I, Jacqueline C Hull, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication.

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Manifestations of Emotion: Discourse & Material Rhetoric in Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine

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Manifestations of Emotion:
Discourse & Material Rhetoric in Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine

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Abstract
In recent years, Cincinnati, Ohio’s downtown neighborhood Over-the-Rhine (OTR) has received national spotlight with feature stories in publications such as National Geographic and The Huffington Post, praising the neighborhood for its progress. What many of them tend to leave out is the immense gentrification that has taken place over the last decade. Many people who were once fearful of spending time in OTR are now flooding the streets. Something had to happen rhetorically in order for people, who once viewed OTR as fearsome, to now consider the neighborhood safe and secure. This essay explores how the media’s discourse rhetorically removes the emotion of fear from OTR and instead, attaches security. Secondly, this project attempts to uncover whether or not the material rhetoric of OTR mirrors the discourse (of security). After attempting to identify what language is used to portray OTR as no longer fearsome and then highlighting that the material rhetoric echoes the same sentiments of security, this essay suggests that there is an overarching privileging of some people and not of others. The material qualities of OTR become symbols of the amount of care extended to the people living there; in turn, the implications of this reflect the ongoing issues of racism and classism in the United States. This paper argues that by acknowledging the power in the material, perhaps we can create communities that serve all residents equally.
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This work is dedicated to the changing neighborhood that inspired all that follows. Over-the-Rhine, you are complex, emotional and full of so many people that care deeply about building a community. I can only hope that this thesis will contribute to bettering the lives of all people who walk your streets.
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**Introduction**

Urban development is a part of every city and the ways developers, private and public, go about it are cause for much debate. For years, cities have (re)developed their downtown areas through the use of gentrification – the upper-middle, and historically white, people buy up all of the buildings, kick out the residents, and build new stores, apartments, parks, restaurants, bars, etc. Cincinnati, Ohio’s neighborhood, Over-the-Rhine (OTR) is no different. Particularly in the last five years, the area, which sits just north of downtown Cincinnati, has gone from a place where some people had never considered visiting, to a place where these same people are eager to buy property and spend time with friends and family. With massive change comes an emergence of varying attitudes, thoughts and opinions that people are more than willing to share, and do so through a variety of outlets personally and publicly.

Based on the number of people who walk the streets, a person driving by may think OTR must be a popular area. However, as “popular” as the neighborhood has become, the response to the development of OTR has not been unified. Some people describe the neighborhood today using words like “revitalized” and “progress,” while others use “gentrified” and “inequality.” Examples of these varying opinions will appear in my upcoming chapters. Emotions range from one end of the spectrum to the other. There is one thing that we know for certain: OTR is dripping with emotion, regardless of where on the spectrum it falls.

Furthermore, urban development and gentrification are not issues solely relevant to Cincinnati. This topic pertains to all cities that are attempting to, have attempted to, or may eventually attempt to revitalize or gentrify their downtown area. All cities want to prosper, grow and succeed, and the city’s people should want the same. However, what “success” looks like
varies from person to person, which is why the line is not so cut-and-dry. This makes the process of change in a city messy, challenging and controversial.

Transformation of urban spaces requires meddling with peoples’ homes, lives and emotions. Examining urban development and gentrification through an emotional lens provides a window that is commonly not looked through, which is why I believe in the value and importance of my project. In addition to the contribution this research will make to the study of communication and material rhetoric, I have to also admit up front my love and adoration of this neighborhood, and my sincere and yearning hope to contribute to making it a better place for those who walk its streets.

A Brief History of Over-the-Rhine

The history of OTR, a neighborhood listed on the National Register of Historic places, is full of ups and downs (Dutton, 2014). Though every city’s history has countless details, all of which could be pertinent at one time or another, I seek to briefly highlight the larger shifts in OTR’s history. This brief overview will provide a basic understanding of the changes OTR has seen and how some of them relate to the changes we are seeing today.

Originally a German settlement, at its peak from 1860-1900, the area was home to “18 breweries that employed about 5,000 people” (Alter, 2015, p. 1). This was the district’s first notable time period. However, with the growing popularity of the suburbs, people started to move out, taking businesses, restaurants and the whole package right along with them. In 1920, there were even plans to build a subway system, but after the city dug up some of the tunnels, they cancelled the project (Alter, 2015). By the late 1990s, OTR’s population was down to 6,000
(Alter, 2015). Still home to many people, OTR was no longer the “booming” business district that it was in the 1800s.

In 2001, a Cincinnati cop shot and killed an unarmed man, Timothy Thomas, “who was the 15th black man to die at the hands of police in five years” at the time (Fisher, 2014, p. 1). The days following this shooting of Thomas consisted of burning, looting and rioting. The rioting caught the attention of the entire city and put OTR in national spotlight for issues of race and police brutality. This event magnified the tension between African-Americans, the neighborhood and the police force, a tension that lives on far past those nights in 2001. We can look to recent shootings, such as the one in Ferguson, Missouri, as examples of this. At the time, the 2001 riots “were as powerful a wake-up call on race relations as Ferguson has been in recent weeks” (Fisher, 2014, p. 5). They were also times that called for reform of the community’s policing. Not only was the neighborhood known for its poverty, it became known for its racial inequality, a reputation that would persist for years to come (Fisher, 2014).

OTR, the same “neighborhood that exploded in violence that night in 2001, has undergone gentrification on hyper-drive, with $400,000 condos and rows of trendy eateries popping up where boarded-up buildings, addicts and prostitutes dominated just five years ago” (Alter, 2015, p. 3). Just five to ten years ago, most of the buildings on Vine Street in OTR were abandoned or run down and there were not any commercial businesses. Now, though not everyone agrees with the change, the area has experienced mass gentrification and is now “marked by extremes of wealth and poverty, with a burgeoning whiter middle class and a community mostly of color fighting for visibility and their rights, but living day-to-day on the edge of displacement and homelessness” (Dutton, 2014, p. 11). The gentrification of OTR assumes that all people in the community want and can afford upscale living; however, as a
resident of OTR states, in a news story, “People like myself, I can’t afford to go in these restaurants” (Dutton, 2014; Nichols, 2015, p. 1).

Marc Fisher (2014), in his *Washington Post* article, describes the staggering differences on Vine Street in two sentences:

One end of this block of Vine Street faces bars offering $12 cocktails and rehabbed apartments selling for a quarter of a million dollars. At the other end of the block, signs plastered on vacant buildings in the weeks since the violence in Ferguson say ‘Stop Killing Us or Else’. (p. 8)

OTR a neighborhood with years and years of tension, and this tension lives on as the people who used to live in the southern parts of the area (now more gentrified) have been pushed north and elsewhere in the city. The differences that I will highlight (in upcoming chapters) between the north and south parts of Vine Street have not always been there. OTR is saturated with history, ebbs and flows, good times and bad times, challenges and changes.

**Gentrification & Over-the-Rhine**

My thesis specifically discusses gentrification of OTR. The neighborhood was originally known for its German heritage and massive brewery district. As aforementioned, with the combined effects of prohibition and the urban sprawl in the 1950s, the neighborhood was heavily vacated. Once home to 45,000 people at the turn of the 20th century, OTR’s population dropped to less than 7,000 by 1990 (Hughes, 2012; Wesseler, 2013). In 1990, 71% of neighborhood residents were African-American (Wesseler, 2013). For years, many people thought of the neighborhood as crime-ridden and unsafe, even the “idea of visiting Over-the-Rhine… was a scary proposition,” and was described using words such as “wasteland” and “war zone” (Glaser, 2012;
The 2001 race riots, as aforementioned, did not draw people to OTR. Driven by fear, the middle-class, mostly white, people left OTR, and though people were still calling the neighborhood “home,” many living outside did not view it as a place to visit. Restaurants and shops closed. Buildings were boarded up. For many, the neighborhood was one that was just passed through on the way to the downtown business district.

However, in the last ten years, there has been a return to this part of the city – some referring to the movement as intense gentrification and some as “urban renewal” or “urban renaissance” (Alter, 2014; Dutton, 2014; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014; Lopez, 2014; Rosen, 2015; Sievering, 2010; Slife & Dennis, 2014). Many people are praising Cincinnati for its progressive leaps and bounds toward an urban core. Even the popular media publication, National Geographic, gave the neighborhood a significant mention (Nelson, 2014). However, many people are referring to these same leaps and bounds as intense gentrification. Gentrification “signifies displacement of the poor, mostly people of color” (Ehrenhalt, 2015, p. 2). This is not a term that many politicians and public figures wish to use to discuss the happenings of an urban neighborhood because “gentrification” carries a significant negative connotation for some (Ehrenhalt, 2015). In fact, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines gentrification as “the transformation of neighborhoods from low value to high value” (Ehrenhalt, 2015, p. 3). This definition does not delve in to how these neighborhoods undergo this “transformation.” Gentrification notoriously privileges the upper-to-middle class, who are predominantly white, and the question becomes, what are the repercussions of this? Many of the repercussions can be emotional – for those directly affected by the changes in OTR, such as residents.
A Personal Anecdote

Any person living in or around Cincinnati (and perhaps, some people living outside of the area as well) has heard of the (re)developments, changes and/or gentrification occurring in OTR. This is because the neighborhood’s name has been plastered on news stations’ and newspapers’ front, back and inside pages for the last ten, and more significantly five, years. This is also because some people who used to avoid OTR are now making it a point to visit and even bring their friends. There have been significant changes in the neighborhood, and depending on with whom you speak, the changes may be considered good, bad or neutral. My exposure to the neighborhood has been a mix of all three.

My interest in the ever-changing neighborhood, OTR, developed quite naturally. I grew up in Liberty Township, Ohio, about 45 minutes north of Cincinnati, giving me some exposure to the downtown area. Not until college did I spend any significant time in OTR. I can remember five years ago when I was an undergraduate at the University of Cincinnati and I would pass boarded up windows in place of what is now an all-glass storefront filled with expensive designer clothing. I can remember my parents telling me to “be careful” when I first told them I was going to a restaurant on Vine Street in OTR. I can remember friends telling me that I “had to” see a new bar or restaurant, while still, other friends who said, “be careful if you go down there.” I can hear the ring of emotion in their voices even today – whether it was fear or excitement. Finally, I can vividly remember the varying opinions about the neighborhood’s “redevelopment” or “gentrification.” In fact, I myself had a difficult time pinpointing how I felt about the changes in general. All of the occurrences were (and are) very emotional. For some people, they felt developers were treating some people unfairly and taking away their homes. On the other hand, for some people, they felt developers were doing incredible things for the city
and creating more homes. Regardless of how a person felt about the changes, there was no doubt that they were responding to an emotional topic. I recall conversations with people who claimed: “It’s about time the city did something about OTR,” “It’s such a shame that people are losing their homes,” “I still won’t go down there,” or “Wow, I can’t believe how much the city is changing!” Again, these statements, though they did not echo the same feelings, were said from the heart and the gut. They were felt. As time went on, I continued to spend more and more time in the neighborhood – but never living in it, as I wanted to be close to the University. OTR was gritty, lively and loud. I began to fall in love with the neighborhood – though this was not the case for all.

However, as my own interest and love for OTR continued to grow, I could not help but notice the continued disparity within the neighborhood and within the reactions to the neighborhood. Some blocks were completely taken care of: buildings rehabbed, sidewalks new, paint fresh and landscaping maintained. Then, you would walk down other blocks and see something completely different: buildings boarded up, sidewalks littered, paint peeling and weeds spreading. I thought to myself, what is the media saying about all of this? Most of the news articles I had read were overwhelmingly positive… but what about all of this? There was something going on here. This was the first spark of my thesis.

For the next four years, OTR continued to pop up in the news and I followed the stories here and there. Though in most cases the changes were referred to as “rebirth” and “renaissance,” there were some others using words such as “gentrification” and “displacement.” By and large, the changes in the neighborhood were portrayed as positive and progressive in mainstream media. Though opinions of and emotions about the neighborhood’s changes were not homogeneous, there were a few things for certain: the neighborhood looked (visually) much
different than it had years prior, a commercial district continued to develop, and many people who had not lived in and/or visited OTR before were doing so. Things had changed, and it appeared that some people’s emotions were a part of that change. Based on my own conversations with friends, as well as strangers, I knew these positive responses were not echoed everywhere; regardless of whether the response was positive or negative, the topic in general stirred up emotions in the people of the city. In a way, the neighborhood was sticky with emotion.

By first examining the rhetoric about OTR and then observing the material rhetoric of OTR, we can begin to unpack the emotional nuances of what makes this neighborhood exciting for some and perhaps oppressing for others. As a person who does not live in the neighborhood, I feel that there can be some disconnect between my emotions and the neighborhood itself. Therefore, putting my own emotions aside – though my love for the neighborhood remains – I embarked on a journey to understand what it is that makes “gentrification” or “redevelopment” about more than flipping a neighborhood.

**Research Questions**

Due to the stickiness of emotion I felt in my own and in others’ responses to OTR, I found myself asking the questions outlined in this section. The research question with which I embarked on this project asks:

- *How can a place become stuck or unstuck with a certain emotion?*
I seek to answer this question in chapter two by analyzing the rhetoric of OTR. My specific research questions about the rhetoric are as follows:

- **What language is used to portray the place as no longer fearsome (and instead, as secure)?**
- **What material features are used to make the place feel secure?**

The final research question asks:

- **What are the implications of the discourse about OTR and the material qualities of OTR?**

After completing the analysis chapters, I came up with the following answers to my above questions. In chapter two, we see that popular media are using various metaphors to describe the gentrification in OTR. In an effort to cover up or mask the fear that some people once felt about the neighborhood, the discourse in chapter two ascribes a new emotion to OTR: security. Security is seen in metaphors of light, life and mobility in chapter two; these metaphors manifest themselves physically during the walk in chapter three. This is how the rhetoric circulates: when the discourse of “security” matches the material aspects of OTR, people may consider the place secure. As will be noted in the chapters to come, southern Vine Street (the more gentrified part of the street I walked in OTR) is characterized by newness, cleanliness and homey-ness; northern Vine Street (the less gentrified part of the street) is characterized by boarded up buildings and unkempt sidewalks. These material features that mirror the metaphors from chapter two reveal that gentrification is a material sign of which bodies are cared for and which are not. Ultimately, I argue that if OTR (and its various developers, private and public) is truly to “build a community” – and an inclusive community at that – then all residents should be of interest and priority. This means that all areas of the neighborhood would receive the
maintenance and care that the gentrified area(s) does. Up to this point, the neighborhood’s track record shows a clear privileging of some bodies over others. As my analysis of the material will reveal, the material qualities of OTR become symbols of the amount of care extended to the people living there.

**Preview of Upcoming Chapters**

The first chapter of my thesis is a literature review. This chapter will discuss emotion’s validity and involvement in our lives, as well as how it can shape a place by “sticking” to objects (Ahmed, 2004). Also within this first chapter, I will identify two rhetorical processes that work to make OTR a safe place: one is discursive; one is material. Finally, within the literature review, I will outline my methods and focus for analysis. My research intends to argue that emotion and material rhetoric can help to peel back the layers of nuance in regard to the changes occurring in OTR.

Next, my second chapter addresses the first rhetorical process: the discursive one. In this second chapter, I introduce mainstream media’s comments and show that, overwhelmingly, there is an echo of fear about OTR. Then, I discuss mainstream media’s efforts to unglue fear from OTR and portray the neighborhood as a safe place (to those who previously did not consider it to be so). As a result of a close textual analysis, three rhetorical devices (all three metaphors) emerged as the primary way to display the emotions of fear and security: dark/light, death/life and immobility/mobility. After going into detail for each of these metaphors, I argue that in order for these metaphors to work rhetorically (on those who read/come across them), the physical place must mirror the metaphorical description. Most of the articles that I discuss echo the same sentiments: OTR was once characterized by darkness, death and immobility, but is now
characterized by light, life and mobility. However, at the end of this chapter, I introduce a scholar, Thomas A. Dutton, who provides an alternative perspective to what is happening in OTR. I argue that his point of view sheds light on the potential implications of the neighborhood’s changes, which are also crucial to recognize and discuss.

Lastly, in my third chapter, I turn to OTR’s material qualities. At the end of my second chapter, I acknowledge that in order for the rhetoric about OTR to “stick,” or in order for people to believe the rhetoric, the material qualities of the neighborhood must mirror the descriptions. Therefore, this chapter will address the physical qualities through the conduction of a walk. On the walk, I will look for material aspects of the neighborhood that resemble the media’s metaphorical portrayals of OTR.
Chapter One:

Literature Review

Emotion in the Academic Sphere

Emotion is often something put on the back burner for academics, not taken so seriously, and has even taken a bit of a “backseat to reason” (Papacharisi, 2015, p. 9). Antonio Damasio (2003), a neuroscientist who admits his lack of attention to emotion in the past, states:

Feelings of pain or pleasure or some quality in between are the bedrock of our minds. We [as humans] often fail to notice this simple reality because the mental images of the objects and events that surround us, along with the images of the words and sentences that describe them use up so much of our overburdened attention. (p. 3)

This dismissal of emotion occurs in everyday life, too, as it “is common to think that emotions get in the way of rational decision-making and lead people to behave in ways they may regret later” (Papacharisi, 2015, p. 10). We have all heard statements such as, “Suzie is just being emotional. She doesn’t know what she’s doing,” or “Put your emotions aside,” or simply, “Stop being so emotional.” Emotions, as powerful and influential as they can be, can be seen as quite the opposite: as having little value or substantiability when it comes to judgment, analytics and decision-making.

However, things in the Communication academic sphere have been changing. Many theorists recognize emotion as a key factor in how we navigate and decipher the world around us, leading to what has been called an “affective turn” in the academy (Clough & Halley, 2007; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Jenkins, 2014). This turn is driven by the sense that when we consider the prevalence of emotion in our lives – which, as Gregory Seigworth (2012) states, fill each and every day – we receive a much richer interpretation of its events. Damasio’s (2003) neuroscience
research illustrates the true value in understanding emotion’s effect on our lives and on the way we live them. Indeed, neuroscience has demonstrated that damage to the emotional centers of the brain leave people unable to make rational calculations as well (Damasio, 2003). The affective turn is interested in how emotion underwrites logic, and hence enables certain discourses or ideologies to stick and circulate (Seigworth, 2010; Tomkins, 1962-92).

Though emotion is frequently downgraded, this is changing because emotion can be logical, as well as key to sociopolitical issues through affect (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). Affect, which is the varying amount of energy or intensity, is key to the (im)mobility of some bodies, the (lack of) rights of some bodies, as “[it] marks a body’s belonging to a world of encounters or; a world’s belonging to a body of encounters but also, in non-belonging…” (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p. 2). Through affect, then, is how we could decide who can and who cannot move freely in our world. It is also the means by which we are motivated to make decisions such as these.

Affect is the main human motivator (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Tomkins, 1962-92). To feel affected by something is the first step in motivating a person to act (Tomkins, 1962-92). This exemplifies affect’s ability to “act” and to be “more than discourse… to mobilize readers… [and shows] what affect can do” (Seigworth, 2003, p. 79; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p. 24). We often credit the drive system (as it is psychological and physiological) as the main motivator; however, “the drive system is… secondary to the affect system” (Tomkins, 1962). This is because, as Tomkins (1962) states

The affect system is… capable of masking or even inhibiting the drive signal and of being activated independently of the drive system by a broad spectrum of stimuli, learned and unlearned… [and] is the primary provider of blueprints for cognition, decision and action. The human being’s ability to duplicate and reproduce himself is guaranteed not
only by a responsiveness to drive signals but by a responsiveness to whatever circumstances activate positive and negative affect. (p. 22)

In short, without affect, there is no motivation; there is no social. Affect plays a key role in the constitution of the socio-political through its strong influence on our motivational system.

Damasio’s (2003) work shows that emotion and logic are tied; the affective turn has focused on how the social and ideological depend upon emotion as a way of navigating the world around us. As such, “an understanding of the neurobiology of emotion and feelings is key to the formulation of principles and policies capable of reducing human distress and enhancing human flourishing” (Damasio, 2003, p. 8).

Emotion is key to sociopolitical issues; this is especially true in relation to my thesis and the gentrification of Cincinnati’s neighborhood Over-the-Rhine (OTR). In the 1950s, large amounts of white people left the major inner cities all over the country and moved to the suburbs. This movement, coined “white flight,” was driven by fear (Frey, 1979). When white flight occurred, this suburbanization “left largely black minority populations stranded in many of the nation’s largest cities” (Frey, 2014, p. 1). Now, city living is on the rise, gaining popularity once again in Cincinnati and other cities in the U.S. (Green, 2014). If leaving the urban core was driven by fear in the 1950s (for some people), then the return must be driven by a different emotion. This thesis project seeks to understand the role of emotion in gentrification, “a development-driven demographic shift in cities marked by the rising predominance of wealthier residents and businesses” (Lopez, 2014, p. 1). This thesis asks what emotion(s) has replaced fear for these people who are returning to these downtown areas? And, furthermore, how has fear been replaced? Answering these questions requires a theoretical framework developed in this chapter.
First, I will discuss emotion and its importance, and how it, too, can shape a place by sticking to objects, an idea presented by theorist, Sara Ahmed (2004). I will then discuss two rhetorical processes that are working to make OTR a safe place: one is discursive; one is material. Finally, I will outline my methods and focus for analysis. For the purposes of my research, I argue that emotion and material rhetoric can shed significant light on the current gentrification in Cincinnati’s OTR.

**What are Emotions?**

Damasio (2003) defines emotions as “actions or movements, many of them public, visible to others as they occur in the face, in the voice, in specific behaviors” (p. 28). Such actions and movements are crucial ways of survival. In other words, Damasio claims that we often exhibit emotions in order to communicate to others and ourselves whether a stimulus is pleasant or unpleasant, positive or negative, or could pose any danger. We also use emotion as a way of categorizing experiences, a categorization process that is quite logical. Naturally, we want to avoid negative emotions and increase positive emotions (Damasio, 2003). When we categorize a place as fearsome, we act accordingly: we avoid it, our bodies shrink in and get smaller, and we walk faster to get through to the “other side,” whatever that may be (Damasio, 2003; Ahmed, 2004). In this way, emotion helps to guide our decisions and actions.

Serving as a kind of roadmap to decision-making, emotions can uncover details about human behavior, by providing “a natural means for the brain and mind to evaluate the environment within and around the organism, and respond accordingly and adaptively” (Damasio, 2003, p. 54). Our experiences with certain emotions can teach us lessons – we can learn from situations in which our emotions got us into trouble (Damasio, 2003). For instance, if
we have an inappropriate emotional reaction to something, we can learn to suppress those emotions and react differently in the future (Damasio, 2003). In order to do so, we must first understand that our brains have the ability to store a reaction and reproduce the reaction in a similar context later on; however, that reaction is not inevitable. When the reaction is not wanted (for example, anger in regard to a certain person), you are still able to train your brain to respond differently by learning to disregard the anger and overlay a stronger, positive emotion instead (Damasio, 2003). Emotions not only reveal depth about human behavior; they also seem to guide it, but this does not mean that emotions control us.

We are capable of controlling certain interactions with certain objects and people. As Damasio (2003) states:

We humans, conscious of the relation between certain objectives and certain emotions, can willfully strive to control our emotions, to some extent at least… By controlling our interaction with objects that cause emotions we are in effect exerting some control over the life process and leading the organism into greater or lesser harmony… (p. 52)

This exertion of control may be conscious or unconscious, but the process of control and regulation of emotion is constant.

Because humans use emotions to process and navigate their environment, emotions, whether positive, negative or neutral, shape our everyday experiences and our sense of self (Ahmed, 2004; Damasio, 2003). Indeed, emotion is highly personal, and is often framed as such in common statements like “I was scared” or “I am happy.” As Brian Massumi (2002) says, emotion is a “subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal” (p. 28). Throughout the day, a person may feel a
varying amount of energy or intensity as (s)he is affected by various encounters, and Massumi (2002) contends, emotion is the personal qualification of this energy or intensity.

This varying amount of energy or intensity is known as affect (Seigworth, 2003; Massumi, 2002). Many use the terms affect and emotion interchangeably, as they often work together; however, the two must be distinguished from one another, for “one of the clearest lessons… is that emotion and affect… follow different logics and pertain to different orders” (Massumi, 2002, p. 27). Though I will be focusing my project on emotion, in order to understand emotion, one must define affect. Some scholars describe affect as “pre-cognitive,” meaning that you feel goose bumps before you know that you are happy, sad, mad, etc (Jenkins, 2014). This “knowing” of happiness, sadness, madness, etc, is emotion. Again, Massumi (2002) defines emotion as “… the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience…” (p. 28). The “fixing of the quality,” as stated by Massumi, is a qualifying of emotion that makes it personal and ownable; affect, on the other hand, is neither of those things. During an encounter or experience, a person feels a varying amount of energy or intensity (this is affect), and through this affective process (i.e. as they are affected), a person makes sense of the affect and identifies an emotion.

This qualification of experience into emotion occurs constantly, whether the person is completely conscious of it or not. This is because emotion “ultimately designates… a dynamic … of the relation between the brain and the body” in which there “is a constant exchange of information between the two” (Malabou, 2012, p. 37). As such, emotion is highly personal because it is the result of this communication between brain and body. Emotion is an *intrapersonal* communication. As Malabou concludes:

The emotions organize and coordinate cerebral activity. Whether it is a matter of primary emotions (sadness, joy, fear, surprise, disgust), secondary of ‘social’ emotions
(embarrassment, jealousy, guilt pride), or what are called ‘background’ emotions (well-being, malaise, repose, discouragement, etc.), the emotions are the elaborate prolongation of affective processes at work within homeostatic regulation… Every individual history begins there.” (p. 38)

As this quotation indicates, emotions result from affective processes. Affections are simply the ways that one body impacts or contacts another body in an encounter (Deleuze, 1988). An example of affection that Gilles Deleuze (1988) provides is sun on the skin. The feeling a body encounters as the rays of light hit the skin’s surface – that is an affection. These encounters happen between bodies, with each body being affected by the other body, in different but related ways (Deleuze, 1988). From this perspective, a body can “be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 127). A body is simply an arrangement or organization of parts, of “an infinite number of particles” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 123). All of these bodies hold the capacity to affect.

When we think of emotion, we may think of words such as happy, sad, angry or surprised. We may think of times when we felt one of those emotions. Overwhelmingly, though, we think of people when we think of emotion. We do not think of space or material things being emotional, eliciting emotion or contributing to the buildup of emotion. We typically think of humans as able to affect, but any body can affect. In the setting of OTR, bodies consist of the people that walk around the streets of OTR, as well as the non-human objects, structures, buildings, trashcans and other various material things within OTR’s vicinity. All bodies affect other bodies or are affected by them. For example, if a person is walking down Vine Street in OTR, they encounter countless other bodies as they walk: other walking people, trash in the
street, boarded up windows, sirens or perhaps dogs barking. All of these things affect the experience a person has while walking. All of these things also encounter and affect one another, too.

Emotions stem from affections, being the brain’s communication of the feelings or sensations the body experiences (Deleuze, 1988). Thus Sara Ahmed (2004) refers to emotion as a noticed bodily change; in other words, emotion occurs when we shake in fright and then realize we are now scared. Thus emotion is personal and ownable, the qualification of our embodied encounters. Crying is a good example of how emotion qualifies or personalizes the affections we experience. People can be affected in such a way as to start crying. Yet, some people cry when they are sad or when they are happy. Crying is an affection that becomes personal and qualified via emotion, when we sense the crying as the result of being “happy” or “sad.” Thus emotion is the personal ascription of function and meaning to the things we encounter. For each individual, to feel sadness has a different meaning, entails different responses and ultimately, results from different affections. The individual processing of these affections, whether this processing occurs consciously, subconsciously or non-consciously, whether it occurs more or less clearly, is emotion.

Of course, not all people will respond to encounters or affections in the same way. Humans personalize affections via emotion, but the same encounter for two people does not necessarily lead to the same emotion. There is the potential for people to interpret their encounters in different ways: they could be joyful, scared or startled. Culture and history clearly play a part in this interpretation and configuration of emotion, especially in some urban spaces, where turmoil, crime and gentrification have been issues.
Although emotion is the highly personal result of an intrapersonal communication, it nevertheless has a social element. Emotion is often conceived only as a personal issue, ignoring this social element. As Ahmed notes, the “everyday language of emotion is based on the presumption of interiority,” as evidenced in such common statements that presume I have emotions and I then display my emotions to you (Ahmed, 2004, p. 8). Ahmed critiques this viewpoint – what she calls an inside-out model of emotion, for ignoring the social element of emotion. Ahmed (2004) provides the example of a crowd having feelings, “and that the individual gets drawn into the crowd by feeling the crowd’s feelings as its own” (p. 9). The general energy in the crowd was infectious. Upon reading this, I immediately saw the connection: a concert. Many times, when I have attended a concert, especially at a larger venue, the crowd’s excitement (which I would not have attributed to an individual at the time; I would have said, “The crowd was excited!”) was completely contagious. Perhaps my own excitement added to the excitement of the crowd; however, clearly, the excitement of the crowd affected me in that moment. Due to the fact that much emotion starts from outside the individual, Ahmed (2004) believes emotions should be regarded as “social and cultural practices,” as they are often responsible for binding the social body together (p. 9). Multiple people may feel more connected when they have been a part of a shared emotional experience.

Yet, despite the flaws of the inside-out view of emotion, Ahmed also cautions against a simple outside-in model. Emotion cannot be said to strictly emanate from the outside in because different bodies will respond differently to these outside emotions and affections. Due to the potential variances in emotional interpretation, emotion is not a property or characteristic of an object. Neither black bodies nor OTR are inherently fearsome, but for some people, they become fearsome through encounters. As Ahmed (2004) states, “We do not love or hate because objects
are good or bad, but rather because they seem ‘beneficial’ or ‘harmful’… whether something is beneficial or harmful involves thought and evaluation… The process of attributing an object as being or not being beneficial or harmful… clearly involves reading or encoding the contact we have with objects in a certain way (p. 5-6). Damasio (2003) also supports this notion when he discusses visiting a childhood home years later and feeling uncomfortable:

There is nothing in your brain’s basic makeup prepared to respond with displeasure to houses of a certain kind. But your life experience has made your brain associate such houses with the displeasure you once had. Never mind that the cause of the displeasure had nothing to do with the house itself. (p. 55)

To expand further, Ahmed (2004) uses the famous example of a child encountering a bear. In the example, the child sees a bear, is afraid and runs away. The question becomes why is the child afraid of the bear? For Ahmed (2004), a “‘Dumb View’” of emotion – an outside-in model – would answer “that the bear makes the child afraid, and that the bodily symptoms of fear are automatic” (p.7). This view is too simple, because it does not consider what the child sees that makes them fearful and makes them run. To feel fear, the child must have an image of the bear as an animal to be feared, an image “that is shaped by cultural histories and memories” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 7). It is not that the bear is fearsome, ‘on its own’, as it were. It is fearsome to someone or somebody. So fear is not in the child, let alone in the bear, but is a matter of how child and bear come into contact. This contact is shaped by past histories… Another child, another bear, and we might have a different story. (Ahmed, 2004, p. 7)

The same thing holds true for some bodies encountering one another in OTR. As aforementioned, it is not that the dark street or broken window is fearsome; fear is instead the
result of some people’s past encounters with and prior orientations toward the object that have stuck over time (Ahmed, 2004; Damasio, 2003).

In short, Ahmed (2004) critiques the inside-out and outside-in models of emotion because each presumes that emotions are simply something either a person or the social “has” prior to their encounter. Instead, Ahmed offers an alternative model of emotion, one that I follow in this thesis. Rather than automatically coming from the outside or naturally emanating from inside, Ahmed understands emotion as “creating the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 10). This view suggests that emotions are not in the individual (“I”) or the social (“we”). Instead, emotions create surfaces and boundaries separating the “I” from the “we” or “it,” delineating both objects. In other words, it is through our emotional responses to objects and others that surfaces or boundaries are made [between them]: the ‘I’ and the ‘we’ are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others. As we are impressed or affected by other bodies, we adopt orientations towards those objects that help constitute those objects and our selves.

This means that the model advanced in this thesis does not simply suggest that emotions are individual and social but instead rejects the separation in the first place. Emotions, instead, “are crucial to the very constitution of the psychic and the social as objects” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 10). As people are affected in encounters, they develop orientations and emotional responses to those encounters that shape the psychic and the social, the subject and the object. Emotion, then, as described above in the discussion of affection, is the result of a complex encounter between outside and inside, through which the subject learns about the outside and the inside. These encounters help constitute the very shape and understanding of the outside and the inside in the first place, thereby playing an active role in constituting both the self and the social. In the case
of OTR, this means that OTR becomes a fearful object and people become afraid of OTR as part of the same process, due to becoming affected by and oriented towards OTR, whether they encounter OTR linguistically (as illustrated in chapter two) or materially/physically (as illustrated in chapter three). In short, in OTR, emotions shape the social and the self.

**How Do Emotions Stick?**

What this view of emotion leaves unanswered, so far, is how certain objects become understood as emotional and/or provoke certain emotions. If emotions are not property of an object, they must attach themselves or encode themselves to the object in some way. How does OTR become seen as a fearful place, thereby orienting the encounter between OTR and individual in such ways that it shapes both the place and the subject? This section answers this question via Ahmed’s notion of stickiness. Emotions shape various subjects and objects by becoming “stuck” to them, which simply means that over time, people ascribe so much emotion to something that it becomes saturated with that emotion (Ahmed, 2004). Something becomes sticky when someone “…name[s] something as disgusting… to transfer the stickiness of the word ‘disgust’ [an emotion] to an object, which henceforth becomes generated as the very thing that is spoken” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 94). When I describe an emotion as being stuck to something – for example, an urban neighborhood – I mean that emotion becomes strongly associated with that neighborhood, which perhaps could be related the common term “stigma.”

How does an object become stuck with an emotion? Ultimately, objects of emotion take “shape as effects of circulation” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 10). Ahmed argues that the sticking of emotions depends primarily upon rhetorical circulation, as the quotation (about disgust) above outlines. The emotions a place or object evokes depend upon historical and cultural associations,
and those associations “remain alive… as effects of circulation” (Ahmed, p. 8). As Ahmed (2004) concludes, “The circulation of objects of emotion involves the transformation of others into objects of feeling” (p. 11). For example, for a person who is scared of OTR, they may feel fearsome toward all objects and people in (or that they associate with) OTR. This is how emotion can be encoded in an object, yet not be a property of that object.

Getting an emotion to stick to (or become associated with) a place requires work, and, as Ahmed (2004) states, “The work of emotion involves the ‘sticking’ of signs to bodies: for example, when others become ‘hateful,’ then actions of ‘hate’ are directed against them” (p. 13). As this rhetoric is repeated, sometimes emotions become so strongly associated with a person, place or thing that sometimes a person cannot refer to X without immediately thinking _____ (fill in the blank with any emotion). As discussed above, for some OTR go-ers, they cannot walk through the neighborhood without feeling fearful (Glaser, 2012; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014). Simultaneously for some other OTR go-ers, they cannot walk through the neighborhood without feeling joyful and excited about the changes occurring (Alter, 2014; Dutton, 2014; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014; Lopez, 2014; Rosen, 2015; Sievering, 2010; Slife & Dennis, 2014). These emotions – fear and joy – are stuck to the space. As these emotions become engrained into our minds and bodies over time, they become more and more difficult to overcome – and to change. This could play out when a person walks down Race Street and a feeling of fear will not go away, even when (s)he has nothing of which to be scared (since the emotion is not property of the object). This prospect indicates how emotion thus shapes subjects, objects and their encounters. When rhetoric regarding fear or security sticks to bodies (such as OTR), other bodies become oriented towards them in a fearful or secure manner, not because the bodies are fearful, but because, for some people, they have been stuck (metaphorically) with fear – because,
perhaps, some people “heard” it was scary or secure. As Ahmed states, “Objects are often read as the cause of emotions in the very process of taking an orientation towards them” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 6).

Humans and their encounters of course, carry out the association, the work of sticking emotion to objects or others. For example, for a long time, when some people heard “Over-the-Rhine,” they immediately thought of a fearful place, an unsafe area with a lot of crime – as will be further demonstrated in the next chapter (Glaser, 2012; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014). As these people repeatedly experienced and identified fear in the neighborhood over time, fear became stuck to the neighborhood (Ahmed, 2004). More recently, following revitalization efforts, OTR has become described by some as an object of excitement and liveliness – as also illustrated in the first chapter of analysis (Alter, 2014; Dutton, 2014; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014; Lopez, 2014; Rosen, 2015; Sievering, 2010; Slife & Dennis, 2014). Whether OTR becomes labeled (i.e. stuck) with fear or excitement shapes the place and the encounter, both in its material aspects (as illustrated in the second chapter of analysis) and in how the subject orients themselves towards that place. (Do they run from or avoid it? Or do they travel there expecting good times?).

This process of attributing emotions to objects is what makes certain emotions “stick” to certain objects, and thereby, enables the emotions to circulate throughout the social field (to other people). Importantly, Ahmed is not arguing that the emotions themselves circulate, but that the emotions become stuck to certain objects via circulation:

I suggest that it is the objects of emotion that circulate, rather than emotion as such. My argument still explores how emotions can move through the movement or circulation of
objects. Such objects become sticky, or saturated with affect, as sites of personal and social tension. (Ahmed, 2004, p. 11)

As rhetorical circulation sticks objects with emotion, that emotion can then spread via the object. As the emotion spreads, it then shapes subsequent subjects, objects and encounters, which I will discuss in more depth shortly.

Revealing the importance of this concept, the spread of emotion shapes public belonging and identification. It is this shaping that illustrates the powerful social consequences of emotion. Indeed, as Ahmed (2004) directs us, we should not ask so much whom or what is emotional but “What do emotions do?” (p. 4). What emotions do is shape public belonging because, as emotions stick to certain objects and not others, people change their actions with and orientations towards those objects, as Damasio (2003) notes above. For instance, Ahmed (2004) begins The Cultural Politics of Emotion by wondering how a nation can be portrayed as an emotional object, as it is in A British National Front Poster. She asks: “How does a nation come to be imagined as having a ‘soft touch’? How does this ‘having’ become a form of ‘being’, or a national attribute?” Ahmed (2004) illustrates that once a nation, or any object, becomes stuck with certain emotions, the emotions become imagined as “attributes of collectives” (p. 2). Those attributes serve to identify some people as proper national subjects, while excluding others. As such, emotions “are bound up with the securing of social hierarchy… [E]motionality as a claim about a subject or a collective is clearly dependent on relations of power, which endow ‘others’ with meaning and power” (p.4). Emotions shape surfaces of bodies, which “take shape through the repetition of actions over time, as well as through orientations towards and away from others” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 4).
Take the example of an emotion, fear: once fear becomes stuck to certain places or bodies, it affects and shapes how we orient toward (or away from) them. Fear orients bodies in a certain way. Fear is strongly linked to the alignment of “bodily and social space,” in that “fear shrinks bodily space and … involves the restriction of bodily mobility in social space” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 64). As a person becomes fearful, their body begins to “shrink back from the world in the desire to avoid the object of fear” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 69). When a person is fearsome, they want to get away from the object of that fear. Again, this fear is based on past encounters and encodings of the emotion.

Not only is fear a thing of “the past,” but overwhelmingly, fear relates to the future. When a person is fearful, they are anticipating something: to be hurt, to feel something unpleasant, to get injured, etc. This anticipation puts the mind in the future, considering what might happen or could happen. The fear itself does not reside in the current object, but rather exists in the idea of possibility. This is a rather peculiar way for emotion to move around, which Ahmed (2004) claims is the fear moving sideways, across bodies. Sideways movement of fear binds object-to-object, in turn creating a bundle of objects of which to be fearful (an example could be an entire neighborhood, like OTR).

This is how an entire place can become fearsome. The result of fear sticking to a place is that certain subjects may experience restricted mobility. Fear shapes the social by dictating the politics of mobility and “what is fearsome as well as who should be afraid is bound up with the politics of mobility, whereby the mobility of some bodies involves or even requires the restriction of the mobility of others” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 70). Fear restricts mobility of certain bodies, especially, in the case of OTR, the bodies of the poor and African Americans. In other
words, some (mostly white) people may not visit parts of OTR if they feel that there are many black bodies walking around (which some of them may perceive as fearsome).

In response to fear, privileged bodies not only restrict mobility of “fearful” others but also become differently oriented, turning their bodies away from fear and “towards home” or “towards love” and in doing so, create a “fellow feeling” of security for those people that felt fearful (Ahmed, 2004, p. 74). This fellow feeling that Ahmed references can also explain the social side of emotion – the sharing of an emotion amongst other people. When we create a “fellow” feeling, some bodies can occupy more space through their collective body (Ahmed, 2004). This collective body “stands in for the individual body, and moves on its behalf,” freely if not restricted by fear (Ahmed, 2004, p. 74).

Fear orients the body in a certain way, leading to a restriction of movement and, the alternative movement, is toward security. Thus, when gentrification efforts attempt to unstick fear from OTR, they therefore attempt to create a sense of home, belonging, security or, as Ahmed (2004) refers to, “fellow feeling.” When you sympathize with another person’s feelings, you create a “fellow feeling” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 8). This turning away from fear and towards “fellow feeling” can be used to explain the effort to “revitalize OTR” (Alter, 2014; Dutton, 2014; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014; Lopez, 2014; Rosen, 2015; Sievering, 2010; Slife & Dennis, 2014). Through revitalization, some people replace fear with a sense of home or belonging, both through language and through the material aspects of the revitalized areas (as will be explained in my analysis).

Gentrification efforts often originate from fear and seek to make the neighborhood a safe place for those who find it fearful (Glaser, 2012; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014). In other words, the efforts to revitalize an urban neighborhood do not address the fear, instead they just unstick
the fear by turning away from it, and ascribing a new emotion: security. The new bodies that enter OTR make up a collective body that turns away from fear, and creates a sense of “home” in the neighborhood (as will be discussed in the analysis chapters). The new bodies are able to create this sense of home through new discourse about and structures within the neighborhood.

The current gentrification of OTR is an attempt to replace fear with security and a sense of “home.” This process is, in a way, unsticking fear. This “unsticking” has to be a rhetorical process, since rhetoric is what sticks emotion in the first place (Ahmed, 2004). I argue that there are two rhetorical processes at work in OTR: one is discursive; one is material. The discursive process occurs within the discourse about the place; the material process happens in the physical place.

Although I agree with Ahmed (2004) that circulating discourse is key to sticking emotion, her approach tends to conceive of this discourse as exclusively linguistic. However, when we’re talking about a place (OTR), you must pay attention to the material qualities, too. Though fear can begin to stick to a place through discourse, it cannot continue to do so unless fear is also potentially present in the material aspects of the place. This is especially true since emotion is the result of an interpretation of affections emanating from other bodies. If the affections of those bodies don’t seem to match the emotions, then it becomes less likely that such emotional language will stick. If the place feels safe, if, say, the material rhetoric seems to express home and security, then fear is unlikely to stick. Also, on the flip side, if a place is being communicated as secure and safe, the material aspects of the place must match the discourse, or else it won’t stick.

Each time a person visits OTR, they “gradually categorize the situations [they] experience – the structure of the scenarios, their components, their significance in terms of [their]
personal narrative” (Damasio, 2003, 146). This categorization gets filed away until the next time they are in a similar situation; then, they do not even have to experience the same sequence of events or encounter the same stimulus. This familiarity triggers the emotion that they felt during their last visit (Damasio, 2003). Put simply, an emotion stuck to the street the last time they were there because of their encounter.

In order for OTR to fit the prior categorization made by the discourse (security vs. fear), the material rhetoric must evoke similar affective experiences (Damasio, 2003). For objects, there is an emotional distinction of grades: some objects evoke weak, barely perceptible emotions, while others evoke strong emotional reactions (Damasio, 2003). If the categorization of the neighborhood suggested by the articles (that I reviewed for this project) evokes a strong sense of security, the place itself must also evoke a strong sense of security; this is because “If we do not experience a certain body state with a certain quality we call pleasure… we have no reason whatsoever to regard any thought as happy. Or sad” (Damasio, 2003, p. 87). In order for either emotion (security or fear) to stick to the place, the affective experience of the place (OTR) must mirror that emotional categorization (security vs. fear).

Additionally, if the material rhetoric did not evoke the same affective experience, the affections (the ways that one body comes into contact with another) would not articulate to those emotions (fear and security) (Damasio, 2003). We know this because emotion is a processing and making sense of affect and, as Ahmed (2004) says

Whether I perceive something as beneficial or harmful clearly depends upon how I am affected by something… The process of attributing an object as being beneficial or harmful, which may become translated into good or bad, clearly involves reading the contact we have with objects in a certain way. (p. 6)
A person’s perception of OTR (as secure or fearsome) depends on how (s)he is affected by the place. For a subject to be affected by an object is what David Hume (1964) refers to as being impressed upon. Ahmed (2004) likes Hume’s term “impression” because an impression is something left by the object (the object impresses on me; i.e. affects me) and is something the subject does (“I form an impression”). In saying that, she is claiming that emotion is always the result of both: the impression or affection of the object and the “acts of perception and cognition” of the subject (Ahmed, 2004, p. 6). That means that the subject alone is insufficient; the emotion comes to life in the encounter between the subject and object. This applies to OTR in the way that we can say the place is safe until we are blue in the face, but if the object (i.e. the place) doesn’t leave that impression (doesn’t affect us that way), it is unlikely to stick to that emotion.

My major argument and contribution to the emotion literature, then, is the contention that emotion sticks through both discursive efforts, as well as material objects. There is a circulation of emotion in the physical space through bodies, as well as a “circulation of words for emotion” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 13). Ahmed (2004) would benefit from rhetorical scholarship because of the acknowledgement of the material as rhetorical, not just discourse. There is rhetorical power in the physical structure of space, as I will discuss in the following sections (Schuster, 2006, p. 9).

**Discourse**

Not only can a place become sticky, but texts can become sticky, too (Ahmed, 2004). In my first analysis chapter, I will study the discourse about OTR by reading and discussing news stories that cover the area’s redevelopment. In doing so, I will look at the circulation of discourse as Ahmed (2004) presents. Though the current state of the neighborhood is my focus, I will also include news stories that reference the “old” OTR and how things used to be: those that reference
the German immigration and settlement, rise of brewery district, 2001 riots, as well as when the area was starting to pick up before the riots. The news stories represent some people’s perspectives – largely the writers are white, which is important to note. Not everyone has access to the writing and publication of news articles; therefore, my observations and discussion are based on those that do. The subjectivity of the articles is inevitable.

Most – but not all – articles that I came across focus heavily on the development and positive side of the actions taking place in OTR. Many articles portray that OTR was once a place of fear, but now is booming and should be your next “night out.” As I continued to go through the articles, I asked what language is used to portray the place as no longer fearful? I chose to look at language that indicates no longer fearful because, largely, that is the language I came across.

Ahmed (2004) provides a model for looking at the text for emotionality and figures of speech. As I read, I will look for direct and indirect language regarding the emotions fear and security. When reading for emotion, Ahmed (2004) refers to the “emotionality of texts” (p. 12). She uses the nation example because it illustrates why we use a phrase such as “The nation mourns;” we attribute emotion to the nation (to a place), giving it the ability to mourn. I will look for examples of phrases similar to these; I will look for rhetoric that “sticks” and contributes to an encoding of fear/security.

Another way of reading texts for emotion is by looking for their effects on a person’s orientation. Ahmed (2004) states, “Emotions are performative and they involve speech acts, which depend on past histories, at the same time as they generate effects” (p. 13). These effects happen when we “name” an emotion. When we do name an emotion – call something fearful or
safe, for example – certain orientations take effect (Ahmed, 2004). Through the reading of these texts, we can see how these orientations take place (i.e. away from fear and toward home).

Lastly, I will focus heavily on the metaphors I found in the texts, as they seemed biggest as I examined the texts. Metaphor is a figure of speech that applies a phrase (or term) to something unrelated, but suggests a resemblance. Ahmed (2004) suggests figures of speech like a metaphor are crucial to the emotionality of texts. She states that the use of “metaphors of ‘softness’ and ‘hardness’ [of a nation] shows us how emotions become attributes of collectives, which get constructed as ‘being’ through ‘feeling’” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 2). In particular, “[she examines] how different ‘figures’ get stuck together, and how sticking is dependent on past histories of association that often ‘work’ through concealment. The emotionality of texts is one way of describing how texts are ‘moving,’ or how they generate effects” (p. 13). Such metaphors work “through concealment” as Ahmed (2004) references, by suggesting certain comparisons while concealing others. For instance, in the discourse chapter, I will show how the metaphors of life and death, light and dark, and mobility and immobility work to unstick fear from OTR.

As aforementioned, in order for these emotions to stick (or unstick), they need more than discursive rhetoric; they also need material rhetoric. Indeed, gentrification is largely a process of transforming the material rhetoric to unstick fear and replace it with security. Thus I will first establish the fear/security dyad in OTR through the 25 articles (that I included) published about the place, all of which were published between 2010 and today (with the exception of one in 2006). Then, I will look to the physical place for material aspects that exhibit this fear/security dyad and for this, I must first discuss the study of material rhetoric.
Material Rhetoric & Walking

In order for a body to feel affected, there must be an encounter, and “Places are best thought of not so much as enduring sites but as moments of encounter, not so much as ‘presents,’ fixed in space and time, but as variable events; twists and fluxes of interrelation” (Edbauer, 2005, p. 5). These moments of encounter hold the potential for people to encode the place as emotional. Many have already studied space, even in its emotional aspects, as I will outline below (Aiello & Dickinson, 2014; Edbauer, 2006; Schuster, 2006). There is also attention to material rhetoric and its contribution to emotional experiences. In my own research, I will perform a similar method of reading the place – one based on walking.

Within a space countless messages are sent. Communication is constant, and humans are not the only ones involved in it. Non-human, or material, things communicate meaning, too. Companies, developers, designers and others who plan and design a space, use materiality to create a certain atmosphere that in turn, affects those within it. The communication of meaning via the material is known as “material rhetoric.” Material rhetoric “involves turning initially to media and materials other than language in order to consider what Jack Selzer calls, ‘the material conditions that sustain the production, circulation and consumption of rhetorical power’” (Schuster, 2006, p. 4). Additionally, as a theory, material rhetoric “includes notions that space, its arrangement, and the objects that occupy it have consequences and display partisanship” (Schuster, 2006, p. 4). When considering a space and the way it affects those that inhabit it or come across it, we must look at the material qualities of the space because when we only focus on language, we limit our perceptions of change, power and consequence (Schuster, 2006).
Mary Lay Schuster (2006) quotes Barbara Dickinson as stating the purpose of material rhetoric is to “examine ‘how multiple discourses and material practices collude and collide with one another to product an object that momentarily destabilizes common understanding and makes available multiple readings” (p. 2). This definition highlights the opportunity for multiple interpretations of every space due to its differing materiality – and people’s differing interpretations of the materiality. This concept is particularly relevant in OTR, as everyone is viewing the same material characteristics of the neighborhood, but not everyone is encoding these characteristics the same way. The interpretation of the space can vary from each OTR visitor to resident to employee. Ultimately, people may use the material to communicate a specific message, but it all depends on how people interpret the materiality.

Aiello and Dickinson (2014) refer to the “experience of materiality,” which indicates that materiality has the potential to affect those that encounter it within a space and foster an experience (p. 309). Material rhetoric examines objects, not as linguistic signs, but “through their spatial organization, mobility, mass, utility, orality, and tactility” (Schuster, 2006, p. 4; Dickinson, 1999, p. 297). The material makeup of the streets, parks, restaurants and shops all contribute to the overall feeling that a person may have while walking through the neighborhood.

Analyzing the physical and material aspects of a situation provides deeper and richer insight into the decisions we make, attitudes we adopt and emotions we feel while in a certain space. Aiello and Dickinson’s (2014) discuss the material aspects of a Starbucks store, demonstrating how materiality affects the customers’ perception of the Starbucks brand. The article demonstrates the value in doing this. They discuss their experience inside one of the Starbucks stores: “We could distinctly ‘feel’ the multiple scratches on the cold slate table at which we sat” (p. 309). Aspects of materiality, such as texture, color, weight and scent, all work...
together to impact the person encountering them. Materiality is not always intentional, but in the case of the Starbucks stores and the “revitalized” parts of OTR (typically, the more northern half, as will be discussed in my second analysis chapter), materiality is an intentional strategy of creating an environment that communicates an emotion. Just like language, words and symbols, materiality communicates meaning and can contribute to feeling certain ways, which a person may eventually identify as an emotion (such as fear/security). Starbucks tried to get its customers to feel a sense of locality, community and authenticity in their stores through the use of the material (Aiello & Dickinson, 2014, pp. 310-311). Some ways that Starbucks changes the material was through their use of dark woods, pictures of local families and the hanging of a “community board.” Materiality holds an immense amount of power; it has the potential to change what happens within a space; it has the power to influence the way that we act and react within a space (Aiello & Dickinson, 2014).

Starbucks wanted to change the way their customers were affected by the in-store experience. Likewise, some developers in OTR wanted to change the experience that people had when walking through the neighborhood. Starbucks’ “shifting from authenticity to locality in design and branding practices alters critical engagements and everyday relationships with global consumer capitalism;” this shift occurred in the look and feel of the stores specifically (Aiello & Dickinson, 2014). Washington Park, the biggest public park in OTR, used to be rundown, filled with trash and a home for drug dealing and prostitution (Greenblatt, 2014). After millions of dollars and quite a bit of work went in to the opening of a new Washington Park, the park looks entirely different. There are well-kept playgrounds, water fountains, green grass, park benches and lights. The design of the park encourages groups to visit the dog park, to play Frisbee or to attend concerts. Something as simple as the design and aesthetic of a public space can (and did)
change the type of activity that occurs within its perimeter. For Starbucks, “Overall, redesigned stores slow us down and invite us to gaze, touch, recognize and linger, rather than simply move through. They also exhort us to place our bodies next to the bodies of others and to bring our embodied selves and networks into their space, so we can dwell, connect and even perform our creative skills in it” (Aiello & Dickinson, 2014, p. 317).

Through analyzing the material rhetoric, a person can also identify overarching themes and attempts of persuasion at work. When you do not consider the big picture of materiality, you miss these things. For example, when customers entered the few Starbucks stores that changed their interior design and layout, they may have simply thought to themselves, “Oh, look how nice that wooden fixture on the wall looks!” or “I recognize that organization on the bulletin board – that’s new.” These thoughts or comments in the moment may not mean much, but when you take a step back and consider what elements of persuasion are at work here, you then realize that Starbucks is not only interested in fostering a better coffee-drinking time with your friends. Starbucks is trying to rework its reputation – a massive, global company worth millions of dollars – and appear to be more community-focused. In the case of OTR, as people drive past Washington Park, they may think or say out loud, “That park looks great,” or “Hey, isn’t that a new parking garage?” But, from a rhetorical perspective, a lot more is revealed: developers want people to spend time downtown and visit the park. They are trying to displace the fearful emotions that some people have with a sense of security or home (the details of this I will discuss in the following chapters).

In order to study the material rhetoric of OTR, I completed a walk down Vine Street, the neighborhood’s most central and busiest central street. During the walk I was looking for bodies that have the potential to affect any person. As the articles were more focused on security, I, too,
will focus on the elements of the neighborhood that could communicate security. As I walk, I will look for affective bodies and try to outline the qualities of these bodies that suggest, for some visitors including the authors of these articles, security instead of fear. Because I am interested in studying the material, I will be bracketing out human bodies in my observations. Though I know and acknowledge that human bodies – specifically raced and classed bodies – play a massively influential role in gentrification, I am, instead, choosing to focus on the material aspects of the neighborhood as one additional way of understanding the space because, as I have argued, these material elements also play a crucial role. I will, however, discuss the implications on human bodies that the material decisions can have.

I will be detailing the qualities I observed on my walk of Vine Street. I walked five blocks of the street from Central Parkway (on the South side, labeled “42”) to Liberty Street (on the North side, labeled “E Liberty St”) in order to know the difference in qualities. The South side of the street contains a much higher number of renovated buildings, new restaurants, new condos, etc. This is the half of the street that most of the news stories discuss. Again, though I am walking the street to understand all of the qualities, I will focus on the qualities of the areas that are being talked about by some people as “safe” and “secure.”

Walking

Walking is a part of our everyday lives. You may walk to class, to work or to your car in the morning. You may walk to the subway, down the same streets at the same time, every single day. When we walk the same paths as we always do, we begin to tune out our surroundings because we are usually walking within “an area, which most everyday activities and adventures [are] confined” (Edensor, 2000, p. 83). This makes me think of times when I have walked or driven to
my parents’ house so many times, that when I arrive, I hardly remember getting there. We become unaware of our environment because, to some extent, it stays the same and we encounter it all of the time. In this section, I will argue the importance of slowing down and taking note of the environment that surrounds us. The trash on the sidewalk, the new “Under Construction” sign or perhaps the new restaurant on the corner are all pieces to the puzzle; each of these, what could seem to be, insignificant changes from day-to-day become important when evaluating how a space changes. When discussing space, and in particular the rhetoric of space, in relation to urban development, I must walk the space I speak of – my research hinges on the physical elements of OTR, because, as aforementioned, rhetoric cannot stick if the material place doesn’t match the discourse about the place. It is vital for me to walk the streets I speak of because of the countless changes in the space. The space is being constructed with the intention of getting people to visit, to come to OTR and walk around. Thus, that is what I did, making observations as I walked.

There have been many academic articles in the past that incorporate walking as a way of reading a place (Certeau, 1984; Edensor, 2000; Pinder, 2001). As of late, within “humanities and social sciences, as well as art and cultural practice,” theorists are walking as a way of evaluation – of architecture, urban planning, spatial politics, etc (Pinder, 2011). Walking is a “search for a vantage point from which to grasp and understand life,” which is why using walking as a way of understanding OTR is useful (Edensor, 2000, p. 81). Walking’s formation of a relationship between pedestrian and the space helps to uncover more understanding in my following chapters (Edensor, 2000). Walking gives these theorists a full, firsthand perspective, enriching their experience and subsequently their research and findings. Every space has a story, and walking can be a method for unfolding that story (Pinder, 2011). Walking has the potential to “unsettle
and bring into question current realities,” which is especially relevant in OTR as its “current” state is constantly changing, with the frequency that old buildings are purchased, flipped and turned into something completely new (Pinder, 2011, p. 672).

Walking gives you a unique understanding of the place and has the ability to “spark evocative images, events, and stories” (Pinder, 2011, p. 659). Michel de Certeau (1984) supports that walking is about more than experiencing and traversing a space (Pinder, 2011). He calls it a “speech enunciation” that “works with existing possibilities and interdictions (p. 98; Pinder, 2011, p. 676). Certeau (1984) is most known for his discussion about ordinary users and their impact on place through walking and creating lines, as if on a map using their paths (Pinder, 2011). As walking is directly related to the politics of mobility intertwined with fear – the ability to move freely – walking can be seen as a way of expressing this ability (Pinder, 2011).

Walking can also be organized and structured, as with John Lynch’s (2013) piece on a museum walk that guides you along the way. Detailing each step of the way, Lynch (2013) illustrated that a play-by-play of the walk is the best method for explaining a physical space, both physically and symbolically. In order to grasp the symbolism found within the walk, one must first understand the surroundings. In Lynch’s (2013) piece about The Creation Museum, he discusses how the walk through the museum itself is symbolic of conversion the museum wants attendees to feel (p. 9). As museum visitors made their way through the doors, into the exhibit and even as they exit, the direction of the walk and the obstacles visitors encounter while walking are exemplary of the spiritual experience the museum hopes its visitors encounter (Lynch, 2013).

In sum, space is a text with multiple layers of meaning; walking is one method of peeling back those layers and noting what a person may encounter in the space. Indeed, some theorists or
artists use walking as a means for experiencing the mundane, everydayness that a spaces
inhabitants experience; walking enables

   learning about, mapping, narrating, and performing in spaces, whether alone or in a
group. Addressing the regulated and fixed as well as the accidental, the unfixed, the
transient, and the errant has become key in a process that is often city based. (Pinder, 2011, p. 675)

To experience the potential encounters with the space of a city, one must walk, because “[a
neighborhood’s] rhythms cannot be shown by means of cameras or images but require ‘equally
attentive eyes and ears, a head and a memory and a heart’” (Pinder, 2011, p. 677). The value of a
walker is that they are able to “resolve transformation by recovering past value, experiencing
continuity, embracing change, while acquiring poetic sensibilities,” which is pertinent in the
nature of walking in OTR due to its rich history and recent rapid change (Edensor, 2000, p. 84).

Walking, thus, enables one to encounter objects that comprise the spaces of the city. My
focus on encounters is derived from affect theory. Affect is the feeling that results from being
affected – the flows of energy that strike or touch us in our encounters (Deleuze, 1988; Jenkins,
2014; Massumi, 2002; Seigworth, 2003). Affects are those transitions between one state and
another; in other words, affects are the flows of feelings as impacts (affections) are felt from
other bodies. Because affect is the flow of feelings between bodies, it only exists in the encounter
(Deleuze, 1988). This is why it was incredibly important for me to capture what people may
encounter as they walk down Vine Street. The material qualities that people may encounter hold
the capacity to affect them. An abandoned building or brand new trash can both have the
potential to affect.
Affect taught me to look at qualities of the bodies, to look at the encounter, analyze the encounter and to understand how these material qualities have the potential to make us feel certain ways. Affect causes me to ask what material features “feel” like fear versus “feel” like security for some – because if the place has been talked about as “safe” but a person doesn’t feel safe in the place, the “safe” emotion will not stick. As I compare the discursive rhetoric (first analysis chapter) with the material rhetoric (second analysis chapter), I may begin to understand how this material rhetoric has been coded (i.e. stuck) with fear and security.

My overall research question asks how a place can become stuck or unstuck with a certain emotion. As seen in this chapter, circulating rhetoric may be the answer here, which leads to my specific research questions about that circulating rhetoric: What language is used to portray the place as no longer fearsome? And, what material features are used to make the place feel secure? I will begin with the language in the next chapter, examining numerous articles to show how OTR has been encoded with fear and security through rhetoric and the use of metaphors.
Chapter Two:
Discourse about Over-the-Rhine

Introduction

Discourse, as we see in the previous chapter, is critical to sticking any kind of emotion (Ahmed, 2003). Thus, in order to examine what emotion(s) sticks to OTR, I must first turn to the discourse about the place. In the past, as mentioned in the Introduction, OTR was known in mainstream media for its crime, drug activity and low-income housing. As seen in some news articles, not many people who lived outside of the neighborhood considered it much of a place to visit (Glaser, 2012; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014). The 2001 race riots did not do much for the area’s reputation as welcoming either (Greenblatt, 2014; Lopez, 2014; Sievering, 2010; Wesseler, 2013). Ultimately, for some, the area was fearsome.

In order to get non-OTR (i.e. typically white, upper/middle-class) residents to visit, live in, spend money in, etc, the neighborhood again, it cannot be seen as a source of fear, as fear keeps people away. This chapter seeks to answer what language is used to portray the neighborhood as no longer fearsome. The articles that I came across did not explicitly mention negative emotions (i.e. fear), but there appears to be an echo present in the articles attesting to the way people used to feel (i.e. fearful). For example, some of the articles mention how some people would not have visited the neighborhood before in fear of what may happen (Glaser, 2012; Keirn, 2014).

In the last decade, there have been huge efforts to make changes in the neighborhood. Popular media has been working to portray the neighborhood as a safe and fun place to visit, perhaps in an effort to get people to come to OTR, live in OTR, spend money in OTR, etc. Largely, articles now discuss OTR’s changes as positive (Alter, 2014; Glaser, 2012; Greenblatt,
2014; Hughes, 2012; Keirn, 2014; Myers, 2014; Pender, 2015; Rosen, 2015; Tweh, 2014; Wesseler, 2013). Though there are “notable exceptions… the majority of media coverage, both local and national, has centered on the concept of dramatic renaissance and rebirth” (Wesseler, 2013, p. 23). For my project, I focus on this “majority,” as I see them attempting to ascribe a new emotion to OTR: security.

I used various methods of collecting articles for the months leading up to the writing of my thesis. Most notably, I kept a pulse on the Cincinnati media outlets that mentioned OTR and its changes, as those news sources are dedicated to the city specifically. Furthermore, I spent significant time researching online, using search terms such as “Over-the-Rhine gentrification,” “OTR redevelopment,” “OTR urban development,” “OTR progress,” “Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine,” “Over-the-Rhine riots 2001,” “OTR restaurants,” “OTR’s history” and countless other similar phrases. These searches yielded many Cincinnati-based news articles, some personal blog posts, as well as a few national news sources. Finally, my thesis advisor, Dr. Eric Jenkins, as well as my first reader, Dr. Steve Depoe, always sent relevant articles my way. These articles are only representative of some people’s opinions and points of view. An important aspect to note about these articles is that middle-to-upper class white people wrote the majority of them. This group is the group that gentrification serves. Most of the articles that turned up were fairly recent – all of the articles I used in this project published from 2012 to 2015, with the exception of one from 2006 and another from 2010. I gathered and reviewed countless articles; in the end, I analyzed 25 for my project, choosing them based on topic relevance (gentrification versus redevelopment). Primarily using articles written in the last three years provides an understanding of how popular media is portraying the neighborhood’s current state, which helps to answer my
question regarding the language used to portray the place as no longer fearsome, something it once was (for some).

As I performed a close textual analysis of these articles, three rhetorical devices (all three metaphors) emerged as the primary way to juxtapose the emotions of fear and security: dark/light, death/life and immobility/mobility. Furthermore, these metaphors perpetuate the circulation of emotion in regard to OTR. In this chapter, I discuss these three metaphors, their significance and the way(s) that light, life and mobility communicate security to an audience that may have once thought of the neighborhood as something to be feared. These metaphors serve to portray the place as no longer one of fear, but one of security. In doing so, these metaphors also serve to erase previous inhabitants of the neighborhood, especially black and lower class bodies – as those are alluded to in darkness, death and immobility.

The Metaphors

Dark / Light

The first metaphor that I discuss is also the least used in the articles. Some articles made reference to darkness and, consequently, lightness. Darkness, at its core, is typically something that we fear and learn to fear from a young age. When we are children, there are many of us who are “afraid of the dark.” