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Harriet Tubman, Women on 20s, and Intersectionality: Public memory and the redesign
of US currency

In March of 2015, the website womenon20s.org launched an online poll featuring over one hundred historical women to pressure the Obama Administration to replace the likeness of Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill with a woman (Stone, 2016). The movement's founder, Barbara Ortiz Howard, suggested the lack of women on currency was a "glaring omission" worthy of public attention (Cafarello, 2015, para. 3). Women On 20's actions proved successful, with the Treasury department announcing in June of 2015 that they would place a woman who "represented the spirit of America" on the \$10 bill, the note next scheduled for redesign (Holland, 2015). Though Women On 20s heralded the change as a victory, a vigorous public debate began on the replacement of Alexander Hamilton, the nation's first Treasury Secretary, on the \$10 bill (Stone, 2016). Harriet Tubman, the winner of Women On 20's online poll, was the presumptive favorite to replace Hamilton. Following a robust public debate, however, featuring what U.S. Treasurer Rosie Rios characterized as "Hamilton-vs-Jackson rhetoric" (Korte, 2015), a redesign of the \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills was announced, with Tubman selected to feature prominently on the front of the \$20 bill.

Women On 20s lauded Tubman's ascension as a victory for the American people (Stone, 2016). Advocates claimed "putting Tubman's face on the \$20 bill would be a fitting tribute to her achievements" (Wickham, 2015), and the placement was "recognition of the central place of slavery in American history and the role that former slaves, like Tubman, played in undermining and ultimately ending that institution" (Sullivan, 2016, para. 22). The change, however, was not universally praised. Then presidential candidate Donald Trump called the process "pure political correctness" (Frizel, 2016), and Fox News' Greta Van Susteren suggested the administration was

“gratuitously stirring up the nation” (Bacon Jr., 2016). Changing the portraits on bills was interpreted as a disruptive political action.

As the preceding comments illustrate, changing American currency is not simply cosmetic. The Treasury Department suggests money “is a statement about who we are as a nation” that “honors our history and celebrates our values” (Holland, 2015). Money is equated with political power, and its ubiquity can signal what a society deems important (De Goede, 2005). The debate surrounding Tubman’s placement on the \$20 bill reveals the intense and competitive process by which public memories are negotiated through media, politics, and visible social discourses and to what end particular memories are foregrounded or deemphasized. This understanding of the public sphere, building from Habermas’s (1989) conception of the term, looks to the arguments circulated in media and political spaces concerning the social articulation of a public memory.

Blair, Dickinson, and Ott (2010) suggest memorialization is a political process to shift remembrances of the past, solidify group identity, or justify actions in the present. Tubman’s public memory is subject to this process following attention paid to the Women On 20s movement. Women On 20s’ focus on gender disparity suggests Tubman’s status as a notable historical woman contributed to her selection for the \$20 bill. An intersectional reading (Crenshaw, 1991) of Tubman, however, complicates the former abolitionist as an ideal candidate for memorialization on currency by emphasizing the importance of Tubman’s race and material legacy alongside her gender. Tubman, a black female who suffered under and fought against slavery in the United States, offers a case where memorialization is nominally desirable to rectify the gender disparity on currency, but that memorialization is troubled by dissent which privileges a complex understanding of historical figures and their relationship to the technology of

memorialization. Though Tubman is slated to grace the \$20 bill, arguments were circulated which suggest memorializing her through currency is an affront to her legacy.

This essay will develop two interrelated claims. First, Tubman's memorialization demands intersectional critique, as the voices supporting and opposing Tubman were based, in part, in the importance of Tubman's social identities and her relationship to structures of oppression. Second, the public debate on the desirability of memorializing Tubman *on money* reveals the inherent tensions in using printed bills to signify and remember history. As a technology of memorialization, the materiality of currency is implicated through an intersectional understanding of those remembered. In the context of Tubman, using money as a means of memorialization is further troubled by her treatment as literal property while enslaved.

