the role that Whiteness, in addition to maleness, plays in the development of the androcentric counterpublics’ divergent archive(s), I draw particularly from work examining rhetorics of Whiteness (Kennedy et al., 2005; Prendergast, 2003; Trainor, 2008) and intersections between class, economics, and Whiteness (Harris, 1993; Lipsitz, 1998; Roediger, 1991). These critical studies are important not only in the general conception and theorization of the divergent archive, but especially for an intersectional analysis of the divergent archive(s) of androcentric counterpublics.

To make possible my reading of androcentric counterpublics as the locus of a number of White, male, cissexual, and heterosexual rhetorics in the formation of their divergent archive(s), I draw from broader critical race theory, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1989 & 1991) concept of

⁴ As I note above in regards to gender, profeminist androcentric counterpublics are, somewhat, the exception to this rule. Many profeminist counterpublics work towards racial inclusivity and take for granted the reality of racial/ethnic hegemony and privilege.

“intersectionality.” Crenshaw’s theory articulates the interlocking mechanisms of oppression across a variety of ascribed and claimed identities, including sex, gender, sexuality, race, class, and able-bodiedness. Though androcentric counterpublics are composed mainly of White, cisgendered, heterosexual men—and some White, cisgendered, heterosexual women—intersectionality is useful for understanding how such counterpublics (fallaciously) claim a single identity marker, maleness, so closely in their development of the divergent archive. The reality is that androcentric counterpublics exist at the center of a constellation of essentially hegemonic identities, including maleness, Whiteness, heterosexuality, cissexuality, nationality, and class. Intersectionality makes this fact very clear. Last, combined with other research on White, Western masculinity and maleness (Bordo, 2000; Faludi, 2000; Kimmel, 2013; Messner, 1998 & 2000), theories of intersectionality enable me to consider how development of androcentric counterpublics’ divergent archives are predicated upon ignoring their members’ complicity in the denial and sabotage of economic, civil, and legal opportunities that many androcentric counterpublics believe is feminism’s fault.

THEORIZING THE DIVERGENT ARCHIVE

Understanding the collection of texts that leads to a divergent archive requires expanding our definition of what an archive is, which for some may seem to too broadly stretch the word, to cover too much ground and lose specificity. However, in the case of divergent archives, it is important to see these collections of texts *as archives* in order to understand how they function and are utilized by members of the counterpublics who develop them. I identify four formative conditions that seem to be conducive for encouraging the creation of a divergent archive. This list is far from exhaustive, however, and some divergent archives may lack one condition or another and/or possess conditions or features not listed here.

First, divergent archives are formed by counterpublics, and in the way that I theorize them, almost always by counterpublics whose primary discourse is related to identity—this could include, for example, counterpublics that form around discourses on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, or religion. This is likely due to the fact that many counterpublics tend to form around discourses of oppression and perceive themselves to not be adequately recognized or considered by mainstream publics and the institutions that tend to serve those mainstream publics. In the example of my case study, androcentric counterpublics, the major discourses revolve around gender. The smaller organizations, groups, and factions within the umbrella term of androcentric counterpublics may have different ideas of what constitutes the greatest obstacles or threats to men (in general, Western men in Anglophone countries), but they all align themselves around the discursive charge that men are mistreated, discriminated against, and do not possess the advantages and privileges they supposedly do under a patriarchal system (the existence of which is often dismissed or debated among many androcentric counterpublics). As I will discuss in Chapter 1, a shared sense of primary discourse is crucial to the development of a divergent archive through identifying, naming/labeling, and defining a divergent archive's *raison d'être*. This may lead to counterpublic members whose identities may seem at odd with the discourse employed by the counterpublic; for example, women who are part of the men's rights movement, which in some ways seeks to limit women's social and political influence.

Second, divergent archives are marked by their formational counterpublics' perceived lack of access to, inclusion within, or awareness of institutional archives and public discourse. In order for a divergent archive to be compiled, constructed, or curated, the counterpublic(s) that would form that divergent archive must first feel that institutional archives that already exist cannot or do not serve those purposes. This problem of the inadequacy of institutional archives is

a fairly well-documented concern in Writing Studies, where, for example, student writing is often difficult to find and access within university archives (Connors, 1997; Crowley, 1998; Miller, 1991; Ritter, 2009). There might be any number of reasons why a counterpublic could perceive this to be the case—and I argue that it is the perception, rather than the reality that is a formative condition here—but to take a variety of androcentric counterpublics as an example, many members feel that the institutions which control such archives have been corrupted or taken over by feminists and feminist ideologies hostile to the idea that men could be discriminated against as a gender (Brown, 2017; Farrell 1993; Taylor, 2017). This dovetails, of course, with the third formative condition for divergent archives: a perceived lack of legitimacy and legibility in regards to mainstream publics.

Third, for a divergent archive to form, it is necessary that members of the counterpublic(s) developing it perceive a lack of legitimacy and legibility in regard to members of mainstream publics. When I refer to ‘legitimacy’ in this instance, I am referring to the dismissal faced by members of a particular counterpublic in relationship to their concerns, arguments, agenda, or positioning. As an example, androcentric counterpublics consistently argue that people identifying as men and/or male are just as discriminated against, if not moreso than, people identifying as women and/or female (thus far, I have had difficulty locating clear positions by androcentric counterpublics regarding trans, genderqueer, and non-identifying individuals). In making such an argument, these androcentric counterpublics run afoul of

⁵ This is a particularly curious, though perhaps unsurprising, omission from most androcentric counterpublics. Given that any counterpublic which argues that men are discriminated against would have to come to at least a moderate level of consensus regarding who is/can be and who is not/cannot be a man, the lack of many androcentric counterpublics’ stance regarding trans, genderqueer, and non-identifying people is disconcerting. As I discuss throughout this dissertation, androcentric counterpublics tend to rely upon a great deal of essentialized, conservative definitions for identities in order to make arguments and build a divergent archive. Though certain arguably androcentric counterpublics—the mythopoetic men’s movement and profeminists in particular—have been clear in their welcoming of men who identify as homosexual, most have sidestepped the question of who is and is not a man entirely. For the most part, it seems that androcentric counterpublics have regarded people born with male sex

feminist arguments regarding patriarchy and institutionally-sanctioned programs (such as affirmative action) that articulate maleness as an identity that is not discriminated against (or at least not to an inordinate degree). The resistance and occasional outright dismissal faced by androcentric counterpublics in making such an argument amounts, to their members, to a denial of legitimacy in their concerns and agendas. That is, the claims of androcentric counterpublics are viewed by members of those counterpublics themselves to lack veracity in the eyes of wider, mainstream publics and institutions.

It is crucial to understand that this element of how divergent archives are built relies upon a felt *sense* that others deny a counterpublic's legitimacy, and that this perceived lack of legitimacy may or may not be real. What matters is that a counterpublic feels that its claims, arguments, and/or beliefs regarding particular public/collective memories are contested (and generally, rejected) by broader publics and institutions, and that this contestation leads to an inability to enact changes in attitude, policy, or social behavior—or all three—in favor of the counterpublic's goals. Whether the counterpublics' members accurately perceive and categorize mainstream responses to the topics, divergent archives arise partially as rhetorical responses to the feeling that 'true' arguments and memories are being ignored or remain unheard, prompting the perception of a lack of legitimacy by the counterpublic's members. This anxiety around legitimacy results in increased efforts to become 'legible'—that is, clearly understood in the way that a counterpublic's members desire—and one way to achieve legibility is to be able to provide historical narratives of collective/public memories; a process which requires an archive. Archives denote authority and objectivity; to be included in one is to be granted importance as a historical

organs (penis and testicles) to be quintessentially 'male,' and have relied upon the conservative and traditionally masculine nature of their counterpublics to exclude trans, genderqueer, and nonidentifying people, as well as those who may identify as intersexed in some way. As I discuss later, this tendency towards White, traditionally masculine and male members leads to narrow and often troubling conceptions of who is and is not a 'man.'

subject, just as to be denied space in the archives, as many scholars on female, minority, and LGBTQ+ rhetors have pointed towards, is to be rendered historically invisible (Gere, 1997; Glenn & Enoch, 2010; Rawson, 2009; Royster, 2000; Royster & Kirsch, 2012). To illustrate, I will take a prominent example of this feature of divergent archives within androcentric counterpublics: the vociferous debate regarding the routine circumcision of male infants.

One of the longest-running planks of many men's movement organizations and androcentric counterpublics has been the vilification of routine male circumcision. Circumcision has been particularly salient across a wide swath of androcentric counterpublics, crossing boundaries of politics and class. Though the precise origins of the anticircumcision arguments within androcentric counterpublics are difficult to pinpoint, it was approached through multiple frameworks across multiple organizations and groups. For example, the American Fatherhood Coalition (an American father's rights organization active since the mid-1980s) approached the issue of circumcision as a concern regarding the health and rights of male babies that were stripped from them by medical professionals eager to make an extra buck through the procedure (Milos, 1988; NOCIRC, 1993; Snyder, 1989). Men's rights groups articulated circumcision as a procedure designed to deny men "wholeness" and that arose out of taboos around male masturbation (NOHARMM, "A Kellogg legacy", n.d.). These men's rights groups labeled circumcision as "male genital mutilation" and claimed that feminism's outcry regarding female genital mutilation without equal focus on circumcision was anti-male and thus sexist, even going so far as to draw up pamphlets and lists directly comparing statements made regarding female genital mutilation and circumcision in an attempt to show the similarities regarding popular attitudes on the subjects (Newborn Rights Society, n.d.; NOCIRC of Michigan, n.d.; NOHARMM, "Circumcision in America", n.d.).

The seeming lack of attention that androcentric counterpublics felt were being paid to circumcision as an issue and its status as a default medical procedure in the United States led members of these counterpublics to perceive the issue as being dismissed out-of-hand. Thus, several men's movement organizations took it upon themselves to develop materials, seek out medical professionals who agreed with them or would condemn circumcision as an unreasonable procedure, and even organize professional medical conferences on the subject, such as the International Symposium on Circumcision (IAHB, 1991). Whether or not conversations about circumcision in the 80s and 90s were publicly dismissed, as many androcentric counterpublic members claim, is debatable⁶, but what is clear is that members of these counterpublics felt very strongly that their arguments regarding circumcision and its harmfulness to boys and men were going unheard. Thus, members of androcentric counterpublics engaging in discourse regarding circumcision as genital mutilation perceived themselves as lacking legitimacy in regards to the collective memory of mainstream publics and institutions.

If divergent archives are constructed due to a perceived lack of legitimacy, then it follows that the artifacts, materials, and arguments for public/collective memories need to be made *legible* to audiences (generally mainstream publics and institutions) in order to make particular public memories convincing. *Legibility* marks the degree to which developing a divergent archive is a rhetorical act in the same way that it is a historical, memorial, and discursive one. Legibility refers to a counterpublic's efforts to make a case for particular collective memories to a public audience that may not be immediately positioned to accept those memories. In this way,

⁶ Though it is true that circumcision of male babies continues to be a routine procedure, it is arguable that the topic has always been summarily dismissed. In the late 80s and 90s, circumcision proved a controversial topic with a fair number of news articles, exposés, and medical op-eds discussing and questioning the practice (Cooper, 1999; Dodd, 1992; Gillett, 1991; Milos & Macris, 1992; Richards, 1996; Walker, 1993). Moreover, the topic has been messy for men's rights activists in particular, who are occasionally accused of anti-Semitism, which some (though not all) MRAs are quick to deny (Kennedy and Sardi, 2016).

legibility functions as a rhetorical act of *identification* more than persuasion, a process Kenneth Burke (1968) describes as “consubstantiation” (p. 21). This rhetorical identification is oriented primarily through reference to evidence, anecdotes, ephemera, or artifacts found within a divergent archive. These pieces of the divergent archive themselves may intersect with other archives or collective memories, which helps to strengthen the legibility of particular collective memories and thus making them easier to claim as *public* memories. The more legible and familiar a collective memory is, the closer the counterpublic moves towards transferring those memories to larger, more mainstream publics.

Eventually, a counterpublic hopes, the divergent archive will cease to be divergent, and become legible enough to be granted at least partial inclusion in (or to supplant) institutional archives and become a resource for public memories. Divergent archives that are illegible have little chance of affecting public memory, which is why enclaved publics or secretive organizations tend not to build divergent archives (though it is entirely possible they participate in or construct other kinds of archives). Above all else, legibility dictates that a divergent archive be at least mostly, if not fully, accessible to members of mainstream publics.

Last, a divergent archive is necessarily cobbled together across a diffuse array of media and repositories. It is in this way that a divergent archive may look least like many institutional archives. Generally, we conceive of archival artifacts and materials as being granted legitimacy through the aegis of institutions; essentially, if it made its way into an institutional archive, then it is granted institutional rigor and legitimacy. Moreover, because the counterpublics that form divergent archives are often denied access to or are unaware of institutional archives as I mention above, often there is simply no one to collect, categorize, and make available the materials in which the counterpublic would be most invested. Sociopolitical and sociocultural factors also

play a role; hegemonic viewpoints mean that underrepresented minority groups may not have materials donated or collected, instead being overlooked or, in many cases, ignored. The materials that form a divergent archive may be adjacent to one another in only the most tenuous ways and thus rely upon the counterpublic's members to curate and draw connections between such materials through collective memorialization. Most importantly, divergent archives may possess a great deal of what Jose Esteban Muñoz (1996) refers to as "ephemera" (p. 10).

The lack of 'legitimate' archival materials and documents (or lack of access to such materials) for the particular form of collective memory that a counterpublic might recall means that androcentric counterpublics have often come to rely upon ephemera. Ephemera, as Muñoz describes it, is "linked to alternate modes of textuality and narrativity like memory and performance: it is all of those things that remain after a performance, a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself. It does not rest on epistemological foundations but is instead interested in following traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things" (p. 10). Muñoz articulates the concept of ephemera as particularly useful to queer theory and research because definitions of rigor have tended to discount or disqualify 'sources' from which queer research and scholarship must draw. He also makes clear, however, that he is not "suggest[ing] that the minoritarian subject has some primary or *a priori* relation to ephemera, memory, performativity, or the anecdotal" but that he is pointing to the "efficacy and, indeed, necessity of such strategies of self-enactment for the minoritarian subject" (p. 11).

Ephemera are a crucial element of divergent archives in general and androcentric counterpublics are no exception. Countless arguments regarding the system of male oppression referred to as misandry by androcentric counterpublics⁷ rely upon ephemera, particularly

⁷ Although theories of intersectionality would suggest that some men who are part of androcentric counterpublics may indeed face oppression (through their racial/ethnic identity, nationality, or sexuality, for example), the concept

testimonial narratives regarding first-hand experience of the supposed systemic oppression of men. For a divergent archive, ephemera (which can include testimonies, anecdotes, and memories, among other forms) functions as a kind of glue; lacking the legibility and legitimacy of many institutional archives, a divergent archive's gaps in what has occurred in the past are filled in by the stories, memories, and anecdotes that convince people of particular public memories. As I note above, the difference between memory and history in an archive are crucial to understanding a divergent archive; ephemera are particularly powerful elements of collective memories, though they may not always be influential in dictating history.

The process of making collective memory legible and legitimate—and possibly moving it into the realm of public memory—involves the accretion and curation of texts and artifacts, much of it ephemera, that come to represent a divergent archive. However, the very nature of the counterpublics that develop divergent archives means that these texts and artifacts often lack the institutional veracity that is required in order to make arguments for history and thus the development of public memory. Many of the counterpublics that form divergent archives are either unable to access institutional archives or do not find the historical material that validates their sense of history and collective/public memory within such institutional archives. This can be as true for androcentric counterpublics as it is for counterpublics that form around other discursive bases, such as race/ethnicity, though obviously the circumstances of what they cannot find may be quite different between them.

of misandry is partial and inconsistent, at best. Though true that men may face difficulty or discrimination in certain arenas, the argument for misandry rests upon the idea that men *as a whole gender* are oppressed, an assertion which is not supported by research nor widely shared among those outside of androcentric counterpublics. Rather, as I discuss throughout this dissertation, assertions of misandry often rely upon cherry-picked stories, denouncement of most gender-based discrimination research, and an internalized belief that major institutions in the Anglo-American West have become 'infiltrated' by militant feminists whose ultimate goal is the systemic oppression of men. As I imagine is clear by now, I do not believe misandry as touted by androcentrists is real and disagree with the assertion that men as a gender are wholly and systemically oppressed.

While androcentric counterpublics are likely to find a great deal of representation in the form of White, heterosexual men, the vast amount of this material does not help them forward their memorial argument of misandry (Farrell, 1993). This inadequacy of institutional archives for male-oriented counterpublics reinforces their own argument that most, if not all, major institutions within the Anglophone countries where androcentrics tend to reside have been thoroughly taken over by feminists and influenced by feminist policy.⁸ In this moment, it becomes apparent that the force of a historical and memory narrative largely accepted by mainstream publics—that women as a whole have long been barred from positions of institutional and national authority and power in Western countries—remains separated from the memories of the androcentric divergent archive—which argues that women have never been that excluded from positions of power and that this historical narrative has led to an overcorrection, such that women are now the dominant sex.

This theorization of the divergent archive and (some) of its formative conditions is far from exhaustive, but it does indicate some common elements in the development and identification of divergent archives.

WHY ANDROCENTRIC COUNTERPUBLICS?

Potential case studies for “The Divergent Archive” could come from a variety of counterpublics. I utilize a portion of counterpublics that I collect under the umbrella term “androcentric counterpublics”—meaning counterpublics whose primary marker for identification

⁸ This position, as I will discuss in further detail later, enables members of androcentric counterpublics to rail against major institutions like government, education (higher and K-12), and the military as thoroughly feminized while praising the ‘bold’ actions of politicians and figures who promote ‘red-pill’ friendly policies and agendas. Of course, many of the institutions that androcentric counterpublics tend to rail against are controlled overtly or indirectly by men, allowing members of androcentric counterpublics to rhetorically have their cake and eat it, too: they’re able to portray themselves as victims ignored by the institutions that should serve them, while exerting vocal influence due to the hegemonic agency they claim not to possess.

is a foremost allegiance to the perceived concerns of and discrimination against (White) men, masculinity, and maleness and which are largely, though not exclusively, composed of people who identify as male and White—for a number of reasons. First and foremost, there is a dearth of scholarship examining and scrutinizing the discursive, rhetorical, and literacy practices of the androcentric counterpublics serving as my case study. It is true that, as Miriam Brody (1993) argues in *Manly Writing*, the history of public discourse, rhetoric, and composition has been deeply marked by an assumption of ‘masculine’ writing/communication as ideal, and that much research on writing has taken this fact for granted. Michael Messner’s (1998, 2000, 2016) research on men’s movement rhetorics is a rare example of rhetorical research focused exclusively on men’s rights/men’s movement rhetoric. Messner aside, research on the rhetoric of androcentric counterpublics in their modern form (since the late 1970s) is relatively rare and as a result, androcentric counterpublics remain poorly understood both within the field of Writing Studies and by mainstream publics. This is particularly true in regard to men’s rights rhetoric in its current, digitally centralized form through websites like *A Voice for Men* and *Return of Kings*.

Moreover, what research does exist often fails to address the diversity of subpublics and collectives among androcentrics. The ‘men’s movement’ of the 1980s and 90s is not a single, monolithic group, but instead a collection of disparate groups united under a prominent discursive claim: that the systemic oppression and discrimination against men (misandry) is quite real, and that it is a direct consequence of second and third-wave feminism (Ault, 1994; Farrell, 1993; Hayward, 1990; Men’s Rights, Inc., “Men’s rights IQ test”, 1989). Particularly in Writing Studies, little research has examined androcentric counterpublics, much less identified them as responsible for building particular archives and promoting specific collective and public memories. One goal of this project, then, is to not only build a theoretical framework for

understanding the rhetorical processes of divergent and non-institutional archives and their relationships to counterpublics and public memories, but also to serve as a useful examination of the rhetorical, archival, and literacy practices of androcentric counterpublics.

My second reason for choosing androcentric counterpublics as a case study is that they occupy a curious sociocultural discursive position. Technically, many members of androcentric counterpublics possess what we would consider a hegemonic positionality; most members tend to be White, cisgendered, heterosexual, from an Anglophonic country (primarily the United States, the United Kingdom, or Australia, though there are smaller androcentric publics in countries like India and Japan), able-bodied,⁹ and identify as male (Kimmel, 2013). My use of hegemony here refers to Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's (1971) notion of cultural leadership forces that position certain identities and ideologies as natural and innate—in this case, White, cisgendered, heterosexual maleness and masculinity—and which confers significant authority and privilege in ways other positionalities may not (Bates, 1975; Gramsci, 1971; Storey, 2009). Yet the members of androcentric counterpublics discursively articulate themselves as being 'locked out' of these positions of authority and privilege they are told they possess (Hayward, 1987; Hesse, 2014). Moreover, they claim that their public memories are decidedly at odds with that located within most institutional archives, and in fact, often accuse such institutions

⁹ This particular facet of androcentric counterpublics is difficult to discern. Though forms of disability do not tend to appear prominently within androcentric counterpublics, those counterpublics do often take up causes and rhetorical positions in relationship to (male) veterans with disabilities, or portray members as victims occupying a range of potentially 'disabled' positionalities, such as those suffering from trauma after being "falsely accused" of rape, "battered husbands," or the statistically significant number of men suffering from depression and whom commit suicide. Interestingly, these discussions of the mental trauma borne by men under a supposedly "gynocentric" culture (where femaleness is considered hegemonic) fail to extend to the men connected to androcentric counterpublics who commit public acts of violence, often explicitly against women. As I will discuss in Ch. 2, these men and their acts haunt attempts by androcentric counterpublics to make their divergent archive(s) legible and legitimate and are thus disavowed, obscured, or purposely forgotten.

(including universities, museums, and local and national government) as furthering a gynocentric agenda driven by the whims of feminists.

The contrast in the acknowledgement of the hegemonic realities white, cisgendered, heterosexual men face by outsiders to androcentric counterpublics—including other white, cisgendered, heterosexual men—and the members of those counterpublics is a curious phenomenon. If these men are everywhere in the institutional archive, if their history is hegemonic, why don't they feel that way? It is my aim to attempt to answer this question, the process of which I hope will lead to better mutual understanding and more constructive dialogue on mutually beneficial terms.

This brings me to my last reason for choosing androcentric counterpublics: because to not do so is irresponsible.

Toxic masculinity, entrenched nationalism, misogyny, and the homophobia that so often undergirds them will only continue to spread if left unchallenged, as has become increasingly apparent in the wake of events like Dylann Roof's shooting spree at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC on June 17, 2015, the response to Stanford rapist Brock Turner in the spring and summer of 2016, and the white supremacy rallies in Charlottesville on August 11 and 12 of 2017 (which ended in the death of Heather Heyer and the injury of 19 others when James Alex Fields, Jr. deliberately drove a car into a crowd of anti-protestors). The difficulty is that at times, androcentric counterpublics' discourse seems to devolve into something more akin to conspiracy theories than dialogue. Their insistence upon feminist agendas that control institutions as vast and (for most feminists) bereft of female representation as the United States' government often serves androcentric counterpublics as a way to justify *everything* that does not explicitly and immediately benefit men as another element of

institutions that are either dominated by feminist dogma or are bullied into gynocentric attitudes by feminists (Bell, 2015; Eldora, 2017; Wright, 2014).

This position of always being the victim regardless of who the perpetrator is (and the vast majority of time in policy, legislative, and popular media discussions, it is other men) all too often keeps androcentric counterpublics from reflectiveness or genuine attempts at egalitarian dialogue. This self-marginalization and self-victimization combine with elements of authority and privilege that often go unacknowledged by members of androcentric counterpublics to become what sociologist Michael Kimmel (2013) refers to as “aggrieved entitlement” (p. xiv). Aggrieved entitlement names the deep-seated sense of ‘deserving’ exhibited by members with traditionally hegemonic positionalities when the benefits of that hegemony do not seem to be accessible to them. The aggrieved entitlement of androcentric counterpublics must be confronted, destabilized, and brought into real, mutually beneficial dialogue. In order to do that, we must understand how androcentric counterpublics come to believe in their own victimization and why so many of them think it is feminism’s fault—which requires us to understand the divergent archive and the rhetorical processes of collecting and curating it.

As I note above, my use of the term androcentric counterpublics is to unite a sometimes disparate and competing group of counterpublics under a single label in order to better examine the discursive connections and differences among them. I justify combining groups as different as profeminists and the trad/con members of *Return of Kings* under this common designation because, regardless of particular beliefs and agendas, all of these groups, organizations, and forums articulate an investment in two primary discursive claims: first, that men face real systemic challenges that complicate simple notions of male privilege and hegemony; and second, that a cause of these challenges is feminism, which according to many androcentric

counterpublics, have become the new hegemony (Wright, 2014). As Asen (2002) notes, we ought to recognize counterpublics not merely through identities or positionalities, which can create reductive and contrasting understandings, but through the discourse(s) generated by a given counterpublic. Since despite some differences in the means and secondary discourses of androcentric counterpublics, they remain unified in these primary discursive concerns, I think it is necessary for this project to view them as a loosely connected group rather than individual, small counterpublics. Another reason is that while there may certainly be differences among androcentric counterpublics, many of their primary concerns, like circumcision, rape claims, domestic abuse, and the portrayal of men in popular media, to name a few, are held in common. These common concerns are often made evident in moments like the controversy surrounding *Mad Max: Fury Road*, to which I point in the opening of this dissertation. Even as Clarey at *Return of Kings* and Fields at *A Voice for Men* disagreed rather pointedly about what *Mad Max: Fury Road* said about misandry, they both viewed it as a significant medium over which to debate what they perceived as issues of male and masculine representation. I now briefly identify some of the classifications and prominent factions within my umbrella case study of androcentric counterpublics.

Broadly speaking, most androcentric counterpublics have tended to fall into four broader groups in terms of their primary concerns, discourse, and rhetorical methods in communicating that discourse (though overlap between members of groups is not uncommon): profeminist men's groups, mythopoetic men's groups, men's rights groups, and the 'redpill right.' Profeminist men's groups (which have largely switched to referring to themselves as simply male feminists) often originated as all-male organizations seeking to destabilize what we would now call toxic masculinities, to confront misogyny and sexism, and to develop better

understanding and equality between men and women from the perspective of confronting patriarchal norms (Kimmel, 2013). Many of these profeminist groups appear to have sprung up in the 1970s and 80s, aimed at educating men on how to confront bigotry in a variety of forms, most notably misogyny, as well as how to limit their own misogynistic tendencies (L.A. Men's Collective, 1975). Documents from several smaller profeminist organizations (such as the Los Angeles Men's Collective) also indicate strong stances against homophobia and efforts to include gay men within the group (1975). As mainstream feminism moved out of the second wave and into the third, it became acceptable for many of these men to drop the 'pro' label and simply refer to themselves as feminists.

The profeminist men's groups now largely seem to have been absorbed into larger, non-gendered organizations and are represented by bodies such as The American Men's Studies Association. I include the profeminist groups in this taxonomy of androcentric counterpublics because the history of other androcentric counterpublics, including mythopoetic and men's rights groups, are deeply connected to profeminist origins, and many profeminist men are concerned about the men involved in the same issues—like paternal custody, domestic abuse, and rape—but approach these issues from the standpoint of destabilizing the toxic masculinity that compels many men's involvement in these issues. However, because many profeminists eventually became part of broader feminist and queer movements alongside women and people identifying as queer, if they have created an expansive divergent archive, it will likely be found with those counterpublics. For this reason, profeminist men's groups do not feature prominently within the case studies of this dissertation in its current state.

The mythopoetic men's groups were largely active in the 1980s and 90s, and were groups of men who sought to rediscover the 'deep masculine' that urban society has wrenched from

them (Messner, 2000). The mythopoetics have been guided largely by the work of authors like Robert Bly, Michael J. Meade, and Robert L. Moore, in a process akin to self-help in reclaiming the emotional and spiritual expression that has been taken from them both by toxic masculinity and the feminizing forces of the modern world (Bly, 1990; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Messner, 2000; Moore & Gillette, 1991). Focusing on spiritual retreats (often including sweat lodges, drumming, and chanting) and the reclamation of male coming-of-age rituals, the core mythopoetic concern was that of men in nature with each other, being honest, and rediscovering what it innately means to be a man.¹⁰ The mythopoetics also tended to maintain a stance of apoliticism, and while they identified feminization of men as a primary concern for men, they sidestepped blaming feminism and feminists directly. Though the mythopoetics seemed to have the greatest participation and during the late 1980s and 90s, there are still pockets of mythopoetic activity through groups like The ManKind Project (2016), a “nonprofit training and education organization...hosting life-changing experiential personal development programs for men” (n.p.). Due to their apolitical stance and tendency to avoid direct engagement in public memory formation, the mythopoetics generally do not feature in the case studies examined as part of this project.

The third and most prominent collective within androcentric counterpublics is the men’s rights movement. I identify androcentric counterpublics as part of the men’s rights movement through two discursive features: First, they identify themselves as men’s rights activists (MRAs). Though MRAs have come into the spotlight recently in news and popular media as a sort of

¹⁰ The mythopoetic men’s movement takes maleness as innate and determined by genitalia, leaving little room for fluid considerations of gender and maleness. As a result, the mythopoetics have been almost entirely composed of white, middle-class, middle-aged men with occasional exceptions. Their apolitical stances and traditionally entrenched conceptions of gender seem to prove an obstacle to the participation of queer men, men of color, and men with more fluid or nontraditional gender identities, despite a seeming willingness on the part of mythopoetic groups to include such men (Ferber, 2004).

stand-in for all androcentric counterpublics, there are a variety of androcentric counterpublics that do not consider themselves part of a men's rights group, and that do not share the men's rights priority in fighting for 'equal' rights for men and women. Some androcentric counterpublics, such as the profeminists, recognize the tendency for such discourse to become an airing of grievances against feminism rather than an attempt to secure justice for all genders. Other groups—like the last androcentric counterpublic I'll discuss, the “redpill right”—reject equality as a goal entirely in favor of openly restoring masculine and male domination of Western society. Thus, simply because a counterpublic may be disposed to similar arguments and discourses, they may not identify as part of the men's rights movement, just as people who believe in equality and justice for women may not all identify as feminists.

Second, men's rights counterpublics are identifiable through their particular agendas, rhetoric, and activism. Men's rights counterpublics tend to focus around a handful of prominent concerns, including circumcision, domestic abuse (against men), paternal custody, “false” rape claims, representations of men in popular media, and systemic misandry (Belanger, 2011; Blake, 2015; Kimmel, 2013). While other androcentric counterpublics may be interested in some or all of these concerns, they tend not to view themselves as ‘activists’, and do not employ a rights-based rhetoric in order to make their arguments. Men's rights counterpublics frame most concerns about equality through a rhetoric of lost ‘rights’ in the wake of gains by women. Feminism has done so well, they argue, that now the balance has tipped back the other way, and it is men who are systemically oppressed. Men's rights counterpublics focus on consciousness-raising, organizing boycotts, protests, and conferences, and developing literature and articles focused on ‘exposing’ the misandry prevalent in Western, Anglophonic countries. MRAs rely upon neologisms like “gynocentrism” (the concept of a female hegemony in society, which they

believe Western Anglophonic countries currently are) and “misandry” in order to build an elaborate worldview wherein most major institutions like universities, the government, and corporate business are either controlled by feminists or bent to feminists’ will through a variety of means. Men’s rights counterpublics distinguish themselves by attempting to openly affect law, policy, and cultural mores and attitudes, as opposed to the apolitical stance of most mythopoetics and the more back-channel methods employed by the redpill right.

The final group of counterpublics that I include in my case study of androcentric counterpublics are what have come to be known as the ‘redpill right.’ Of all the androcentric counterpublics, the redpill right is by far the most disconcerting. Many of the subpublics and imagined counterpublics in this group, such as the aforementioned *Return of Kings*, The Red Pill reddit, and various pickup artist (PUA) groups openly acknowledge their goal of restoring men to dominant positions in society, where members of these groups feel they belong. Several of the redpill right organizations have elaborate theories regarding the sexual economy of Western, Anglophone nations, most of which conclude that women are now deeply advantaged by ‘traditional’ heterosexual relationships and romance. They advocate for methods that distinguish men as “alphas” (socially dominant men with behavioristic tendencies sexually attractive to women) who use “game” (a set of behaviors designed to attract the sexual interest of women) to pickup women without becoming tied down into relationships that render them as “betas” (men who possess “provisional” traits like providing resources or wealth in order to anchor women into a relationship; it is believed by PUAs that this is how most men maintain traditional heterosexual relationships) who are always at risk of losing their significant other to an alpha (in PUA ideologies, women are the selective gender and are thus always looking to ‘trade up’) (MachiavellianRed, 2015).

Unlike men's rights activists, redpill right counterpublic members see no point in trying to affect legal policies or sociocultural attitudes. Rather, methods like game allow them to more covertly affect the lifestyle they desire, even in the midst of a supposedly misandry-ridden society. The redpill right counterpublics also, as their moniker suggests, tend to be overwhelmingly conservative and/or libertarian in behavior, attitudes, and politics. Because women (not to mention people identifying as queer, who are often summarily dismissed from the redpill right without thought) tend to operate as sexual objects to be won or tricked rather than as agentive persons, I consider the redpill right to be the most troubling and potentially dangerous set of counterpublics among androcentric counterpublics.

This dissertation focuses on two main types of androcentric counterpublics: men's rights and redpill right groups. It is crucial to remember, as Asen (2002) notes, that membership in one counterpublic does not preclude membership in others, even potentially contrasting or directly conflicting counterpublics. Though members of the redpill right counterpublics may see men's rights counterpublics as wasting their time on fruitless endeavors (and age plays a great deal in which androcentric counterpublic an individual member might find themselves), there are almost certainly members who foment the discourse of and participate across both kinds of androcentric counterpublics. Combining these counterpublics into a single set has the potential to elide particular elements of these counterpublics. However, androcentric counterpublics share so many elements of the divergent archive, particularly the men's rights and redpill counterpublics, that it is difficult to articulate how and why they might be separated. For all four of these counterpublics, the treatment and sociocultural positioning of men in Western, Anglophonic countries is a primary element of their discourse. For the mythopoetic, men's rights, and redpill counterpublics, this crystallizes in the concept of misandry, and it is this discursive focal point

that this dissertation identifies as most useful and prominent in the construction of a divergent archive. This is particularly salient in regards to the need for a divergent archive to be open and relatively accessible for those interested in locating it. For the purposes of this project, I acknowledge the slippages in lumping these counterpublics together for the sake of the productive generations in recognizing their collective effort to document, archive, and combat what they perceive as the systemic oppression of the male gender.

METHODS AND DATA

This project develops a theory of the divergent archive through the case study of androcentric counterpublics, particularly men's rights counterpublics and redpill right counterpublics. To do so, I draw on a variety of archival materials, texts, and artifacts from several androcentric counterpublics. The majority of these archival materials were obtained from the Changing Men Collection housed within Michigan State University's Special Collections. However, given the diffused and "non-rigorous" nature of a divergent archive's artifacts and materials, many other materials that have been collected from a variety of repositories/resources for the androcentric counterpublics' divergent archives may not look like traditional archival artifacts/texts (Bessette, 2013; Muñoz, 1996). This disparate collection of artifacts includes prominent androcentric counterpublic websites—such as *A Voice for Men* and *Return of Kings*; popular culture/media produced by and/or about androcentric counterpublics such as *The Red Pill* (2016) documentary by Cassie Jaye; and literature and scholarship produced in defense of androcentric counterpublics or the 'reality' of misandry, including Warren Farrell's *The Myth of Male Power* (1993) and Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young's *Spreading Misandry* (2001). While some of these materials may seem too recent to be archival, the in-process nature of a divergent archive and androcentric divergent archives in particular, means that to limit my

historiographic research to materials with the usual historical distance would only reify what is already within institutional archives, much of which is not even accessible to or utilized by members of divergent counterpublics. This is particularly salient when we consider that divergent archives are not just developed to preserve history, but particular collective and public memories that may not possess the rigor that historical materials are expected to have.

There is a massive amount of material produced by androcentric counterpublics and their members. The “manosphere,” as the collection of online sites related to androcentric counterpublics is sometimes collectively referred to, is made up of thousands of articles, websites, and Youtube videos. That’s before we even consider the archival materials located within Michigan State University’s Changing Men Collection, which includes another 400 vertical files across 25 boxes of archival materials. There is enough material across these sources for several monograph-length studies of androcentric counterpublics and their rhetorical practices. For these reasons, I had to narrow the scope of what I included in my case studies for the purposes of this dissertation. My principles of selection, followed by an articulation of my use of feminist rhetorical strategies to analyze and critique those materials, are below.

Due to the sheer volume of material that could be studied as part of an androcentric counterpublic’s divergent archive(s), I observed three key principles of selection in determining materials for my case study. Those principles were: 1) to limit selection of materials to ‘salient’ and ‘impactful’ documents, artifacts, and ephemera relative to androcentric counterpublics; 2) to utilize materials with a clear author/producer/publisher; and 3) to (with a handful of exceptions) focus on materials produced under an organizational, institutional, or collective’s aegis.

First, I determined that for this project, I ultimately needed to focus on texts and materials that were intended to be spread publicly, addressed prominent themes or topics of androcentric

discourse and memory, and generated noticeable discussion either among members of androcentric counterpublics/collectives, or between mainstream publics, oppositional counterpublics, and androcentric counterpublics. There are any number of websites, Youtube accounts, and Twitter accounts that are run by individuals participating in androcentric discourse. However, because my dissertation is interested in how counterpublics attempt to transfer collective memory to publics and thus make those memories public, artifacts and materials that saw little circulation or engaged with limited and/or enclaved subpublics did not make sense to include in this case study. This is why, for example, this dissertation does not address more enclaved androcentric subpublics like ‘MGTOWs’ (Men Going Their Own Way) or ‘incels’ (involuntary celibates). While these groups—as men taking on ascetic lifestyles that refrain from any unnecessary social or sexual interaction with women (MGTOWs) and men seeking sex through pickup artist methods of ‘game’ but apparently unsuccessful on a long-term basis (incels), respectively—are certainly of interest to a study of androcentric rhetoric, they are generally cloistered from more mainstream publics, by choice or circumstance.

While I do not have a single precise measurement of ‘salience’ or ‘impact,’ per se, I decided to generally include artifacts from the Changing Men Collection when they were circulated from more prominent androcentric organizations with a clear audience of either mainstream publics or occasionally widespread distribution among their own and other androcentric organizations/collectives. The extensive documentation included in the Changing Men Collection allowed me to figure out which organizations tended to have more expanded (i.e., national) reach and which were more regionally or locally bound. For these reasons, my archival research focuses on materials drawn from the National Coalition for Men (NCFM), Men’s Rights, Inc. (MR, Inc.), the American Fathers Coalition (AFC), the National Organization

to Halt the Abuse and Routine Mutilation of Males (NOHARMM), and the National Organization of Circumcision, Information Resource Center (NOCIRC). I also include news articles from mainstream periodicals both local and national when they interviewed or discussed representatives or associates of these androcentric organizations, many of which operated as non-profit businesses complete with board members and budgets. While many of these organizations/non-profits have ceased operation, a few continue under the aegis of other organizations and at least one, the National Coalition for Men, has been extremely active in the last few years (2016-2020).

For digital/online materials, I almost exclusively draw from the two most prominent androcentric websites—*A Voice for Men* and *Return of Kings*—and the comment sections within popular articles found on those websites. I made the decision to draw mostly from these *AVFM* and *ROK* for two reasons: first, they were stable sources with a wide reach that collected, hosted, and spread androcentric discourse and collective memory, making them the primary disseminators and propagators of androcentric collective memories and rhetoric in digital media. Their notoriety among mainstream publics and other subpublics also makes a clear case for their inclusion as prominent ‘repositories’ for the androcentric divergent archive. Tellingly, *A Voice for Men* and *Return of Kings* have been labeled “male supremacy” hate-group websites by the Southern Poverty Law Center (2018), with both founders, Paul Elam (*AVFM*) and Daryush “Roosh” Valizadeh (*ROK*) specifically quoted as exemplifying an agenda of “hateful ideology advocating for the subjugation of women” (“Male Supremacy,” n.p.). In this way, I hoped to distill a mountain of hateful, anti-feminist rhetoric into a more relevant collection of texts, artifacts, and ephemera.

My second principle of selection involved only utilizing texts with a clear claim of author/producer/publisher. Because so much of this dissertation's analyses of androcentric counterpublic materials as a case study revolves around being able to trace discourse and rhetoric as they move across subpublics, counterpublics, and publics, I needed to be able to attribute texts and materials to, at the very least, an organization in order to better discern the circulation these documents and artifacts underwent. A number of materials located within the Changing Men Collection do not have a clear author or publisher of the material (such as one of the many androcentric non-profits), and this made it difficult to claim such materials as participating in discourse across publics without knowing who drafted it, where it was sent, and why. For digital materials, even if I was not able to discern the actual identity of an author (many go by pseudonyms or usernames), its representation through *A Voice for Men* and/or *Return of Kings* seemed sufficient to recognize how and where these materials enter a counterpublic/public circulation, and what kind of androcentric discourse surrounds it. For these reasons, my case studies focus almost exclusively on materials with a clear author or organization claiming publishing credit.

My third principle of selection was to focus my case studies on materials, ephemera, and artifacts produced (with a handful of exceptions) under an organizational, institutional, or collective's purview. While there are a handful of exceptions to this rule—for example, the androcentric adjacent academics like Warren Farrell, Katherine Young, Christina Hoff Sommers, and Paul Nathanson who generally do not declare a specific attachment to androcentric organizations or groups but whose work is in clear alliance and/or defense of androcentrism—in general I pulled materials from organizations or groups like the National Coalition for Men and

Men's Rights, Inc., or from websites with clear sets of editors and contributors, like *A Voice for Men* and *Return of Kings*.

This principle of selection overlaps with my first, but my goal in this dissertation was to represent the broader discourse of androcentric counterpublics and to show how—as a collective—these groups sought to influence public memory by displacing it through their own collective memories. While individual members of these groups most certainly can and do contribute to this rhetorical process, my focus on the role that constructing a divergent archive plays here meant that individuals without clear networks of circulation among both androcentric collectives and/or mainstream publics were of less interest as case studies. There are a lot of angry, White men screaming into the void of the internet about women, feminism, and social justice movements. I made a decision early on that this project was more interested in how such men formed larger coalitions and collectives in order to influence public memory. In doing so, it became clear that cataloguing individual authors with little-to-no influence would not be reflective of the rhetoric and discourse moving across androcentric counterpublics and other subpublics/publics. In order to analyze the body of materials I did collect for my case study, however, I drew upon the feminist rhetorical and historiographical practices articulated by Royster and Kirsch (2012). I utilized their “terms of engagement”—critical imagination, strategic contemplation, and social circulation, specifically—in order to honestly and critically engage with the archival artifacts within the androcentric divergent archive.

I must note here that Royster and Kirsch's terms of engagement are primarily oriented toward feminist rhetorical and historiographic work involving the research and recovery of female rhetors and writers. It may seem odd for a dissertation that utilizes the archival materials of a group of counterpublics largely composed of White, cisgendered, heterosexual men to draw

from these terms of engagement, but they provide necessary and useful perspectives in understanding divergent archives. Critical imagination, an “inquiry tool, a mechanism for seeing the noticed and the unnoticed, rethinking what is there and not there, and speculating about what could be there instead,” (Royster & Kirsch, p. 20) is useful not only for filling the gaps of what is not located within the divergent archive, but also what has been *purposely omitted, disavowed, or forgotten*, a crucial facet of identifying the elements of divergent archives that I refer to as “shadows in the archives.” Locating shadows in the archives requires understanding that much of a divergent archive is orchestrated by what is not there just as much, if not more, than what is, an issue I discuss further in Chapter 2.

