2017

The White Bicycle: Performance, Installation Art, and Activism in Ghost Bike Memorials

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THE WHITE BICYCLE: PERFORMANCE,
INSTALLATION ART, AND
ACTIVISM IN GHOST BIKE MEMORIALS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical Collage
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Communication Studies

by
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May 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge all of the individuals who were a part of this process. First, thank you to my advisor, mentor, and friend Patricia Suchy. Your guidance, enthusiasm, and encouragement have made me a better person and scholar. Thank you to my committee, David Terry, Helen Regis, and Geoffrey Coalson, for your constant support and constructive feedback. Tracy Stephenson-Shaffer, Rachel Hall, Bryan McCann, Loretta Pecchioni, and chris collins for all of the thought-provoking conversations and coffee. Donna Sparks, for always having a friendly smile for me, even on the roughest of days. Diane Ferrero-Paluzzi and Lisa Merrill for all of the guidance, friendship, and support. I could not have made it to this point without you.

I want to thank all of the people who have contributed to this project. The cast of The White Bicycle for all of the laughs, and for your patience, commitment, and care. All of the people who have helped me look for ghost bikes from the very beginning, and who continue to contact me every time they spot a white bicycle on the side of the road. The people who were willing to be interviewed for this project for all of your insight and time. Travis Southard for your feedback, friendly conversation, and willingness to show me around Philly. I also want to acknowledge all of the people who have responded to my work at conferences and festivals for taking the time to do so, and for all of the suggestions that have made my dissertation better. Special thanks to the Brew Ha Ha staff in Baton Rouge for keeping me caffeinated and for giving me a place to write.

Thank you to my friends for your love, support, late night pep talks, and hugs. Cynthia Sampson, for keeping me sane and for putting up with all of my shenanigans. Stephanie Heath, my wonderful officemate, friend, and dissertation buddy. Sanela Osmanovic, Ryan Rasner, Colin Whitworth, Wade Walker, Rebekah Whitaker, Travis Williams, Johanna Broussard, Chris

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Abstract

In this project I examine the performative nature of the ghost bike memorial. Ghost bikes, flat-white painted immobile bicycles created by cycling communities and loved ones of victims, are installed roadside to mark the locations of cycling related deaths. Using critical performance ethnography and critical-cultural analysis as methods, I analyze how the ghost bike performs as an artifact of mourning and inspires co-incident performances of grief, activism, and community building and maintenance. As a memorial object used worldwide to represent cycling culture, the ghost bike acts as a social network link that connects a multitude of diverse cycling communities. I present five case studies of ghost bikes in New York City, Durham, North Carolina, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Lafayette, Louisiana in order to dissect what the polysemic ghost bike communicates to public audiences. My analysis led to the discovery that ghost bikes are not only used as memorials. They also perform as metonyms for the absent, ruined bodies of cyclists; as markers of racial identity for victims; and as tools to reframe the narratives told about cycling-related deaths. I describe how the differing interpretations of the memorial are adapted to create and alter performances of identity, and I argue for the potential for these performances to influence perceptions about cycling safety, cycling-based legislation, and road infrastructure.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Busy Roosevelt Avenue runs through the borough of Queens, New York, beginning in the Sunnyside neighborhood and ending in Flushing. Hundreds of thousands of people access Roosevelt Avenue by car, subway, bicycle or other modes of transportation each year, particularly in the Corona/Flushing area where Roosevelt provides direct access to Citi Field Stadium, home of the New York Mets baseball franchise, and Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, home of the famous Unisphere and the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, among other attractions. For over two years I commuted on this stretch of road, each day noticing how cyclists weaved in and out of traffic. I found these cyclists to be a source of annoyance; they rode more slowly than the flow of traffic, and at times I would encounter two or three riders on one bicycle, all without helmets, seemingly unaware of their surroundings. Since I had to adjust my manner of driving to accommodate their actions, I thought sharing a road with the cyclists was an inconvenience and, much to my embarrassment now, yelling at the cyclists from inside my vehicle became part of my daily routine.

I was driving on Roosevelt Avenue one afternoon when a strange bicycle caught my eye. Chained to a street sign next to the Citi Field parking lot, just a few feet from the 126th Street and Roosevelt Avenue intersection, the bicycle was unlike the others I had seen in the neighborhood: every part of it was painted white, including the tires. I questioned why it would be left at that particular location; the block was not bicycle friendly and given the area's reputation, it was likely the bike would get stolen. Like many things encountered in the city, the bicycle left my mind once it was out of sight, and I went on with my day. In the following weeks, however, the bicycle continued to catch my eye, and looking for the bike each morning as I passed through the intersection became a habit. Months after my initial encounter with the white bicycle, I began to

question its significance. Aside from its unique coloring, it was the only bike I had seen that *never* moved. Assuming the role of detective, I took on the case of "The Mysterious White Bicycle" and began questioning people I knew in the area about the bike only to find that no one else knew about it. So, I turned to the Internet. A Google search produced a link to "Ghostbikes.org" which told me that "Ghost Bikes are small and somber memorials for bicyclists who are killed or hit on the street." Until I read the search results, I had not considered the possibility of the bicycle standing as a memorial but Ghostbikes.org revealed that it was indeed one, representing Mireya Gomez, age 50, killed May 5, 2012 as a result of a crash with a car. The ghost bike was unlike any other memorial I had seen in the city, and as I delved further into the website, and subsequently followed its prompts into the street, the bike's intricate layers of meaning began to reveal themselves.

This dissertation project seeks to understand performances of mourning, activism, and community building associated with ghost bike memorials. These performances take on multiple forms, some immediately apparent and others more subtle, that develop over time. The performances take place worldwide on various platforms, starting with the homes, garages, and bike shop spaces of the ghost bike creators, to constantly changing streets in cities and towns of all varieties, to web pages accessed on computer screens, cell phones, and tablets. I became interested in these performances after coming to the realization that my everyday perceptions and actions changed after my interaction with Mireya Gomez's ghost bike. My view of everything I encountered in the street shifted, despite the fact that physically the streets were the same as they had always been. Everything was changing, though nothing was changing at all. It struck me that others might be experiencing the same revelations as me, that others might be altering their performances while navigating streets and spaces both familiar and not, just as I was. I hoped

that by studying these performances, I would learn what the memorials meant to the communities that housed them and about the intrinsic significance of the ghost bike itself.

When I first began my analysis of the ghost bike, I thought my path forward was clear cut; a cyclist died and a memorial was built. What I forgot was that while death in the abstract seems straightforward, it is never as simple as it seems. It is hard, messy, complicated, frustrating, maddening, and inevitable. The deaths studied in this project were sudden, unexpected, and often preventable, further complicating how memorials for these kinds of death function. As Jonathan D. Fast writes, "Sudden death is a specific case of loss that has unique characteristics, and makes unique demands on survivors…[differing] from anticipated death, such as following a long illness, in the forms and intensity of survivors' grief" (485). Additionally, those confronted with sudden death are more likely to find ways to re-conceptualize the world in a meaningful way than other mourners (Fast 490), as exemplified by creators of the ghost bike memorials, many of whom are cyclists who have had their own experiences with motor vehicle crashes or are loved ones who are left to grieve in the aftermath. In making ghost bikes, they intend to inform and warn the public about the possibilities that could occur should drivers and bicyclists collide.

Thinking of the street in the abstract also appears to be straightforward, but what I came to realize was how often I took the intricacies of the street for granted. When writing about New York, Michel de Certeau claims that the city "reinvents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future" (91). Rather than holding on to its past, the city continuously grows, often leaving no physical trace of the past occurrences on its streets. Seemingly each human and each object has its place on the street, but new agents are added each day, contributing to the chaos of the landscape by introducing new

materials, processes, and uses. Perhaps it took me so long to notice the ghost bike in Queens because of this visual chaos. It is also possible that I had not noticed the bike because I did not know to look for it; the ghost bike's presence is just as ephemeral as the performances of the street users.

In the remainder of this chapter, I provide a comparison of ghost bike memorials against other forms of roadside memorials. I then will explain my research methodology and the content of the remaining chapters. I conclude with limitations and my aspirations for this study.

1.1 Ghost Bikes and Other Roadside Memorials

A ghost bike is an all-white painted bicycle secured to a post or other structure to demarcate the location of a cycling-related death ("The NYC Street Memorial Project").Typically ghost bike creators may render a used or donated bicycle immobile by removing the brakes and chains, or by welding parts together in an effort to protect it from being stolen ("The NYC Street Memorial Project"; Travis). Patrick Van Der Tuin created the first ghost bike in 2003 in St. Louis, Missouri. Since then, over 600 white bicycles have been installed on streets worldwide (Dobler 169). As the ghost bike is placed on the road in recognition of a death, it is classified as a type of roadside memorial.

Roadside memorials, also commonly referred to as roadside shrines, are sites that express grief over a sudden or unexpected loss of life, purposefully placed alongside highways and streets to "seek our attention…as we pass them – some of us routinely – on our journey from one place to another" (Kennerly 231). These memorials are often identifiable by particular artifacts, including "a cross, flowers, a plaque with names and dates, and sometimes messages of grief" (Clark and Franzmann 580). Kennerly notes that names and dates are often inscribed on the crosses, allowing the object to serve as an identification marker in addition to its religious

purposes (234). Though a victim's personal artifacts are not always included as parts of roadside

shrines, their presence is considered to be another marker of memorial space.

Roadside shrines are usually constructed as close to sites of death as possible, most often

by family members and friends of the victim. The placement of the memorials blurs the lines

between public and private space as the construction of a personal roadside memorial forces the

public space of the road to integrate with a private place of mourning. As Clark and Franzmann

state, constructers of roadside memorials "assume authority to express their grief in ways that

implicitly and explicitly challenge the authority of the church or state, and transform the roadside

into their own sacred space" (579). The rise of the roadside memorial marks a shift in the

location of mourning away from where a body is buried to where the death of that body

occurred. Clark and Franzmann find the shift to be significant as "the presence of the deceased is

directly connected to the place where their life was lost. The actual spot becomes sacred and is

imbued with ritualized meaning by the creation of the memorial" (591). The practice of creating

a roadside memorial becomes significant because it allows the creators to grieve on their own

terms rather than having to conform to pre-established institutional norms.

Ghost bikes, though roadside memorials, differ from the memorials described by

Kennerly and Clark and Franzmann in several ways. First, they deviate from the typical materials

used in roadside memorial construction. A flat-white painted bicycle takes the place of the Latin

cross often seen at the side of the road and serves as an indicator for a very specific type of

unexpected death, one of a cyclist killed in a collision with an automobile. Second, while the

Latin crosses are used in memorials that can encompass multiple types of death in many different

locations, the repetitive use of the white bicycle at the locations of cycling deaths establishes a

network of memorials linking cycling deaths worldwide. Third, while some ghost bikes do have

signage – loved ones sometimes place plaques at the sites and the New York City Street Memorial Project now places "Cyclist Killed Here" signs at newer ghost bike memorials in New York– there is often no signage or personalization.

1.2 Intersecting Methodologies

This project will show that ghost bike memorials, like the streets on which they stand, are intricate and complicated. The ghost bike is a polysemic object imbued with multiple meanings that intersect with the others, causing themes such as grief, activism, memory, and art to bleed into one another. Using one methodology to study these intersections would be inadequate. My research framework, led primarily by performance studies theories and methods, intersects with theories and ideas from fields such as anthropology, visual studies, critical media studies, sociology, and installation art. Madison and Hamera state that performance gives value to multidisciplinary research because "performance theory provides analytical frameworks; performance method provides concrete application; and performance event provides an aesthetic or noteworthy happening" (xii). The memorials studied in this dissertation represent crashes and deaths that have occurred between the early 2000s and present day. Although they are semi-recent, I have analyzed these events as historical performances influencing the current climate of cities across the United States. Lisa Merrill writes that history "is an embodied interaction with traces found in the material evidence of artifacts, whose interpretation demands other performances of meaning-making" (65). The ghost bike serves as the artifact for this history, and as the subsequent chapters will reveal, has inspired a multitude of performances based on differing interpretations.

I adapted my methodology to meet the needs of each presented case study. Chapters 2 and 5 are based upon findings discovered through critical performance ethnography. This

method "rests on the idea that bodies harbor knowledge about culture, and that performance allows for the exchange of that knowledge across bodies" (Jones 339). My investigation of ghost bikes in New York City (Chapter 2) and of the ghost bike funeral in New Orleans (Chapter 5) rely on my active participation and engagement with other members of the respective communities. My choice to utilize ethnography as a research method pushed me to analyze my positionality in relation to the street and cycling culture. D. Soyini Madison writes: "Positionality is vital because it forces us to acknowledge our own power, knowledge, and biases just as we are denouncing the power structures that surround our subjects" (8). It was important that I understand how my background and experiences could influence the way I write about the people and cultures represented in my study.

While this project blossomed from a genuine curiosity about ghost bike memorials, I am largely an outsider to cycling culture. While I often rode bikes around my suburban New Jersey neighborhood as an adolescent, I stopped cycling regularly at the age of 15 after my brother was struck by a car while riding his bike to a friend's house. Though I have occasionally ridden in the years following that crash, I cannot claim to have specialized knowledge about cycling culture. I also made a conscious decision not to ride a bicycle as a part of my research process because I was concerned that my focus would shift from the ghost bikes and the streets to my own riding proficiency. My position as an outsider came with advantages and disadvantages. It allowed me to remain open to possible intersections with cultural influences that directly affect cycling communities, such as urban planning, infrastructure, and politics at the national and local level. It also led to discourse with community members that included in-depth discussions about topics and concepts I had only briefly encountered otherwise.

It is important for me to highlight the importance of language within this study. When I first began presenting my research to the public, I adopted common terms used in mainstream media to describe the scenarios I was studying. One night after a production of *The White Bicycle*, a performance I directed in the HopKins Black Box at Louisiana State University,[1] an audience member from the Baton Rouge cycling community informed me that my use of the word "accident" was an incorrect label for the collisions between bicyclists and motorists. "Crash" is the term used by cyclists to describe these incidents, a strong word that redirects how one perceives the event. After the November performance of *The White Bicycle*, the cast and I had a conversation with an activist from Philadelphia about media reports that cover cycling crashes. He explained how news reports often place the blame on the vehicle rather than its operator, thus excusing the driver from having to claim responsibility for her role in the crash. These conversations influenced my writing choices in this dissertation. I have taken great care to incorporate the terminology widely used by bicyclists across the United States and to frame my analysis in a way that addresses the accountability of the people involved in the following scenarios. I have also utilized varying terminology to label roadside memorials including spontaneous shrines and unauthorized, personal, and private memorials.

Despite the advantages of my outsider status, there were deficits in my knowledge about cycling and the everyday experiences of bicycle riders. To counter and supplement my lack of experiential knowledge, I chose to interview active members of cycling communities in New York City and Baton Rouge about ghost bikes in their communities. My experiences with

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[1]Content for *The White Bicycle* was inspired by many of the ghost bikes analyzed in this project. The show's original run took place in April 2016, and additional performances were staged in October 2016 at the Petit Jean Performance Festival and November 2016 at the National Communication Association Annual Conference. The performances were attended by students, scholars, cyclists, cycling activists and members of the local communities. Their feedback influenced the production of the show and my analysis of ghost bikes in this study.

ethnographic and oral history interviews prior to my ghost bike research influenced how I structured the interviews presented in this dissertation. Donald A. Ritchie writes that oral historians recognize that collected narratives do more than recount events, they are "interpretations of what happened, filtered through interviewees' memories" (13). Ritchie also states that "a good oral history will always leave room for interviewees to speak their minds, and will not try to shoehorn their responses into a prepared questionnaire or mindset" (16). Prior to each interview, I compiled a list of open ended questions for the purpose of beginning and guiding the interviews; however, I found that the subjects covered by the interviewees often moved past ghost bikes to include their personal experiences, their insights on safe riding practices, and issues with riding in their respective cities.

Ritchie writes that people use the insights of others to gain knowledge about current events that help reshape and "make new sense out of past experiences" (17). Rather than restricting the interviews to my list of questions, I followed the interviewees' prompts and found that ghost bikes were intrinsically tied to larger, overarching issues faced by bicyclists. Many of these insights helped reshape and make new sense of my experiences with ghost bikes, city infrastructure, and cycling communities. Madison writes that critical performance ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address unfair or injustice processes within a particular domain (5). Through my participation in performances surrounding ghost bikes and conversations with cyclists, I began to understand underlying powers of control that directly influence the quality of life for bicycle riders in ways that I could not recognize as an outsider. This understanding enabled me to explore possibilities for challenging institutions, bodies of knowledge, and social practices that "limit choices, constrain meaning and denigrate identities and communities" (Madison 6). As my writing will reveal, I came to identify with the plight of

the cyclist, and much of my analysis supports ideals that would improve the experience and safety of riding.

Other case studies, those presented in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and the latter half of chapter 5, warranted a critical cultural studies based analysis. Lawrence Grossberg writes that cultural studies seeks to understand and intervene in the relationship between culture and power (89). He claims that cultural practices cannot only be treated as texts because they are "places where a multiplicity of forces (determinations and effects) are articulated, where different things can and do happen, where different possibilities of deployment and effects intersect" (90). Therefore these case studies analyze how ghost bikes intersect with the creation of social capital, performances of community identity, Victor Turner's concept of social drama, building and removal practices, and the memorialization of events that resulted in mass causalities. By analyzing the forces of power that dictate cultural expectations and norms for these areas, and by comparing and contrasting them with ghost bikes, I was able to identify the significances and shortfalls of performances associated with the memorials.

The following case studies will show that the ghost bike connects a multitude of people concerned with different aspects of cycling culture. These connections caused by the ghost bike create what David Terry calls co-incident performance (336). Terry and Todd state that a co-incident performance is not a performance by a community for a particular audience; rather it is an embodied articulation of diverse co-performers around a particular act or object that unites them (10). Terry states that "Co-incidences are moments of 'by-chanceness' that give pause to many things done 'on purpose' and render visible the often hidden fact of shared spatial becoming without flattening it into a single narrative" (336). The diverse performances created by those united through the ghost bike allow for multiple interpretations of the memorial. The

chapters in this dissertation represent some of these interpretations, and branch out from the ghost bike to include topics relevant to these performers including community building, infrastructure, and safety.

As a discipline, performance studies places its focus on the live body and how the body performs within environmental contexts. Throughout the duration of this research, I have encountered many instances where embodied action has intersected with the digital realm to share, invite participation in, and expand live performances surrounding ghost bike memorials. These intersections create what Marcela A. Fuentes titles "performance constellations," acts that complicate the linearity of acts of transfer by accounting for the "hybrid, networked, and decentered iterations generated by the creative assemblage of body-based performance and digital media" (26). Fuentes' performance constellations reposition digital media from objects peripheral to the body to technologies instrumental for embodied radicality necessary for activism and protest in an era of neoliberal globalization through the assembling of dis-located bodies and events, thus linking synchronous and asynchronous behaviors across multiple platforms (26). The linkage of acts across digital and physical platforms allows participants engaging in performances of activism to confront social issues on several fronts and invites those witnessing the events digitally to replicate the acts (Sànchez Cedillo 56; Fuentes 32).

Performance constellations can be found throughout many of the cities and organizations involved in ghost bike building, installation, and activism cited in this study. The NYC Street Memorial Project invites its digital audience to create ghost bikes in their own local communities through instructions for creating the memorials provided on the "How To" page of their website. I utilized the interactive ghost bike map on Ghostbikes.org to navigate my search for ghost bikes in New York City, thus basing my performance on the information provided by the website. In

New Orleans, local cycling clubs and independent activists use Facebook to share information about crashes around the city and events pertaining to activism, like the July 2015 die-in at City Hall. In North Carolina, women who fought against the removal of their partners' ghost bike memorials utilized online petitions to share their stories and garner support for their cause. These digital actions not only reinforce the actions taking place on the streets of these cities, but also create spaces for additional conversations and performances to occur after the live events have ended. The convergence of digital and physical spaces creates and alters social networks and public memories so greatly that the relationship between the two cannot be ignored. Rather, in order to understand the strategies and tactics at play in ghost bike memorial interactions, it is necessary to evaluate the role of digital technology.

1.3 Plan of Chapters

Beginning with Chapter 2, the subsequent chapters serve as investigations of the polysemic ghost bike memorials based on the cities in which they are located and how the memorials are used or received in these locations. Therefore, each chapter features a specific theme in addition to the location study. Chapter 2 focuses on New York, the city where I first discovered the ghost bike memorial and home to the largest population of the memorials in the entire world. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 feature cities across the same state: Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and New Orleans, Louisiana. I chose to study these three cities for two reasons. First, I thought it would be interesting to study how ghost bikes were utilized across three major cities in the same state. Second, despite all being located within Louisiana, the ghost bikes in each city are used for differing purposes and events. In addition to studying ghost bikes in New Orleans, Chapter 5 also includes a case study of Durham, North Carolina and discussion of memorials in other parts of the country. The very specific memorial removal policy established by the city of Durham in

2014 led to a high profile conflict between city residents and officials after all three of the city's ghost bikes were removed. The themes addressed each of these chapters stem from public perception of the relationships between street spaces, roadside memorials and cycling politics.

In Chapter 2 I employ ethnographic methodology to guide my exploration of the ghost bike network in New York City. New York City is home to the most extensive ghost bike network in the world, particularly because it has the largest number of ghost bikes in one place, and because The NYC Street Memorial Project keeps track of these memorials on Ghostbikes.org. This chapter analyzes the interactive map of ghost bikes in New York hosted on the Ghostbikes.org website as a tool of subversive cartography against the power structures that do not recognize ghost bikes as part of the cityscape. I also utilize the work of Michel de Certeau and Daniel Makagon to analyze power structures within urban spaces and locate the ghost bikes' position in the cityscape.

Chapter 3 focuses on the role of the individual in ghost bike memorialization in tension with infrastructure's role in public perception of bicycle riding. Stemming from conversations I had with two individuals from Baton Rouge's cycling community, I sought to explore what role the individual plays in memorial building and community use of those sites. Drawing from David Gauntlett's research on "making as connecting" and Ivan Illach's notion of "conviviality," I explore how the act of making objects such as the ghost bike memorial allows creators to engage their environments actively and to create social capital that bridges and bonds communities together. The second half of the chapter provides a brief overview of bicycle-related infrastructure, and explains arguments citizens have made against these spaces, as well as issues with their regulation that create difficulties for users and non-users encountering the space. I employ Edward Soja's conception of the socio-spatial dialectic, which argues that a mutually

influential relationship exists between the social and spatial dimensions of human life (4), to analyze the outcome of a bike lane conflict that took place in Baton Rouge during October 2015. I argue that there is a direct relationship between perceptions of bicycle spaces and drivers' attitudes towards cyclists, which impacts cyclists' feelings of safety while on the road.

Chapter 4 studies the ghost bike dedicated to Mickey Shunick, a University of Louisiana Lafayette student who was abducted while riding her bike home from a friend's house and later murdered by her abductor. Circumstances surrounding Shunick's death differ from the types of death typically associated with ghost bike memorials, exemplifying how the memorials are adaptable to meet the needs of the surrounding community. Drawing from the work of Victor Turner, Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, Brian Ott, Cheryl R. Jorgenson-Earp and Lori A. Lanzilotti, I analyze how the memorial site materializes the communitas developed while Shunick was missing. I also use Marita Sturken's work on the relationship between national mourning and tourist performances to understand how this ghost bike allows people outside of the Lafayette community to participate in the act of collective mourning. Additionally, this chapter also explores the social network and digital legacy that developed from Shunick's disappearance and ghost bike memorial through an analysis of the "Find Mickey Shunick Now" Facebook group, which developed from an organizational tool during the search for Shunick to a host site of missing posters for people across the country. Lastly, this chapter explores the creation of "Mickey's Loop," a bike path around Lafayette that begins and ends at Shunick's ghost bike memorial. Advocates in the Lafayette community anchor their efforts for improving and expanding bicycle infrastructure around Shunick's ghost bike.

Chapter 5 explores performances of activism associated with the ghost bike through the case studies of a die-in protest in New Orleans and spontaneous memorial removal practices

through the analysis of a controversy in Durham. Following the death of cyclist Benjamin Gregory on July 7 2015, a ghost bike was installed on Elysian Fields Avenue at the site of his crash. On July 23, prior to the staging of the die-in, activists staged a funeral procession devoted to Gregory. The procession from the protestors' starting point in Duncan Plaza to its final resting place on a post outside of City Hall's main doors. Drawing from theorists including Manuel Castells, Tim Cresswell and Gene Sharp, I analyze the incorporation of the ghost bike into nonviolent resistance movements. I refer to scholars Paul Ricouer, Jack Santino, and others to guide my exploration of how the ghost bike is used to communicate activist intent after embodied performances of protest have ended. The second half of this chapter reviews the structures and policies that guide memorial removals, and compares the removal of the ghost bike as a roadside memorial to the removal practices of government sponsored memorials and spontaneous shrines created in the aftermath of large-scale tragedies. The removal process speaks to how the sites and the deaths they represent will be remembered in public memory.

1.4 Limitations

First, this is not an exhaustive study of ghost bikes. As some locations were more accessible to me than others, I was unable to visit all of the ghost bike memorials that I have written about. While I attempted to travel to as many sites as possible, ghost bikes are spread out across the country and I could not visit them all. I did my best to assess the non-visited sites through first-hand testimonials published elsewhere and other media sources documenting the ghost bikes.

Second, I have chosen to write about bicycle activism and advocacy but decided against including perhaps the most well-known, recognized form; Critical Mass. Critical Mass is an international, monthly event during which cyclists converge to take over the streets. Furness

writes that participants and scholars have labelled the event as a protest, street theater, party, social space, method of commuting, rebellion and "pro-bike anti-car monthly action" (300). While I believe Critical Mass is a valuable tool for advocates, it does not directly relate to ghost bike memorials. Therefore I decided not to include discussion of it in my dissertation and acknowledge that my research on cycling activism is limited only to the phenomena related more directly to ghost bikes.

Third, I recognize that there are additional frameworks that could be applied to the study of ghost bikes that I have chosen not to include within my study. For example, the ghost bike and its white surface could be viewed through the lens of hauntology. Made popular by Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, Hauntology focuses on the communication between the self and spirits of those no longer present. While this framework may offer a valid method of analysis, I am more interested in what is present in ghost bike memorials rather than in the absences they invoke.

It is my hope that this project will first educate others, particularly those who do not engage in cycling, on road politics from the cyclist point of view. While I cannot claim to be a cyclist myself, this project has expanded my understanding of cyclist perceptions and altered my driving behaviors, allowing me to form a bridge connecting both perspectives. Second, I hope this dissertation will enlighten the public on the purposes behind ghost bike memorials and the intricacies involved in memorialization practices. Most importantly, my hope for this project is that readers will inhabit their environments with fresh eyes and develop a deeper understanding of the role everyone plays in shaping the culture of space. Though every street, every city is different from one another, our behaviors and actions guide how that space is used by others. Perhaps if we were all more aware of our relationships with our social and physical environments, we could improve conditions for all using the street.

Chapter 2: New York, New York – Discoveries from a Ghost Bike Pilgrimage

"Are you from the city?" The question caught me off guard, though it probably should not have. I was standing on the north side of Manhattan's East 96th Street behind my camera and tripod, recording the traffic passing the remnants of Qi Yu Weng's ghost bike. The question was asked by a middle aged man with a heavy Spanish accent standing in the doorway of building number 235, holding a garden hose. Behind him, in the building's entryway, was a bicycle leaning against residents' mailboxes. He explained that I seemed like one of those city officials who come uptown to check on things. There are a few reasons why he might have suspected that I worked for the government, perhaps because I was a white female with a camera in a predominantly Latino neighborhood. I was also dressed as if I were at work, wearing a cardigan even though the weather was too warm for it. I explained that I was not working for the city; that I was a student looking for ghost bike memorials. Even after the explanation, he was hesitant to talk to me until the camera was turned off.

We stood on the sidewalk next to each other looking at the white bicycle frame lying in front of us, chained to a post with a "Cyclist killed here" sign from the New York City Street Memorial Project. "It's sad they stole the other parts of the bike-- the wheel, the seat," he said. "This is a dangerous street. I don't live here, my brother lives here. He's the super in this building," he continued, referencing building 235 behind us. "I always tell him he has to be careful. Whenever I come up here, I get off my bike at 96th and walk here, but that's hard too because of the construction and the sidewalks are small. I have to stop to let people pass me." Looking towards Second Avenue, I could see what he meant. The large construction site on the edge of the intersection caused the sidewalk to be closed, with pedestrians and cyclists redirected onto a narrow path. I had just walked through the path a few minutes prior to our meeting while

unsuccessfully searching for the memorial site. We talked for a little longer, our conversation ending after I asked whether he thought a bike lane on this block would help make it safer to ride there. "This street is too busy and the city probably won't do it," he said as he moved closer to a water valve attached to the building. He spoke in Spanish to a man carrying a broom and the pair began cleaning the sidewalk.

Figure 2.1 – Qi Yu Wei Ghost Bike. Photograph by author.

This interaction happened during a series of trips I took through the boroughs of Manhattan and Queens in New York City searching for ghost bikes. I began actively looking for the memorials in May 2014 when I returned home after my first year of graduate school and found that Mireya Gomez's ghost bike was missing from the 126th Street and Roosevelt Avenue intersection in Flushing, Queens. Gomez's bike, the first ghost bike I had ever seen, stood for at least two and a half years prior to its removal, and when I began asking about its current location,

no one could tell me. A reply email from Ghostbikes.org told me it was nearly impossible for them to know what happens to all of the ghost bikes. A conversation with my co-worker from The Holiday Inn LaGuardia Airport Hotel, a retired police detective, ended with "it's probably the Department of Transportation removing them but I don't think you'll be able to find out for sure." Frustrated by my inability to find any real answer about the missing bike, I decided to find out just how many other ghost bikes in New York City suffered the same fate.

In addition to New York being the location where I first learned about ghost bikes, it is the ideal location for this type of search for several reasons. First, cycling and pedestrian concerns have been active topics in the city politics for the past decade. In 2007, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg partnered with then transportation commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan to implement PlaNYC, "a groundbreaking effort to address New York City's long-term challenges including the forecast of 9.1 million residents by 2030, changing climate conditions, an evolving economy, and an aging infrastructure" (Mayor's Office of Recover & Resiliency). Under PlaNYC, 366 miles of bike lanes were created on New York City streets between its inception and the end of Bloomberg's term in 2014 (Petro). Upon his inauguration, current NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio introduced the Vision Zero initiative aimed at reducing the number of traffic fatalities on city streets. The Vision Zero homepage states that "approximately 4,000 New Yorkers are seriously injured and more than 250 are killed each year in traffic crashes… On average, vehicles seriously injure or kill a New Yorker every two hours" ("Vision Zero"). In January 2016, de Blasio dedicated an additional $115 million to Vision Zero for additional safety and traffic calming measures ("Mayor Bill").

New York also has a rich history of street memorialization and activism concerning traffic related deaths. A collaboration between Times Up!, a non-profit focused on environmental

issues, and Right of Way, an organization dedicated to direct action and street justice lef to

stenciled "Killed by Automobile" outlines of human bodies began appearing on NYC streets at

the locations where pedestrian and cycling deaths occurred as early as 1996 ("New York City").

The city's first ghost bike, created by the artist collective Visual Resistance, appeared in 2006 on

5 Avenue in Brooklyn, after Elizabeth Padilla had been killed in an altercation with a semi-truck

(Levine). The New York City Street Memorial project, a non-profit organization that grew out

of a Times Up! initiative, began creating ghost bikes alongside Visual Resistance in 2007, and

the organization eventually became the main source of ghost bike creation and maintenance for

the city. Since the creation of Elizabeth Padilla's memorial in 2005, there have been over 150

ghost bikes installed throughout the city of New York, making it the city with the largest number

of ghost bike sites on the planet ("New York City").

Ghostbikes.org, a website created by the NYC Street Memorial Project, serves as a digital

archive for information related to ghost bike memorials. Originally the site tracked ghost bikes

worldwide but a statement on the homepage of the site reveals that it has solely focused on ghost

bikes in and around New York City since 2012 ("Ghost Bikes"). In addition to revealing

information about the location of ghost bikes, the site also features a "How-To" section

dedicated to the process of ghost bike making, a "Press" page that hosts links to ghost bike-

related news articles from 2007 to 2014, and an interactive map that allows site users to locate

many of the known ghost bike locations on a Google Maps platform. The map on

Ghostbikes.org, which I will analyze in more detail later in this chapter, acts as an information

gateway by providing users with specific geographical locations of the memorial sites and links

each specific ghost bike to known biographical and news sources.

Since 2014, I have completed 5 pilgrimages throughout Manhattan and Queens during which I attempted to visit 26 ghost bikes sites, not counting my repeated visits to some of the sites. To complete these pilgrimages I created my own alternative maps of New York City by replacing commonly cited destinations with the ghost bikes and allowing them to guide me as I explored the city. I entered into this journey expecting to find each ghost bike at the location demarcated on the map, but soon came to find that expectation did not match reality. The lack of still-standing ghost bikes caused me to reevaluate New York City in an attempt to understand the place these memorials have within the cityscape, the value that they have to communities, and what happens to the missing ghost bikes.

2.1 The City

As Matthew D. Lamb writes in "Self and the City," "we learn cities by learning to navigate them" (10). The more one ventures throughout a city, the more one becomes aware of who and where she is within the spatial layout of the city. Lamb recognizes that the material arrangement of a public space doubles as a mirror for the individual, who uses the architecture of the city to reflect on personal identity and agency (10). For as long as I can remember, New York City has been my favorite city. My bias likely comes from the fact that I have spent the majority of my life roaming in and out of the boroughs. I was born on Staten Island and spent my early years living with my parents and grandmother in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. We moved to New Jersey when I was six, and I remained there until I moved into the Iona College residential halls in August 2006. Even though my parents had physically moved our residence outside of the city, we spent the majority of my childhood and adolescence shuffling back and forth between the two states to visit family, attend events, or simply to spend time walking around.