The essay develops in three parts. I begin by detailing scholarship on intersectionality and public memory with attention paid to the way currency functions as a technology of memory. Next, I use the vocabulary of intersectionality to analyze various articulations of Tubman's memory, explaining how her gender and her time enslaved are both highlighted in the process of memorialization. Finally, the broader implications of the analysis concerning intersectionality and understanding currency as memorial are discussed.

Intersectionality and Technologies of Memory

Collective memory refers to the social construction of historical events, people, or places through "discourses, events, objects, or practices" of memory (Blair et al. 2010, p. 1). Collective memory, as described by Halbwachs and Coser (1992), is a mechanism of social sense making to position individuals in relation to a historical event through the assemblage of symbols and practices. Sernett (2007) suggests Harriet Tubman is articulated in national memory through mythopoeic discourses of her "larger than life" qualities, leading to a partial and incomplete

account of her history (p. 9). Oertel (2015) corroborates this reading, suggesting Tubman's public history often erases nuance in favor of embellished accounts of her accomplishments, with commemorative symbols of Tubman emphasizing the outstanding aspects of her life while neglecting others. Tubman exists in the public's memory as a mythic crystallization of anti-racist, anti-patriarchal ideals, subject to a positive telling of her life that elevates some accomplishments while demoting others. This dynamic demands an intersectional critique (e. g. Collins, 2002; Crenshaw, 1991) of Tubman's identity as a black woman abolitionist, as the focus on Tubman's race, gender, or vocation is rarely articulated without the promotion of one salient attribute over others.

Intersectionality, as developed in Crenshaw's (1991) germinal piece on the subject, invites an understanding of a subject that accounts for the distinct but interrelated influences different identity categories such as gender, race, and class have on individuals. By foregrounding a particular social identity in a given context, other social identities are deemphasized and their influence ignored. Crenshaw concludes effective scholarship and public policy would include an understanding of the way that different social identities buffer, or compound, marginalization when taken together. The circulations of Tubman's histories is subject to contemporary political climates that (de)emphasized particular social identities or forces. Tubman was not elevated to mythic status outside of marginalized black communities in part due to the pervasive tendency to downplay slavery in education, culture, and Southern politics (Senett, 2007). Despite this downplaying, Tubman is subject to an articulation of history that validates anti-racism and anti-misogyny. Tubman's intersectional history is a break from notable public memorials of black figures, wherein race and gender fail to intersect meaningfully (e. g. Gallagher & LaWare, 2010; Poirot, 2015). As such, Tubman is best understood not by

isolating a single accomplishment or social category, but by creating the most complete possible picture of her history.

By focusing on Tubman as a black woman, however, tensions become apparent between groups who emphasize different aspects of her past for their own political goals. This is not to say that a group *intentionally* downplays Tubman's blackness, femininity, or occupation. Rather, Crenshaw (1991) suggests the stakes for intersectional activism are quite high, as the alternative is a competition between different counter-hegemonic forces:

The failure of feminism to interrogate race means that the resistance strategies of feminism will often replicate and reinforce the subordination of people of color, and the failure of antiracism to interrogate patriarchy means that antiracism will frequently reproduce the subordination of women (1252).

In memorializing Tubman on currency, conflict occurs between those individuals who prioritize Tubman's status as a woman (positioned contra historical men), and those who emphasize her status as a black abolitionist (positioned contra exploitative capitalism). The corresponding debate demonstrates the complexities of understanding a historical figure's gender, race, and significant achievements when taken together.