Similarly, strategic contemplation—which is meant to “render meaningfully, respectfully, honorably the words and works of those whom we study, even when we find ourselves disagreeing with some of their values, beliefs, or worldviews” requires that I represent the materials and texts of the androcentric divergent archive in a fair, honest, and complex way, even as I vehemently disagree with many of the views and arguments of androcentric counterpublics. For this project, strategic contemplation does not mean that I accept the often misogynistic, homophobic, and/or racially ignorant rhetoric of certain androcentric counterpublics as truthful, but instead that I do not immediately dismiss what members of these counterpublics articulate without trying to understand the perspectives from which they come and the origins of those beliefs and values. Like Michael Kimmel in *Angry White Men* (2013), I hope to counter the hateful and/or phobic elements of androcentric counterpublic discourses while recognizing that those discursive and rhetorical constructions come from real pain, disillusionment, and fears regarding men’s place in a swiftly-changing sociocultural environment.

Last, “social circulation,” which “invokes connections among past, present, and future in the sense that the overlapping social circles in which women [and in my dissertation, men] travel, live, and work are carried on or modified from one generation to the next and can lead to change rhetorical practices” (Royster & Kirsch, 2012, p. 22). For my project, social circulation requires me to acknowledge, scrutinize, and reflect upon rhetorical trends within masculinity and maleness (particularly white masculinity and maleness) that have made possible certain rhetorical and archival conditions for androcentric counterpublics—as well as for my researching them. The largely hegemonic positionality of most members of androcentric counterpublics means that even as they claim marginalization and victimization, they are able to force others to listen to them in ways many cannot (the most drastic example of which are the mass shootings that ‘send a message’). It also means I recognize, bluntly, that my research subjects have long been the statistical beneficiaries of privilege and deference from a variety of institutional and non-institutional systems; as a group of largely white, cisgendered, heterosexual men, the members of androcentric counterpublics have in many ways received attention and advantages in undue ways, the equalizing of which they perceive as discrimination (Kimmel, 2013). However, it also means recognizing that as a white, cisgendered, heterosexual man, *I too profit from these advantages*, including my ability to navigate the spaces of androcentric counterpublics with less danger than those maligned by such counterpublics, and in my potential ability to convince members of these counterpublics to engage in honest dialogue with me. Thus, while I must honestly and ethically engage the subjects of my research and wish to recognize their emotional frustrations and difficulties, I cannot do so without reflecting upon the real rhetorical advantages (and, sometimes, constraints) both these subjects and myself possess.

These terms of engagement enable me to produce a dissertation that does not immediately dismiss the divergent archive as fallacious, unimportant, or illegitimate, but they also provide me with the critical and reflective sensibilities required for sincerely and accurately assessing and critiquing their rhetorical processes. Such methodological frameworks are crucial to this project.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Because divergent archives represent a diffused, chaotic archival process, I have chosen to unpack the concept through four chapters highlighting the rhetorical processes of both the divergent archive of androcentric counterpublics (my case study) as well as divergent archives more broadly. Chapter 1 articulates in detail what the divergent archive is, how it forms, and how it represents the intersection of rhetoric, archives, publics, and memory. Most importantly, it lays out the key concepts of ‘legibility’ and ‘legitimacy’ that undergird the purpose behind constructing an ad-hoc, community archive in order to transfer memories from collectives to publics. It also elaborates on public/counterpublic theory and the role of collective and public memory studies in the rhetorical process of the divergent archive. It ends by highlighting examples of divergent archives among androcentric counterpublics as well as beyond them.

Chapter 2 details the messy threads that arise from the definitional discursive struggles and conflicts between what should and shouldn’t be included in the materials of a given divergent archive in order to attain legibility and legitimacy. In the attempt to construct and curate a divergent archive that reifies a counterpublic’s collective memories, members of that counterpublic may fail to recognize the rhetorical liabilities that accompany the construction of a divergent archive. Referring to such rhetorical liabilities and the memories they espouse through the metaphor of “shadows in the archives,” I discuss how divergent archives and their organizing

counterpublics meet clear rhetorical limits in their ability to secure legibility and legitimacy. I do this through a case study examining the divergent archive surrounding anti-circumcision protests within androcentric counterpublics, an attempt to secure legibility and legitimacy that generally backfires. This is due to how androcentric anti-circumcision discourse seems to dovetail with anti-Semitic rhetoric, due in part to androcentrics' unwillingness to consider solutions to male circumcision more complex than an outright and total ban. The larger these messy shadows loom, the more likely it is that a counterpublic's divergent archive will remain unpersuasive and on the margins of public memory narratives, unable to move their collective memory into public rhetorical spaces.

Chapter 3 examines the role that *kairos* plays within the divergent archive and the consolidation of collective memories. Drawing from David M. Sheridan, Anthony J. Michel, and Jim Ridolfo's (2012) articulation of *kairos* in *The Available Means of Persuasion*, as well as Dustin Edward's (2017) notion of "tactical rhetorics," I argue that constructing a divergent archive, as well as rhetorically transferring collective memories into public ones, requires a kairotic sensibility. Further, it considers how the very consolidation of collective memory within a counterpublic is itself a rhetorical process that engages deeply with *kairos* by necessity. Ultimately, such processes expose the fluid nature of both memory and archives and their deeply kairotic essence. This is made clear by my case study, which analyzes the rhetorical decisions made by androcentric groups in co-opting kairotic discourse on how education fails students on a gendered level, by weaponizing the fact that men now represent a minority of students in higher education compared to women. The National Coalition for Men's use of Title IX complaints to argue that female students now constitute a majority on American university and college campuses—and thus, scholarships and grants targeting such students are by nature,

discriminatory toward the ‘minority’ of male students—represents a troublingly savvy and kairotic inversion of social justice rhetoric.

Chapter 4 considers how popular culture texts can function as both potentially ephemeral artifacts within the divergent archive and rhetorical, discursive sites of contestation over collective memory. While pop culture has long been recognized to play a role in the formation of collective and public memories, here I argue that such texts can serve as material to be stored within divergent archive repositories as part of the memorial process. Moreover, the very existence of pop culture as public texts whose meanings and cultural relevance can be negotiated across publics and counterpublics means that they serves as key opportunities for divergent counterpublics to attempt to consolidate and transfer their collective memories into public ones by encouraging publics to identify with their particular rhetorical readings of a text. Focusing on late 20th and 21st century television and film, I use my case study to show how advertisements, films, and television shows have become artifacts within the androcentric divergent archive, as well as prompted public contestation over the misandry and gynocentrism supposedly present within modern pop culture. This indicates how expansive the scope for constructing and curating a divergent archive can potentially be; almost any cultural artifact can be stored in such a repository.

Finally, I conclude with a brief consideration of the gaps addressed as well as left open by this project, how public engagement with androcentric counterpublics has shifted since this project’s inception, and a brief nod toward the necessity of continuing to theorize the rhetorical development of divergent archives, attempts to transmute collective memories into public ones, and destabilizing androcentric rhetoric.

CHAPTER 1: COUNTERPUBLICS, EPHEMERA, AND THE RHETORICAL CURATION OF A DIVERGENT ARCHIVE

“But where does the outside commence? This question is the question of the archive. There are undoubtedly no others.”

-Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*

This dissertation takes up as its central concern the notion, as Jacques Derrida frames it, of where “the outside commences” as indeed being “the question of the archive” (8). What I discuss throughout these chapters is how groups of people come to view themselves as being ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ mainstream publics, how they build resources to convince others of that status, and the ways they try to use these resources to move across such boundaries—or, as in my case study of asymmetrical androcentric counterpublics, how to shore up those boundaries. In doing so, I argue, they hope to transfer their collective memories as a counterpublic into public memories. These questions of ‘insiderness’ or ‘outsiderness’ tell us a great deal about how groups of people that see themselves as outside the mainstream (counterpublics) come to see themselves that way, and why they position themselves as deserving of more attention, concern, or resources than others.

Most importantly, this discourse (public conversations) on who is inside and out makes clear how counterpublics work hard to build a case for how they perceive themselves in relation to other publics, which they do by building flexible, distributed archives (divergent archives). Sometimes, those archives are grounded in historical fact and research, as say, feminists’ work to show how the economic (and non-economic) labor of women has long been underappreciated and undercompensated compared to their male coworkers. Other times, they are grounded in feelings, testimonies, and personal experiences—what I refer to as ‘ephemera,’ to borrow queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz’s term—as is so often the situation with the androcentric (concerned exclusively with perceived male issues) counterpublics that serve as my case study.

These divergent archives are both driven by, and make possible, interpretations of the past and present that are related as narratives of collective memories. Thus, in order to understand how divergent archives work, we need to recognize the function and roles of archives and why they are constructed, the recognition of counterpublics, and the construction of collective memory into public memory. The current chapter puts these three bodies of theory into play with one another. It also examines how androcentric counterpublics exemplify the relationship between a counterpublic, the (divergent) archive(s) it creates, and the collective memories narratized through that archive and counterpublic's public arguments in the hopes they might encourage dominant publics to identify with them.

THE ARCHIVE AND ITS MANY MANIFESTATIONS

In *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida (1995) reminds us that the term “archive” comes from the classic Greek notion of the *arkheion*, literally the house of the archon, a magistrate whose residence retained official state and legal documents (2). The purpose of the *arkheion* was to maintain and secure the documents and records of statecraft, both to preserve history and to adjudicate potential legal disputes. This notion of the archive, as a physical space and/or repository and a function of governing institutions' recordkeeping, resonates with how archives are generally described today. The Society of American Archivists describes “archives” as referring to “the permanently valuable records—such as letters, reports, accounts, minute books, draft and final manuscripts, and photographs—of people, businesses, and government,” as well as also being used to identify “the building or part of a building in which archival materials are kept, i.e., the archival repository itself” (SAA, 2016). This usage of the term archive—both as the materials and repositories that constitute the process of ‘archiving’ as well as the locations in which such materials and repositories reside—could potentially lead to reductive

conceptualizations of how we conceive of the limits of an archive are and their various forms. This tendency to conflate the notion of archive along with the physical structures in which archives are housed, I argue, contributes to the impulse to overlook archives which might take alternate or distributed forms, like divergent archives.

To understand how “the archive” informs this dissertation and my overall theory of the public rhetorics and collective memories of counterpublics via divergent archives, I identify three primary functions of archives, discernable both independently of one another as well as working in concert. The first is the function of the archive as repository; the second is the archive as organizer(s) of historical materials/data; and the last is the archive as arbiter (mediator) of history/memory. In order to understand what makes divergent archives different from other kinds of archives, we have to recognize how these functions operate within archives in general.

First, the archive appears most tangibly as a (usually) physical location that functions as a repository for artifacts, documents, records, and other materials—both physical and digital—deemed important for preservation/inclusion. This definition is obvious both in the Society of American Archivists’ description (2016) of “what archives are” that I quote above, as well as, for example, Charles Merewether’s (2006) description of the archive as that which “constitutes a repository or ordered system of documents and records, both verbal and visual, that is the foundation from which history is written” (p. 10). When we refer to an archive, this is generally what we envision: a physical location and space that functions as a repository for archival materials. This makes sense; as Derrida (1995) notes and Assman (2008) affirms, the original purpose of the archive was tied both to the physical location *and* its function as an institutional record-keeping body. This function of the archive is its most visible (to hold documents for the sake of preservation) and all archives, whether institutional, community, or personal, work as a

repository on some level, though not always physically or centrally, as is the case with divergent archives.

The second primary function of the archive is to *organize* the materials located in the repository, an act which has rhetorical, historical, and political ramifications. By this, I mean the archive's (and archivist's) function of determining what should be kept and what should be discarded as well as how and where to catalogue and preserve those archival materials, and how those decisions make visible or invisible certain individuals, groups, and/or ideologies. Within the last few decades, these processes have been thrown into question due to the massive capacities of digital storage systems that can expand an archive's repository almost infinitely, altering decisions on what to include, how to consider digital 'archives' and historical materials, and how to incorporate such technology and methods into the work of archivists (Sternfeld, 2011). Additionally, recent conversations on the non-neutral and non-objective elements of archivists' work have complicated the processes of collecting, retaining, and classifying materials, which many archivists now understand to be a rhetorical and political undertaking (Brown & Davis-Brown, 1998; Cook & Schwartz, 2002; Schwartz & Cook, 2002; Trace, 2002). Regardless, one of the functions of the archive is to organize and categorize what has been collected (and decisions regarding what is and isn't collected serve as an early organizational decision), and to enable access to such material within an archive. This is not to say that every archive is thoroughly and completely categorized and taxonomized; often, issues of labor or conflicting priorities may prevent a structured form of organization, which itself is an organizational decision.

The archival work of organizing materials is thoroughly steeped in rhetorical and ideological decisions, as Brown & Davis-Brown (1998), and Cook & Schwartz (2002), among

others, note. In questioning the ‘truth’ or ‘objectivity’ inherent in such material and organizational decisions, archivists have come to recognize the role that their profession and the products of their work play in developing historical and collective memory narratives. Writing Studies scholars across a variety of research subjects have also noted the impact that the organizational and repository functions of the archives have on the possibility to articulate the rhetorical histories and legacies of a number of individuals and groups of people. This includes women (Adams, 2001; Daniell & Mortensen, 2007; Gere, 1997), people of color (Cushman, 2013; Kynard, 2014; Royster, 2000; Royster & Williams, 1999), and LGBTQIA+ people (Bessette, 2013; Rawson, 2009), among many others. As a response, a number of community archives have taken up the call to preserve the legacies and records of individuals and groups who may not find inclusion in institutional archives (Flinn, Stevens, & Shepherd, 2009).

Finally, the archive has functioned symbolically, metaphorically, and rhetorically as a way of conceiving the construction and negotiation of formal historical narratives (which are grounded in dates, settings, and actions), as well as narratives of collective memories (which are broader, more general narratives that may be untethered from specific dates, settings, or actions/events) (Halbwachs, 1950; Wertsch, 2008). This is the archival function that Stuart Hall (2001) imagines when he claims that an archive “is a discursive formation” (p. 90) and to which Foucault (1969) claims as the “first law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events” (p. 29). This function of the archive serves as a link between the retaining and collection of materials and their subsequent organization (or not) to the ways in which materials are drawn from, interpreted, and represented by non-archivist historians/historiographers. The rhetorical work of reading, selection, and representation can be in the service of understanding archival materials *historically*—what Peter Novick (1999) has

distinguished as “be[ing] aware of its complexity, to have sufficient detachment to see it from multiple perspectives, to accept the ambiguities, including moral ambiguities, of protagonists’ motives and behavior” (pp. 3-4)—or it can be used to construct a narrative of *collective memory*, which Novick (1999) suggests “simplifies; sees events from a single, committed perspective; is impatient with ambiguities of any kind; reduces events to mythic archetypes” (p. 4). In other words, history seeks to articulate a tentative understanding of events without simple or monolithic narratives, while collective memories seek to establish monolithic, cause-effect narratives that often limit the potential for ambiguity. This discursive, rhetorical function of the archive is perhaps its most influential, though the collection and organization of materials undoubtedly plays a role in the power of the archives as well. However, it is this particular ability of the archives, to govern what can be said about both history and the narratives formed out of collective memories, that is of greatest import to my dissertation. These three primary functions (repository, organization, history/memory) of archives are utilized primarily by three types of archives—institutional archives, community archives, and personal archives—which I differentiate, as well as relate to divergent archives.

I differentiate between institutional, community, and personal archives based on two main criteria: the organizing/presiding agents of the archive (who collects, preserves, and organizes?), and the intentions of those agents for their archive, which differ across the three categories (what is it the archive is supposed to do?). I identify institutional archives as those that are overseen and legitimated by institutions charged with maintaining records and archival materials for a variety of purposes (including surveillance, recordkeeping, fact-checking, and the preservation of historically salient materials), and which are most prominent among governmental entities, universities, and ‘watchdog’ groups (such as the American Civil Liberties

Union or Citizens for Responsibility for Ethics in Washington). Institutional archives are, generally speaking, the most prominent type of archive, and largely represent the original function of the *arkheion*: keeping records and preserving materials for use by particular stakeholders (Assman, 2010). While institutional archives are generally overseen and organized by experts (such as trained archivists) or other individuals imbued with the authority to collect and preserve archival materials for their given institution, the ultimate authority for the archive rests with the institution that houses the archive (university, government, etc.). Institutional archives, because of the potentially large scope of their purview, may have a variety of purposes for maintaining archives, but for the purposes of this dissertation, I categorize archival materials into two types: “passive” and “active” archival materials.

Passive archival materials are those that may be automatically or non-selectively collected, and for which there may not be immediate purpose or use without some motivating factor. The default archiving of meeting minutes, quotidian correspondence, or official documentation of any number of on-the-record decisions might count as examples of passive archival materials, since the vast bulk of these materials may never be consulted again—and are likely not written in ways that expect them to be reviewed—depending on the circumstances. This quality of passive archival materials is encapsulated in Arlette Farge’s (2013) discussion of French legal records located in the Bastille, when she declares that “[t]he archive was not compiled with an eye toward history. It describes, in everyday language, the derisory and the tragic in the same tone, for what was important above all for the administration was first to find out who was responsible and then to figure out how to punish them” (p. 7). This lack of intention “toward history” that Farge points to by the French state in the archives she works within, however, also points toward how archival materials collected passively may take on an active

resonance, given the proper circumstances (in Farge's case, the discerning eye and mind of a researcher/historian). My designation of 'passive' merely indicates that such archival materials are not collected and preserved with the *immediate intent* to generate historical and/or collective memory narratives, though this does not foreclose their use in such a way in the future. It's also useful to note here that passive materials and active materials may just as easily be ephemera as other, more 'rigorous' materials. Aleida Assman (2010) marks the shuttling between material collected without immediate salience as the distinction between "the archive" (passively constructed) and that which is culturally, socially, and politically relevant to current discourses, referred to as "the canon" (actively constructed) (p. 99).

Active archival materials, then, are those collected, preserved, and organized with the intent to be consulted regularly or at a particular future moment. Many social and/or culturally oriented materials that are archived are classifiable as active archival materials, such as the archives of American presidents—which are collected in Presidential libraries with the expectation that they will later be perused and used to construct historical and/or collective memory narratives—or the ethno-cultural community archive(s) (the African and Asian Visual Artists' Archive) described in Stuart Hall's (2001) "Constituting an Archive," which Hall also referred to as a "living archive of the diaspora" (p. 89). While institutional archives can and do collect active archival materials (the presidential archives are one such example), community and personal archives are composed almost entirely of active archival materials. Because community and personal archives are constructed with an eye to preserving materials relating to a specific group or individual, most material is actively reviewed and thus, passive material at the moment of collection is kept to a minimum. If an archive's purpose, community, or collecting/organizing agent changes, however, archival materials that have already been collected might be rendered

passive by such shifts. I identify a difference in passive and active archival materials in order to distinguish material that tends to serve the purpose of constructing collective memory narratives from material that often does not. However, these categories are not fixed, and material may shuttle between one or the other, moving from, to use Assman's terms, the archive to the canon. A prominent example of such a shift is evident in the way that material collected passively by universities—student texts, assignments, and textbooks—has been used to develop historical (and, I would argue, collective memory) narratives of the field of Composition Studies in Robert J. Connors's (1997) *Composition-Rhetoric*, Susan Miller's (1990) *Textual Carnivals*, and Sharon Crowley's (1998) *Composition in the University*, to name a few.

Community archives are those drawn from a particular group that generally (though not always) lacks a backing institution (though theoretically, a community archive might itself become an institution), and whose organizing agents collect and curate the archive to reflect a particular vision of their overarching 'community.' Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd (2009) loosely define community archives as "collections of material gathered primarily by members of a given community and over whose use community members exercise some level of control" (p. 73). As Bastian & Alexander (2009) highlight in their collection *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory*, the purposes of and community that composes a community archive can be quite broad, for example including independent community archives focused on activism/preservation for particular minority, non-dominant, or non-hegemonic groups (Kelly, 2009; Hall, 2001; Moore & Pell, 2010), the collection and preservation of documents related to community and state-based violence and truth commissions, and even the everyday history of towns and cities through local town archives. The function of a community archive is to establish archival repositories for groups that may not see institutional inclusion or may be erased or buried within institutional

archives. Largely driven by the desire to articulate the existence, history, and memory of such groups, community archives represent an effort to control the narratives (both historical and collective memory) that exist (or don't) for particular publics/counterpublics, organizations, and peoples. Because community archives tend to possess particular criteria for inclusion determined by the organizing/collecting agents, they tend to collect less passive material, though this does not mean that community archives' material can't lose its active resonance over time. Finally, community archives may be developed with or without institutional backing or oversight, though some become part of institutional archives across their existence (Flinn, Stevens, & Shepherd, 2009; Moore & Pell, 2010).

As a particularly pointed example of the connections between counterpublics, community archives, and collective memories, Shaunna Moore and Susan Pell (2010) articulate the concept of "autonomous archives" (p. 257). Moore and Pell point to the development of autonomous archives—community archives that are formed by emergent publics and participate in the shaping of collective memory narratives—as indicative of the often independent relationship community archives establish in order to remain separate from larger publics, institutions, and their archives. These autonomous archives, examples of which include the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, Hope in Shadows, and Friends of Woodward's Squat (Moore & Pell's research focuses on the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver), emerge "from the needs and desires of a marginal and fragmented community in its efforts to express, collect, represent and preserve the evidence of its activities and experiences in particular places" (Moore & Pell, 2010, p. 258). As a specific form of community archives, autonomous archives evince the kind of work that community archives might seek to perform without the interference or aid of institutional

archives. While divergent archives have a great deal in common with autonomous archives, they differ in a few key ways, which I detail below.

Last, personal archives are what their name implies: archives developed by individuals or small groups (generally families) for the purpose of preserving personally relevant material. Personal archives might include photo albums, diaries, and personal correspondence as some of the materials within them. Though the material within such an archive might later become somewhat passive, the intimate and generally individual collection process for a personal archive generally renders its material active, helping to construct a history or collective memory narrative for an individual or small group (potentially a family). Similarly, personal archives may eventually become part of institutional or community archives, depending on the personal background, but in their initial stages of collection and preservation, are driven on a personal—rather than institutional or community—scale. Amy Lueck’s (2017) discussion of the memorialization of high school experiences made by young women at the Louisville Girls High School through memory books, school literary annuals, scrapbooks, and photo albums is a prominent example of the rhetorical purposes the development of personal archives can have. Lueck points to the “shifting form of school memory books and annuals” as an indicator of the “memory and identity work” that such texts promoted (p. 385). Because such documents were composed and curated for the purpose of documenting memories across time, they exist as personal archives of young womens’ tenures in high school. As these compositional practices became commonplace, these artifacts of personal archives eventually came to be subsumed into institutional archives as yearbooks. Lueck’s research suggests that across time, the relevance of personal archival materials to larger, broader archives may become apparent, prompting a shift in their housing archive or archiving practices.

Divergent archives tend to be collected and preserved most like community archives, in that they are driven by the collective efforts of smaller groups rather than institutions (groups like the asymmetric androcentric counterpublics that serve as my case study), so it might be theoretically helpful to consider them highly distributed and not necessarily centralized community archives. As Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd (2009) acknowledge, community archives are just as often constructed from ephemeral materials as they are from more traditional, rigorous primary documents and artifacts. Further, many (though not all) community archives' focus on social concerns and activism—as well as their oppositional relationships to broader, more dominant publics and institutions—suggests that divergent archives are a highly distributed, more loosely formed kind of community archives. However, while I find it useful to classify divergent archives as a particular type of community archives similar to autonomous archives, there remain some key distinctions.

First, most scholarship on community archives does not always account for the role of a counterpublic's discourse on the formation of community archives, and those counterpublics tend to be more regionally bound than the asymmetrical androcentric counterpublics that serve as this dissertation's case studies, as in Moore & Pell's (2010) discussion of Vancouver-based autonomous archives. Research on community and autonomous archives has also tended to focus on archives created/curated by progressive, minority, or non-dominant/non-hegemonic counterpublics to the exclusion of dominant, hegemonic, and entrenched organizations, groups, and/or counterpublics, an exclusion which renders it difficult to understand how and why such groups might develop their own forms of community archives. This narrowing of the kinds of agents who develop community archives has also extended to a certain fixity in how community archives are maintained, which tends to be a single, centrally located repository; this may prevent

consideration of archives composed across a variety of media and locations, physical or otherwise. Last, divergent archives work from a position of desiring to affect public discourses and institutional archives in ways that allow for the inclusion of a divergent archive's materials and historical and/or collective memory narratives. Many community and autonomous archives, while potentially overlapping in this goal, may be content to remain distinct and separate from institutional or more mainstream archives and may even view this as a primary function of their existence (Flinn, Stevens, & Shepherd, 2009; Moore & Pell, 2010).

Divergent archives, then, represent the accumulation of a particular counterpublic's archive, intended to build a case for specific collective memories relating to the public rhetoric and discourse of that counterpublic. They deal primarily in active archival materials, and unlike most community archives, tend not to be centralized in one particular repository (though they may be). What articulating a theory of divergent archives enables us to understand is how counterpublics seeking to construct themselves as 'outside looking in' rely upon a rhetorical process that encompasses both a negotiation of collective memory *and* the construction of an archive that undergirds and makes convincing those narratives of collective memory.

DOES THIS WORK REPRESENT A QUEERING OF THE ARCHIVE?

This dissertation and my theoretical understanding of the archives as a rhetorical process is indebted to the work of queer scholars, scholarship on queer archives (archives that take for their organizing principles a position, collective memory, or history of queerness and/or materials relating to queer subjects), and queer theory from scholars such as Jose Esteban Muñoz (1996), Charles Morris III (2006, "Archival queer"), Jean Bessette (2013; 2017), KJ Rawson (2009), Jonathan Alexander & Jacqueline Rhodes (2012), and Ann Cvetkovich (2003). Several of these scholars' theories posit a 'queering' of the archive, both in the sense of making the

archive hospitable, recognizable, and/or accessible to queer subjects, experiences, and artifacts, but also in the sense of subverting the heteronormative presumptions and values that almost universally undergird institutional archives. This dissertation's use of such work suggests that a theory of the divergent archive may in and of itself queer the archives or the rhetorical processes that contribute to the building and curation of an archive; however, the fact that the subjects of my case study stand so completely in opposition to the notions of such queering makes me uncomfortable in declaring this dissertation to do such work. To be clear, this is not because I do not perceive queering the archive to be powerful, necessary, productive work—I do—but because to declare these theories to queer the archive even as they examine how divergent archives might make possible the collective memory narratives of white, cis, and heterosexual men, and then to declare them as an active force in queering those archives, seems to run counter to the very notion of queering the archive.

As I note in my introduction, counterpublic theory must confront the systemic problems posed to public, democratic dialogue by groups whose *discourse* may claim alterity (in its rejection by broader publics and other counterpublics) but whose *membership* may fall more squarely into the hegemonic. When and where the group of androcentric counterpublics I draw upon as a case study may represent a position of alterity or not is worth scrutinizing, but for most intents and purposes, the members of these androcentric counterpublics reflect Western cultural ideals and thus occupy a position of hegemony. To mark this disparity in these counterpublics' discourse (which is often roundly rejected, though its popularity among certain demographics seems on the rise), I address the androcentric counterpublics that serve as my case study as an 'imagined' counterpublic. What this means is that the perception of the counterpublics' discourse may render it a counterpublic, but its individual members, on the whole, are quite capable of

mobilizing a number of hegemonic forces to serve their ends (as but one telling example, it was not people of color, LGBTQIA+, or women's votes that the Democratic party anxiously sought to court after losing the presidential election in 2016—instead, it was White, cis, heterosexual men). That imagined counterpublics can and do make use of divergent archives as much as counterpublics whose discourse and members are more accurately represented as subaltern is a disquieting fact—and why I am not wholly comfortable describing such theory as queering the archive, particularly since I articulate that divergent archives seek to become and/or displace institutional archives in many instances. Rather, it may be that the divergent archive represents a rhetorical process that serves a variety of purposes for a variety of counterpublics. It is my hope that further refining of the concept and theory, however, will enable scholars to queer the archive through the concept of other, subaltern divergent archives in the future.

COUNTERPUBLIC RECOGNITION AND DISCURSIVE STANCES

In this section, I articulate a number of theories elaborating on the (self-)recognition of counterpublics. I define a counterpublic as a group of people organized under a particular set of discourses that perceive themselves to be in opposition to broader publics, subpublics, and other counterpublics. Because pinpointing a moment of 'formation' for a given counterpublic is an almost impossible task, I instead discuss the process through which a counterpublic comes to recognize itself publicly *as a counterpublic* (as opposed to individuals critiquing publics, competing counterpublics, and/or institutions or enclaved publics), and how that recognition is made possible by, and coalesces into, a coherent discursive stance through which the counterpublic is represented and recognized by publics, other counterpublics, and institutions. In using the term "discursive stances," I am referring to the particular rhetorical and discursive positions that a counterpublic and its members adopt in order to articulate itself/themselves in

relation to publics, other counterpublics (both competing and allied), and institutions (including governments, educational institutions, etc.).

Discursive stances enable members of a counterpublic to position themselves in relation to the discourse of counterpublics of which they consider themselves members, and those publics, counterpublics, and institutions which they oppose or consider allies (but of which they are not a member). I use the term ‘stances’ to indicate the fluid nature with which counterpublics and their members may shift, which can be swift and occasionally contradictory to previous stances; counterpublics/members may even hold potentially contradictory discursive stances at the same time. As an example, androcentric counterpublics have articulated as longstanding evidence of misandry the disproportional rate at which men are injured and/or killed in particular careers/jobs, implying that men are considered ‘expendable’ by a gynocentric society (Farrell, 1993). However, the same counterpublics and members may simultaneously retaliate against suggestions that certain male-dominated fields, careers, and positions should be expanded to include women—fields and careers such as construction and manual labor, the military, police forces, and STEM-related fields (Kimmel, 2013). Discussing a counterpublic’s recognizable rhetorical discourse as discourse alone implies a permanence which many counterpublics—androcentric counterpublics included—simply do not embody. Moreover, ‘discourse’ alone does not encapsulate the rapidity with which a discursive stance may be advocated at one moment by members of a counterpublic, and repudiated/attacked the next. An example is the contradictory stances regarding the Equal Rights Amendment, which certain androcentric counterpublics backed at certain points, and would immediately distance themselves from only a day or two later (Shapiro, 1980). Thus, I identify these representative positions and arguments as stances to

indicate the rapidity with which they might be switched (or contrastingly held at the same moment).

Counterpublics are not static entities, but rather shift stances as befits the counterpublic, its members, and allied and/or competing publics. Though counterpublic/counterpublic sphere theory has tended to treat discourse(s) as always already existing and not so much as a developmental process, there are some ways we can articulate the recognition(s) of a counterpublic. Nancy Fraser (1992) articulated the concept of the counterpublic/counterpublic sphere in “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” by arguing that Habermas’s (1991) conceptualization of the bourgeois public sphere relied upon the exclusion of smaller, subaltern publics/public spheres (counterpublics). Habermas’s claim that the bourgeois public sphere bracketed social inequalities to allow for discourse on equal footing, for Fraser, fails to recognize the hegemonic circuits of power exercised in the ability to participate in that discourse, both on individual (ability to participate regardless of class, gendered, or racial exclusions) and spatial (ability to access the spaces within which such deliberations would take place) bases. Thus, Fraser articulates that subaltern counterpublics form as necessary, deliberative responses to societal, cultural, and institutional exclusions, particularly in democratic societies.

Warner (2002) complicates this understanding of a counterpublic by locating the formation of a public across the audiences and circulation of certain forms of discourse, particularly in relationship to texts; in Warner’s examples, journalism and periodical publications’ readers (and authors, participants, and publishers) represent an identifiable, if abstract, representation of a public. More importantly, Warner determines that a counterpublic, in order to be more than a small “subpublic” (small publics that limit the scope of their discourse

and addressees) “maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status. The cultural horizon against which it marks itself off is not just a general or wider public, but a dominant one” (p. 86). Thus, in order to truly represent a counterpublic, a given public must recognize its alterity not just within “ideas or policy questions, but to the speech genres and modes of address that constitute the public” and that “[t]he discourse that constitutes it [the counterpublic] is not merely a different or alternative idiom, but one that in other contexts would be regarded with hostility or with a sense of indecorousness” (Warner, 2002, p. 86). Arguably, androcentric counterpublics consistently point to their ‘subordinate’ status, and are met with “hostility” and or “a sense of indecorousness.” However, Warner’s definition of a counterpublic seems to rely upon identification of a counterpublic as being clearly separated/unconnected to dominant and/or hegemonic publics, identities, and institutions. Such a reading troubles any discussion of androcentric counterpublics, since many members of androcentric counterpublics potentially *also belong to or identify with* dominant and/or hegemonic publics. To better understand how these counterpublics and their members can simultaneously claim subordinate status and rely upon dominant/hegemonic discourses, we need to understand the role that imagining and intersectionality play within such a counterpublic.

Robert Asen’s (2002) “Seeking the ‘Counter’ in Counterpublics” identifies a reduction of a counterpublic to “persons, places, and topics” as potentially causing misreadings of a counterpublic as necessarily tied to elements of identity, space, or subject. Doing so presents a rigidity in classifying who and/or what is considered ‘counter,’ and forecloses our ability to see how counterpublics—such as the androcentric ones I discuss as case studies for this dissertation—can attract members who may not necessarily reflect subordinate status (even as they claim it). Rather, they “imagine” such a status, generating imagined (and potentially, but not

necessarily, real) relationships to other counterpublics, subpublics, and mainstream publics (Asen, 2000). This generative element of imagination produces a relationship of counterpublicity, essentially establishing a discourse of alterity (potentially counter to members' real alterity) and collective memories of possessing a subordinate status, even if a counterpublic may also draw upon potentially hegemonic discursive stances (for example, the discourse I noted about men being overrepresented in dangerous/injurious fields while simultaneously preventing the entrance of women into such industries and careers). It is important to note that what drives a counterpublic's position of 'counter' is not necessarily a real relationship to the subaltern; rather, it is the representation of a discourse or discursive stance that is subaltern, even if members of the counterpublic may themselves reflect hegemonic or dominant groups. In this way, androcentric counterpublics attract members who imagine, perceive, and represent themselves as subordinate to other (counter)publics, and which, without intersectional understandings, may be reduced to hegemonic circuits of power they may (and/or may not) possess (Kimmel, 2013; Crenshaw, 1991). However, I recognize that to address the androcentric counterpublics of my case study without acknowledging the disparity between the systemic oppression they claim to face, and the systemic challenges most of them actually face works to elide the very real differences between vulnerable, non-dominant counterpublics and the androcentric ones I discuss here. Thus, in order to mark this distinction, I identify these androcentric counterpublics as "asymmetrical counterpublics," by which I mean that they discursively claim a position as subaltern 'outsiders', though that representation may be largely or mostly inaccurate.

Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1991) theories of intersectionality regarding race, class, and gender (among other positionalities) provide much needed insight into how members of counterpublics who ostensibly possess hegemonic power may not (or may not *feel* that they

possess hegemonic power). Crenshaw (1989) explains that a historical lack of effort by both mainstream publics and legal institutions to consider individual identities as multiply constructed rather than defined at any given moment by a singular quality/identity renders understanding the intersectionality of an individual—the fluid combination of intersecting identities, for example being a white, heterosexual, cisgendered, middle-class man (some of my own intersectional positionalities)—difficult and at odds with how we conceive of the identity politics that often guide a counterpublics' discourse and members' discursive stances. Asen and Warner both compel us to look toward a counterpublic's discourse, and combined with Crenshaw's theories regarding the social, legal, and cultural impact of intersectionality, it becomes clear *why* identity alone cannot help determine the recognition, influence, and membership of a counterpublic.

Framing counterpublics through identity alone—like, say, assuming androcentric counterpublic members to be all White men—fails to expose how discursive stances related to an identity may echo far beyond it (as evidenced by the fact that a growing number of women are becoming prominent advocates of androcentric counterpublics) (Scandrett, 2017). Any given divergent archive will be driven primarily through the collective memory of its counterpublic(s), but without understanding the intersectionality of a given counterpublic's members, we cannot hope to fully understand its archive. These intersectionalities are precisely what generate the ephemera that are so foundational to a divergent archive, distributed across memories and experiences filtered through intersectional perspectives, even if the presenters of the ephemera do not recognize them as such. It is the intersectionality of imagined androcentric counterpublics' ephemera—and androcentric counterpublics' ignorance of and/or refusal to acknowledge those public memories as driven by Whiteness, heterosexuality, cisgenderedness, and Westernness—that simultaneously enables the wounded claim to subordination by

androcentric counterpublics and renders it illegible and/or illegitimate to other, mainstream publics.

COLLECTIVE MEMORIES, NARRATIVES, AND DIVERGENT ARCHIVES

If theories of publics and counterpublics provide us a framework for understanding how groups create rhetorics and discourses meant to travel across publics and present themselves as insiders/outsiders, then collective memories provide a means for understanding how counterpublics and their members conceptualize the historical and temporal factors that generate those discourses and narratives. “Collective memory” as a term comes from Maurice Halbwachs (1950) and describes the social negotiation of memories between individuals and larger groups. Though Halbwachs does not define the term formally, nor specify how large a group has to be to participate in collective memories (he refers to collective memory from units as small as a family to members of a nation), the concept clearly refers to the shaping of one’s memory as always a result of social interactions (what Halbwachs refers to as “milieus”) (p. 42).

As a concept, collective memory has come to be imbued with a variety of valences and meanings. Barry Schwartz (2008) has utilized the concept of collective memory in empirical research, locating a definition of collective memory that originates with individual memory, but also determines that “[i]ndividuals do not know the past singly; they know it with and against other individuals situated in different groups and through the knowledge and symbols that predecessors and contemporaries transmit to them” (p. 11). Thus, as Schwartz describes it, collective memory is generated through individuals but never determined by or finally resting with any one individual. Corning and Schuman (2015) identify the simplest, broadest definition of collective memory as “a memory shared by the members of a group, with the memories helping to create and sustain the group, just as the group supports the continued existence of the

memories” (p. 1). For the purposes of this project, I identify collective memory to be the rhetorical understandings and representations of the past that an individual articulates as socially drawn (“everybody knows that”) rather than through individual research, interpretation, or perception. What this means is that individuals may present viewpoints that they locate from within their own experience—to use an example from my case study, to say that a man’s spouse in a particular incident was abusive—without necessarily contributing to or engaging with collective memories. If, however, an individual’s rhetoric and discourse implied that they expected a man’s spouse committed abuse, since there is a longstanding double-standard of tacitly accepting the routine abuse of men by female partners (as asymmetrical androcentric counterpublics might narrativize such a collective memory), then that individual would be contributing to a narrative of collective memory regarding the supposedly biased assumptions of gendered domestic abuse.

What fuels collective memories and how they form varies depending on who you ask, but most uses of collective memory rely upon an understanding of memory as socially negotiated (whether with the past and/or with contemporary conceptions) and potentially contestatory (Corning and Schuman, 2015). Aleida Assman (2007) suggests that collective memories are formed not only through the personal interactions of individuals, but also through “symbolic communication via media such as newspapers, television, history textbooks, museums, monuments, and commemoration rites” (p. 34). Viewing these wider forms of media as also contributing to the development of collective memory means that popular culture, journalism, and a variety of other cultural/social texts provide opportunities for the formation of collective memories. Schwartz’s (1991; 2008) work on collective memory examining the portrayal of former presidents like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln suggests that popular

representations of such figures in collective memory do not merely reflect the ideas of the author, but rather more broadly encapsulate the public perceptions of that particular moment.

Jill A. Edy's (2006) work on journalism of social unrest and its role in developing collective memory is helpful in framing the contribution of collective memory to this dissertation's goals. In Edy's discussion of a framework for understanding collective memory, she articulates that analysis of collective memory is most comprehensive when it combines an understanding of both theories of rhetorical framing and the development of narratives through memory. I draw from a similar framework in this dissertation's analysis of the collective memory of particular counterpublics, complicating the notion of the development of collective memory narratives by examining how those narratives are informed by the rhetorical processes of collecting, curating, and referencing divergent archives. Narratives, then, become useful tools for parsing the collective memories of counterpublics, indicating their broader values and (sometimes unspoken) goals. Such narratives also aid in mainstream publics' identification with, and thus circulation of, a collective memory as they seek to legitimate it as public memory.

James Wertsch (2008) further elaborates on the development of collective memory narratives alongside "deep collective memory" by differentiating between collective memory articulated in "specific narratives" which are "organized around particular dates, settings, and actions" (collective memory) and collective memory expressed through "schematic narrative templates," which are "more generalized structures used to generate multiple specific narratives with the same basic plot" (deep collective memory) (p. 140). Wertsch discusses the difference in abstraction across these narrative tools through the incident of the removal of a Russian soldier's statue from its place in an Estonian city—to a different section of the city—and how this provoked a vehement, violent reaction from Russians and ethnic Russian Estonian citizens that

Wertsch claims aligned with a deeply embedded schematic narrative template for Russians, which Wertsch calls “Expulsion of Foreign Enemies” (p. 142). This template, Wertsch suggests, enabled Russians and ethnic Russian Estonians to view both the invasion of Russia by Germany in the Second World War and the removal of the Bronze Soldier in Estonia as separate instances of the same deep collective memory; that of Russia’s expulsion of foreign enemies.

Wertsch distinguishes between collective memories and deep collective memories because while collective memories may be bound to specific elements and may change along with shifts in those elements, deep collective memories are firmly entrenched and much more conservative in their variations. Such deep collective memories may explain a great deal about the narratives promoted by particular counterpublics and their divergent archives, even as the specific circumstances of events may change. As a telling example, Michael Kimmel (2013) identifies what we might consider a deep collective memory for the androcentric counterpublics that serve as my case study: the narrative that while men do not strike first, they respond with overwhelming force. This schematic narrative template helps make sense of, for example, the overwhelming fury with which androcentric counterpublic members respond to what they perceive as verbal assaults on men by feminists, particularly women. These schematic narrative templates also aid in moving collective memory closer to being public memories, since they tap into widespread and deeply held frameworks through which events and discourse are publicly interpolated.

Schematic narrative templates also point toward the fraught relationship between history, collective memory, and archives. History, Peter Novick (1999) suggests, complicates narratives of past events and acknowledges the potential ambiguity of historical actors and their actions. However, historical narratives, as schematic narrative templates show, can often be fodder for

the development of narratives of collective memory. Barbie Zelizer claims that “collective memory is both more mobile and mutable than history,” and that collective memories function as a “kind of history-in-motion which moves at a different pace and rate than traditional history” (p. 216). Thus, archives function as a potential drawing ground for *both* history and collective memory, as historians and archivists have claimed (Assman, 2010; Brown & Davis-Brown, 1998; Cook & Schwartz, 2002; Flinn & Stevens, 2009; Nora, 1989). Since the construction of collective memory narratives is a rhetorical act, it stands to reason that the construction of archives from which collective memory narratives are drawn (and which, in turn, are legitimated by collective memory narratives) is itself another rhetorical process. Divergent archives, as the end result of these processes, are therefore of great interest to scholars concerned with the shaping and execution of public rhetorics of social inclusion and exclusion; who/what is “inside” and who/what is “outside.”