One of my favorite memories of Manhattan involves semi-regular trips to SoHo with my mother and younger sister. We would spend hours walking up and down Broadway and its intersecting streets, ducking into different stores, such as Mangos or Urban Outfitters, to shop for clothes before walking over to Little Italy or Chinatown to meet my dad for a post-work meal. As a student at Iona, I spent an entire semester commuting from New Rochelle, New York to Grand Central Station where I would catch the downtown 6 train to SoHo and walk to the corner of Spring Street and Broadway where I interned for the non-profit organization, CITYarts. As I walked the streets of the neighborhood each day running errands, I fondly revisited the memories of shopping with my family and supplemented them with new ones – quick runs to the hardware store on West Broadway or picking up lunch for the office at the hole-in-the-wall Pakistani take out restaurant with the most delicious samosas I have ever tasted. Observations of the street, intertwined with the formation and recollection of memories, allow for imagination and emotions to shape the way I intrapersonally interpret these experiences (Human; Benjamin and Demetz). I learned that area of the city like the back of my hand and strengthened my identification with the term "New Yorker." My internship occurred during the year that Gym Class Heroes released an album titled "The Quilt," which I listened to obsessively during my commute. By the time the 6 train rolled into the Spring Street Station, the song "Home" would be blaring through my headphones. To this day, the song plays in my head each time I encounter that subway station, and when I emerge onto the streets above, a warm, elated feeling fills my entire body. At the time of writing, I am overwhelmed with nostalgia and reminders of how these experiences have influenced my life. As Bradford Vivian writes, "We depend on our memory for our individual and collective sense of identity, meaning and purpose" (10). The memories I have recounted

here, and the ones I recreate each time I visit SoHo, have shaped who I am and how I interact with any city I experience.

The dominant structures of a city are built to create and guide particular behaviors within that space. The objects and structures that make up memorials within the cityscape behave in the same way. Memorial spaces created by governing or religious institutions, for example, are constructed to encourage particular practices and behaviors that would differ from visiting an alternative or secular space. I recall an incident that made the cover page of the *New York Daily News* in June 2012, detailing how a class of middle school students was removed from the Ground Zero memorial in downtown Manhattan for "tossing refuse into the reflecting pools, which mark the footprints of the twin towers" (Chapman, Moore and Lysiak). The article is filled with quotes from other visitors associated with the memorial: "This is an absolute disgrace…They need to be taught to be respectful;" "If these kids were in middle school, then they're old enough to know better… It's a memorial. They showed an absolute lack of respect;" "It really is so sad that anyone would disrespect the souls that were lost in the terrorist attacks back on 9/11… One can only hope that these children do not become lost and that they learn from their mistakes" (Chapman, Moore and Lysiak). By highlighting the "lack of respect" of these students, the article's authors identify behaviors that violate the memorial's "Prohibited Behavior and Disorderly Conduct" regulations and publically shames the students' behavior as a warning and reminder to others who may choose to visit the site ("Visitor Rules and Regulations").

When unofficial memorials are added to a city's landscape, the roadside memorial for example, opportunities for alternative practices blossom. The varying structures of these memorials could dictate a variety of different behaviors, each dependent on the interpretation of

the respective memorial by its visitors. For example, on a recent walk through the East Village, another neighborhood that carries significant personal meaning for me, I encountered a large empty lot surrounded by a chain link fence on the corner of Second Avenue and 7th Street. Secured to the fence were images of two men-- killed when a gas pipe exploded underneath the Sushi Park restaurant that once stood at that location-- as well as notes and other tokens of remembrance (Preston). As my party and I walked past the site, I was the only one who was startled by the empty space next to us; perhaps I was the only one who recognized the space for what it was, and it was the first time I encountered the post-explosion corner. As I took in one photo of a young man, one of the restaurant workers, and the semi-grassy space serving as its background, I recalled the times I frequented the restaurant and stories from the day of the explosion told by friends who lived on the surrounding blocks.

Ghost bikes, as one example of an unofficial memorial, allow for alternative interactions that differ from official memorials. They are objects not as easily identifiable as other memorial sites and therefore, one visiting a ghost bike memorial might have to observe/interpret the white bicycle before she can comprehend its purpose. On Friday, July 18, 2014, I went on my third ghost bike pilgrimage; the second one located in Manhattan. I started my excursion by searching for two ghost bikes that were supposed to be located within a block of each other, the bike for 12 unknown cyclists killed in 2005 and the bike for five unknown cyclists killed in 2007, but discovered that both memorial sites had been removed. The third bike on my list was for Andrew Ross Morgan, killed in 2005 after he had been hit by a truck ("Andrew Ross Morgan"). I knew from reading his biographical page on Ghostbikes.org that this particular ghost bike had an intricate history; it was a site visited often by Morgan's loved ones and the community surrounding the bike cared for it in their absence ("Andrew Ross Morgan"). When I turned the

corner off of Houston onto Elizabeth Street, I was able to locate Morgan's bike (See Fig. 2.2.).

There was an active construction site next to the memorial, with workers using a jackhammer to

create a hole in the street. I was reading the notes inscribed on the bike's frame and taking photos

when a construction worker approached me to see what I was doing; "is it just an old bike?" he

asked. I explained that the bike was a memorial and that I was reading the messages left there.

Fig. 2.2. Andrew Ross Morgan Ghost Bike. Photograph by author.

I returned to photographing the bike when a second construction worker approached me.

She asked questions about what I was doing and we began talking about the ghost bike. I told her

what I knew about the bike's history and about my project searching for ghost bikes all over the

city. I expressed my frustration at not being able to find other sites and that I believed they were

being removed by the city. In turn, she told me that she had never seen a ghost bike before even

though she had lived there her whole life, but she knew what a Citi Bike was. "What do they do

with the bikes once they take them down?" she asked, one question I was unable to answer. Our

conversation quickly moved from the bike to life in the city, about how the city changed so often

and how things moved so quickly. She shared that she was 39 years old with five children and

told me stories about them getting caught up the fast-paced lifestyle that accompanies being raised in a city. She described the struggles she faced trying to keep them from growing up too quickly. She used her experiences to relate to the crash and the ghost bike standing before us: "Maybe things were really busy that day and the truck driver didn't see him?" she wondered. Perhaps she shared her concerns about her children with me because our conversation caused her to reflect on the difficulties of protecting them within this particular environment, similar to another mother that I write about in Chapter 4, who sought to protect riders after the death of her daughter. After a few more minutes of discussion, she wished me luck on the rest of my search and returned to work.

Looking at these instances of interaction with memorials in the Manhattan, there is a fascinating connection between the memorial type and the behaviors enacted at each location. Lamb writes that "Architecture facilitates, or enacts, the power of discourse to circumscribe a range of acceptable practices in urban space." (4). The first two examples, the (mis)behavior of middle school children at the 9/11 memorial and my encounter with the spontaneous/semi-permanent memorial at the site of the Sushi Park explosion, rely on boundaries set by physical structures to guide behaviors. The 9/11 memorial, as a state sponsored site, is the most formal because an official set of guidelines outline expectations for behavior within the memorial space. The Sushi Park memorial, set up on the chain link fence bordering the parameters of the former restaurant, allows its visitors to envision the building that once stood and understand that the current grass covered lot remains empty in homage to what once existed. These structures provide physical traces of the past. The 9/11 memorial pools exist in the exact locations where the Twin Towers once stood, and the chain link fence surrounding the lot on the corner of 2 Avenue and 7 Street outlines the outside walls of the building similar to an architect's blueprints.

Both of these memorial sites also represent extraordinary events, both of which reached mainstream media and stayed in the public consciousness for a period of time. Though there are many differences between the 9/11 memorial and the ghost bike, one of the most notable differences are the memorial structures. The 9/11 memorial provides a museum-like structure that many are familiar with. Its visitors are directed through the space and given cues on how to interact and interpret the presented materials. The ghost bike is not afforded the same opportunity because it is an unfamiliar structure. Pre-established conventions do not exist for this roadside memorial, there are no guides or cues for its visitors. Rather, those interacting with the ghost bike must rely on pre-existing personal knowledge of the object or on the insights of others. The third memorial, the roadside ghost bike, stands apart from the others buildings have a weightier presence as architecture does not play a role in its existence; perhaps one explanation for why this memorial type is not as easily identifiable as the others.

The ghost bike represents an ordinary event, a traffic crash that occurs and is cleaned up in a short amount of time. While the horrific events that occur within rarer, larger scale traumas are often more blatantly noticeable-- we recognize when building(s) have been altered or go missing from a city skyline-- whereas bicycle and motor vehicle crashes are everyday occurrences, "cleaned up" as quickly as traffic flows on the street. Some attract mainstream media attention, particularly if they are especially horrific or involve a large number of people, but the majority receive the same quick attention that the crashes themselves receive. They are there one moment and gone the next. While the possibility of alterations to a street or roadside structure exists-- maybe skid marks are left on the blacktop or a guardrail remains dented-- rarely does a visible trace remain.

This often leaves spontaneous memorials, like the ghost bike, to stand solitary on the roadside with only man-made visual aids (perhaps a sign, plaque or personal artifact) to guide behaviors.

Morgan's ghost bike has one simple visual aid, a small metal plaque attached to the frame, facing the sidewalk and its users. The plaque was not clearly visible from the opposite side of the street, where the construction site was located. Perhaps the construction workers had a reaction similar to my own when they first saw the ghost bike, relating it to other chained bicycles awaiting the return of their owners, or perhaps the bicycle had not stood out enough to catch their eye. My conversations with the construction workers revealed one important factor: these two people relied on interpersonal interaction instead of the buildings and street layout to learn about the white bicycle. These interpersonal interactions replaced the architectural cues that Lamb claims one uses to understand his or her own place within the city (10). My conversation with the female construction worker also reflects the woman's attempt to understand her agency in relation to the memorial. Her linking of Morgan's death to the fast-paced city life that affects her family indicates that the woman was using our conversation to make sense of the ghost bike's presence and her own/her family's exposure to danger on the same streets. Instead of using the arrangement of public space as a mirror to check her self-identity, as one might when interacting with a more formalized memorial space, the woman used our interaction in conjunction with the ghost bike itself to evaluate her identity within the city space.

Similar to how the construction worker used our conversation to understand her identity in relation to the ghost bike, I have come to the realization that my ghost bike search prompted me to reevaluate my identification with the city. Part of my reevaluation includes how I navigated the city during this search. Though walking was my primary method of transportation,

as it was prior to this search and remains my primary method in its aftermath, I allowed the ghost

bike locations to determine my routes throughout the city. The interactive map of ghost bike

memorials found on Ghostbikes.org creates an opportunity for navigation by using the memorial

sites as markers of significance rather than focusing on traditional structures, like historical

buildings or tourist destinations. Choosing to use this map as my guide also altered my

perception of the city, a task that proved to be more challenging, and at times more

uncomfortable, than I expected.

2.2 (Re)Mapping the City Through the Digital Archive

There are hundreds of readily available maps outlining the streets of New York City,

each directing its user throughout the grid in specific ways. Upon first glance the map appears to

be a neutral canvas, presenting a view of the city that is universal to all users and provides a

platform for the users to direct themselves through the urban space using their own free will and

intentions. However, the map is not as simple or as objective as it may seem. Rather, cartography

is heavily influenced by the maker of the map. D. Pinder writes that the absence of a map's

author erases the agency of the cartographer and causes the document to take on a "universal

point of view" (407). Pinder sees cartography as a contested practice, though it is often perceived

as a neutral activity, because it is always embedded in existing power structures (408). He writes

that "Like all forms of representation, maps show some things and suppress others, make some

things visible and others invisible, and through a process of including and excluding they

construct visions of the world which 'embody the interest of their authors…'" (Pinder 408;

Wood 71). The map is able to maintain the "illusion of cartographic objectivity" through the

differences in how each individual user views the map (Makagon 154). As users, we appear to be

in control of the map. We believe are exerting our own agency when we use the map as a tool to

design our own routes through whatever landscape we have chosen to explore or have to navigate in order to get to wrok, failing to recognize that the streets and destinations included on the map guide us through spaces predetermined by the map's creator.

For the purpose of this project, there is one specific map warranting more in-depth exploration, the Google Map. Though not the first internet-based mapping service, Google Maps is currently the most prevalent internet geographic mapping service. It has mapped 28 million miles of roads in 194 countries since its inception and continues to grow as technology advances (Chivers). This platform hosts platform of the ghost bike map located on Ghostbikes.org, though the site utilizes Google Maps differently than the platform's home site. The differences in use will be explored later in this chapter. Google Maps differs not only from the traditional paper map but also from its digital ancestors because its connection to the virtual realm of information creates a DigiPlace (Zook and Graham 466). DigiPlace, a hybrid space where "information ranked and mapped in cyberspace [is used] to navigate and understand physical places," provides users with capabilities to map and explore specific locations while providing additional information about those locations via links to corporate/personal websites, news sources, user reviews, and other indexes of information (Zook and Graham 466). Google Maps, through its PageRank system, privileges physical corporate locations that have a strong web presence and highlights those locations on maps by emphasizing their names during user searches (Zook and Graham 470). So while the user actively searches a destination or develops a route using Google Maps, she is also exposed to these additional places highlighted on the map, whether they be a clothing store or a tourist destination. In 2016 Google announced that it would begin experimenting with opportunities for paid advertising on the Google Maps platform, providing businesses the opportunity to pay for their logo to be placed next to their name on the map

(Boehret; "Ads and Analytics"). The Google Map DigiPlace can never be objective because of this inclusion of preselected locales that automatically appear on any and every version of a Google Map, and because Google is at least partially monetizing this data.

Google Map users are also provided with an option to create their own personal maps through the "My Maps" application on the Google interface. The My Maps application allows users to "create custom maps with the places that matter to you" adding specific points or shapes to the preexisting Google Map template, searching and saving specific locations and personalization through particular colors and icons, to be imported to personal devices or shared with friends ("Introduction"). The "illusion of cartographic objectivity" comes into play with this application because it seemingly allows users to create a map of spaces and places relevant to them even though Google has predetermined what landscape space can and should be recognized. Thus the illusion of objectivity in the Google Maps application, is also combined with the illusion of cartographic subjectivity.

Ghostbikes.org employs the My Maps application to create a user-friendly map of known ghost bike locations. Jason Farman writes that the advances in geographic mapping technology allow for the "special debate of maps within maps, new levels of interactivity and user agency with maps, and the ability for non-professionals to engage in this activity" (872). By creating a map of ghost bike locations, the NYC Street Memorial Project is creating an alternative map that inscribes value onto place differently than the general Google Maps Digiplace system. The digital ghost bike map supplements the original Google Map interface by providing a document highlighting a different type of attraction and history, just as various organizations create maps marking places specifically for their members, like the Queens Jazz Trail map that marks where famous Jazz musicians once lived or maps created by tourism companies that guide their patrons

to specific locales. The ghost bike map also becomes a networking tool for the communities involved with the memorial. As I will demonstrate later in this chapter, the map can be used to bridge memorial sites, and community members perform individual acts of agency over the memorials by contributing information to the map and archive.
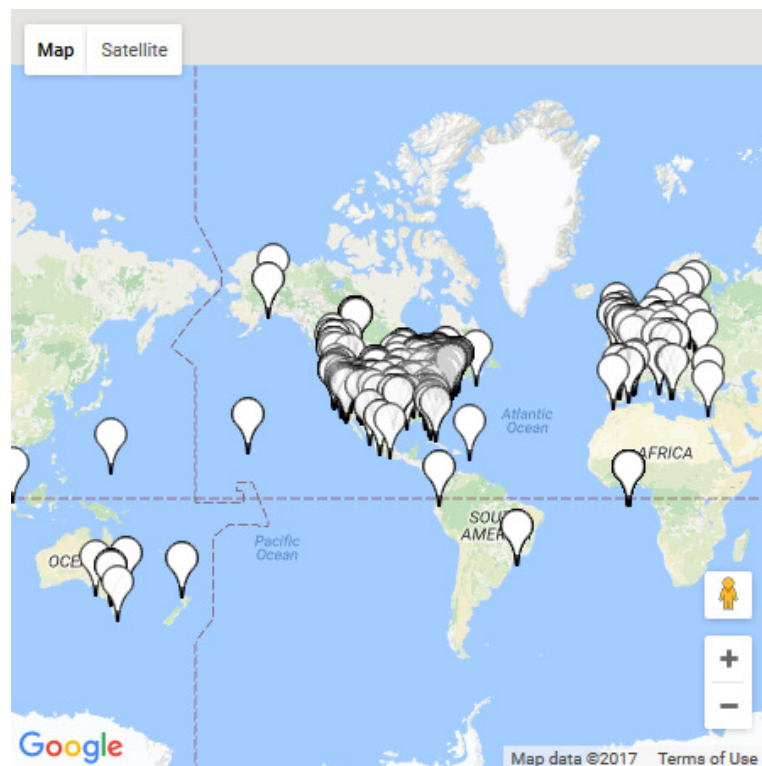
Fig. 2.3. Ghostbikes.org World Map. Photograph from The NYC Street Memorial Project. "Ghost Bikes," Ghostbikes.org, ghostbikes.org/ghostbikemap.

The New York City Google Map is transformed completely by the marking of the ghost bike locations, transitioning from a web of streets and businesses to a map dominated by white markers (see Fig. 2.3). The markers are larger in scale in comparison to the layout of the continents on the world view map, making them the focal point of the image; a visual technique that remains consistent as one zooms into a particular location on the map. As I guide the map to the New York City area, the number of markers is so large that the grouping around the city no longer allows one to differentiate between each of them; they become a huddled mass that

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engulfs the island of Manhattan and much of the surrounding boroughs, as well as edges of Long

Island and New Jersey (see Fig. 2.4). In contrast, the faint gray lines representing the streets are

barely visible and the majority of state/county/borough labels-- the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and

New York-- are only partially visible. My attention is diverted away from the streets and

highways, the major features of the Google Map, and instead redirected to the cluster of white

markers, the metonyms for ghost bikes.
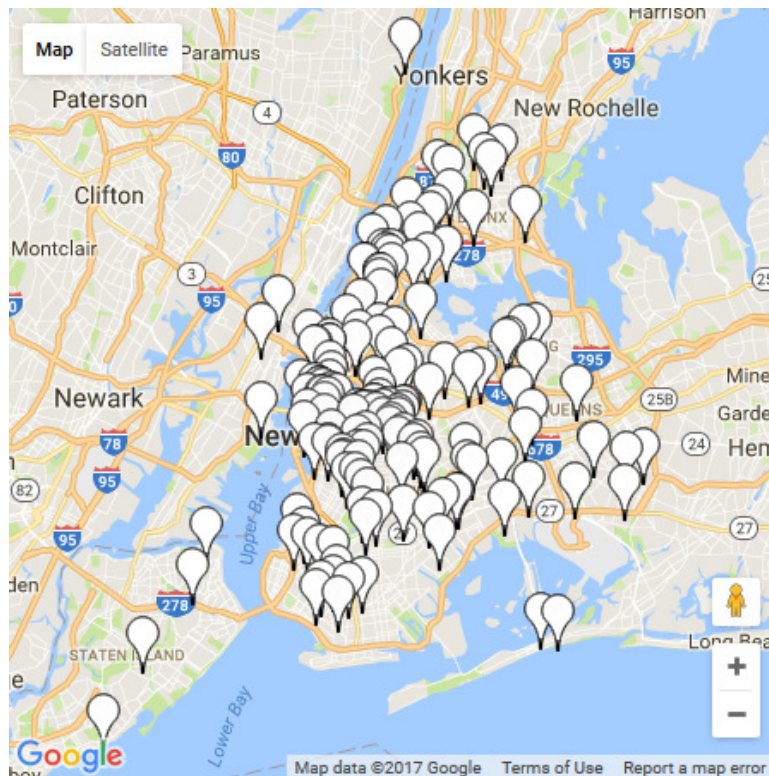
Fig. 2.4. Ghostbikes.org New York Map. Photograph from The NYC Street Memorial Project.
"Ghost Bikes," Ghostbikes.org, ghostbikes.org/ghostbikemap.

As stated above, maps, particularly the digital variety, typically highlight dominate

roadways and architectural locations such as popular tourist sites, historical buildings, parks, etc.

By choosing to highlight the location of ghost bikes, The NYC Street Memorial Project and

Ghostbikes.org are challenging traditional map making and forging an alternative map based on

events not typically remembered or called upon within public memory. The crashes represented

by the ghost bikes do not have physical addresses or strong web presence, two features that must be recognized by Google in order to be labeled on a Google Map. It is the My Map function of Google Maps and the dedication of The NYC Street Memorial Project employee who updates and maintains the map make the ghost bikes the featured destination. In *Where the Ball Drops: Days and Nights in Times Square*, Daniel Makagon, focusing on how ghost stories influence the image of Times Square, writes "the spirits that are foregrounded in public discourse are not randomly selected; rather, city officials and civic boosters appeal to some ghosts while attempting to banish others" (35). Similar to how officials choose specific elements to create a frame on how to view Times Square, Google Maps and other cartographers choose specific elements to highlight in order to frame how one views a city. By creating the Ghostbikes.org map and focusing on these alternative locations, the ghost bike cartographers reframe how the map users view the city. Rather than focusing on an "official" version of New York City, the Ghostbikes.org map sheds light on the grimmer elements not often sold to tourists and city visitors. It rearticulates the history of the city by drawing focus to the deaths and crashes that occur there, revealing the "fractures and fissures" that lie under the surface of the tourist map and summon issues involving infrastructure, traffic patterns, and urban planning (Makagon 36).

The Ghostbikes.org map takes the mapping revision a step further by linking each ghost bike marker to an archive of information about victims and crashes within the city limits. Though the amount of information varies from page to page, each white bicycle is linked to a corresponding page containing narratives, images, newspaper articles, and other remembrances. By linking the map to these sources, what I call biographical pages, Ghostbikes.org creates an alternative version of Digiplace (See Fig. 2.5). It first mimics Google Maps' rating/ranking system and replaces it with the name, age and death date of victims associated each ghost bike

marker on the map. And just as a standard Google Map allows its users to link to additional resources pertaining to highlighted locations, the Ghostbikes.org map provides detailed information that is not collected elsewhere on the internet or even readily available at the physical ghost bike locations on the street. This digital archive challenges the unstable and uneven reporting and news coverage of cycling crashes and deaths in mainstream media by creating a permanent and extensive compilation of sources, all accessible through a specialized, alternative map.
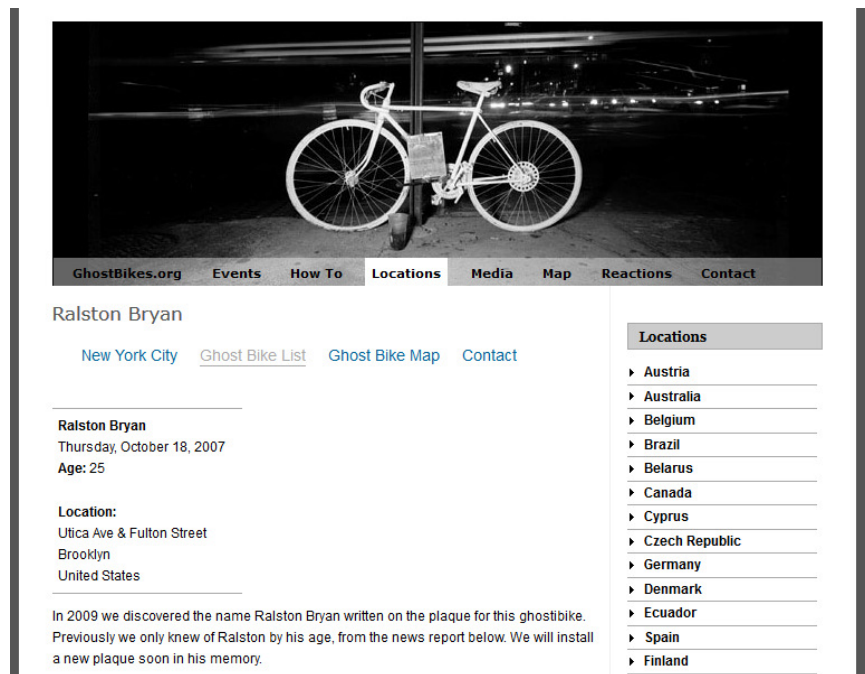
Fig. 2.5. Biographical Page for Ralston Bryan. Photograph from The Street Memorial Project. "Ralston Bryan," Ghostbikes.org, ghostbikes.org/new-york-city/unnamed.

2.3 From Mapping to Touring: Creating Alternate Routes & City Identities

Using the Ghostbikes.org map as my guide, I planned four ghost bike search trips during the summers of 2014 and 2015 in two boroughs, covering 18 different neighborhoods. The majority of these trips were completed on foot, though I did rely on the subway for traveling long distances in Manhattan (Sutton Place to Yorkville for example) and used a car to travel between

ghost bikes in Queens, mostly to cover the distance but also to cut the time it would take to travel by train to and from each location. I chose walking over other methods of transportation for a couple of reasons.

First, I have always enjoyed walking, whether it be in a large city like New York or in the suburbs. One of the main advantages of foot travel is that I am able to regulate how and where I go. I can choose how fast or slow I would like to move, and it is easier for me to make a detour or an extra stop when I am enroute, whereas deviating from a route in a car or while utilizing public transportation can be more difficult. Though the layout of the street has been predetermined by urban planners, pedestrians have the ability to move off of the already existent paths provided by the sidewalks. De Certeau, in acknowledging the inevitability of pedestrians utilizing the pre-existent spatial boundaries in place, observes that "the walker actualizes some of these possibilities….But he also moves about them and he invents others, since the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements" (98). The improvisation that walking allows can be seen daily whether by small, inconspicuous gestures-- a pedestrian wandering off of a path in Central Park to move about a grassy area-- or large, grander gestures, like performed by artist Alex Villar who transcends the norms of space by occupying often unused areas, for example the space between a handrail and a wall in a train station ("Alex Villar"). Fewer possibility for improvisation exist when one rides in a car or takes public transportation. Automobile travel within a city, such as New York, is restricted solely to the street. While one appears to have agency in choosing which route she would like to take, there is limited opportunities to move the car off of the blacktop. Public transportation has similar restrictions, though users lose all agency regarding routes of travel as the trajectories for public transportation are mapped out and vehicles/trains move according to an already

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determined time schedule (though it is rarely as efficient as it is supposed to be-- automobile traffic or slow subway cars cause delay, these vehicles break down often, etc.). At any given time one can access a subway map or a bus schedule, and now even track buses using smartphone applications, to see when/where a vehicle will arrive or where it is currently located. "Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it "speaks" (de Certeau 99).

Second, even though bike and automobile crashes occur on the street, a ghost bike's home is the sidewalk. The streets and the sidewalks, as Jane Jacobs writes, are a city's "most vital organs" (29). The ghost bikes could not exist in the street; there are no spaces for stationary objects in the constant flow of traffic, so they are placed on the sidewalk bordering the street. From this border space, the ghost bike can seen by passing motorists and bicyclists but it also becomes even more accessible to the pedestrians who encounter it while utilizing the space. Encountering the ghost bike on the sidewalk allows its visitor more time to interact or observe the memorial than one would have while traveling in the street. Sidewalks themselves play a large role in city culture; aside from providing an assigned space for walkers, the sidewalk aids in the building of community culture by giving a street's inhabitants and users an opportunity to interact. "They [the sidewalks] bring together people who do not know each other in an intimate, private social fashion and in most cases do not care to know each other in that fashion" (Jacobs 55). The sidewalk provides a place where neighbors can meet to gossip, where strangers can interact with locals, where artists can create public art, and where ghost bikes can stand, all for a brief moment or an extended one. Traveling along the sidewalks, I interacted with neighborhood locals and visitors, occasionally enlisting them to help locate a ghost bike or to ask questions

about the neighborhood. Other times I was the one approached by people working or living on a

particular block who were curious about what I was doing. These encounters provided

context for neighborhoods I had never been to before, provided directions to objects I did not

expect to find, and challenged my sense of comfort and identity.

Michael Sorkin reminds us that each person carries "a private map along and revises it

every time we step out the door. These maps have consequences not just for our feelings about

the city but for our literal ability to negotiate it" (92). During the times when I was planning the

ghost bike searches, I tried to shelve elements of my personal mapping of the city, though I

found myself unable to do so. All of my previous experiences walking in the city play a factor in

how I navigate the streets and how I handle myself while doing so. It was important to me,

however, that I allowed the ghost bikes to serve as my guiding force rather than starting from

locations that I know I enjoy or am familiar with and searching from there. There were times

when my personal geography intersected with the ghost bike map I was creating; the instance

where my search allowed me to walk up 2nd Avenue in search of the "Bike of 13 unnamed

cyclists and pedestrians killed in 2008" serves as one example. According to the ghost bike map,

this bike should have been located on the Avenue between 9th and 10th Streets, outside of

Stuyvesant Church. Knowing that a close friend lived on 2nd Avenue just a few blocks from the

site, I called him when I crossed Houston Street onto 2nd Ave. and he accompanied me to my

destination, which happened to coincide with his route to work. We talked about the ghost bike

as we walked up the avenue and stopped outside of the church to look for the ghost bike, only to

find it was not there. My friend, who has lived on 2nd Avenue his entire life, had never heard of

or encountered the bike I was looking for. It was not something I had encountered in all of my

time hanging out in that neighborhood either, even when I had previously been a part of a "ghost

tour" group that began right outside the church. We stood on the sidewalk, scanning the scene for any sign of the bike, and it felt almost like any other afternoon we would have spent walking around the neighborhood. This was not the only moment where sections of my personal map intersected with the ghost bikes but these intersections occurred because the route I chose to take was the most convenient to get from ghost bike site to ghost bike site.

While conducting the five ghost bike searches, I created my own maps and routes of the city (see Figs. 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10). These maps mark the routes that I took while traveling from ghost bike to ghost bike, while also marking the presence/non-presence of the ghost bikes and other relevant events that occurred during the searches. Creating and marking my own route on preexisting maps, similarly to how the Ghostbikes.org map has done with the Google Map, I participated in my own act of cartographic subversion. In *Where the Ball Drops*, Makagon writes about a collection of doctored maps that he encountered at The New York Public Library-- "Parts of Manhattan in historical maps and pictures/information by Robert McMurray" (149). He describes these maps as historical maps altered with a black felt-tip pen. Arrows are drawn to specific sites where ownership has changed, buildings have been razed, or something new has been constructed" (149). When Makagon meets McMurray, and questions him about the map, particularly McMurray's inclusion of his own former places of residence marked in black ink, Makagon finds that the maps seems to be a "response to the combination of an anonymous culture and a need to locate oneself in the acceleration of history" (151). By placing the personal markers on the map, McMurray addresses the separation that occurs between social memory and history during this acceleration; highlighting the lived and embodied memories amongst what is officially recorded (Nora 2; Makagon 151). By creating the maps of my ghost bike search, I too attempt to bridge this separation.

Fig. 2.6. Pilgrimage #1 – Midtown and Upper East Side. Photograph by author.
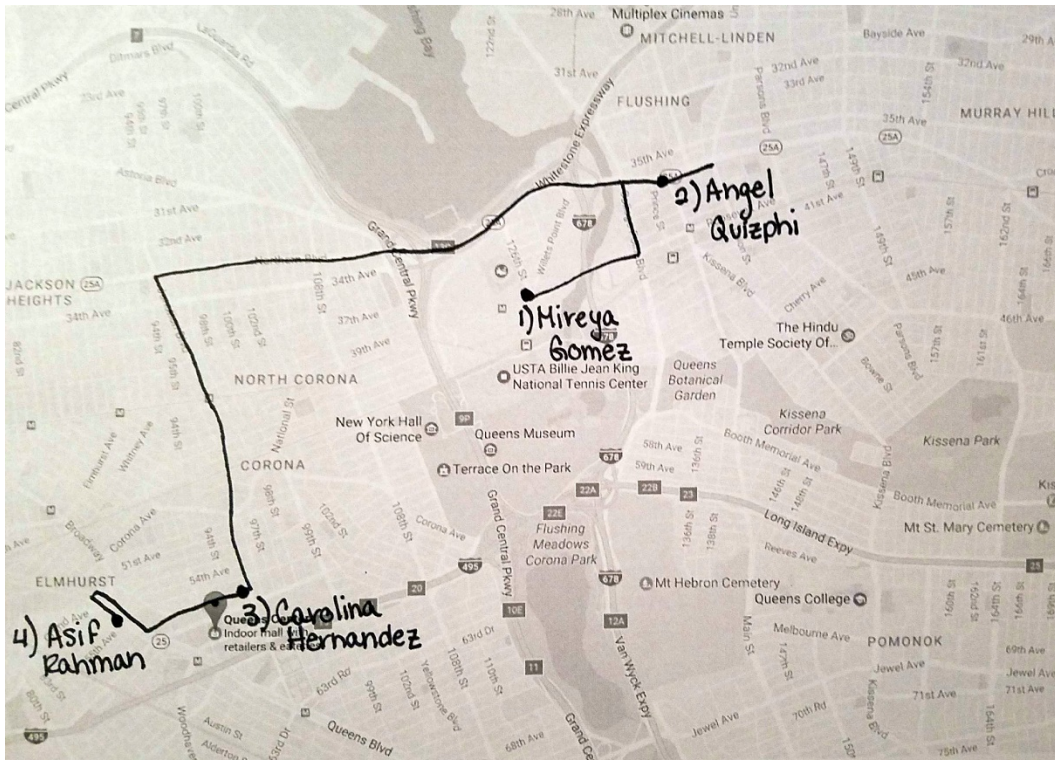
Fig. 2.7. Pilgrimage #2 – Queens. Photograph by author.
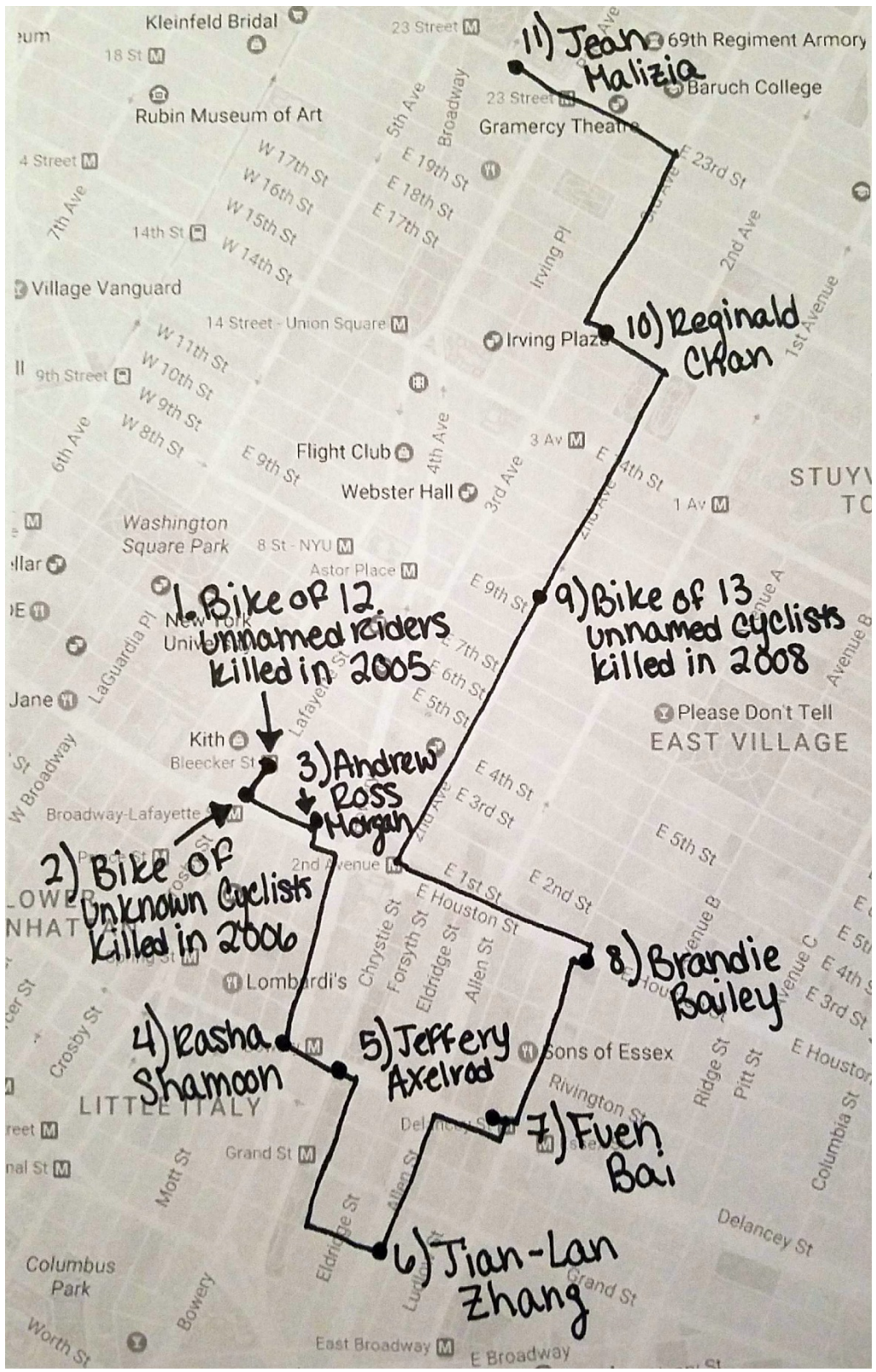
Fig. 2.8. Pilgrimage #3 – Lower East Side & East Village. Photograph by author.
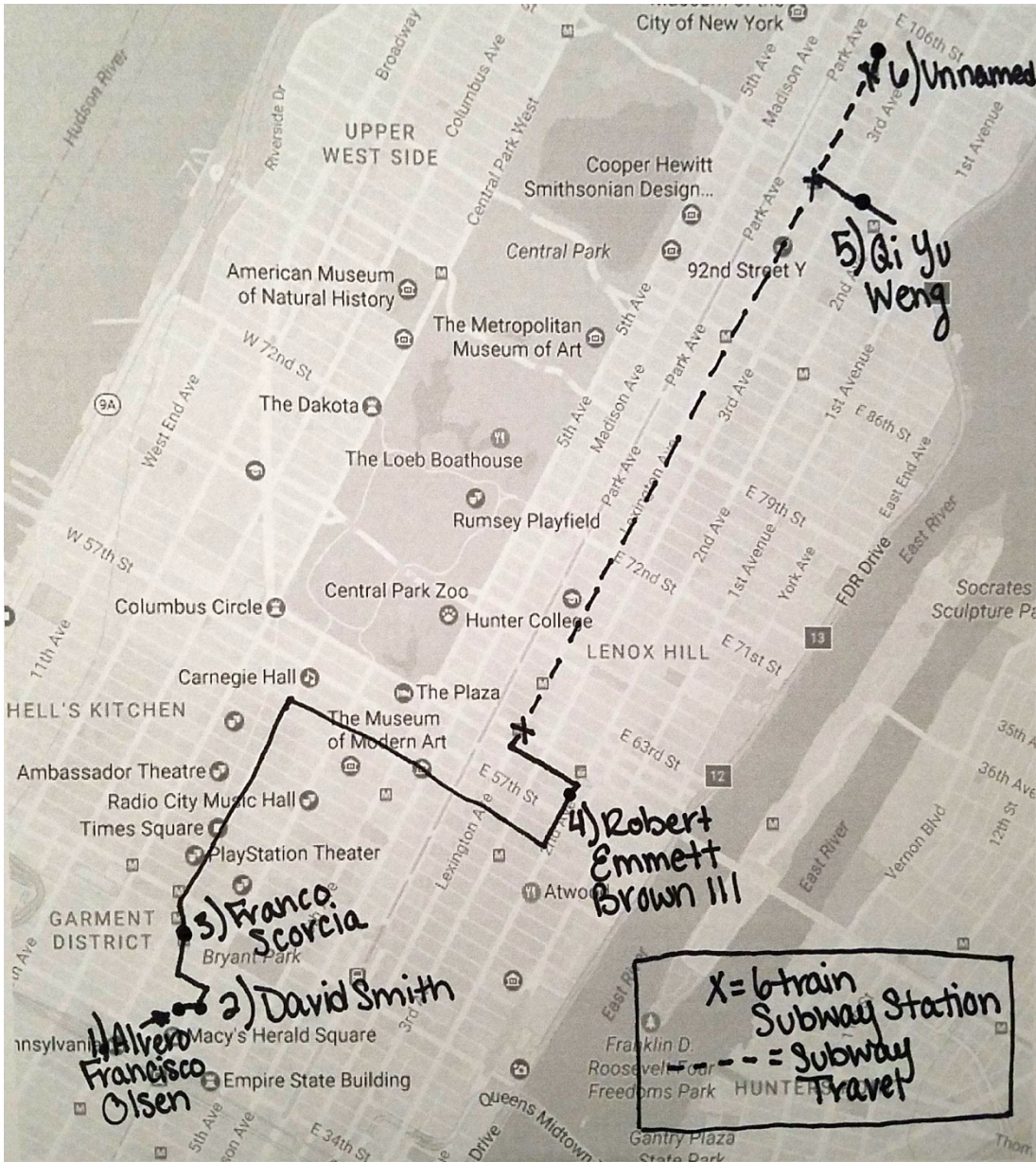
Fig. 2.9. Pilgrimage #4 – Midtown, Upper East Side & Harlem. Photograph by author.
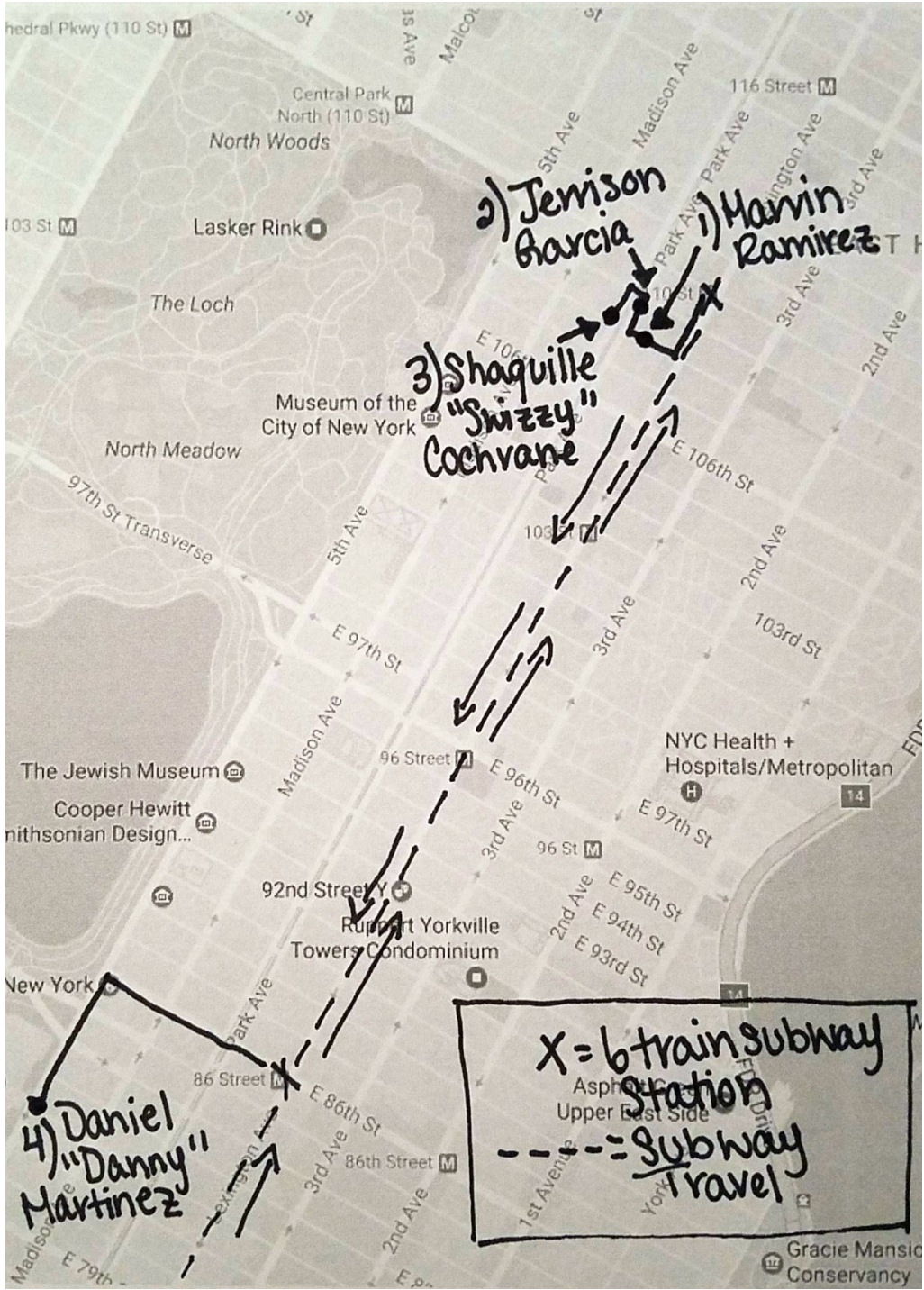
Fig. 2.10. Pilgrimage #5 – Harlem & Upper East Side. Photograph by author.

Though my embodied experience is placed on the map, it is only in relation to the ghost bike sites and my attempts to find them, therefore balancing, yet again, a ghost bike geography with a directly related personal geography created solely for this venture. By highlighting the ghost bikes and the paths I forged to reach them, I am attempting to recreate remembrances of a part of history that are not present, and most likely will never be present, on other print maps. The inclusion of these markers is an attempt to subvert the dominant constructions of maps that include certain elements while excluding others to aid in the social construction of a particular reality (Pinder 408). By using my agency as an amateur/subversive cartographer, I have created maps that highlight a particular social history left out of traditional maps, tours, and commonly told stories about the history of the city. I created new narratives regarding places of importance on the street and presenting alternative realities from a particular group that exists and functions within the city bounds. Though the agency of cartographers is typically erased from finished maps in order to present a "universal" point of view my voice is purposefully included to create records that draw attention to political objects imbued with meaning and a point of view to counter dominants narratives about the streets and places of interest (Pinder 407).

2.4 Seeing Double

In *Virtual Afterlives: Grieving the Dead in the Twenty-First Century*, Candi K. Cann writes that bodiless memorials, such as the ghost bike, return the disappeared/deceased body to geographical space through substitution-- the memorial serves as a "cleaner, neater, more sanitary, and less scary" representation of the physical corpse (23). The ghost bike memorials, she points out, do not only represent the body of cyclists; they are also visual reminders of the bicycles involved in these crashes. Cann writes:

> This [the ghost bike] is not merely a replacement of the cyclist, an apparition of the missing body and his or her bike in the afterlife, but it is also a reminder of the bike

before its rider's death – a bike before its fateful collision. The bike… is presented as clean and pristine; there is no evidence of the terrible effects of the car accident on the bike itself. It is, essentially, a memorial made digestible for the American public – powerful yet presentable. (35)

The descriptive words used to describe the ghost bike-- clean, pristine, and digestible-- stand out amongst the rest of Cann's analysis. I agree with her description of the ghost bike being a public-friendly memorial that serves as a metonym of often-seen-as-scary dead body and appreciate her attempt at including the ghost of the bicycle; however, I find that her analysis is missing an important aspect of the ghost bike memorial; how it stands over time.

The terms "clean," "pristine," and "digestible" seem to indicate a particular type of ghost bike, one that has, perhaps, just been installed (she describes the process of creating and installing a ghost bike as described by Ghostbikes.org in the pages leading up to this argument), or one that has been regularly maintained. Absent from her observations are the ghost bikes that have been exposed to the elements of weather and their respective neighborhoods over an extended period of time. Over the course of my New York ghost bike pilgrimage, several of the bikes I have encountered have been the opposite of pristine; many are marked, either by ink or dirt, or have suffered some level of damage. While it is possible for a longstanding ghost bike receiving regular maintenance from its creators and visitors to fit the description Cann provides, I have found this to be a pretty rare exception. So then, if the "pristine" ghost bikes are considered to be "safe," what messages are communicated to the public by the weathered memorials? What types of bodies do these bikes represent? The answers for these questions were revealed during a visit to one particular ghost bike site, devoted to Carolina Hernandez in Rego Park, Queens.

It was nearing dusk as I stood on the sidewalk near the corner of 57th Avenue and Junction Boulevard viewing the ghost bike dedicated to Hernandez. The bike is half leaning

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against the pole it is attached to but half lying on the ground, as if it were in pain. It is in an obvious state of decay; the white paint has chipped away to reveal under layers of rust, and the rear tire is bent. I am slowly overwhelmed with an emotion that I cannot describe as I come to the realization that the weathered state of the ghost bike mimics the damage inflicted onto a bicycle involved in a collision. My mind wanders to the story that a co-worker told me a few days prior, about how she was in her apartment when she heard loud noises outside. She looked out the window to see that a little girl had been hit by a car while riding her bike. A few days later the ghost bike appeared.

Almost seven years later, I am looking up at the apartment houses surrounding me; trying to imagine what it must have been like for my co-worker to look out her window and see a girl lying on the ground. When I look back down at the white bicycle, I am no longer just looking at a bike. I am beginning to visualize a young girl whose body sprawled out on the ground, in pain. I have never seen an image of Carolina Hernandez, but looking at the dents and twisted metal of the bicycle, I begin to imagine injuries on a human body that would cause it to contort in an analogous way. This is the moment where I began to understand the ghost bike as visual metaphor, as metonym, for the body; and not just the clean, embalmed body one often witnesses after death, but the raw, pained body riddled with injuries, the type of body that is hidden, cleared away, and not discussed after death.

In *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry writes that physical pain is the one facet of human emotion that resists being expressed through language. Pain is a state of consciousness that actively defies language, destroys it, reducing the pained individual to the sounds and cries used before she is taught language (4). Scarry writes that pain differs from other states of consciousness because it lacks a referential content; "It is not *of* or *for* anything. It is precisely

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because it takes no object that it, more than any other phenomenon, resists objectification in language' (5). This is not to say that there is no expression of pain via language. Terms and phrases exist to verbalize feelings of pain, often created/dictated through the language developed by medical professionals, though this too is limited. Scarry claims the limited vocabulary used to express pain allows for an "as if" structure to be created (15). This "as if" structure creates two metaphors, one that creates an image of a weapon to induce pain and the other the image of a wound, such as "It feels as if there's a nail sticking into the bottom of my foot" (15). "Physical pain is not identical with (and often exists without) either agency or damage, but these things are referential; consequently we often call on them to convey the experience of the pain itself (15).

The "as if" structure is what allows for the connection between the damaged ghost bike and the damaged body to be imagined. The bicycle is an object easily personified to represent various functions of the human body. Both rely on their parts in order to function; the chains, pedals and wires work together to make the tires spin or stop, just like the human body relies on its internal systems in order to function. Both are mobile objects, directed by specific instruments to travel in one direction or another. Ultimately though, the connection between the body and ghost bike memorial lies in the imagery created through the overall ghost bike project and through the intentions expressed on websites like Ghostbikes.org. The ghost bike memorial represents a past event and also the once-present body involved in that event. Neither object, the body nor the bicycle, can naturally express the pain through language. Never having seen Hernandez's body at the time of her death or the bike she was riding, I have no actual referent to describe the amount of pain felt in the aftermath of the crash. However, I have noticed after witnessing several other bicycles in the aftermath of crashes, the damage to the white bicycle that allows for the insertion of "as if" into the equation. The positioning of the ghost bike,

simultaneously half standing and half lying on the ground, creates my association-- the ghost bike looks *as if* it has been hit by a car and is in pain.

I created similar associations when I began to re-imagine the damaged ghost bike as a stand in for the injured body. My personification of the ghost bike creates the connection between the bike tires and the human legs and how the bent rear tire seems to emulate the way an injured leg contorts at unnatural angles, or the connection between the chipped white paint and the rust it reveals to torn skin exposing bloody layers of tissue and muscle. This ghost bike does not feel safe. It feels damaged in a way that frightens me, a way that causes me to recall every damaged body I have seen or imagine the ones described but not pictured. In the many articles I have read about bicycle crashes and cycling deaths, the body of the deceased is not shown in any accompanying photograph. The body remains out of frame as the images show intersections, streets, police cars, ambulances, markers designating where the bodies once laid, and occasionally, damaged bicycles. However, it is here on the sidewalk that I find a regeneration of the injured, pained body mirrored by a decaying white bicycle.

Gazing upon Carolina Hernandez's ghost bike, I realize that the people living in the neighborhood had watched the bike decay over time; an act that is not possible when a human body dies suddenly. Unlike the often drawn out process of watching someone's body decline due to illness, an unexpected death suddenly removes the body from sight. Loved ones do not have a significant amount of time to process what has happened to a victim's body or to grieve as decline occurs; rather they are forced into grieving during and after a funeral or burial. The bicycle becomes a visual metaphor in the sense that like the body, it decays.
Witnessing the drawn out deterioration of a bicycle substitutes for the lack of time with the suddenly deceased and removed body.

The color white can be used to communicate many different messages such as innocence, or purity. The color white is also used to create a blank canvas, one that can be inscribed or covered with any message or meaning an artist choses to express. While some ghost bikes do have personalized artifacts attached to them-- for example, Asif Rahman and Andrew Ross Morgan's ghost bikes had plaques declaring their names-- many of the ghost bikes lack markers declaring a specific victim. Even when they do, if one were to pass a ghost bike while in a moving vehicle, the markers are often hard to read. Hernandez's memorial site lacked personal or informational artifacts, but in a way, the memorial was personalized through its damage. The ways in which the "pristine" white paint was scuffed or chipped could never be replicated onto another memorial; its markings are unique to this ghost bike.

While looking at a ghost bike, one can imagine the victim to be anyone; him or herself, a friend, family member, a partner. The first time this re-imagination happened for me was when I stood in front of Carolina Hernandez's memorial. I realized that I did not need to see an image of her to understand what had happened to her; my ability to visually re-imagine a teenage girl's injured body in place of the ghost bike was strong enough to cause an emotional reaction. Knowing the story of the victim did play a role in the affect created by this visualization, Hernandez also happened to be youngest victim of all the cycling victim's memorials I visited, but having had this experience during the second ghost bike search shaped how I would come to view the ghost bikes I encountered on the last two pilgrimages. I came to understand that the conditions surrounding this installation produced the substitution.

I use the term installation to describe the ghost bike because I believe that the memorial site can also be viewed as a site of guerilla installation art. The ghost bike as guerilla installation art encompasses all of the intended meanings of the ghost bike memorial while providing a

frame that highlights its creation, installation, and performance. The term "guerilla installation art" combines two artistic techniques, installation art and guerilla art, developed independently but paired in order to make an unexpected statement in public space. Installation art is defined as art objects assembled within a particular location (an art gallery, museum, public space, etc.) that creates an 'experiential' or 'immersive' environment for its spectators (Bishop 6). Keri Smith defines guerilla art as "any anonymous work… installed, performed, or attached in public spaces, with the distinct purpose of affecting the world in a creative or thought provoking manner" (11). Both techniques produce artworks that are ephemeral, meaning that they are only meant to exist for a specific amount of time before they are disassembled or removed. Smith writes, "Work that is impermanent reminds us that nothing in life is permanent, that every state is temporary and transitory" (17). The temporary nature of installation and guerilla artwork call for the spectator to be physically present and engaged with the piece(s) to garner its meaning.

Julie H. Reiss claims, "The essence of installation art is spectator participation" (xiii). Installation art relies on the spectator for its completion as "meaning evolves from the interaction between the two" (Reiss xiii). As site-specific installation art, meaning that the piece is "inextricably linked to its locale," the ghost bike invites its viewers to reflect on the surrounding environment in addition to the materiality of the installation (Rosenthal 28). By "engaging the surrounding space… an installation can speak to and about that specific space… ponder its physical and theoretical being – its identity" (Rosenthal 27). The cohabitation of the installation piece and the environment allows art to impersonate life (Rosenthal 27).

Hernandez's ghost bike exemplifies Rosenthal's claim that installation art can impersonate life. The prolonged exposure to the elements have allowed the memorial to deteriorate at its own rate, due to whatever it has encountered in the years it has stood on the

corner. The alterations to the ghost bike allow for the spectators to reinterpret the ghost bike and create additional associations with other figures, like I have done by linking Hernandez's ghost bike to the injured body.

2.5 Ghost Bike vs. Citi Bike

My sister and I were walking along The Avenue of the Americas near 36th Street, talking about the ghost bikes we were looking for. There were supposed to be two memorials nearby, one for Alvaro Francisco Olsen on 36th Street between 36th and Broadway, and one for David Smith on the Avenue of the Americas between 36th and 37th Streets, but we were having trouble finding either of them. Our conversation was interrupted by a woman who offered to point us in the direction of a nearby Citi Bike stand. She thought we were looking for these. She revealed that she worked in the area and after I explained we were looking for ghost bikes, not Citi Bikes, she told us that she had never seen a ghost bike in this part of the city. Instead, she said to travel to Williamsburg, Brooklyn where there were several of them. I had a second, similar experience a few weeks later when I was walking down Delancy Street near Chrystie Street and stopped two girls passing by to ask if they had ever seen a ghost bike near that intersection. They kindly answered my question by referring me to the Citi Bike stand located around the corner from where Jeffrey Axelrod's ghost bike should have been. These interactions were not my first with the Citi Bikes, but they called attention to the fact that the New Yorkers surrounding me could easily identify one specific type of bicycle.

Citi Bikes, the bike share program implemented by the City of New York and sponsored by CitiBank, were first installed on the streets of Manhattan and Brooklyn in 2013 ("The History of Citi Bike"). A plan for a bicycling sharing system in New York City, where users could rent bicycles from a docking station and ride them for a set amount of time before returning them to

any of the multiple docking stations around a city was implemented in 2009. In the same year,

The NYC Department of City Planning released the "Bike-Share Opportunities in New York

City" study, which stated that a bike-share program would allow New York City to "re-envision

transportation within the urban sphere," and would "offer immediate transportation solutions as

they can be built, installed, and open for business in months rather than years" (7). When Citi

Bike launched in May 2013, 6000 blue bicycles stamped with the new Citi Bike logo, which a

play on the CitiBank logo, the program's corporate sponsor, were released for public use ("The

History of the Citi Bike"). By 2016, Citi Bikes were located in the boroughs of Brooklyn,

Manhattan and Queens, with plans to expand from 8,000 to 10,000 bicycles by placing new

docking stations in neighborhoods throughout Brooklyn, and the Upper East and West Sides of

Manhattan, as well as Jersey City, New Jersey ("Citi Bike Expansion"). The Citi Bike program

has gained popularity; in 2015 it counted a record 10 million rides and in 2016 was expecting to

break (2016). It received endorsements from celebrities such as Leonardo DeCaprio and Naomi

Watts (Chung). New York is not the only location where bike sharing programs have been

successfully implemented; as of March 2016, 80 cities across the US hosted a bike share system,

and an additional 100 cities are considering or in the process of constructing their own (Beitsch).

Though the bike share program has allowed transportation via bicycle to become more

accessible, it is not without its share of problems.

Citi Bike, like other corporate/city sponsored bike share operations across the country,

has had difficulties regarding helmet use amongst its riders. In the abstract for their study

regarding helmet use and bicycle riders, Basch et al. write that while it is well known that bicycle

helmets are used to prevent/reduce head injuries, "it is unclear how to effectively promote helmet

use, particularly in the context of bicycle-sharing programs" (503). The bike share system does

not present opportunities for its corporate sponsor or the city to easily provide helmets for the bike share users and studies reveal that bike share riders are less likely to wear helmets when compared to other bicyclists (Basch et al.; Fischer et al.). Basch et al. also note that "almost all (97%) of the serious cycling injuries and fatalities in NYC between 1996 and 2005 occurred among cyclists who were not wearing a helmet" (503).

A second issue related to the Citi Bike program in New York is the location of the docking stations. Alison Cohen, then President of the Alta Bicycle Share organization which develops bicycle sharing systems nationwide, stated in 2011 that in order for a bicycle share system to work, there needed to be a certain density regarding the amount of docking stations in a particular area (Jaffe 2011). New York's bike share system was to model the one installed throughout Paris, which houses 28 stations per square mile, or in New York terms, "one every two or three blocks" (Jaffe 2011; City Planning Commission). The City Planning Commission recommended in 2009 that "A New York City bike-share program should focus on the city's medium- and high-density areas," which equals out to approximately 32,000 people or more per square mile (9). The combination of these guidelines for creating a bike share system is beneficial to any of the people who frequent the particularly busy areas of the city, especially locations that receive an influx of visitors from tourism. On the other hand, this system excludes the lesser populated areas of the city's five boroughs, including areas where the train systems do not reach and places receiving little to no tourism-related business.

When I began to encounter the Citi Bike docking stations regularly while completing my ghost bike search, I was frustrated to discover that so many of the stations were located in the same areas around Midtown and Downtown Manhattan where the missing ghost bikes once stood. My first assumption was that city organizations were removing the ghost bikes because

there were plans for the Citi Bike stations to be installed in that location. I had read a blog post written by a New York cyclist who recounted the story of his friends Carl and Tia, a couple living and working in Gowanus, Brooklyn. The couple lived a mile away from their workplace and the street on which they resided had bike lanes leading directly to the warehouse where they worked, but Carl and Tia never rode bikes in their neighborhood because they passed a ghost bike on their route, an object that caused them to fear riding in their neighborhood (Naparstek). Another cyclist responded to the post, which generally questioned whether memorialization practices for cyclists harmed cycling as a whole, claiming that it was not the ghost bike itself that appeared as "scary" to those who witnessed it, but rather it was the reality the ghost bike represented that created fear (Komanoff). Having read both blog posts, and the intense conversations taking place in their corresponding "Comments" sections, I found the arguments made to be intriguing; does the process of memorializing a fallen cyclist really scare the public away from riding bikes? All of the research I had conducted, and generally my views on the ghost bike, had always leaned towards the positive nature; the memories they sought to recall or the change they advocated. These articles, paired with my inability to locate many of the ghost bikes I had been searching for, presented a possibility for negative actions or reactions to the memorials.

Though the problems outlined above indicate there are disconnects between elements of the ghost bike network and the bike share system, the two networks are connected in a rather peculiar way. In 2014 and 2015 there were a combined 34 cycling related deaths reported in New York City, and only one of these crashes took place within a Citi Bike zone (Evans; Bicycle Crash Data Report). Since the inception of the NYC bike share program in 2013, there have been zero fatalities reported for riders on Citi Bikes (Dale; Nguyen). Though non-fatal crashes

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involving Citi Bike riders still occur, there are several possibilities as to how Citi Bike riders have avoided death thus far: increased ridership, bicycle design, and location of rides. The bike share system has allowed for an increase in riders where Citi Bikes are available, causing more bicycles to be on the street at any given time (Dale). The increased number of riders increases the visibility of cyclists, which directly correlates to an increase of driver awareness (Jacobsen; Dale). The Citi Bikes are created to move at slower speeds than non-Citi Bike bicycles and are built to position the bike's seat lower than its handlebars, leading to better balance for the rider (Nguyen). Lastly, many of the Citi Bike stations are placed in areas that have a large number of bicycle lanes for riders to use. Since the Citi Bike users typically do not go outside of the Citi Bike zones, their rides take place within concentrated areas that maintain a large number of cyclists.

It seems that the Citi Bikes have succeeded in promoting safer areas for bicyclists to ride, similar to the aims of the ghost bike memorials. In areas of the city where the ghost bikes have been removed, the Citi Bikes have actualized some of the mission to promote bicycle visibility. However, since ghost bikes in New York continue to disappear as the Citi Bike program expands, I am left with questions about their relationship: Is it possible for the ghost bike and the Citi Bike to co-exist on the same city streets? What influence could one bicycle have on how the other is viewed? If the Citi Bikes have led to safer riding conditions within their zones, how can rider safety be improved in other sections of the city that lack bike share stations? These are difficult questions that are impossible to answer without extensive research. Though seemingly unrelated, the ghost bike and bike share networks are linked through ghost bike's call for safer riding conditions and the bike share's ability to create opportunities for those conditions to occur.

2.5 Touring, Tourist, Tourism

If you say the word "tourist" to a New Yorker, there is a fairly good chance that she would grimace in response. Most natives or locals in large metropolitan cities dislike the behaviors of tourists that visit, even though tourism plays a large role in city economics. I have seen instances of this dislike firsthand, with friends who go out of their way to avoid the crowds in Times Square or complain about the person who suddenly stops in front of you on the sidewalk to take a photo. At times I have joined the complaining, particularly if I am in a rush to get somewhere, but for the most part I find pleasure in observing someone taking in "the sights" of New York for the first time. I have never minded the tourists in New York; that is until I became one.

In *The Tourist* Dean McCannell writes that "The rhetoric of moral superiority that comfortably inhabits this talk about tourists was once found in unconsciously prejudicial statements about other "outsiders" (9). Part of this problem stems from the perceived superficiality of tourist experiences. McCannell notes "They [tourists] are reproached for being satisfied with the superficial experiences of other peoples and other places" (10). Michael Bowman, echoing the sentiments of Daniel Boorstin, writes about the gullible nature of tourists to choose pre-selected experiences over the more real and "authentic" experiences that surrounds them. He writes, "Today, tourist agencies offer prepackaged, even pre*lived* (as in television ads for cruises) experiences…And those who do venture forth find that a mass-produced, plastic culture of schlock and tourist kitsch proliferate everywhere" (Bowman 143-4). New York, like other large cities, is filled with opportunities to consume the pre-determined tourist experiences described by McCannell and Bowman. One can walk down nearly any street in Midtown Manhattan and encounter one of the "Hop-On, Hop-Off" buses that transport hordes of tourists

around the city to pre-selected destinations. I have participated in some of these experiences myself; I once allowed myself to be talked into buying an expensive visitors package to the Empire State Building that included tickets to the "New York SkyRide," a cheesy and outdated 4D attraction ride narrated by Kevin Bacon that attempts to frame its riders as participants in a helicopter tour around the city. The blatant artificiality of this attraction caused my friend and me to complain extensively afterwards, during which we expressed our disbelief that we, as locals, had been conned into paying much more than necessary for a tourist trap. It was only the second time in my life that I had ever truly felt like a tourist in New York, a feeling that I despised.

When I started the ghost bike search, I chose to search for the memorials in locations with which I was familiar. My sister and I walked 18 miles on the first ghost bike excursion, mostly around Midtown and the Upper East Side. The second ghost bike search through Flushing and Rego Park, Queens, and the third through the Lower East Side and the East Village in Manhattan. Having previously spent time in each of these locations, I was comfortable exploring the neighborhoods. It was not until May 2015, when I returned home to complete my fifth ghost bike search that things began to change.

There were ten ghost bikes for the last search and the route extended north into East Harlem. It was my first time traveling to East Harlem. According to the Ghostbikes.org map, there would be five ghost bikes within two subway stops of each other. I wanted to explore a new area of the city, and I was determined to find the ghost bikes after having seen some images of the victims on their biographical pages during the planning process.