An intersectional reading of Tubman is further troubled by the relationship between the discursive and material elements of public memory. The material technology supplementing public articulations of a memory can compound discursive erasure of an identity category such as race or gender. A number of scholars (e. g. Blair, 1999; Dickinson, Ott, & Aoki, 2006; Zagacki & Gallagher, 2009) argue that material conventions of memory, such as the layout of a museum or the nature of the memorial object, can influence the way memories are experienced and understood. Materiality is informed by technologies of memorialization, the mechanisms of

presenting a version of history within a physical space. Sturken (2008) defines technologies of memorialization in physical terms, arguing “while they might include memorials, souvenirs, bodies and other objects, [they] are increasingly visual technologies of mass and mediated forms – photographs, films, television shows and digital images” (p. 75). Technologies of memory function as a form of mediation in which the item “remembers” and conveys meaning to a person or group, and as such are subject to the same contestations of meaning over a given subject. Investigating the combined discursive and material elements reveals interplay between the differing social identities of subjects of memorialization, the discourses surrounding those subjects and the memorialization process, and the physical technology of memorialization.

The present study joins this conversation on the relationship between discourse and material objects by proposing memorialization on currency treats money as a technology of memory, and creates subsequent contestation in the public sphere. This contestation is clear in the negotiation of Tubman’s collective memory relative to other individuals memorialized on currency. By printing names, faces, and tableaux of events on money, a treasury shapes and concretizes collective memories. Money, as a ubiquitous technology, speaks significantly to two aspects of memorialization. First, memorialization on money emphasizes particular figures in American history, with individuals such as George Washington and Alexander Hamilton paid significant attention in both primary education textbooks and pop culture retellings of the nation’s founding (De Goede, 2005). Second, placing money at the locus of memory speaks to the nature of power in a given society. Bodnar (1993) argues that, in public memory, “power is always in question [...] because cultural understanding is always grounded in the material structure of society itself” (p. 10). Memorial practices can be informed by institutional decisions made in the service of an articulation of a particular memory. Similarly, popular references to

“Dead Presidents,” and specific names, such as Grant and Benjamin, acting as synecdoche for capital acquisition suggests a discernible cultural link between money and the portraits placed on it. The linkage between capitalism and prestige ensures physical currency is a representation of legitimacy in market-based societies (Carruthers & Babb, 1996). To have one’s name or likeness placed on money is a crowning achievement, as money is central to the everyday practices in capitalist societies.

In the context of redesigning US currency, the public debate over Tubman entails statements from advocacy groups and community leaders, press releases from government organizations, and arguments forwarded through both traditional and social media, ranging from April of 2015 to August of 2016, and spanning a number of major news outlets including *Time*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*.¹ Articles ranged from editorials to journalist’s reports on the currency redesign. The proceeding analysis of representative texts will detail that debate by speaking to different emergent historical visions of Tubman.

The Tension between Gender and Race

Through activism and public interest in their cause, Women On 20s instigated a number of political conversations on the role of women in politics and history, specifically situating their campaign against the backdrop of the centennial celebration of the passage of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote (Flores, 2015). Paul Thornton, writing for the *Los Angeles Times*, lauded memorialization, suggesting after Tubman was announced:

having a women's face, and a black woman's face no less, on the \$20 bill will lift the status of women everywhere. It's impossible to imagine how this will affect some cultures in Africa, Asia and elsewhere, especially those in places where a woman's face must be covered (2016, para. 2).

Thornton's argument is representative of Women On 20s and other advocates, as it echoes the notion that placing women on currency would assist in gender disparity in light of poor historical representation. Mihm (2016) suggests that women were gradually removed from currency in the twentieth century, citing a lack of popularity for currency featuring women that exacerbated representational disparity. Indeed, "it was the absence of women that animated grassroots efforts to change the Treasury's long-standing designs" (Lauer, 2016, para. 2). This cultural environment signifies gender representation as a meaningful struggle in the context of memorialization and currency. The solution, then, becomes increased memorialization of women to reject the almost exclusively male representation on currency. Barbara Ortiz Howard, the founder of Women On 20s, suggested the lack of women on money was a "glaring omission," which spoke to the widespread devaluing of women in politics and American society (Cafarello, 2015, para. 3). Money, then, could act as a tool of memorialization to rectify the representation of women in other spheres.