The formation of divergent archives are not only the end result of a process of conveying collective memory narratives and the discourses of a counterpublic, but also apparatuses that aid in the formation and legitimation of such rhetorical processes. Collective memory narratives, whether deep collective memories or not, are drawn from pools of available thought, materials, and discourse on history and how it is remembered. Assman (2010) points to just such a relationship in describing the ‘canon’ and the ‘archive’; which represent, respectively, the current available collective memory and narratives, and the archival material (which assumes a variety of forms) from which future collective memories/narratives might be drawn. Collective memories and narratives must be drawn from somewhere, since they are never independently held, but socially negotiated and transmitted (Halbwachs, 1950). Divergent archives, then, represent the conscious shaping of a counterpublic’s discourse in developing a historical and

memorial base from which to argue for, and alter or develop, collective memories and their narratives. More intentional than most institutional archives in the collection of active archival material and sometimes more ideologically driven than community archives, divergent archives are intended to enable the formulation and legitimation of particular collective memories and narratives in turn making legible and legitimate the divergent archive—and strengthening a counterpublic’s discourse/discursive stances (which in turn, brings both a divergent archive and collective memories/narratives greater legibility and legitimacy). Thus, what marks divergent archives apart is not the simple recording or preservation of history, but a pointed interest in material making possible the promotion of particular collective memories. This, combined with the counterpublic and often nondominant/nonhegemonic nature of most divergent archives’ curating agents, is partially why ephemera becomes so prevalent in the divergent archive: they speak from a particular position, to specific collective memories.

CREATING/CURATING THE DIVERGENT ARCHIVE

Divergent archives, as I’ve indicated above, represent an apparatus through which counterpublics derive collective memory narratives that enable them to promote (what they hope is) persuasive public rhetoric depicting them as outsiders (and/or sometimes insiders). The role of the divergent archive in such rhetorical processes is crucial if we hope to understand where such counterpublics draw convincing material from in order to shape the discourses that figure them in relation to other publics as insiders or outsiders.

In this section, I turn to discussing how counterpublics work to accrue, curate, and promote divergent archives as a rhetorical process. The formation of a divergent archive serves to solidify, centralize, and make accessible the discourses and collective memory narratives of a given counterpublic. Members of the counterpublic eventually come to ‘curate’ collections of

ephemera and other materials in order to make a case for the legitimacy and legibility of a given counterpublic's discourse. Because a counterpublic's discourse is the primary means through which it draws attention and visibility, it is necessary for a counterpublic to articulate collective memories through rhetoric that makes discursive stances seem natural, innate, or obvious.

Rhetorically, the curation of a divergent archive also enables a counterpublic to better control what can be said about particular events, practices, or ideologies—and when it is *permissible* to discuss what is said about those events, practices, and ideologies—creating a foundation for convincing others of the persuasiveness of a counterpublic's discursive stance(s) and collective memory narratives.

In curating material for a divergent archive, the organizing agents of an archive may seek to channel discourse around particular concepts, themes, or events in particular directions by developing novel means of transmitting the discourse. Such efforts sometimes entail the creation of new terms (neologisms) or concepts that reorient familiar ones or place them into different contexts; for example, as Phaedra Pezzullo (2003) discusses, breast cancer survivors and members of the San Francisco-based Toxic Links Coalition seek to reframe discourse on National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) by highlighting the environmental factors in breast cancer and how those responsible for some of those environmental pollutants sponsor NBCAM in order to direct attention away from preventive actions that would reduce breast cancer risks, but be costly for such companies and institutions. The Toxic Links Coalition uses disruptive cultural performances in order to draw attention to and reorient public awareness of the environmental causes of breast cancer, at least partially shifting the conversation away from a benign advocacy as seen in NBCAM and towards actively limiting the dangers of environmentally-caused breast cancers.

Nancy Fraser (1992) similarly highlights how feminist counterpublics needed to reframe discourse on domestic abuse in different, persuasive ways in order to convince people of its seriousness as a public matter (legitimacy) and to better articulate and define what was and was not domestic abuse (legibility). Such an effort behooves the building of a divergent archive, composed of ephemera (stories and testimonies of domestic abuse and its effects), scholarship and research (on the prevalence and effects of domestic abuse and its perception as a private, rather than public, matter), and advocacy for survivors of domestic abuse (official and institutional support for a particular form of collective memory). A number of discursive stances have emerged from asymmetrical androcentric counterpublics focusing on a broad range of social, legal, and cultural concerns that they have collected under the neologism of ‘misandry’. As a result, the promulgation of misandry as a formative concept for androcentric divergent archives has led them to be chock-full of texts, artifacts, and materials proclaiming the presence (in their eyes, near ubiquity) of misandry in Western society.

Divergent archives are curated and promoted when an accumulation of collective memory narratives cannot or will not find ground within mainstream public memories and discourse. This does not necessarily mean that such collective memories are not legitimate or based in factual events; for example, publics/counterpublics attempting to preserve the collective memory of Japanese internment in the United States during World War II may often have those narratives questioned and/or left aside in discussions of American participation during the second World War (Hung, 2016; Kindig, 2016; Salyers, 2009), as are the casual, American acts of racism committed in the wake of events like September 11, 2001 (Bah, Jarrar, & Aladdin Afif, 2011; Basu, 2016). These examples suggest that divergent archives may form just as easily in the

service of collective memories and narratives that dominant/hegemonic members of a society or culture would rather forget, disavow, or contradict than remember.

In a similar move, collective memories salvaging histories of hegemonic or dominant groups may seek to ‘remember’ those collective memories and narratives in ways that elide violence, oppression, or widely accepted historical facts. The long-running narrative of the United States’ Civil War being about states’ rights and an overreaching federal government rather than the slavery of African Americans, indicates just such a potential for collective memories (a notion defended by President Donald Trump’s Chief of Staff, John F. Kelly, and Maine governor Paul LePage in 2017) (Cirillo, 2017; McDermott & Kaczynski, 2017). These efforts to present alternative, differing, and even contradictory divergent collective memories (collective memories drawn from and articulated through divergent archives) make clear the production of collective memories as a rhetorical act/process; people make a case for their memory in refining and sharpening details, accumulating arguments, memories, ephemera, and historical miscellanea to make it persuasive. In doing so, they hope to move such memories into the wider, more stable realm of public memory, thus lending their rhetoric and discourse more credence and influence.

Often, these narratives reflect deep collective memories by relying upon schematic narrative templates (Wertsch, 2008); the examples regarding Japanese internment after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and racist acts of violence in the wake of 9/11 both fall within the schematic narrative template adopted by many American, white men of responding to provocations with overwhelming (and often misplaced) force. They also reflect Benedict Anderson’s (1983) assertions that imagined communities, particularly nations, view minorities as not actually being part of that nationality; a schematic narrative template (the only real

Americans are white ones) that has held true for a long time, even as shifting demographics mean white Americans will soon be a minority.

These various fragments of memory (which I collectively refer to as ephemera) may come with texts, materials, and/or artifacts, or they may not come attached to other discursive materials (in which case it would be unlikely that a divergent archive would form from such fragments). Regardless, the documentation and generation of texts revolving around such ephemera itself takes on the shape of an archival text or artifact, particularly when connected to public memories that can be positioned as subaltern (as counterpublic memories are by nature imagined to be). This is a rhetorical (and occasionally, literal) survival tactic for a counterpublic; if the ephemera that form the foundation of a divergent archive are discredited wholesale (as they sometimes are), discursive stances and often the foundational identities of a divergent counterpublic's members may be at stake.

It is this non-monolithic belief in the multiplicity of public/cultural memories and the primacy of ephemera as a way of understanding representations of the past that grants divergent archives their persuasive power. Where many (though not all) institutional archives are held to making rhetorical decisions about what to include or not based on concerns of rigor and towards implying broader memories, historical and research interests, and limited institutional space, divergent archives are curated and organized around particular memories and discursive stances. This form of collection also leads to an eclectic distribution of archival materials; for example, in the case of androcentric counterpublics' divergent archives, archival materials exist across a network of repositories, some digital (websites/web forums such as *A Voice for Men*, *Return of Kings*, and The Red Pill subreddit), some physical (Michigan State's Changing Men Collection), and publications/public documentation (scholarship and pseudo-scholarship on misandry,

masculinity, and legal policies regarding men). As I discuss in Chapter 4, even pop culture materials may form such materials, alongside the conversations surrounding their cultural reception.

This ‘divergent belief’ in the potential truthfulness and utility of ephemera also allows for reconceptualizations of collective memories and reinterpretations of the past, both for dominant/hegemonic and non-dominant/non-hegemonic members of divergent counterpublics. As José Esteban Muñoz (1996) articulates, ephemera is crucial to people of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, precisely because many representations of POC and LGBTQIA+ experiences are perceived as not possessing institutional and/or academic/intellectual rigor. However, the use of ephemera—in addition to representing the lives, experiences, and collective memories of groups and identities that are empirically subaltern—can also be turned to justify collective memories that may promote distorted, uneven, or bigoted discourse/discursive stances. Though potentially capable of both egalitarian and oppressive stances, androcentric counterpublics have tended to use ephemera as counterexamples to feminist and social justice narratives rather than opportunities to identify and build connections through recognition of systemic inequalities (Kimmel, 2013; Rose, 2014). While certain androcentric counterpublics, such as men’s rights groups, pay at least lip service to an interest in equality rather than backlash (though simply expressing that desire does not make it an actual imperative for many MRAs), others, like the redpill right, are clear in their intent to return power in the Western hemisphere to White, straight, cisgendered men (Valizadeh, 2017, “How to save”).

The use of ephemera as a cornerstone for the divergent archive is apparent in androcentric counterpublics’ early discourse. Figures such as Warren Farrell, Paul Elam, Frederic Hayward, and Dave Ault, and organizations such as Men’s Rights, Inc., the National

Congress for Men, and the Fathers Rights Association of New York State, Inc. launched critiques of feminism through assertions that men were being silenced, ignored, and potentially even discriminated against because of ideological feminism's focus on men as the oppressors of women (Ault, 1994; Elam, 2013, "Mary Elizabeth Williams"; Farrell, 1993; Hayward, 1990; Rossler, 1986). The evidence of this silencing came largely in the form of men's personal experiences and memories, which also served to argue back to ideological feminism/feminists in their attempts to expose the patriarchy. This trend has not abated; even as androcentric divergent archives come to be composed of an array of more "rigorous" materials, ephemera, testimony, and personal experiences continue to be the most powerful and visible driver of these divergent archives and the androcentric counterpublics curating them.

As just one example of this tendency towards ephemera, articles about rape culture on men's rights and redpill right blogs and websites have invariably attracted comments drawing upon, or directly communicating, ephemera in the form of testimony, personal opinions, and second-hand narratives. In Robert Stacy McCain's¹¹ (2015) article, "What 'Rape Culture' Really Means: Your Male Heterosexuality Is Problematic" commenters agree with McCain's conclusion that rape culture functions as a war on male heterosexuality, drawn in great measure from a statement composed by Scott Aaronson (2014) discussing his fears of sexual harassment in retaliation to courtship as a college student as well as McCain's own experiences (more ephemera), by offering up their own pieces of ephemera in the comments.

In the comments, DeadMessenger (2015) relates how their "son in kindergarten [was] being accused by his imbecile teacher of 'sexually' harassing a little girl named 'Juliet' by

¹¹ Robert Stacy McCain is a popular conservative blogger whose Twitter account had over 80,000 followers before the account was banned for participating in 'targeted abuse'; his website, while arguably less influential than *A Voice for Men* or *Return of Kings* among androcentric counterpublics, is still quite popular and espouses a pro-MRA stance. This article has also circulated widely on MRA websites, like *A Voice for Men*.

quoting Shakespeare to her.” There are several assumptions at play here, the first of which must be made by the reader in believing this piece of ephemera to be accurate, and which then stem from DeadMessenger. Their assumptions include that the teacher in question is feminist or influenced by feminism, that the teacher was framing the son’s behavior as sexual harassment, that all the son did was quote Shakespeare, and that none of this, in fact, could be construed as sexual harassment (a later reply to the comment informs us that both DeadMessenger’s son and ‘Juliet’ cried because they got each other in trouble). However, if we take these assumptions and this sharing of ephemera for granted (as most of the readers of the article/comments would), it is easy to see this piece of ephemera as trying to both affirm and replicate McCain’s assertions and ideas as made evident by the sharing of his ephemera.

Alison Tieman (who also goes by the web name Typhonblue) (2012) wrote an article about the “manufacturing” of “female victims” and the marginalization of “vulnerable men” that is consistently reposted/recirculated on androcentric websites like *A Voice for Men*. Ephemera’s role in the construction of an androcentric divergent archive is particularly pronounced here: User JoeShmoe (2015) relays a story about how, while JoeShmoe was asleep, his ex-wife and child’s mother took “advantage of [his] nocturnal erection and [he] asked ‘why did you do that’ then she said ‘I missed you’ and then took [his] son and left.” He tells us that this incident resulted in his contraction of trichinosis, which caused his then-wife to assume he was cheating, and whom he claims “now has a hard time trusting me.” In the same comment, JoeShmoe relates another incident from his youth, wherein as a 15-year-old, an older female neighbor of one of JoeShmoe’s friends seduced him after inviting him in to get out of the “Florida Heat”. Further commenters express their sympathy for JoeShmoe’s situation, reiterating that “feminism deserves the blame” (Ingold Inglorion, 2015).

Later in the comment section for the same article, Gman9999 (2014) relates an overheard story—it is common and, as long as the story reinforces notions of misandry’s presence, encouraged to present ephemera from second and third-hand sources—about a male victim of domestic violence by his (female) ex, and who “tried several times to leave only to find that in my community there was no help for men in situations like [his]. There are women’s shelters everywhere, but none that cater to men and their children.” Another user replies to Gman9999’s comment with ephemera of their own, as andrejovich_dietrich (2014) tells that “he too was run over and dragged down the highway for a distance. Not only did the Police refuse to charge her with attempted murder, but not even a [sic] leaving the scene of an accident. Insult to injury, the next morning while in the hospital my ex served me with a restraining order.” These comments serve as testimonial ephemera, working to create a community in which counterpublic members might contribute to a divergent archive of a variety of misandric experiences and (so they claim) systemic discriminations.

The communication of ephemera does more than simply establish connections among members of a counterpublic; as Tasha Dubriwny (2005) and Jean Bessette (2013) acknowledge (albeit in the context of speaking out in solidarity for the Redstockings’ Abortion Speak-Out of 1969 and the experiences of lesbian women through the Daughters of Bilitis, respectively), the sharing of such ephemera play a large role in consciousness-raising and, by extension, to a collective rhetoric. When these counterpublic members contribute their ephemera—usually in response to archival material composed, at least partially, of ephemera itself—they strengthen the collective rhetoric (and the collective memories that rhetoric points toward) of their particular counterpublic, resulting in a more expansive and persuasive divergent archive. This accumulation of ephemera in raising consciousness and establishing a collective rhetoric also

serves to strengthen the legitimacy and legibility of a divergent archive, as I discuss in the subsequent section.

Nor are these shared experiences/ephemera limited to recent Internet articles or androcentric counterpublics' web forums; ephemera has proven an essential element to the construction of androcentric counterpublics and their divergent archive(s) for several decades. As but one example, the newsletter for a father's rights organization, Texas Fathers for Equal Rights (TFER) (1978), collected and disseminated not only ephemera relating to custody cases or issues facing members of the organization, but also the results of relevant, high profile cases, and strategic legal advice for fathers in custody cases or trying to combat what they felt were unfair custody decisions. This combination of ephemera, legal literature/news, and advice serves multiple functions for the counterpublic, providing emotional, legal, and social support for fathers while simultaneously providing a space for ephemera to be shared and documented, in addition to establishing a collective rhetoric of misandry and father's rights. Most importantly, it is clear that TFER worked to provide access for men in Texas to a collection of both personal experiences and legal advice, hoping to counter what they saw as a public discourse favoring the actions of bitter ex-wives and corrupt lawyers. The ephemera and other materials compiled and disseminated by TFER function(ed) as a divergent archive, working to collect, share, and validate men's experiences of misandry, while simultaneously providing what they viewed as divergent collective memories of men's experiences of child custody battles through the 1970s and 80s, attempting to control and shift the discourse on "deadbeat dads" toward a focus on unjust court systems they believed were stacked against fathers (Texas Fathers for Equal Rights, 1991). These concerted efforts to share, spread, and validate the ephemera of androcentric

counterpublics and their members, and to document them for posterity, represent efforts made to curate and work across a divergent archive.

These examples demonstrate on a limited basis that ephemera and the memories, testimonies, stories, and experiences ephemera represent/communicate are crucial to a counterpublic's discursive stances and collective rhetoric, as well as providing a foundation for the development of a divergent archive. As several of the ephemera I point to expose, the desire to share ephemera that one counterpublic member believes/hopes will be accepted by others as real, supportive, and truthful works simultaneously to build a collective rhetoric/discourse for the counterpublic while simultaneously curating the materials of a divergent archive. This means that sharing ephemera does just as much in terms of being heard/recognized (legitimacy) and being understood (legibility) as it does in contributing to a larger archive of public memories and experiences. As the archival materials from Texas Fathers for Equal Rights, the National Congress for Men, and *A Voice for Men's* comment sections suggest, the use of ephemera as material for a divergent archive persists across time, organizations, and media. Even within material that is ostensibly scholarship, legal texts, and/or other, more 'rigorous' material, ephemera is often present in one form or another.

It is crucial to understand that ephemera, by its nature, is difficult to 'prove.' It is entirely possible (and likely; much of this occurs on the internet, after all) that some ephemera presented within the space of androcentric counterpublics' divergent archive texts/materials are not entirely factual or may be completely fabricated. Without a doubt, the potential fraudulence of the ephemera presented by an androcentric counterpublic is disturbing, particularly given the severity of certain accusations. We cannot simply sidestep the idea that many of these memories may be partially or completely fabricated, misrepresented, or misremembered. However, as far

as analyzing the divergent archives of androcentric counterpublics goes, the factuality of ephemera is less important in regards to the divergent archive's functionality. What matters is that rhetorically, ephemera is disseminated, and that such ephemera is at least partially taken up by other members of the counterpublic, allowing that ephemera to become an active and legitimate part of the divergent archive. That a great deal of this ephemera is distributed across digital materials suggests ongoing issues with how, as Paul Ricoeur (2004) argues, both archives and historians privilege the document as the ideal archival artifact, limiting the perceived legitimacy and legibility that diffusely crafted, digital materials may have for community archives, including divergent archives. Regardless of its 'rigor', ephemeral archival materials form the backbone for many divergent archives.

A prime example of the acceptance of ephemera as archival material occurs, for example, in the space of *A Voice for Men's* website both by being engaged with and validated by other commenters, but also in simply being allowed to remain; several other comments and commenters are removed, deleted, and/or banned from the website (*AVFM's* mods are very active and quite aggressive, particularly against what they perceive as "Gender Studies 101" comments)¹². In the space of the Texas Fathers for Equal Rights newsletters, ephemera crops up in the acknowledgement and sharing of cases deemed unjust and practices and experiences that represent the counterpublic's general sense of collective memories. Not only are these ephemera solicited and recorded, they are spread through the mechanism of a newsletter that in documenting and sharing such ephemera constructs memories that accord with the androcentric

¹² Comments and arguments that tend to fall back on foundational ideas or terms relating to feminist ideology are often castigated and treated harshly as "Gender Studies 101" rhetoric in androcentric counterpublics. Such an accusation might be prompted by appeals to the oppressive nature of patriarchal systems, arguments which place blame primarily on men as a whole (as opposed to specific male individuals), and viewpoints which take for granted that women are disadvantaged in most social situations and institutions.

counterpublic's discursive stances; in this case, that divorce courts, lawyers, and judges are biased against fathers and have actively worked to undermine their authority and legal standing. This is one of the reasons that ephemera can form the foundation of an archive; not only do pieces of ephemera accumulate in such a 'repository,' but they are actively curated by members of the counterpublic in ways that reinforce the collective memories they espouse (in the case of the aforementioned *A Voice for Men* article, stories of men's violation by women, who subsequently face no punishment).

As members of a counterpublic share ephemera, a community is built around the transmission and validation of these experiences, and they come to circulate in spaces beyond the immediate counterpublic. This is the first apparent step in the legitimation and move toward legibility for a divergent archive. As a divergent archive begins to gain recognition beyond its formative counterpublic, and to circulate and/or become legible to other publics/counterpublics, its discourse expands into spaces and publics beyond that of its originating counterpublic. This may not happen all at once and may occur unevenly; the impact of androcentric divergent archives and their relevance may not necessarily be slow and gradual. As a brief example, the election of Donald Trump in 2016 and his appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education very quickly opened up room for androcentric counterpublic members (particularly men's rights activists) to plead their case regarding (by their estimation) too-stringent and anti-male Title IX policies and directives for university administrators, and particularly the lowering of the burden for evidence required of sexual assault survivors in campus rape cases (Scott, 2017). Such conversations occurred alongside Columbia University's decision to settle with Paul Nungesser, the man accused by Emma Sulkowicz (better known as the "Mattress Girl" due to her bearing of a mattress symbolic of the one she claimed to have been raped on by Nungesser as a

performance art piece), a decision which androcentric counterpublics celebrated as due in part to their efforts to spread awareness of the impact and frequency of false rape allegations¹³ (Arndt, 2017, “Mattress girl”; Taylor, J., 2017).

Before that summer’s flood of public discourse on androcentric counterpublics’ perspectives on campus sexual violence (and the Trump administration’s willingness to entertain them), it would have been difficult to argue that androcentric counterpublics’ collective memories on the subject were considered legitimate among public institutions or within the discourse of mainstream publics. While we should absolutely scrutinize whether or not such recalls of public memory (that is, androcentric counterpublics argue a large number of rape accusations by women—a crucial detail for androcentric counterpublics—are now and have historically been, false), are considered legitimate and/or legible, they point to the rapidity with which the discursive stances that lead to the curation and support of a divergent archive may gain at least a small level of legitimacy and legibility to more mainstream publics. It is likely in this particular example that the divergent archive built by androcentric counterpublics on the subject of false rape accusations—which, to be frank, is largely inaccurate, extremely selective, and inconsistent (almost nowhere does the fact that men are by far the more likely gender to commit sexual violence against men, women, and gender non-conforming individuals get acknowledged)—played a role in convincing Secretary DeVos of the need to rollback policies regarding Title IX’s influence on university campuses.

¹³ While many androcentric counterpublics maintain a discursive stance claiming that false rape is a widespread and deeply impactful issue for Western men, most informed research and statistics on the subject suggest that false reports only constitute between 2-10% of all reported cases at most (rape is notoriously underreported among men, women, and gender non-conforming individuals), which is well in line with the rates of false reports for other felonies (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, “False Reporting,” 2012).

CONVINCING THE PUBLIC(S): DEVELOPING LEGITIMACY AND LEGIBILITY FOR A DIVERGENT ARCHIVE

The end goal of a divergent archive, from a counterpublic's perspective, is to gain legitimacy—authenticity in historical/public memory discourse and a perception as being grounded in common understanding; essentially, that the memories and histories a counterpublic promotes are real/plausible—and legibility—the ability to be accurately read, perceived, and understood by other publics and institutions. Without legitimacy, a counterpublic will remain enclaved as a fringe group, and if they possess something like a divergent archive, that divergent archive will be considered as little more than a set of conspiracy theories. Similarly, without legibility, a counterpublic's divergent archive will not be accurately read, understood, and/or transmitted to others, resulting in misreadings or mischaracterizations of the discursive stances and collective memories of a given counterpublic.

The formation and curation of a divergent archive both requires and simultaneously generates conditions for a counterpublic's divergent archive to be considered legitimate. For the collective memories of a counterpublic to be regarded as at least partially accurate, they must be able to suggest a historical trajectory that assures such memories are held by more than a few individuals—which is a function served by a divergent archive. But a divergent archive's role in reinforcing a notion of legitimacy must also itself hold up under at least a certain level of scrutiny. That is, the more a divergent archive helps convince nonmembers of a counterpublic of that given counterpublic's authenticity and accuracy in its discourse, the more that divergent archive is invested with the legitimacy to convince others of its authenticity and accuracy. Essentially, the more a discourse is discussed, shared, and transmitted to other members who do not immediately dismiss it, the more a divergent archive becomes convincing through the sheer

weight of counterpublic members contributing to and referencing it as a source of public memory. This is why divergent archives are likely to proliferate in a digital, networked environment; while divergent archives existed long before the internet, the internet makes it easier to transmit a perception of collective memories to more people, and to help connect people for whom particular discursive stances and divergent archives are likely reflective of their memories and experiences.

As an example of a divergent archive's ability to simultaneously require and generate legitimacy, consider androcentric counterpublic members' discursive stance that women commit domestic abuse/violence more than men commit domestic abuse/violence against women. This is a longstanding plank of a number of androcentric counterpublics, but particularly father's rights and men's rights organizations (which of course overlap but are not necessarily the same set of counterpublic members) (National Coalition for Men, 2009; Rossler, 1986; Men's Rights, Inc., n.d., "Falsehoods"). Androcentric counterpublics have long held that domestic violence is indeed a prevalent problem, but that gynocentric attitudes have led to an ignorance of what they argue is the *real* issue: 'battered men/husbands.' It is important to clarify that this is an extremely complicated issue, and that in no way do I suggest that survivors of domestic abuse and/or violence should ever face scorn because of their gender. What follows is an attempt to show how a divergent archive built around what androcentric counterpublics claim is the legacy of a misandrist culture (an assertion with which I do not agree) and was founded on ephemera (the stories, some true and some potentially false) of male survivors of domestic abuse and violence, has come to acquire legitimacy in its consistent presence *as* a divergent archive.

It is crucial to note that while I do not dispute that men are certainly affected by domestic violence, the severity of that abuse, its consequences, and its fallout tend to be far, far worse for

women (Kimmel, 2013; Straus and Gelles, 2006). I would like to discuss the divergent archive of domestic violence in relationship to the notion that women abuse men more than men abuse women, a misleading statement that is backed by decontextualized statistics: according to the National Coalition for Men, for example, women initiate domestic abuse/violence “70%” of the time (National Coalition for Men, 2009). This particular divergent archive is not particularly interested in documenting the prevalence of domestic abuse across both genders, but is instead aimed at ensconcing three particular collective memories: First, that men are not the primary perpetrators of domestic abuse and/or violence, second, that women are in fact the more prevalent and guilty party in cases of domestic abuse and/or violence, and finally, that the “epidemic” of battered men is largely ignored in Western societies (Elam, 2013, “Mary Elizabeth Williams”; Farrell, 1993; Good, 2014).

A divergent archive for androcentric counterpublics built around domestic abuse/violence (abuse is largely considered to consist of psychological, emotional, and mental attacks on an intimate partner, while violence is physical assault, including hitting and sexual assaults) starts with an accumulation of ephemera that points towards the experiences and memories of (claimed) abuse/violence survivors. A prominent example in this particular divergent archive is Earl Silverman, an advocate for shelters specifically devoted to survivors of domestic abuse/violence for the last 20 years, who opened his own men’s shelter in Calgary, Alberta (Canada) in 2010. Silverman cited his experiences of not being allowed to take refuge in any of the Canadian women’s shelters after facing substantial and significant abuse/violence from his wife as a foundational and driving memory (Goldwag, 2013; Poole, 2013; Stephenson, 2013). Silverman’s work and memories of domestic abuse/violence throughout his life, and his suicide in 2013 in particular, have prompted the sharing of a variety of similar ephemera by other men

who claim to be survivors or witnesses of domestic abuse/violence. As such ephemera accumulates, it forms into a divergent archive, the pooling of which helps convince nonmembers of the androcentric counterpublic(s) that the discursive stances representing domestic abuse/violence against men is in fact a significant issue. As more men share stories, experiences, and memories of domestic abuse/violence against men, the issue begins to attract more widespread attention, potentially even scholarship (as this subject did starting in the 70s with researchers like Murray Straus and Richard Gelles, whose findings androcentric counterpublic members often misleadingly quote out of context—to the frustration and outcry of both Straus and Gelles), and journalism (even a cursory Google search indicates that the presence of men as victims of domestic abuse/violence has been widely reported on the last 10-15 years).

This accumulation of both ephemera and more rigorous archival material in turn serves to strengthen the legitimacy of a divergent archive, more firmly entrenching the discursive stances that it indicates as at least partially accurate, authentic, and/or real. Interestingly, even when there is counterfactual evidence against a particular discursive stance, a divergent archive's legitimacy may remain intact if enough members (and potential members) of the counterpublic are willing to overlook, dispute, or reject such evidence. This is apparent in regard to the third point regarding androcentric counterpublics' members' discursive stance toward male domestic abuse/violence—that male domestic abuse/violence has long been ignored in the West—and the insistent stance that no one is paying attention to male survivors of domestic abuse/violence. While it is true that mainstream publics tend to perceive female survivors of domestic abuse/survivors as more prevalent (an assessment which, particularly in the case of domestic violence, research suggests is accurate), the widely reported results of research by figures like Straus and Gelles also indicates a wide variety of publics are aware that men are frequently

survivors of domestic abuse/violence. Whether or not such knowledge alters rigid conceptions of gendered behavior—such as toxic masculinities that insist men *cannot or should not* be victims and the stigma around identifying as a survivor of violence, particularly at the hands of women (an element of masculinity that androcentric counterpublics often wrongly attribute to feminists)—is another matter entirely. But it is clear that such a divergent archive begins with the transmission and accumulation of ephemera as a convincing foundation. That, in turn, enables the development of a divergent archive which strengthens a counterpublic's claim to legitimacy. Legibility, which represents the understanding and accessibility of the archival materials and the collective memories a divergent archive espouses, is connected to legitimacy, but also separable from it.

If legitimacy is about securing authenticity and convincing publics of the plausibility of a certain set of collective memories, then legibility is about making sure that those memories are properly understood and interpreted, according to the formational counterpublic's members. Legitimacy and legibility are separable, but are also closely linked; without legitimacy, legible discursive stances are accessible but lack the force of authenticity, reality, or rigorousness, and without legibility, legitimate divergent archives are viewed as espousing real, but incoherent or contradictory, memories and histories. Thus, legitimacy and legibility are closely linked, and moves made to enhance the persuasiveness of one most often enhances the persuasiveness of the other. For example, claims of misandry by members of androcentric counterpublics do not possess legibility and are confusing if androcentric divergent archives are not granted the legitimacy to believe members' ephemera. If those ephemera are immediately dismissed, (as they sometimes have been for androcentric counterpublics) then it doesn't matter how well communicated or elaborated those ephemera are; they lack the social force to affect an

acceptance of androcentric counterpublic members' memories and are, in essence, a set of fictions. Legibility ensures not only that other publics will interpret the ephemera (and other archival materials/artifacts) appropriately, but that they also understand the reasons such ephemera point to particular public memories.

A divergent archive's legibility depends on a number of factors, but possessing legibility relies primarily upon whether the ephemera that form the foundation of a divergent archive rhetorically communicate the collective memories of a formational counterpublic. If those public memories are persuasive or contain enough elements in common with members of other publics who access a divergent archive, then they gain at least some legibility. The expansion of legibility may wax and wane depending on a variety of factors, including incidents, events, or scandals that may prove a catalyst in making collective memories understood. These catalysts may also be bound up in issues of legitimacy; when a legitimate or authentic figure espouses certain public memories, or when they are backed by the proper archival material (or both), then a divergent archive's legibility and legitimacy hit a tipping point where publics begin to accept the divergent archive as both legitimate and legible. That tipping point is where collective memories are identified with—consubstantiated, to use Kenneth Burke's (1968) term—by broader publics, transforming them into public memories.

A telling example of this shift is the scandal surrounding celebrities in the film and television industry in the fall of 2017. Though apparently known as an open secret that Harvey Weinstein sexually harassed and assaulted a number of women throughout his career—reports which, I would argue, constitute a divergent archive constructed by a counterpublic of harassed and assaulted individuals (largely women) but whom lacked legitimacy and legibility—it took a particularly damning incident in which Weinstein was caught on tape (as part of an NYPD sting

operation) committing such acts to convince mainstream publics of the legitimacy and legibility of this divergent archive (Farrow, 2017; Kantor & Twohey, 2017; Kelley, 2017). These reports led to the exposure of other prominent cases of sexual harassment and assault within the film and television industries, which blossomed into a watershed of reporting on sexual harassment and assault by prominent figures (almost entirely men) in a number of professions and industries. In the span of about a day, a divergent archive that had possessed neither legitimacy nor legibility was granted both at a dizzying pace, which enabled the submission of more ephemera related to harassment and assault, now legible in the wake of Weinstein's scandal and granted a legitimacy they did not have mere days before.

A common denominator in the development of legibility for a divergent archive often centers around key concepts, terms, or ideas, which a counterpublic utilizes to mobilize accessibility and understanding for publics that might otherwise overlook or misconstrue the ephemera that compose a divergent archive's collective memories. For example, Nancy Fraser (1992) discusses how the concept/term of domestic abuse had to be articulated and defined by a feminist counterpublic in order to make the divergent archive and collective memories it represented accessible to nonmembers of that counterpublic. In a similar (though somewhat inverse) way, androcentric counterpublics drew the neologism 'misandry' as a counter-term to 'misogyny,' a term long used by feminists to describe the social oppression and stigmatization of women. As I described earlier, androcentric counterpublics articulate misandry as the social oppression and stigmatization of men, most particularly in favor of women. Androcentric counterpublics embrace a discourse that suggests feminism worked almost too effectively, tipping the scales in favor of women. Androcentric counterpublics are generally organized around the notion of the oppression of men, but the ephemera that represented such collective

memories appeared inaccessible and thus, illegible (in addition to potentially being illegitimate). As a response, certain androcentric counterpublics sought a way to frame their ephemera through a concept that was easier for nonmembers of the counterpublic to understand, and so they created the term misandry.

Misandry was a useful concept for developing legibility for a couple of reasons. First, misandry drew upon a framework already popularized by feminists—misogyny—and simply flipped it so that the term referred to “similar” experiences of men¹⁴. Misandry also has caché in that it sounds academic, and thus derives some rigor from an association to scholarship and research (though it is difficult to argue that misandry originated as an academic concept). Last, misandry provides a catch-all category for the variety of ephemera populating androcentric counterpublics’ divergent archives, ranging from the perceived uneven custody battles of fathers to the representation of men in sitcoms as dumb oafs for the sake of comedy. Anything that could be perceived as a slight against men might qualify as misandry to androcentric counterpublics. This broadness in the concept allowed for androcentric counterpublics to frame a variety of systems and behaviors as misandrist. In many ways, the prevalence and utility that a formational concept grants to a divergent archive makes sense; just like institutional archives, a divergent archive needs something to determine the limits and boundaries of what a particular archive should include. This does not mean that a divergent archive’s materials are stable; in fact, it’s quite the opposite. The definition and applications of misandry in relation to androcentric counterpublics’ divergent archives most likely has and very well may alter over time. One brief

¹⁴ Frederic Hayward, founder of Men’s Rights, Inc., wrote to the National Congress for Men (NCM) (an androcentric counterpublic loosely collected around father’s rights and other, broader men’s rights platforms) tells NCM “[d]on’t let your resentment of the women’s movement stop you from appreciating their brilliant use of strategy...[w]hile all women’s issues fall under their domain, they never try to hit all of them at once. They distinguish between broad goals and narrow strategies. They’re smart” (Hayward, 1986).

example of this is the inclusion of circumcision as an instance of misandry, which was debated and wrestled over by androcentric counterpublics; some members of the counterpublic did not see this as an example of misandry, but as the concern of a different counterpublic (Main, 1997; Hampton, 1997, “Subject: Circumcision-3”).

Note that a divergent archive does not need to be legitimate or legible *to everyone*, or even to most publics, in order to function. Many divergent archives, including several of those curated by androcentric counterpublics, possess legitimacy and legibility for only certain members of other publics. A counterpublic’s divergent archive may take years or even decades to acquire legitimacy and legibility among broader publics, just as a counterpublic’s divergent archive may lose legitimacy and legibility as the discourse of publics and institutions shift and take up new stances. Many of the memories espoused by androcentric counterpublics and represented by the ephemera located within their divergent archive have not been considered legitimate or legible until more recently, including the notion that women by default are currently more privileged than men.

When a divergent archive fails to possess any legitimacy or legibility, it ceases to be a divergent archive, by definition. Divergent archives can only exist when made visible and accessible to publics outside of their formative counterpublic. Otherwise, they are the domain of enclaved publics, which shun interaction and dialogue with other publics, and their materials represent something more akin to cloistered knowledges. This does not mean that such archives disappear entirely, just that they enter a period of being a buried collection of material and ephemera. It is entirely possible, however, that they may return to public awareness and become restored to divergent archive status; certain neo-Nazi and white supremacy counterpublics appear to be resurfacing in just such a way during Donald Trump’s presidency (Bacon Jr., 2017; Meltzer

& Dokoupil, 2017). It is also possible for other counterpublics to cannibalize collective memories from an enclaved divergent archive and/or for members of the defunct divergent archive to migrate the materials to another counterpublic's divergent archive. The cross-pollination among nationalist/White supremacist and androcentric counterpublics' ephemera—and the resistance among androcentric counterpublics to publicly take up matters of import to men of color and men identifying as queer or trans—might be evidence of such a process.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION(S)

This chapter has sought to articulate how counterpublics become recognized, how those recognized counterpublics collect and curate a body of ephemera which eventually becomes a divergent archive, and how a divergent archive acquires legitimacy and legibility in order to become persuasive as a repository of collective memories. Though this theorization is far from complete, I hope that it serves as a useful foray into describing how archives formed by counterpublics and outside of institutional oversight come to exist and how they are accessed by members of publics beyond the formative counterpublic. Having discussed the main functions of a divergent archive and a general process for its formation and curation, I will now move to discussing one of the most notable features of a divergent archive—the shadows of the archive—and how a discussion of the limits of rhetorical identification within a divergent archive meet with real challenges to procuring legitimacy and legibility, thus making consubstantiation with mainstream publics far more difficult.

CHAPTER 2: THE SHADOWS OF THE ARCHIVE

Indeed, from the historicity of the archive, rhetorics; out of the deconstruction of the material presence of the past and, thus, in relation to what the archive cannot authenticate absolutely but can (be made to) authorize nonetheless, issues an invitation to write rhetorical histories of archives, which is to say, critical histories of the situated and strategic uses to which archives have been put.

—Barbara A. Biesecker, “Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention”

By describing the archive as a “scene of invention,” Barbara A. Biesecker (2006) invites us to consider how archives themselves, not just the materials *within* them, function as rhetorical texts (p. 124). A number of scholars have since complicated this concept, including Cara Finnegan’s (2006) consideration of how researchers must often rhetorically interpret what an object in the archive *is* when that information is not codified. Such challenges emerge when trying to decode, triangulate, and contextualize a number of androcentric archival materials, among other concerns regarding the rhetoricity of the archive (Glenn and Enoch, 2010; Haskins, 2007; Morris, 2006, “The archival turn”; and Sharer, 1999). Most recently, Jean Bessette (2017) has argued that the establishment of archives for particular collectives serves not simply as a rhetorical resource, but as an act of composition itself, taking in her research “an expansive approach to understanding archives and the rhetorical strategies they leverage as a form of *historiography*” (emphasis original, p. 2). In *Retroactivism in the Lesbian Archives: Composing Pasts and Futures*, Bessette examines lesbian archives as “*compositions* with implications for lesbian identity and sexual politics” (emphasis original, p. 2). While interested in how archives have implications for particular subjects’ identity and politics, this project extends those concepts to consider how counterpublics utilize archives as resources that allow for the articulation and circulation of collective memory. This practice, in turn, reflects a counterpublic’s discursive

concerns and provides purpose for the materials located within those archives—a rhetorical process that I describe through the concept of the ‘divergent archive.’

Part of understanding how counterpublics curate divergent archives and articulate collective memory narratives is recognizing what gets lost, obscured, or forgotten in that process. As James V. Wertsch (2008) and Peter Novick (1999) acknowledge, a collective memory narrative is simplistic and monolithic; while it strings together a series of events in order to identify connections among them, it does not grapple with the complex and contradictory nature of those events, of people’s participation in and reaction to them, and how those narratives are intertwined with—or distinct from—a counterpublic’s discourse. In the service of articulating a monolithic collective memory narrative, counterpublic members construct archives rhetorically—that is, they make deliberate choices about what should and should not be included in those archives and refer to some materials and artifacts more than others. Much like the erection of a physical monolith, these archives and the collective memory narratives that come from them cast a shadow, one that obscures what might be encompassed in its shade.

This chapter explores the consequences of constructing monolithic collective memory narratives through a divergent archive and the rhetorical limits that accompany such a process. To examine this rhetorical phenomenon—which I identify through the concept “shadows of the archive”—I analyze how ephemera, events, or artifacts within shadows are often elided or purposely forgotten from particular archives and collective memory narratives. These ephemera have the potential to radically alter the rhetorical impact of a divergent archive, in addition to collective memory drawn from any archive. I explore the shadows of the archive by examining how androcentric counterpublics have constructed narrowly contextualized, oversimplified collective memory narratives regarding circumcision as a systemic and gendered act of violence.

In elaborating a history in which circumcision is performed as an uncaring, thoughtless vestige of misandrist Victorian behavior, androcentric counterpublics obscure and displace alternative ways of understanding their own and other archives (and memories) regarding the act of circumcision. This displacement in turn contributes to the erasure of a number of stakeholders in circumcision, forming a narrow, monolithic collective memory that prevents constructive dialogue on the practice of circumcision from occurring. It also makes transference to and identification as a public memory all but impossible. Shining a light on these shadows makes clear how androcentric divergent archives elide discourse about circumcision as the rhetorical embodiment of a sacred covenant for practitioners of Judaism, as well as a health measure to combat certain medical issues (most notably the transmission of HIV/AIDS). If we accept that archives serve as scenes of invention, then it behooves us to consider what gets cut or dropped from those scenes.

I elaborate on the concept of shadows of the archives by first identifying and defining the term, and discussing how shadows are particularly apparent in, but not exclusive to, divergent archives. Then, I briefly discuss the history of the term ‘misandry,’ a concept pivotal to understanding the shadows particular to the androcentric divergent archive. I explain how the term evolved to encompass a wide array of behaviors, issues, and topics. After, I take up a specific manifestation of supposed misandry, male circumcision, and discuss how androcentric divergent archives produce some very lengthy and dark shadows in regard to their collective memory narratives of circumcision. Analyzing those shadows as they have occurred across androcentric counterpublic archival materials will help make clear the harm to legibility and legitimacy some shadows can cause if not perceived, understood, and/or addressed. Finally, I conclude the chapter by addressing how situated archival research can help to dispel, or at least

diminish, shadows from divergent archives and help counterpublics embrace an array of legible and legitimate collective memory narratives.

WHAT'S IN A SHADOW?