I began the trip by revisiting a few of the ghost bike sites I had been unable to locate in Midtown before working my way over to the East Side and heading uptown. In an attempt to avoid creating a tourist persona by pulling out a map on the street, I hand wrote out the directions

to each ghost bike site in a small blue notebook. After revisiting 2nd Avenue and 58th Street, my instructions were

> Walk back to 6 train, take uptown to 96th Street → Walk east to 96th and 2nd, in between the corner of 2nd and Marx Brothers playground → bike for Qi Yu Weng, age 28, death date March 25th, 2011.

Following the directions, I walked to the edge of the park where groups of men were playing soccer and hanging out on a handball court, but could not locate the ghost bike. As I continued down the block, I noticed a man sitting on the stoop of a building across the street watching me; he made me feel uncomfortable. As a woman who walks around Manhattan on a regular basis, I am accustomed to receiving unwanted attention from passersby, the cat calls and stares that come along with city life. Usually when I am unfortunate enough to have these encounters, I am in parts of the city that I know well; a factor that gives me confidence to ignore what is happening and continue onto my destination. In this scenario however, I began to question myself: Does he realize that I do not know where I am going? Why is he watching me? What do I do if he approaches me? I decided to walk back towards the intersection, a more populated area, and ask somebody to give me information about Qi Yu Weng's bike. Though I had not been on 96th Street for longer than ten minutes, I was already more self-aware than usual.

In the moment, when I was concerned about my personal safety, I failed to realize that perhaps the man was watching me because I was an outsider. How many times had I sat on my grandmother's front porch in Queens and watched people I did not recognize walk around the neighborhood? In *The Death and Life of the Great American City*, Jane Jacobs notes that city streets and sidewalks contain two types of people: users and watchers (37). She describes a scene revolving around a typical city scenario: waiting for the bus. Not long after arriving at the bus stop, Jacobs was called upon by a resident living in the building across the street who informed

her that the bus was not running on that particular day (38). The tenant of the building, in watching the street, notices Jacobs, the user, and provides information that informs her of how the street works. By choosing to disclose this information, the watcher is protecting the user, guiding her by way of providing information while also looking out for the street itself. Jacobs writes:

> This woman was one of thousands upon thousands of people in New York who casually take care of the streets. They notice strangers… If they need to take action, whether to direct a stranger waiting in the wrong place or to call the police, they do so. Action usually requires, to be sure, a certain self-assurance about the actor's proprietorship of the street and the support he will get if necessary…. (38)

The aware resident becomes one of the many guardians of her street. Though I will never be sure why the man on the stoop was watching me, I did meet such a guardian once I located the ghost bike. I refer to the brother of the superintendent who approached me in the narrative that I provided as the introduction to this chapter. Though he was not a permanent resident of the street, the man indicated that he spent significant time there, and I was able to infer that he held the same sense of proprietorship as the woman in Jacobs' narrative. By questioning me, a stranger, about my actions, he was acting as a warden of the street. He supplied me with information in an attempt to teach me about one of the many intricate dances of daily activity performed on the block we were standing on; not only to create a safe environment for me as a street user but also to protect the sanctity of that neighborhood. His hesitancy to speak while the camera was recording and his initial question-- "Are you from the city?"-- strove to identify the stranger, and in turn set the tone for the remainder of the conversation. Later, after our interaction had ended, I wondered about how it would have progressed had I been a representative of the city: Would he have talked to me at all? Maybe provided different information? The opening question, I realized, was asked in order to serve a third type of

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protection, one of self-preservation. I was an outsider in the place where he had both physical

and emotional investment, causing him to approach me. His hesitancy, however, suggested he

perhaps was uncomfortable interacting with someone from a city agency. His statement that "the

city wouldn't build a bike lane here," also suggests a belief that the city did not care about or pay

attention to that neighborhood. And though our encounter was brief, he used his role as a regular

in this location to educate me; something that might never have happened if he had spoken to a

city official instead.

The next set of directions in my notebook read:

Walk back to 6 train – Uptown to 103rd St. GB on corner of 104th
& Lexington," → "Unnamed," death date April 17th, 2014.

As I approached the corner of 104th Street and Lexington Avenue, I easily was able to find the

ghost bike standing on the corner and immediately recognized that this one was different from

the others I had seen. First, it was the only ghost bike I found for an unnamed or unknown victim

that was still intact; in fact this ghost bike, just over a year old, was in the best condition of all

the ones I encountered in New York. Second, the style of bicycle used to create this memorial

differed from any ghost bike I had visited or seen images of. Typically, ghost bikes are made of

mountain bikes or leisure bikes with straight handle bars and a traditional bike frame, but the

unnamed ghost bike in this neighborhood was made from a lowrider bike (see Fig. 2.11).

The lowrider ghost bike memorial holds cultural significance that separates it from the traditional

bikes used in ghost bikes memorial because of the relationship between lowrider bicycles and

Latino culture.

Fig. 2.11. Lowrider Ghost Bike. Photograph by author.

Lowrider bicycles, a spin-off of the lowrider car, are built so that their frames hug the ground (Hamilton). Usually custom decorated, the highest point of the lowrider is the handlebars; the seat is positioned in a way to allow the rider's body to sit lower on the bicycle (Hamilton). The lowriding style is "…the result of two very different traditions, California car culture and Mexican culture coming together in Southern California. Lowriding has always had a distinct Mexican flavor…" ("Lowrider Bicycle"). The cars modified to emulate the lower rider style played a large role in socialization within Chicano culture; not only did the car serve as a status symbol but the owners of the cars would come together to show off to one another and hang out, similar to the tradition revolving around classic car shows around the US ("Lowrider Bicycle"). The lowrider bicycle functions similarly within the cycling community, and East Harlem, also known as Spanish Harlem or El Barrio, is home to one of the largest Latino populations in all of New York City. Though one may not know the name of the crash victim killed at this intersection, one can ascertain that its maker, and possibly the entire surrounding Latino community, is making a statement about the victim's identity. The cultural significance

imbued in the lowrider bicycle declares the victim a member of the Latino community. Ethnicity, to the best of my knowledge, is not typically suggested by the ghost bike itself, though the artifacts at these memorials sometime imply ethnicity and cultural values.

The following day, I resumed my search where I left off:

Walk to 108th Street & Park Ave →one bike uptown side, right below 108th Street → Jerrison Garcia, Age:25, Death Date: 8/18/14 → Downtown side, 2 bikes 1. At intersection → Shaquille Cochrane (Swizzy), Age: 19, Death Date: 7/30/12 2. On 108th, downtown side → Marvin Ramirez, Age: 18, Death Date: 6/2/13

Here, I varied from my directions; instead of walking to 108th Street from my current location, I took the 6 train to 110th Street and walked from there. From the moment I exited the train station, I again became more self-aware than usual. The first thing I saw was project housing on the other side of the street. My nervousness irritated me, and I felt like I was losing my confidence in my "New Yorker" identity.

Project housing is a common sight in East Harlem. In the post-World War II 1950s, East Harlem's population surge (at its height counted 142,000 people per square mile) caused the government to restructure housing in the area by demolishing dilapidated tenements and building 15 new housing projects by 1967 ("East Harlem History"). Currently the New York Housing Authority lists fifteen active housing projects located within East Harlem, 11 of which were opened prior to 1967 (NYC Housing Authority). Thanks to news reports and movie depictions, I have often associated housing projects with violence, one possible explanation for my discomfort. The outside of the project, the Clinton Houses, was teeming with people, most of whom seemed to be high school aged. Again aware of being on my own, I decided to walk on the sidewalk opposite the Clinton Houses, where I encountered a man who cat-called at me in

Spanish and a yarn bomb[2] depicting a beautiful purple flower surrounded by butterflies. Ignoring the man, I paused on the sidewalk to take a photo of the yarn bomb, an act that made me painfully aware of just how tourist-y I was behaving. Crossing the street and walking along the outside border of the Clinton Houses, I encountered the ghost bike dedicated to Marvin Ramirez. I found a second ghost bike, the one dedicated to Jerrison Garcia, after crossing Park Avenue under the brick MetroNorth train tracks. I recognized Garcia's memorial from the photos I had seen on his Ghostbikes.org biographical page, but as I stood on the street and looked at the picture of Garcia attached to the handlebars, I was struck with an odd sense of identification. Jerrison Garcia was 25 years old when he was killed and at the time of the visit, I was the same age. He was the first and only bicycle crash victim whose age at time of death matched my current age. After searching the area for the last ghost bike on my list and failing to find it (Ghostbikes.org reported it as missing), I walked back to the train station and headed downtown.

The level of discomfort I felt walking near the projects was a feeling that I had never had before and was causing me stress that I struggled to understand. I found myself looking for a place where I could stop and reflect on what happened, a desire that ironically led me to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET). While the MET is among the most well-known tourist destination in Manhattan, it also happens to be one of my favorite places in the city. I also happened to know from my research that a ghost bike once stood across the street from the museum, though I had never noticed it during the multiple trips I took there from 2009 to 2015. I paid a $2 donation, something I sort of prided myself on since typically only locals know that the

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[2] The yarn bomb is a type of street art that uses crocheted or knitted yarn to cover objects found in public spaces, including but not limited to fences, trees, light posts, benches, cars, and handrails of public transit buses and trains. They are sometimes used to make political statements about the environment and various structures of power, though they do not have any other connections to the ghost bike. I have been interested in this art since the early 2000s and have actively sought yarn bombs on during my travels. The yarn bomb described above was a surprise discovery.

pricy admission fee posted in the lobby is merely a suggestion, and found myself in the large room containing the Temple of Dendur. I wrote notes about my trip to Harlem as visitors posed for photos in front of the Temple and the children next to me ran in circles, playing a game.

What was it about this area and this trip that made me so uncomfortable? I was able to come up with two answers to this question. First, East Harlem-- in fact, the entirety of Harlem-- is a place that I had been repeatedly told was dangerous and should avoid. It was not until I read Phillipe Bourgois' *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* that I began to examine who had told me to avoid the area and why. Bourgois writes

> It is not merely the police who enforce inner-city apartheid in the United States but also a racist "common sense" that persuades whites, and middle-class outsiders of all colors, that it is too dangerous for them to venture into poor African-American or Latino neighborhoods…. Most people in the United States are somehow convinced that they would be ripped limb from limb by savagely enraged local residents if they were to set foot in Harlem. (32-3)

For the first time, I factored my whiteness into the equation. Throughout my life, the people who warned me against going to Harlem were also white, and they were older than me; an important factor since they had lived through the more dangerous, gritty New York City of the 1970s and 1980s, an experience that affects how they view different areas of the city. Prior to this experience, I had never thought twice about the warnings or the racism that lay beneath it and how I was influenced by it. It also caused me to examine the areas of the city where I was most comfortable in, Midtown and Downtown Manhattan; areas predominately consisting of businesses and expensive housing. These were places where crimes occurred, and though my car had been broken into twice, once in Midtown and once in the East Village, I never felt unsafe in these areas. However, I was overly cautious whenever I ventured near the border of Harlem. This was an issue that I did not even know I had to confront until I ventured into East Harlem; causing me to grapple uncomfortably with my whiteness, my privilege, and my identity as a New Yorker.

Since coming to this realization, I struggle to identify with the proud New Yorker who commuted to her internship as I wonder how it took me this long to understand how slanted my views towards this area of the city have been.

The second answer to the question came in the realization that during this trip, I took on the worst behaviors that associated with tourism. As most outsiders do, I planned my trip to an unfamiliar area based on specific points of interest. Instead of being open to exploring this new part of the city, I limited my experience to pre-determined destinations. I even stopped in the middle of the sidewalk along the way to take photos of the street art, a replication of the act that I so often have complained about. And though ghost bikes are by no means a traditional, or "cheesy/inauthentic" tourist site, my search for ghost bikes could be classified as an act of "dark tourism." By traveling from ghost bike site to ghost bike site, I completed what John Lennon and Malcolm Foley would label as a pilgrimage, an act they consider to be one of the earliest forms of dark tourism (3). They write "…pilgrimage is often (but not only) associated with the death of individuals or groups, mainly in circumstances which are associated with the violent and the untimely. Equally, these deaths tend to have a religious or ideological significance which transcends the event itself to provide meaning to a group of people" (3). Additionally, Bowman writes "The performative consequences of pilgrimages are to mobilize local, national, and even international participation in the maintenance of a set of social and cultural performances…" (149). The ghost bikes, which mark the locations of untimely violent deaths, create meaning for cycling communities that transcend the act of death to encourage people encountering the sites to take particular courses of action, that is to be more aware while driving or to become involved in activist movements to improve cycling conditions.

The ghost bikes perform as objects of activism and remembrance, something that I actively reinforce by visiting the sites and talking with people about their meaning. Visitors also imitate and maintain a variation of an annual performance completed by The NYC Street Memorial Project on their annual memorial ride. This event is a ritual that encourages public memory and performance on a large scale encompassing the entire New York City ghost bike network. Separate rides occur simultaneously in each borough and participants travel routes between several ghost bikes sites, pausing at each one to place offerings at the site and share memories of the victim or speak about goals for increasing safety while riding. As the participants in the ride travel from ghost bike to ghost bike, they draw public attention to these sites continually to remind the surrounding areas that the act of mourning the cycling deaths is important and relevant, as well as to reinforce the presence of cyclists on the road and the need for awareness of them. My pilgrimage, though smaller than the annual memorial ride, mimics these actions and maintains their goals.

2.6 Revisiting the Past to Understand the Present

This ghost bike search taught me not only about the bikes but also about myself and my relationship with the city that I have claimed as home. I am not the first person to tour cities searching for the stories and meanings behind ghost bikes; Genea Barnes toured North America for her book *Don't Forget Me, Ghost Bikes- A Photographic Memorial*. However, I believe I am the first person studying ghost bikes that completed an anti-tour of a city when I had never expected it to be one.

Anti-tours began with Norman Klein, a professor at the California Institute of the Arts, who lead his students on tours around Los Angeles in the 1980s, searching for remnants of the city's past. Klein describes the tours in the introduction to *The History of Forgetting*: "I would

stop at locations where no buildings existed any longer, tell them what had been there once; a movie studio, a whorehouse, whatever. We would get out, look around, and agree that it was gone alright" (3). The purpose of these tours is to understand the history of urban space and the erasure of memory corresponding to that space over time. Klein and his students examine the modern cityscape in search of what lies beneath it, the gritty details that reveal each under layer used to create the current, tidier version. He likens the history of urban space to the process of creating an animated cartoon, "I noticed that the drawings and pencil tests made before a cartoon was finished often betrayed more about the real intentions than what finally showed on the movie screen, even though the earlier versions were usually just thrown in the trash…. the final version was the whitewash, or the conciliation, the ad that went public" (3).

Klein is not the only scholar to recognize the relationship between the erasure of public memory and urban space. Makagon writes about the "Disneyfication" of Times Square that resulted in the "safe" and corporatized current version of the Square, meant to replace the earlier, un-sanitized versions (50). The images of cities that we currently see have been carefully crafted by those in control of it in an attempt to create false memories to replace ones that already exist; a process that Klein calls "distraction" (2). The distractions aim to move our attention away from the problematic, contested moments of history by redirecting us towards the polished and officially sanctioned versions found in tourist's guides. As I think about the concept of "Disneyfication," I return to Cann's claim about the "pristine" ghost bike serving as an accessible memorial for the public. Is the ghost bike a Disneyfied version of bicycle crashes? Do the ghost bikes perform their cultural work through a revised, sanitized version of death?

Another scholar that acknowledges the erasure of memory is de Certeau, who wrote about New York as a city that "reinvents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing way its

previous accomplishments and challenging the future" (91). New York, and really all major

metropolitan cities, do not hold on to the everyday, commonplace occurrences on its streets. The

city continuously reinvents itself by replacing old memories with new, in the same way that new

buildings and images replace the buildings and memories Klein sought to recover with his

students. I did not realize that my ghost bike search doubled as an anti-tour until after they were

completed. As I made a list to compile all of the bikes I searched for during the five trips, I

marked the ones I had found and the ones I had not; six ghost bikes out of the 26 on the list.

More ghost bikes missing than found; the majority of my search consisted of my exploring areas

looking for traces of the missing ones. As I circled blocks and retraced my steps from corner to

corner looking for any sign of the missing bikes, I tried to imagine where they once stood, and

the role they might have played in shaping performances the streets.

Since coming this realization, I have come to find that I am not the only person who has

completed an anti-tour related to bicycles. Popular cycling blogger Eben Weiss, also known as

BikeSnobNYC, details his own anti-tour in the book *Bike Snob: Systematically & Mercilessly*

Realigning the World of Cycling. His introductory chapter details the popularity of cycling

throughout the sport's history by revisiting the column "Gossip of the Cyclers" published in *The*

New York Times during the 1890s (25). The column informs him about one extremely popular

route, Merrick Road, which once allowed cyclists to travel from Queens to Eastern Long Island.

He stresses the importance of this route to the cyclists of the time:

> So for Cycling, Long Island's Merrick Road was like the Bonneville Salt Flats and
> Daytona Beach combined. It was so popular that people built hotels and businesses for all
> the cyclists who would visit from the city. It turns out that the town of Valley Stream in
> Nassau County on the border of Queens was built to service the throngs of cyclists that
> would come to Merrick Road every weekend. Cycling actually created Valley Stream in
> the same way that gambling created Las Vegas. (30)

He decides to retrace this route on Merrick Road, now Merrick Boulevard, in the present day. After making some adjustments to accommodate changes (a ferry ride from Manhattan to Queens that no longer exists) that have occurred since the 1890s, he begins in College Point (coincidently the same place I was living when I first found Mireya Gomez's ghost bike). The "Gossip of the Cyclers" directions read "From College Point the electric car tracks are followed to Thirteenth Street, where a turn to the right is taken and the road followed to Flushing, a matter of only about three miles from the ferry" (Weiss 32). Weiss finds that neither the electric car tracks nor Thirteenth Street exists, opting to take the main thoroughfare of College Point Boulevard instead. He continuously has to make similar adjustments as he searches for parts of the route and road markers that are no longer present, while also dealing with automobile traffic and crowds of pedestrians that presently occupy the roads. Weiss follows the column's directions to the end of the route in Far Rockaway, his own place of residence, and in his reflection, questions his identity with cycling and his hometown:

> The signs grew increasingly familiar, but until this day I never had any idea that at one time this street was teeming with the very first cyclists. It was eerie….There are plenty of other places today that maintain their cycling heritage, but the Rockaway peninsula is not one of them. Yet I'd become a cyclist anyway. In growing up here, had I absorbed it unknowingly? Had I somehow been informed by these mustachioed, pantalooned ghosts? (40).

His observations and questions are eerily similar to the ones I have asked myself. Our anti-tours are similar, though we searched for different types of ghosts. Weiss' anti-tour is an instance of ghost-biking, the retracing of historical routes on a modern landscape to uncover how the spaces had changed. My pilgrimage was dedicated to finding and understanding ghost bike memorials, but I was led to other ghosts-- Ones of crashes, victims, and objects once present on the street, as well as ones left out of the constantly revised history of the city.

Another anti-tour can be found in the documentary *Bikes vs Cars*, which follows Dan Koppel, a writer, urban explorer and bicyclist from Los Angeles, as he travels around the city searching for the place where an elevated bike path once stood ("People"). As the documentary progresses, viewers see Koppel discuss cycling culture in Los Angeles as he straps his son into a carrier attached to the front of his bike. We also see him with copies of paper maps, his guide, as he searches residential neighborhoods for where the elevated paths once stood. He stands on the sidewalk in front of residential houses, pointing into backyards where support beams once stood and questioning the residents about their knowledge of the bike path. Koppel, like Weiss and myself, followed routes demarcating where artifacts of cycling culture once existed but stand no longer.

What is there to be learned from these anti-tours? First, it seems that even though space is delineated for bicycles in the street, efforts must still be made to understand how bicycles fit into city culture. Given the resurgence of cycling popularity over the past decade, people like Weiss and Koppel are revisiting the historical aspects of cycling to make sense of where we are at the present. What has changed? How can revisiting these spaces teach us about current bicycle culture? Can we use them for inspiration? These questions are woven into their explorations and address larger issues with cycling culture and urban planning that exist as modern cities work to improve their infrastructures. They are also the questions I found myself asking about the ghost bikes I found and failed to find. By visiting and revisiting ghost bike sites, I sought answers about the bikes themselves, the communities they represented, and how cities were affected by their presence. I learned about the power of the ghost bike: how it can be used to represent

ethnicity, how it performs as a metonym for the body, and how it is sites that constellates a variety of emotions and problems. These discoveries opened by eyes to the extensive possibilities of what ghost bikes can signify beyond marking a crash site, and influenced my analysis in the remainder of this study.

Chapter 3: Baton Rouge, Louisiana – Ghost Bike Building and Bike Lane Spaces

In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, there are two ghost bikes located within a mile of each other on the busy Perkins Road thoroughfare. One of these ghost bikes, installed in January 2012 and dedicated to Nathan Crowson, was Baton Rouge's first ghost bike memorial. The second white bicycle, west of Crowson's memorial at the intersection of Perkins Road and Congress Boulevard, was installed September 2012 following the death of Jason Stablier. Baton Rouge's third ghost bike, located on Gardere Lane near Pascagoula Drive, was created after the death of Barbara Jacob, also in September 2012. Crowson, Stablier, and Jacob were all killed after drivers hit them while operating vehicles under the influence of alcohol. In January 2017, five years after their deaths, Crowson and Stablier's ghost bikes still stand roadside on Perkins Road, though Jacob's memorial has been removed. A fourth ghost bike dedicated to Clifford Gouner following his August 2015 death has appeared. Gouner's ghost bike is attached to a fence bordering the soccer fields next to the Baton Rouge Public Library on Goodwood Boulevard, the location where the cyclist was struck while trying to cross Goodwood close to the road's Main Street intersection. All four of the ghost bikes were created and installed by the same man, Travis Hans, Baton Rouge resident and owner of a local bicycle repair shop.

Gordon Mese, former Baton Rouge mayoral candidate and local business owner, introduces me to Hans on a Wednesday afternoon in September 2016 by. Mese and I met to discuss a crash that occurred following a memorial bicycle ride for Gouner on August 4, 2015. Mese and his partner were riding their bicycles in the bike lane on Capital Heights Avenue when he was struck by a vehicle after the driver had run a stop sign. The pair were on their way home from Gouner's ghost bike memorial. Following our discussion of the crash and bicycling

infrastructure in Baton Rouge, Mese proposed the Government Street road diet (a plan to overhaul Government Street's infrastructure to include bicycle lanes and pedestrian spaces, discussed below), we walk over to Hans' shop, and soon I am standing in front of the shop's counter introducing myself while Hans works on a bicycle repair.

I ask Hans about the ghost bikes he created. He says he feels like he was working on ghost bikes before he started making them in Baton Rouge, perhaps while he was living in Austin, Texas, but that the first one he created in Baton Rouge was for Nathan Crowell, his former roommate and employee. When I tell him that I have encountered four ghost bikes in Baton Rouge, he corrects me to say that he's installed six total, though he does not provide the location of the other two (at the time of writing, I have been unable to find media coverage on these two bicycles or the crashes from which they resulted). Hans tells me that his "keychain is getting too large" from holding the keys to the U-locks securing the ghost bikes in place (a result of the number of cycling deaths in Baton Rouge), and that is partially why he has decided to use signs going forward. "I'm following New York's lead," he states. New York City ghost bikes are now accompanied by "Cyclist Killed Here" signs, which often remain after a ghost bike has been taken down. "There's just infrastructure problems there with trying to put bikes up all over the place…. I have a sticker cutting machine, the same one they use to cut the stuff that goes on the signs. So I bought real deal professional sign blanks, so we're going to start doing that and putting them on posts wherever" (Hans). The signs would be an alternative to the ghost bikes and would be easier to install on busy roadways, such as Baton Rouge's Airline Highway where Travis had difficulty finding a place for a ghost bike following the death of a cyclist in 2015. There aren't sidewalks or enough public green space to house a memorial there. At the time of our interview, Hans had just begun working with a new graphic designer on a design layout for

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the signage (the original designer backed out of the project) and he was unsure of what the signs would look like, only revealing the plan for one central image along with a space at the bottom for a victim's name.

Our conversation moves on to the dangers of bicycle riding in Baton Rouge, and the three bicycling deaths that have occurred since Gouner's ghost bike installation (one of which is the death on Airline Highway discussed above). He reveals that he had three ghost bikes ready following their deaths, but none have been installed. He discusses the space issues and also emotional difficulties that can accompany an installation. He begins to talk about the LSU student who was killed almost directly in front of his [the student's] house during a ride home. He was acquaintanced with the victim's roommates around the time of the crash but was unsure if they would be comfortable with a constant reminder of their friend's death right in front of their house. Hans revealed that putting the ghost bike at that location made him "feel weird" and since he was unable to acquire a direct answer from the roommates, he decided not to install the ghost bike. From our conversation, I conclude that Hans' signs would be a less invasive form of memorialization that would still enable him to demarcate the location of the crash. His response reveals some of the difficulties that accompany roadside memorial installations, and his position as sole creator of them.

The conversations with Mese and Hans bring up two topics that I have previously encountered but seem to be particularly prominent within the Baton Rouge community: one person taking a lead or key role in memorial construction, which is ordinarily considered to be a collective activity, and issues surrounding cycling infrastructure. In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore these two topics in an effort to understand what role(s) the individual plays in memorial building and how infrastructure positively or negatively effects perceptions of riding.

While infrastructure does not directly influence the building of memorials, it is undeniably enmeshed with rider safety, a factor that correlates to crashes, possible death, and a need for memorial spaces.

3.1 The Role of the Individual in Memorial Building

Hans is not the only individual known for in-depth involvement with memorial building. The first ghost bike memorial stemmed from the work of a single individual, Patrick Van der Tuin, who later recruited friends to help place additional ghost bikes at the sites of crashes around St. Louis. Richard Tomlinson, a cyclist from Silsbee, Texas, is known for creating and distributing the memorials throughout Houston, Texas. Each of these men have shaped memorial culture, influencing the appearance of these sites and how other mourners and activists choose to interact with them.

Van Der Tuin created the first ghost bike memorial in October 2003 in St. Louis, Missouri ("Ghost Bikes"; Dobler 169). A November 2003 article published in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported that cyclist Van Der Tuin witnessed a collision between another cyclist riding in the bike lane and an automobile, leading him to take action (Jonsson). The article reported that "a twisted bike, painted ghostly white and sporting a 'Cyclist Struck Here' sign" created by Van Der Tuin appeared at the location of the accident and, though removed a few days later, the impact of the bicycle was significant enough for Van Der Tuin and his associates to install 15 additional ghost bikes throughout St. Louis county in the following weeks (Jonsson). In an interview with *Grist*, Van Der Tuin discusses his amazement at the movement that sprang from his creation, and that in some cities, long-standing ghost bikes have become permanent memorials (Thomas). The interview ends with Van Der Tuin stating "…the hope is that the families are getting something out of it. I don't know whether it's a memorial or a finger to the

municipality that doesn't want to prosecute the driver, but I hope it's giving them some voice" (Thomas). Since Van Der Tuin's first ghost bike, over 600 others have been installed on streets worldwide, with new ghost bikes appearing after crashes on a regular basis; each drawing attention to the consequences of irresponsible driving or cycling while providing perhaps a larger speaking platform than Van Der Tuin ever intended, giving a voice to victims, riders, families, and communities.

Richard Tomlinson first became interested in ghost bike memorials following the death of Chelsea Norman in the fall of 2013 (Bike Houston). Houston's first ghost bike was installed in December of that year by Norman's family, and though Tomlinson was not involved in the creation of that memorial, he had already begun transforming bicycles into ghost bikes (Bike Houston). His goal for 2014, as stated in an interview with Bike Houston, a non-profit organization dedicated bicycling safety, was to install 61 ghost bikes across Houston, a city 100 miles away from his home, to represent past cycling deaths (Bike Houston). *The Houston Chronicle* reported in April 2014 that Tomlinson had already installed 40 of those white bicycles, putting up 13 in a single weekend (Hlavaty). Tomlinson collected bicycles for the memorial from local cycling shops and private donations, though he traded new bicycles in for used ones, and performed the labor needed for their transformation, paying for the needed materials out of his own pocket (Hlavaty). In the Bike Houston interview, Tomlinson acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining each of the sites, considering the cost, distance, and time required to do so. He hoped to instill an "adopt a bike" system where local residents could keep track of the ghost bikes in their neighborhood (Bike Houston). Since his mass-ghost bike installation, additional cyclists in Houston have come together to continue installing ghost bikes, and a networking system has been established through the "Ghost Bike Houston" Facebook

group, where cyclists communicate about crashes and the state of existing ghost bike memorials (Ghost Bike Houston). Tomlinson is work is largely responsible for informing the Houston public about ghost bike memorials and serves as the starting point for what has become a larger community movement.

The work put forth by Hans, Van Der Tuin, and Tomlinson can be seen as acts of conviviality. Conviviality, as defined by Ivan Illich, is the "autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment," which contrasts to the conditioned responses one receives or is taught by institutions (18). By designing, building, and installing the ghost bike memorials, Hans, Van Der Tuin, and Tomlinson are stepping outside acts of ritualized mourning to participate autonomously in their communities, a participation that guides others to act in a similar manner, hence the evolution of the ghost bike network. The repetitive act of making the memorials potentially serves as a connection between vast amounts of people who may or may not know each other. As David Gauntlett writes, "Making is connecting because acts of creativity usually involve, at some point, a social dimension and…because through making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments" (2). The continual building of the ghost bike memorial becomes a form of social capital, which bridges and bonds its social network.

Gauntlett, working under Robert Putnam's framework of social capitalism, writes "Bridging social capital draws people in, and embraces diversity, making links between different people and groups. Bonding social capital, on the other hand, is more exclusive, tying together people who are already similar, or have interests in common" (139). Though bridging and bonding are different forms of social capital, there are communities who have degrees of both

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(Gauntlett 139), including the network tied to ghost bikes/The establishment of the ghost bike memorial was completed by individuals, Hans, Van Der Tuin, and Tomlinson for example, within a specific group – regular cyclists who participate in the cycling communities within their respective cities. The ghost bike movement grew to include additional cyclists, as well as families and friends of the victims, all having common goals-- mourning the deaths of cyclists and working to improve safety measures for bicycle riders. The bridging aspect of the social network comes into play with the involvement of individuals outside of the cycling community who aid in building, maintaining, and visiting ghost bike sites and advocating for cycling rights: individuals, like myself, who have become involved in the ghost bike movement through their encounters with the memorials on the street. The network continues to bridge and bond across all facets of society, bringing together people of different backgrounds and experiences who continue to perform acts of making around the purposes and messages imbued within the ghost bike object.

This is not to say that every person in existence supports or agrees upon the presences of ghost bikes. Although I will explore later in this chapter and in others, people who are against having these memorials and certain cycling safety standards, the purpose of exploring ghost bike building as an act of connection is to draw attention what has already occurred for those directly involved with the memorials and how that already existing connection grows. It is also important for me to address how reliant the physical ghost bike memorial sites are on this network. Hans, Van Der Tuin, and Tomlinson all indicate the necessity for collective participation if ghost bike building continues; though this is not something that Van Der Tuin directly states. Rather I have drawn this conclusion from his inclusion of other people in helping him put up multiple ghost bikes. Hans and Tomlinson both indicate that building, installing, and maintaining multiple ghost

bike memorials become tasks too difficult for one person to handle alone. First, there are the monetary costs of memorial construction to consider; the collection and buying of used bicycles, paint, chains, tools, signage, etc. which can become costly even if one receives donations from others. Second, there are the intangible elements to consider: time and emotional involvement. Every step of the memorial building process, particularly when it involves as many steps as the ghost bike might need, takes time and dedication from the individuals who create them. Factoring in the time needed for building the ghost bike, transporting it to a site, installing it, and then the unmeasurable amount of time needed for its maintenance, it is easy to see how one individual could become overwhelmed. It is also important to consider possible emotional burdens placed on the person who builds the memorial. As Hans indicated during our conversation, he is not only emotionally involved because Crowley was his roommate and friend; he also has to be invested in the emotions of a victim's family and loved ones. Bearing the weight of responsibility that comes with handling such emotions can become difficult for a singular individual. The ghost bike process, from building to maintenance, succeeds largely because of the collective involvement of its network; proving that the network and the ghost bike could not exist without one another.

3.2 Correlation between Cycling Infrastructure and Safety

A survey conducted by the advocacy organization People for Bikes found that 104 million Americans rode a bicycle at least once in 2014, with 45 million of those people riding for transportation purposes (Lindsey; PeopleforBikes "U.S. Bicycles"). The survey also indicated that despite the high number of riders and 54% of respondents' consideration of cycling as a useful method of transportation, 52% of responded that they were worried about being hit by a car while riding (Lindsey). Jacobsen and Rutter write that even though the act of cycling itself is

not inherently dangerous, "A climate of fear around cycling may…lead to lower levels of cycling, making it more risky for those who continue to cycle" (142). Considering that motor vehicles impose the most danger upon cyclists bicycling-related infrastructure like bike lanes increase cyclists' sense of safety and directly correlates to a higher percentage of riders (Pucher and Buehler 4; Furth 124; Landis, Vattikuti and Brannick 123). Reynolds et al. note that the presence of more cyclists on the road can improve their visibility to drivers (4). A brief overview of the most common forms of bicycle infrastructure in the United States is provided below.