Though this approach to memorializing the unrecognized has obvious merit, the public debate became complex and, at times, problematic. Placing women at the forefront of public memory is desirable, as it rectifies the conspicuous underrepresentation of women. That rectification, however, can create new problems with representation understood through intersectionality. Tubman's placement in the national conversation through Women On 20s creates a terministic screen through which the public could view Tubman: as a woman, first and foremost (Burke, 1966). By envisioning Tubman as a woman of note, placed in the context memorializing women on money, one risks viewing Tubman as a simplistic representation of women rather than a complex, intersectional historical figure. Tubman's ascension to American money would be a symbolic victory for women everywhere, despite the material problems facing

women in the United States in terms of pay, a problem further exacerbated for women of color (Marlowe, 2015). Emphasizing Tubman's status as notable historical woman erases the nuance of her identity and accomplishments to emphasize her representativeness. In this context, Tubman's experience as an abolitionist is relegated merely to historical significance, with a movement suggesting she is notable not for her resistance to a dominant structures, but because she was a woman doing so in a patriarchal society. Rather than allow Tubman's memory to focus on the intersection of race and gender in the battle against slavery, focusing primarily on gender emphasizes the symbolic victory for women. Initial framing suggests Tubman could be understood *simply* as a representation of American women, a move which would foreground her gender at the expense of her other identity as black abolitionist.

This understanding of memorialization being primarily about gender is supported by advocates' reaction to the Treasury's initial decision to place a woman on the \$10 bill, rather than the \$20. Such a decision is notable, if only because of circulation; Beth Marlowe (2015) in *The Washington Post* points out \$10 bills constitute less than five percent of paper money in circulation, where \$20s represent four times that amount. Marlowe (2015) concludes, cynically, "women make 78 percent of the money men do, and now they'll be on 5 percent of the bills men are on" (para. 2). Other advocates, however, were more supportive because the decision meant women would be included in the national conversation. Congresswoman Joyce Beatty (D-OH) suggested memorialization was desirable simply because it was occurring, mentioning in a press release "whether it is a twenty dollar bill or a ten dollar bill, I am glad that the Administration and Congress are working to bring gender equality to all areas of American life," (2015, para. 5). Howard acknowledged the \$10 "is the next denomination that is going to be redesigned, and if they are willing to dedicate it to a woman, we are very happy" (Shropshire, 2015). Indeed, Susan

Ades Stone, the executive director of Women On 20s, suggested in an interview with PBS “the name of the winner is not what this is about. What it’s about is showing that there’s wide support for a woman on our paper currency” (Ramer, 2015, para. 8). The process becomes more meaningful than the person memorialized; a woman, any woman, is preferable to the status quo.

This is not to suggest that there was an intentional erasure of Tubman’s legacy. Rather, her roll combatting slavery was often footnoted in service to positioning Tubman as a champion for all women, especially following the Treasury’s decision to include a tableau of suffragettes. Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) released a public statement on April 21st, 2016 arguing “for too long, women have been absent from our paper currency, in spite of incalculable contributions by women to our country.” Hoyer went on to note “What all the women whose portraits will be displayed on our bills held in common was the belief that all people - regardless of gender, race, or creed - ought to have an equal opportunity to get ahead and secure the blessings our country offers.” (Hoyer, 2016, para. 1-2). Ultimately, the abstract conversation on memorialization erases differences between women in favor of symbolic change and highlights notable disconnects between memorializing and the material condition of women in the United States. Andre Gillispie, a political scientist at Emory University, argued "putting women on currency is not going to change the gender pay gap and not going to change the fact that the pay gap is worse for black women and women of color" (Bacon Jr., 2016, para. 5). Similarly, CNN contributor S.E. Cupp (2015) suggests “the idea that putting a historically important woman [...] on the \$10 bill is a gift of some sort is setting the bar pretty low” (para. 4). Memorializing women for the sake of representation as “symbolic politics” is conveyed to problematize national priorities (Bacon Jr. , 2016, para. 5). Amy Dru Stanley, a University of Chicago professor quoted in the *Chicago Tribune*, concludes, "if women's equality is reduced to what currency she's on, it

should be the \$1 bill, to highlight that we lack pay equity” (Bacon Jr., 2016, para. 8).