The metaphor of the shadow is useful for a few different reasons. First, considering the shadows of an archive helps make clear what scholars of both rhetorical historiography and collective memory have argued: that archives are by their very nature rhetorical, and thus are just as important for the materials, artifacts, and texts that find inclusion in them as they are for what is excluded (Assman, 2010; Brown & Davis-Brown, 1998; Rawson, 2009). In this sense, the shadow functions as what is near to, behind, or adjacent to the archive, but is not included *within* the archive. Because the archive is crucial to the construction of collective memory narratives, those narratives also contribute to the creation of shadows, a kind of interposed, opaque, rhetorical body. Sometimes these shadows are relatively harmless; at other times, what becomes obscured in the shadows of an archive may significantly affect the kinds of histories and collective memory narratives that might be drawn from that archive. Shadows may be unintentional, or the product of archival limitations such as physical/storage space, subject, or loss of materials. Divergent archives, however, have the potential to produce a number of shadows as byproducts of purposeful forgetting, ignorance, loss, shortsightedness, and displacement, given their specific concerns regarding the collection of materials, artifacts, and texts related to the discourse(s) that they articulate. One such example is androcentric counterpublics' shadows in regard to circumcision. Portrayed as one instance in a long string of misandrist sociocultural behavior, the rhetorical decision to focus on the bodily effects and trauma involved in the procedure casts a shadow over religious and medical discourse that considers circumcision as sacred ritual and harmless preventative procedure, respectively.

Shadows of the archive can encompass a number of rhetorical and historiographical concerns, but I am not suggesting that I forward an exhaustive theory of the concept, nor that the metaphor functions perfectly. Rather, my research into the divergent archives of androcentric counterpublics raises important questions about the consequences of the construction of archives—especially conservative, hegemonic, extra-institutional ones—and the articulation of collective memories drawn from those archives. As a result, I apply the concept broadly, to shadows that are results of both accidental and purposeful elision or exclusion. In a project that considers the construction of archives by counterpublics to reify and sharpen the rhetorical impact of collective memory, I believe it important to consider the limits and complications that arise in the wake of such rhetorical strategies. While all archives cast shadows due to their inability to encompass all relevant material (and even in the notion that archives accept some material as relevant and others not), divergent archives' particular relationship to diffuse materials that are curated to be legible and legitimate in specific ways make them rich sites for analyzing the impact of shadows of the archive.¹⁵

Shadows are especially important to the divergent archive for three interlocking reasons. First, they have the potential to decontextualize, obscure, or oversimplify counterpublic discourse and collective memory narratives. An example of this is the paucity of conversation around a complex understanding of maleness and masculinity for androcentric counterpublics. Generally, androcentric counterpublics are comfortable with vaguely gesturing at a notion of

¹⁵ There are a number of examples of the shadows constructed in the archive of other counterpublics' divergent archives, both harmful and harmless. For example, a number of feminist archives have long been forced to contend with the conservatism, racism, and homophobia undercutting a number of women's movements and which endangers the legibility and legitimacy of such collective memory narratives for certain publics, counterpublics, and individuals (Breines, 2006). A more harmless shadow, however, may be the exclusion of materials documenting male involvement in women's movements. While a potential erasure it is arguable that rhetorically, a feminist counterpublic's memory narratives and legibility and legitimacy are not damaged much by such an omission.

maleness and masculinity that presumes cissexuality, heterosexuality, and Whiteness, though certain philosophies, like neomasculinism, codify those identities as foundational to their androcentric counterpublic (men's rights activists tend simply to shun discussion of such matters, particularly in the more contemporary iterations of the movement). By including materials drawn almost primarily from, and concerned about, White, cissexual, heterosexual, Western men, the members of androcentric counterpublics do not engage with complex discussions of how alternative sexual orientations and gender identities deconstruct and make apparent the socioculturally constructed nature of maleness and masculinity. The divergent archive's material on circumcision is a key marker for this point: circumcision generally does not resonate as an exigent concern for men of color, Jewish men, or trans/queer men (and/or any combination thereof).

Second, shadows of the archive are especially salient for divergent archives because when engaging in this decontextualization or oversimplification, they potentially foreclose alternative ways of understanding the historical and memorial value of an archive's materials. By this, I mean that a divergent archive/collective memory narrative's shadows may lead to narrow understandings of how archival material can present a complex representation of the past that differs depending on its audience. Imagine you are standing behind the monolith that is a divergent archive and cast in the shadow that is the collective memory narrative derived from that archive. When you look around, you (and that counterpublic's members) may not be able to see anything *but* the shadow. The result is that in the crafting of a counterpublic's discourse and collective memory narratives, there are no considerations of conflicting or contradictory conclusions that must be grappled with through dialogue. Everything becomes reduced to a single cut-and-dry argument (one that with androcentric counterpublics, almost always ends in

accusations of misandry). As an illustrative example, the inclusion of materials from and focusing on almost entirely White, cis-and-heterosexual men drawing from androcentric divergent archives rarely recognizes the intersectionality—the ways that intersecting elements of an individual’s positionality can work in concert to produce an interlocking system of oppressions or privileges—from which they argue (Crenshaw, 1991). Thus, when androcentric counterpublic members observe and document ads about products for babies that are geared toward mothers, like Pampers’ old slogan, “All the love a mother can give,” they understand these ads not as guided by neoliberal (driven by capitalistic, market-based choices) strategies targeting particular demographics, but by anti-male sexism (MR, Inc., 1989, “Announcing: The third,” n.p.).

Third, as a result of both the decontextualization of materials present within a divergent archive and the foreclosure of alternative ways of reading/understanding archival materials, shadows of the archive can be used to justify erasures and/or the whitewashing of historical incidents or documents in extreme cases (such as androcentric counterpublics). Imagine again that you’re in the shadow of the monolith of a divergent archive. The shadow obscures everything around you, and even the archive (monolith) itself, since it’s not illuminated. Now imagine that someone else not standing in the shadow tells you about all of the details of the monolith and the ground around you that you’re not able to discern from your current position. If being in the shadow is comfortable for you and you don’t want to leave it or change your position, you might ignore or disagree with what that other person tells you from their vantage point. Not unlike how the coolness of a shadow on a hot day can be preferable to standing in direct sunlight, remaining in the mental and memorial space of a shadow can sometimes prevent discomfort or pain. In many ways, what happens when androcentric counterpublics argue from

their divergent archive(s) without bothering to change their angle on it is that they simply ignore, deny, or refuse what others say to them.

As but one disturbing example of how shadows can justify erasures, androcentric counterpublics have been particularly concerned with trying to discredit the statistics on the prevalence of rape by men in Western societies (Frost, 2014, “Rape culture”; Arndt, 2017, “Mattress girl”). Attacking them from a number of angles, particularly vocal members of androcentric counterpublics have insisted that if anything, women rape men just as much as the inverse and/or claim to be raped falsely, and the feminist-dominated media and medical industries have simply manufactured a rape crisis from thin air (Elam, 2013, “I’ll decide if”). Rather than push for broader conceptions of rape and sexual assault (an endeavor many feminists advocate) and combat masculinist ideologies that make it socioculturally difficult for men to acknowledge and discuss being survivors of sexual violence, androcentric counterpublics instead insist upon questioning the stories and experiences of female survivors, and defending men accused of sexual assault (Løvenskiolds, 2016). Standing in the shadow of their divergent archive, enveloped in their collective memory narrative of what they perceive as a feminist witch hunt against men, many androcentric counterpublic members erase the testimony, trauma, and pain of male, female, and non-binary or genderqueer survivors of sexual assault due to the dogmatic discourse of their counterpublic and the divergent archive they curate.

Shadows of the archive, then, have the potential to complicate the legibility and legitimacy of divergent archives when they decontextualize or oversimplify historical and memorial materials and narratives, can foreclose alternative ways of understanding archival materials, and in the worst instances, cause the erasure of valid competing constructions of both history and collective memory. This does not mean that shadows or divergent archives are

always constructed in service to reifying hegemony, however. The divergent archives constructed by counterpublics like Black Lives Matter (BLM) in order to document and transmit collective memory narratives about the troubling and long history of unprovoked police violence against people of color, for example, functions as a divergent archive seeking to articulate memories that counter mainstream public memories of police forces as a benevolent and necessary institution. Even so, such an archive may still possess shadows that impact the legibility and legitimacy of such memory narratives; examples for BLM might include a focus on video documentation of police violence against Black people—documentation which may not always be interpreted the same way by all audiences or may even be tampered with or purposefully lost—or misinterpretations of what the counterpublic’s discourse means, leading to misleading counter-discourse (such as the “Blue Lives Matter” movement). Just because these shadows don’t arise from willful ignorance in regard to other perspectives (as is the case for many of the shadows of androcentric divergent archives) from Black Lives Matter as they build a divergent archive (they are obviously all too aware of the disingenuous Blue Lives Matter campaigns which deeply misconstrue the issues at hand), they are still products of the attempt to articulate and transmit a collective memory narrative from that archive that affect legibility and legitimacy.

In order to understand the particular shadows of androcentric counterpublics’ divergent archives, it is crucial to understand the oft-repeated and much-maligned concept of misogyny. It would be no understatement to suggest that across the development of a number of androcentric counterpublics, misogyny has come to represent every major concern of their discourse, encompassing a wide variety of phenomena, behavior, and incidents. In the next section, I

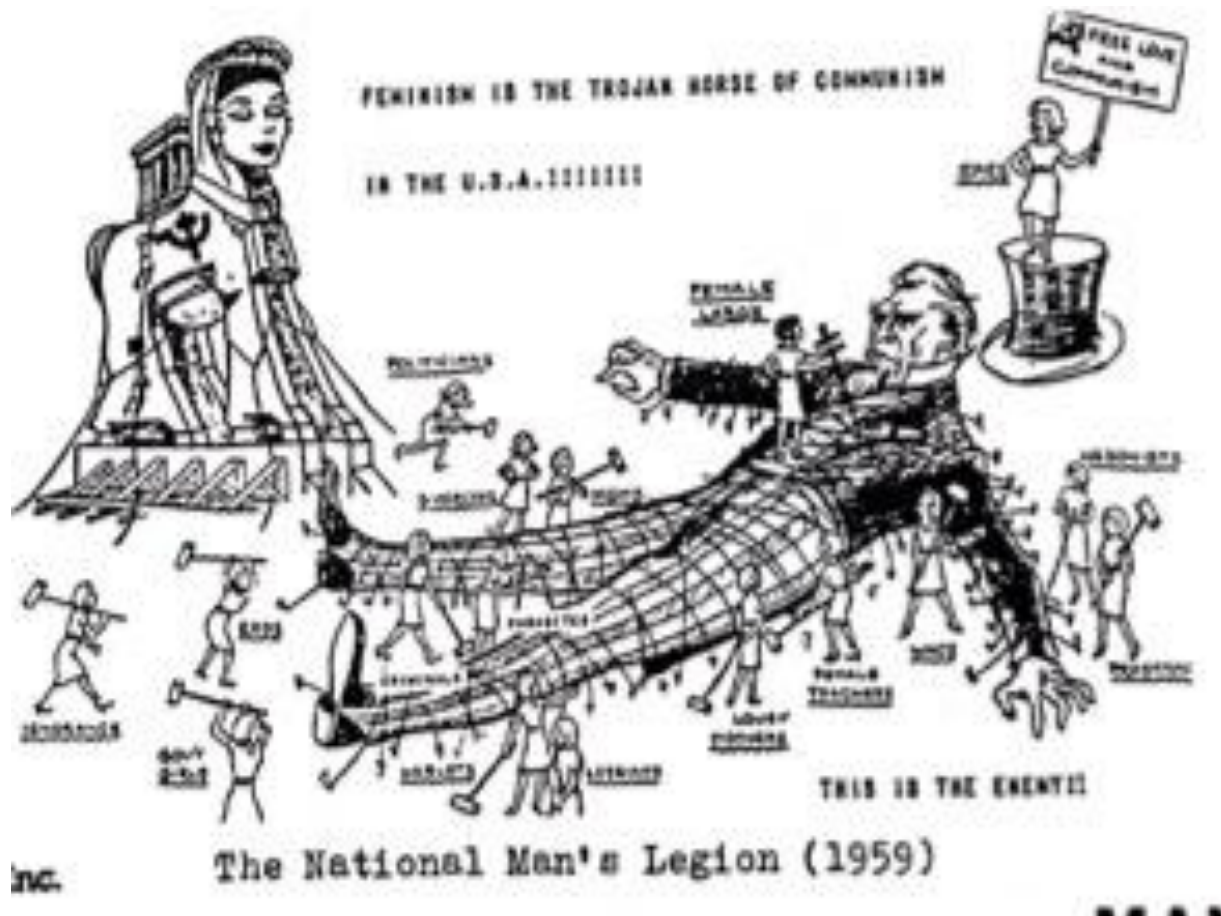
delineate a (brief) history of the term and concept and connect it to the development of androcentric counterpublics and the many shadows that result from their divergent archives.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MISANDRY

To understand the shadows of the archive cast by androcentric divergent archives, we must first understand the concept of ‘misandry,’ what it encompasses, and how it is organized and presented as an all-encompassing form of (White, cis-and-heterosexual) male oppression. To help make sense of misandry as a concept developed across time by androcentric counterpublics and informing many shadows in their archives, I detail a brief history of the more prominent androcentric counterpublics, particularly the men’s rights movement(s), and discuss how the use of misandry as a concept casts shadows resulting in a discourse suggesting the only oppression/discrimination that matters is androcentric counterpublics’. This renders androcentric divergent archives as liabilities in achieving legibility and legitimacy among other publics, even non-androcentric Intactivists, who would normally be natural allies for androcentric counterpublics.

Interestingly, most scholarship places the origins of the broader “Men’s Movement” alongside the formation of several feminist and profeminist organizations and communities. Second-wave feminism’s push in the 1960s and 70s to rearticulate gender/sex roles and to identify the damaging effects such roles had on women was extended to masculine roles, which, feminists argued, were just as entrapping and damaging for men as they were for women (Kimmel, 2013). Questioning these gender and sex roles for men led many to ally with feminists and adopt feminist ideologies, developing a number of anti-sexist groups. These groups sought to articulate more inclusive visions of masculinity that fostered values around generosity, self-reflection, and community (L.A. Men’s Collective, 1975; NOMAS, 2017).

As male participation in feminist efforts to deconstruct gender norms and roles wore on, many men came to question the capability and purposes of feminism in ‘liberating men.’ Warren Farrell (1993) describes this moment as catalyzed by observing “something my feminist womenfriends [sic] had in common: an increasing anger toward men, a restlessness in their eyes that did not reflect a deeper inner peace” (p. 12). When Farrell began to “incorporate both sexes’ perspectives,” he claims that jobs began to dry up for him, indicating (to him) that what feminists wanted to hear was not equality, but anti-male tirades (p. 13). Thus, as Farrell frames it, feminism began to promote the disparagement of men rather than the equality of women. Like Farrell, many early androcentric counterpublic members frame this transitional moment as a move away from what they claimed was a takeover of a feminist counterpublic/women’s movement interested in equality by a group of women who simply wanted to hate men (Ault, 1994; Hayward, 1986). One early flyer distributed among androcentric counterpublics even declared feminism “the Trojan Horse of Communism in the U.S.A.” (The National Man’s Legion, 1959, n.p.). As a result, androcentric counterpublics now generally articulate two primary types of feminists: ‘equality’ feminists (like Betty Friedan), who are supposedly truly interested in gender parity (and are largely connected to feminism in the 1960s), and ‘ideological’ feminists (like Jessica Valenti, Susan Faludi, or Andrea Dworkin), whom androcentric counterpublics characterize as enforcing a dichotomy wherein women are inherently good and men inherently evil (Nathanson & Young, 2006).



[Image 1: Feminism as Trojan Horse]

Androcentric counterpublics then formed in opposition to what they saw as feminist campaigns against men, splitting into several smaller allied counterpublics, primarily men's and father's rights groups (including Men's Rights, Inc., the American Fathers Coalition, and the National Coalition of Free Men), profeminists, who largely held with feminist principles and which I classify as not being part of androcentric counterpublics, and the mythopoetic men's movement. Though most of these groups originally focused on the oppressive trappings of what we would now call 'toxic masculinity,' the various counterpublics approached the issue differently. The men's rights movement(s) sought to push back against both ideological feminists and other forces they saw as criticizing and blaming men for troubling masculine behaviors and for developing overtly negative public perceptions of men. At the same time, the mythopoetics

confronted issues in the male gender role and masculinity by focusing on an ‘innate’ masculinity, their need to commune with other men in nature to help uncover that innate masculinity, and stances of political neutrality (meaning that the mythopoetics tended not to take overt discursive stances in relationship to feminism). Eventually, concerns about the oppressive function of masculinities and male gender norms were largely left to the mythopoetics and profeminists/male feminists, as other androcentric counterpublics within the last two decades turned to focus on what they saw as the real enemy: third-wave “ideological” feminism and its (usually female) proponents.

Within men’s rights counterpublics and more recently among the neomasculinist and redpill right counterpublics, it has become important to mark a concept of ‘awakening’ to the oppression supposedly caused by ideological feminism. This moment of recognition—that men are in fact systemically oppressed rather than women—is now referred to as a “red pill” moment, a reference to the 1999 film *The Matrix*. In the film, Morpheus (played by Laurence Fishburne) offers to Neo (Keanu Reeves) the choice between a red pill that would make clear the digital, illusory prison in which Neo mentally lives, or a blue pill that would make him forget that his world is a simulation and allow him to return to his ‘normal’ life. Beyond being a film popular among members of men’s rights and redpill right counterpublics, the notion of the ‘red pill moment’ has come to encapsulate a discursive awakening for people who advocate for claims of misandry and its systemic presence in Western societies (bsutansalt, 2015; Love, 2013)¹⁶. It is important to recognize the rhetorical permanence that describing red pill moments has; taking the

¹⁶ The “red pill” has also come to function as a symbolic trope beyond androcentric counterpublics; it has come more broadly to mean a shift from one polarized faction to another through ‘awakening’ to the ‘truth,’ as in a 2017 Fox News headline declaring “Liberals sick of the alt-left are taking the ‘red pill’” (Ames, 2017). Though I’d argue this actually represents a slight misapplication of the concept, the point remains that the idea and language have begun to travel in circles outside of strictly androcentric counterpublics.

red pill means, like Neo in *The Matrix*, to be forever cognizant of the ‘reality’ of which you were oblivious to prior to the red pill. In the language of androcentric counterpublics, there is only a before and after to a red pill moment, not a fluid shifting of ideologies and worldviews that can be just as easily countered or reconsidered. This rhetoric reflects the potentially complicating discourses presented by the shadows of androcentric divergent archives: that no other oppression can be faced and solved without first recognizing and confronting misogyny.

Misogyny as an organizing principle of androcentric counterpublics has a fascinating and troubling history. Though difficult to pinpoint the exact origin of the term, it has been validated as an intellectually worthy neologism across Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young’s ‘scholarly’ tetralogy on the subject, which to date includes *Spreading Misogyny* (2001), *Legalizing Misogyny* (2006), *Sanctifying Misogyny* (2010), and *Replacing Misogyny* (2015). As Nathanson and Young (2001) describe it, misogyny is “the sexist counterpart of misogyny. Like misogyny, misogyny is culturally propagated hatred. And like misogyny, it is often expressed as negative stereotypes of the opposite sex. But unlike misogyny, misogyny is not closely monitored, because, from a gynocentric perspective, it is considered morally and legally acceptable” (p. 5). The term has proliferated as an oppositional counterpart to misogyny (the systemic and sexist oppression of women), as androcentric counterpublics sought a compelling neologism to encapsulate what they felt (and continue to feel) was a complete and total system of oppression for men across a variety of legal, social, and cultural platforms (Nathanson & Young, 2006).

The legal, social, and cultural practices and issues that constitute androcentric counterpublics’ description of misogyny include, but are not limited to: male circumcision, domestic abuse/violence (which androcentric counterpublics paint as more prevalent for male

survivors), rape culture and false rape claims (androcentric counterpublics have taken as gospel the notion that rape statistics are routinely inflated and distorted), silence around sexual assaults on men, depictions of men in popular culture, collegiate women's and gender studies programs (which, they claim, do not achieve parity without 'Male Studies' programs), legal and institutional policies that androcentric counterpublics see as skewed to women's advantage (such as Title IX), fathers' and custodial rights, policies or spaces that limit or complicate male entry, including ladies' nights at bars and safe spaces where men are barred from entering, and attempts to achieve and enforce gender 'equity' in a variety of workplaces (you'll rarely see, ironically, androcentric counterpublics making the case for why there should be more male nurses and social workers, professions that are thoroughly feminized and often socially/financially devalued¹⁷) (Nathanson & Young, 2001). It's helpful to recognize that nearly all of the planks that represent misandry to androcentric counterpublics are largely generated not through ground-up resistance to oppressive systems or policies, but instead as counterpoints to mainstream feminist agendas (Kimmel, 2013). What this means is that androcentric counterpublic politics have largely taken cues on what to oppose based on feminist discourse, fighting whatever trends occur in public feminism(s).

Throughout this chapter and the dissertation as a whole, I discuss the fallout from shadows of the androcentric divergent archive that lead to a characterization of almost any behavior as potentially misandric. The development of an archive serves, among other purposes,

¹⁷ By 'feminized', I am referring to industries and positions that are overwhelmingly staffed and sought by women. Such industries are exceedingly rare; in professional workplaces, examples include nursing, elementary-level education, hairdressing/beauty work, and certain kinds of manufacturing (Bradley, 1989; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015); among nationwide university majors, generally only nursing programs, social work, and humanities majors (and not even all of those) possess a clear majority of female students, although efforts to recruit female students more heavily into STEM-oriented fields may generate shifts in such numbers in the near future (Chamberlain & Jayaraman, 2017).

to develop cover for androcentric collective memories not as a constructed and romanticized past, but as ‘history.’ That notion, that a divergent archive purports to convey history rather than memory, can in many cases further the counterpublic’s discourse and increase legibility and legitimacy if it does not face significant challenges from other publics and counterpublics. In this way, building a divergent archive is an attempt by androcentric counterpublics to convince others of the historical significance and prevalence of misandry, through the collection of a number of archival materials. The divergent archive, then, stands to make such claims of historical sociocultural practices much more convincing than simply pointing to everyday experiences. It also, however, opens up room for criticism; insisting upon one collective memory narrative opens up room for attacking the accuracy and acceptance of such memories. Forming a divergent archive has significant rhetorical affordances for a counterpublic’s discourse and memory narratives, as well as constraints. The extremely broad definition and claimed presence of misandry by androcentric counterpublic discourse can sometimes function as both.

The nearly ubiquitous presence of behavior or practices that signal misandry to androcentric counterpublics, coupled with the high number of sympathetic White men in positions of institutional power, means that critics of misandry are often able to critique feminism without acknowledging larger systems of disenfranchisement, or the dangers of toxic Western masculinities. Such privileges combine with the shadows inherent to this divergent archive to create a situation in which members of androcentric counterpublics rarely feel called to reflect upon how their rhetoric and activism may stem from other sources than misandry, or how their tactics and strategies may work to shore up hegemonic privilege for certain individuals rather than actually lead to equality or justice for anyone. As a result, other counterpublics have

borrowed from the discourses of and allied themselves with androcentric counterpublics, an often-unintended consequence of the shadows of their divergent archives.

Misandry's conceptual role in the formation of androcentric counterpublics and the shadows inherent to a divergent archive that purports to document misandry's existence has allowed for a variety of allied groups, organizations, and ideologies to take root alongside the androcentric counterpublics themselves. Some of these alliances or overlaps, such as with anti-circumcision activists—who refer to themselves as Intactivists—make sense, as both groups condemn circumcision and see it as a violation of male children's bodily autonomy. But other overlaps and alliances become much more difficult to defend and must be consistently disavowed, such as the associations between androcentric counterpublics, White supremacy, and anti-immigrant counterpublics. As White supremacists have become more emboldened and visible, if not more numerous, during the Trump presidency, journalists have begun to trace the connections between White supremacy movements and androcentric counterpublics like the men's rights movement (Futrelle, 2017; Romano, 2018). These connections, which tend to narratively link men's rights activism as a sort of 'gateway' to more virulent White supremacy actions, are reified by much of what androcentric counterpublics imply (and sometimes directly say) and the makeup of the counterpublics' members.

Overwhelmingly, White perspectives and concerns dominate androcentric counterpublic platforms—circumcision, for example, is far less common in non-White and non-American men—and taken to its extremes, can combine with nationalistic attitudes regarding White supremacy and anxiety over the fate of White masculinity (Romano, 2018). Neomasculinist website/online community *Return of Kings* explicitly adopts an anti-immigration stance for men coming from non-Western countries, claiming that such individuals, combined with ideological

feminism, are weakening and destroying the virility and fortitude of American men (Valizedah, 2017, “ROK Community Beliefs”). That such discourse draws connections to more extreme groups that are not necessarily directly linked to, but ideologically overlap with, androcentric counterpublics is a testament to the consequences of the shadows of their archive. In focusing almost exclusively on the issues that affect White, cissexual, and heterosexual men, androcentric counterpublics have little room to claim that their values and concerns do not align with certain elements of White supremacy or xenophobic counterpublics. Androcentric counterpublic discourse, archival materials, and collective memory narratives have constructed liabilities that hinder the establishment of legibility and legitimacy by not recognizing the shadows cast by their archive and collective memories of misandry. I turn now to discussing one such particular collective memory narrative and the rhetorical construction of a divergent archive to buttress it in androcentric counterpublics’ anti-circumcision platforms.

ANTI-CIRCUMCISION ACTIVISM (‘INTACTIVISM’) AND MISANDRY

Despite the falling popularity of circumcision as a hygienic and preventative procedure—only 55% of newborn boys in the U.S. were circumcised in 2010, down from 63% in 1999 (Jaslow, 2012)—anti-circumcision movements are a prominent element of androcentric counterpublics. A prominent example comes from the attempted 2010 ban on circumcisions in San Francisco. In the fall of 2010, a group of activists opposing male circumcision—labeling themselves “Intactivists”—proposed a legal effort to ban all circumcisions in San Francisco, CA (Cohen, 2011). When their efforts were not taken seriously, they collected the 7,100 signatures required to enter a measure on the 2011 ballot, led by Matthew Hess, who wrote both a MGM (“male genital mutilation”) bill for San Francisco and a similar one for the city of Santa Monica (Medina, 2011). The bill expressly prohibited circumcision of any male child younger than 18,

with no exceptions provided for “belief...custom or ritual,” and including potential penalties of a fine up to \$1000 and/or imprisonment in county jail for up to a year (Hess, 2010, “San Francisco,” n.p.). Though the necessity of circumcision and a public conversation on its rollback as a default medical procedure had been ongoing since the mid-1980s (for example, see Dodd, 1992; Gillett, 1991; Main, 1997; Milos & Macris, 1992), the bills written by Hess provided the most visible and productive efforts of Intactivists in over two decades. Hess himself said that the bills were “the furthest we’ve gotten, and it is a huge step for us” (Medina, 2011, n.p.). The ballot measures in San Francisco and Santa Monica introduced many to Intactivist perspectives on circumcision, which the movement generally prefers to call “male genital mutilation” and likens to female genital mutilation (Moisse, 2011, n.p.). Predictably, the ballot measures led to a great deal of controversy, with Hess himself unnecessarily fanning the flames.

As a way to gain exposure for the MGM bill and to secure signatures on the petition to get the measure on the November 2011 San Francisco ballot, Hess also wrote and edited his own Intactivist superhero comic: *Foreskin Man*. Spanning seven issues, the titular hero—a Bruce Wayne-esque rich playboy and philanthropist—stops a variety of villains bent on circumcising male babies and young boys. Though the comic may be meant to parody the macho, hyper-masculine excesses of many male superhero comics, it also seems to revel in them, reproducing a variety of offensive, lazy hallmarks of the genre (Miles Hastwick/Foreskin Man is impossibly muscular and proportioned, as are the women Hastwick often beds after saving their infant sons from circumcision). While the comic in general prompts the same critiques of problematic gendered and racial representation as many Gold and Silver Age comics, its second issue in particular drew a great deal of criticism for its portrayal of “Monster Mohel,” a monstrous villain possessing exaggerated, stereotypical features often characterized in anti-Semitic depictions

(Hess, 2010, “Monster Mohel”). Nor does Hess’s comic simply single out Monster Mohel (mohels are individuals who perform *brit milah* ceremonies for Jewish families) as atypical among Jewish people; the infant’s father, “Jethro,” summons Monster Mohel to his son’s *brit milah* behind his wife’s back and against her wishes, making even the seemingly normal Jethro complicit in what Hess characterizes as an unconscionable act.

Unsurprisingly, *Foreskin Man*, particularly the second issue featuring Monster Mohel, ignited a controversy around the ballot measures’ connection to anti-Semitism, made even more complicated by the fact that Hess penned both *Foreskin Man* and the proposed San Francisco bill. The comic was credited with harming the effort to gather support for the MGM bill, though Hess insisted that the effects on awareness and outreach that the comic had far outweighed the risks, attributing the outcry against *Foreskin Man* to people fighting against the inevitable advancement of “human rights issues” (Moisse, 2011, n.p.). However, Hess’s efforts were ultimately frustrated in October 2011 by Governor Jerry Brown’s signing of a bill that prevented any local bans on circumcision in the state of California (Lovett, 2011). Intactivist groups continue to champion the cause, with a highly-touted documentary covering the practice of male circumcision and including interviews with Intactivists, *American Circumcision*, released and screened across the United States throughout 2018 (Marotta, 2017).

Though the overlap between Intactivists and men’s rights activists is difficult to gauge precisely, it is certainly sizeable, and many MRAs have made opposing male circumcision a major plank of the men’s rights movement (Hampton, 1997, “Letter to editor”). *A Voice for Men*, the most prominent men’s rights mouthpiece on the internet, regularly runs articles on the anti-circumcision movement, along with pieces that ‘expose’ and dox doctors who openly perform circumcision (provide relatively private information like clinic/practice addresses, websites, etc.

in the hopes of encouraging outpourings of shaming/harassment/threats), labeling them “known genital mutilators” (Costanza, 2018, n.p.). Men’s rights activists oppose circumcision as it represents, to their mind, a most heinous form of misogyny: violence against a male child’s genitals without consent. Like Intactivists, MRAs argue that it is not enough that the procedure is optional and its popularity on the decline; rather, they frame circumcision as a human rights issue, comparing it to female genital mutilation (Ingraham, 2015; NOHARMM, n.d., “Circumcision in America”). While it is not apparent whether Matthew Hess identifies as a men’s rights activist, it is clear that his rhetoric and efforts have been applauded by MRAs, and that the more extreme elements of the Intactivist movement—for example, the Bloodstained Men, who don white jumpsuits with large red stains on their crotch meant to symbolize the blood from a circumcision in order to protest the act—constitute smaller androcentric counterpublics of their own, allied in purpose and method, if not always in name, with androcentric counterpublics like the men’s rights movement (Bloodstained Men Development, 2018).

The controversies that follow anti-circumcision discourse, particularly in the form of over-the-top, designed-to-offend media like *Foreskin Man*, the performance protests of the Bloodstained Men, or the doxxing of medical professionals who perform circumcisions, become archival material for androcentric divergent archives. These materials are drawn upon to construct a collective memory of anti-male sexism in which men/boys are not granted bodily autonomy even as children. From androcentric counterpublics’ perspectives, these boys and men are forced to undergo a traumatic and unnecessary surgical procedure. Such archival material serves androcentric counterpublics’ divergent archive(s) as documentation of the affective pain and outrage that these men feel at the continued (though diminishing) practice of circumcision and the perception that their frustrations go unheard. It also presents a number of shadows of the

archive when it comes to the legitimacy and legibility of androcentric counterpublics' public discourse regarding circumcision. The shadow of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, along with concerns regarding the rhetoric and aggressive framing of androcentric counterpublics' anti-circumcision discourse, complicate their attempts to promote an open discussion on the realities of circumcision and its place as a routine medical procedure. This narrowly contextualized set of archival materials and the monolithic collective memory narrative they reify create shadows that render androcentric counterpublics' efforts susceptible to a wide array of criticism and challenges to their legibility and legitimacy.

If divergent archives are rhetorical resources that help counterpublics make a case for the legibility and legitimacy of collective memory narratives, their need to be public, exposed, and enduring simultaneously provides critical publics ammunition in the form of embarrassing or offensive shadows that may no longer be acceptable in making a case for legibility and legitimacy. For androcentric counterpublics seeking to ban circumcision, the persistent links to anti-Semitism that follow in the wake of debates on circumcision require a constant need to refute charges of ethnic, cultural, and religious bigotry. Examples of such archival materials as the Bloodstained Men's protest performances, the *Foreskin Man* comics, and the doxxing articles of *A Voice for Men* grant opposing publics rhetorical opportunities to decry the extremism of such approaches and their lack of interest in dialogue.

Above, I argue that all archives have the potential to cast a number of shadows that potentially weaken their rhetorical positions for counterpublics seeking legibility and legitimacy for their collective memory narratives from broader, more dominant publics. Androcentric counterpublics, however, present an example of a counterpublic demanding legibility and legitimacy, while not seeking to grant such legibility and legitimacy to the publics that oppose

them. This results in a rhetoric of violation and insistence that women or cultural/religious circumcisers have no right to discuss this topic—essentially, men attempting to occupy the *sole* victimized role (Hampton, 1997, “Subject: Circumcision-12”; Wilson, 2014). The shadows cast by an archive that demands dialogue but does little to seek or sustain real dialogue regarding the perceived difficulties of being male are long, indeed. In the next section, I briefly detail my methodology for considering those shadows.

CONTEXTUALIZING FEMINIST RHETORICAL METHODS AND THE ANDROCENTRIC ARCHIVE

In discussing androcentric counterpublics’ divergent archives and their shadows related to circumcision, it’s useful to first contextualize the archival materials and ephemera employed in this chapter, as well as briefly review my methods and methodology in working with these materials. In building a theory of the divergent archive, I have argued that divergent archives are by their nature distributed across a network of repositories rather than in a single location. The materials I analyze below come from one of two discrete archives: the men’s rights community website *A Voice for Men* and the Michigan State University Changing Men Collection.

I utilize electronic as well as paper-based archival materials—articles, discussion boards/forums, comments, and other documents—from *A Voice for Men* (AVFM) because this is the most visible and popular androcentric counterpublic source of information, news, and ephemera for contemporary men’s rights activism. Moreover, in addition to being an observable site of counterpublic member engagement, AVFM makes clear the ephemeral and community-building functions of a divergent archive. In this space, counterpublic members do more than just read articles and news regarding androcentric counterpublics; they also, as I noted previously, do a great deal of building what Tasha N. Dubriwny (2005) calls “collective rhetoric” (p. 396) and

sharing ephemera within forums and comment threads to articulate a collective understanding of events, practices, and moments in time (Haskins, 2007). AVFM functions as a highly curated, diffuse repository containing articulations of how androcentric counterpublics portray their realities and public events, as well as documentation of the ephemeral reactions to those texts.

For these reasons, I view *A Voice for Men* as a divergent archive composed and curated outside the bounds of the institutions normally viewed as the owners and organizers of archival material. Because the androcentric counterpublics involved in AVFM are largely denied inclusion in broader, institutional archives—as elements of androcentric counterpublic discourse and collective memory usually are—the archives they create to document a history and collective memory look different from our normal conceptions of how an archive is constructed and categorized. I also draw from an archive for androcentric counterpublics located *within* an institution: the Changing Men Collection, a part of Michigan State University’s Special Collections. The Changing Men Collection, as discussed previously, contains a variety of ‘Men’s Movement’ related archival materials, including numerous folders on circumcision, father’s rights, mythopoetic men’s groups and retreats, individual androcentric counterpublic organizations like the National Coalition of Free Men, the National Congress for Men, and Men’s Rights, Inc., among a wide swath of other subjects.

Despite the institutional cover granted by MSU’s Special Collections, however, it must be noted that the Changing Men Collection itself is largely representative of the same archival irregularities present in other divergent archives. The Changing Men Collection appears to have been almost entirely curated/organized by a former graduate student at Michigan State University, Ed Barton, who in requests for materials from men’s movement groups, suggests that the scant amount of materials on men’s rights and father’s rights, compared to what he saw as a

large amount of space and attention paid to feminist/pro-feminist archival materials, needed to be rectified (E. Barton, personal communication, April 8, 1992 & January 21, 1999). This individual single-handedly built, organized, volunteer curated, and secured the majority of the archival materials located within the Changing Men Collection. Barton's 'fingerprints' are everywhere within the collection; in emails and letters asking organizations or individuals to donate copies of manuscripts or texts to the archive, in organizing the materials into a manageable system of topic-separated folders, and in an (admittedly praiseworthy) attempt to include the perspectives of mythopoetic groups, men's rights groups, and pro-feminists alike¹⁸. Even this collection housed within an institutional archive possesses divergent elements, in the singularity of its founding and acquisition of materials (almost entirely through a volunteer curator) and its creation in opposition to other publics/counterpublics.

By their very nature, divergent archives are fragmentary and oriented towards particular perceptions, events, and communities, and the androcentric divergent archive is no different. To help navigate these challenges in scrutinizing and analyzing the archival materials of androcentric divergent archives in order to make claims about the collective memory narratives and rhetoric they support, I turn to Royster and Kirsch's (2012) "terms of engagement": critical imagination, strategic contemplation, and social circulation¹⁹ (pp. 20-22). I draw upon Royster and Kirsch's terms of engagement in order to conscientiously and carefully attend to what

¹⁸ It must be said here that my dissertation project owes an enormous debt to Ed Barton, who has for so long organized and secured donations of material to the Changing Men Collection. Though the many notes and letters make clear potential differences in our perspectives toward androcentric counterpublics and a potentially biased interest in certain topics over others (there are two massive folders on circumcision materials while others—whether through circumstance or intent, I don't know—remain comparatively slim), the sincere effort to create an archive that represents all sides of men's issues, and that preserves a number of documents I would never have access to otherwise, is of massive importance to the study of androcentric counterpublics, particularly those from the 1980s and 90s.

¹⁹ I outline these terms in detail within my introduction, and as such will only briefly identify their purpose in this chapter.

Royster and Kirsch call “an ethics of care and hope” (p. 145). While, as I hope is apparent by now, I personally disagree with a majority of androcentric counterpublics’ discourse, arguments and rhetorical strategies and tactics, I am ethically bound to approach the archival materials and the information they reveal from a standpoint that seeks to understand their motivations, concerns, and desires. Like so many of the rhetorical historiographers who have come before me and whose work informs this dissertation (Bessette, 2013 & 2017; Cintron, 1997; Gere, 1997; Hogg, 2018), I have no desire to excuse or suggest an automatic complicity with the viewpoints of my archival subjects. But I do take seriously the need to represent them in their own words, as complex, multifaceted individuals who are responding sincerely to what they feel are parts of the world that must be changed.

Research into “conservative counterpublics” (Hogg, 2015, p. 392) requires a belief that such subjects, like all people, are products of a number of social, cultural, and institutional systems that affect how they come to view and represent their world and themselves. Like Ralph Cintron’s (1997) work in *Angel’s Town*, I find myself in the position of needing to understand people whose viewpoints and actions I occasionally abhor and oppose, a process which necessarily requires empathy. Without excusing the actions they take, which have very real consequences for the causes of social justice, I seek to consider what rhetorically drives them so that we might better intervene in the systemic production of unjust or bigoted discourse and arguments. If our politics do not come from a place of compassion, both for those whom we sympathize with and those whom we vehemently disagree with, we cannot hope to fully understand, create dialogue, and intervene in dangerous counterpublic discourse. For these reasons, I turn to Royster and Kirsch’s terms of engagement, beginning with critical imagination.

Critical imagination enables us to fill in the (sometimes considerable) gaps of what is not located in the divergent archive but also what has been purposely or accidentally omitted, disavowed, or forgotten, a crucial perspective when considering shadows within the androcentric divergent archive. Critical imagination is required, for example, in considering how the voices of Jewish men, as one example, are largely and conspicuously absent from a conversation on circumcision that androcentric counterpublics claim to be fought on behalf of the rights of all men²⁰. I also engage in critical imagination alongside strategic contemplation—meant to honestly and respectfully render the “words and works of those whom we study”—to consider from an archival and rhetorical standpoint how circumcision has been, and continues to be, a flashpoint of controversy for members of androcentric counterpublics.

As I discuss below, several androcentric counterpublic members represent anti-circumcision activism as largely dismissed on its surface rather than engaged with sincerely by other publics. This may help explain why anti-circumcision androcentric counterpublics invoke a discourse of trauma, wounding, human rights violation, and victimization around the topic of circumcision—producing shadows that foreclose alternative ways of understanding the embodied process of circumcision. While we must remain critical of claims to victimhood and work to contextualize such rhetorical tactics, we must also take seriously that members of these counterpublics experience pain and frustration in their personal relationships to combating circumcision. The ephemera and narratives they produce of embodied loss and feeling unheard

²⁰ Though Intactivists and androcentric counterpublic movements against circumcision do occasionally involve Jewish-identified members, these individuals are most often ‘token’ members of the movement, and many no longer practice Judaism or consider themselves Jewish. When I say that Jewish men are absent from androcentric conversations about circumcision, I mean that these conversations are held without attempts to include Jewish men who are pro-circumcision, a troubling and telling omission for a movement that insists it is welcoming to Jewish men and consistently refutes connections to anti-Semitism (Elam, 2017, “Beware the jooze”).

or misunderstood are a large part of producing a divergent archive that androcentric counterpublics feel is not reflected in broader, institutional archives.

I also draw upon Royster and Kirsch's concept of 'social circulation', recognizing and working to articulate how texts within the androcentric counterpublic's divergent archive connect across the past, present and future, and how these texts alter—or in their dismissal, do not alter—rhetorical practices and perceptions of collective memory narratives within and outside of androcentric counterpublics. One element of the shadows within the androcentric divergent archive is that anti-circumcision discourse has been around for quite some time, though it is consistently presented as a pressing crisis (Hayward, 1987, "Me woman"; Kennedy & Sardi, 2016; Main, 1997). It is debatable as to whether or not Intactivists within and outside of androcentric counterpublics have been winning these rhetorical battles, but what is clear is that the conversation currently being argued around circumcision has been circulated since at least the late 1980s (Hayward, 1987, "Equal rights"; Milos, 1988).

ANTI-CIRCUMCISION RHETORIC, TERMINISTIC SCREENS, AND SHADOWS OF THE ARCHIVE

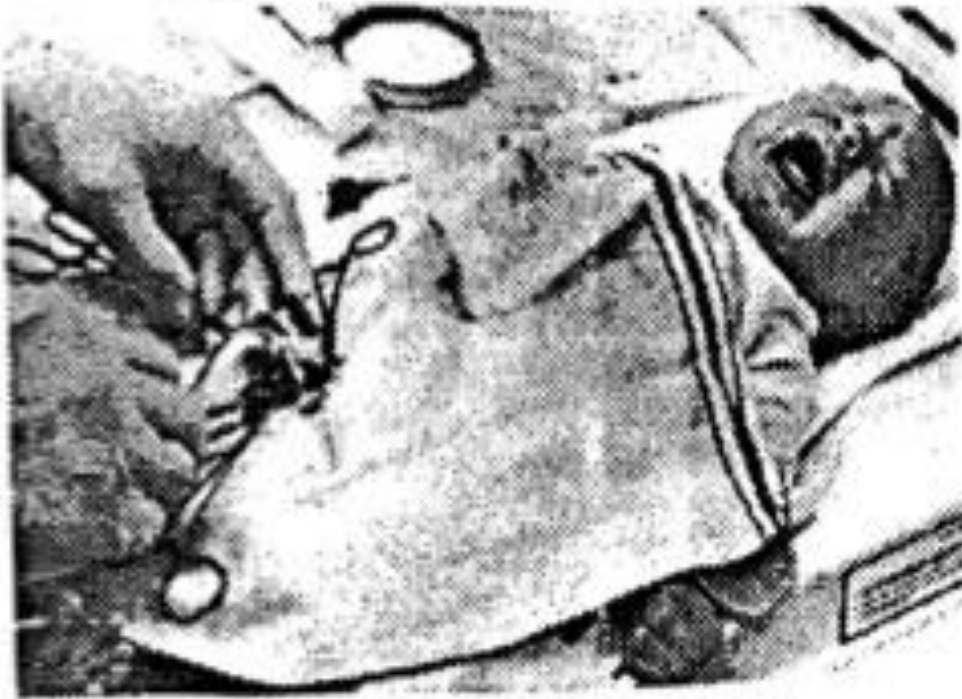
Understanding the rhetorical nature of archives as "compositions" themselves, and the effect that an archive's shadows can produce rhetorically, requires us to examine how those shadows function rhetorically within a divergent archive. The recognition of shadows of the archive makes clear the rhetorical limits of a divergent archive, highlighting the ways in which it succeeds and/or fails in convincing broader publics and other counterpublics of its legibility and legitimacy, as well as the kairotic nature of its collective memory narratives, since all collective memory narratives seek to establish the *kairos* of their memories. This connects to Biesecker's (2006) identification of the archive as a rhetorical "scene of invention," wherein the archive

functions to delimit what can be said about the past and our memories of it (p. 124). Foucault (1969) describes this rhetorical function of the archive as being the “first law of what can be said” (p. 29). Viewing the divergent archive as a site of rhetorical invention helps us understand how using a publicly available archive to commit to specific collective memory narratives opens room for shadows, resulting in the decontextualization of archival materials, foreclosures on alternative narratives or means of understanding, and the erasure of certain voices within or near that divergent archive.

One concept for understanding how shadows come to function as products of collective memory narratives’ development is to view them through the lens of Kenneth Burke’s (1968) theory of the terministic screen. Burke describes terministic screens as socially-constructed ‘filters’ through which we understand language and how that frames what we observe in the world. That is, the words that we use themselves constrain how we are able to view the world. As he notes, “much that we take as observations about ‘reality’ may be but the spinning out of possibilities implicit in our particular choice of terms” (p. 46). Further, Burke claims that disagreements over the terms that form particular terministic screens often show up “as a distinction between terministic screens positing differences of *degree* and those based on differences of *kind*” (emphasis original, p. 50). Identifying these connections and disparities as “continuities” and “discontinuities,” respectively, Burke’s theory of terministic screens enables us to consider how a joke at a man’s expense, for many, simply functions as harmless humor (a joke), but for androcentric counterpublics, is not a joke but an instance of misandry (p. 50). The distance between ‘joke’ and ‘misandry’ implies a discontinuity where an instance of intended comedy instead supposedly represents anti-male sexism.

Androcentric counterpublics possess a number of terministic screens—the most prominent of which relate to the term misandry—but in considering the shadows of their archive, circumcision is a particularly useful example. Burke argues that terministic screens function across three vectors or modes: visual, verbal, and rhetorical. Androcentric counterpublic discourse on circumcision exhibits engagement with all three. The visual image of a male baby being circumcised, to members of androcentric counterpublics, is not an image of a routine medical procedure, but a traumatic and unnecessary wounding; a primary strategy in anti-circumcision literature is to depict as graphically and disconcertingly as possible the process of removing a baby’s foreskin and to symbolically link small chunks of viscera or meat to the process of circumcision or images of babies crying and writhing in pain (see Image 2) (Costanza, 2016; NOHARMM, n.d., “Circumcision in America”). Because androcentric counterpublics foreground what they argue is a lack of child autonomy involved in infant circumcision, they enact verbal terministic screens. Examples include efforts to displace common medical terminology by describing circumcision as “male genital mutilation,” connecting the practice to female genital mutilation.

**CIRCUMCISION?
SOME PEOPLE THINK
IT'S A SCREAM.**



SO DOES HE.

[Image 2: NOHARMM Promo]

Further, androcentric counterpublics “dox”—identify personal information, here the location and contact information for a doctor’s practice and encourage individuals to shame or harass an individual/group—and label doctors who perform circumcisions as “known male genital mutilators” (Costanza, 2018). Rhetorically, calling circumcision genital mutilation, promoting imagery depicting children crying in pain or bloody bits of flesh meant to symbolize foreskin, and describing circumcision as a human rights violation serve as attempts to convince

audiences (publics/counterpublics) of the continuities between human rights violations and routine circumcision (and inversely, the discontinuities between circumcision as a harmless preventative medical or religious procedure). The continuing practice of circumcision as identified by androcentric counterpublics then becomes linked to the systemic web of sociocultural and governmental practices that they argue compose misandry, yet another term that imposes particular continuities and discontinuities.

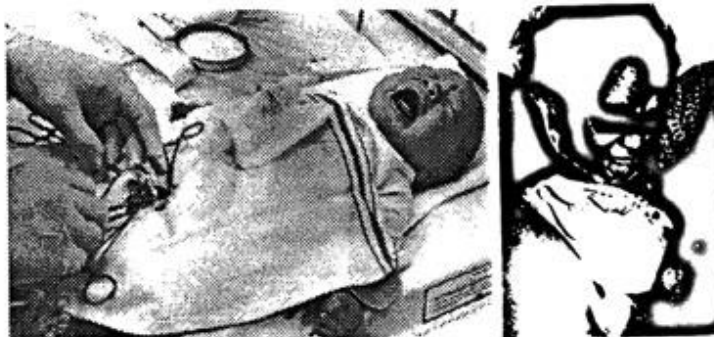
Terministic screens combine with the shadows of an archive to construct a limit to the ability of a counterpublic's divergent archive to be useful in rhetorically persuading other counterpublics of the legibility and legitimacy of a set of collective memory narratives. These shadows and the complications they create are often directly or indirectly responsible for challenges in making androcentric counterpublics legible and legitimate to opposing counterpublics and disinterested publics. Below, I articulate how the shadows of divergent archives prevent their legibility and legitimacy through the decontextualization and oversimplification of an archive's materials, the loss of alternative collective memory narratives resulting from that decontextualization/oversimplification, and finally, the erasure of publics and competing counterpublics interested in the discourse around circumcision. In identifying these limitations brought by certain shadows of the archive, I describe how archives function not only as resources for collective memory, but how they might also limit or impair the legibility and legitimacy of such memories.

Driven by assertions of misandry, discussions of circumcision reduce complex issues involving a variety of stakeholders into dichotomies of ethical/moral and unethical/immoral: according to androcentric counterpublics, circumcision is an unethical violation of human rights, full-stop. These reductions to either/or responses, and the insistence that misandry is the most

present and overlooked form of discrimination and oppression, represent shadows in the anti-circumcision, androcentric divergent archive. That shadow is made more visible when we consider how discourse on misandry functions elsewhere within androcentric counterpublic archives, with an overriding focus on the stripping of men's choices, rights, and autonomy by supposedly feminist institutions and social systems. Circumcision is constructed across androcentric divergent archives as connected to a variety of other forms of misandry by being a male child's first misandric experience (Main, 1997). The prevalence of attention to and efforts to combat female genital mutilation in the 1990s spurred instances of outrage by androcentric counterpublics, who claimed that like female genital mutilation, circumcision stripped children of autonomy and agency, was a medically unnecessary procedure, and limited male sexual satisfaction later in life, as the document below indicates (NOHARMM, n.d., "Circumcision in America").

CIRCUMCISION in AMERICA

We cannot expect to address the problem of female circumcision without equally addressing the problem of male circumcision.



MALE

FEMALE

Yes	Is the practice rooted in ancient blood ritual?	Yes
Yes	Is it initially adopted to suppress or control sexuality?	Yes
Male circumcision in the U.S. began when we adopted it from England in the late 1800's to "prevent" masturbation.		
Yes	Did the medical establishment assume control of the practice?	Not Yet
Yes	Do cultures use hygiene, medicine, religion or tradition to justify it?	Yes
Yes	Is it done without anesthesia?	Yes
Yes	Is it painful and traumatic to the child?	Yes
Yes	Does it carry long-term physical, psychological, or emotional effects?	Yes
Yes	Does it diminish sexual sensitivity?	Yes
Most circumcised males are not aware that foreskin protects sensitivity of the glans (penile head) and enhances sexual pleasure.		
Yes	Does it abuse or mutilate the child's body?	Yes
Yes	Is it done without the child's consent and against his/her will?	Yes
Yes	Is it a violation of a child's fundamental human right to his/her own body?	Yes
Yes	Do the victims accept it as "normal" or defend the practice?	Yes
NO	DO AMERICANS WIDELY CONDEMN THE PRACTICE?	Yes

W H Y ?

"It is not easy to see evil in something that has the sanction of long tradition, but traditions can be bad or good. They represent inherited error as well as inherited truth."
Archbishop Lang - United Kingdom

Order
Male Circumcision in America - Violating Human Rights
 A Consciousness-Raising Primer & Resource Guide \$9.95 + \$2.00 postage
 NOHARMM - Men Organized Against Circumcision P.O. Box 460795 San Francisco, CA 94146 Donations welcomed

[Image 3: NOHARMM Information Page/Pamphlet]

Understanding circumcision solely as a violation of human rights and building an archive to persuade publics of this point, however, generates shadows that decontextualize and oversimplify circumcisions' function as a medical and sociocultural practice. Androcentric counterpublics' terministic screens promote a perception of circumcisions as human rights violations to male children. At the same time, they vilify efforts to protect female children from what they see as similar procedures, suggesting that girls and women are more valued within Western societies (an instance of misandry). Rather than forge alliances with feminist and more progressive wings of the Intactivist movement, they instead double down on anti-feminist rhetoric by suggesting that a society they believe is gynocentric and dominated by feminist dogma (a demonstrably untrue assertion) actively works to dismiss and/or ignore anti-circumcision activism. This oversimplification arises from a number of elements lurking in the shadows of androcentric divergent archives, but here we'll focus on one: the failure of androcentric counterpublics to recognize that circumcision is not a problem for all men, but rather mainly affects White, cissexual, and heterosexual men (Kennedy & Sardi, 2016, p. 16).

While androcentric counterpublics paint circumcision as a widespread, pernicious problem, research suggests that rates of circumcision have been declining over the last few decades, falling to 55 percent of newborn U.S. boys being circumcised in 2010 (Jaslow, 2012). Moreover, circumcision is highly concentrated among White men in the U.S. In 2010, 91 percent of White men in the U.S. were circumcised while only 76 percent of Black men and 44 percent of Latino men in the U.S. had undergone the procedure (Firger, 2014). There are a number of reasons for this, including medical access and cultural and educational factors, but also the fact that circumcision has primarily functioned as a way to distinguish White, Anglo-Saxon Protestants in the U.S. from European immigrants (Kennedy & Sardi, 2016). This historical

legacy of circumcision is drawn upon by androcentric discourse but tends to omit that these arguments have often been made by other men concerned with the dilution of White, American masculinity and sexual behavior deemed inappropriate. As Kennedy and Sardi (2016) note:

What is noticeably absent from these discussions is the consideration of the privileges of white, heterosexual masculinity. If society has failed to protect men as it has protected girls and women, it is because of the characteristics that have given men power—the assumption that they are independent, strong, brave—and have propagated women’s subjugation—the assumption that they are weak and dependent. If men, as individuals, have been violated, it has gone hand-in-hand with the provision of power for men, as a group (p. 16).

Without recognizing the historical context of circumcision as “tied to racism, nativism, classism, heterosexism, and male dominance,” androcentric discourses are subject to shadows that prevent them from recognizing the complicity of White, cissexual, and heterosexual masculinity in perpetuating the practice of circumcision (Kennedy and Sardi, 2016, p. 7).

The oversimplification of the history and memory of anti-circumcision discourse within androcentric counterpublics is another element of the shadows created by a collective memory narrative that casts circumcision through the terministic screen of misandry. Protesting circumcision has not always been a major plank of androcentric—specifically men’s rights—counterpublics. Rather, it became part of the broader androcentric agenda for a number of reasons, and not without resistance by some members of those counterpublics.

In a listserv for the National Congress for Men, Wayne Hampton (1997) clarifies why some members of the organization view circumcision as a worthy component of the men’s movement, arguing that anti-circumcision activists are “freedom fighters: working toward the

FREEDOM of boys and men to have and enjoy all of their body parts—including those traditionally removed to suppress male sexuality” (emphasis original, “Subject: Circumcision-12”, n.p.). Hampton also makes clear that some members of the men’s movement have referred to the “anti-circ” individuals as “whiners,” as Hampton asserts that the “anti-circumcision movement isn’t filled with ‘whiners’...[i]nstead, it’s filled with men and women who are COURAGEOUS to stand up for the rights of male as well as female children in a society that demonizes and ridicules us” (emphasis original, “Subject: Circumcision-12”, n.p.).

Hampton’s pressing need to make a case on the NCFM listserv suggests that a memory narrative of circumcision as misandrist had to be rhetorically constructed and defended as “fulfilling one of the most basic and sacred male responsibilities: the protection of children” (Hampton, 1997, “Subject: Circumcision-12”, n.p.). The shadows of the androcentric divergent archive often occlude this element, obscuring the purposefully constructed nature of androcentric collective memories regarding circumcision. Unfortunately, the oversimplification of circumcision as a multivalent sociocultural practice makes it difficult for members of other publics and counterpublics to accept as legible and legitimate a memory narrative of circumcision as a human rights violation. These shadows also foreclose the consideration of alternative conceptions of circumcision *within* the androcentric divergent archive.

Even a brief time in the androcentric divergent archive makes it clear that the primary conception of circumcision is as a wound. Rhetorically, a terministic screen establishing a continuity between circumcision and the notion of a wound symbolizes a violation, a lack of consent, agency, and autonomy in the practice, and a passiveness to the victim. A number of archival materials from the Changing Men Collection reinforce the notion of circumcision and having been circumcised as a process of wounding. In the same listserv email penned by

Hampton (1997, “Subject: Circumcision-12”) that I discuss above, he refers to uncircumcised individuals as “intact” while circumcised individuals are labeled “non-intact” (n.p.). Prominent men’s rights activist and Men’s Rights, Inc. founder Fredric Hayward describes his circumcision as having part of his body “amputated” (Gillett, 1991, p. 2). Several archival documents show individuals referring to the “uncut” (uncircumcised) body as “whole,” as opposed to “mutilated,” describing the missing foreskin through a rhetoric of lack and violation (Hampton, 1997, “Subject: Circumcision-12”; General Assembly of First International Symposium on Circumcision, 1989; Milos, 1988). This rhetorical positioning of ‘the wound’ renders circumcised men as only part of their potential ‘whole’ selves, engaging with a terministic screen that describes their existence through a lens of lack and victimization made possible by supposedly money-hungry doctors and uncaring feminists. This positioning—being victim to rapacious sociocultural and legal systems—is, ironically, derided by androcentric counterpublics when they perceive feminist individuals or counterpublics deploying it.

The wound is also used to justify understanding circumcision as an act of misandry. In a separate NCFM listserv message, Wayne Hampton (1997) responds to a query asking “[d]o intact men have any identifiable advantage over circumcised men?” by replying “[h]ow about a complete sexual nervous system?” (“Subject: Circumcision-3”, n.p.). A recurring charge in androcentric anti-circumcision discourse, the claim that the loss of foreskin reduces sexual pleasure for men frames the practice of circumcision as a grave injustice not just to male children’s autonomy, but also to their sexual health. This perception of the loss of potential sexual pleasure reinforces assertions of Western societies as ‘gynocentric’: female-centered and dominated. Androcentric counterpublics insist that in such a gynocentric sociocultural environment, only a woman’s sexual pleasure matters and male sexuality is criminalized and

rendered a perversion, which they believe routinized circumcision reinforces (Elam, 2013, “I’ll decide if” & 2017, “Was Jesus King”; Wright, 2015). NCFM member S. DeLuca (1997) describes experiences of female perceptions regarding the uncircumcised penis of male children as “dirty” and “yucky” while he simultaneously claims that female genitals are not similarly stigmatized²¹. DeLuca asserts that this portrayal of male genitalia as somehow gross or unclean contributes to assumptions that the “penis is flawed from the start,” so that “cutting it up a bit seems acceptable” (n.p.).

Even when discussed medically, accounts of circumcision from within the androcentric divergent archive foreground the violence of the procedure and its contestable lack of necessity from a medical standpoint (Milos & Macris, 1992). The origins of circumcision as an issue for androcentric counterpublics appear to start from the concern of a handful of individuals (some involved in the medical community) who saw the procedure of circumcision as an unnecessary and troubling surgery and sought to dissuade parents from approving or seeking them out for their sons (Milos, 1988; NOHARMM, n.d., “A Kellogg Legacy”). A prominent example is the work of Marilyn Milos, a registered nurse and one of the founders of NOCIRC, the National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers (Milos, 1988 & 1992). Adding to the concerns from a medical standpoint, a number of informational materials within the androcentric divergent archive point to the lack of anesthetic used in circumcision, justified, they say, by the notion that the baby has no sensory ability to experience pain (Pangborn, n.d.). Many documents, like the one described above (Image 3) produced by NOHARMM (National Organization to Halt the Abuse and Routine Mutilation of Males), a San Francisco-based anti-

²¹ DeLuca seems to have conveniently forgotten the deep stigmatization of a number of natural phenomena related to female genitalia, including menstruation, the social pressure for often unsafe methods of vaginal hygiene (douching), and even the ironic depiction of childbirth as a visceral, appalling phenomena (DeLuca, 1997).

circumcision group, directly compare the circumcision of infant girls to boys, arguing that the U.S. declaration of female circumcision of women as a felony without considering similar legislation to protect male children amounts to a human rights violation (General Assembly of First International Symposium on Circumcision, 1993; Hampton, 1997, “Subject: Circumcision-12”; NOHARMM, n.d., “Circumcision in America”). These archival materials reinforce the terministic screens at play regarding discourse on circumcision, even when discussed from certain medical viewpoints.

Finally, the terministic continuities generated by rhetoricizing circumcision as a wound finds its inevitable conclusion in the desire for services that redress, restore, or ‘heal’ the wound of circumcision, most apparent in archival documents advertising services and procedures to reverse the wounds and trauma of circumcision. Ads for “PErSONA COUNSELING SERVICES,” a self-described “Healing Resource for Men,” promote their “No Fee Services for Men Addressing the Wound of Circumcision” including informational resources, recovery groups, and “Foreskin Restoration Information and Assistance” (Fisher, n.d.). One of the most unique documents within the circumcision materials in the Changing Men Collection is a description and ad for a device designed to simulate and potentially restore circumcised men’s foreskin. Dubbed “foreballs”—a portmanteau combining the first part of foreskin and making a nod to the device’s use of ball bearings to pull forward loose skin on the shaft of the penis—the document describes the creator’s process of designing and testing the device on himself (Griffiths, 1988).

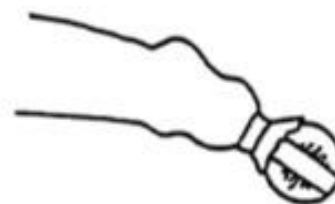
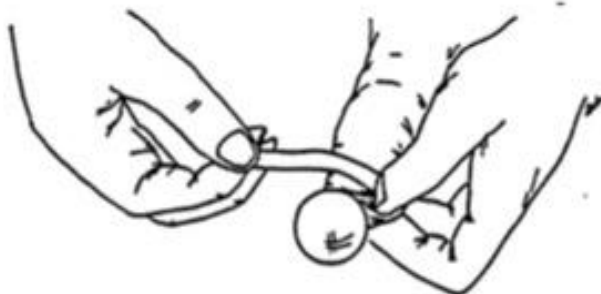
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Nothing about this product or its instructions is meant as, or should be taken as, medical advice. Any attempts of foreskin restoration, should be with the consultation of a physician. Because no two individuals are the same, you are likely to have special needs. All restoration activities should be carried out under the supervision of a physician. Of necessity the author and manufacturer make no guarantees concerning the product, information or techniques contained in this material or the use to which they are put. Foreballs or separate bearings are not recommended or guaranteed.

[Image 4: "Foreballs" Foreskin Restoration Device Diagram]

I do not present these materials with the purpose of mocking or dismissing the frustration and emotional pain that these anti-circumcision activists feel, but rather to acknowledge the depth of sincerity and exasperation that androcentric counterpublics attribute to the routine practice of circumcision and their depiction of the procedure as a wounding.

The terministic screens engaged by androcentric counterpublics' anti-circumcision discourse, however, also contribute to the shadows of their divergent archive that foreclose potential alternatives of understanding the collective memory narratives that result from the practice of circumcision. The most prominent of these are recognizing Jewish memories of circumcision and the *bris* as a sacred covenant with God, enacted upon the body, as well as the medicalized memories of circumcision as a preventative procedure that a number of researchers argue helps prevent the spread of HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, and urinary tract infections (Firger, 2014; Jaslow, 2012). Drawing continuities between circumcision and the wound generates discontinuities between its practice as a socioreligious rite and as a preventative medical procedure, preventing androcentric counterpublic members from recognizing how others might conceive of circumcision. This, in turn, constructs shadows in regard to the androcentric divergent archive's material on circumcision that negatively impact the legibility and legitimacy of convincing opposing or neutral publics of the need to view circumcision as an unnecessary, harmful procedure.

When androcentric counterpublic Intactivists promote legislation that outright bans circumcision as a practice, they put it into conflict with the legal right of Jewish individuals' freedom of religion. While claiming to work on behalf of all men, androcentric counterpublics openly ignore or reject the collective memories of Jewish men who see circumcision not as misandry but as a sacred rite. In this way, they ironically engage in an element of the misandry

they claim to be fighting, and the shadows cast in their wake further weaken their legibility and legitimacy. By not engaging in dialogue with Jewish communities and finding ways to address the routinization of circumcision without treading upon freedom of religion, androcentric counterpublics become associated with anti-Semitic groups and discourse.

While it is unclear if a majority of androcentric counterpublics' members hold anti-Semitism as a common ideology, what is observable is that rhetorically, they massively weaken their position by not being able to directly and convincingly counter assertions of anti-Semitism. Such arguments are usually dismissed out-of-hand rather than engaged as serious, and the conservative nature of androcentric counterpublics feeds shadows that connect them to anti-Semitic groups and discourse. Moreover, the doxing of doctors willing to perform circumcisions, attempting to shame them as “male genital mutilators” and calling into question their medical credentials and ethics further enshrines shadows in the androcentric divergent archive and prevents dialogue on alternative collective memory narratives of circumcision (Costanza, 2016; Costanza, 2017, “John Apostol”; Costanza, 2018)²². By narrowly constructing a collective memory narrative of circumcision as a wound and its continued practice as misandry, androcentric divergent archives not only oversimplify and decontextualize the operation of circumcision as a socio-cultural, religious, and medical practice, they foreclose alternative ways of understanding memories of circumcision and communities that practice it as anything but misandrist. Such collective memory narratives also create shadows around the divergent archive that can contribute to the erasure of experiences and collective memory narratives outside of the divergent archive.

²² Most of the articles about “known genital mutilators” on *A Voice for Men*, for whatever reason, are written by Gary Costanza. Though he’s one of the only consistent authors tracking doctors who perform circumcisions, Costanza is prolific; a cursory Google search shows at least six articles just on the first page of results.

If securing legibility and legitimacy of a collective memory narrative is one of the primary functions of divergent archives, then shadows that cause erasures relative to those collective memory narratives can negatively impact efforts to convince other publics of the accuracy and reality of a specific collective memory narrative. Circumcision and its androcentric divergent archive communicate a collective memory narrative of the practice as misandry and a ‘wound’ create such shadows. These shadows of the archive, you could say, ‘block out’ or cast ‘shade’ over narratives adjacent to one that connects circumcision solely to misandry, making them harder to see, and narrowing the legibility and legitimacy of that collective memory narrative. One of the challenges of convincing broader publics and competing counterpublics to take androcentric memories seriously is that androcentric counterpublics have often worked hard to limit, whether consciously or inadvertently, who participates in the construction of counterpublic discourse. Generally, contributions to androcentric counterpublic discourse, particularly on topics like circumcision, have been limited to White, cissexual, and heterosexual men. When contributors to the discourse do not seem to possess those identity markers, their contributions to the discourse is stringently surveilled and expected to reflect what White, cissexual, and heterosexual men have contributed to androcentric discourse. This unwillingness to allow for potentially diverse viewpoints regarding concerns of the counterpublic lead to an erasure of collective memory narratives that may align with ones reflected by androcentric counterpublics.

The problem that this particular shadow produces for androcentric counterpublics is a disparity in their avowed purpose—combating sexism against men and defending the rights of (supposedly) all boys and men—and the reality, which reflects priorities in combating difficulties faced by only a fraction of boys and men within the West (Allan, 2016; Kennedy &

Sardi, 2016; Kimmel, 2013). Circumcision produces a particularly potent shadow in this regard because it makes clear androcentric counterpublics' willingness to confront an issue important to a small faction of White, cissexual, and heterosexual men, while men of color and Jewish men are unlikely to consider circumcision a prominent concern (given that circumcision rates are considerably lower among men of color in the Anglosphere and the issue seems quite settled within the Jewish community). Moreover, androcentric counterpublics connect circumcision to a host of other supposedly misandrist practices and social behaviors, fallaciously conflating the routinization of circumcision to anti-male sexism and insisting that its continued practice is secured through feminist ideology, declaring it the "cornerstone of American feminism, its first great success story which paved the way for all the rest" (Main, 1997, n.p.). At the same time, androcentric counterpublics insist on banning infant circumcision with no exceptions for religious rights. This leads to an erasure of the perspective of large groups of men on the subject of circumcision, both potentially as a sacred practice and as a potential loss of autonomy.

That erasure proves a thorny problem for androcentric anti-circumcision activists and discourse. As Kennedy and Sardi (2016) note, androcentric counterpublics' narrow, anti-feminist rhetoric prevent any sort of alliance with feminist and LGBTQIA+ counterpublics that may seek to garner awareness of and publicly question the routinization of circumcision. At the same time, pieces of propaganda like *Foreskin Man* and the unwillingness of Intactivists to consider religious exemption for a circumcision ban prevent any manner of dialogue with potentially open-minded Jewish groups, particularly when such rhetoric signals to anti-Semitic groups that anti-circumcision androcentric counterpublics are willing to attack circumcision even as a religious practice integral to their identity (and cultural expectation even for secular Jewish men). Finally, the erasure of collective memory narratives that accurately recall circumcision as a

practice meant to separate White American men from immigrants arriving from Europe prevents androcentric counterpublics from recognizing circumcision as a practice begun to protect and enshrine White, Anglo-American masculinity, started and perpetuated by men, not women or feminists (Fox & Thompson, 2009).

The erasure of competing collective memory narratives, while seeming to suggest its spread as a public memory, may rhetorically harm it by limiting the number of people who perceive a collective memory as legible or legitimate. Shadows of divergent archives make apparent the limits and constraints that forming a divergent archive to reify specific collective memories possesses. While divergent archives make available a number of resources to convince nonmembers of a counterpublic of the legibility and legitimacy of the collective memories espoused by that counterpublic, they also enable the decontextualization and/or oversimplification of archival materials and memory narratives, the foreclosure of alternative ways to conceive of collective memories, and the erasure of adjacent or competing collective and public memories.

DISPELLING THE SHADOWS OF THE ARCHIVE

This chapter has sought to utilize the metaphor of the archival ‘shadow’ to expose the limits and challenges of a divergent archive in articulating the legibility and legitimacy of collective memory narratives. Divergent archives can prove an invaluable resource and repository for materials that enable counterpublics to argue for particular formations of the past as communicated through collective memories. They may also, however, go too far in their attempts to argue for the legibility and legitimacy of those collective narratives, weakening their rhetorical position or excluding potentially compatible collective memory narratives from outside of their counterpublics. While I believe that the routinized process of circumcision is a

medical and social practice worth discussing when not compelled by religious beliefs, I am not interested in weighing in on such a debate with my own opinion on the matter. Rather, what concerns me here is how androcentric counterpublic discourse on the anti-circumcision movement serves as a prime example of how a divergent archive's material could prove legible and legitimate to a number of nonmembers; however, the shadows cast in the wake of androcentric insistence on circumcision as first and foremost a human rights violation as a system of misogyny prevent widespread acceptance of the legibility and legitimacy of that collective memory narrative.

For divergent archives to produce affordances rather than constraining shadows, they must first be cognizant that there are limits to the rhetorical constructions of collective memory narratives that they recall and share. As we have seen, androcentric's need to reframe circumcision as only understandable through the lens of misogyny and their insistence on blaming feminist movements for circumcision's continued practice prevents alliances with a number of other, potentially amenable counterpublics. For a collective memory of misogyny to be persuasive, androcentric counterpublics must recognize that misogyny (if it were real) would not look the same for all men; rather than focus solely on issues that seem to concern only a handful of White, cissexual, and heterosexual men, they might consider attacking circumcision from a number of angles, forging alliances for example with trans men for whom surgery on genitalia is already a salient subject. Such a move would, however, necessitate a shift away from attempts to shore up the hegemonic privilege that most men in androcentric counterpublics possess and refashion androcentric discourse to include a variety of perspectives from all backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and genders. As I will discuss in the next chapter, however, the

kairotic co-optation of actually subaltern counterpublics' rhetoric suggests that androcentric counterpublics are unlikely to dispel their shadows anytime soon.

CHAPTER 3: *KAIROS* AND MEMORY

Archives have also always been at the intersection of past, present, and future...[t]hese spaces are the loci of power of the present to control what the future will know of the past.

—Joan M. Schwartz & Terry Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory”

In their 2018 book, “The Boy Crisis: Why Our Boys Are Struggling and What We Can Do About It” Warren Farrell and John Gray claim that boys globally are facing a crisis in education, mental health, absentee fathers, and sense of purpose. Though public concern and outcry regarding falling rates in male educational success have surfaced a number of times in the last two decades (CCAP, 2015; Farrell, 1993; Marcus, 2017; Rosin, 2010; Sommers, 2000), a memory of society’s failure to address male social and economic decline, and its documentation within archives, continues to persist in the narrative of ‘the boy crisis’ to the present day. This memory, of course, dovetails with the androcentric concept of misandry: the supposed systemic discrimination and hatred of men. But what makes the particular memory narrative of the boy crisis so timely and important, particularly as it is returned to periodically as an issue we must address *now*? The answer to this question lies in recognizing the intersections between *kairos*—the rhetorical element of the opportune moment or timeliness—and the rhetorical consolidation and transmission of collective memories that allows them to be recalled by mainstream publics.

Across this project, I have argued that memory narratives, the rhetorical constructions of memory as they are communicated across publics, must appear to be consistently presented in ways that make them legitimate (reasonable/accurate) and legible (understandable). One of the ways through which counterpublics secure that legibility and legitimacy for their collective memory narratives is through the construction of divergent archives and the collection and curation of the artifacts, materials, and ephemera that they place within them. But these

narratives, archival artifacts, and ephemera must themselves fit within convincing claims to legibility and legitimacy. In order for a counterpublic's memories and discourse to gain traction among other publics, those publics need a foothold into understanding and accepting those memories/discourses. Some counterpublics may attempt to do this by articulating how particular archival materials, ephemera, or documents reinforce their arguments for legibility and legitimacy. This is because convincing publics of the accuracy of discourse (the social, cultural, and institutional ongoing conversations about particular topics) around collective memories cannot be performed in a vacuum. Rather, counterpublics must reinforce discourse and memory by consistently connecting old memories to new ones. For example, androcentric counterpublics don't simply point to each new instance of what they believe is misogyny; they argue that those instances of misogyny reinforce long-running collective memories regarding the systemic hatred and oppression of women. This means that part of the rhetorical process in the construction of divergent archives and the articulation of collective memory narratives by counterpublics is the need to constantly convince other publics/counterpublics of a given memory narrative's *kairos*. This kairotic connection, of course, also extends to the divergent archive connected to those particular memories, helping to further reinforce legibility and legitimacy. Failure to convince broader publics of a memory narrative's *kairos* may lead to being viewed as akairotic, that is, lacking the rhetorical element of proper and opportune timing.

An example from my case study of androcentric counterpublics: both androcentric and feminist counterpublics seek to argue that the other's discourse is akairotic. Androcentric counterpublics claim that feminism has overreached, moving past equality and ensconcing women as the sole possessors of hegemonic power, therefore rendering feminism redundant and no longer necessary. Feminist counterpublics, for their part, accuse androcentric discourse of

arguing a false narrative of female dominance, insisting that such discourse does not accurately represent the current moment. The struggle here is not solely about who presents a more ‘accurate’ view of the world or which counterpublic’s memories resonate more broadly. Rather, these counterpublics, in order to secure legibility and legitimacy for their articulation of collective memories, must also maintain a mediated relationship to *kairos* in order to rhetorically convince other publics that their memories *continue to be relevant*.

In this chapter, I consider how counterpublics that develop divergent archives and work to articulate and transmit collective memories into public memories must constantly mediate that discourse in relationship to the rhetorical element of *kairos* as part of securing legibility and legitimacy. A better understanding of the relationship between *kairos* as a rhetorical element and the need for memories to relate to *kairos* or risk irrelevance is useful for articulating how counterpublics formulate archives and convey collective memories. These processes are rhetorical all the way down: at each stage, a counterpublic’s members are attempting to rhetorically affect their discourse in a way that is legible and legitimate. Part of that process is tethering discursive arguments and agendas to the collective memory narratives that they espouse and that drive individuals to participate within those counterpublics. As part of that participation, they point to ephemera, artifacts, and other archival materials in order to buttress the collective memory narratives with which they identify. However, as archivists and archival scholars like Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook (2002) argue, collective memories and archives do not simply communicate the past; rather, they inform individuals how to perceive the present and how to engage the future through the lens of such memory. For androcentric counterpublics, this means a discourse and collective memory of the supposed assault on (White and cis/heterosexual) masculinity and maleness—what they describe as misandry—a narrative which compels them to

reject feminist claims to memory and instead to propose an alternative public discourse on gendered power. But in order to do so, androcentric counterpublics must consistently point to events and ephemera (all of which become lodged in androcentric divergent archives) and connect them to past instances in order to demonstrate both the accuracy of those memories and the kairotic nature of their discourse.

KAIROS AND ITS MANY MEANINGS

I begin with a discussion of *kairos* as a rhetorical element and concept. Legibility (how understandable a discourse is) and legitimacy (how justifiable/worthwhile a discourse is) play an important role in the rhetorical persuasiveness of the collective memories promoted by a counterpublic utilizing the materials of a divergent archive. Whether the materials, memories, or ephemera transmitted by counterpublics are legible and legitimate depends upon how timely and appropriately opportune (kairotic) those discursive elements may be; for example, an akairotic piece of ephemera may be neither understandable nor reasonable. For this reason, divergent counterpublics and their archives must consistently establish a relationship to *kairos*. As I note above, lacking *kairos* within their rhetorical discourse invites other publics to dismiss androcentric counterpublics' memories and archival materials. The attempt to convince other publics of the persuasiveness and validity of memories, then, depends upon a counterpublic's ability to tap into, or try to persuade an audience of, *kairos*. While counterpublics may often take advantage of current events to tap into *kairos*, they can also connect those moments to past memories or archival materials, presenting the discourse as particularly kairotic in its recurring importance.

Kairos, as Eric Charles White (1987) defines it, is “an ancient Greek word that means ‘the right moment’ or ‘the opportune’”; its dual meanings come from the “opening or

‘opportunity’ or, more precisely, a long tunnel-like aperture through which the archer’s arrow has to pass” and “the critical time’ when the weaver must draw the yarn through a gap that momentarily opens in the warp of the cloth being woven” (p. 13). *Kairos*, then, indicates the quality of perceiving and seizing a rhetorical opportunity but also refers to accurately measuring and applying the amount of force required to shoot through the gap. *Kairos* has also been connected to a variety of other contexts and meanings. As Phillip Sipiora (2002) acknowledges, *kairos* came to signify a number of concepts in ancient Greece, including “ ‘symmetry,’ ‘propriety,’ ‘occasion,’ ‘due measure,’ ‘fitness,’ ‘tact,’ ‘decorum,’ ‘convenience,’ ‘proportion,’ ‘fruit,’ ‘profit,’ and ‘wise moderation,’ ” among other uses (p. 1). *Kairos* was (and is) a complex concept, and as Sipiora’s expansive list of meanings for the term suggests, it operates on a number of levels related to rhetorical situations and discourse. Frank Kermode (1970) further describes *kairos*’s common juxtaposition in dualistic terms, most notably between *chronos/kairos* (time as flowing without remark vs. time that is discerned and seized), the wrong vs. the right time, and chaos vs. orderliness. For my purposes in considering the entangled relationship between *kairos* and memory, it’s important to note *kairos*’s ethical dimensions, its spatial components in the attribution of chaotic *chronos* vs. orderly *kairos*, and its original use in the *Iliad*, which denoted *kairos* as striking a lethal or critical blow (Sipiora, 2002).

These understandings of *kairos* make sense in the context of developing divergent archives and articulating collective memory narratives. If *kairos* helps establish orderliness, then an effective (divergent) archive taps into *kairos* as it attempts to bring order to chaotic, disconnected ephemera. Moreover, divergent archives and their intended process of reifying collective memories for particular counterpublics could be argued to possess a moral or decorum-related element. One purpose of divergent archives and their collective memory

narratives is to clarify and memorialize a counterpublic's discourse in relation to specific social systems, institutions, or publics/counterpublics. So, it makes sense for those counterpublics to view that discourse as morally kairotic. Otherwise, counterpublics would not have a strong case for their memories and discourse. James Kinneavy (2002) notes how both the opportune moment for a rhetorical event as well as the moral rightness of that argument are often joined in understandings of *kairos*: "the righteous anger justified in a war situation would be excessive and improper in a family dispute: the *kairos* would not be right" (emphasis original, p. 58). For the counterpublics that espouse memory narratives and build divergent archives, *kairos* functions as a righteous weapon, the arrow that strikes true to the heart of the discourse, exposing the rightness of collective memories and therefore increasing the odds of attaining legibility and legitimacy.

Among rhetorical scholarship, *kairos* has been considered to have "much in common with the situational context" (Kinneavy, 1986, p. 104). Lloyd Bitzer's (1968) model of the rhetorical situation, which he defines as a "natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance," sought to provide a framework for the deployment of rhetoric (p. 5). According to Bitzer, the rhetorical situation is composed of three necessary elements: exigence, audience, and constraints. Audiences were, simply, the audience for a particular demonstration of rhetoric, while constraints represented both the challenges and affordances that might be offered by a particular moment in a rhetorical situation. Bitzer defined exigence as "an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be" (1968, p. 6). In this way, Bitzer imagines rhetoric as a practical tool for responding to the contexts and environments that rhetors might find themselves within, with the exigence marking how and why they might rhetorically engage,

audience clarifying to whom they addressed that rhetoric, and constraints making clear the opportunities and obstacles that might mark a particular rhetorical situation (constrained genres, audience disposition, and/or material necessities, for example).

However, Bitzer's model of the rhetorical situation has been critiqued as stripping agency from rhetors and rendering them reactionary rather than as active shapers of the rhetorical situations around them, most notably by Richard E. Vatz (1973). As Vatz argues, Bitzer's characterization of rhetoric presumes a "realist" philosophy, meaning that Bitzer locates in his definition of exigence the assumption that when we look at a rhetorical situation, we all see the same thing. This notion of exigence as intrinsically apparent to all fails to account for how rhetoric itself might shape the way an exigent situation is viewed. Androcentric counterpublics's particular terministic screens make this obvious: what for other groups would simply be the routine medical procedure of circumcision, androcentric counterpublics see an exigent moment to combat what they view as male genital mutilation. Thus, we have to recognize how rhetoric and rhetors themselves shape the exigence of rhetorical situations just as much as uncontrollable elements of environment or atmosphere. Vatz potentially goes a bit too far in the other direction, however, essentially failing to acknowledge the context of situations outside of rhetors' rhetorical response (Sheridan, Michel, & Ridolfo, 2009). As my example regarding circumcision suggests, there are certainly contexts beyond any individual rhetor or group of rhetors' control—here, the long-practiced procedure of circumcision for religious, cultural, and medical reasons—but how we talk and think about circumcision, as exigence, depends as well on how rhetors construct it as either a cruel stripping of male autonomy or a preventative medical procedure.

The concept of the rhetorical situation is important in relationship to *kairos* because it speaks to the conditions that can make rhetoric kairotic or akairotic. The notion of whether

kairos can be constructed socially by rhetors and audiences, or whether it is simply something that can be perceived and seized, is debated within rhetorical scholarship. Generally, everyone agrees that *kairos* requires understanding, at least implicitly, the exigence, audience, and constraints at hand so as to craft the most persuasive message. But some scholars have argued that considering *kairos* through the vein of the rhetorical situation can make clear the connections between *kairos* and discourse as kairotic event. Carolyn Miller (1992) notes these associations, explaining that “as the principle of timing or opportunity in rhetoric, *kairos* calls attention to the nature of discourse as event rather than object,” articulating that “[*k*]airos as opening...is actively constructed by writers and readers,” (pp. 310-313) a view also supported by Yates and Orlikowski (2002). Miller’s claim here is that if *kairos* represents the moment of time that is unique or opportune—and thus removed from *chronos* or clock time—then it is more useful to think about discourse as an event, something that is actively constructed and mediated rather than as a static object.

Relative to my argument, Miller & Yates and Orlikowski’s description of *kairos* as actively constructed and discourse as event means that when a counterpublic’s discourse is animated by collective memories, those memories are both part of an attempt to construct or suggest *kairos*, as well as a rhetorical event that itself affects whether an audience perceives discourse as kairotic. Thus, androcentric counterpublics are always attempting to work from within a kairotic moment—for example, their backlash against the concept of rape culture as feminists staged ‘Take Back the Night’ events—even as they try to shape the *kairos* of their discourse, which falsely claims that rape culture doesn’t and has never existed (Frost, 2014, “The truth about”; McCain, 2015). The deployment and expression of memory is mediated here by

kairos, but the rhetorical nature of memory narratives means they may also function to help construct and tap into kairotic moments.

Counterpublics that form divergent archives also necessarily reflect notions of discourse as event-based and actively constructed, because ephemera and memory are key elements of the materials that constitute such an archive. As new rhetorical events and incidents occur, a divergent counterpublic is faced with how to interpolate potentially differing and contrasting events into a broader divergent archive, and discourse of collective memories. This marks the discourse not as stable object—added to or subtracted from—but as continually in flux, being reshaped as members of the counterpublic claim new ephemera as relevant to that archive. Part of that claiming process, however, involves making clear the kairotic nature of both the newest archival materials, as well as the continuing *kairos* of the overall collective memories and divergent archive. For example, androcentric counterpublics’ reaction to the *Mad Max: Fury Road* trailer represents a rhetorical articulation of a collective memory narrative—the displacement of ‘manly’ men even from their own film franchises thanks to the feminization of Hollywood—in relation to the discursive event of the trailer’s release.

By calling for a boycott of the popular upcoming film, Clarey and *ROK* sought to capitalize on the kairotic nature of the film’s impending release as well as their own counterpublic’s outrage at the most current instance of what they perceived as misandry. Their attempt to tap into *kairos* came not just from the incident of the film, however, but had to be finessed by members of the counterpublic themselves, not only reacting to the film itself and talk around it, but framing that discourse through collective memory and archival ephemera that consolidated it alongside a supposedly long line of examples of a feminist Hollywood excising men from the preferred demographics of action films. That thread of discourse, which can be

traced back to Fred Hayward's (1989) claims of 'male bashing' as a practice routinely engaged by ads and television programs, marks the discourse as ongoing and, in androcentric counterpublics' eyes, kairotic.

Moreover, counterpublics' use of new and popular media as a rhetorical battleground (and source of archival material) require a mediated relationship to *kairos* in order to be effective. David Sheridan, Tony Michel, and Jim Ridolfo claim in "*Kairos and New Media*" (2009) that rhetorical events deployed by activist rhetors require "kairotic decisions" related both to the media but also the circulation and distribution of those rhetorical events (n.p.). Since a number of counterpublics engage in activism and transmit their discourse(s) through media, these concerns regarding kairotic decisions in media and circulation also apply to the construction of divergent archives and the collective memories articulated through them. Sheridan, Michel, and Ridolfo (2012) expand upon their claims regarding the necessity of kairotic decisions in *The Available Means of Persuasion*, acknowledging the role that publics/counterpublics play in the rhetorical impact of such media. Sheridan et al. utilize a "kairotic approach to public rhetoric...an approach that seeks to discover in each situation what kind of rhetorical action is appropriate. In our deployment, *kairos* refers to a struggle between rhetors and their contexts" (p. 21). I find this articulation of *kairos*—the struggle between rhetors and context with rhetorical texts at stake—useful in considering how *kairos* affects the divergent archive in its buttressing of memory.

More recently, rhetoric scholars have asserted that the kairotic nature of a piece of media may also rely upon factors related to a text's transmission. In the case of rhetorical texts that are digital or Internet-based, circulation comes to be a powerful indicator of a rhetorical text or event/discourse's *kairos* (Gries, 2015; Lotier, 2018). Dustin Edwards (2017) articulates the

concept of “tactical rhetorics” to describe a “*metic* mode of invention and intervention, a generative framework for traversing and remixing circulatory encounters” (n.p.). *Mêtis* refers to “wily, cunning, or adaptive intelligence” and is “frequently described as being embodied in transient circumstances of conflict or struggle” (Edwards, 2017, n.p.). Edwards’ concept of tactical rhetorics, which employ *mêtis* as an element of *kairos*, help make clear how circulation itself can provide a foundation for invention, using the example of the “Feminists Read Mean Tweets” videos, which drew from Jimmy Kimmel’s “Celebrities Read Mean Tweets.” Edwards describes how the “Feminists Read Mean Tweets” videos employ tactical rhetoric strategies in order to redirect the message and purpose of “Mean Tweets” videos while drawing upon their circulatory networks and kairotic popularity.

Tactical rhetorics prove a useful lens for understanding how certain rhetors make use of other texts’ circulation in order to invent rhetorical events or discourse. Such rhetorical events/discourse must necessarily make use of *kairos* as part of a tactical rhetoric, as drawing from (or establishing) currently kairotic circulation is one method for ensuring a rhetorical text’s viability. I draw upon Edward’s notion of tactical rhetorics to help explain how counterpublics might draw from other publics’ rhetoric and/or discourse in circulation, and how that represents an attempt to portray divergent archives and certain collective memories as kairotic. As I discuss below, this is apparent in androcentric counterpublics’ use of feminist rhetorical strategies—turned against feminist ends, of course—borne out of feminist counterpublic rhetorics’ circulation among mainstream publics.

Though far from exhaustive, this brief history of *kairos* describes some of the many (and sometimes muddled) dimensions that *kairos* takes on, particularly when applied to the formation of divergent archives and articulation of collective memory narratives. Most importantly,

rhetorical scholarship views *kairos* as a crucial element of rhetoric, one that can be the difference between a highly persuasive, effective, and well-circulated message, discourse, or text, and one that passes unnoticed. But what exactly constitutes *kairos* and how one ‘taps into it’—or whether one can even purposefully tap into *kairos*—are questions that rely upon particular rhetorical situations and contexts. For the purposes of this project and chapter, I take *kairos* to be an essential element that must be considered for counterpublics’ collective memory narratives and discourse to achieve legibility and legitimacy. Seizing the ‘timely’ or ‘opportune’ moment and being able to rhetorically capitalize on possessing a kairotic narrative or discourse is crucial to convincing members of broader publics and counterpublics of the worth of a divergent archive and the collective memory narratives it reifies. This is true even if tapping into a kairotic moment may be only partially within a rhetor’s control.

Additionally, the connotations of *kairos* that relate to ethical or moral timeliness are relevant in relation to such counterpublics. For counterpublics that build divergent archives and articulate collective memory narratives through those archives, the timeliness and ethics of these discourses are practically one and the same. Recall how, as I discussed in Chapter 2, androcentric counterpublics continually protest circumcision amid declining rates of the procedure because to their minds, it does not matter how few male children are ‘mutilated’; they claim they will vehemently protest the procedure for as long as *any* boys are allowed to be circumcised. In the following section, I describe how classical and contemporary rhetoric scholarship has treated memory and consider the rhetorical conceptualization of memory against the broader notion of collective memory. In doing so, I elucidate how articulations of collective memory in the form of a narrative are rhetorical endeavors, and how *kairos* factors into the construction, consolidation, and transmission of memory.

MEMORY AND *KAIROS*

Memory has a complex history within the field of rhetoric. Originally one of the rhetorical canons, memory served as a talented rhetor's ability to recall and draw upon a massive amount of information in the order in which they desired to communicate it, a technique made legendary in a tale about Simonides of Ceos (Vivian, 2010). The legend suggests that while attending a dinner party of a wealthy nobleman, Simonides was drawn outside, at which point the roof of the banquet hall collapsed, killing those inside. Only Simonides was able to identify which body belonged to whom, a feat he accomplished by remembering which guest was in which room as he wandered the wreckage. Cicero (2001) explains that this experience taught Simonides "what most brings light to our memory. And he concluded that those who would like to employ this part of their abilities should choose localities, then form mental images of the things they wanted to store in their memory, and place these in the localities" (2.354) Frances Yates (2001) has documented how, from that point onward, mnemonics played a major role in the art of rhetoric, only being left behind in "comparatively modern times" (p. 2).

Rhetoric and writing studies scholarship—among a number of other fields, including literature, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and anthropology—has long been invested in and interrogated the nature of memory within rhetoric, both as canon/*techne* and as a function of public discourse. However, rhetoric/writing studies has produced less research engaging *how*, procedurally, memories come to be consolidated within a social group in the first place. For a useful framework in understanding how memories move from being ephemera to becoming part of a more stable, discursive viewpoint or belief system, I turn to the interdisciplinary work of Thomas J. Anastasio, Kristen Ann Ehrenberger, Patrick Watson, and Wenyi Zhang in *Individual and Collective Memory Consolidation: Analogous Processes on Different Levels* (2012). As a

group, these four scholars comprise expertise in neuroscience, history, psychology, and anthropology. As an interdisciplinary group, their goal is to find models and theories about the consolidation (acquisition and retention) of memories for both individuals and collectives. Such work is meant to resonate both within more scientific understandings of memory, as well as humanist perceptions. The results of their research produces a theoretical model amenable to both social sciences (psychology in particular) and the humanities for understanding how individual and collective memory is consolidated. They assert that while the ‘entities’ involved may differ, the processes of memory consolidation for individuals and collective groups are largely analogous. Anastasio et al.’s “three-in-one” model expresses a relationship between labile memory (short-term), stable memory (long-term), and the recursive process that marks associations between items in the consolidation of memory (pp. 71-72).

In essence, the three-in-one model theorizes memory consolidation as a relational and recursive process distributed across four elements: the “buffer” (labile or short-term memory storage), the “relater” (which handles the association of items), the “generalizer” (which serves as stable/long-term memory storage), and the “entity,” which constitutes the entire being through which the consolidation of memory occurs, whether that’s an individual or a collective such as a family, state, or public/counterpublic (p. 72). Anastasio et al. also acknowledge the need to recognize non-mnemonic (not related to the act of remembering) factors that are always external to the entity, including competing memories across individuals or collectives. However, within the three-in-one model, such external factors are viewed as taking place within the entity. To use my case study as an example, though feminist and androcentric counterpublics may noticeably affect the other’s consolidation of memory—say, in feminist assertions of the existence of ‘rape culture’ and androcentric rejections of that concept—that consolidation takes place within either

the discrete entities of feminist and androcentric publics, *and/or* within larger entities, such as “Anglocentric American publics.” Within their respective discrete entities, androcentric counterpublics might take ephemera/rhetorical materials from feminist counterpublics and *internally* relate it to misandry (a long-term, stable memory structure for androcentrics) and thus reject it, though a larger/more capacious entity might not consolidate such memories through a relationality to anti-male sexism/misandry.

The consolidation of memory itself, according to the three-in-one model, happens like this: Individuals or collectives encounter new memory material through an individual’s working or short-term memory, or through a group’s “ephemera (media, journals), data, archives, artifacts” which is placed in short-term storage in the “buffer” portion of the model (Anastasio et al., pp. 71-73). After being placed in the buffer, the “relater” which represents the “hippocampus or relationality” for an individual and “debate, agreement, dialog, [and/or] ‘contest and negotiation’” for the collective, draws associations between the memory materials in the buffer and those in the generalizer (p. 72). The generalizer element can be composed of a number of concepts/memory materials, but some examples Anastasio et al. note for the individual are “classification, schema, narrative” and “books, viewpoints, museums, belief systems, and paradigms” for the collective (pp. 72-73). Once these associations are made and strengthened, a memory is consolidated and made part of the generalizer, which is more stable and long-term than the buffer. Anastasio et al. also emphasize that this entire process is thoroughly recursive; this means that at all points, any of the elements may serve to bolster the others, as short-term associations in the buffer may better illuminate long-held memories in the generalizer element, and the process of the relater can at any time strengthen memories in either the buffer or generalizer.

Anastasio et al. use Thomas Kuhn's model of the scientific paradigm to explain how the three-in-one model functions for a collective analogously to its operation for individuals. Their elaboration is worth quoting at length:

More specifically, data and reports on them constitute the labile [short-term/buffer] memory of a scientific community, whereas textbooks (and related materials such as course curricula) constitute stable memory (knowledge) structures [long-term/generalizer]. The scientific community itself constitutes the relationality element, as individuals compete with each other, through written communications and at conferences, to find the most elegant and powerful explanation for the facts at hand. The tendency is to find explanations that are consistent with the reigning paradigm, but that is not always possible...[t]hat the direction of research may be driven in part by more prosaic concerns, such as the availability of research funding, can be chalked up to the influence of the consolidating entity. (p. 75)

We can use the three-in-one model to consider how memories come to be consolidated within counterpublics, including androcentric ones. Ephemera and experiences become documented and shared among the counterpublic/collective, usually through articles, news reports, blog posts, or forum communication. The counterpublic then discusses and compares this material in the buffer to memorial material located within the generalizer (archives, discourse, ideologies, etc.). Through the relational (relater) process of dialogue, those ephemera are either affirmed and spread or rejected, and then placed within the generalizer or denied space within those longer-term archives/storage.

This process is thoroughly recursive; material in the buffer may cast new light on material in the generalizer or force out material as necessary during memory consolidation. For

counterpublics, the discernable hallmarks, positions, and broader memories that mark their discourses may change in relation to new material within the buffer. Most importantly, for collectives, this process is rhetorical because it must be socially mediated; no single counterpublic member, for example, can force others to accept changes in the memories related through the counterpublic's discourse. Consolidation is crucial in the process of legitimacy and legibility; as memories are consolidated within a collective, it enables that collective to rhetoricize their discourse (including memories) and share it among wider collectives (i.e., from counterpublics to mainstream publics). The counterpublic's arguments and discourse themselves constitute part of the recursive process of the relater, where they attempt to draw associations between shorter and longer-term/stable memories.

To clarify, I'll now walk through the three-in-one model of memory consolidation using an example from androcentric counterpublics, though the model should hold up for any collective. When androcentric counterpublics articulate collective memory narratives that university spaces are no longer welcoming or safe for men (which of course draw from memories of a different form of university space that *was welcoming to men*), particularly male students, they draw from ephemera and enter the 'buffer' stage, where incidents and experiences had or discussed recently are held. Such incidents might include, for example, supposedly "anti-male" statements by faculty in Gender and Women's Studies programs and the resulting Title IX complaints (a process which, as I detail later, the National Coalition for Men has engaged), or advocacy for male-free spaces (Parke, 2018; Piner, 2016). In this first stage, androcentric counterpublics are signaling a kairotic event, text, or piece of ephemera that may align with their memorial discourse.

Next, after signalling or marking out that event as a topic for discourse in the counterpublic and placing it in the ‘buffer’, members of the counterpublic must do the work of the ‘relater’ in drawing and building associations. This results in a number of simultaneous rhetorical moves; in order to provide the most effective argument possible, they must connect this incident, event, or ephemera to the causes and arguments they espouse in their discourse (i.e., that this is a topic apropos to the counterpublic, otherwise confusion and disagreement fractures the counterpublic discourse on the incident). They must also find ways to convince publics and counterpublics that this is not an isolated incident—in this case, that the professor is not a maverick within the department, institution, or field—a process which might involve recursively drawing upon a variety of ‘generalizer’ or long-term stable memory structures (divergent archives, among others). This enables androcentric counterpublics to argue that the material in the buffer is connected to other instances of ‘misandry’ they have memorialized or pointed out in the past. How far back they might go to achieve this rhetorical end depends on the nature of the incident, the members involved in the discourse, and its relationship to ephemera and materials within the divergent archive. Sometimes, archival material/ephemera may be used to make the case that the new incident is worthy of attention and to implicitly draw a connection (“this is just like X in 199X”). However, the rhetorical identity of counterpublic members and the legibility of their collective memory narrative depend upon being able to draw these connections within the archive through the relater. Without those connections, their articulation of collective memory and discourse about an incident may fail to be kairotic; after all, if this is just a one-off concern that can’t be connected to stable memories, is it worthy of a great deal of attention?

Once a counterpublic has done the buffering work of identifying an incident worthy of memorializing and the rhetorical relating work of connecting the ephemera/event to patterns, trends, or other incidents/events/ephemera within the divergent archive, they have to secure—at least within sections of their own counterpublic—agreement that the incident conveys what they claim it does, and that it fits with their memories. This functions as an additional element within the counterpublics relation/association of items and is important to the consolidation of the memory. If it doesn't fit, then either the memory of the incident is rejected from consolidation—at least for the moment—from the divergent archive and broader collective memory or the counterpublic's discourse and collective memories may themselves rhetorically morph to encompass the new material. As Anastasio et al. describe through Kuhn's concept of the scientific paradigm, when relaters fail to produce satisfactory associations between the memory material in labile/short-term storage and stable/long-term storage, it results in the consolidation of a new framework, or what Kuhn labeled a "paradigm shift" (Anastasio et al., 2012, p. 76).

Among androcentric counterpublics, an example of this relational shifting is the subject of 'false rape' as connected to the Brock Turner sexual assault case at Stanford; a number of androcentric materials make clear that they are not in favor of sexual assault, but that a claim of 'rape culture' is overreaching and blurs the line between a sexual assault and a night a woman may just later regret (to androcentric counterpublics, it is always women who make false rape claims) (Elam, 2013, "I'll decide if,"; Frost, 2014, "The truth about"; McCain, 2015).

Androcentric counterpublics generally describe rape in reductive, problematic ways, as something that happens to women in darkened alleys with complete strangers. This mythic representation of the statistical realities of rape occurs because recognizing the commonality with which sexual assault survivors are familiar with, and even close to, their attackers would

complicate androcentric memorial discourse. Namely, acknowledging the realities around sexual assault runs counter to androcentric efforts to convince people that fathers and other male family members or acquaintances are not any more prone to violence or sexual assault than female ones. And yet—in a case that exemplified how rape is discussed and condemned among androcentric counterpublics—a number of androcentric articles alleged that Turner was innocent or being set up, despite being caught in the act of sexually assaulting an unconscious woman behind a dumpster (Løvenskiolds, 2016)²³.

Rather than acknowledge Turner’s crime and denounce him as an example of a ‘true’ rapist, androcentric forums like *A Voice for Men* instead questioned the viability of the evidence and the survivor’s own statement, showing that there is not a case for which androcentric counterpublic members won’t defend men accused of sexual assault. This shift occurred through the relationality/relater element of the three-in-one model, as members of the collective (counterpublic) drew associations not between old androcentric depictions of rape, but to associations regarding the androcentric belief that many (maybe even most) sexual assault accusations are fabricated to some degree. Quite frankly, this relational shift suggests that rather than adhering to supposed long-term androcentric memories of what counts as ‘legitimate’ sexual assault, androcentric counterpublic memories imply that any rape claim by a woman is probably false, an appalling recalling of collective memory.

²³ In a deeply troubling letter, Brock Turner’s father suggested that punishing Turner and potentially ruining his life and adulthood because of “20 minutes of action” would be a disproportionate reaction by the courts (Miller, 2016). I cannot begin to explain how flawed this rhetorical move is, but what is important to recognize here is that the defendant’s father suggested that even if Turner had committed sexual assault, the punishment was too harsh. Their focus was on making sure that potential guilt—despite Turner’s insistence he was not guilty—did not prevent Turner from being successful in the future. With sexual assault cases like Turner’s, it is little wonder that sexual assault is thoroughly underreported across the spectrum of genders and sexualities, and that most survivors are skeptical any sort of justice will be administered (RAINN, 2018).

Finally, once the rhetorical discursive material has undergone the relational associations that mark it in the discourse as an accepted memory, it becomes memorialized for the divergent archive in stable/long-term memory through the generalizer element of the model. In the case of the examples above, such memorialization frequently takes the form of articles on websites or acts of protest that are memorialized, recirculated, and archived. The move to bring Title IX cases against universities by NCFM (National Coalition for Men) and the journalism and legal, institutional documentation generated by those events serve as potential material for a divergent archive. The divergent archive, then, functions as part of the generalizer/stable memory element of memory consolidation. Once consolidated, those memories become long-term parts of the counterpublic memory narratives, mediating future relationality. To summarize, as ephemera move from the buffer to the generalizer through the mediation of the relater/relationality, the entity (in this case, androcentric counterpublics) consolidates those memories. Once consolidated, those memories become part of the recursive process the three-in-one model represents. Having been consolidated within the counterpublic/collective, the memory consolidation can take place within a larger-scale entity, for example, on a statewide or national collective scale.

As counterpublics work toward relationality that shifts the memories consolidated in broader, mainstream publics closer to the memories of those counterpublics, the process of relationality functions to either generate or inhibit legibility and legitimacy. This means that the successful consolidation of memories between counterpublics and mainstream publics are tied up in the legibility and legitimacy of those memories, archival materials, and discourse. The recursiveness of the three-in-one model also means that as the consolidation of memories is strengthened, it also strengthens the memories, divergent archives, and discourse of a given

counterpublic. The more a mainstream public seems to ‘buy in’ to counterpublic memories through the relationality involved, the more of those memories that will become stored in the generalizer/stable memory. In addition to these factors, the rhetoricity of relationality also means that *kairos* necessarily plays a role in the consolidation of memories between counterpublics and more mainstream publics. As the relater element of the three-in-one model unfolds, the discourse, dialogue, ephemera, and memories that affect relationality are also guided and affected by their kairotic potential. We can understand this better through the example regarding androcentric counterpublics noted above; in an effort to convince institutions and publics of the discrimination against men and misogyny inherent to certain public spaces—liberal universities, in particular—androcentric counterpublics draw upon ephemera that they claim indicates the hostility and ‘danger’ men face within university spaces. Those ephemera must continually be generated through new incidents/events (in the buffer) but must also be related to older events/incidents of misogyny (in the generalizer).

In order to affect the stable, long-term memories in the generalizer of mainstream publics, which arguably view men as equally welcome or safe, if not more safe than women, androcentric counterpublics must engage in a process of relationality that is both understandable (legible), reasonable/viable (legitimate), and kairotic (opportune/appropriately measured). One method through which androcentric counterpublics have attempted to do so is by means of Title IX investigations. Androcentric counterpublics have seized on the legibility and legitimacy of Title IX as an institutional structure—albeit one not intended for the purposes to which androcentric counterpublics have put it—and the rhetorical, kairotic weight with which Title IX complaints have been imbued through social activism like the #MeToo cultural movement. In doing so, androcentric counterpublics increase the likelihood that memories of misogyny and

hostility towards men in university spaces that androcentrics have portrayed as liberal/progressive may be consolidated into the ‘entity’ of the mainstream American public.

Kairos, then, functions within the three-in-one model in a number of ways, but most obviously through the ‘relater’ element, through which a collective argues for, or against, memory consolidation. The ‘timeless’ quality of *kairos*, that which marks it outside of *chronos*, applies here as well, since the process of memory consolidation is represented by a discernment of what is already in a collective’s memory, and what should be associated or retained within that generalizer element. *Kairos* may also play a role in what ephemera is even considered for relationality, as well as whether paradigm shifts via the generalizer make sense. Because memories and memory narratives are always constructed in the present moment to serve current ends, relationality as a process seeks to associate memories in the most kairotic fashion possible. Collective memory scholarship has also described how *kairos* can function within the shuttling of material between the generalizer and the buffer. Jan Assman and John Czaplicka (1995) break down collective memory into two primary forms: “communicative memory,” or the memory that travels through living communication (essentially oral histories), and “cultural memory,” which exist through cultural artifacts, archives, and tropes that continue on outside of particular individuals within a collective (pp. 125-129). For the purposes of my research, both elements of collective memory are important for the way that counterpublic members individually and rhetorically shape discourse, as well as for how the memories within that discourse come both before and extend after them.

Aleida Assman (2010) describes the need for collective memory narratives to continually make sense as they are recalled in the present moment as the relationship between the “canon”—material currently relevant to cultural discourses and collective memory narratives—and the

“archive”—material collected but not currently relevant to the kairotic moment (p. 99). While Assman’s concepts are less articulated in their exact relationship to one another than Anastasio et al.’s elements within the three-in-one model, both express the recursive and consistent need for memories’ relationality between more immediate ephemera and longer-term, stable collections of memory. Across both theories, *kairos* works to relate the buffer to the generalizer, and the canon to the archive, suggesting what is most timely or opportune to remember—and associate with those memories—in the current moment.

Similarly, James Wertsch’s (2008) concepts of deep collective memories and schematic narrative templates point to both the importance of *kairos* within the rhetorical construction and transmission of memory, and the process of memory consolidation as described by Anastasio et al. Wertsch argues that deep collective memories are drawn from a series of “schematic narrative templates” through which collectives frame a number of events as they consolidate them as memories. For example, according to Wertsch, the Russian narrative template of “Expulsion of Foreign Enemies” provided a way to understand the linking of collective memory narratives from the invasion of Russia both within World War II and the removal of the Bronze Soldier in Estonia as part of the same deep collective memory (p. 142). Deep collective memory, within the three-in-one model, functions as material buried within the generalizer, memories which provide a broad schematic narrative template for relation as new memories are experienced and related to older ones. Thus, in an entity with a schematic narrative template, relationality often hinges upon the ability to relate labile, newer memories to stable, deep collective memories, as in the Bronze Soldier case.

The combination of deep collective memories with the relationality of consolidating memories means that collectives will, as Anastasio et al. describe with scientific communities,

fall back upon common methods of associating labile (short-term) memories with stable (long-term) ones for as long as those tactics of relationality continue to draw associations that make sense to the remembering entity (for my interests, a collective). If the memories that make sense to a collective are often related to through deep, schematic narrative templates, then this means that the *kairos* of rhetorical memory constructions are not necessarily related to a memory's novelty or uniqueness; in fact, it often suggests the opposite. Unique, novel memories are more likely to be discarded than consolidated, because they are much more difficult to deal with in terms of relating/associating to the patterns of stable memories (when those unique memories challenge stable memories, they're likely to force a 'paradigm shift' in the consolidation process). Thus, when it comes to the consolidation, articulation, and transmission of memories, *kairos* often functions through a quality of cyclical timelessness rather than a specific, seized moment. While it may seem disingenuous, this sort of constantly asserted cycle is obvious within a number of collectives' memories, including androcentric counterpublics.

In their endless quest to persuade mainstream publics of the existence and preponderance of misandry, androcentric counterpublics fall back upon schematic narrative templates in order to relate new memories—for example, the Brock Turner sexual assault case—to older, stable memories: a number of false rape claims, in addition to the general memory of rape as a weapon wielded by—in their estimation—vengeful women seeking “fame and money” (Løvenskiolds, 2016). But a couple of years later, the same schematic narrative template has been used to consolidate the controversy surrounding Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States (and was preceded by similar controversies around Bill Cosby). And, if we wanted to go back further, both Kavanaugh and Turner's cases recursively hit upon Clarence Thomas's hearings regarding Anita Hill's accusations of sexual harassment for his nomination to

the Supreme Court in 1991. This schematic narrative template—that women will wield false accusations of sexual assault or harassment as a tool for revenge, fame, and money—has become the primary method of relating such memories for androcentric counterpublic entities²⁴.

This potential timeless cyclicity—through relational processes that are reused across long periods of time—is what so entangles *kairos* with memory. Though a memory develops or recedes across time (*chronos*), schematic narrative templates provide a rhetorical situation or atmosphere that renders such concerns consistently kairotic through their cyclical nature. If androcentric counterpublics possess a deep collective memory of false rape claims supposedly for a woman's gain, then incidents linked to that narrative template are *always* kairotic because those memory narratives invoke a cyclical and deeply-held response to those incidents, events, or ephemera. As Wertsch describes in the incident with the removal of the Bronze Soldier from its initial site in Estonia, the incident became kairotic not necessarily because there were a large number of ethnic Russians in the city, but because it tapped into a collective memory narrative that exists as a kairotic moment no matter when in *chronos* it happens; incidents that become rhetorically linked to the deep collective memories of the expulsion of foreign invaders must always be paid attention to, and therefore, are perpetually kairotic (at least until the schematic narrative template shifts or is replaced). Similarly, incidents regarding the public accusation of assault or harassment against men are generally met with skepticism and condemnation by androcentric counterpublics, regardless of whether that's in 1991 or 2018. Because the same

²⁴ It should be noted that this schematic narrative template often reaches far beyond androcentric counterpublics, though it certainly has the most traction and widest application there. The notion that women will falsely accuse men of sexual assault for their own gain may be much more deeply seated among Western, anglophone culture than has been commonly expressed, though it would be hard to know for certain. For the most part, this schematic narrative template is used to relate (or more accurately, reject) memories of famous, beloved celebrities abusing or assaulting women (and occasionally men). The notion that women stand to gain anything from such accusations is absurd and inaccurate in an overwhelmingly large number of these incidents; women who make public accusations of violence are often viciously harassed and coerced into recounting by public pressure, generally from angry groups of men.

deep collective memories and schematic narrative templates drive consolidation, the rhetorical articulation of such memories are markedly similar.

However, it is the rhetorical and affective work of relationality in consolidating a memory through the lens of a schematic narrative template that may be difficult or unsuccessful. If publics and/or counterpublics are unconvinced that a rhetorical event reflects deep collective memories—if a rhetorical event does not ‘trigger’ a reaction out of deep collective memory schematic narrative templates, so to speak—then it is not aligned with the deep collective memory and rhetorically fails to be kairotic. In the case of Brock Turner, for example, androcentric counterpublics failed to relationally associate Turner to other seemingly falsely accused (according to them) rapists, and mainstream publics appeared to reject a narrative wherein Turner is a victim to sinister feminist plots (Miller, 2016; Victor, 2018). Turner’s case indicates how legibility and legitimacy as rhetorical discourse may be granted through the counterpublic but fail and/or be considered akairotic when introduced into mainstream publics. It is worth noting, however, that a lack of legibility and/or legitimacy can be altered through the recursiveness of memory consolidation in the future.

As counterpublics work to consolidate memories as part of the larger ‘entity’ of more mainstream publics (like the public of the U.S.), they must also contend with how appearing kairotic or akairotic can affect the relationality of specific memories into the body of more stable memories (the generalizer). This contestation to ‘win’ the broadest acceptance for a particular consolidation of collective memory often appears in the form of accusations of akairoticness. In constructing memorial discourse in relation to opposing publics/counterpublics, a common tactic is to accuse the opposition of lacking *kairos*. Androcentric counterpublics, for example, viewing feminism and feminist counterpublics as their antagonists, consistently describe a collective

memory narrative that seeks to negate the kairotic elements of feminist discourse and memory. The androcentric argument claims that while feminism was important in the past, its excesses and overreaches have now tipped the scales the other way, making women hegemonic and society gynocentric, and placing men in a position of alterity. By describing feminism as once useful but now a destructive force, androcentric counterpublics cast feminist collective memory narratives regarding patriarchy and the hegemonic position of (White) men as akairotic, not part of the kairotic moment. When and where either androcentrics or feminists might succeed in convincing collectives of their memorial discourse would constitute a ‘paradigm shift’ regarding the more stable collective memories within an entity’s generalizer.²⁵

In this section, I’ve drawn from Anastasio et al.’s ‘three-in-one’ model to help explain how collectives acquire and consolidate memories into longer-term, more stable narratives, aided by schematic narrative templates. I’ve also shown that *kairos*, as a rhetorical element, serves a key function within the relationality of memory consolidation, as collectives seek to interpolate and associate more labile memories with stable ones. Now that I’ve articulated the entanglements between the rhetorical construction of memory and the role that *kairos* plays in that articulation and transmission, I turn to an extended case study of the function of *kairos* within the consolidation of memory: androcentric counterpublics’ crusade against—and uneasy utilization of—Title IX institutions on university campuses they deem ‘too progressive’ and/or ‘feminist.’

²⁵ I should note that it’s difficult to discern, and too large in scope to assess, how a nationally sized public might consolidate particular events and memories. Even were such an endeavor possible, it may not be *useful*; the consolidation of memories for individuals happens across a variety of counterpublics (and collectives), and given the potentially deep political and identity-based divides present in collectives of a national or even state-wide scale, it’s unlikely that *all* members of a public/collective that large thoroughly consolidate any one particular memory. More likely, individuals will draw upon the memory narratives of smaller collectives to which they belong, and then project those outward on a larger scale.

CASE STUDY: TITLE IX AND ‘MISANDRY’

The relationship of *kairos* to androcentric counterpublic discourse, memories, and divergent archives is observable on multiple levels, particularly in their assertions regarding how welcome, safe, and/or hostile particular public spaces are. For example, androcentric counterpublics produce a memorial discourse, drawn from divergent archival material, that identifies an expansion of feminist politics with a shrinking of ‘male’ (and by extension, androcentric) space. Though the politics of whom to allow in what space has long been gendered across a variety of arenas and spheres—nearly everything from recreation to athletics to private industry has faced gradual shifts toward opening traditionally male spaces to women (and vice versa, in some cases)—these developments have not occurred without some amount of backlash (Faludi, 2006; Kimmel, 2013). In the case of androcentric counterpublics, some of the discourse around memorialization of space is a narrative of opening up traditionally male spaces at the same time women ban men from entering specific spaces. Frederic Hayward’s well-publicized crusade against ‘Ladies Night’ in 1980s Massachusetts, for example, argued that privileging women by not charging them covers at bars on specific nights amounted to anti-male sexism (Fripp, 1980). Similarly, a number of androcentric counterpublic members have expressed frustrations through ephemera recounting memories of not having ‘battered men’s shelters,’ in the same way that certain tax-funded resources provided for shelters in which domestically abused or assaulted women and their children could find safety (Men’s Rights, Inc., 1989, “Men’s Rights IQ Test; Men’s Rights, Inc., n.d., “Falsehoods about Men and Violence”). These ephemera amount to a memory narrative in which tax dollars paid for shelters that abused or assaulted men were turned away from, a story that fits well within the androcentric schematic

narrative that feminism produces benefits for women that are rendered inaccessible—to androcentrist minds, purposely so—for men.

In order to elaborate on the entanglements between androcentric transmissions of memory and how it functions in relationship to the divergent archive, in this section I utilize materials from the androcentric divergent archive and rhetorical events/discourse promoted by androcentric counterpublics to make clear the effort by divergent counterpublics to tap into kairotic discourse and to frame their collective memories as kairotic. I do so by examining the androcentric collective memories regarding the perceived shrinking of, hostility, and unwelcomeness toward boys and men within certain spaces: namely, universities/colleges' recent overall decline in enrollment, retention, and graduation of male students, a phenomenon which androcentric counterpublics blame on feminist and liberal efforts aimed at democratizing the traditional gender imbalances in higher education (especially the presence and expansion of Gender and Women's Studies programs). The presentation of such discourse, driven by the consolidation of androcentric memory around the shrinking of space for boys and men, represents a kairotic transmission of memory, one that seeks to combat perceived loss of space by arguing it is feminism's fault. The *kairos* of such discourse—at least for androcentric counterpublics—is assured by the schematic narrative templates that relates their view of White, cissexual, and heterosexual mens' shrinking spaces on university/college campuses. However, androcentric responses to these phenomena have also sought to tap into another form of *kairos* in the tactical rhetorics they deploy. Androcentric counterpublics, and men's rights groups in particular, engage in a tactical rhetoric drawn from a rhetorical, circulatory practice of feminist counterpublics: the use of Title IX complaints to argue for the presence of gender-based

discrimination. In this case, androcentric counterpublics wield Title IX as a tactical rhetoric to identify what they believe is misandry in universities.

The deployment of Title IX functions as a strategy to combat what androcentric counterpublics argue are programs and policies that are sexist towards men, like openly feminist and progressive faculty, gender and women's studies departments, and/or safe spaces that exclude men. They function primarily through a kind of rhetorical and kairotic co-opting of feminist language and concepts. Such tactics work not only to manipulate policies and institutions in unintended ways, but also to draw the concept of misandry into conversations regarding Title IX's attempts to fight gender-based discrimination, making collective memories of misandry potentially kairotic, legible, and legitimate. The National Coalition for Men (NCFM), a men's rights organization founded in the late 1970s and that is "committed to ending harmful discrimination and stereotypes against boys, men, their families and the women who love them" has recently begun to use Title IX complaints as a means to counter what they believe are atmospheres of radical feminism that make university campuses inhospitable for boys and men ("NCFM Home Page," 2018; NCFM, "NCFM Files DOE," 2018). Such Title IX complaints function as savvy moments of tactical rhetoric, drawing from the arguments and rhetoric circulated among feminist counterpublics and mainstream publics regarding sexual assault of women on campuses, and inverting those rhetorical moves in the defense of men and the notion of misandry towards boys and men across education broadly, but particularly within higher education.

The memory narratives of excluding men from spaces or rendering spaces hostile to boys and men find a foothold in the androcentric furor over declining numbers of boys and men enrolling in American universities and colleges, as well as male attrition rates, which are

demonstrably lower than attrition among girls/women; female students now account for about 56% of all students enrolled at colleges or universities, and graduate at higher rates: about 63% compared to male students' 57% (Marcus, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). There are caveats to these numbers and a good deal of contextualization necessary to understand what they mean, of course: male graduates continue to be overwhelmingly represented in STEM fields, with women only making up 39% of chemists and material scientists, 28% of environmental scientists and geoscientists, 16 percent of chemical engineers and just 12 percent of civil engineers, while more feminized fields, like Education, Nursing, and Social Work continue to be underfunded and underappreciated. Additionally, research suggests that as women enter traditionally male fields, pay for those fields decline. However, the raw numbers of falling male success in education contribute to a collective memory of the recession of men from spaces and institutions considered 'public'; in this example, higher education (Camera, 2015; Carmichael, 2017; Levanon, England, & Allison, 2009; Miller, C.C., 2016). This collective memory narrative and its consolidation functions kairotically, drawing from recent, continuing developments in the enrollment and graduation of boys and men at universities and colleges and also taps into a schematic narrative template (several, technically) within which feminism's insistence upon the opening up and gender diversity of spaces has begun to 'force out' boys and men. This makes rhetorical discourse regarding the contestation of spaces across gender cyclically and continually kairotic for both androcentric counterpublics and for feminist counterpublics. While we can (and should) contest the accuracy and sincerity involved in androcentric claims of shrinking and/or hostile spaces towards male individuals and groups, the use of these memories as kairotic elements of androcentric rhetoric is indisputable.

As part of the ‘boy crisis,’ androcentric counterpublics have long decried the ‘liberal university campus’ and the existence of Gender and Women’s Studies (GWS) programs in particular, believing them to be a method through which students are conditioned to become feminists and socialists (Kimmel, 2013; Luthra, 2018; Nathanson & Young, 2001). More specifically, androcentric counterpublics have argued that the existence of GWS programs represent inequality unless there are similarly funded and staffed “Men’s Studies” programs on campuses (Australian Men’s Rights Association, 2011; Elam, 2010, “Men’s Studies”; Elam, 2010, “Male Studies: Back for Round 2”; Nathanson & Young, 2001; Sharron, 2013). Such arguments are not new to the current moment; this has been a longstanding complaint by men’s rights groups, as they claim that ‘feminists’ have taken over universities and public intellectuals. Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young, in *Spreading Misandry* (2001) claim that the “roots of misandry in popular culture can be found in the misandry of elite culture,” spurred on in particular by deconstructionist, feminist academics (p. 233).

This belief in the misandry of universities is also reflected in a number of articles by *Return of Kings* contributors, with statements like “[t]o be a man in college is to be blamed for everything that’s wrong with the world, from poverty to colonialism to environmental degradation” (Forney, 2014) and headlines such as “Society Can’t Afford the Educated Woman” (McGinnis, 2013), “5 Ways Modern Colleges Have Become Left-Wing Indoctrination Factories” (Luthra, 2018), “Men Should Train 18-Year-Old Girls in Feminine Grace Before They Are Ruined By College” (Brown, 2017), and “Why College is a Warzone for Young Men,” (Roscoe, 2016). These sentiments reflect consolidated memories within androcentric counterpublics, particularly the notion that many (if not most) university spaces, post-culture wars, have become hostile and unwelcoming to young, White men, and politically Conservative ones in particular.

Seizing upon statistics that have long shown boys and men to be falling behind in regard to college acceptance, retention, and graduation rates compared to their female peers, androcentric counterpublic discourse relate such numbers to a schematic narrative template that views White masculinity and men to be constantly ceding ground and losing access to spaces that were traditionally dominated by White men. They also function kairotically to connect such deep collective memory to rhetorical material that seemingly validates their discourse, in the shape of falling boy/male participation and success in education.

This notion of the “boy crisis” in education seems particularly kairotic, being reported on by a number of sources both within and outside of androcentric counterpublics. In addition to Warren Farrell’s (1993; 2005; 2008; 2018) longstanding argument that such numbers indicate it is actually boys who are being failed by educational institutions rather than girls, it has made for a popular story among mainstream and even ‘left-leaning’ journalism, most notably in an *Atlantic* article in 2017, which interviewed the manager of a “Men’s Resource Center” at Lakeland Community College, Jim Shelley. Shelley is quoted in the article justifying the male dropout rate in ways deeply resonant of androcentric discourse: “Not only are there not programs like ours that are supportive of male students, but at most college campuses the attitude is that men are the problem. ...I’ve had male students tell me that their first week in college they were made to feel like potential rapists” (Marcus, 2017, n.p.). Christina Hoff Sommers, an American philosopher and frequent defender of the men’s rights movement, penned a remarkably similar article for *The Atlantic* seventeen years earlier, blaming the lack of interest in the boy crisis on the work of Harvard’s first gender studies professor, Carol Gilligan (2000). Articles pointing to the boy crisis in education, the “Disappearing College Male” (CCAP, 2015), “The Increasing Significance of the Decline of Men” (Edsall, 2017) and “The End of Men” (Rosin, 2010), to

name but a few, make clear that concern for boys and men in regard to educational institutions has traveled far beyond androcentric counterpublics. Moreover, many of these journalists—associated with ‘liberal’ news institutions like *The New York Times* and *The Atlantic*—cite or acknowledge the androcentric claim that boys/men feel unwelcome or viewed with automatic hostility on university/college campuses (Marcus, 2018; Rosin, 2010; CCAP, 2015). The notion of the boy crisis in education appears to possess a particularly kairotic valence, not least of which because (like many ‘crises’) it seems to cyclically reappear, across the 1990s, the 2000s, and into the late 2010s.

I am not suggesting that we should be sanguine about boys’ and mens’ increasing dropout rates and lack of engagement across all levels of education; clearly, these are troubling phenomena that need to be addressed on a systemic and sociocultural level. However, for the purposes of my argument here, I’m primarily interested in how the collective memory of androcentric counterpublics regarding the hostility of educational institutions toward boys and men is being taken up. I’m particularly struck by how their claimed cause of that hostility—feminist presence on and influence over university/college campuses and programs—is being considered by members of publics beyond androcentric counterpublics. Clearly, androcentric collective memories and discourses have tapped into a kairotic rhetorical argument (albeit one driven by the cyclicity of their deep collective memories regarding a shrinking of male space, opportunity, and support) in the consolidation of collective memories. One element of the relationality involved in that consolidation of collective memories regarding the failing of educational institutions in regard to boys and men seems tied to androcentric notions that such spaces are hostile, unwelcoming, and even discriminatory toward male students. But this doesn’t exactly explain why such collective memories and their rhetorical transmission seems to tap so

deeply into the *kairos* of memorial discourse around gender and education. To better understand that, we must examine the tactical rhetorics that androcentric counterpublics use in regard to the circulation of discourse about gender and universities. To put it simply, androcentric counterpublics have picked up on and mimicked rhetorical discourse on collective memory by feminist groups, memorializing men as victims and educational institutions as systemically sexist (against men).

Androcentric collective memory discourse and deployment of a rhetoric of male victimization in educational institutions represents clear attempts to tap into *kairos* in three ways: First, this is a rhetorical strategy that androcentric counterpublics have clearly observed circulating among other counterpublics and publics, most notably feminist ones, and adopted for their own discursive ends. Materials within the androcentric divergent archive, as well as the overall development of their rhetorical arguments, make this clear (Hayward, 1986, “Letter to NCM Board Members”). Second, adopting the positionality of the ‘true’ victims aligns with a collective memory narrative of misandry that has been peddled and reinforced by the androcentric divergent archive for quite some time. Last, the adoption of the rhetorical identity positioning of ‘victim’ also enables androcentric counterpublics to deploy tactical rhetorics that are kairotic and connect collective memory narratives regarding misandry and anti-male sexism to that *kairos*. These tactical rhetorics, as I note above, come into acute focus in the example of the National Coalition for Men’s (NCFM) recent Title IX complaints.

As of this writing, NCFM has filed complaints against at least three different universities: the University of Pennsylvania, Northeastern University, and Georgetown University (Airaksinen, 2018; National Coalition For Men, “Georgetown Title IX Letter,” 2018; National Coalition For Men, “Northeastern Title IX Letter,” 2018). The established motivating factor for

each of these schools varies slightly; Northeastern’s complaint focuses on the “man-hating” Women’s and Gender Studies professor Suzanna Walters (who penned an op-ed titled “Why Can’t We Hate Men?”), while the UPenn complaint targets their Women’s Center, and the Georgetown complaint broadly identifies an array of women’s studies initiatives, scholarships, and groups that are supposedly woman-only. However, all of the complaints draw upon a familiar framework, one that identifies men as now being in the minority of students on campus and representing a discriminated group that these programs, departments, and policies further entrench.