Among the various types of cycling infrastructure in place across the United States, the most common form of American road sharing are shared lane markings, also known as "sharrows" (National Association of City Transportation Officials; Furth 130). A sharrow is "used to indicate a shared lane environment for bicycles and automobiles," as indicated by an image of a "bicycle silhouette topped by a double chevron, usually marked every 200 feet in the middle or right third of a travel lane" (National Association of City Transportation Officials; Furth 130). Sharrows are perhaps the easiest road sharing tool to implement as they are placed on already-paved streets and do not change street layout. Bike lanes, designated spaces separating bicyclists from vehicular traffic, are typically demarcated by white lines of paint placed on the right-hand side of the road (Vanderkooy). Bike lanes are considered to be an inexpensive and accessible as they are created through the painting of the street, though the majority of cities invest an expansive amount of time studying the relationship between bicycle lanes and vehicular traffic before construction; a topic that I will address later in this chapter and in Chapter 4. As the popularity of cycling increases, so does the push for additional bike lanes across the country.

A third type of bicycle infrastructure is the protected bike lane, which separates bike lanes and vehicular traffic with a physical barrier (Vanderkooy). Protected bicycle lanes have been a staple of European cycling infrastructure in countries like Denmark and the Netherlands for decades, though their introduction to American infrastructure is more recent (Vanderkooy). Though protected bike lanes can be more expensive to create, the number of bike lanes in the US has grown since the late 2000s. PeopleForBikes' Green Lane Project, which seeks to increase the number of protected lanes across the US, reports that there are currently 387 protected lanes in 106 cities (PeopleforBikes "Green Lane Project").

As Jacobsen and Ritter state, cycling is not an activity that is inherently dangerous; rather the majority of cycling takes place in locales that prove dangerous to bicycle riders because of motor vehicle traffic (142). A study by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics found that nearly a third of the population is dissatisfied with their community designs for making bicycling safe, and when the dissatisfaction was measured by the amount of available infrastructure, "a very strong relationship between infrastructure and satisfaction is found" (Bureau of Transportation Statistics). And as Gordon Mese points out, bicycle lanes benefit all sectors of the community. In addition to providing a space for cyclists, the presence of the bike lane narrows travel lanes, which slows down motor vehicle traffic, and the space creates a buffer for pedestrians utilizing the sidewalk (Mese).

Despite bike lanes being an inexpensive and space-efficient means of accommodating cyclists and the large numbers of cities across the US pushing for increased bike lanes, implementing them can be difficult (Furth 123). Part of the difficulty stems from inherently biased bicycle-related theories, such as Vehicular Cycling, described below, which has influenced bicycle-infrastructure policies and legislation since its inception. Additionally issues

related to time, space, funding, and public support often delay the construction of such spaces. In the next section I will explore how each of these areas has influenced cycling infrastructures and physical effects seen on streets as a result.

3.3 Difficulties Involving Infrastructure (or, Lack Thereof)

.   Despite the safety aspects associated with bike lanes, there are some who are against the incorporation of such a space into street infrastructure. In 1976, John Forester published a book titled *Effective Cycling*, in which he argued that bicycles should be viewed as vehicles and should be treated as such on the road, a theory labeled "vehicular cycling"(Forester 2). He writes that the United States "has always insisted that cyclists' prime duty is to stay out of the way of same-direction motor traffic, the method of cringing along the side of the road that is called cyclist-inferiority cycling," and claimed that since the law treated the cyclists in the same way it treats motorists, the cyclists were given "second class rights" (Forester 2). As Furth writes, "VC [vehicular cycling] proponents argue that separating bicycles from motor traffic is inherently unsafe except along a road with no intersections…They assert a dichotomy between "objective safety" (crash risk) and "perceived safety," claiming that although people may feel more secure riding in their own space, such as in a bike lane or a separated path, they are in fact at greater risk of collision with motor vehicles than if they mixed with traffic…" (114). Despite Forester's claim that "American society has never recognized that vehicular cycling is the safe and proper way to cycle," his VC theory shaped cycling theories for decades following its publication, despite a lack of evidential backing (Furst 116; Babin). While European cities such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen were developing extensive networks of separated bike paths, organizations like the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

(AASHTO) were publishing their *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, featuring VC influenced policies against separated bike paths and that lacked strict regulations of mixed traffic roads.

Furth claims that one reason for the AASHTO's adoption of VC principles is that vehicular cycling does not require additional funds or roadway space dedicated to cycling (118). Funding and space issues are frequently used to argue against the implementation of new bicycle traveling spaces. Michael Storkin makes a claim about city planning similar to Furths' when he acknowledges the "planning and transportation establishment" tendency to advocate for vehicular movement, often at the expense of pedestrians [and cyclists], claiming that the more space vehicles have to move, the smoother the flow of traffic will be (104-5). Therefore designers need to undergo a series of measurement exercises to understand how bike lanes will affect the flow of traffic in a particular area. Although reallocating space on the street through re-painting line boundaries is not a difficult task, it becomes complicated by the relationship between new lanes and traffic flow.

Cost is a second factor that deters cities from installing new bicycle lanes. Though the cost amount varies between cities and states, The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) reports the installation of a five-foot wide bike lane could cost anywhere from $5,000 to $535,000 per mile, depending on the scope of the project, though the average cost of installation falls around $130,000 (Bushell et al. 13). The next question becomes "Who is going to pay for these costs?" Often disagreement occurs between the city, state, and federal levels about who absorbs the cost of materials and construction, and these disagreements can delay or diminish the implementation of bike lanes. The disagreement becomes particularly complicated in locations where state roads intersect with local roads, leaving departments at the local and the state level to

compromise over responsibility. The difficulties surrounding the Government Street road diet in Baton Rouge serves as an example of discord amongst planners and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Furth claims a third factor hinders the development of bicycle infrastructure across the US: a lack of popular interest (133). Though Furth claims the interest in bike lanes has been growing, and many American cities are advocating for more bicycle infrastructure, there are still individuals on the local level who advocate against these spaces because they believe that the bicycle lanes will negatively impact their daily lives. For example, business owners and retailers fear that reducing traffic lanes or replacing on-street parking with bicycle lanes will interfere with the flow of traffic and the amount of people who will shop in that area (Jaffe). Kyle Rowe, a researcher from the University of Washington, completed a case study on 65th Street in Seattle, Washington, where parking spaces were replaced by a bike lane (Rowe 2). Though business owners on 65th street opposed this street renovation because of a fear that it would negatively impact their operations, the lane was constructed. After the lane installation was completed, the business district saw a 400% increase in sales, though it is impossible to measure how much influence the lane has in producing the increase (Rowe 2). The owners on this block overestimated the value of the street space, an assumption that influences business owners across the country (Jaffe).

Another area of opposition from local residents concerns the implementation of road diets. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines the term "road diet" as the conversion of "an existing four-lane, undivided roadway segment to a three-lane segment consisting of two through lanes and a center, two-way turn lane" (FHWA). The FHWA claims that road diets enhance mobility for all using the streets, including pedestrians and cyclists, and

can reduce the crash rate by almost 50% (FHWA). Many cities use road diets to make space for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, as seen in Baton Rouge. Gordon Mese proposed a road diet nearly 20 years ago in an effort to bring bicycling infrastructure to Government Street, one of Baton Rouge's busiest roads. Mese designates Government Street as Baton Rouge's only real urban street as it is where the residential and commercial coexist, and where varying cultures, races and different socio-economic classes intersect (Mese). It stretches from the Mississippi River to Lobdell Avenue. The Louisiana Department of Transportation states that the road diet would affect 4.2 miles of Government Street, between East Boulevard in downtown Baton Rouge and the Lobdell Avenue intersection (LADOTD). The road diet would also transform the traffic light intersection at Lobdell Ave, Government Street and Independence Park Boulevard into a roundabout (LADOTD). After years of failing to be implemented, the road diet was put into plan by East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor-President Kip Holden in 2014, who then claimed it would take one year to complete the project (Hardy). The Government Street road diet would create additional bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure for a city that is severely lacking in these safe spaces.

At the time of writing in January 2017, some of Government Street near downtown had been repaved though no bike lanes have been added, and Hardy reports in *The Advocate* that changes have been made to the initial plan. He writes, "Federal studies show that once a street serves about 20,000 vehicles per day, road diets cause so much congestion drivers have to begin taking alternate routes. On Government Street, More than 25,000 vehicles drive the stretch near Baton Rouge Community College every day" (Hardy). He follows with a statement from the East Baton Rouge Parish Transportation and Drainage Director, Stephen Bonnette, who states that following the results of the survey referenced above, sections of Government Street would

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need to maintain four lanes for vehicular traffic while the remainder could transition in accordance with the road diet. This change would cause the road to begin with four lanes, then transition into three lanes for about a mile before reverting back to four lanes. Government would then transition back to three lanes leading into the traffic circle at Independence. This design would be frustrating for both automobile drivers and bicyclists who would have to navigate the varying traffic patterns.

Aside from the design issues, there was also confusion over where funding for the project would come from. Originally, it was believed that the funding was coming from the DOTD trust fund, which was state money, but it was later revealed that it was federally funded (Mese). Since it was federal money instead of state money, there are additional processes to undergo, including a mandatory environmental impact study (Mese). The confusion about funding caused further delays for the project and no start date has been announced. Clearly there are still some kinks to work out in this plan before construction can begin, though Gordon Mese believes that Baton Rouge residents will begin to see construction in the fall of 2017.

Aside from a fraught planning process, most of the difficulty surrounding the implementation of the road diet stems from residential and local business opposition. In a letter written to *The Advocate*, Baton Rouge resident Janice Calvert writes "Tell me, what are drivers to do when they are forced to stop behind CATS buses [the Baton Rouge public bus system], as these buses pick up passengers along Government Street? If the city is allowed to go forward with this absurd plan, traffic will surely be more congested then [sic] it is now… Drivers with any sense will be avoiding Government Street like the plague" (Calvert). Some business owners on Government Street have stated that they are worried that the construction needed for the road diet will hinder customers from driving to their stores, while some residents have expressed

worries that the road diet will cause drivers wishing to avoid congestion to detour onto residential streets that connect with Government (Allen "Baton Rouge;" Allen "Some Business"). Road diet advocates challenge these notions, believing that the increased bicycle infrastructure and renovated pedestrian sidewalks will increase visitation to Government Street and the Mid-City area (Hardy). During our interview, Mese pointed out that there has been more growth and renovation on Government Street in the last three years (2013-2016) than he had seen in his lifetime. He also pointed out that since the road diet plan was accepted that all for-sale buildings on Government Street had sold and new businesses were opening on the street while already established ones were relocating there (Mese). Both sides continue to debate the benefits and drawbacks of the Government Street road diet as the LADOTD and city planners work to revise the current plans and proceed with the project.

Aside from the difficulties surrounding the building of bike lanes, Furth indicates there are other dangers faced by cyclists when using these spaces. He writes that "the close proximity to moving traffic makes bike lanes more stressful to ride in… especially where traffic is fast or turbulent. Bike lanes offer no protection against illegal parking, often exposing cyclists to "dooring" (when a parked car's door suddenly opens, colliding with a passing bike)…" (123). Furth's comments regarding the bike lanes' lack of protection only focuses on one particular danger faced by cyclists as a result of this practice. Dooring, the sudden opening of a car door into the path of a moving bicycle, is a common and serious issue for cyclists to contend with. What Furth fails to mention dooring is can occur outside of bicycle lanes. Cyclists are also frequently doored while riding next to vehicle parking lanes when drivers open driver-side doors into travel lanes without checking for bicycles. Additionally, I believe the term "illegal parking" can be extended to cars parking in bike lanes, an additional issue that creates dangers for bicycle

riders as it forces them to merge into vehicular traffic rather than riding in their designated space. The act of parking a car in a bike lane occurs with residential and non-residential alike, creating difficulties for riders and community members that affect people's perceptions of the space.

In September 2015, homeowners living Baton Rouge's Webb Park neighborhood faced off against local cyclists after receiving citations for parking vehicles in the bike lanes installed on Glenmore Avenue. Glenmore Avenue is a two way residential street with a large grass median separating the lanes. Bike paths were installed on both sides of Glenmore in 2006, covering approximately 3/4 of a mile, lining the street in front of the residential housing. As Gordon Mese pointed out, it is the only thoroughfare that connects cyclists with a bridge over the I-10 interstate, providing a connection between Perkins Road and Government Street/Mid City (Mese). The controversy began after cyclists reported vehicles parked in the bike lanes to the Baton Rouge Police Department, resulting in citations for the automobile owners. Homeowners responded to the citations by creating a petition for the bike lanes on their street to be removed, gathering 50 homeowner signatures (approximately 90% of those living on the street), stating that they would prefer to have on-street parking instead of the bike lanes, despite the fact that almost every house is accompanied by long or double wide driveways and some of the houses have additional parking pads on their property next to the street (Allen "Tempers Flare"). The cycling community responded to the homeowners' petition by creating their own petition geared toward saving the bike lanes. The conflict spilled onto the physical street, online forums, and a community meeting designed to discuss the issue, creating polarization between the two groups who had gotten along until the ticketing occurred.

The homeowners' argument centered on the idea that their guests should be allowed on-street parking when visiting their homes; a right, they implied, that should be afforded to them

for having paid to live on the street. Some of the cyclists chalked messages of support in the bike, while one homeowner parked a bicycle, which was chained to the bumper of his vehicle, in the bike lane, posting a photo of the bicycle to his Facebook page with a caption stating "TGIF social experiment starting 3:40 pm [sic] what will happen to my bike tethered to my car parked in the "bike lane" – A. Someone has to ride their bike around it B. Someone just steals it C. Someone gets mad [followed by three angry face emoticons] D. All of the about and I get a ticket on my bike…Can't wait!!!" (Jackson). A screenshot image of the Facebook post was posted on Nextdoor.com, a neighborhood networking site, sparking another fight amongst local residents.

At a community meeting held by then-Councilwoman Denise Marcelles at the Ingleside United Methodist Church on October 5, 2015, over 200 attendees debated and argued over the bike lane issue. One homeowner accused the cyclists of turning the disagreement over the bike lanes into "a war," while the cyclists, citing the illegality of parking in marked bike lanes, claimed that the street belonged to everyone and that the removal of the Glenmore bike lanes would negatively impact future bike lanes to be installed across the city (Allen "Tempers Flare"; Braud). Residents and cyclists proposed potential solutions to the conflict, though no resolution was decided upon. Following the meeting, Marcelles created a committee containing six Webb Park representatives and six bicycling advocates to discuss and propose solutions to satisfy all involved.

Following the Glenmore dispute, I spoke with Baton Rouge resident and Capital Heights Neighborhood Association President, Tyler Hicks. Hicks, a regular cyclist, spoke at the Ingleside United meeting and serves on the committee exploring solutions to the conflict. He spoke of a series of meetings during which a compromise was proposed: they would create a multiuse path

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in the median to provide a safe space for bicyclists and pedestrians. This solution would allow for residents to park in front of their homes because the street space would be repurposed. When the compromise was presented to Baton Rouge's head of traffic, he found that the cost for the multi-use path would exceed his budget of $100,000 and the project would only be implemented if the residents raised the rest of the money (Hicks). Hicks stated that though the residents were dissatisfied with the response and tried to schedule meetings with Marcelle, the meetings were cancelled due to scheduling issues. Since my conversation with Hicks in February 2015, no future public updates have been made on solutions to the conflict and no additional "flare ups" have occurred. It seems that the discord surround the situation has faded for the time being, or at least until another incident occurs.

Though the Glenmore Avenue bike lane conflict seems to have calmed down, it is another example of the difficulties faced by communities with conflicting opinions on how public space should be utilized. Submerged within these conflicts are class and race issues, in this case particular, class. The road diet and Glenmore Avenue conflicts represent what Edward Soja calls the socio-spatial dialectic, a mutually influential relationship between the social and spatial dimensions of human life (4). Considering that humans are "intrinsically spatial beings from birth," we are constantly engaged with our social surroundings, an engagement that allows us to shape our socialized spaces and for the socialized spaces to shape us in return. (Soja 18). As Soja writes, "Space is not an empty void. It is always filled with politics, ideology, and other forces shaping our lives and challenging us to engage in struggles over geography" (19). The fight to install, keep, and maintain bike lanes across Baton Rouge indicates a larger spatial struggle between demographically different segments of the population, especially upper-class

residents and working class/low-income residents who rely on bicycles for their sole method of transportation.

Soja writes that all publically maintained areas of the street and mass transit networks become "zones of contention between public and private property rights and focal points for social action aimed at assuring residents' rights to the city" (46). In a society that privileges property ownership and privatization of space, claims to cities and spatial discrimination become tied up in rights to property. The Glenmore Avenue homeowners, consisting of predominantly white, upper-class residents, claim ownership of the street because they have paid for property that lines it. Though the demographics of riders utilizing these lanes vary, there are both recreational and commuter riders, and census data reveals that nearly half of the people who cycle to work in the United States earn less than $25,000 per year and rely on bicycles and bike lanes for safe travel (Kinder Institute). This amount starkly contrasts with the income of the Glenmore residents if one can deduce from the size and stateliness of the houses on that road. During the conflict, one Glenmore resident claimed that the issue stemmed from "people who don't live here, who we've invited into our neighborhood so they could ride their bikes and see our beautiful lawns" (Allen "As Many"). This comment underscores the belief that the ownership of private space allows for control over the surrounding public space since the homeowners have "invited" the cyclists into the neighborhood, as if the public space is accessible only through permission. It also indicates the belief that "invited outsiders" are crossing a boundary by coming into the space and reporting on the misbehaviors of the residents, despite the actual law-breaking that has occurred. This attempt at private control of public space becomes an act of spatial discrimination against those utilizing the bike lanes.

Baton Rouge isn't the only city that struggles with regulating bike lanes. The Tumblr blog *Cops in Bike Lanes* tracks police vehicles illegally parked in bike lanes around New York City by posting photos featuring the vehicles and their identification numbers along with a caption declaring the street location and borough. The blog solicits photo submissions from readers, and these photo are marked with captions contain hashtags such as "#rightnow," to indicate that the police vehicle is blocking the lane at the time of posting and "#repeatoffender," used to identify vehicles that have parked in bike lanes on multiple occasions. A 2011 YouTube video titled "Bike Lanes" posted by user CaseyNesitat opens with video footage of Nesitat receiving a bicycle summons from an NYPD officer for riding his bike outside of the bike lanes, despite it not being illegal to do so. Nesitat follows this footage with text that states "i [sic] did try to explain to the office that sometimes the bike lane is not the safest place to be. He said it didn't matter. He said i ALWAYS needed to be in the bike lane" (Nesitat). The remainder of the video shows Nesitat demonstrating dangers of the bike lane by riding his bike in lanes across New York City and crashing into objects that block the lanes, such as construction equipment, garbage cans sitting in pot holes, and illegally parked delivery trucks, while also navigating around pedestrians who walk into the bike lanes without looking for oncoming bicycles. Each collision with objects results in Nesitat being flung off of his bicycle, a vivid example of what occurs when a cyclist rides in obstructed bike lanes.

The "Bike Lanes" video extends beyond the illegally parked cars issue to shed light on additional scenarios that could potentially harm bicyclists like poorly maintained pavement and pedestrians misusing the lanes. It also highlights a lack of general knowledge regarding biking-related laws. The video calls to mind a conversation with an acquaintance, Ejai Jimenez, an avid

cyclist from Brooklyn, New York, during which Jimenez recalled an experience similar to

Nesitats':

> …there was a cop obstructing the bike lane, he was giving tickets out to adults for not wearing helmets when the law is 14 and under. He was standing in the bike lane so I stopped to avoid hitting him…. And the first thing he said to me was "Welcome to the club, give me your ID." I said, "excuse me?" "Give me your ID." And I'm like "Why?" "Because you're not wearing a helmet." I had my helmet on my back cause [sic] I was on my way to give a tour in Central Park and I told him "My helmet's right here." He said "You're supposed to wear it." And I said "that's for 14 and under. Officer, am I free to go?" So he stepped back, and looked at my bike, and said "I don't see any reflectors." And I'm like "reflectors are not required. Bike shops are required to sell bikes with reflectors when they do, but reflectors are not required in the street. What's required is a white light for the front (and I pointed at it) and a red light for the back (and I pointed at it), but that's only at night. That's from dusk till dawn. Officer am I free to go?" And this is when he stepped up to my face and he was like "I am getting your ID." And that's where shit just went downhill….. So basically, I knew exactly what I was talkin' about and just because…I put it on him in front of other cops, like you know on 34th and 8th, he threw me down to the ground, put his knee in my back and was just like "GIVE ME YOUR ID." He turned into a bully and I got locked up for 13 hours. Just because I didn't wear a helmet. (Jimenez)

The narratives told by *Cops in Bike Lanes*, Nesitat, and Jimenez reveal issues related to

the policing of bike lanes, such as officers of the law enforcing policies that do not exist, in

addition to attempting to ticket cyclists for laws that don't apply to them. The mis-informed

nature of the police interactions, coupled with the citation in Nesitat's case and Jimenez's

wrongful arrest, ripples into public consciousness and affects how users of the street view and

utilize those spaces. Following Jimenez's recitation of his story, he mentioned that since his

arrest, he has avoided riding in places where he knows police will be present and utilizes social

media networks, such as Facebook, to communicate the location of police stings targeting

bicyclists so others can avoid those locations while riding. These types of experiences force

cyclists like Jimenez and his friends to reroute their rides tactically in order to avoid similar

encounters.

Nesitat and Jimenez's stories relate back to the Glenmore bike lane controversy. Mark Martin, Baton Rouge cyclist and member of Bike Baton Rouge, a local bicycle organization that works to improve cycling infrastructure in Baton Rouge, identifies the issue during an interview with the *Greater Baton Rouge Business Report,* "It is patently illegal to park in a bike lane, but if you don't enforce it then suddenly you start enforcing it, it catches people by surprise" (Riegel). Like the NYPD officers' incorrect regulation of bike lane policies, the Baton Rouge Police Department failed to enforce the no parking in bike lanes violations until someone in the public had filed a report. There is no way of knowing what would have occurred in the Webb Park neighborhood had the police department been enforcing the law since the bike lanes' inception; perhaps the argument between homeowners and cyclists would have occurred at an earlier date or maybe not occurred at all. All three examples reveal common discrepancies experienced by cyclists and other street users that negatively alter attitudes towards bike lanes, and possibly even bicycling itself.

Although the number of bike lanes and similar infrastructure has increased across the US, their effectiveness is decreased by misuse and obstructions that endanger cyclists. As long as conflicts over alternative travel spaces, like the ones analyzed in this chapter, continue, cyclists will be forced to contend with unsafe riding conditions, crashes, and fatalities. Though ghost bike creators like Hans, Patrick Van Der Tuin and Richard Tomlinson have social capital that has benefited communities across the country, the tragic nature of their work will be forced to continue as long as these problems exist. As I will explore in the following chapters, the situations surrounding motor vehicle and bicycle crashes vary with each individual case, but street infrastructure plays a role in every single one. I have sought to understand the relationship between infrastructure, street users, and safety measures, and found that all actors involved with

the street, from urban planners to law enforcement, bicycle riders to pedestrians, business owners to homeowners, undoubtedly influence the relationship structure through their attitudes and behaviors. Until motorists and bicyclists are able to create a unified perception of how one should address the other, a task that would take immeasurable time and resources, we will continue to see ghost bike memorials appear on the side of the road as reminders of the work needed to make the streets an inclusive space for all users.

Chapter 4: Lafayette, Louisiana – Mickey Shunick's Ghost Bike and Extended Network

At the corner of St. Landry and Dean Streets in Lafayette, Louisiana, a small pocket park stands amid fields of grass and residential housing. At the time of my visit on August 28, 2016, the bushes and trees are still in half bloom, though their brightness is dulled by dark skies and falling rain. The pavement for the park's walkway starts a few feet from the street's edge, and in the center of this path lies the reason for the pocket park's creation: a white ghost bike memorial. The bicycle, welded onto a white metal post, is poised almost five feet in the air, and even in the dim light of the rain storm, the bright white paint stands out against the green backdrop. The ground around the memorial is scattered with objects of remembrance: a horse riding trophy, stones of various sizes and colors, a blue teddy bear, a faded "Lafayette Strong" sign. The ghost bike is also covered with artifacts: Mardi Gras beads, a small decorative black bicycle with a polaroid picture tucked into the spokes, a "Ride of Silence" pocket card from 2014, and a silver Utah Jazz necklace that my companion, Stephanie, placed on the frame under the seat. It is the most extravagant ghost bike memorial that I have ever seen; the bike and park are obviously well cared for. This is the location where the community of Lafayette remembers and mourns the death of Mickey Shunick.

Micheala "Mickey" Shunick, a University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) senior, was riding her bike home from a friend's house in the early morning hours of May 19, 2012 when she disappeared ("Timeline"). After her family reported her missing to the Lafayette Police Department later that day, local search parties were formed. Shunick's missing person's case was soon picked up by national and international news media that accompanied reports about the search with video surveillance footage of her at a stop sign on St. Landry Street, followed by

images of a white truck at the same stop a few minutes later ("Mickey Shunick"). The damage to her bicycle, found a week after her disappearance under a bridge at the Whiskey Bay on the Atchafalya River, indicated that the back tire had been struck from behind ("Timeline"). The bridge where Shunick's bike was found is over 25 miles away from her abduction site (Mooney). On July 27, police charged Brandon Lavergne with two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Shunick and Lisa Pate, a Lafayette women killed in 1999. Mickey Shunick's body was recovered near a small private cemetery in Evangeline Parish, approximately 45 miles away from where she was taken, on August 7, 2012 (Mooney). Lavergne later pleaded guilty to both charges in exchange for life in prison ("Timeline"). During the coverage of the case, police declared that Lavergne abducted Shunick between the stop on St. Landry Street and the Blackhead Coliseum, a building located within walking distance of her ghost bike.

This is the story I tell Stephanie about the ghost bike as we stand behind it, huddled under an umbrella while we study the Polaroid photo. It is not the first time I have told this story, but recounting Shunick's murder at her memorial site, so close to the location of her abduction, gives me chills. We spot the "Mickey's Loop" sign installed across the small road and cross to study it. This sign was the first of several installed across Lafayette since December 2015 when "The Mickey Shunick Memorial Bike Loop," an eight mile bike trail following existing and soon-to-be installed bike lanes, was officially implemented by the city. I add this sign, and what it represents, to the list of elements I have seen that separates this ghost bike from the others I have encountered. The Mickey Shunick ghost bike, the only ghost bike installed in Lafayette, is in some ways an anomaly. Unlike other ghost bike sites, Shunick's ghost bike has received attention not only from her loved ones but also by the expansive Lafayette community. The site, and the pocket park built along with it, are sanctioned by the university and the city-approved

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bike loop dedicated to her is the only one of its kind. In the sections that follow, I will explore

the commonalities and the differences between Mickey Shunick's ghost bike and others in an

effort to understand how this unique adaptation of a typical ghost bike memorial serves the

Lafayette community.

4.1 The Memorial

Fig. 4.1. Mickey Shunick Ghost Bike. Photograph by author.

Mickey Shunick's ghost bike, like all other ghost bikes, is first and foremost an artifact

that accompanies performances of grief. On September 29, 2012, the Community Celebration in

Honor of Mickey Shunick took place in Lafayette's Parc International to serve as a celebration of

Shunick's life and as a thank you to all of the people who helped search for her ("Community

Celebration"). The culminating event of the Community Celebration was a public bike ride from

Parc International that followed the route of Shunick's last ride. The press release for the event

stated that the ride would end with the ghost bike installation and Joseph Savoie, the President of

ULL, would be present for the ghost bike's dedication ("Community Celebration"). The bike,

installed on property belonging to the ULL, is located in the last known place where Shunick

was alive, the stretch of St. Landry Street between Dean Street and Coliseum Road. The bicycle

is adorned with the personal artifacts of visitors, who travel to the site for their own particular

reasons, representing presence but also speaking to who Shunick was as a person. The equestrian

trophy relates to her hobby of horse riding, the decorative bicycle attached to larger ghost bike

speaks to her cycling habits, and the faded photograph presents two women, one bearing strong

resemblance to Shunick, as representation of friendship. The "Lafayette Strong" sign placed in

the grass beside the ghost bike links the tragedy of Shunick's death with another tragedy within

the Lafayette community, a mass shooting at a local movie theater during which gunman John

Russel Houser killed two people and wounded nine others (Jamieson). The placement of the

"Lafayette Strong" sign at Shunick's memorial at least three years after her death indicates that it

remains a site of significance within the community, that people still gather at the ghost bike to

mourn and remember Shunick on ordinary days and at times of tragedy.

The ghost bike and the artifacts that adorn it are representative of the communitas present

in the Lafayette community following Mickey Shunick's death. Communitas, according to

anthropologist Victor Turner, is "phenomena of transition" occurring when a group or social

structure nears the end of a liminal state, typically marked by the completion of a rite of passage

(112). Turner writes that "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and

between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial" (95). He

follows Arnold van Gennep's view that the liminal state to be associated with rites of passage,

and is broken down into three stages: separation, margin (or liminal) and aggregation (Turner

94). According to Turner, separation, margin and (re)aggregation are defined as follows. The first stage, separation, occurs when an individual or group departs a fixed point within a social structure or a determined set of cultural conditions. The marginal/liminal stage represents a moment when the characteristics of the individual or group are "ambiguous;" this marks the passage through "a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (94). The final stage, reaggregation, occurs when the rite of passage has been completed; the individual or group resumes a stable place within society that adheres to a defined social standard (94-5). Communitas occurs during reaggregation, when the person or group emerges from the liminal state to assume a new position within society. Within the moment of communitas is the giving of "recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be *no* society" (Turner 97). In order to understand how communitas was formed in the wake of Shunick's abduction and subsequent death, and how the ghost bike remains as a permanent marker of it, I will describe how the events following her abduction brought the Lafayette community through the stages of separation, liminality, and reaggregation.

Shunick's abduction marks the moment of separation that occurred within the Lafayette community, as one of its members was removed from the everyday routine established within the city's culture. Shunick's missing status sparked a change in the typical behaviors of other community members as well, ranging from the hundreds of people who participated in the search by forming daily search parties, hanging posters and flyers throughout the city, arranging benefits to raise money in order to support the searches and the Shunick family, and donating supplies to sustain the searchers to smaller but still meaningful gestures, like the ULL football team placing "Mickey" stickers on their helmets. The liminal state begins in the days following the abduction when Shunick failed to reappear. Her status during this time is unclear; she is not

present but not fully gone. During this time, there were so many possibilities for what could have

happened to Shunick, and the slogan for the search became "Bring Mickey Home." The slogan

constructs the community as Shunick's home and states their desire for her return. Her

"missing" status affirmed her position within the unknown, as a person who is figuratively and

literally "neither here nor there." The last photo of Shunick, taken by a security camera prior to

her abduction (see Fig. 4.2), further implicates her liminal status. The photo is dark and

pixelated. Shunick and her bicycle are illuminated by the light from a nearby gas station, as well

as a reflector on her pedal and a white light on her handlebars. It is a haunting image depicting

Shunick's final movements, and it appears as though she is travelling towards the edge of the

frame, out of range for the camera and out of range for the community.

Fig. 4.2. Surveillance Photo of Mickey Shunick. Photograph by KATC-TV.

The liminal phase remains even though her abductor is arrested and charged with

kidnapping and murder, though at this point as Shunick has still not returned to her community

for reintegration. The final stage of reaggregation occurs when Shunick's body has been located

in August of 2012. The discovery and identification of her body allows the community to reassign her new status as deceased. Her body is returned, but there is yet another aspect of this reaggregation that will be marked by the construction of the ghost bike.

What I find to be the most interesting about the aspect of the process within the community is that the sense of communitas seems to have formed prior to Shunick's reaggregation. It seems to start immediately after her abduction when the residents of Lafayette, though also experiencing a form of separation, banded together to express support and longing for her return. As posts in "Find Mickey Shunick Now" Facebook group reveal, in the months between her disappearance and the discovery of her body, the community was constantly searching to find Shunick and restore her position, however changed by this incident. Communitas, the sense of unity and connection, was created through tragedy and united residents of the city in an extraordinary way. The ghost bike, installed at the culmination of a day-long event celebrating Shunick's life and the volunteers who helped to "bring her home," remains a symbol of the communitas experienced by Lafayette residents, as evidenced by the continued offerings of personal artifacts, the use of the site as a destination for community events like The Ride of Silence, and the ties to other local tragedies and struggles through the posted "Lafayette Strong" sign, four years after her death. It is this feeling of extraordinary unity that can still be sensed when visiting the ghost bike for Shunick, even by outsiders.

Two of the many things that sets this ghost bike apart from its sister memorials is the location of the ghost bike and its construction. A September 27, 2012 blog post on Mickeyshunick.com states that the ULL would provide a space on campus for the pocket park and the ghost bike. This post reveals institutional approval to not only install a memorial but also to build a corresponding park. Pocket parks are typically vacant or forgotten spaces that are

transformed through the work of community groups or private organizations that reclaim the area

for the benefit of the local neighborhood (Blake 2). The pocket park, a scaled-down version of

the typical neighborhood park, serves a variety of different functions providing for instance small

event spaces, play areas, meeting places, or breaks from surrounding urban environments (Blake

2). The pocket park made to accompany Shunick's ghost bike is a place for visitation and

reflection. Surrounded by open field, the pocket park invites visitors to stay for an extended

period of time by including amenities such as a bench and a bike rack. The park creates a place

for pause; it breaks the possibilities of movement provided by the vastness of the open field by

creating a place of security and stability (Tuan 6; Blair, Dickinson and Ott 24). While the street

serves as the last place where Shunick was alive, in movement during her ride, the exact location

of the crash with Lavergne is unknown. Standing on the street corner it is possible to imagine a

person riding through the open landscape. It is the unknown within this scenario that creates the

wonder, the never-ending stream of questions about where precisely it could have happened,

exactly what path Shunick's bicycle took, what it felt like to be unexpectedly hit. When she was

hit, did she recognize this was not an ordinary crash? How did the abductor put Shunick and her

bike into the truck? Thinking back to Carolina Hernandez's ghost bike and how its state of decay

reminded me of her body, here Shunick's pocket park memorial invites me to imagine the

narrative of her last bicycle ride. The pocket park breaks this movement of the imagination by

creating a designated place for mourning and reflection. It provides a place of stability, a

constant, within a scenario filled with uncertainty. It reduces the openness of space and the wide

array of possibilities within the complications of her abduction through the creation of place with

specific identity and significance, a place that gives public memory focus.

Fig. 4.3. Photograph of Shunick Ghost Bike and Pocket Park. Photograph by author.

The layout of this pocket park is reminiscent of cemetery spaces where benches are set up near gravesites for visitors and loved ones to spend time or reflect, except the ghost bike is not a grave site. It is not a tombstone, nor is it a place where a deceased body rests. Rather, the park and the ghost bike are located in the last place where Shunick was known to be alive. Traditionally roadside shrines mark the locations where bodies transition from the realm of the living into the "symbolic world of the dead" (Jorgenseson-Earp and Lanzilotti 153). The shrines at the site of tragedy provide a place for mourners to gather metaphorically and literally around deathbeds and create vigils for sudden-death victims after the fact (Jorgenson-Earp and Lanzilotti 159). Jorgenson-Earp and Lanzilotti write that contact with the site of death serves as a transformational performance for mourners as it is a step towards acceptance (160). They note that active engagement with the site "invites the viewer to add to the text, to help write the final

story of the tragedy, and thereby regain control over the scene" (160). The decision to create a ghost bike for Shunick at the site of her abduction rather than the site of her death or the location where her body was found serves as one such act of script writing. Shunick's loved ones and community are able to focus the attention on her death away from the gruesome details of her murder towards the less intense, though still devastating, act of abduction. Aside from her abductor, no one could control the events that led to Shunick's death, but through the revision of the script, the family gains a semblance of power by redirecting the tragedy to the bicycle, an object that has both positive and negative associations for the victim. The use of the ghost bike reduces the role of the murderer within the story as it creates an association with an activity that Shunick had an affinity for and recalls the last moments where Shunick was doing something that she enjoyed. Though the memorial is a marker of grief, its placement and design revises how Shunick's death is recalled within public memory.

Shunick's white bicycle is welded onto a fairly tall metal post, secured into the pavement by several industrial sized bolts, that raises the bicycle into the air. The memorial has no need to be locked to an already existing structure because unlike other ghost bike memorials, it has been purposefully built to remain in place. The height of the structure removes the bicycle from the ground and placed as if it is atop a pedestal. A light is installed on the ground, centered in front of the white bicycle, to illuminate the ghost bike at night, causing it to be a focal point on an otherwise dark street. All of these elements indicate that this memorial is designed to be seen. This ghost bike does not blend into the background of the cityscape because of its location, it has official permission to be seen, a luxury not afforded to its sister sites.

In other ways, this ghost bike is similar to the other ghost bikes: it is adorned with personal artifacts, and since its installation, has been used as a site for people and organizations

to gather and to draw attention to other cycling causes. It is also a part of the larger, world-wide ghost bike network that is created through the use of the white bicycle artifact. However, the social network associated with this memorial varies from the social network surrounding other ghost bikes. The 2014 Ride of Silence pocket card tucked into the front tire of Shunick's ghost bike presents the date and time of the ride as well as its destination. On the back of the card, three lines of text read: "Honoring: Tony "Billy/Cookie" Parker and Davey [illegible]. At the time, I did not recognize the names listed on the card, but it was clear the men were killed while riding in 2014, prior to the Ride of Silence. The card brought my attention into the digital realm, where I read about cycling deaths about which I would not have otherwise known. In attempting to find more information about their deaths, or ghost bikes, I searched for news articles about their crashes and encountered several telling the story of Parker's death. The digital presence of Shunick's ghost bike creates many additional social connections, all of which are unique to her ghost bike. In the following section, I will explore the digital network surrounding Mickey Shunick and her ghost bike memorial.

4.2 The Digital Presence and Network of Mickey Shunick

When my companion Stephanie and I went looking for Shunick's ghost bike, we did not know our way around Lafayette, so we used my cell phone's GPS application to find ULL. Once there, we had difficulty locating the ghost bike, and as I began to type the name of the intersection, I was surprised by the location suggestion presented by Google Maps: "Mickey Shunick Memorial Ghost Bike." After accepting the suggestion, we were provided with walking directions from our location to the ghost bike. The Google Maps sidebar lacked any information aside from the name and address of the memorial but this is still significant: it is the only ghost bike I have encountered with a GPS coordinate. Unlike the ghost bikes in New York City, and

the majority of ghost bikes worldwide, whose locations are not to my knowledge included on the mainstream Google Map platform, Shunick's bike has overcome the Digiplace/PageRank system to become a destination worth searching. While I cannot confirm the reason why Shunick's ghost bike has become a searchable destination, I assume that it is because of media coverage and the site's inclusion in community events. It may also have to do with the memorial's relative permanence.

Google Map's acknowledgement of Shunick's memorial is not the only digital source that presents the ghost bike on a digital mapping platform. While I was browsing the Facebook event page for the 2014 Ride of Silence in search of the two riders identified on the card, the event referred me to its ending place, Shunick's ghost bike. As I moved my mouse over the location, the title became underlined and a secondary pop-up box appeared. *It was a hyperlink*. The pop up box revealed a small square photo of Shunick's ghost bike as its "profile picture" and provided a brief overview of the information found on the main page for the location: "5.0 star rating, 6 reviews, Arts & Entertainment – Lafayette. 119 like this. 39 people checked in here." The hyperlink redirects to the full Facebook Places profile for the ghost bike. Set up in the same style as one of the Business Pages, Shunick's Places Page has an "Official Page" designation under the blank cover photo.

The "Facebook Places" feature launched in 2010 as competition to other check-in applications like FourSquare and Gowalla (Gross and Hanna). A 2010 *Wired Magazine* article states that "The feature works through a mobile app or browser, where a user wanting to 'check-in' can search for place nearby or add a place to 'check-in' to" (Singel). The Facebook Places page created when a person checks in at a particular location allows any user accessing the page to post reviews, comments, and photos related to that location (Samuel). Businesses that discover

an "unofficial" or "unmanaged" page can request to gain access over the page via a verification process, but "Pages that represent geographic locations can't be claimed" (Facebook Help Center). In addition the geographic page, there are several other Mickey Shunick Facebook Pages run by Charlene Shunick, Mickey's sister, and others. Charlene Shunick's active involvement with other Mickey Shunick related Facebook Pages, documented through her posts, allows me to draw the association between the geographical location label and the ghost bike Places Page.

What I find to be the most interesting about Shunick's ghost bike's presence in both Google Maps and Facebook's Places feature is the accessibility it provides in contrast to other ghost bike memorials. While searching in New York, I relied on the Ghostbikes.org map, and while searching for ghost bikes in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, I relied on word of mouth and internet searches. The Google Maps and Facebook Places Page transform Shunick's ghost bike from a roadside memorial into a destination. People from out of town are able to link directly to the ghost bike, removing the need for word of mouth or extensive research.

Shunick's disappearance was a nationally covered, tragic event like other disappearances (Jon Benet Ramsey, Elizabeth Smart and Lauren Spierer), and the focus on the bicycle-related aspect of her death prompted attention not typically given to other cycling-related deaths. The national news coverage of Shunick's expanded the trauma of her death past Lafayette city limits, turning it into a larger, collective trauma felt by people all across the United States and even internationally. Perhaps the inclusion of Shunick's ghost bike in mapping applications follows from the scale of the event. In *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero*, Marita Sturken writes that sites of collective trauma often become the focus of tourist activity because they possess a particular level of authenticity in

relation to how the event played out in the media (11). Sturken writes that these visits "are acts that intend to create a connection between the tourist and the site of trauma…tourists can feel that they have experienced a connection to these traumatic events and have gained a trace of authenticity by extension" (11). Though Sturken writes about Ground Zero and the site of the Oklahoma City bombing, her claim for identification between visitor, site, and authenticity can be applied to Shunick's memorial as well. Those living outside of Louisiana, outside of Lafayette, experienced Shunick's disappearance and death indirectly via the nightly news or the internet. Visitation, made accessible through the GPS coordinates, would allow visitors from all over to physically connect with the story by paying their respects, leaving artifacts at the site, or simply walking along the road where Shunick was abducted. It was an act that I too performed, again returning to the role of tourist, in an attempt to understand both the event of Shunick's death and how I related to it.

The Facebook Places Page also transforms the Mickey Shunick Ghost Bike Memorial into a destination, though it functions differently than the GPS. First, the Places Page categorizes the ghost bike memorial as a place used for "Arts & Entertainment," a designation that had to be selected by one of the users who checked in at the location. Though it is impossible to know why a visitor marked the ghost bike as a site for "Arts & Entertainment," there are several opportunities to speculate why this came to be. First, it is possible that the visitor viewed the memorial as a piece of art. The ghost bike, as I have discussed in Chapter 2, can be viewed as a piece of installation art. The bicycle is an object that has been featured in other site specific installations, including Ai WeiWei's "Forever Bicycles 2015," made from over 1500 bicycles to symbolize freedom of movement ("Ai WeiWei's") and Gilberto Aceves Navarro's "LAS BICILETAS" exhibit comprising of 250 red, orange, black and white bicycle sculptures made to

promote bicycle transportation through art ("Program). Shunick's ghost bike in particular, however, also bears resemblance to a metal sculpture or statue due to its elevation. Lafayette is a city also known for its rich artistic heritage and culture. Perhaps this user, in addition to viewing the ghost bike as a memorial, also saw it as a work of art and decided that this categorization would be appropriate.

It is also possible that the user marked the ghost bike an "Arts & Entertainment" destination because it has been used in community bike rides such as The Ride of Silence. There are multiple posts displayed on the memorial's Places Page recognizing the site's inclusion in the 2014 and 2016 Ride of Silence. Another possibility, and what I think is the most likely of the options, is that the person who created the Places Page chose "Arts & Entertainment" because it was the closest fit. In an attempt to understand what types of locations are housed under the "Arts & Entertainment" category, I accessed the check in feature on my personal Facebook application. The descriptions for the various categories are only available when one creates a new check-in location or edits a pre-existing one. "Landmark," "Movie Theater," and "Museum" are the three buzz words listed to identify what gets tagged with the "Arts & Entertainment" label, and "Landmark" would be an accurate description of the Shunick ghost bike based on the analysis I have provided thus far. However, the contradiction occurs when one clicks on the "Arts & Entertainment" hyperlink located on the Memorial Page. The user is redirected to a results page for the search keywords "Arts & Entertainment in Lafayette, Louisiana." The results listed are marked in order of popularity, which is determined by the number of check-ins at each location. Festival International de Louisiana is ranked first, followed by "It's Paint Party LLA – Black Light Paint Party," "Downtown Alive!" "Acadiana Center for the Arts," "LARC's Acadian Village" and the "Children's Museum of Acadiana." There are a variety of destinations

and businesses listed as the list continues: movie theaters, bars, bingo halls, skating rinks, etc. Out of the 195 destinations, events, and businesses listed under "Arts & Entertainment," only one is a memorial unrelated to Mickey Shunick.

Even though I find the categorization to be an odd fit for the memorial, there are benefits to the Places Page. It serves as a digital sign-in book for visitors/tourists who travel to the physical memorial site, allowing them to mark publically their participation and share thoughts, well wishes, or comments. It also serves as a digital scrapbook where photos of past events and visits are collected and placed on public display. While it is the only Facebook page dedicated to Shunick's ghost bike, it is *not* the only Facebook page dedicated to Mickey Shunick. At the time of writing, there are several active Facebook pages and groups related to Shunick, each building and contributing to the digital network associated with her and her ghost bike.

4.3 The Digital Legacy

On May 19, 2012, the day Mickey Shunick went missing, the "Find Mickey Shunick Now" Facebook Group was established. Run by family, friends, and the social media team established to promote the search for Shunick, the Find Mickey Shunick Now group served as a method to share information about organizing search parties, gathering needed supplies, organizing fundraisers, and to address rumors and updates regarding Shunick's missing status. By May 28, 2012, posts about the search for Mickey Shunick had reached over 850,000 people ("Find Mickey Shunick Now"). During the time that Shunick was missing, the posts in the group Group consisted primarily of updates on the search, various missing posters featuring images of Shunick, some of which were photoshopped to depict what she could look like if her appearance had been altered, and photographs of Mickey smiling, sometimes alone and sometimes with friends, posing for the camera, or doing something she enjoyed. The phrase "Bring Mickey

Home," at times abbreviated to BMH, served as captions for many of these photos and posts. In mid-July, posts regarding the arrest and indictment of Brandon Scott Lavergne begin to appear and on August 8th, the day after Shunick's body was recovered, a video posted by Scott Cohen, head of the social media team, addresses various rumors and closes with the statement "No matter what happens, Mickey isn't going anywhere and neither are we."

In 2016, the "Find Mickey Shunick Now" Facebook group remains active, though it has evolved. Shunick's presence remains through the group's profile image, a smiling Shunick wearing riding gear and posing next to a horse, and the groups' cover photo: a drawing of a girl with long blonde hair riding a bicycle accompanied by the phrase "Mickey Always" (see Fig. 4.4.). The image references Shunick's affinity for bicycle riding and recalls her last moments.

Fig 4.4. Header for Find Mickey Shunick Now. Photograph from "Find Mickey Shunick Now," Facebook.com.

Shunick is still occasionally seen in photos posted on the group's wall, most often on the anniversary of her abduction, her birthday or on holidays, though there are many other faces and imagines now seen throughout the posts. On October 5, 2016, a post has the caption "SAINT ROSE, LA" and contains the missing poster for Corielle Clayton, a 15-year-old-girl who went missing on October 1. Another post shares a link to a WAFB article about a 16-year-old-girl who

went missing from Gentilly, with the caption "NEW ORLEANS, LA." As Facebook users accessing the group continue to scroll through past posts, they encounter hundreds of other missing posters and links to news stories, some marked "Found Safe" or "Found Deceased," from states across the country including but not limited to Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Ohio, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Arkansas, Utah, New Mexico, Florida, Michigan, Washington, Oklahoma, Iowa and Colorado.

The "About" section of the group states "We are using this page as a way to honor Mickey and to help other families bring home their loved ones," and encourages anyone accessing the page to share information about missing persons, local or from far-away states. A link that refers users to a second Facebook group created by the same social media team specifically for out-of-state or out-of-region missing persons and closes with the sentiment "Everything we do is in the name of Michaela 'Mickey' Shunick: the strongest, bravest, most loving person we will ever know." The group is a closed group, meaning that only the moderators can control what gets posted to its wall. Submissions are sent through private message and then either posted directly by the "Find Mickey Shunick Now" moderators or reposted from an outside source. Members of the group, or the general Facebook public, have the ability to comment on the posts or re-share them. The link for the out-of-state missing persons group, "Find Mickey Shunick Now! Search Resources" is a public group, allowing any and all Facebook users to post information about missing persons without the permission of moderators.

Since September 2013, a third resource occasionally appears in posts by the original "Find Mickey Shunick Now" page, directing users to the non-profit organization Resource Association (RA) Missing People, founded by Charlene Shunick. The RA Missing People organization states that it strives to be "a dependable, knowledgeable, trustworthy support system

for those affected by a missing person" ("Our Story"). The "Find Mickey Shunick Now"

Facebook group has transitioned during its four years of existence, it now helps others find their

loved ones in the same way that the Lafayette and Facebook communities supported the Shunick

family during their search for Mickey.

The missing persons featured in the "Find Mickey Shunick Now" posts vary

demographically – there are people of all ages, genders and race. If extensive information is

known about a missing person or his/her related search, the individual may be featured in several

posts, or additional posts may be created to update on the status of a missing person. The first

post about a missing person who was not Mickey Shunick appeared on June 9th, 2012 when the

FMSN moderators expressed their condolences to the family of a missing woman named Jaren

from New Orleans after she was found deceased. On July 27, 2012, another post announces a

candlelight vigil for Keiosha Felix, a missing teenager girl from Duson, Louisiana. After the

discovery of Mickey Shunick's body in August 2012, the missing posters begin to appear more

frequently and by October 2012, missing persons from all over the country began to dominate

the group's wall. The notices posted about the missing persons vary from person to person; some

are copies of actual missing person fliers that have also been distributed outside of the digital

realm, and others are reposted of photographs of the missing person, with information about the

individual and his or her last known whereabouts posted in the caption underneath it.

Jones, Zagacki, and Lewis write in "Communication, Liminality, and Hope: The

September 11th Missing Person Posters" that missing persons posters perform three rhetorical

functions. The first is that the missing poster changes the liminal period where the person in

question is not present through the use of a subjunctive voice that creates an "as if space of

possibility and hope through which spectators might relate to the images [featured on the

poster]" (Jones et al. 109; Zelizer 163). The missing posters freeze time and encourage hope

while aiming to resist dwelling on the possibility that the missing person is already dead (Jones

et al. 109).

Second, the missing person posters remind their viewers of the urgency of the situation

and call "forth the presence of others that transcended the chaos of the moment and enlisted

others to join the search" (109). Jones et al. discuss the missing posters' ability to haunt as the

photographs used often depict happy, lively people in contrast to the grim nature of their

disappearance (109-10). Though this discussion features the "haunting" nature of the missing

person posters in relation to the aftermath of September 11, 2001 when families and loved ones

of people in the towers plastered missing posters all over Manhattan, the missing person posters

featured in "Find Mickey Shunick Now" group create similar effects. The majority of the

photographs featured in the posts depict the missing during moments of liveliness – some are

posing, often smiling for the camera, while others are "selfies" expressing the moods or identities

that the missing wanted to portray at the moment the photograph was taken, and some are

unstaged spontaneous photos, moments when the person(s) featured weren't acknowledging the

camera. Most of the photographs and the accompanying text indicate the innocence or everyday

qualities held by the missing with the intention of framing those individuals in a way that

maintains hope or causes the viewers to continue assisting with the search. The photographs and

descriptions also reflect ideals and beliefs of the loved ones, who hope that the "happy

memories" shown on the poster may once again become reality (Jones et al 116; Turner 1974

141). Lastly, the making and sharing of missing person posters allows the friends and family of a

victim to "redress the trauma, to connect with the loved one and to form new relationships" with

strangers willing to help with the search; three motivations underlying the formation of "Find Mickey Shunick Now" that have expanded into the community the group has built for its users.

Digital missing person posters function in a variety of ways, their similarities in line with the functions of the analog missing person posters described above. The differences between the digital and analog missing person posters lie within their materiality and breadth of function. Reflecting on the posters hanging on the streets of Manhattan in the weeks following 9/11, Sturken writes "The posters remained within the cityscape, tenaciously clinging to buildings and signposts, becoming increasingly faded and torn, their deterioration a kind of evocation of grief ("Tourism and 'Sacred Ground'" 416). The analog posters, made of paper, are faced with deterioration caused by exposure to the natural elements of the city (very much like the deterioration of the ghost bikes that I wrote about in Chapter 2). The digital missing person poster does not face the same type of deterioration. Rather, their removal is caused by broken links to the original sources, or the transitory nature of internet news. However, even when the posters are removed from social media sources like Facebook or Twitter, a trace of them always exist within the archives of those organizations. Resources like the "Find Mickey Shunick Now" Facebook group also creates an archive of missing people, all of whom may maintain different statuses (found, deceased, still missing) over time. While the physical posters were eventually removed in the aftermath of 9/11, visitors to the "Find Mickey Shunick Now" Group have the ability to scroll through the posts in reverse chronological order, starting with the present day and ending with the earliest posts, and read all of the missing person posters and articles that remain.

The other difference between the digital and analog missing person posters is the breadth of function and availability, mostly related to the type of audience viewing each poster. The analog missing person poster, like the ones posted around the city of Lafayette following Mickey

Shunick's abduction, primarily serve to inform and evoke performances from the immediate surrounding community. The posters may travel to nearby cities and if the case is picked up by a mainstream news source, perhaps a wider margin of people. The digital missing posters, as seen in the "Find Mickey Shunick Now" Facebook group, have the ability to reach wider audiences. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that social media has helped to resolve and recover 98.5 % of AMBER alerts since 2005, and that social networking sites have allowed the recovery rate of missing children to be at the highest rate ever, 96.5% in 2011 as compared to 60% in the 1980s (O'Connor). In a 2011 interview with *Foxnews.com* Bob Lowery, the executive director of the Missing Children's Division at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, acknowledged the large role that social media has in recovering lost children. "We are finding lost kids now faster than we ever have and social media has no doubt helped us communication with the public," Lowery stated. "We are able to engage the public with disseminating images of the missing child and that increases the probability that we will find that child" (O'Connor). The "Find Mickey Shunick Now" Facebook Group is one such social networking tool, as evidenced by the amount of shares and the comments listed under each post; acts completed by people nationwide.

On September 18, 2016 at 5:00 PM CST, "Find Mickey Shunick Now" re-posted a notification for a missing autistic child named Keaton in Youngsville, Louisiana. The comment thread attached to this post serves as an example of how social media allows the network to expand. One user posted "Sharing in Iowa, Louisiana…praying!!!" three minutes after FMSN shared the post (Reed). Youngsville, Louisiana and Iowa, Louisiana are over an hour apart from one another. Less than twenty minutes after Reed's post, another Facebook user wrote "Texted my daughter she lives n [sic] that area" (Viator). These users, both from towns located outside of

the area where the child went missing, were able to access information about the child from the Facebook post and share it with others in their respective networks in the hopes that these acts will help further the search. A second post featuring Keaton appeared on the page at 7:33 P.M. that evening, calling for volunteers to participate in the search for the child. The second post, written by page moderators, was shared by 1,016 group members and other Facebook users within their respective networks. The post also received 157 comments, the first written just 7 minutes after its publication, and the last written 15 days later. While the comments vary from Facebook user to Facebook user, the comments thread serves as a space for people to express well-wishes, and later condolences for the family, as well as update others with the most recent information known about the search. This kind of space can only exist in the digital realm.

As Candi K. Cann notes, mourning practices across various cultures seem to call for a replacement of the missing body with a material or virtual reminder of the deceased so that the living can continue to maintain the relationship that existed prior to death (134). Grieving via the Internet "allows for marginal discourse to circumvent traditional modes of bereavement by reclaiming mourning discourse and the ways we talk about and think about the dead" (Cann 16). Through the missing persons resources set up in Mickey Shunick's honor, her loved ones are "reclaiming the mourning discourse" by using their grief to help others. Rather than allowing the "Find Mickey Shunick Now" Facebook group to focus solely on mourning Mickey Shunick, the Shunick family and social media team turned their digital community into an expansive network for those currently facing situations similar to theirs, and returns the support that the family received during Shunick's missing period. Instead of allowing the focus of Shunick's death to remain on the events that caused it, the community rewrites the script through their focus on helping others on Mickey's behalf. The community continues their relationship with Shunick

through the posts they write about her and through the use of her name in association with the resources they provide.

4.4 Mickey's Loop

Fig. 4.5. Mickey's Loop Sign. Photograph by author.

Across the street from Shunick's ghost bike stands a reflective purple sign bearing an emblem that reads "Mickey's Loop – The Mickey Shunick Memorial Bike Loop," here after referred to as the MSMBL (See Fig. 4.5.). This sign, the first of several placed throughout an 8 mile loop around the city of Lafayette, was installed at the site on December 30, 2015 during a dedication ceremony hosted by the Lafayette Consolidated Government and the ULL (Louisiana Consolidated Government). The creation of the bike loop merged pre-existing bike lanes with new ones and includes several streets where Shunick often rode (Burgess). The creation of the loop has been a cause for many already active cyclists to rejoice. In an interview with *Active Acadiana,* Allan Brambila, a member of the ULL Cycling team, discussed how the route will provide options for safe travel through Lafayette as it provides a direct route to the ULL campus and also to popular places in the downtown area (Salinas). The dedication of the Bike Loop in

Shunick's honor has been addressed by her family as a continuation of her legacy. Nancy Rowe, Shunick's mother, has stated "It's really important because people riding on bicycles are at risk every time they get on the road…If more people use the loop, then more cars will become aware of people on bicycles" (Burgess; Duchmann).

The MSMBL is made even more valuable through its service as an extension of the memorial already put in place by the ghost bike, a one-of-a-kind supplementation to the work of the ghost bike memorial. As Blair, Dickenson and Ott state, "Public memory may be taken to serve interests, needs, and desires of the present… [and] to mark off the present as a 'different world' from the past" (13). The MSMBL connects to the pre-existing public memories already associated with Shunick and her dedicated ghost bike, and extends them to meet the needs of the present by providing a safe space for cyclists. As discussed in Chapter 3, cyclists feel safer when riding on streets with designated bike spaces. Tying Shunick's name and memorial to cycling lanes in Lafayette causes the discourse surround her pre-existing public memory to appear as if it is now protecting cyclists within the community, almost as if they are sending a message: we could not protect Mickey Shunick from what happened so we are going to make changes in an effort to protect others like her.

On the rainy day when my companion and I visited Shunick's ghost bike memorial, we decided to drive Mickey's Loop around Lafayette. On ULL's campus bike lanes were thoroughly marked. There were several signs posted throughout notifying motorists of the bike lanes and providing directions on how to interact with them at the intersections. The bike lanes themselves also sported physical markers beyond the usual painted lines: there were stretches of protected bike lanes and at the intersections, the bike lanes were painted a bright green, to remind drivers that even though the protected bike lanes ended, the remainder of the lane was still there. The

bike lanes on Johnston Street and St. Mary's Boulevard were the most detailed bike lanes that I have ever witnessed, especially on an open college campus like ULL. However, as we drove through town following the Loop, it was difficult for us to find some of the signs and follow the bike lanes. Part of this difficulty was caused by our lack of familiarity with Lafayette. The other difficulty arose when we were unable to find bike lanes on all of the streets that the Loop covers. While some streets had clearly marked bike paths and visible "Mickey's Loop" signs, other segments did not. I later learned that the incompletion stemmed from the project having "no definite completion date" because some of the path's streets required "long-term projects" before the bike lanes could be installed (Duchmann). So even though the Lafayette City-Parish Council "voted unanimously" to support the implementation of Mickey's Loop, they did so with the knowledge that only segments of it would be completed in the near future; leaving the remaining pieces of the path to be installed at an undetermined time.

As I explored in Chapter 3, bike lanes are often contested spaces. In a society where the infrastructure of the roads have been long focused on moving the car throughout city streets, the spaces for bicycle travel have often fallen to the wayside. This is because, as Jason Henderson writes in *Street Fight: The Struggle over Urban Mobility in San Francisco*, automobility has been "essentialized in conservative politics" (33). Henderson defines the "essentialized" ideology: "To essentialize is to assume that a group of people, institutions, or objects have universally shared set of attributes as well as certain fixed identities that produce fixed determined outcomes" (33). The automobile has been depicted as an essential entity since its creation; it provides fast and efficient travel and physically separates the people in the car from the dangers present on the street (Henderson 32). The addition of bicycle lanes to an urban street reduces the travel space for the vehicle, which in turn affects the flow of traffic as it was

previously known. Henderson's study of bicycle lanes in San Francisco revealed that proposed bicycle lanes approaching streets or intersections that contained moderate to high traffic were dropped because the flow of traffic would be too slowed down (116). The traffic study would be determined through the scientifically "unbiased" intersection level of service, a traffic engineering metric that assesses the delay of motorists at intersections (116). Any time the intersection level of service determined cars would experience a delay of 35 seconds or more, extensive travel studies would be implemented, which often ruled against the inclusion of bicycle lanes and slowed any progression towards them.

There is a second issue regarding lanes designated to be a part of Mickey's Loop, which supports the claims made by Henderson regarding the creation of bike lanes while highlighting other issues within the Lafayette community. Though segments of the Loop have yet to be transformed into bicycle friendly spaces, there have been new bike lanes installed throughout multiple segments of the Loop, including the lanes created on West Bayou Parkway. In June 2016 residents of the neighborhood bordering West Bayou Parkway submitted a petition to the Mayor-President of Lafayette calling for the removal of the newly installed bike lanes, claiming that they produced potential safety hazards and increased traffic in the area (Goff). The petition indicated that while the community supported Lafayette's goal of making the city more bicycle and pedestrian friendly, not all streets could be successfully altered (Goff). To counter suggested removal, Forward Lafayette, a local cycling organization, also submitted a petition to protect the West Bayou Parkway bike lanes. At the time of writing, there has been no determination regarding the petitions, and the bike lanes have remained in place.

The West Bayou Parkway residents submitting the petition claimed the worsening traffic conditions as the reason for wanting the bike lanes to be removed. During our drive around

Mickey's Loop, completed early on a Sunday afternoon, we noticed that traffic flowed rather smoothly, as one might expect on a weekend with no major events. The bike lanes were easily identified on the street and were removed at points in the road where automobiles might have difficulty, for instance curved turns in the street or areas where additional space was needed to make a left hand turn. We also noticed that the houses lining West Bayou Parkway were larger than the houses surrounding any other area the Loop passed through and that the area appeared to be more suburban than others. Though there are several different populations that use the bicycle for transportation and leisure, the citizens of Lafayette who would primarily benefit from the bike lanes are those of lower-income status who may not own a vehicle or choose to ride a bicycle instead of a car, complicating the call for the removal. The petition, led by neighborhood residents falling into a higher income bracket, calls for the removal of a space that would benefit Lafayette citizens of all classes, many of whom fall into a different income bracket than their own. The West Bayou bike lane controversy aligns with the Glenmore Avenue bike lane conflict described in Chapter 3.

The city of Lafayette has embraced Mickey Shunick and her ghost bike memorial in extraordinary ways not seen in other cities. The communitas created in the wake of her disappearance can be traced throughout the city's networks, digital and non-digital, to show how communities can rally to redefine tragedy. The ghost bike memorial has become an emblem for how the city's residents cope and respond to trauma, and showcase the possibilities that can arise through the imagery of the white bicycle.

However, the bike lane controversy proves that not all schisms can be neatly resolved or reaggregated. The reaggregation stage is not as simple as the Turner model might make it seem. The next two chapters explore different struggles over ghost bike memorial sites when some are the centerpieces of protest and others are removed by legislation.

Chapter 5: New Orleans, Louisiana and Durham, North Carolina: Ghost Bike Installation, Protest and Removal

This chapter differs from those preceding it seeks to understand how two differing communities-- New Orleans, Louisiana and Durham, North Carolina-- interact with ghost bike memorials. I have chosen to place my research about these cities together because they allow me to look at the lifespan of the memorial from creation to use to removal. This framework also allows me to continue to explore areas discussed in earlier chapters, such as grieving practices, inclusion of artifacts, and the individual's role in memorial building and maintenance, while also analyzing the ghost bike's use as a performative object of protest and how the sudden removal of a ghost bike can affect its surrounding network. The New Orleans segment of this chapter will focus on the role of the ghost bike in protest movements. The later section on Durham focuses on memorial removal, a topic briefly discussed in Chapter 2, to establish an understanding of how removal practices associated with larger scale memorials contrast with the removal of the roadside memorial.

5.1 New Orleans, Louisiana – July 2015

I hear the bagpipes before I see them, and let the sound guide my roommate and me toward Duncan Plaza, a small green space opposite New Orleans City Hall on Perdido Street. We turn a corner to find the piper, dressed formally and several people spread out on the surrounding grass with their bikes lying next to them. We have traveled from Baton Rouge to New Orleans to support the protest that is about to occur. A cyclist, Ben Gregory, had been killed on July 6, 2015 after being hit by a car, the fourth cycling death for New Orleans that year, and the cycling community organized the protest to reinforce the arguments they had been presenting during town meetings. As we walk closer and take a seat among them, I smell paint. I turn to find a

bearded man, Alexander Fleming, holding a can of spray paint, angling it toward a bicycle he has propped against a tree. "He's making a ghost bike," I whisper to Cynthia, nervous that the people around us would overhear me. This is my first interaction with the cycling community in New Orleans and I do not want them to recognize me for the outsider that I am.

As the white paint covers the bicycle, the crowd continues to grow; a group of men from the Bad News Bike Club arrive on bicycles, followed by a few businessmen in suits and women holding cardboard signs. A few minutes later, the painting has ceased and Fleming is calling for everyone to line up. "Where are my pallbearers?" he shouts and several men rush into position on either side of the now all-white bicycle. They lay the bicycle on its side and lift it to shoulder height, transforming the bicycle into a coffin and the crowd into a funeral procession. We follow the pallbearers through the park and across the street to City Hall. As the bagpiper plays "Amazing Grace," the bike is chained to a street sign and people begin placing their offerings, incenses and a flower, while others write messages on the bike frame with a black marker. The rest of us kneel on the sidewalk surrounding the ghost bike as news reporters and their cameras document our actions. A man in a top hat proclaims that he is going to read us a passage from the "good book," an old looking paperback novel. "First a funeral, then we die!" he proclaims, a reference to the die-in we are about to stage. As I will discuss below, a die-in is a form of nonviolent resistance in which protestors use their bodies to occupy public space. The crowd disperses across the pavement, taking up the entirety of the entryway into City Hall. Fleming gives a speech through a megaphone, calling for improved cycling infrastructure throughout the city, and asks if we are ready to die. Human bodies and bicycles lie on the ground as the names of the six people killed while riding over the last two years are read aloud. Before we rise,

Fleming announces that we are going to leave the ghost bike in place as a reminder to City Hall of what we, meaning the cyclists, experience each day.

5.2 Bicycling in New Orleans

New Orleans has a bourgeoning cycling community. Through encouragement and sometimes partnership with several bicycling-related organizations, including Bike Easy, a bicycling safety and advocacy organization, NOLA Social Ride, a collective that organizes weekly group rides across the city, and several bicycle-social clubs, New Orleans has expanded efforts to increase the number of cyclists over the past decade. In 2014, the League of American Bicyclists upgraded New Orleans from a "bronze level" bicycle friendly community to "silver level," granting the city an "excellent" rating for their public education outreach efforts[3] (The Regional Planning Commission 93; The League of American Bicyclists). In 2009, *Time Magazine* listed a route in New Orleans (French Quarter to Lower Ninth Ward to City Park) as one of the "Top 10 Urban Biking Trips" worldwide (Bland). Since 2013, the number of bicycle commuters in New Orleans has ranked the city as one of the top ten cities for bicycle commuting across the country, and as one of the leading cities in the southern region of the United States (The Regional Planning Commission 83-6).

Since recovery efforts from Hurricane Katrina began in 2006, the City of New Orleans has expanded bicycle infrastructure from 12.5 miles of bike space to 98 miles, including bike lanes, shared bike and car lanes, bike boulevards, and off-street shared-use paths (The Regional

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[3] The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) Program rates cities across the United States based on bicycle infrastructure and public cycling programs. Cities are evaluated on the "five E's: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation ("Frequently Asked Questions"). Cities can be awarded bronze, silver, gold, or platinum status based on how the community meets the criteria. It is possible for cities with poor bicycle infrastructures and programs to be denied from the ranking system. The BFC reports that as of 2016, over 700 communities have applied to be a BFC and only 372 have been awarded one of the designations ("Frequently Asked Questions").

Planning Commission 7). The 2015 New Orleans Pedestrian and Bicycle Count Report reveals that "estimated daily traffic at sites with dedicated bike lanes has increased by 294% over the last six years [2009-2015], compared to a 54% increase at locations that have no bicycle facilities at all" (2). Studies conducted for the 2015 Pedestrian and Cycle Count Report revealed that the number of female cyclists recorded at the 12 core counting locations have increased 5.2% since 2010 to a total of 32.3% (42). The increase in the number of female cyclists is important for any city, as higher number of female cyclists often indicate "comfortable riding conditions" and higher perceptions of bicycling safety and riding-friendliness for all cyclists (Garrad et al. 228; The Regional Planning Commission 42). In addition to the city government's efforts to increase bicycle space across New Orleans, advocacy organizations have made attempts to increase awareness of bicycle related laws and regulations. A "New Orleans Bike Map" created by Bike Easy and the Regional Planning Commission in 2012 not only provides a physical map of New Orleans' existing bike lanes but also provides educational sections titled "Be a Smart Cyclist" and "Be a Friendly Motorist," which present tips on how to ride bicycles safely and how to operate vehicles properly when sharing the road with bicyclists (Bike Easy). The combined efforts of the city's governmental agencies and advocacy organizations have begun to create more accessible spaces for local and visiting bicycle riders, though the city still faces issues regarding cycling safety.

The first ghost bike in New Orleans appeared in 2012 after the September 18th death of Jason L. Bauer, Jr., a five year-old who was riding bicycles with his uncle on Jefferson Highway when he was struck by a car that fled the scene (Red; Boyd). Joshua Baer, a Bike Easy board member, decided to make a ghost bike for Bauer after seeing the memorials in other cities and enlisted the help of a local bicycle shop to create the white bicycle (Boyd). The ghost bike was

installed on Friday, October 19, 2012, during a memorial bicycle ride organized by NOLA

Social Ride, during which cyclists rode from Cooter Brown's Tavern and Oyster Bar on South

Carrollton Avenue to Oschsner Hospital to the site of Bauer's crash on Jefferson Highway and

Newman Street (Red; Baer). Since Bauer's ghost bike installation in 2012, there have been 17

ghost bikes installed in and around the city of New Orleans, including the ghost bike placed

during City Hall protest and three ghost bikes placed in near-by Mandeville, Covington, and

Terrytown (Boyd; Rainey).

The die-in protest on July 23, 2015, organized by Fleming, drew inspiration from a die-

in performed by Houston, Texas cyclists in June 2015. The Houston cyclists staged their die-in

on the lawn of Houston's City Hall following the deaths of four cyclists occurring during a three

week span (Daley; Flynn). The organized protest, preceded by the ghost bike funeral and

installation, is one of several grassroots advocacy actions implemented by cyclists in New

Orleans. In *The City and the Grassroots*, sociologist Manuel Castells defines urban social

movements as "urban-orientated mobilizations that influence structural social change and

transform the urban meanings" (305). These movements, organized by communities to address

issues directly affecting their social and living conditions, oppose hegemonic norms within

society. The term "grassroots" indicates "knowledge that arises from practical reasoning,

everyday actions, practices and lived experiences of people within localized contexts" (Rajat 2).

As these organizations and movements start at the local level, they enable the people to

communicate with organizations, such as the government or large corporate entities, about the

discontent and difficulties present in their communities and the changes they deem necessary to

improve them.

Castells writes that intellectual failure occurs when there is a separation between the analysis of a crisis and the analysis of a social movement, which stems from the separation of the entities involved in the crisis/movement: people and the state, economy and society, cities and citizens, etc. (xvi). As a result, urban systems are separated from personal experiences, a break that becomes visible through the mobilization of people wishing to create social change (xvi). As I wrote earlier in this section, New Orleans has been working to improve its bicycling infrastructure since the recovery period following Hurricane Katrina. These efforts have been recognized through the League of American Bicyclists delineation, and through governmental and popular media publications documenting the progress. However, these accolades fail to account for the personal experiences of the riders who use the infrastructure on a daily basis, particularly the dangers that the riders continue to face despite the increased number of bike lanes. To gain recognition for their personal experiences, and to advocate for further advancements on current infrastructure, members of the cycling community in New Orleans staged the ghost bike installation, funeral, and die-in protest. Voicing their concerns about bicycling safety through these actions, the cycling community is directly addressing the city's government, which continues to promote their efforts to increase bicycle infrastructure throughout the city without addressing the increasing number of crashes and deaths.

In 2012, Bike Easy hosted the "Danger Decatur Rally" to protest a restriping of Decatur Street that would create three blocks of bicycle lanes rather than the "Complete Street" for which Bike Easy was advocating (NolaDefender). The Danger Decatur Rally called for bike lanes on both sides of the street for the entire length of the street rather than just the proposed three blocks, and consisted of participants installing a temporary bike lane and riding or standing in it while holding signage advocating for permanent lanes (Hinson). The event appears to be a

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departure from Bike Easy's typical collaboration with the city of New Orleans, and information

about the event contesting city planning is not listed in the Bike Easy Event Archive, though the

community event is still accessible on Facebook (Bike Easy; Hinson). There are also several

Facebook groups dedicated to monitoring bicycle safety on the grassroots level, including

Fleming's *Stolen Bikes NOLA*, which aids bicyclists in retrieving their stolen bikes around the

city independent of the NOPD; *Bike Uneasy*, a "forum for capturing bad drivers who endanger

bikers' rights and safety;" and *The Bad News Bike Club* group page, which posts information to

benefit cyclists and promotes community events. The people involved in these organizations,

whether through leadership roles or membership, use these channels to communicate with one

another and to organize live events outside of the digital realm. Leading up to the City Hall

protest, Alexander Fleming and other organizers posted information on an event Facebook page,

allowing the information to be accessible to all and allowing the community to come together to

plan their grassroots intervention.

5.3 The Protest

The ghost bike memorials placed throughout the city of New Orleans transform the

spaces of the city into places representative of the citizens' personal experiences, representations

of their grief, fear, and anger placed roadside for the city to see. As Tim Cresswell writes, seeing

the world as a series of places becomes an act of resistance in itself against "a rationalization of

the world that focuses more on space than place" (18). Cresswell claims that looking at the world

around us as a "world of places" allows us to see different things, such as "attachments and

connections between people and place… worlds of meaning and experience" (18). De Certeau

defines place as "an instantaneous configuration of position" (117). A place indicates stability,

each element has a specific, identifiable role (117). He defines space as "intersections of mobile

elements," or "a practiced place" (117). Spaces are defined by its users, who "orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function" (117). De Certeau uses the street to exemplify these concepts: "Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning [the place] is transformed into a space by the walkers" (117). As I wrote in Chapter 1, roadside memorials work to blur the lines between public space and private places of mourning; their presence changes the surrounding landscape by drawing attention to the events that once occurred there and allowing the public to audience the grieving/remembering process. As Jack Santino writes, spontaneous memorials "insist on the personal nature of the individuals involved in these issues and the ramifications of the actions of those addressed by the shrines" (370). In turn, the ghost bike installation and die-in protest at New Orleans City Hall in July 2015 brings the personal experiences of the city's riders to the government's front door through the performance of funerary practices and the participants' embodiment of death, sprawled across the building's walkways. The memorials, and the events and protests associated with them, shed light on the separation between the city's seemingly idealistic planning and the actuality of daily life.

The actions surrounding the installation of this particular ghost bike highlight the performative acts of protest associated with this type of memorialization. Though there is no one set ritual associated with the ghost bike, many installations are preceded by a collective community ride from a starting point to the scene of the crash. The installation of the ghost bike at City Hall is also preceded by a community-organized event, though a makeshift funeral procession substitutes for a group riding event. The bicycles are still present during the ghost bike procession, though their owners walk the bicycles rather than ride them. In staging a funeral, complete with social actors traditionally seen at various iterations of this ritual for instance a bagpiper playing "Amazing Grace," pallbearers, and a sermon, the protest organizers

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are rewriting the script for institutionalized ritual practices to include elements specific to the type of death represented by the ghost bike, as well as the cause it represents.

Perhaps the most poignant aspect of the City Hall funeral procession comes in the transformation of the bicycle itself, which occurred at least three times during the event. The first transformation occurred during the creation of the ghost bike in Duncan Plaza prior to the start of the funeral. Participants in the protest, passersby, and media representatives watched Fleming paint the bicycle, effectively transforming the riding apparatus into an artifact of memorialization. The second transformation occurred when four men answered Fleming's call for pallbearers and substituted the ghost bike for a casket. The pallbearers performed this act by turning the ghost bike from its standing position onto its side, and then lifting the white bicycle to shoulder height, with each of the four men resting a part of the bicycle on his body. The pallbearers and their "casket" followed behind the bagpiper, and led the procession of protest mourners through the park and across the street to city hall. The third iteration of transformation came in the placement of the ghost bike at its final resting place. As the bicycle/casket was placed on the sidewalk in front of City Hall, it came to rest so that mourners could bear witness to the service about to take place, and the bicycle was transformed once again, this time into its final role as a roadside memorial.

Each transformation of the bicycle serves as a performative utterance, with actions performed during each phase substituting for the active "doing" of language. As Peter Jan Margry and Christina Sánchez-Carretero write, grassroots memorials have an inherently performative nature as the intent to accomplish change is "not limited to the memorial itself or its memorial space, but includes the agency of the individual objects or texts and the behavior of the people involved" (3). The phases of transformation become representative of the body: the

transition from ordinary bicycle to white bicycle representing the live body's transition to the deceased body; the use of the bicycle in place of the coffin in a funeral procession referencing the unseen body and the grief surrounding it; and the final shift of coffin to roadside memorial, the body/bicycle reaching its final resting place and initiating its ultimate purpose to serve as a reminder and warning to future public(s) who interact with it. Each of these performative utterances references the goals of the protestors who are seeking change through the representation of their struggles, and each strives to capture the attention of the political constituents housed within City Hall, the lawmakers and influencers who actually have the power to instill those changes.

Fig. 5.1. City Hall Ghost Bike. Photograph by author.

The protestors continued to create additional performative utterances after the ghost bike installation through their interactions with the memorial during the "funeral service." After the bicycle was laid to rest, the protestors closest to the memorial began to place artifacts on and around it, lighting incense and placing flowers, recognizable practices associated with those who are grieving. A black marker was produced and those who had placed artifacts began inscribing

messages onto the bike's frame, the black ink a stark contrast against the white paint. Inscription, defined by Paul Ricoeur as "the placing of a message, written or graphic, onto a physical medium" is a commemorative practice in which visitors to a particular site write to the deceased in order to express grief, condolences and other messages (Ricoeur 183; Puccio-Den 52). However, Armando Petrucci and Deborah Puccio-Den note that the inscriptions serve the living rather than the dead (Puccio-Den 65). The act of inscribing messages also allows the writers to connect with future site visitors. Puccio-Den writes that "Unlike the memory of the event, which is recounted by a speaker to an attendant audience, the writing… speaks, 'off-line,' to anyone who can read," communicating the basic messages of the writers and serving as proof of the authors' presence and participation (58).

Though inscription does not take place at every ghost bike memorial site, I have encountered several where visitors and loved ones have written messages on the frame of the bicycle and witnessed this action during the ghost bike funeral at City Hall. Some of the messages expressed grief-- "Rest in Peace," while others spoke more directly to the protest itself, someone's message of --"See Bikes!" The written text reaffirms the agency of the social actors within the protest and serves as Puccio-Den's direct record for those who are not present at the event but may encounter the memorial at a later time.

The placement of this ghost bike also challenges the conventions of the ghost bike, and really roadside memorials as a whole, as this white bicycle has been transformed for multiple purposes. It is a symbol of collective grief as well as a symbol of resistance, and a "silent witness" to the sudden death that occurred and was subsequently erased from the street's landscape (Santino 369). The City Hall ghost bike is not placed in the location of a sudden death; rather it is used to represent the collective bicycling deaths spread across the city and the multi-

year time period during which they all occurred. The placement of this memorial implicates the political constituents inside of the building, designating them as actors within the social drama, roles which Fleming and other protestors have deemed necessary in order to achieve recognition of the plight of riding in New Orleans. The ghost bike becomes a physical indication of the deaths we picture abstractly after reading media accounts but do not witness in person. Santino writes that the creators of shrines insist on the acknowledgement of the deceased as real people, their deaths as real events and "the devastation to the commonwealth that these politics hold" (370). It is this infusion of the personal, social and political that allows the ghost bike to serve as a political statement (Santino 370). In the case of the City Hall ghost bike, it is a political statement that attempts to hold the city government accountable for its lack of action to resolve the issues that plague the cycling community and are responsible for the deaths of 16 people.

The emphasis on political dissatisfaction and desire for change that is metaphorically placed on the City Hall ghost bike is a reminder that this type of memorial does not just exist for one particular purpose. In her work on ephemeral memorials created after sudden deaths, Irene Stengs writes that "memorials may be considered ritualized sites that not only 'are,' but at the same time 'act' and interact with the social reality through which they are constituted" (72). The City Hall ghost bike was not created in the aftermath of a sudden death, but rather was planned in advanced and ultimately represented multiple dimensions: a string of cycling related deaths, the grief felt by loved ones and community members, and the anger felt at the perceived lack of action by the local government. Stengs writes that we should view memorials as sites that pass through a "continuous sequence of varying forms, intentions and interpretations," and though she uses this claim to analyze the ephemeral nature of the memorials, it is also applicable to the reasoning behind the creation of the memorial, particularly when looking at the ghost bike. As an

artifact of memorialization it is not only open to interpretation by the publics interacting with it, but it also affords the possibility for its creators to use the object for multiple purposes, as seen in New Orleans with the protest installation and in Lafayette with the Mickey Shunick memorial.

5.4 Non-violent Protest

The ghost bike funeral, installation, and die-in are performances of non-violent action and intervention. In *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Gene Sharp writes that performances of nonviolent action occur in response to a governing system that relies on the support of its people to function, and are based on the view that "political power can most efficiently be controlled at *its sources*" (9-10). Sharp believes studying politics alongside their social context allows for the understanding that the roots of the political system spread beyond the structure of the state and into society itself (10). He classifies three particular methods of nonviolent political protest that respond to the oppression of the governing system more effectively than violent action: 1) protest and persuasion, 2) noncooperation, and 3) intervention, two of which were utilized during the New Orleans City Hall demonstration (114). Each categorization contains a variety of performances present in political protests beginning in the eighteenth century and extending into modern day protests occurring over 40 years after the publication of Sharp's handbook. Though some of Sharp's writing is dated, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* offers definitions of methods still applicable to current protest performances.

I aim to focus on performance methods that belong within two of Sharp's categorizations, protest and persuasion and intervention, to gain a deeper understanding of the practices utilized during the City Hall protest and to evaluate the effectiveness of these methods. Sharp defines "nonviolent protest and persuasion" as a class containing a large range of "methods which are mainly symbolic acts of peaceful opposition or of attempted persuasion, extending beyond verbal

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expressions but stopping short of noncooperation or nonviolent intervention" (117). These methods are representative of the social actors' point of view, personal feelings, and/or moral condemnation towards a political or social issue, and hope to achieve one of two goals: influence the "opponent" of the actors to that it activates change, or to communicate with the public in order to garner more support for the desired change (117-8). These approaches seek to express the protestors' motivations through written text, verbal utterances, and performative actions.

Honoring the dead is one expression of nonviolent protest and persuasion used to challenge political climates and influence change. Sharp defines the act of political mourning as using symbols typically seen in mourning an individual death for "expressing political opposition and regret at particular events and policies" (157). Though Sharp delineates political mourning as its own method, it overlaps and works congruently with the method that follows it, the mock funeral. The mock funeral, he writes, "is used to suggest that some cherished principle or social condition has been destroyed or is in danger, or to suggest that certain policies imperil human lives;" a definition that outlines the intentions behind the ghost bike funeral performed during the City Hall protest. I am assigning the ghost bike protest the "mock funeral" designation as it differs from Sharp's "demonstrative protest," during which a person's funeral is used as a rallying point to express political dissension, because it was not a literal funeral occurring in the aftermath of a death, though the ghost bike as metaphorical body does indeed serve as a symbol for the bicycle riders killed in New Orleans. The symbolism of the ghost bike, both as a political object and representation of past deaths, blurs the line between Sharp's differentiated acts of "political mourning" and "mock funeral" because it allows the protestors to do both simultaneously.

Following the funeral, the protestors performed a second act of protest, nonviolent intervention. Sharp defines nonviolent intervention as methods of protest that intervene within a situation, either positively or negatively (357). Intervention as a method "may disrupt, and even destroy, established behavior patterns, policies, relationships, or institutions, which are seen as objectionable; or they may establish new behavior patterns, policies, relationships or institutions" (357). It is the disruption of the everyday that gives this method a more pressing effect, though Sharp claims that the direct nature of intervention may force the participating social actors to face more dire consequences as a result. Within the categorization of "nonviolent intervention" lie the methods of physical intervention where "the interference is created by people's physical bodies as they enter, or refuse to leave, some place they are not wanted or from which they have been prohibited" (371). The "die-in," during which participants sprawl on the ground or floor of a particular space as representations of deceased bodies, is not listed amongst Sharp's methods of physical intervention, though it is where this act could be considered. Sharp defines several similar acts, such as the sit-in, the stand-in, the ride-in, the mill-in, and the pray-in, during which social actors occupy a space in order to make a statement about a political circumstance. Though the origins of the die-in protest are difficult to trace, it is likely that this form of protest was just emerging as Sharp was working on his handbook in the early 1970s (Koren).

In the late 1980s, ACT UP, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, used the die-in to protest discrimination against HIV positive people, and the method has seen a surge in popularity in recent years across multiple platforms and political issues (Foster 403). In 2007, hundreds of people protesting the Iraq War staged a die-in on a walkway leading to the Capitol in Washington D.C., resulting in the arrest of 189 participants, ten of whom were veterans of the war (Boorstein, Haynes & Kline; Koren). Die-ins have also been used as a tactic for protestors

participating in the Black Lives Matter movement: in 2015, die-ins were staged in New York to protest the death of Staten Island's Eric Garner, and in 2016 protestors staged die-ins in Baton Rouge, Louisiana following the death of Alton Sterling. Both men were killed during altercations with police officers. The die-in following the ghost bike funeral at the New Orleans' City Hall was inspired by a similar event held by other cycling activists in Houston, Texas (KTRK 13 News). This form of protest succeeds as a method of intervention because it disrupts the everyday routines of the spaces in which they occur.

It also succeeds because of physicality of the body, whose movement and choreography create multiple meanings during the protest. Though, as Foster claims, most scholars analyzing protest movements "dismiss the body, either by conceptualizing protest as a practice that erupts out of a bodily anger over which there is no control, or by envisioning it as a practice that uses the body only as an efficacious instrument that can assist in maximizing efficiency," the value of using the body in protest extends far beyond its role as message carrier (396). Foster writes that protestors' commitment to physical action, no matter the form, "imbues them with a deep sense of personal agency" that breaks down the social aspects surrounding the protest, and allows the body in turn to articulate an imaged alternative (412). The performance producing the imaginative response is what allows the body to speak, to both the protestor and those observing.

As participants in the City Hall protest we used our physical movements to transform ourselves into different roles, each projecting an imagined response to the cycling deaths. Though we were gathered as "protestors" spread out across the park as we waited for the protest to begin, we transformed into "mourners" during the funeral procession and into the "deceased" during the die-in. These roles create strong visual imagery which are more apt to produce emotional affect for those fulfilling the roles and for those who can now visualize the abstract

deaths talked about in the news; the live bodies amassed together to perform "death" provide

witnesses with the opportunity to picture deceased bodies not shown in mainstream media

photographs. In 2008, Joshua David Stein wrote that a ghost bike installation "no longer looked

like a bicycle as much as the negative space where one should have been, as if it had been cut out

of a photograph by an X-Acto knife" (Stein). The "deceased" bodies of die-in participants create

the opposite effect by filling in the "negative space" where the actual deceased bodies of victims

once laid but are no longer seen. Though the bodies may not be lying in the exact spot where the

protested issue took place, their placement in front of structures such as a city hall building

allows for the disruption to speak directly to sources of power.

One aspect is absent from the City Hall protest but present in the literature written about

protest movements: response from organization being protested against. Both Sharp and Foster

detail possible violent reactions to nonviolent protest, and Foster goes into detail about how

participants in the ACT UP die-ins, as well as other nonviolent protest participants, actively

prepared for physically harmful reactions (Foster 406-7). At City Hall there were multiple media

sources documenting the protest but there were scarcely any governmental agents present. There

were a couple of people who exited the front doors of City Hall, smart phones in hand, who

observed for short periods of time, but there was no direct interaction with these people or

anyone else from the building. The relatively limited amount of observers from within the

building caused me to wonder how the event was functioning. Were city officials watching us

from the windows of the building? Would they watch recorded footage on the local news station

later on that night? Were they paying attention to us at all?

As the ghost bike funeral dispersed and we prepared to "die," Fleming instructed us to

move onto the outdoor plaza in front of City Hall so that we filled the space but left a clear path

from the building's doors to the sidewalk. Though the instruction was passed onto our group

from the organizer of the event, it was obvious that he had worked with City Hall when

arranging the protest; and though we were not inside the City Hall building, the city maintained

control over a seemingly public space by regulating how we could protest in that particular

location. In an article about the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York City's Zuccotti Park,

Michael Kimmelman reminds us that public spaces "are not really public at all but quasi-public,

controlled by their landlords." Seemingly a public space, Zuccotti Park, a 33,000 square foot

park in lower Manhattan, was actually regulated by landlords, Brookfield Office Properties, who

prohibited tarps and sleeping bags in the park. It was a rule that gave Brookfield the right to evict

the protestors from the park, though the company did not follow through with that action. I am

reminded of the quasi-public space again on the day of the ghost bike die-in, nearly four years

after the Occupy Wall Street Movement, during Fleming's repeated reminder about the path in

front of the door, which in some ways negated the purpose of the event. As the participants

found their spots across the pavement, a security guard/police officer from the building observed

our actions from his position in front of the doors, an additional reminder that while we were

protesting the death of cyclists and disintegrating infrastructures, we were doing so based on the

city's terms. I am confused by this strict adherence to the rules, particularly when these

directions are given from an organizer who runs a community-monitored stolen bike recovery

group that skates around the work of the local police department. Are we truly disrupting the

everyday performances of the space if we are playing by the landlord's rules? Is the main success

of this event its completion? In the aftermath of the City Hall protest, I continue to question the

effectiveness of the die-in and wonder what statement we made by complying with the rules of

the state.

Zachary Furness writes, "Cyclists who circulate political ideas and images frequently connect bicycling to issues of ecology, autonomy, and public space through techniques that stand in direct contrast to those of the centralized, corporate institutions of automobility" (301). The protests within the New Orleans bicycling community exemplify Furness' claim, tying the act of bicycling to issues of public space in order to encourage changes in infrastructure and policy. Though the die-in at New Orleans's City Hall was not the only die-in to protest cycling deaths, it is the first to be directly associated with a ghost bike memorial installation. By combining the grassroots memorial with nonviolent interventionist performance tactics, this event reveals potential opportunities to reinforce messages imbued in the memorial and alter how the public views cycling deaths. The City Hall protest presents a method o could be replicated by other communities seeking to provide embodied representation as reinforcement for the effect produced by the ghost bike.

In the remainder of this chapter I will focus on the complicated process of removing spontaneous memorials. As I have discussed earlier in this chapter, memorials stand as performative sites of remembrance, grief and/or activism, they implicate spectating publics in the grieving process through their presence in public locations. The public aspect also complicates the memorials as it challenging for local and state governments to regulate the memorials in a way that satisfies those in mourning while upholding laws/public safety. I will begin by discuss a controversy surrounding a memorial regulating policy in Durham, North Carolina that impacted the ghost bike memorials in that city. I will also discuss memorials in Colorado and Connecticut in order to understand how all spontaneous memorials are subject to uncertain and contested removal. An inclusion of the multiple memorial types will also be used to analyze what happens to memorial artifacts in the aftermath of removal.

5.5 Durham, North Carolina

In 2014 the city of Durham, North Carolina adopted a city-wide "Memorial on City Property" policy with the purpose of establishing "a policy that provides guidance for the treatment and removal of unauthorized memorials on City of Durham policy, including rights-of-way" (Durham City Council). The city of Durham, similar to many cities across the United States, did not have an official policy regarding "unauthorized memorials." The city noted in a staff memo that "While it is important to respect the solemn purpose of these installations, the City must balance that respect with its responsibility to manage the right-of-way to protect public safety" (Sorg "Durham Could").

Prior to the explanation of the procedure, the document provides four definitions of terms: 1) City right-of-way, "a strip of land acquired by purchase, donation, reservation, dedication, prescription or condemnation and accepted by the City Council for maintenance;" 2) City property, "Property owned by the City of Durham" not including property leased by the city; 3) Memorial, "A marker (including associated flowers, notes and personal mementos other than a grave marker), which honors the site where a person died suddenly and/or unexpectedly, or where a similar tragedy or event is commemorated," excluding authorized memorials honoring the death of a deceased individual; and 4) Nuisance, "Something that is unpleasant, causing trouble, annoying or bothersome" (Durham City Council). Though the first three terms defined for this policy are necessary for understanding the geography of the land, it is the fourth term, "nuisance," that I find to be problematic. The term "nuisance," indicates of the attitude Durham council members have adopted regarding roadside memorials. Additionally, the definition for the word provided in the policy differentiates it from the other geography-related terms; it is not applicable to any element of urban planning, nor does it describe how an object

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would interfere with public safety. Rather, the document presents "nuisance" as an objective

term, though the definition provided uses vocabulary suggesting subjective attitudes towards an

object. The manner in which the term is used within the procedure further problematizes how the

policy addresses and responds to "unauthorized" roadside memorials.

The procedure for Durham's "Memorials on City Property" policy is as follows:

A. When a memorial that is placed on City property or right-of-way is reported to City staff as a nuisance, City staff will inspect the site to determine if the memorial interferes with public use and/or safety.
B. If City staff determines that the reported memorial, placed on City property or right-of-way, <u>does not</u> interfere with public use and/or safety, City staff will allow the memorial to remain in its current location for up to 45 days from the date it was brought to the City's attention. City staff will make an attempt to notify the individual(s) who placed the memorial, if identifying information can be found, allowing them the opportunity to remove the memorial at the end of the 45 days to retain their personal items and mementos.
C. If City staff determines that the reported memorial, placed on City property or right-of-way, <u>does</u> interfere with public use and/or safety, City staff will make an attempt to notify the individual(s) who placed the memorial, if identifying information can be found, allowing them the opportunity to remove the memorial to retain their personal items and mementos. If City staff cannot identify the individual(s) who placed the memorial, City staff has the authority to remove the roadside memorial immediately.
D. In the event that the individual(s) who placed the memorials are not able to be identified at the time the memorial is removed, the Department of General Services will store the materials for 30 days, after which the items will be disposed of it they have gone unclaimed.
E. The Director of General Services and/or the Director of Parks and Recreation have the authority to implement this policy, and their decision in matters of memorial treatment and removal shall be considered final. (Durham City Council)

As described in point A, the procedure for the memorial management comes into effect once a

memorial has been reported to city staff as a nuisance. The structure of this policy indicates that

city inspection of the memorial will only go into effect after an individual subjectively decides

that the memorial is "unpleasant, causing trouble, annoying or bothersome." It does not indicate

that the individual reporting the memorial to City staff finds the memorial in question to be

hazardous or an interference to public safety. If the policy is meant to maintain public safety, it should use language that applies directly to public safety.

A second issue with this policy is its reliance on eyewitness reporting. Though the title "Memorials on City Property" implies that the policy applies to *all* memorials deemed "unauthorized" by city government, the language used to outline the procedure only references memorials reported to the city by its constituents, thereby specifically targeting the memorials that are labeled as "nuisance" by the individual(s) filing a report. I acknowledge now, as I have done in earlier chapters, that it is impossible to keep tabs on every roadside memorial in a city that is constantly reinventing itself. However, smaller cities, like Durham, could utilize government employees already assigned to working on the street to identify memorials as they appear. If the "Memorials on City Property" policy only applies to memorials reported by city constituents, the policy is left open to discriminatory views.

Local Durham news reports from 2014 indicate that residents believed the new policy on "unauthorized" memorials was made specifically to target ghost bike memorials installed within city limits (Sorg "Durham Bicycle"). In a note to the Durham Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Council, Deputy City Manager Bo Ferguson wrote

> I will state (and would ask you share freely) that the ghost bikes were not what started this conversation or prompted us to develop a policy….Nonetheless, we acknowledged early on that any policy we develop would be applicable to and have an impact on the ghost bikes, as they are one of the more visible and consistent memorials that show up in our rights-of-way. (Sorg "Durham's Ghost")

Ferguson also writes that a memorial installed at police headquarters for Jesus Huerta, a man who according to police fatally shot himself while handcuffed in the back of a Durham Police car, was the one which prompted the policy to be created (Sorg "Durham's Ghost"). Despite Ferguson's claims that the ghost bikes did not spur the policy's creation, his acknowledgement

of the potential effects the policy on the memorials proved to be accurate the following year when several ghost bikes in Durham were removed by the city after a citizen's report. The city could not have predicted the backlash that followed.

5.6 Ghost Bike Removal in Durham

On June 22, 2015 Durham resident Kahlil Nasir filed a complaint with the Durham General Services Department regarding two ghost bikes, one dedicated to Joshua Johnson, killed August 2013, located at University Drive and Durham-Chapel Hill Boulevard, and the second dedicated to Kent Winberry, killed October 2014, located at Duke University Road and Chapel Hill Road (Sorg "One Grumpy"). In his complaint, Nasir wrote "It is a tremendous eyesore to pull up at the light and see a white bicycle attached to a pole with flowers and with a giant ant pile growing around the bike. As a city we need to continue to make beautification projects such as new subdivisions and commercial developments and not seeing these bikes throughout the city" (Sorg "One Grumpy"). His email complaint, which is public record, set in motion the "Memorials on City Property" policy, and both bicycles were removed from their locations by the end of July 2015.

Nasir filed a second complaint on July 22, 2015 about a third ghost bike memorial, dedicated to Seth Vidal, killed July 2013, located near the intersection of Hillandale Road and Interstate 85 (Bridges "2 Durham;" Sorg "One Grumpy"). Two days later, Eunice Chang, Vidal's partner, was instructed to remove Vidal's ghost bike within 45 days (Chang). She complied and relocated Vidal's ghost bike to the front yard of her home in September 2015 (Bridges "2 Durham"). Nasir's complaints set in motion the procedure to remove three ghost bike memorials across Durham, and succeeded when all three memorial sites were deconstructed.

The ability for a single individual to cause the removal of memorial sites is described in the "Memorials on City Property" policy. Nasir's complaint described the ghost bike memorials as an "eyesore," which fits in line with the definition of "nuisance" as something annoying or unpleasant. It was Nasir's subjective opinion of the memorials that led to their removal, despite declarations from other residents that they did not want the ghost bikes removed and the length of time that the ghost bikes stood without interfering with traffic or complaint from other residents (Sorg "One Grumpy"). The city's rapid response to Nasir's complaints is also surprising; considering procedures, point A states that the complaints will cause the city to investigate and evaluate the nuisance claim (Durham City Council). The span of time between Nasir's July complaint and Chang's receiving the request for removal was only *two days*, which meant that in the one day between receiving the complaint and corresponding with Chang, the General Services Department ruled that Vidal's ghost bike was impeding on public safety, despite its prior peaceful presence. Though Ferguson claimed that the memorial policy did not specifically target the ghost bike memorials, the efficiency in which they were removed seems to question this statement.

In response to the removal request for Vidal's ghost bike, and the already implemented removal of Johnson and Winberry's memorials, Chang, along with friends and family of the other two victims, published an open letter to Durham City Council on Change.org to petition for a re-evaluation of the "Memorial on City Property" policy. In the letter, they acknowledge how the policy allows for one person to cause the removal of ghost bikes and focus on how the policy challenges their right to free speech. The petitioners indicate the ghost bikes are representative of free-speech acts in which they, alongside other mourners and ghost bike creators, express grief and share messages with the public (Chang et al.). They also shed light on other areas of

openness within the policy by stating "The policy doesn't require that person [the individual filing the complaint] to be a citizen of Durham, to demonstrate that the memorial impacts their life in any way, or to show that the memorial is, in fact, a nuisance" (Chang et al.). Not only does the policy privilege subjective complaints, its open-endedness also lacks standards for who can file a claim and for gauging the legitimacy of complaints.

The petition proposes a revision to the policy that would create more specific guidelines for the investigative and removal processes. Chang and the other petitioners suggest that

> …the complainant should attest under oath that he or she is a Durham resident that lives or works within ¼ mile of the roadside memorial, and must specifically allege how the memorial poses a nuisance. The City should then, in conjunction with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, make a determination as to whether the memorial is actually a nuisance. For example, does the memorial block road maintenance? Is it in disrepair? If it is not a nuisance, it stays. If it is, then it can be removed. An appeals process should also be established to ensure this policy is fairly applied. Only with such a narrowly tailored policy can freedom of speech rights be preserved. (Chang, et al.)

Some of the suggestions above seem conducive to improving the regulations for roadside memorials. The recommendations for precise guidelines on who can file a complaint and for specifically tailored questions during the investigation stage create a fairer and more objective policy. The suggestion of an appeals process is also intriguing as it would allow the memorial creators and supporters to argue for a prolonged installation period, though it could also have its disadvantages, for example rulings against the supporters could set a precedent against roadside memorials, or become a drain on city and personal resources. However, the continued use of "nuisance" in the petitioners' recommendation continues to be problematic. Based on the context of the proposed changes, the use of the word presents other types of difficulties outside of the superficial adjectives in the proposal's definition. Though the petitioners also suggest surface level appearances could be a reason for ghost bike removal, they also reference a situation in which the memorial would prohibit road usage or maintenance. Perhaps substituting

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a different term, like interference or distraction, would improve the petitioners' argument as the terms suggest that the object in question performs an action rather than simply being an annoyance. This call for change serves as opportunity for the community to change biased language already listed in the official policy by suggesting better suited vocabulary to match its goals. At the time of writing, the petition is closed to new signees, though its site on Change.org indicates that 1,789 pledged their support for the petitioners and their fight against ghost bike removals (Chang).

As a response to the backlash against the decision to remove the ghost bikes, the Durham City Council called for its members to revisit the "Memorial on City Property" policy in August 2015 (Bridges "Durham May"). During their plea for revisions on the policy, Councilman Steve Schewel stated that he believed the bar for removal was too low, while a second councilman, Dan Moffit, revealed his belief that the policy had unintentionally pitted citizen against citizen (Bridges "Durham May"). The City Council scheduled a discussion of the policy for October 2015, but in a *News Observer* article from that month, Bridges revealed that the topic had postponed until 2016 following a Supreme Court decision on the *Reed v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona* case regarding signs in public right-of-ways (Bridges "2 Durham"). Pastor Clyde Reed of the Good News Community Church sued the town of Gilbert, Arizona after the church was cited for leaving signs promoting the time and location of the church's Saturday services (Supreme Court 1). The town of Gilbert has extensive sign code regulations which state that most signs in public right-of-ways require a permit, with the exception of ideological (signs not fitting into other categories that communicate a message or idea), political (used to influence the outcome of an election) and temporary directional signs (directing the public to church or other qualifying event) (Supreme Court 1). Each of the exempted sign types is assigned regulations for

how long the sign can remain posted on the public right-of-ways. The Supreme Court's majority opinion written by Justice Clarence Thomas ruled that content-based restrictions on public signage was unconstitutional, stating that "The Sign Code, a paradigmatic example of content-based discrimination, singles out specific subject matter for deferential treatment, even if it does not target viewpoints within that subject matter" (Supreme Court 3). Eugene Volokh of *The Washington Post* writes that content-based regulations differ from the often constitutional "Content-neutral restrictions" regulating sound amplification, blockage of traffic, etc., or promote aesthetics through the regulation of sign size and quantity. To determine if a content-based law or regulation is constitutional, it must undergo "strict scrutiny," a process which the sign code regulation failed.

Though the situation and policy regarding the regulations for roadside memorials differ from *Reed v. The Town of Gilbert, Arizona*, there are similarities that could affect a conversation between the citizens of Durham and their government. First, the delineation between sign and memorial would need to be established. If the creators of the ghost bikes are using the memorials to communicate messages to the public, as Chang and petitioners have stated, then should the memorial be considered a type of sign? If so, should the ghost bike/roadside memorial as sign be regulated under the same policies as other signs, depending on if those other policies are already in place? Secondly, if the "unauthorized"/roadside memorials are to be viewed as separate entities from other signs placed on city property, then the citizens and the town would need to discuss how the policy enabled the ghost bikes to be singled out amongst other types of memorials, especially after the initial speculation implicating the regulations as a response to ghost bikes had to be publicly refuted by a city official.

In October 2015, Bridges reported that two ghost bike memorials had been installed to replace Winberry and Vidal's previous memorials (Bridges "2 Durham"). Bridges' article reveals the city of Durham was treating the new ghost bikes as "brand new memorials," about which no complaints had been received, and provides Eunice Chang's reaction to the replacement memorials: "I felt relieved that I wasn't the only one who believes that ghost bikes are an important reminder of a life lost as a consequence of inattentive driving and a traffic infrastructure heavily biased towards motorists. And frankly, that I wasn't the only one who wasn't deeply affected by the loss of Seth Vidal" (Bridges "2 Durham"). As of December 29, 2016, there has been no further reporting on Durham City Council meetings addressing the "Memorials on City Property" policy, and the second memorials created for Winberry and Vidal remain in place. The controversy surrounding the regulation of roadside memorials in Durham, North Carolina sheds light on how this particular type of memorial is publically addressed. In order to understand how this regulation stands in comparison to others, I will compare spontaneous roadside memorials to other types of roadside memorials in the United States in the next section, as well as compare removal and archival processes.

5.5 Memorial Removal across the US

The city of Durham is not alone in facing difficulty with the memorial removal process. In cities across the US, similar circumstances have surfaced, causing communities and local governments to address how and when it is appropriate for a memorial to be taken down. There does not seem to be a consensus across cities or situations; each location and each death has been handled individually, though some commonality remains. There is one factor that seems to influence the removal process: whether or not the death was a high-profile or a mass casualty situation. Jonathan D. Fast notes that large-scale sudden deaths produce a larger class of

mourners situated within different levels: national, community, individual and direct family and friends (Fast; Caldwell). Instances of large-scale or extraordinary sudden death attract mourners throughout Fast's spectrum who contribute to the memorial building process.

Following the Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting in Newton, Connecticut on December 14, 2012, in which Adam Lanza killed twenty children, six school employees, his mother and himself, spontaneous memorials appeared across Newton to grieve the victims. These memorials, "erected at the site of the shootings, at various churches, in people's yards, and in public places such as street corners and central Newton buildings," included a myriad of artifacts such as teddy bears, balloons, flowers, flags, crosses, and personalized angel statues (Cann 43). The tributes received by the town of Newtown was so great that officials were forced to request that other communities stop sending gifts and other goods and redirect them to their own charities instead (Rivera). Two weeks after the shooting Newtown's first selectwoman, Patricia Llodra, announced that the memorials on public property were going to be removed (Cann, 45; Rivera). In a statement published in *The New York Times*, Llodra stated "There's no roadmap for this [memorial removal], so I have to really make the decisions based on what my heart tells me is right and what my head says is possible….We knew the memorials can't stand forever" (Rivera). After describing the weather conditions faced by Newton in the two weeks following the shooting, Llodra continued, "So I knew the time was going to come where we really had to move the memorials. Not only because the tributes themselves started to look unkempt and start to communicate a message that wasn't part of honoring what the donor intended; it also signifies a moving on, a readiness for the community to go to that next step" (Rivera). Following Llodra's statement, families of victims were invited to spend time at the memorials prior to their deconstruction so that they could have private time to grieve and collect

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any items that they wanted to keep (Rivera). Those who disagreed with the removals moved memorials from public to private property to continue the grieving process for as long as they saw fit (Cann 45), just as Eunice Chang rehomed Seth Vidal's ghost bike to the front yard of her home.

A few months prior to the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting, James Holmes opened fire during a showing of *The Dark Knight Rises* at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, killing twelve people and wounding fifty-eight (Cann 36; Tenser). Soon after the shooting, a memorial was built across the street from the theatre which included twelve white crosses built by Greg Zanis, flowers, balloons, letters, candles, and stuffed animals (Cann 37). On September 20, 2012 the city of Aurora removed the memorial erected across from the movie theater, exactly two months after the shooting, stating that the date of removal was coincidental and that many of the items would be placed in storage at the Aurora History Museum (Tenser). Prior to the announcement of the memorial's removal, the city of Aurora consulted with families of victims about the memorial and the items left there (Tenser). The families were notified two weeks prior to the memorials' deconstruction and were invited to the site prior to September 20 for a moment of reflection and to collect any items they wished to keep (Tenser). A press release was sent to the local media on September 19, the day prior to the removal, notifying them of the process without inviting media representatives to the event, stating "In consideration for the victims, we wanted to collect everything very respectfully for the victims, and we felt like we didn't want it to become a media event" (Castellanos). The victims' families were not present at the removal, which was completed by employees of the Aurora History Museum and city officials. Following the deconstruction, city officials placed a sign in the field where the memorial once stood that

states "Thank you for the outpouring of love and support for the victims of the 7/20 tragedy. Always Remember" (Castellanos).

The sites of tragedy in both Newton, Connecticut and Aurora, Colorado, amongst other sites of mass tragedy, differ from sites where violent deaths occur on smaller scales spread over time. One of these differences is the amount of recognition the death(s) receive. When President Barack Obama travelled to both Newton and Aurora in the aftermath of their tragedies, he established the memorials as "nationally recognized site[s] of mourning" (Cann 39). This type of recognition often leads to policy reform (Fast 486). Fast writes that in the aftermath of the Columbine High School shooting, "The senate created a National Commission on Character Development, and reviewed a new juvenile crime bill," in addition to introducing a gun control bill to Congress (486). Following the shootings in Newton and Aurora, President Obama called for gun control reform across the country (Altman). These opportunities are not afforded to memorial sites representing victims of other types of sudden death, like cycling crashes, because they are seen as common, every day occurrences.

In the cases of Newton and Aurora, the local level of recognition extended beyond the individual and personal levels to local community governing officials. The decision to remove the memorials in both cities came from the government, Selectwoman Llodra and Mayor Steve Homan. Cann writes that Homan's timely visit (he visited alongside President Obama) demonstrated "his solidarity with the memorialization project" and credits him as the person who urged the community to move through the grieving process by removing the spontaneous memorials (39). By removing the memorials, the state decrees that the sites are preventing the citizens from healing and from returning to a state of normalcy (Cann 46). The sponsored removals also provide an opportunity for the government to reclaim control over public space

(Cann 46). The removal and the promise of an "official" memorial are framed as acts of

assistance for community members, though Cann claims that this process often displaces the

grief of the mourners (46).

What I find to be most interesting about the removal of the memorials in Newton and

Aurora is the "moving on" rhetoric used to gain compliance from community members, a

strategy seemingly assigned to particular types of deaths and memorials. The "moving on"

rhetoric is completely absent from the memorial policy instituted in Durham, where the language

used completely disregards any or all grieving processes. In fact, the policy's use of the term

"nuisance" completely counters the rhetoric used for memorials and situations with large

mourning constituencies. Roadside memorials, such as the ghost bike, motivated by grief and the

desire to advocate against the manner of death in the same vein as the larger spontaneous

memorial sites created in the aftermath of mass tragedies, struggle to accomplish their goals

because they do not receive the same type of recognition. When a cyclist is killed following a

crash, it is impossible to know what type of media coverage the death will receive and how long

the coverage will last. If the public is unaware of a death, or a series of deaths stemming from the

same cause, than there is no possibility for larger classes of mourners. When there is lack of

recognition, there is lack of awareness and therefore a lack of advocacy from the larger

community/national level. Instead these smaller, personal sites can be publicly viewed as

annoyances, and the people utilizing these sites are often not afforded the same opportunities to

be a part of the removal process.

Legislation regarding roadside memorials varies across the United States. In a 2010

study, George E. Dickinson and Heath C. Hoffman mailed surveys to Department of

Transportation (DOT) directors in all 50 US states regarding whether policies for roadside

memorials exist within state. Out of the 49 states that responded to the survey, Dickinson and

Hoffman found that 23 states had officially adopted a policy regulating roadside memorials,

including Iowa and Minnesota which do not have an "official" policy but rather "statements" or

"guidelines" on how to address the memorials, and Montana, which does not have a roadside

memorial policy but does support the Montana American Legion Highway Fatality Marker

Program (Dickinson and Hoffman include the MALHFMP as a policy) (158). The study finds

that "None of the states allocate specific funds in their annual DOT budget for erection,

maintenance, and/or removal of memorials," though the department absorbs the costs of such

actions (160). One survey question regarding action taken by the DOT if a roadside memorial

falls into disrepair found "29 respondents (63%) said they remove it and five states (11%) said

they leave it in place. Seven respondents report that all private memorials are removed regardless

of their condition" (160-161). Each state, with or without official regulations for the memorials,

handles their presence differently. For example, the Arizona DOT removed all commemorative

memorials along US 60 and Route 177 roadways because the state finds roadside memorials to

be a safety hazard, therefore making them illegal (Jeong). Though the memorials created for

large-scale sudden deaths, such as those in Newton and Aurora, also breach memorial policies,

their deconstruction and removal were handled in a manner that sought to respect the individuals

using the spaces to grieve. In places like Arizona, where all roadside memorials were removed

without question, or in New York, where the ghost bikes seem to disappear as suddenly as the

deaths they represent, the mourners' grief becomes displaced without comfort or recognition.

What role do the items left at a memorial site play in the act of remembrance? What

happens to the artifacts placed at spontaneous memorials after the sites have been taken down?

These two questions prove to be significant because the visitors to memorial sites often do more

than just visit. Marita Sturken writes that the concepts of mourning and memory have converged

with concepts of healing and closure to allow memorial culture within the United States to be

experienced as a therapeutic practice (*Tourists of History* 14). Sturken writes that memorials

function as a "technology of memory," a social practice imbued in power dynamics, where

"memories are shared, produced, and given meaning" (*Tangled Memories* 10). "The embodiment

of memory (and its perceived location in objects that act as substitutes for the body)," she writes,

"is an active process with which subjects engage in relation to social institutions and practices"

(1997 10). One form of engagement is the act of contributing items to the site, which function

much like written inscriptions; the artifacts offer proof of the act of witnessing while

simultaneously expressing sentiments felt by the visitor. Writing about the Vietnam Veterans

Memorial in Washington DC, Sturken notes "The memorial has tapped into a reservoir of need

to express in public the pain of this war, a desire to transfer private memories into a collective

experience," completed through the leaving of personal artifacts at the site (*Tangled Memories*

76). Their placement at a memorial site transposes the objects from personal to cultural artifacts,

items bearing witness to pain suffered" (*Tangled Memories* 76). By placing an artifact at the site,

the visitor becomes a part of the cultural technology that shapes how the event will be viewed in

the future.

Artifacts are an integral part of memorial practices, whether they are left at a state-built

and run memorial like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial or included in the construction of a

roadside memorial. The answer to the second question, ("What happens to the artifacts placed at

spontaneous memorials after the sites have been taken down?") seems to lie in the situations

surrounding the memorial. Artifacts from state or government sponsored memorials and

memorials for events mourned on a national scale appear to be handled differently than those left

at roadside memorials or similar roadside shrines. Part of the reasoning for this split comes from the availability of resources from organizations or people associated with a memorial site. For example, the Oklahoma City National Memorial, built in the aftermath of the 1995 Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing, has "an extensive archive which retains, among many other things, the objects that have been left by visitors at a fence on the exterior wall of the memorial" (Sturken *Tourists of History* 93). After receiving too many non-personalized items left at the site, archive manager Jane Thomas created the "I Am Hope" project which washes and redistributes stuffed animals to children living in Afghanistan and Iraq (Sturken *Tourists of History* 93). After the Oklahoma City Bombing, the Federal Building was labeled as a site of national tragedy and received government support for the memorial construction. In the 22 years since the bombing, the site has grown from spontaneous memorials created in the immediate aftermath to a permanent memorial and museum centered around the themes of remembrance, peace, spirituality and hope, cherished children, comfort, recognition and learning (Oklahoma City). The people working within the organization running the memorial have control over the site and the artifacts left there. Other memorials and museums have been created in the aftermath of tragedy with government support, but how do smaller-scale cities handle spontaneous memorials after an incident?

Following the removal of the Sandy Hook Elementary memorial, the town of Newtown collected materials left at memorial sites for possible inclusion in a permanent memorial being built at a later time (Cann 45; Rivera). Rather than saving the artifacts as-is, after each had been exposed to various elements of weather, the town of Newtown grounded the items, turning organic materials such as flowers and trees into "sacred soil," while the remnants of teddy bears and similar items would be used to create bricks for the future memorial site (Rivera). In Aurora,

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Colorado, 30 workers from the Aurora History Museum filled over 160 boxes with items left at that the memorial, including 300 candles. Flowers, wreaths and similar items were ground into mulch to be redistributed around the city (Castellanos). Family members of victims who were not ready to visit the memorial site prior to its deconstruction are allowed access to the archived items, which are stored in a warehouse to be used in a permanent memorial or exhibit at a later time. As noted earlier in this chapter, the rate at which the cities received donations of larger-scale memorial objects was too great for the host organizations to continue receiving them. The precision assigned to the repurposing of the items from the Newton memorial sites indicates that while the artifacts hold value, their as-is state when taken from the memorials do not meet standards of appearance that would be placed in an "official" memorial. The repurposing serves as an act of regaining control over the vast amounts of items, similar to how governing officials regain control over the public space by announcing the removal of memorials. As the permanent memorials have yet to be constructed, it is impossible to know how the collected items and repurposed materials will be used in the sites, though the efforts given to collecting the items and storing them exceed the possibilities afforded to smaller, grassroots memorials lacking city-level government backing.

When I reported a ghost bike missing to The Street Memorial Project in June of 2014, I received an email in return that stated "ghost bikes go missing all the time… and only very rarely do we learn why or by whom" (Belcher). Though The NYC Street Memorial Project was speaking about ghost bikes in New York City, the sentiment applies to most ghost bikes regardless of location. While searching for ghost bikes in New York, I visited the former site of Franco Scorcia's ghost bike at 40th Street and Broadway several times. I was unable to find the bike and returned to Ghostbikes.org for further information. Upon reading his biographical page,

I discovered a link to *The New York Times Lens Blog*, which publishes photos from around the world. The blog's December 10, 2010 post featured a photograph of Scorcia's ghost bike lying on the top of a pile of black garbage bags. Though devastating, the photograph offered evidence of what could happen to any or all of the ghost bikes. It was also the *only* documentation of the bike's removal. Had the photographer chosen not to take the photo, we may have never learned what happened to the memorial, as is the case for majority of ghost bikes that have been taken down. This is also true for more permanent memorials like Mickey Shunick's in Lafayette. During Mardi Gras, Shunick's bike is adorned with hundreds of bead, and though it can be assumed the Shunick family collects items, there is no way to account for who removes the beads or how they are disposed of or repurposed. Since no street remains the same day after day, or even hour after hour, it is impossible to keep track of every action taking place; and if a ghost bike is placed on the private property of a person who does not want it there, the landowner/leaseholder could have the memorial removed without question.

The Durham ghost bikes, as well as Shunick's, serve as exceptions to unstable removal process as the ghost bike creators were offered the opportunity to retrieve the items at each ghost bike site, and remove the bicycles themselves. Durham was able to provide this opportunity because the identities of the creators were known to the councilmembers. In other cities, such actions are difficult because it is nearly impossible to keep track of all roadside memorials and their creators, particularly when organizations like The NYC Street Memorial Project do not claim individual authorship for memorial sites. If one does not know who created a memorial, or who is responsible for its caretaking, then there is no chance of notification or discussion. Since city offices, such as departments of transportation or sanitation, become responsible for removing memorials from public property, at a cost they absorb, the materials and objects at

memorial sites are likely disposed of. There are not storage spaces filled with artifacts, as there are in Newton and Aurora, nor any accessible public record tracking the removals. The ghost bike memorials, much like the bodies they represent, become one of many historical layers present on the streets where they once stood, in spite of the lack of a physical archive. This is another sense in which ghost bikes are ghosts. They vanish. But even when they vanish, the memories of them remain.

The situations in Durham, Newton, and Aurora, highlight the complexities that surround memorial building and removal, as well as the grieving process. Newton and Aurora show there is possibility for to determining a "right" way to build a memorial that satisfies all involved, whether the memorial is officially sanctioned or not, and the same goes for the deconstruction process. As of January 2015, residents and officials in Newtown, Connecticut were still struggling to find consensus on whether a permanent memorial should be built (Altimari). Though monetary donations for a permanent memorial totaled at least $1,080,000.00, and the town received enough memorial-related items to fill six storage units, Newtown officials were striving to accommodate the feelings of the victims' families, survivors, and surrounding community members in the hope of creating a memorial that would respect differing opinions while honoring the deceased (Altimari). In July 2016, four years after the movie theater shooting, *The Denver Post* reported that the 7/20 Memorial Foundation had raised half of their $200,000 goal for funds to build a memorial in Aurora, and the first plants for a memorial garden were scheduled to be planted in 2017 (Arnold). Similar to how these cities are seeking a permanent place for their memorials, creators and supporters of ghost bikes are seeking recognition of their causes and memorials.

Though ghost bike installation, use, and removal practices vary depending on the location of the memorial, the case studies within this chapter highlight situations that could influence all ghost bike memorial sites. The New Orleans protest reveals the ghost bike's power as a performative object and establishes opportunities for future uses. While the die-in was not the most successful part of the protest, its coupling with the ghost bike funeral and installation indicates an evolution from preceding cycling die-in events. The structure of the New Orleans protest could serve as both a model and a stepping stone for other communities seeking to stage nonviolent interventions. The controversy in Durham highlights the difficulty of balancing governmental responsibility and community desires when addressing and removing spontaneous memorials. Though the regulation of roadside memorials differ from state to state, the controversy in Durham reveals even with formal procedures in place, memorial removal is complicated and messy. In this chapter I focused predominantly on performances associated with the ghost bike, which differs from the materialistic themes found in the proceeding chapters. In my conclusion, I continue to discuss performance and how it intersects with the research I have presented.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

As I noted in the Introduction, I had the opportunity to compile and direct a staged performance based on my dissertation research. I constructed *The White Bicycle* from a series of narratives about ghost bikes, cycling experiences, and infrastructure politics. I also drew inspiration from several sources I have discussed in this project including the *Cops in Bike Lanes* blog, Casey Nestitat's YouTube video, my ghost bike pilgrimage, Van Der Tuin's first ghost bike, and Durham's removal policy. This performance gave me an opportunity to move my research from the written page of my notes and this dissertation to the bodies of the performers who voiced many of the ideas I had been grappling with, thus providing additional perspectives through which I could view the memorial. It also provided an opportunity for me to speak with students, scholars, cyclists, and community members about their interpretations of the performance and their experiences with ghost bikes and bicycle riding. My encounters with the stage and the audience influenced my analysis of ghost bikes and eventually led to many of the conclusions I have drawn.

The White Bicycle stage was designed to mimic a city street. We painted a sidewalk from one side of the theater to the opposite wall, lining the risers where the audience sat. We outlined two streets that met at a three-way intersection and had two large, open areas upstage right and left that were primarily used to represent pedestrian spaces. The opening scene of the show, titled "Everything and Nothing at All," originated from my personal experience of discovering Mireya Gomez's memorial in Flushing, Queens. There were two performers in this scene, the primary narrator who sat on a bench upstage right and the secondary narrator who sat in a car parked in the street center stage left. The narrators mimicked each other's movements and at times completed each other's sentences, forcing the audience to continually split their attention

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between the two performers. During a conversation with performance scholars Ruth Bowman and Michael Bowman following one of the Black Box performances, they mentioned that they found the staging of this scene to be effective because the audience was forced to split their attention just as the driver is forced to split her attention between what happens inside and outside of the vehicle. Another audience member voiced his appreciation of the decision to start the show with a scene about drivers and cars because it allowed the non-bicyclist audience members to identify with performers before they encountered the unfamiliar. When I wrote "Everything and Nothing At All," I thought of it as an introduction to the ghost bike and an explanation of my experience; after all, my encounter with Mireya Gomez's ghost bike was the incident that sparked my interest these memorials in the first place. However, as I thought about the scene and the feedback I received, I realized that the scene was necessary not because it explained how the project started but because one cannot talk about bicycles and bicycles' spaces without addressing the vehicles that share that space. This became the driving force behind my analysis of bicycle spaces in Chapter 3. The issues involved with sharing these spaces also influenced how I wrote about the protest in New Orleans and Durham's removal policy. I also came to see this scene as a representation of how American culture has essentialized the automobile, discussed in Chapter 4. The relationships between the car, the bicycle, and the street needed to be present within this study for me to analyze cycling issues and deaths.

Prior to compiling *The White Bicycle*, I spent an extended amount of time thinking about my interactions and perceptions of Carolina Hernandez's ghost bike. I recognized the relationship between the deteriorating ghost bike and the injured body but did not have the vocabulary or understanding needed to write about it at that stage of the process. During one rehearsal, the cast and I were working on a scene titled "Discovery." I adapted the text for this

scene from a narrative included in a Grist.org article on the history of ghost bikes. The narrative tells the story of a woman and her partner who encounter the aftermath of a hit-and-run crash and find two severely injured cyclists lying in the road. As we discussed the story and worked to devise the movement for the scene, we decided to use a bicycle to replicate the emotional and physical impact of discovering injured bodies. Two of the performers carried a bicycle to center stage and flipped it upside down so that the front wheel of the bike could imitate the steering wheel of a car. They pretended to drive the car until the narrator spoke a line about finding the crash site. The performers then pushed the bicycle so that it landed on its side with a loud bang. We decided that we needed an equally strong image to follow the movement and a cast member suggested that we view the bike as the bodies of the victims. One of the cast members certified in CPR demonstrated how to complete an initial assessment of a victim, and the performers applied those actions to the bicycle: first stabilizing each tire with both hands, then putting an ear to the spokes as if checking for breath, and finally squeezing the brakes on the handlebars to feel for a pulse. As they replicated and adjusted these actions, the bicycle became a visual substitute for the bodies. The effect was startling. As I watched the performers repeat the scene during rehearsals and performances, I began to understand how a bike could be a visual stand-in for the body and related the images to my experience with Hernandez's memorial. These experiences revealed that the roadside ghost bike did more than mark the location of a crash site; it also stood as a metonym of the deceased. It is perhaps the most impactful message I have learned during this process.

Despite the commonalities I uncovered during the process of producing the show and writing this dissertation, I found myself surprised by some of my discoveries. When I started researching ghost bikes, I looked at them as sites representing a discrete cause. I came to

recognize the ties between the ghost bikes and many of the major protest movements and national issues of the twenty-first century, including the Black Lives Matter movement, Occupy Wall Street and mass shooting tragedies. I was also surprised by my inability to separate the ghost bike as a memorial from types of memorials. While it would have been impossible to study the ghost bike without studying structures of power, I was unable to write about the ghost bike memorial as a solitary object or site because comparison proved to be necessary. While the ghost bike is a type of roadside memorial, it was unreasonable to compare it only to other roadside sites because the object intersects with a multitude of physical and ideological structures within memorialization culture.

There are several moments throughout this project that address the intersections between race, class, and cycling culture, some explicitly and others more ambiguously. In Chapter 2, I discovered that the ghost bike could be used to represent specific cultures after I encountered the low-rider memorial and reflected on its history. My pilgrimage caused me to reflect on how my race and my class influenced my perceptions of New York and my relationship to the city. The people I interacted with were residents who lived and worked there because it was necessary for their livelihoods. Though I once was an inhabitant of the city, my experiences differed: I visited Midtown and Lower Manhattan as a consumer, and traveled to Harlem as a researcher and a tourist, which partially accounts for my feelings of discomfort during the search. There are other intersections that warrant deeper investigation: What does it mean that the ghost bike funeral included a bagpipe instead of the New Orleans tradition of a second line? How did race and class affect the amount of attention that Mickey Shunick's death received in contrast with other deceased cyclists? What demographics are represented amongst those who organize and

participate in ghost bike related protests and rides? These are questions that will guide my research as I continue to investigate performances involving the ghost bike memorial.

There are additional avenues for future research related to ghost bikes and cycling culture. One possibility would include continuing to visit additional ghost bike sites in regions and countries not included in this project to uncover additional uses and variations of the ghost bike memorial. Another area of research would be to study the relationship between the spontaneous memorial and organized bicycle rides that sometimes accompany, follow, and revisit ghost bike sites like The Ride of Silence or the NYC Street Memorial Project's annual memorial ride. While I have acknowledged these events in my research, they could easily justify individual studies that exceed the bounds of this project. Additionally, I encountered a type of bicycle rider that I was unaware of prior to starting this project, the invisible cyclist. Invisible cyclists are low-income or bicycle-dependent riders who often go unaccounted for in governmental studies because of inaccessibility to data about them, language barriers, immigration statuses, etc. (Kinder Institute; Koeppel). The invisible cyclists are also the riders who are most likely to go unnoticed on the street and are directly influenced by gentrification and the "hipster" image recently associated with bicycle users. Studying this cycling population would allow for an expanded understanding of race and class relations within cycling culture.

From the outset, I was intrigued by the polysemic nature of the ghost bike and used my curiosity to fuel the analysis of each case study. Part of this research explored the complex relationship between the body, the bicycle, and the memorial. My realization that the ghost bike invokes the body of the deceased, as described above in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, is perhaps the most profound discovery of this project. However, I realize that there are other bodies I have acknowledged but not fully addressed: those of the cyclists who remain on the bicycle. Everyday

cyclists around the world ride their bicycles for enjoyment, exercise, transportation, and a variety of other reasons, despite, or maybe in spite of, the dangers they encounter. While the cyclists I interviewed provided information about the dark side of bicycle riding, they also spoke about the ways the activity brings them joy: Travis Hans spoke about organizing a group ride as a part of Baton Rouge's Southdowns Mardi Gras Parade, and Tyler Hicks spoke about riding with his child in the Capitol Heights Avenue bike lanes.

In the Introduction, I wrote about my position as an outsider to cycling culture. This outside-ness provided the unique perspective from which I have written this dissertation. I realize that this research has provided ample opportunity for me to get back on a bicycle and challenge myself to experience the act of riding as an adult. I decided not to get back on the bicycle because I was worried about my motivations. Just as I was worried about riding distracting me from the research, I have been equally concerned about the research affecting my ride. I am not afraid to ride. I have chosen to wait for a time when my sole focus is not placed on how the ride would fit into my writing. However, I do believe it is important to re-embody the act of cycling. During our conversation, Ejai Jimenez recounted one of his favorite riding experiences—riding down the Westside Highway bike path:

> It's beautiful, really is just beautiful. You've got the river next to you. You've got a bunch of other riders. You've got the riders who are just commuters, you've got the riders who are there to work out, you've got your people who are just riding to enjoy it like me and you get to see a bunch of different neighborhoods… When I ride the West Side, I ride the entire West Side of the city like from 152nd Street all the way down to Pier 8, or even to Wall Street. So, you get to see all those different neighborhoods. And it's one big park, that's the Hudson River Park itself. You know, you get to pass the piers in Chelsea, you get to go by…Midtown, and then as you get further down, you get the entire downtown. You get Stuyvesant High School. You get the whole Wall Street area.. the towers [the Twin Towers], or where the tower [The Freedom Tower] is now, and I like that you get to see so many different things on one bike path. And you get a bunch of different people as well. You've got your runners, your fit people, your people who just wanna hang out on the sides of the park, on the piers. And you get your people who want to do a little bit of racing, so I jump in there and do a little cat 5 racing. (Jimenez)

His story focuses on how riding his bike connects him with others, and serves as a reminder that while many are affected by the dark side of cycling, there are people who continue to ride because it brings them joy, meets their transportation needs, or because their presence helps to make the road safer for other riders.

There were two scenes of *The White Bicycle* that were left open ended. "The Crash" drew from my own personal experiences by recounting my memories of the day my younger brother was hit by a car while riding his bike. It ended with a line about how even though he recovered from his injuries, we both stopped riding our bikes. The second scene, titled "The Tell-Tale Bike," was adapted from a television news report about a mother installing a ghost bike for her child 20 years after his death. We projected part of the newscast onto a large screen, combining our staged interpretation with reality. The scene ended with the stage in a black out except for a spotlight that alternated between a ghost bike made from a children's bicycle and two white umbrellas that moved in succession to imitate the rotating tires of a bicycle. As the spotlight alternated its location, audio clips of a child's laughter and the revving engine of a motorcycle played through the speakers and cast members repeated the phrase "Do you know what happened?" The scene ended when the audio clips and spotlight faded. I chose these endings because both of the stories remain unresolved. Though my brother and I quit riding our bikes as teenagers, there are still possibilities for change and growth, and the cold case remains open. As I strive to conclude this research project, I realize that it too is open-ended. It is possible that as the streets continue to evolve that the ghost bikes will evolve with them, and while I have analyzed how ghost bikes are made and how they viewed by some of the communities interacting with them, there is no recognizable end for cycling issues. As drivers and bicyclists continue to collide, physically and metaphorically, the need for ghost bikes remains.

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