Paradoxically, however, by acknowledging the failure of the symbolic to solve the material, opponents concede the central conceit of memorialization. The creation of public memory is meaningful in spite of, perhaps even because of, the disconnect between that remembered and that which is.

Complicating Tubman

Despite initial framing, Tubman’s collective memory is not entirely dominated by her gender. Though gender was the most salient lens through which many advocates understood Tubman, that frame quickly shifted to a deeper, more nuanced understanding of her contributions to history. Indeed, following Tubman’s ascension in the poll conducted by Women On 20s, the public conversation pivoted to the nature of memorialization on currency and the contestation that would entail. A minority of voices suggested memorializing Tubman *on currency* was a unique problem as a consequence of her identity as a black woman who suffered under slavery. Taken together, these voices emphasize Tubman’s intersectional status as an enslaved female exploited through extreme, unregulated capitalist, to critique the memorial process. Tubman is articulated not as *primarily* a woman but as a complicated historical figure that suffered under, and worked tirelessly against, the system of labor exploitation at the foundation of the US economy. Her role in combating slavery, they argue, ensures that memorializing her through currency serves as an affront to her legacy (Richardson, 2016). Two major themes surface across this dissent: the dramatic failure of the symbolic act to rectify institutional racism, and the irony of placing a former victim of the chattel slave trade on money.

As discussed above, placing historic women on currency can be read as “symbolic politics,” to articulate cultural changes without rectifying material inequity (Bacon Jr., 2016).

Sierra Mannie suggests in *Time* magazine the change is too little, too late, as “black women need representation, but Harriet Tubman on a twenty feels like commiseration, a pat-on-the-back apology for being black” (2015, para. 5). Ineffectiveness is echoed in discussions of the material difference between black and white women. Though voices mentioned above spoke to pay inequity, often those discussions were absent a consideration of race. If one assumes that representation on currency is meaningful, Tubman’s ascension to the \$20 bill is a victory for all women, but black women in particular. An intersectional approach, however, invites comparisons often neglected in the broader conversation on gender equality. Speaking to the difference in earning potential for black women, Mannie (2015) argues “there is a bitter irony to putting a black woman on a \$20 bill when America makes it nearly impossible for black women to see Andrew Jackson’s face there in the first place” (para. 3). The pay gap is markedly more severe for black women, who make roughly 64 percent of what non-Hispanic white males make annually, compared to white women, who make 78% (Patten, 2016). Kirstin Savali, in an article for *The Root*, draws a sharp contrast between white and black women, arguing “when nearly half of all single African-American women have zero or negative wealth, and their median wealth is \$100—compared with just over \$41,000 for single white American women—it is an insult” to commemorate Tubman in this way (2015, para. 7). In light of the economic situation faced by black women, memorializing Tubman on currency is not simply insufficient. Rather, the very act may serve to entrench systems of power that disenfranchise black women. Feminista Jones argues in an article for *The Washington Post* the memorialization will “distort Tubman’s legacy and distract from the economic issues that American women continue to face. While adding representation of women to an area historically dominated by men can be encouraging and boost women’s morale, the symbolism risks masking inequalities” (2015, para. 6). With the challenges

facing women, but specifically women of color, some view Tubman's placement on the \$20 bill as an empty gesture.

Second, Tubman's time as a slave, and by extension her blackness, is elevated to salience to demonstrate the irony of commemorating a woman who was literally traded as property by placing her likeness on currency. In response to the Treasury's decision to place Tubman's likeness on the \$20 bill, William Richardson cautions in *The Interecept* "although African-Americans are celebrating this new recognition of our 500-year long struggle against white settler colonial violence, the nature of that violence should give us some pause" (2016, para. 3). The violence against enslaved populations in the United States is, according to Eichstadt and Small (2002), often neglected in public memorials and historical sites in the South, and in history texts in American schools. By failing to interrogate the relationship between economic logics and the propagation of slavery, some technologies of commemoration risk the erasure of unsavory memories. Baptist (2014) suggests the groundwork of American capitalism is inextricably tied to slavery, with forced labor representing a form of radical capitalism that shaped both the economic institutions and ideologies of the United States. Indeed, the modern capitalist system is built on the foundation of unpaid labor and exploitation of non-white, non-male individuals (Zinn, 2014). In light of this historical evidence, Zoe Samudzi, a feminist writer, is quoted in an interview with *The Washington Post* arguing, "I'd imagine the Treasury aren't masters of irony (...) but I'm mulling over the irony of a black woman who was bought and sold being 'commemorated' on the \$20 bill" (Marlowe, 2015). There is, undoubtedly, a symbolic dissonance that occurs when placing a former slave on currency.

Though money is used as technology of memorialization, that technology is primarily a means to facilitate commerce in a capitalist system. There is a desirability of the publicity and

conversation on Tubman, but placing her on currency invites a material reminder of her historical status as property. Practices such as using enslaved individuals as a means to resolve debt and thinking of enslaved women as investments because of their capacity to birth more slaves all speak literally to the notion that enslaved individuals were commodities with discrete values in a capitalist system (Zinn, 2014). Tubman was previously treated as collateral, traded to resolve debts and viewed as property; her likeness will now receive a similar treatment. Savali (2015) even inverts the desirability of the \$20 bill, indicating “there is something both distasteful and ironic about putting a black woman’s face on the most frequently counterfeited and most commonly traded dollar bill in this country. Haven’t we been commodified and trafficked enough?” (para. 6). Symbolic politics, in this context, have the capacity to both mask and signal the historical abuses of a population. Ultimately, Richardson (2016) concludes, “if people want to truly honor Tubman and her legacy they should consider how our society can combat the current manifestation of that same slave-as-capital logic” (para. 11). Memorialization of Tubman is insufficient in the face of exploitation, “as putting her face on the currency of the nation that considered her equal to that piece of paper is more of an affront than an honor” (para. 12). The relationship of both women, and black individuals, to capitalist structures of domination is foregrounded in the discussion of Tubman’s public memory.

Conclusions

Public memories of Harriet Tubman are complicated, intersecting articulations of different components of her historical identity to achieve different political and social means. This mobilization of memory is consistent with past scholarship on public memory’s relationship to institutions and power structures (Blair et al, 2010), and reveals a number of intersectional dynamics that complicate the way Tubman is envisioned in the public sphere. The present

analysis highlights specifically two implications of intersectional viewings of Tubman: the relationship between memorialization and social justice, and how money functions as a unique technology of memory.

Though memorialization of women and people of color in the political sphere is desirable, the present analysis demonstrates the complex relationship marginalized populations have to technologies of memorialization, especially currency. To memorialize a victim of the chattel slave trade by placing their likeness on literal currency smacks of irony. Though representing Tubman on currency may serve to instigate a concerted conversation about slavery that is sorely lacking in contemporary memorial sites (e. g. Eichstadt & Small, 2002), those representations entail new and complicated questions about the way we memorialize, and in turn remember, the slave trade. Where Veil et al (2011) indicate consultation with victims of a tragedy is desirable because it facilitates a reflexive memory process, that consultation is impossible in the context of slavery. As such, careful consideration of an individual's representativeness of a system of exploitation, and their capacity to resist from within that system, is significant for the present study.

Memorialization on money demands an intersectional reading that accounts for both race, and gender, in capitalist systems. Ghosh (2009) argues that the figurative commodification of diversity in United Kingdom, combined with the creation of physical trinkets that situated diversity within and alongside systems of capitalist and colonialist exploitation, ought to give activists and scholars pause. The process of memorialization, according to Ghosh, rearticulated the political meaning of the memorial to promote, rather than subvert, systems of oppression. To that end, memorializing a woman on currency could be read not as sign of progress, but as placation, a mechanism to signal symbolic progress in lieu of resolving the material concerns

facing women writ large. The materiality of the technology has a constitutive component that sanitizes the project of capitalist exploitation and erases the economic foundations of slavery and misogyny in America. Fraser (2012) suggests feminism has become a complacent in capitalism by adopting the same neoliberal principals that justify the globalized expansion of unregulated, radical acquisition of wealth. Memorializing a woman on currency is not, then, a signal of progress; rather, symbolic action can be read as placation, a mechanism to signify progress in lieu of resolving the material concerns facing women writ large. Indeed, women have a complicated history with their representation on currency, being featured for much of the 19th century on U.S money in idealized, sometimes sexualized, forms (Mihm, 2016). Women have rarely been honored on American money, with former figures like Susan B. Anthony and Sacagawea featured for comparatively brief stints of time before their removal from circulation. An intersectional understanding of historical figures suggests to use money as a form of memorialization invites criticism based on the relationship of those memorialized to structures of exploitation and domination. Absent an understanding of how economic and social systems of oppression intersect, memorialization risks tarnishing or significantly altering the public memory of a figure by erasing aspects of their identity.

Second, the present analysis expands the study of currency as a technology of memory. Money, as mentioned by the Treasury department, “honors our history and celebrates our values,” the same functions Blair et al (2010) indicate signal moves to concretize and redefine a public memory. Paper money has unique limitations, however. Specific technologies of memory have explicit material considerations that both constrain, and enhance, the possible meanings assigned to those memories. For example, currency offers little physical space for memorialization, and includes an additional requirement of functionality as commerce. This

space limitation forces displacement once a portrait needs to be changed, thus inviting controversy over the worthiness of the present portrait and its possible replacement. To be sure, however, currency has unique advantages, as a technology of memory. Money's ubiquity, the societal importance of capital, and the use of portraits as synecdoche in popular culture, all imply that using memorializing through portraits on bills is a worthwhile strategy. Furthermore, Senie and Webster argue that public symbols outside of traditional spaces, such as museums, create "segments of the public who now had to contend with [representation] in the spaces they used daily. In a museum it could be ignored; in a public space it clearly could not" (p. iv). Notably, however, currency's ubiquity is complicated by the gradual transition away from paper money in the United States. Tiffany Hsu, writing for the *Los Angeles Times*, suggests "changing U.S. currency is an increasingly meaningless endeavor, especially given Americans' dependence on payment cards and the shift to digital monetary transactions" (2015, para. 14). Indeed, as the United States moves towards a (physically) cashless society, using currency as a tool of memorialization may have the end result of dating, and eventual making obsolete, public memories of some historical figures. [1]

Though bills featuring Tubman's likeness will not be in circulation in time for the centennial celebration of the 19th amendment, she will be commemorated alongside civil rights leaders and feminist icons through her placement on the \$20 bill. This placement created an exigency, an opportunity for the public to (re)negotiate Tubman's standing in the public memory. As is so often case, however, the technique of memorialization invited controversy and competing interpretations of history. Tubman's public memory was articulated alongside other historical figures to serve the ends of different political and social groups. These articulations

demonstrate the complex relationship between history, memory, and memorialization, a relationship ripe for further study.

¹ Texts were compiled from library databases of news articles. Texts were located through search terms including *women on 20s*, *Harriet Tubman*, and *currency*. The theoretical grounding for the compilation of rhetorical fragments for analysis is in line with McGee's (1990) work on text, context, and fragmentation. McGee suggests that rhetoricians ought to remember "our first job as professional consumers of discourse is *inventing a text suitable for criticism*" (p. 288). Following their compilation, a textual analysis was conducted to locate themes of arguments and argument interactions (see Foss, 2009 for more detail).

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