The Georgetown and Northeastern complaints, for example, both begin with nearly identical language positioning male students as underserved both nationwide and at these particular campuses, stating that these universities are “in violation of Title IX because [each] offers resources, funding, fellowships, and scholarships that are available to women only, even though men are a minority both nationwide [42%]” and at both universities (49% at Northeastern and 44% at Georgetown) (National Coalition For Men, Georgetown Letter, 2018; National Coalition For Men Northeastern Letter, 2018). The letter goes on to explain that women are the “overrepresented sex in general nationwide,” that they are the “majority of law students and medical students,” and that “[n]ew civil rights data published by the Department of Education makes it clear that concerns over the representation of women in STEM education are outdated”²⁶ (2018, n.p.). The complaint states that “77% of all teachers in the public education system are women, and the numbers are increasing” and that “[g]irls have higher grades than

²⁶ It is not clear exactly what element of the representation of women in STEM education is being debated by the use of DOE stats here; most likely, this is a reference to the fact that female enrollment in STEM courses in high school reached near-parity with male enrollment in 2015-2016 (US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, “STEM Course Taking,” 2018). However, as I note above, women continue to be vastly underrepresented in most STEM fields in higher education and in industry, and are driven out of those fields at much higher rates compared to men.

boys in all categories” (2018, n.p.). These statistics and the way that they are couched explicitly draw connections to the overarching kairotic message of androcentric discourse on the boy crisis, namely that boys and men are being underserved by educational institutions in the US and, implicitly, that girls and women are thriving in such conditions and *because* boys are failing.

These memories are then connected to common androcentric talking points regarding misandry and gynocentrism. In the second paragraph of the letters’ summaries (again, nearly identical), NCFM claims:

Men are beginning to face significant problems in the workplace due to this disparity in terms of college degree attainment. Women who apply to STEM degrees are far more likely to be hired than men. A recent study found out that women are 36% more likely than men to receive a job offer. Men work in more dangerous jobs and they are more likely to suffer permanent or grievous harm. The gender pay gap myth ignores many variables. Even if the gender gap were true, the fact remains that women control more wealth than men (60% of all personal wealth) and that women spend more money than men (85% of all customer purchases). (Georgetown Letter, 2018, n.p.)

It is worth noting that these arguments have long been androcentric platforms and are not themselves new or novel critiques of society’s supposed misandry and gynocentrism. What NCFM has done here is associated a number of collective memory narratives consolidated by androcentric counterpublics with issues regarding boys’ and men’s difficulties across educational institutions and into the working world. Namely, NCFM attempts to shore up collective memory claims of men as the disadvantaged or discriminated gender, while suggesting that women are doing just fine, even in traditionally male-dominated fields like STEM.

Rhetorically, NCFM's claims make a few significant moves. First, they reiterate the androcentric concepts of misandry—men are more likely to die, women get more job offers, women control wealth—and gynocentrism—women are more likely to get jobs, women's jobs are less dangerous, men do not control a majority of wealth—in order to establish those concepts as legible and legitimate. Second, they position men as the true 'victims,' inverting the assumed social order wherein men possess a number of advantages that women do not. By linking educational outcomes by gender to potential career outcomes, NCFM attempts to create an argument from zero-sum logic, despite the fact that many of these factors do not seem diametrically opposed but rather, parallel (that girls should do well in educational systems does not automatically mean that boys will do poorly; one does not predict the other). NCFM's complaint also suggests that women's supposed advantages in higher education, including women's and gender studies programs and departments, grant women access to knowledge and advantages men do not have, rendering that system unequal. Finally, they engage in a tactical rhetoric of circulation (Edwards, 2017) that draws both from feminist and other social justice movements' rhetorical moves to establish oppression and utilizes particular institutional tools to combat that oppression. For androcentric counterpublics, that tactical rhetoric has taken the form of Title IX complaints against universities and their women's and gender studies programs.

Tactical rhetoric, as Edwards notes when defining the term, draws implicitly from a kairotic framework of circulation (2017). This means that a tactical rhetoric is kairotic because it seizes on rhetorical texts and moves that are already apparent or established to audiences. Edwards uses the "Feminists Read Mean Tweets" YouTube videos—which are a riff/parody on the "Celebrities Read Mean Tweets" segments popularized by Jimmy Kimmel—as an example of tactical rhetoric in motion, an act of invention from within kairotic circulation. I am arguing

here that the NCFM Title IX complaints against universities like Georgetown, Northeastern, and the University of Pennsylvania represent a similar tactical rhetoric, drawing from the sociopolitical act of making Title IX complaints, arguably ‘popularized’ by feminist and social justice groups. Moreover, the discourse and arguments undergirding NCFM’s Title IX complaints are deeply connected to schematic narrative templates of androcentric collective memory. The ‘facts’ that support androcentric claims to misandry and gynocentrism and that provide evidence for the Title IX complaints are projected through the lens of consolidated memories regarding the shrinking of space and opportunity for anglophone, White, cis-and-heterosexual men.

When androcentric counterpublics receive or experience new pieces of ephemera regarding boys’ and men’s success in higher education that need to be consolidated into their collective stable memory, their relationality process invariably pulls from their divergent archive and forces readings of these phenomena in ways that make blaming feminists unavoidable (for androcentrics). For example, nowhere does NCFM acknowledge that while a single study suggests female graduates may be hired or accepted at higher rates (though not necessarily higher numbers) than men in STEM fields, women are also much more likely to leave those same careers for a number of reasons, including the hostility of STEM workplaces and industries toward women (Camera, 2015; Mundy, 2017). The troubling savviness of NCFM’s strategy here is that they are utilizing an apparatus built to aid the subaltern by positing that individuals of arguably hegemonic positionality are in fact being discriminated against; this combines a rhetorical positioning of the victimization of young, (White), straight men with the hegemonic advantages they wield. Namely, those advantages are related to the fact that anglosphere publics care more about the plight of White men than other social/identity groups.

What the NCFM Title IX claims point to is a rhetorical process of memory consolidation wherein a collective (androcentric counterpublics) has related labile memories (data regarding boys' and men's higher failure rates in education) to stable memories (the concepts of misandry and gynocentrism found in the divergent archives of androcentric counterpublics) through a relationality that draws upon counterpublic discourse and collective memories (the schematic narrative templates of boys/men losing space and social power due to feminism and a society that favors women). These memories, circulated again and again under a perpetual rhetoric of the 'boy crisis', possess *kairos* due to their status as part of White, male deep collective memory, as well as the tactical rhetoric that androcentric organizations use to draw attention to and combat them: Title IX complaints of sexism, a tool commonly utilized by feminists and charged by the Obama administration's bolstering of its sway over educational institutions.

Kairos, then, functions both as the opportune moment in the rhetorical consolidation of memory—what belongs in long-term/stable memory as most poignant—but also in how counterpublics utilize those memories and the materials found in their divergent archives to tap into kairotic moments through tactical rhetorics. By attempting to establish *kairos* both in their claims to collective memory and the tactical rhetoric they deploy to combat misandry and gynocentrism in the form of feminist policies and discourse, androcentric counterpublics work to achieve legibility and legitimacy both for their collective memories of anti-male sexism and the 'dangers' of feminism/feminists. One need look no further than the decision by President Trump's Department of Education, led by Betsy DeVos, which heeded men's rights and other androcentric groups in weakening and altering policies established by the Obama administration around Title IX and accusations of sexual assault on university/college campuses to see that such processes may be gaining legibility and legitimacy among broader publics (and thus, a form of

memory consolidation regarding education and gender conflict within that broader public) (Scott, 2017; Smith, 2018).

In the end, it seems that divergent archives serve as resources not only for establishing the kairotic nature of certain collective memories through consolidation and relationality—the ability to draw upon past instances to rhetorically connect, frame, and memorialize new incidents, ephemera, and information—but also that such memories may enable counterpublics to recognize the rhetorical viability and kairotic nature of their opponents’ tactics as they are circulated and attempt to seize upon those tactical rhetorics for themselves. Moreover, the deployment of these tactical rhetorics and the transmission of this memory operates as a space from which counterpublics can critique other publics’ discourse and collective memory as akairotic; that is, not worth marking out of time. Such rhetorical processes make apparent the role of *kairos* in helping to position a counterpublic’s memories and divergent archive as legible and legitimate, and increasing the likelihood that broader publics might recognize such discourse and consolidate (at least some of) those memories.

CONCLUSION

In an introduction to a special issue of *Archival Science* discussing the intersections of archives, memory, history, records, and the authority attached to the institution of the archive, Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook (2002) point to the powerful work that archives—both institutional and non-institutional—perform in making available the shaping matter of both history and memory. In doing so, they call for archivists to recognize what they do not name, but certainly address, as the rhetoricity of the archive, its potential to both shape and be shaped in ways that affirm it as “the first law of what can be said” (Foucault, 1969, p. 29). As I have attempted to chart across this chapter, the rhetorical element of *kairos* and its presence within

collective memory suggest that divergent archives, collective memories, and the counterpublics that form and articulate them are in a mediated and recursive relationship. The point is that archives, like memories, are kairotic. Decisions, both conscious and unconscious, are made to preserve, to articulate, to identify, to circulate, to bury, to forget. The ethical imperative to *remember*, what Bradford Vivian (2010) identifies as being historically rhetoricized as the obligatory bulwark against oblivion, resonates with the ethical imperatives of *kairos*: the *right* memory at the *right* time. If we swim through a “milieu” of collective memories, as Halbwachs suggests, we are at least choosing the direction in which we swim. For this reason, it is crucial that we acknowledge and study those connections between archives, collective memory, and the counterpublics who form them as rhetorical phenomena. Though we cannot always predict or control the perfect moment of *kairos* nor the exact vein in which collective memories might take shape, we can trace their articulations, the way specific memory narratives are rhetorically attached to particular ephemera and events, how discourse pulses with the schematic narrative templates through which our society cyclically understands social phenomena and how we remember it.

But all of this raises the specter of a question regarding *kairos* that has largely been avoided in rhetorical discussions, most likely because it seems unlikely that the classical rhetors of ancient Greece and Rome would have considered it. Who decides what is kairotic? Is *kairos* universal, or bounded within particular public spheres? What happens when rhetoric seems to be both kairotic and akairotic at the same time? Can a given rhetorical situation be multiply kairotic? My case study raises these questions regarding the potential multiplicity of *kairos* within spaces that seek both to convince an audience primed to agree and one primed to disagree. How do we reconcile public discourse regarding university campuses that alternately suggests

boys and men are both simultaneously privileged and discriminated against in those spaces? We could argue that since rhetoric targets a specific audience, it is either kairotic or not; but this doesn't quite align with discourse drawn from collective memory narratives that reinforce *kairos* on the same topic—for example, rape culture in relation to both androcentric and feminist counterpublics, a matter both agree is timely—but that may be kairotic in differing ways. While this inquiry may seem pedantic, it exposes valuable joints in how we think about public rhetorics and who gets to be considered “mainstream.” Moreover, it also points to the ways that divergent archives in their *kairos* might be read as multiply kairotic (or akairotic). And it raises broader questions about rhetoric and the public that Aristotle, Cicero, Plato, and Isocrates likely would not have envisioned: who gets the final say on what is kairotic?

This all spurs perhaps the most important question: how do we measure *kairos*, particularly among competing publics and counterpublics? As the Supreme Court hearings for Brett Kavanaugh and the accusations of sexual assault by Dr. Christine Blasey Ford in 2018 suggest (and as Clarence Thomas's hearings three decades earlier also suggested), *kairos* is rarely agreed upon, even among people who find the same moment in *chronos* to be worth marking out. For many women and feminist counterpublics, Kavanaugh's hearing marked yet another kairotic moment of recognition regarding the inability and unwillingness of American society and its justice system to take seriously the claims of sexual assault survivors. Dr. Ford's powerful, difficult public statements regarding her memories—memories that were decried by Kavanaugh's supporters as too far gone to remember, or *akairotic*—seemed on one level to evoke ongoing national conversations around sexual harassment and abuse that has driven the #MeToo moment. Moreover, Republican senators' willingness to allow a female attorney to ask their questions for Dr. Ford made patently clear how the group of senators supporting

Kavanaugh—all men—were ill-equipped to rhetorically navigate the *kairos* of this event and moment.

In stark contrast, Kavanaugh's hearing possessed *kairos* for androcentric counterpublics because it was, in their eyes, another example of a vengeful woman seeking to ruin a powerful man's life through what they felt were surely false, or at least misremembered, accusations. Both the defenses of Kavanaugh, seeking to cast doubt on Dr. Ford's memory while maintaining the accuracy of Kavanaugh's (going so far as to allow Kavanaugh to lie about his habits regarding alcohol consumption) and Kavanaugh's reactions at the hearing, a blistering rebuke of what he deemed to be character assassination by vengeful women (and Democrats) resonated kairotically for androcentric counterpublics, another public moment indicating (to them) the overreach of the #MeToo movement. The crux of the case hung on memories of the same party by two people, and whose memory was akairotic. The moment, then, was multiply kairotic; but what does that mean for our theories of rhetoric, of counterpublic discourse, and of collective memories? What claims to public rhetoric can we make through the guise of a fragmented, fractured *kairos*?

All of this is to say that when considering the relationship between *kairos*, counterpublics, their divergent archives, and the collective memory narratives those archives support, what is kairotic is contingent upon a number of other factors, and *kairos* is essentially fluid and ultimately, quite unpredictable. For the moment, however, what is apparent regarding memory and *kairos* is that counterpublics building divergent archives recognize (at least implicitly) the importance of *kairos* in gaining legibility and legitimacy beyond the boundaries of their own members. *Whether* their rhetoric is kairotic and *to whom* it might be kairotic is another question entirely.

In the next chapter, I address how a variety of popular culture texts function as both kairotic sites for discursive negotiation, as well as archival material for divergent archives.

CHAPTER 4: POPULAR CULTURE AND THE ANDROCENTRIC DIVERGENT ARCHIVE

In January 2019, Gillette, a shaving product company owned by Procter & Gamble, released an ad critiquing clichéd defenses of male behavior and toxic masculinity, chief among them the old adage “boys will be boys.” Riffing on their “The Best a Man Can Get” slogan, the Gillette ad asked viewers if commonly displayed examples of bullying, toxic masculinity, and sexual harassment/assault were the “best a man could get.” Changing the slogan to “The Best a Man Can Be,” the ad confronted men with the responsibility for challenging and changing such behaviors, calling them out and not normalizing them. Lasting almost two full minutes, the ad’s length, severity of tone, and clear indictment of traditional conceptions of masculinity and maleness sparked a wave of controversy. It enraged viewers who felt it scapegoated men as a whole and led to a massive downvoting campaign for the video on YouTube (Da Silva, 2019; Stanley-Becker, 2019; Wolf, 2019).²⁷ The ad’s take on asking men to be more involved fathers and conscientious members of society also generated a fair amount of praise for Gillette, albeit with some reservations. As a few commenters pointed out, while Gillette’s ad was considerably better than many sexist and objectifying ads, their business practices—including the ‘pink tax’ on Gillette’s razors for women—did not indicate the company had completely exculpated itself of misogynistic business practices (Da Silva, 2019). The ad served as a flashpoint for how competing and polarized segments of society view maleness, masculinity, and the need to address certain forms of behavior in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal and ensuing #MeToo movement. Feminist perceptions largely echoed the commercial’s sentiments, while

²⁷ While I cannot directly embed the video into this dissertation document, the ad can be viewed on Gillette’s YouTube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0>.

large swaths of less social justice-minded individuals accused the ad of being a cultural declaration of war against men and an affirmation of gynocentrism and misandry in U.S. culture.

One thing the uproar around the Gillette commercial made clear was the degree to which its depictions of masculinity resonated—or failed to resonate—with particular individuals and collectives. Androcentric counterpublic feelings on the matter were emblematically summed up through a tweet from conservative UK television personality Piers Morgan, who called for boycotting the company, saying “I’ve used @Gillette razors my entire adult life but this absurd virtue-signalling PC [politically correct] guff may drive me away to a company less eager to fuel the current pathetic global assault on masculinity. Let boys be damn boys. Let men be damn men” (Piers Morgan, 2019). In this moment, the Gillette ad signified less as a commercial advertising razors and, at least for androcentrics, functioned to call forth a discourse on masculinity. As Morgan’s boycott threat implies, the commercial’s direct invocation of particular memories of raising male children, specifically the notion that ‘boys will be boys’ and the categorization of such an attitude fueling toxic masculinity linked to #MeToo,²⁸ threatens a framework of remembrance that many men view as innately linked to their masculinity and sense of manhood.

To put it simply, to represent men in this way rattles androcentric views of what it means to be a man because it implies that their perceptions of masculinity are faulty and even dangerous. To cast backwards to iconic images of (White, cis-and-heterosexual) boyhood—like a scene wherein two children violently wrestle and onlooking parents shrug it off as boys being boys—is to recollect male behavior in ways that cast it as morally wrong. This reframing of such

²⁸ The #MeToo movement began in 2017 in response to discussions of the prevalence and silence around the sexual assault and harassment of women across a wide array of industries and positions, but most notably regarding Harvey Weinstein’s long campaign of harassing, assaulting, and silencing women. These revelations sparked a series of reports regarding other major figures.

behavior and memory as inappropriate or dangerous calls into question not only the behavior of many boys and men, but also threatens the stability of their identities and sense of what it is to be a man (and how to raise a boy into one). The idea that men should be able to make aggressive passes at women or bully each other physically without repercussion (both presented within the ad as poor behavior) is, apparently, inherent to many androcentric collective male identities and to condemn those behaviors is tantamount to attacking their very manhood.

Kendall R. Phillips (2010) argues in “The Failure of Memory” that the danger surrounding public memories from a rhetorical perspective has not been their loss or forgetting but rather *misremembering* or recalling wrongly; a fear that goes all the way back to Plato. Phillips suggests that “the cultural concern over remembrance is driven not so much by the fear that we will forget but by the fear that we will remember differently” (p. 212). Phillips acknowledges this fear of remembering differently as an animating force in conversations about the rhetorical articulation of public memories, separating the memory, “an almost fantastic experience of the imagery of the past” from recollection, which “involves a disciplined approach to the logical sequence of events and through repetition of this discipline one is able to evoke memories in a more controlled way” (p. 215). Finally, there are ‘public remembrances’ which are the “kind of dominant, reified and calcified forms of remembrance that serve to establish broader frameworks within which the fantasies of public memory are contained and proscribed” (p. 219). Public memory, then, functions through these three rhetorical facets: the ‘public memory’ itself, wherein individuals engage in conjuring images of the past and presenting them to a public; rhetorics of ‘public remembrance’ which work to perpetuate “cultural forms of memory and...[establish] frameworks for an official relation to the past”; and moving between the two, rhetorics of ‘recollection,’ representing the “struggles between the frameworks of

remembrance and the emergence of memories that will either be disciplined or will overturn the frameworks of remembrance and, in this way, establish new frameworks” (pp. 219-220).

What this means is that these three elements of rhetorical public memory—“the fluidity of memory, the stability of remembrance, and the struggles over recollection”—make clear the volatility and fluid nature of public memories (Phillips, 2010, p. 221). While the relationship (and overlaps between) public memory and collective memory may be unclear, it is arguable that the efforts of imagined and actual counterpublics to acquire legibility and legitimacy for their own collective memories represents a struggle over rhetorical recollection to affect the public remembrances of broader publics. Thus, when androcentric counterpublics seek to make a collective memory regarding circumcision (the memory/image) as ‘male genital mutilation’ legible and legitimate, they are essentially deploying a rhetoric of recollection that attempts to alter public remembrances of circumcision. In doing so, they struggle to convince others—through a divergent archive—that circumcision should be remembered not as a routine medical procedure but instead as a horrific violation of male children’s autonomy.

These rhetorics of recollection can become markers of identity for members of counterpublics. Identities, like memories, are rhetorically constructed, called forth based on the kairotic needs of the current moment and situation. Like memories, which are consistently rhetorically structured to serve an individual or collective’s current ends, identities represent a fluid and constantly reshaped element of subjectivity. In Chapter 3, I discussed Anastasio et al.’s theory that collectives consolidate memories through a recursive process that weighs a short-term memory against the frameworks or paradigms that determine what makes a memory worth holding onto. As a result, a memory is either accepted or rejected, or the framework of that collective’s memories shifts to incorporate this new memory. Counterpublics, we might say,

represent collectives whose goal is to render legible and legitimate their collective memories and transmit them to broader publics, thereby making their collective memory a more stable public memory. Such counterpublics engage in these rhetorics of recollection both inwardly, as a collective, and outwardly, as they work to shape public memories. Those memories are often—but not exclusively—driven by concerns of identity and how memories can threaten or reify their perceived elements of such an identity. Divergent archives function to provide a rhetorical resource by which counterpublic memories, and therefore, the rhetorical construction of particular identities, can be consolidated and presented as legible and legitimate to broader publics and subpublics. One method through which divergent counterpublics attempt to reify their collective memories into a public remembrance is the use of popular culture texts as fodder for rhetorics of recollection.

In this chapter, I argue that pop culture texts serve the unusual role of being both a discursive site for contesting memories—particularly in the form of mass media consumed across a wide array of publics, subpublics, and counterpublics—as well as archival artifacts that serve, through the right lens, to make legible and legitimate the collective memories of certain groups through divergent archives. While many counterpublics engage with pop culture in this way, such texts have become a key battleground for androcentrics. As noted in the dissertation's introduction regarding *Mad Max: Fury Road*, androcentric counterpublics tend to treat pop culture as a bellwether for the gender politics of a society. In the particular case of androcentrics, pop culture texts can function as sites for and examples of misandry—sexism against men—as well as gynocentrism: evidence that women are hegemonic within Western societies. Of course, such engagement with pop culture is present among other counterpublics. Feminists, for example, have long critiqued pop culture texts they find to be misogynistic, and have supported

the deconstruction of female stereotypes. Similarly, when androcentric views are seemingly supported within pieces of pop culture, androcentrics point to it as validation of their discourse or an impinging of their agenda and beliefs upon mainstream publics.

The engagement of pop culture among androcentric counterpublics goes beyond simply critiquing or praising ads, films, or video games. The use of popular culture has been an important element in legitimizing, consolidating, and transmitting collective memories of misandry and gynocentrism in the divergent archive(s) of androcentric counterpublics. Because androcentric groups are largely reactionary, they rely upon discourse produced and distributed by other publics and counterpublics as a way to rhetorically position their own. As a result, pop culture often serves androcentric counterpublics as the supposed evidence of collective memories of misandry and gynocentrism and becomes incorporated into their divergent archive as legitimate historical and archival material. Pop culture texts are regarded as reflecting attitudes held in broader publics, which androcentrics point to as further evidence of their cultural and social marginalization as men. When androcentrics talk about boycotting *Mad Max: Fury Road*, they're not simply organizing an expression of disapproval toward the gender politics of the film. While that is certainly an element of *ROK*'s call to boycott the film, Clarey's article—and the existence of the film itself—serve to memorialize what they perceive as evidence of misandry and gynocentrism writ large on the big screen. Like the previous chapter's discussion of the kairotic co-optation of gendered ratios as evidence that educational systems are misandrist and stacked against boys and men, androcentric counterpublics take a page from feminist activism and insidiously turn it on its head, suggesting that if you *really* pay attention to Western pop culture, you'll see that men (particularly White men) are the losers and women the winners.

Thus, I argue here that pop culture texts—late 20th and current 21st century American films and television are what this chapter focuses on, specifically—serve two entangled and interrelated functions within divergent archives: they operate as both 1) archival material ‘stored’ as part of the divergent archive, and 2) as sites of or occasions for divergent counterpublics’ collective memories, particularly when their formative counterpublics’ discourse is concerned with issues of identity, such as gender, race, sexuality, class, nationality, and (dis)ability. Pop culture aids in the rhetorical identification and “acting together” with another individual or group’s rhetoric and discourse, a process that Kenneth Burke (1968) describes as “consubstantiation” (p. 21). These moments of consubstantiation coalesce around rhetorics of recollection, generating significant rhetorical identifications among the divergent counterpublic. Because consubstantiation provides one means for counterpublics to establish legibility and legitimacy for their collective memories and to attract individuals from outside the counterpublic, pop culture functions as a particularly keen space for androcentrics to deploy rhetorics of recollection around film and television.

For example, a rhetoric of recollection long present among androcentric counterpublics comes out of their umbrage over the image and trope of the “deadbeat dad” (Hayward, 1989; Hayward 1990). The notion of the deadbeat dad who refuses to pay child support or to be involved in his children’s life has long been attacked by androcentrics as inaccurate at best and depriving men of custody of their own children at worst. As a result, they have developed a discourse that rejects the memory of the deadbeat dad, arguing that such representations of men in pop culture are indicative of misandry and gynocentrism. In doing so, they encourage a rhetorical process of identification from others who find the notion of the deadbeat dad as inaccurate, offensive, or even dangerous. As a rhetoric of recollection, the figure of the deadbeat

dad was entangled in androcentric concerns of how we approve and disapprove of masculine behaviors in boys and men, the assumptions Anglo-American society makes about the fitness of fathers, and how we portray relationships between fathers and sons. Drawing from Burke's theories of rhetoric as identification rather than persuasion, I suggest that pop culture performs an important role within many divergent archives, compelling individuals and groups to identify with a counterpublic's rhetorics of recollection, leading them to moments of consubstantiation. Those moments of consubstantiation are crucial for collectives seeking to make their collective memories into public ones through the legibility and legitimacy of the materials within their divergent archive(s). This rhetorical process is prominent within androcentric counterpublics, treating pop culture texts as 'archival' material and rhetorical opportunities to reify and spread their collective memory narratives.

POP CULTURE, MEMORY, AND THE DIVERGENT ARCHIVE

Pop culture's relationship to memory, identity, and its incorporation into divergent archives is messy. This is not least because, as Henry Jenkins, Tara McPherson, and Jane Shattuc (2003) acknowledge in *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture*, pop culture performs a variety of functions, some of them seemingly contradictory. Pop culture can be a source of pleasure, a corporate product designed to maximize profits, a factor in subjective identity formation and deconstruction, or a site of political and social resistance to certain discourses (or all of these things at once) (Hall, 1981; Jenkins, McPherson, & Shattuc, 2003; Rodman, 2016; Street, Inthorn, & Scott, 2013). Moreover, pop culture texts do not guarantee a singular understanding or reception by their audiences; as I discuss in the introduction with *Mad Max: Fury Road*, neomasculinists viewed the film as misandrist while men's rights activists perceived the film as *exposing* misandry rather than validating it (both of which are narrow and

simplistic readings of the film). Additionally, dominant receptions of pop culture texts may change across time, a fact indicated by the status of films that don't 'age well' like *The Help*, *Crash*, or *The Blindside*, which purport to be about racial justice (among other things) but serve as narratives wherein White saviors liberate Black people who are rendered passive in the process of liberation (Griffin, 2015).

But exactly what pop culture *entails* presents a famously difficult and complex question. Raymond Williams (1983) notoriously described 'culture' as "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (p. 87). Culture, to Williams (1974), historically "implies at once the general process of human development and the specific organizations of such development in different societies. It implies also both the whole way of life of a people and the practices and products of intellectual work and the arts" (n.p.). Williams distinguishes popular culture as largely being defined in opposition to "high culture" (1974, n.p.). He describes four meanings of popular culture: "well liked by many people"; "inferior kinds of work"; "work deliberately setting out to win favour with the people"; "culture actually made by the people for themselves" (1983, p. 237). While all four of these definitions capture elements of the importance of pop culture as a concept and have contributed to its historical analysis, they all unnecessarily limit what we might count as pop culture. For example, to limit pop culture to what is "well liked by many people" introduces issues of quantification. Exactly how many people is "many people"? For these reasons, a number of British cultural theorists have relied instead on a conception of popular culture developed by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1971). Theorists like Tony Bennett (1986; 2009), John Storey (2002; 2003), and Stuart Hall (1981) have used Gramsci's notion of "hegemony" to argue that pop culture texts represent spaces of rhetorical contestation, domination, resistance, and subversion. That is, pop culture is

neither mass culture that unquestioningly disseminates the ideology of the socially dominant, nor is it a pure space of subversion and resistance coming from below. Rather, it is “a terrain of exchange and negotiation...a terrain...marked by resistance and incorporation” (Storey, 2009, p. 10). In framing pop culture this way, we can identify it through the rhetorical struggles around hegemonic values that occur within and across it—like with *Mad Max: Fury Road*’s competing readings, for example.

Stuart Hall (1981) argues for a complex understanding of how individuals consume and interpolate pop culture texts, particularly among the working classes. Ultimately, he suggests that it is shortsighted to assume that a text’s audience will derive any one particular understanding of that piece of pop culture, whether that is a hegemonic ‘reading’ or a resistant and subversive one. Claiming that “cultural industries do have the power constantly to rework and reshape what they represent; and, by repetition and selection, to impose and implant such definitions of ourselves as fit more easily the descriptions of the dominant or preferred culture,” Hall acknowledges the ways in which the producers of pop culture do control the images represented to consumers of pop culture (p. 187). However, he also states that such images are not purely passively received and accepted, as though “we are blank screens,” instead suggesting that “there is a continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganize and reorganize popular culture” (p. 187). This results in a cultural struggle across pop culture that makes discourse around them a “constant battlefield...where no once-for-all victories are obtained but where there are always strategic positions to be won and lost” (p. 187). Because pop culture’s audiences are never blithely and mindlessly accepting the supposedly hegemonic messages of any given text, there is room for rhetorical contestations over what a piece of pop culture means, how it should be understood, and whether that meaning is harmful or helpful.

Those perspectives, of course, depend upon one's relationship to a given piece of pop culture, the hegemonic elements of a culture and society, and the rhetorical recollections which mediate the representation of both of these things.

It is this notion of pop culture—as cultural texts that serve as sites of hegemonic struggle and negotiation—that is most useful to this chapter's discussion of pop culture texts as archival materials and discursive triggers for the rhetorical construction and contestation of collective and public memory. Cultural studies scholars like Hall, Storey, and Bennett have articulated specific pop culture texts as sites of contestation and negotiation in relationship to social hegemony and resistance against those hegemonic forces. As Bennett (2009) describes:

The field of popular culture is structured by the attempt of the ruling class to win hegemony and by forms of opposition to this endeavor. As such, it consists not simply of an imposed mass culture that is coincident with dominant ideology, nor simply of spontaneously oppositional cultures, but is rather an area of negotiation between the two within which – in different particular types of popular culture – dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultural and ideological values and elements are 'mixed' in different permutations. (p. 96)

Thus, pop culture can indicate a wide variety of media, practices, traditions, and topoi, including media texts like film, television, graphic novels, video games, social media, but also elements of culture like food, colloquialisms, folk tales, and local histories. Through this lens, what matters is not whether a particular text might be classified as a piece of pop culture or not, but how texts function as rhetorical spaces of contestation. Framing pop culture in this way means we can focus on how competing publics, subpublics, counterpublics, and collectives all seek to understand and deploy pop culture as either

reinforcing hegemony or standing in opposition to it. It should be noted that these aren't mutually exclusive moves; a pop culture text can, depending on the rhetoric and discourse through which it is filtered, support both hegemonic and resistant readings in the same moment, as the arguments around *Mad Max: Fury Road* indicate.

What matters for my argument here is that pop culture functions as a widely accessible set of texts that enable a variety of discourses to flourish around them, whether directly related to the text itself a la fandoms and fan subcultures, or as an avenue through which audiences and participants of pop culture might attribute cultural ideologies, mores, and power dynamics. It is this second, discursive function of pop culture—its ability to spark conversations that extend beyond the content of the pop culture text itself—that is most important in considering its role in the divergent archive. For the sake of this chapter, I confine my analysis and case studies to late 20th and 21st century American films and television, largely because they are the most salient and commented upon forms of pop culture by androcentric counterpublics. Films and television (both programming and advertisements) enable a rhetorical space wherein androcentrics can identify with or explicitly disidentify from particular texts as representations of maleness, masculinity, and what they might describe as misandry. Moreover, films and television are likely more readily accessible and consumed by both androcentrics and publics at large than certain other forms of pop culture may be, writ both broadly (in terms of food, cultural practices, events, fashion) and in terms of particular pop culture texts designed for widespread consumption like comics, video games, and literary subgenres. To put it simply, what the groups most squarely in the center of androcentrism (men's rights activists, neomasculinists, redpill righters) complain most often and most bitterly about tends to appear in film and television. This is also the space in which they

have received the most attention, as for the Gillette ad mentioned at the beginning of this chapter and films like *Mad Max: Fury Road* that inspire vocal ire among androcentrics.

In talking about pop culture's role within the divergent archive and the function it plays in the collective memory narratives of counterpublics, it's important to recognize its potential relationship to identity and identification. As sites of both pleasure *and* politics, pop culture texts relate both to what people enjoy and identify with, as well as to depictions of the world, society, history, and life that people find ideal, acceptable, or accurate. As Street, Inthorn, and Scott (2013) describe in their study of young people's consumption of pop culture and its relationship to politics in the UK, "the potential to connect with others is one of the pleasures of popular culture. Young people spoke of using popular culture to affirm their ties with family and friends, but also to establish connections with distant others and locating themselves within wider communities of interest" (p. 104). Such a relationship to pop culture encourages a political identification with the characters, values, or situations presented, and that identification in turn solidifies identities that inspire individuals to participate in communities connected through pop culture texts. This identification results in a rhetorical alignment with others that Kenneth Burke (1968) describes as consubstantiation, the rhetorical process of identifying with specific individuals or groups—and thus implicitly rejecting other rhetorical identifications. These identifications through communities tethered to pop culture in turn can be, and often are, linked to particular publics, subpublics, enclaves, and counterpublics through the process of textual circulation (Warner, 2002).

Additionally, as Ebony Elizabeth Thomas explores in *The Dark Fantastic: Race and Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games* (2019), the absence of particular identities or the ability to identify with the characters and worlds located within pop culture texts—in

Thomas's book, Black audiences' inability to locate Black protagonists within fantastic and speculative pop culture—has its own extensive and damaging ramifications. Thomas describes these ramifications as an “imagination gap,” a corollary concept to ethnic achievement gaps in literacy and educational attainment, wherein “youth grow up without seeing diverse images in the mirrors, windows, and doors of children's and young adult's literature, they are confined to single stories about the world around them and, ultimately, the development of their imaginations is affected” (p. 6). As Street et al. and Thomas's work suggests, pop culture texts are connected to individuals' and collectives' conceptions of the world, its politics, and how they consubstantiate relationships to that world and those politics.

Pop culture, then, brings people together through representations of identity and ways of identification, and even sometimes through the formation of communities related to pop culture, referred to as fandoms. As these communities—which arguably function as collectives and subpublics/counterpublics—engage in the work of identification, they rhetorically come together to consubstantiate a reception of pop culture texts. This consubstantiative work, in turn, is related to the construction of collective memory in a variety of ways. Depending on the kind of pop culture text and its implications for history, memory, identity, and politics, pop culture can be incorporated or rejected by collectives and publics as elements of memory. While my case study focuses on films and television, almost any medium, genre, or mode of pop culture can have an effect on collective and public memories, including graphic novels (*Maus*, *Persepolis*), television (*American Crime Story: The People v. OJ Simpson*, *Chernobyl*), video games (*Call of Duty*, *Assassin's Creed*), and of course literature and nonfiction books (with examples too numerous to name). This is especially apparent in pop culture texts that actively engage with memories of historical figures or events in some way. For example, books (and their adaptations into films)

like Dan Brown's historical fiction thriller, *The Da Vinci Code* (Book, 2003; Film, 2006), take artistic license with history and memory, in this case, the life and crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the possibility that he had children with Mary Magdalene. While marketed as historical (and somewhat fantastic) fiction, the book and subsequent film were met with outrage by Christian protestors who felt their deeply personal relationship to collective memories of Christ were attacked by *The Da Vinci Code*'s portrayal of Christ's actions (specifically, his virginity) (Jones & Brown, 2006; Tang et al., 2006).

Similarly, though rooted in a different channel of memory, a number of recent American war films have participated in memorial—and rhetorical—constructions of historical figures and events. Films like Katherine Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* (2008) and *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), Clint Eastwood's *American Sniper* (2014), and Mel Gibson's *Hacksaw Ridge* (2016) represent salient figures and moments in American wars waged abroad (Iraq, Afghanistan, and World War II's Pacific Theater) and participate in the construction of public and collective memories of those wars and actors within them. Interestingly, some of these films also participate in meta-memory regarding the directors and reception of these films. For example, *American Sniper* is a biopic about Chris Kyle adapted from Kyle's memoir, *American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History* (2012), whose claims regarding lethality, medals, and his death at the hands of another veteran he was trying to help, are inextricably bound up with controversies regarding the Iraq War, conservative jingoism, gun rights, and claims that Kyle may have committed war crimes during his service in Iraq (Buckley, 2015; Reilly, 2016; West, 2015; Zurcher, 2015). The morass of cultural commentary both condemning and praising the film are entangled with Eastwood's open right-wing and Conservative views (to say nothing of his films' often narrow conceptions of masculinity) as well as ongoing conversations

regarding U.S. wars in the Middle East, treatment of returning veterans, and the Second Amendment (Kyle was killed at a shooting range).

Mel Gibson's film *Hacksaw Ridge* was less controversial for the figure and conflict it focused on, WWII conscientious objector and field medic Desmond Doss, and much more so for its work in setting up what might be described as a 'redemption tour' for Gibson, who was shunned by Hollywood after a series of racist, sexist, and anti-semitic statements and attacks came to light (Desta, 2017; O'Connor, 2010)²⁹. The film's heroic subject, memories transmitted, and generally warm reception belied the memory work that an award-winning film might do for Gibson's otherwise stalled career and (well deserved) tarnished reputation. Thus, pop culture texts function not only to engage in memories related to their subjects, but also the politics of their creation and creators. Of course, all of these filmic examples relate to memory and historical events or figures, but the same holds true for a number of other collective and public memories, particularly where identity is concerned, as Thomas's *The Dark Fantastic* indicates.

Pop culture, then, clearly plays a role in the rhetorics of recollection around collective and public memories. When collectives generate discourse around pop culture and its relationship to elements of identity, we can argue that they are engaging in the recursive process of consolidating that piece of pop culture into the 'stable' memory of the collective (Anastasio et al., 2012). In doing so, they engage in rhetorics of recollection, the rhetorical struggle over how to associate a memory to a disciplined, or realigned, framework of remembrance—"the cultural forms of memory and establishing frameworks for an official relation to the past" (Phillips, 2010). This process enables a collective to align a memory (pop culture text) within a framework

²⁹ It's worth noting here that both Eastwood's and Gibson's oeuvre has included a wide range of projects explicitly linked to historical memory and masculinity, including Eastwood's Westerns and Gibson's films like *The Patriot* (2000), *Braveheart* (1995), *Apocalypto* (2006), and most notably, *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).

(way of receiving and interpolating that pop culture text), entering it and the discourse it produces into a divergent archive. In this way, pop culture texts become archival artifacts through their relationship to collective memories, while also serving as useful prompts or rhetorical spaces through which a collective (particularly a counterpublic) can attempt to shift their collective memories into public ones, granting those memories legibility and legitimacy. This process exemplifies the procedural, rhetorical qualities of the divergent archive: the establishment of an extra-institutional, community archive that exists in order to attempt to transmute particular (in this case, aspirational or imagined) collective memories of oppression, exclusion, or injustice into public memories.

An illustrative example of this is the Gillette commercial advertisement I discuss at the beginning of this chapter. The commercial (the image of the memory, here about boys’/mens’ toxic masculine behavior) is taken up by androcentric collectives as an example of misandry and gynocentrism (the framework of remembrance). As they consolidate that collective memory as part of an ‘archive of misandry,’ they then turn the discourse outward as a counterpublic, using the memory the commercial invokes—in their eyes, a declaration of war against men and masculinity—to engage in a rhetoric of recollection with other subpublics and publics. The outcome of that rhetorical struggle is debatable and likely depends on a variety of perspectives related to the subpublics, counterpublics, and collectives that an individual belongs to. Conservatives and androcentrics may view the ‘public’ memory of the Gillette commercial as a gigantic failure for leftists, feminists, and a validation of the ‘go woke get broke’ slogan popular among alt-right subpublics, while feminists and Liberals see the vexed response to the commercial as evidence of the fragile masculinity and reactionary outrage that they believe characterizes androcentrics and right-wing political groups more generally.

This divergence in the assessment of the accuracy and worth of the memories around masculine behavior and maleness as presented in the Gillette commercial is representative of Kendall R. Phillip's broader claim that for rhetoric, the greater issue is not the loss of memory, but a *surplus* of memories that each recall the same memory differently (2010). This anxiety around the multiplicity of memory applies just as keenly to the memory work that pop culture texts engage in and make possible. Pop culture and collective memory are "peculiarly linked," as George Lipsitz (1990) explains in *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (p. vii). Indeed, Lipsitz acknowledges "how the infinitely renewable present of electronic mass media creates a crisis for collective memory, and how collective memory decisively frames the production and reception of commercial culture" (1990, p. vii). Pop culture enables us to have an abundance of memory brought right to our living rooms but in doing so, endangers a notion of 'authentic' memory experienced firsthand, documented, and passed down generationally rather than through a medium.

Moreover, the plethora of pop culture and platforms through which memories can be filmed, documented, and recounted ad nauseam make it difficult to discern what, if anything, we should make an effort to actually *remember*, a crisis exacerbated by the potential to archive everything (Brown & Davis-Brown, 1998; Nora, 1989). If everything is remembered and archived, then arguably nothing really is; the inability to distinguish between memories we should retain and ones we should forget renders the distinction between remembering and forgetting seemingly arbitrary. These concerns are complicated even more by the capacity of the internet to document even 'ephemeral' websites through projects like The Wayback Machine, a digital archive of webpages, some now defunct. However, collective memory also dictates the conditions within which we create, distribute, and discuss the mass media that imperils the very

notion of ‘official’ memory, not to mention being the most visible and potentially wide-reaching avenue through which memory is transmitted. This means that even as we create texts that engage in memory work, we are always already affected by the frameworks of remembrance that surround us. There is no true, original representation of memory.

These anxieties are most visible when they erupt publicly as battles for how particular events should be remembered, or sometimes, how we codify what ways of acting are acceptable within public spaces. As Barbara Biesecker (2006) elaborates in “Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention,” the public recounting of memory within popular exhibits can lead to contestations over the ‘right’, ‘proper’, or ‘acceptable’ way to remember an event. Biesecker makes this argument through the example of a 50th-anniversary exhibit of the flight of the Enola Gay and the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which prompted a controversy around whether it was ‘unpatriotic’ to remember the full scale of the devastation and to suggest U.S. culpability for the dropping of atomic bombs. What is at stake is not simply the accuracy of the collective memory, but rhetorical battles over the ‘rightness’ of the exhibit in a moral sense, prompting outcry over whether conveying the literal fallout and aftermath of the bombs was ‘unpatriotic’ versus focusing on the exhibit as a celebration of U.S. military valor (Biesecker, 2006). Biesecker’s work points toward the fraught nature of how archives and the collective memories contained and evoked therein might be contested both for the narratives they convey *and* the collective memories’ framing that audiences and publics may bring to them. As I’ve acknowledged through my examples in this chapter, pop culture texts are just as likely to spark debates and controversies around the representation and transmission of particular strains of collective memory in relation to certain publics and subpublics. This is often due to their mass consumption and wide appeal to a variety of collectives and publics, and, among particular kinds

of pop culture, ‘artistic license’ around historical events or historical fiction (itself a product of a rhetorical recollection that chooses purposefully to remember differently).

One consistently useful example of the inability to escape memory in receiving and critiquing memories transmitted by pop culture is the neomasculinist website *Return of Kings*’ (*ROK*) anxiety over *Mad Max: Fury Road*. The consternation around the film and the call to boycott it emerges partially from the radical potential of its representation of gender dynamics and imagined post-apocalyptic relationships to masculinity and femininity—particularly the agency, toughness, and subjectivity displayed by Charlize Theron’s character, Furiosa. These gender dynamics and sex roles, despite their representation within a thoroughly fictional—if realistic—universe don’t just relate a story about post-apocalyptic car chases to *ROK*. They are received through a context wherein Furiosa and several of the other female characters, as well as *Mad Max*, reflect a ‘feminist’ vision in which women are tough and capable and men compliant and acquiescent, which is largely how Clarey describes Max’s behavior in the film based solely on the film’s trailer.

This is not necessarily an inaccurate reading, if an uncharitably angry one. But what inflames Clarey and the other members of *ROK*’s anger is that their collective memory narratives construct a framework where the ‘feminist’ vision of *Fury Road* is an attack upon their brand of masculinity and maleness; in a word, misandry. *ROK*’s own collective memory narrative frameworks regarding ‘traditional’ forms of maleness, femaleness, masculinity, and femininity are what enable them to feel and express such alarm regarding *Fury Road*. This public collision of competing collective memory narratives struggling to become public memories—the one the film promotes, where women are agentive, capable, and even badass, and the one that Clarey and *ROK* brings to the text, where it is unrealistic, even (to their minds) offensive to portray women

this way—is indicative of how pop culture functions as a site of collective memory transmission and contestation among the rhetorical recollection of publics and counterpublics.

As noted earlier, Stuart Hall (1981) reminds us that pop culture should not be considered a process of one-directional consumption, however. The fact that *Return of Kings* and *A Voice for Men*, both androcentric websites (albeit with slightly different androcentric philosophies) *disagreed* on whether *Mad Max: Fury Road* was emblematic of misogyny and gynocentrism or actually exposing and reifying notions of misogyny makes this apparent. As Hall (1981) argues, pop culture texts are consumed and understood on a number of levels, where there are points of “resistance” as well as moments of “supercession” (p. 187). Hall’s argument essentially establishes the rhetorical nature of pop culture consumption, a process that must be wrestled with and brought to some kind of agreement. This also holds for how collective memory narratives are conveyed through pop culture; in the previous chapter, I discussed the kairotic nature of collective memories among counterpublics, and how the procedure of consolidating collective memories represents a recursive, rhetorical process. Indeed, much of the consternation around popular culture often has to do with the collective memory narratives it can convey, as well as how collective memories themselves frame those texts’ consumption. In an era of widespread access to mass media pop culture, publics and counterpublics sometimes find pop culture texts more influential to memory than historical scholarship, archives, and ‘official’ or institutionally-sanctioned (usually by the state) public memory.

Pop culture, then, serves as both an artifact of collective memory—an example of a particular discourse solidified in a piece of media—as well as a rhetorical site for the contestation of a counterpublic’s collective memory—an occasion for rhetorics of recollection to come to the fore. So, for example, the Gillette 2019 “Best a Man Can Be” ad functions

simultaneously as a catalyst for rhetorical contestation over gender roles, appropriate male behavior, and toxic masculinity, as well as a public(ish) ‘record’ that can be used as an artifact or archival material. Men’s rights collectives can—and do—come back to pieces of pop culture in a similar way to how cultural studies scholars might (though obviously with a less expert and critical eye, and for more self-serving reasons) when they look at pop culture texts as indicators of cultural or social practices, hegemonic forces, and ideologies; in this case, androcentrics assert (somewhat paradoxically) that feminist attitudes regarding toxic masculinity are misandrist and that business campaigns built on such attitudes will fail due to the backlash of ‘oppressed’ men, a notion that anti-social justice minded groups have pithily labeled “go woke, get broke.”³⁰

Moreover, the Gillette ad itself serves as a rhetorical site to focus on a discourse regarding the collective memories at play here, and how they might become consubstantiated into public memories. In this case, the notion that boys and mens’ masculinities and gendered behaviors have come under attack by feminists and social justice groups. The anxieties and complexities that surround pop culture texts make them useful, if unstable, elements of a divergent archive’s attempt to legitimize and make legible a counterpublic’s collective memories. Those collective memories, of course, are consistently encouraged by a counterpublic’s attempts to move them from merely being collective memories and to being public memories; pop culture merely presents one rhetorical avenue through which this might be possible.

³⁰ Of course, this is a paradox; androcentrics claim to lack social power or standing as men due to misandrist and gynocentric attitudes, but in the same breath declare that they can (and will) topple business/corporate interests that align themselves with feminist or social justice agendas. If androcentrics were truly as oppressed as they claim, they would lack the capacity to overthrow what they view as the domineering forces of feminism. This paradox carries through to many androcentric claims and more broadly to claims about crises of masculinity/maleness, as I note throughout this dissertation.

Across the rest of this chapter, I examine two case studies, one from the 1980s androcentric organization Men's Rights, Inc., and the other *Return of Kings'* 2015 boycott of *Mad Max: Fury Road*, in order to explore how pop culture texts function as both artifact of and site for collective memory rhetorically positioned as public memory for androcentric counterpublics.

ANDROCENTRIC COUNTERPUBLICS AND MISANDRY IN POP CULTURE

If a collective operating as a counterpublic consistently seeks kairotic opportunities to convince other publics' members of the legibility and legitimacy of their collective memories, then it follows that the materials curated and composed for those archives continually frame the subject of collective memory narratives through an engagement with contemporary popular culture. Moreover, because androcentrics have often co-opted feminist rhetoric in their attempts to convince publics of their marginalized status, and feminists have critiqued certain pop culture texts as evidence of misogyny, it is natural that androcentric counterpublics also approach pop culture texts as evidence of misandry. Nathanson and Young's *Spreading Misandry* (2001) is a key example of this work, a piece of pseudo-scholarship which argues pop culture is a space for sowing seeds of misandry through popular representations of men and boys. However, pop culture is also at the epicenter of a number of backlashes led by White, angry men who feel "social justice warriors" have hijacked their precious pieces of pop culture. Reactions to and staunch critiques of certain pop culture texts by androcentric counterpublics—or subpublics that overlap with androcentric concerns regarding Whiteness, maleness, and heterosexuality—have spawned controversies across a wide array of media, including films, (the all-female, 2016 *Ghostbusters*), television ads (the 2018 Gillette ad and those 'cited' by Men's Rights, Inc., discussed below), science fiction literature (the White, male backlash regarding the Hugo awards

in 2014-15 referred to as the ‘Sad Puppies’ controversy), and video games (GamerGate), to name but a few (Dewey, 2014; Rott, 2014; Waldman, 2015; Dvorak, 2016; Shoard, 2016; Sims, 2016).

I analyze here two texts from the androcentric divergent archive that illustrate a means through which counterpublics document events, ephemera, and pop culture texts as part of a divergent archive, as well as how those texts serve as sites for the transmission of collective memory and its attempted transference into public memory. These texts—the “Men’s Rights (MR) Media Watch,” a press release-style list of lauded and shamed advertisements produced by Men’s Rights, Inc. (MR, Inc.) in the late 1980s and *Return of Kings*’ critique of and attempt to boycott *Mad Max: Fury Road* in the summer of 2015—serve as documentation of androcentric counterpublics’ long history of utilizing pop culture as evidence of misandry. Almost thirty years separates the MR Media Watch awards and more current instances of androcentric memorialization, such as the 2015 boycott of *Mad Max: Fury Road*. What these texts have in common, however, is their function as pieces of an archive composed and circulated to persuade members of other publics of a collective memory narrative in which men are often depicted as expendable, easily manipulated, and villainous in relation to the “positive” representation of women.



[Image 5: “MR, Inc. Logo”]

A brief description of Men's Rights, Inc. (MR, Inc.) provides some historical context for the organization and its awards. A "tax-exempt corporation begun in 1977" with offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Sacramento, California, MR, Inc. was "concerned with sexism and men's problems. The basic philosophy behind its work is that the provider and protector roles have dehumanized, damaged, and limited men in ways as serious and pervasive as the reproducer (sex object) and child socializer (motherhood) roles have done to women" (Hayward, "MR, Inc. is concerned," n.d., n.p.). Founded by Fredric Hayward, a longtime men's rights activist, MR, Inc. continued operating throughout the 1980s and 90s, allying itself with other men's rights groups like Free Men and participating in the National Congress for Men. With Hayward at the helm, Men's Rights, Inc. confronted a number of issues that they saw as detrimental to the welfare of men in the U.S., including gender differentials in insurance rates, business policies like 'ladies nights,' father's and divorce rights, and 'male bashing' in popular culture and media (Hayward, "MR, Inc. is concerned," n.p.). Attempts to develop awareness around male bashing led to the "MR Media Watch Awards."



is concerned with sex and men's equality

JANUARY 1989/Immediate Release

Men's Rights, Inc.

P.O. Box 163180
Sacramento, CA 95816
(916) 484-7333

Contact: FRED HAYWARD

NEWS

* * * ANNOUNCING: * * *
* * THE THIRD ANNUAL AWARDS FOR * * *
* THE BEST & WORST IN ADVERTISING *

The MR MEDIA WATCH reports that advertisers are beginning to respect the male consumer. Some have even dared to show female faults. (Last year's survey of 1000 ads found that every jerk singled out in a male-female relationship was the male.) The MR MEDIA WATCH will work with you to produce highly visual coverage of this story.

The Men's Watch Media Watch (MR MEDIA WATCH) was created in 1984 to improve the image of men in the media. This year's awards ceremony was held at the National Congress for Men in Chicago, IL. The selection committee was drawn from the print medium, the broadcast medium, and the anti-sexist movement.

Awards for the BEST:

BEST in BROADCAST

BUDWEISER (ANHEUSER-BUSCH) for a powerful portrayal of love between father and son.

BEST in PRINT

LIQUIPRIN (NORCLIFF-THAYER) for the most creative advertising reminder that fathers, too, are loving and caring parents.

BEST COMBINED CAMPAIGN

PURE & NATURAL (DIAL CORP.) for their adorable ads of a father bathing his infant. These ads received more individual nominations from MR MEDIA WATCHERS than any other campaign in the history of our competition.

BEST PUBLIC SERVICE

Some people still think a parent must have breasts before being able to care for a child. THE NATIONAL EASTER SEAL SOCIETY reminded us that a father doesn't even have to have hands to keep his baby happy, healthy, loved, and well-fed.

Citations for the WORST:

When SCOTT PAPER backed out on its promise last year to end sexist advertising for BABY-FRESH, we decided to name an award after them. This year, they backed out again, so it is only fitting that THE FIRST ANNUAL SCOTT AWARD FOR LACK OF INTEGRITY goes to...SCOTT.

PAMPERS for this year's sexist print and video slogan, "All the dryness a mother can give." Among the thousands of pages that feminists have written about sexism in language, it is never mentioned that mothers give birth and breastfeed, but parents change diapers and raise children."

STAY-PUT SHOULDER PADS for a dehumanizing print ad which said: "They're like a good man: a little bold, a little square, around when you need them, and they stay put....[T]hey never lose their shape. Which is more than you can say for most men."

BILL COSBY, self-proclaimed anti-sexist, for a Jello commercial whose voiceover states: "Moms love it 'cause it's made with milk. Kids just love it." When the hypocritical Cosby did EF Hutton commercials, would he have tolerated a voiceover saying: "Dads love it because it earns money for your family"?

NUTRI-GRAIN for consistently portraying men as ignorant and/or at the mercy of women in commercials for NUTRI-GRAIN cereal and EGGO-NUTRI-GRAIN WAFFLES.

NYQUIL for stabbing men in the back. The good news is that NYQUIL created the first health product commercial where it was the woman who suffered and the man who knew what to do. The bad news is that it was also the first commercial where the one who did know what to do (the man) did nothing to help the sick one (the woman). In fact, he even smiled as she continued suffering.

GRAPE NUTS for creating the most obnoxious couple of the 80's. The woman would rather die than give him some positive feedback, and he never seems to tire of her abuse.

FORD for its objectifying video commercial for FORD RANGER. Not only did a series of women reject "Biff" because he drove the "wrong" truck, but he remained totally friendless and isolated.

The DIAMOND industry for its escalating harassment of men. Their recent print campaign encouraged women to be even more demanding that men spend large sums of money in order to buy relationships.

The MR Media Watch Awards (MR standing for ‘Men’s Rights’) were a series of press release-style newsletters distributed to the members of Men’s Rights, Inc. The “Awards for Best & Worst in Advertising” were a part of the Men’s Rights Media Watch, a group created within Men’s Rights Inc. in 1984 “to improve the image of men in the media” (Men’s Rights, Inc., 1989). There were “best” and “worst” awards for print and broadcast media, and they tended to focus on the role of fathers and husbands, which is unsurprising given both advertising’s focus on parents and (heterosexual) married couples, alongside Men’s Rights, Inc.’s concerns with father’s and divorce rights (longstanding planks of many androcentric counterpublic organizations).

The MR Media Watch Awards for 1988 is a simple document printed in black and white in a seemingly standard press release format. The document features the Men’s Rights, Inc. logo at top left and organizational contact information on the upper right, listing Fred Hayward as the primary contact. In large bold lettering running vertically up the page is the word “NEWS,” and under the title “Announcing: The Third Annual Awards for The Best & Worst in Advertising,” there is an update from the MR Media Watch report stating that “advertisers are beginning to respect the male consumer” and that some advertisers “even dared to show female faults” (n.p.). After an explanation of the history of the Men’s Rights Media Watch group (what is likely a typo in the release calls it “The Men’s Watch Media Watch”) and a mention of the 1988 awards ceremony, held at the “National Congress for Men in Chicago, IL.,” the awards are listed, with the “Awards for the BEST” (emphasis original) listed on the first page and the “Citations for the WORST” (emphasis original) located on the second page (n.p.).

The awards for the Third Annual MR Media Watch follow predictable patterns; the winners of awards include Budweiser (Anheuser-Busch) “for a powerful portrayal of love

between father and son”, Liquiprin, for “the most creative advertising reminder that fathers, too, are loving and caring parents” and Dial’s Pure & Natural campaign for “their adorable ads of a father bathing his infant” (n.p.). This singular focus on portrayals of caring fatherhood for the awards taps into a specific collective memory narrative regarding the stereotype of the cold and uncaring father or ‘deadbeat dad’ that androcentric counterpublic organizations like MR, Inc. saw a need to combat (Hayward, 1985; Feuer, 1986; Nathanson & Young, 2001). A major plank of many androcentric counterpublic organizations was communicating the harmful effects of what they saw as sexist stereotypes of fathers, particularly the trope of the ‘deadbeat dad,’ while simultaneously arguing against the notion that women were caring, devoted mothers by default (Hayward, 1987). This other side of collective memory narratives regarding fatherhood and misandry—that a woman should not be assumed to be the primary caregiver over a father—is made apparent in the MR Media Watch’s citations for the worst in advertising. Men’s rights activism of the 1980s particularly wanted to encourage a public memory of fathers possessing equal (or greater) responsibility in caring for and parenting children, regardless of the reality.

Notably, the MR Media Watch gave far more citations than awards in 1988; there are four “award” categories mentioned, one for broadcast advertising, one for print advertising, one for “Best Combined Campaign,” and one for “Best Public Service” (n.p.) In contrast, there are a total of nine citations for worst in advertising, many of which ignore the humorous or ironic intent of the advertisements. These include Pampers, for “this year’s sexist print and video slogan, ‘All the dryness a mother can give’ ” (emphasis original), Stay-Put Shoulder Pads for a “dehumanizing print ad which said: ‘They’re like a good man: a little bold, a little square, around when you need them, and they stay put...[T]hey never lose their shape. Which is more than you can say for most men”, and Ford for “its objectifying video commercial for FORD RANGER.

Not only did a series of women reject ‘Biff’ because he drove the ‘wrong’ truck, but he remained totally friendless and isolated” (n.p.). The citations represent a wide range of attitudes that androcentric counterpublic members point to as validating supposedly public memory narratives of male bashing and misogyny, like the assumption that women/mothers are primary caregivers for infants; that women are allowed to generalize male behavior and express dissatisfaction publicly about a man’s physical appearance; and that it is socially acceptable for women to reject male attention on the basis of material possessions.

For members of the MR Media Watch and androcentric counterpublics, then, these ads did not just function as humorous, tasteful, or offensive attempts to sell products; rather, they signified within a framework of remembrance recalling the prevalence and severity of male bashing and anti-male sexism. That is, these ads reflected memories through a rhetorical lens that androcentric counterpublic members identified with, feeling publicly mocked and ridiculed purely on the basis of their gender (whether or not those memories were substantiated) and serving as a marker for the lack of concern for the feelings of men as a whole. Those collective memory narratives of the frequency and lack of attention to male bashing, in turn, tapped into other frameworks of remembrance that articulated a tragic and persistent decline of masculinity and loss of power by men that must be resisted (Wertsch, 2008; Kimmel, 2013). The MR Media Watch’s discussion of the awards also indicates their status not merely as artifacts proving the existence of misogyny, but also as a clear rhetorical site for a discourse *on* misogyny. That is, these ads and MR Media Watch’s memorialization of them opened a space for publics beyond androcentrics to hear about these ads as misogynist, prompting individuals outside androcentric counterpublics to identify with the rhetorical assertion that men were discriminated against within advertising.

The process of documenting the Media Watch's report and publicizing it via an awards ceremony and newsletter also served the purposes of establishing what Tasha Dubriwny (2005) calls a "collective rhetoric" (p. 396), enabling counterpublic members to participate in communal sharing and exchanging experiences and instances of male bashing as they occurred in popular culture and which androcentric counterpublic members felt went unspoken in public. This collective rhetoric served the purpose of more clearly identifying the counterpublic's discursive arguments regarding what qualified as male bashing, strengthening the counterpublic's discourse as a whole. But the documentation of the awards/citations and the awards ceremony itself also enact a memorialization of male bashing, both accounting for anti-male advertisements over the past year or more (given the annual nature of the awards) and preserving for the future a record of what ads the counterpublic felt participated in male bashing practices and attitudes. The documentation and ceremony show participation in divergent archival practices, attempts to preserve and maintain records of androcentric counterpublics' discursive worries. This is further indicated in the document's inclusion in the MSU Changing Men Collections, an explicitly curatorial choice made to preserve the history of Men's Rights, Inc.

The decision to document and circulate a list of awards and citations for advertisements in 1988 speaks to androcentric counterpublics' attempts to tap into (or generate) a kairotic moment for a collective-turned-public memory narrative suggesting that men—especially White men—were the recipients of a double-standard regarding who could and could not be publicly mocked. Hayward, himself the founder of MR, Inc., wrote multiple articles and op-eds and gave a number of interviews across the 1980s and early 90s on the subject (D'alcomo, 1978; Fripp, 1980; Price, 1993). He stated in a fall 1989 piece for *Media & Values* that "[b]y far, 'male bashing' is the most popular topic in my current talk shows and interviews," and that "[t]he trend

is particularly rampant in advertising. In a survey of a thousand random advertisements, 100 percent of the jerks singled out in male-female relationships were male” (p. 16). Hayward and other men’s rights activists’ attempts to make the issue of male bashing a public conversation prompted discussion of the depiction of men in advertisements and other popular culture, simultaneously tapping into and helping to generate a kairotic moment adjacent to the ‘backlash’ against feminism in the late 1980s and early 90s. Fittingly, when androcentric counterpublic’s discourse around the representation of men in media has been taken up, Men’s Rights, Inc. and similar groups were prepared with long lists of examples of male bashing across a great deal of time (whether in pop culture or in their ephemeral, personal experiences) that they circulated, drawing those collective memory narratives into a kairotic position.

MR, Inc.’s use of the MR Media Watch awards present a way of interpreting and remembering advertisements as evidence of a collective memory narrative of male bashing, a narrative that they used an archive of materials—including the ads themselves and past awards ceremonies—as both artifact and site for a rhetoric of recollection on the mocking of boys and men. This practice has continued even as androcentric counterpublics across time have grown, shifted, and redefined themselves over the past few decades. My opening anecdote, Aaron Clarey’s article for the neomasculinist website *Return of Kings*, “Why You Should Not Go See ‘Mad Max: Feminist Road,’” is a connected instance of androcentric counterpublics’ use of pop culture, in this case an upcoming and highly marketed film, as evidence for what they perceive as widespread misandry. That text (encompassing the marketing of *Fury Road*, conversations around the film, and the film itself) is linked to an archive filled with memorial associations to other texts which, when compiled, serve a divergent archive intended to expose the pervasive tenure of misandry in Western societies.

Return of Kings, created by the site’s publisher and editor, Roosh Valizadeh, differs from men’s rights groups like Men’s Rights, Inc. for a number of reasons. While Men’s Rights, Inc. and its allied organizations were far from progressive bastions of social justice in the 1980s and beyond, many members of those androcentric counterpublics were careful to assert that men’s rights either saw themselves as taking up a mantle combating sexism that feminism refused, or perhaps even exceeding feminism in fighting sexism against both men and women (Hayward, 1981). Rhetorically, most men’s rights organizations have positioned themselves as being concerned about ‘gender equality,’ and not simply issues that affect men. Neomasculinists, on the other hand, draw from a darker, more openly toxic well.

The “ROK Community Beliefs” on their “About” page include deterministic and reductive ideas about gender/sex: “Men and women are genetically different, both physically and mentally. Sex roles evolved in all mammals. Humans are not exempt” and “Men will opt out of monogamy and reproduction if there are no incentives to engage in them”; advocate for the objectification of women: “[a] woman’s value significantly depends on her fertility and beauty. A man’s value significantly depends on his resources, intellect, and character” and “[e]limination of traditional sex roles and the promotion of unlimited mating choice in women unleashes their promiscuity and other negative behaviors that block family formation”; and anti-progressivism: “[s]ocialism, feminism, cultural Marxism, and social justice warriorism aim to destroy the family unit, decrease the fertility rate, and impoverish the state through large welfare entitlements” (Valizadeh, 2017, n.p.). Where most men’s rights activists maintain at least a veneer of concern for gender equality, neomasculinists wholeheartedly embrace an ideology intended to benefit only White, Western, cis-and-heterosexual men. I group them together under the term androcentric counterpublics because while their rhetoric and membership may differ

(neomasculinists seem to skew younger than more traditional men’s rights activists), their primary concerns and agendas—the decline and supposed oppression of men in Western, Anglophone societies—and their main opponents, feminists and liberal social justice activists, are remarkably similar.

Aaron Clarey, a regular contributor to *ROK*, identifies himself as “Captain Capitalism,” the “resident economist of the mano/androsphere” and is an apparently prolific author, having written the self-published non-fiction books *Enjoy the Decline* (2013), *Worthless* (2011), *Bachelor Pad Economics* (2013), and *The Black Man’s Guide Out Of Poverty* (2015). Penning articles like “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story’ Promises to Be An SJW Sermon Against White Males,” (2016) and “It’s Becoming Too Dangerous For College Males To Date Girls On Campus,” (2016) Clarey often comments on popular culture, neomasculinist relationship advice, and economic issues for *ROK*. In “Why You Should Not Go See ‘Mad Max: Feminist Road,’” Clarey (2015) details his initial excitement for the film, only to realize while watching its trailers that “Charlize Theron kept showing up a lot in the trailers, while Tom Hardy (Mad Max) seemed to have cameo appearances” (n.p.). His suspicions reach a nadir when “Charlize Theron’s character barked orders to Mad Max,” because “[n]obody barks orders to Mad Max” (n.p.). Upon further investigation, Clarey discovers that George Miller consulted Eve Ensler for the film’s depiction of sex slaves and his fears are confirmed when *Time* declares Theron’s character, Furiosa, as the star of *Fury Road* (Dockterman, 2015). From here, the article becomes a diatribe against the hijacking of Hollywood by feminism, the ruination of young women (as sexual objects for men) by ‘conditioning’ them to be like “Furiosa’ and not Sophia Loren” and the “extents Hollywood and the director of *Fury Road* went to trick [Clarey] and other men into seeing this movie” (n.p.).

The article's call to boycott *Fury Road*, like the MR Media Watch Awards, recalls a number of collective memory narratives prominent in androcentric counterpublics, including the notion that men are being/have been sidelined culturally, socially, and economically, as well as the feminist 'takeover' of industries like Hollywood and the government, lessening male influence in important institutions—concerns that are considered to be part and parcel of misandry. Such collective memory narratives articulate a fear of the lessening influence and visibility of men (White men, in particular) on cultural and social stages, including film, television, and advertisements. Clarey's call to boycott *Fury Road* functions not only as a warning to resist the allure of "feminist propaganda" wrapped in cool effects like "fire tornadoes and explosions," but as documentation of misandry from an industry androcentric counterpublics have long believed to be "infiltrated and co-opted" by feminism (n.p.). The rhetorical construction of *Fury Road* as an example of pop culture engaging in misandry as it appears on *RoK* constitutes a divergent archive on the website. This places it in line with other articles regarding how supposedly feminized publics use their outreach to continue to peddle ideas that promote, in *RoK*'s mind, the weakening of men and Western masculinity.

Roosh Valizadeh's response to the attention and outcry over Clarey's article cements the notion of reading *Fury Road* as an instance of anti-male sexism as well as the film and Clarey's response to it serving as both an artifact for the androcentric divergent archive and a site for a rhetoric of recollection around misandry. In Valizadeh's (2015) follow-up, "Our Call To Boycott Mad Max Movie Spurs Avalanche Of Mainstream Media Anger," he details how the original article had "not blown up organically through social networking, like our previous viral articles, but through deliberate and simultaneous promotion in the Anglosphere media" and that much of the journalism covering Clarey's article incorrectly labeled *Return of Kings* as a men's rights site

(which, technically speaking, it is not) (n.p.). Valizadeh mocks the negative headlines, pointing out “how similar the articles are to each other,” proof in his mind that “[t]he media we have is one full of ‘journalists’ who essentially plagiarize each other without adding any additional reporting or value,” and suggesting that the feminist-dominated mainstream media is conspiratorial and full of hack journalism (n.p.). Most importantly, Valizadeh is proud of the attention in the hopes that a few men “will encounter another movie in the future that portrays women as so comically masculine that they can’t help but remember the site with the word Kings in the title that described that very phenomenon. Once these individuals reject the existing narrative, they already know where to go for more answers” (n.p.).

Valizadeh’s response reflects the collective memory narratives prominent in Clarey’s boycott article, namely the diminishing influence of men in cultural and social environments, as well as the notion of a ‘gynocentric’ (female-hegemonic) society where mainstream journalism, Hollywood, and other institutions are dominated by feminist ideologies, to the detriment of (White, Western, cis-and-heterosexual) men. Rhetorically, Valizadeh justifies the idea of *Fury Road* as part of a long string of Hollywood films that sideline and denigrate male characters in favor of impossible female ones in his hope that men seeing such films in the future will return to *ROK*. He even goes so far as to suggest parts of the androcentric divergent archive for such men to start with, providing a link to the “Top 35 Most Important Articles On ROK” (2015). In giving visitors this starting point, Valizadeh links the collective memory narratives important to *ROK* and androcentric counterpublics more broadly to the material produced on his website. Though not a traditional archive by any means, websites like *Return of Kings* serve as introductions to the collective memory narratives that androcentric counterpublics intone, affirming them as a divergent archive. In the response article, Valizadeh even positions *ROK* as more nuanced than

mainstream journalism, pointing to mainstream journalists' lack of distinction between men's rights activists and neomasculinists. In doing so, Valizadeh also provides justification for why the collective memory of misandry that *ROK* espouses should be picked up and embraced as public memory.

Though Clarey's article and Valizadeh's response function differently than the MR Media Watch Awards document, they similarly attempt to tap into and/or generate *kairos* around the collective memory narratives they construct by using contemporary pop culture: print and broadcast advertisements and *Mad Max: Fury Road*. By pointing to a text that reifies their collective memory narratives in the current moment to indicate its kairotic nature, the MR, Inc. Media Watch, Clarey, and Valizadeh engage in what Sheridan, Michel, & Ridolfo (2012) call the "struggle between rhetors and their contexts" (p. 21). Organizing an awards/citations ceremony and a boycott around *Fury Road* through a viral digital article, these rhetors made rhetorical and kairotic decisions about their contexts. *ROK* has a network of individuals sharing articles and hoping to make them go viral. But Clarey's article did not spread solely through normal networks, as it was likely found and shared on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms, largely as part of an effort to mock and ridicule Clarey's call for a boycott. As Valizadeh cannily notes, the mainstream media coverage given to the article multiplied the page's views exponentially, promoting androcentric counterpublic collective memory narratives to a broader audience than they would normally receive. Similarly, the MR, Inc. Media Watch's public attempts to alter what advertisers and their publics thought of as anti-male sexism generated a large amount of attention from news outlets, amplifying the audience for their rhetoric. This 'virality' only serves to underscore how both of these examples of pop culture texts function as both artifacts *and* sites for the construction and transmission of androcentric

collective memory, in the hopes that such memory becomes accepted by broader publics and thus rendering the androcentric divergent archive legible and legitimate.

The MR Media Watch and *ROK*'s call to boycott *Mad Max: Fury Road* are indicative of how pop culture texts can function as artifacts within the androcentric divergent archive that 'prove' the existence of misandry. At the same time, the occasion of these pop culture texts provide a site for disseminating androcentric discourses around misandry and gynocentrism, prompted by the public conversations pop culture texts generate. By participating in these conversations and pointing individuals toward the concepts—and ultimately, towards the androcentric divergent archive—androcentric counterpublics not only memorialize certain pop culture texts as artifacts, but kairotically attempt to transmit their collective memories of misandry and gynocentrism into public memories. That is, they seek to engage in a rhetoric of recollection that remembers these pieces of pop culture not as entertainment, but as instances of anti-male sexism. In doing so, they continue to co-opt rhetorics and frameworks of remembrance established by feminists and other social justice-oriented counterpublics, who point to pop culture as a means of observing misogyny and other forms of discrimination, stereotyping, and bigotry.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I've argued that pop culture functions as both an artifact for inclusion within a divergent archive and as sites for the potential construction and transmission of a collective memory belonging to a specific counterpublic. Those collective memories are rhetorically positioned by such counterpublics toward other subpublics and publics, in an attempt to transform their collective memory into a more stable and widely recalled public memory. This occurs through a combination of the consolidation of collective memories alongside Kendall R.

Phillip's concept of 'rhetorics of recollection,' or the struggle for the framework through which we remember a given memory. These struggles are constantly present in conversations around pop culture. For example, a multiplicity of memory regarding *Mad Max: Fury Road* means that it can be remembered as a successful, feminist action film that treats its female characters as agentive and capable, *or* it can be remembered as a piece of misandrist propaganda that skews gender dynamics in unrealistic ways, as androcentrics have argued. Because of the complex way that individuals and collectives react to pop culture, it's unlikely that there will ever be any one definitive reading of a pop culture text, particularly because its political and cultural implications may function differently than the pleasure an audience might derive from it. What is clear, however, is that pop culture texts are a prominent part of the divergent archive, particularly as counterpublics seek to make their collective memories into public memories.

CONCLUSION: UNFINAL SHAPES

“You think: I could get to hate these people; and then: I can never do these people justice; and finally: I shall never get it done.”

-Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*

Any conclusion to this dissertation must begin with the admission that the shape this project takes is, in so many necessary and unsatisfying ways, unfinished and unfinal. What I’ve attempted to do here is develop a set of theories for the process of how collectives that are either in or imagine themselves to be in a position of counterpublicity work to rhetorically transform their collective memories into public memories. They do so, I argue, through the collection and curation of artifacts, texts, and documents to compose their own ad hoc community archives: a ‘divergent archive.’ Additionally, I take as my case study for this project a collective that has largely escaped the scrutiny of public rhetoric scholars: androcentrics, or the collection of male-oriented groups, organizations, and affiliations that defend masculine hegemony and actively oppose feminism and social justice activism. Through this case study, I examined the composition and purpose of divergent archives, the rhetorical liabilities that such archives can produce—what I call ‘shadows’—the role of *kairos* in the construction of a divergent archive and transmission of collective memories, and the function of popular culture texts as both artifact and discursive site for divergent counterpublics. It probably need not be said, though I’ll say it here anyway, that this dissertation barely scratches the surface of both public rhetorical processes for consolidating and conveying memory, as well as the rhetoric of androcentric collectives. This is but a beginning to a great many things that could be said on both of these topics.

I am aware of the many avenues and permutations that this dissertation could—and in some cases, perhaps, should—have taken. For example, this project does not adequately address the role of Whiteness both in the formation of these groups and in the rhetorical defense of White

(male) hegemonic memory. A more expansive and focused critical race studies lens could bring much to this project's assertions that many groups imagining themselves into positions of counterpublicity do so in part to defend aggrieved senses of entitlement around deeply troubling hierarchies of race, ethnicity, and nationality in addition to gender. It is my hope that future projects undertaken by myself or others can explore how collective (and in many ways, public) memories like 'the boy crisis' in education, police and carceral repression of and violence against male subjects, or concerns over false sexual assault allegations—much like the case of the 'Central Park Five'—do not extend to men and boys of color or men and boys who identify as queer. There are questions well worth asking of androcentric collectives in this vein, like how they justify ignoring the extraordinary rates of violence against men of color and trans and queer men while defending the integrity of men like Brock Turner, who was caught in the act of sexually assaulting a woman by multiple witnesses. The mind, sadly, reels.

Similarly, while this project has much to say about the rhetorics of maleness and masculinity among androcentric collectives as a case study, there is so much more to explore, analyze, and critique. The prospectus for this dissertation was begun in October 2016; a month later, with the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States of America, a lot of things changed around this project. Where once people were skeptical of the merits of examining androcentric collectives, I now found a great deal of full-throated support. While such support has been invaluable during the process of researching and writing this dissertation, it also belied a key frustration I had regarding such subjects: the notion that this was a problem in *this* moment alone or that it was somehow a *new* problem. Men's rights organizations have formally existed since the late 1970s, and rhetorical attempts to preserve White male hegemony have obviously existed far longer than that. This is not a new problem, though it may have become a more

apparent or visible one in recent years. Any attempt to isolate these issues to the current cultural and political moment is a foolhardy one. While the ways we rhetorically construct gender and the roles deemed appropriate for them may expand over time, there will inevitably be pushbacks, backlashes, and setbacks. Like memory, our perceptions of gender are constantly rhetorically reconstructed to serve the current moment by a variety of parties; this is unlikely to change.

That said, the landscape around androcentric collective rhetoric and memories has seemed to shift, and not for the better, in the last few years. Paul Nungesser (the accused rapist of Emma ‘Mattress Girl’ Sulkowicz) forced Columbia University to settle in a Title IX suit that claimed the school had allowed irreparable damage to be done to Nungesser’s reputation through Sulkowicz’s mattress art project and the coverage it received (Arndt, 2017, “Mattress girl saga”; Taylor, 2017). While a settlement is not the same as Columbia losing the suit, the message to androcentrics was clear: with enough legal firepower, any public accusation of sexual or domestic assault—true or not—could be fought against and won. In the wake of the #MeToo movement, several accused celebrities have fought these accusations with lawsuits, occasionally with success. Geoffrey Rush, after being accused of sexual assault by a co-star during a 2015 production of *King Lear*, sued the Australian tabloid newspaper that first ran two articles about the accusations (*The Daily Telegraph*), winning over \$600,000 in initial damages, with damages for the actor’s economic losses still pending (Desta, 2019; Sebag-Montefiore, 2019). Similarly, actor Johnny Depp has sued his ex-wife Amber Heard for defamation (to the tune of \$50 million) after *The Washington Post* published an op-ed by Heard where she discussed both her decision to come forward with the accusations of domestic abuse as well as the consequences and backlash she received for doing so (Puente, 2019). That case is still ongoing, but the message is clear that the #MeToo movement and the accusations of sexual and domestic assault, harassment, and

silencing will not go unchallenged by the accused or by groups bent on shoring up the hegemony of White men.

Androcentric organizations themselves have also been active in the courts, bringing a number of cases with some wins. The National Coalition for Men's Title IX complaints against a variety of U.S. colleges and universities, which I discuss in Chapter 3, have sustained some traction. For example, while most of NCFM's Title IX complaint regarding the University of North Carolina system was thrown out, the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) did agree to explore NCFM's claim that UNC's policies are "biased against male students" (National Coalition For Men, 2019, n.p.). Though OCR hardly agreed with NCFM's premise that the university engaged systemically in discriminating against male students and broadly rejected the complaint's argument, that *any* of NCFM's Title IX complaint was considered worth investigating is telling of a shift in attitude regarding the validity of androcentric claims. Similarly, NCFM scored a limited but notable legal victory when a federal judge in Houston ruled that the military draft was unconstitutional so long as it only applied to men, a line of argument taken up by men's rights activists for decades (Pager, 2019). While the judge's decision was merely declaratory and did not specify action for the government's compliance, NCFM and androcentrics more broadly take the win to be a sign of public and legal veracity of their claims. Ironically, this is one of the few policy points on which most feminists would probably agree with NCFM, in that excluding women from combat positions is discriminatory and more broadly, that the draft itself is a harmful governmental and systemic practice. Although not all of NCFM's legal arguments have taken hold, androcentrics are beginning to find limited success in attempting to win the policy reforms they desire.

All of this begs the question: are androcentrics even a counterpublic (and, as a follow-up, were they ever)? Early in the introduction and again in Chapter 1, I acknowledge that the claim for counterpublicity from androcentrics is, in many ways, debatable. While I do think that there are ways in which androcentric collectives technically represent a counterpublic, I also recognize that the term ‘counterpublic’ was developed, and has long been used, to describe the efforts of actually subaltern and marginalized groups, such as people of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and women, to secure parity in a public arena that consistently minimizes—or actively resists—their participation. This is why I also clarify that I view androcentric counterpublics to be ‘imagined’ or ‘aspirational,’ as collectives that seek to lay claim to an alterity that their individual participants generally do not possess. I do think that *discursively*, most androcentric arguments are treated with hostility in broader publics. But the rise of Donald Trump’s Republican Party and the alt-right has also indicated just how deeply embedded androcentric ideologies are in broad swaths of the mainstream public. With that in mind, future iterations of this work must make a more convincing case regarding the polarized state of androcentric collectives and subpublics. But such an effort also requires interrogating how feminist and social justice arguments have permeated public discourse to varying degrees and recognize the inflexibility of treating subpublics as either being always and entirely counter or non-counter. The discursive ability of a subpublic to convincingly lay claim to counterpublicity and alterity likely depends on when and where those claims are made, what ‘publics’ are paying attention to them, and how we rhetorically adjudicate who is a ‘victim’ and whom the ‘oppressor.’ Unfortunately, this more nuanced set of theories regarding networks of publicity and the rhetoric of how we come to identify subpublics/counterpublics as counter lay beyond the scope of this dissertation at present.

In regard to theories of the rhetorical formation of memory, this dissertation points to significant areas of discussion to be fleshed out. What my research into rhetorics of memory and recollection has made clear is that we know a great deal about how memory is framed and how particular collectives and publics rhetorically construct such memories and frameworks of remembrance. But we know relatively little about how memory comes to be transmitted and spread from one collective to another, from collectives to publics, and from counterpublics to publics. I attempt to provide preliminary, if limited, examples of how this process works on a rhetorical level through this project. In keeping with Burke's (1968) conception of rhetoric as identification rather than persuasion, I argue that collectives/subpublics work to build a variety of kairotic texts and artifacts that represent a kind of community archive, designed to encourage publics to identify with and adopt a collective memory as a public one, thereby expanding the legibility and legitimacy of that collective/counterpublic's memories and thus, their discourse and rhetoric.

However, memories are slippery. Memories are mutable and the frameworks through which we recall them can, do, and must change across time. This is precisely why memory is of such import to Writing Studies as a field; memories are by nature rhetorical expressions that are expressed through composition. To speak of memory without recognizing its rhetorical affordances and constraints in particular contexts is to miss the process (rhetorics of recollection, as Kendall Phillips refers to them) for the product of the memory. Memories, as I describe in Chapter 3, are consistently kairotic rhetorical moments; we are always (re)constructing them through particular frameworks and arguing for our way of remembering over others. For that reason, we must continually research and work to understand the rhetorical constructions of memory at play in both past and current moments.

This project began as a study of the ‘shadowy’ archives produced by groups that have mostly operated on the fringe of public history and memory, among them androcentric organizations. But it quickly evolved to encompass public/counterpublic theory and collective/public memory studies as well, because these three bodies of research are deeply linked to one another. For this reason, the archival elements of the research have, in some parts of the dissertation, taken a back seat to the memory and counterpublic facets. However, I believe that at its core, this dissertation is about the resources—archives, specifically—that people and collectives construct in order to convince others to identify with their ways of viewing the world. The divergent archive may be a conception of how counterpublic collectives seek to transmit their collective memories into public ones through accruing and sharing a collection of texts, artifacts, and ephemera, but it is also a window into how collectives construct their own ad-hoc archives when they find themselves excluded from larger and institutionally mandated repositories.

Finally, I hope that this dissertation provides at least a small window into the rhetoric, agenda, and tactics of androcentric collectives/counterpublics. While I had always intended for androcentrics to be the case study of the dissertation and not its central theoretical contribution, the increasing relevancy and visibility of androcentric groups has made that difficult. Outside interest in this project often focuses less on my attempts to develop a richer understanding of the rhetorical complexity of memory and how it maps onto theories of the public sphere and instead concentrates on this group of fascinating, vicious, mysterious men and women. This is, in many ways, understandable; androcentric rhetoric is inflammatory, sensational, and demands attention of passersby. Public moments of activism by groups like the Bloodstained Men—a group of anti-circumcision activists who don white jumpsuits with a blood-red stain on their crotch,

symbolizing what they believe is the mutilation of circumcision—are curious, amusing, and difficult to ignore. And while I hope that one part of the work this dissertation does is capture the rhetorical strategies utilized by androcentrics, it cannot in its current iteration serve as the definitive treatment of androcentric rhetoric. If (and when) I expand this particular project, I hope to incorporate more traditional rhetorical analysis and consideration of androcentric archives, much of which I am unable to discuss here due to concerns of length (a not unreasonable concern, given this dissertation's already tome-like state). But that analysis also deserves a rich framework that addresses the intersectional elements of androcentric groups, most particularly their Whiteness, cis-and-heterosexuality, and generally middle-classness. Hopefully, I or someone else will be able to engage in what is very necessary, sustained research on the rhetoric and ideologies of androcentric sub/counterpublics in the future.

While I know that this dissertation is far from the final say on the rhetorical transmission of collective memories by counterpublics into public memories through archival processes, I do hope that it serves as a starting point for a number of conversations, about the rhetorical entanglement of memory within public rhetorics, the development of extra-institutional archives by a number of subpublics and counterpublics, and the frightening co-optation of rhetorics of victimization by hegemonic groups. In better understanding the role that memory plays in these processes and how androcentrics wield it in troubling and dangerous ways, my hope is that we can begin to intervene in the moments of consubstantiation where young men (and women) turn toward a rhetoric of anger, distrust, and domination and instead redirect them toward more just ends.

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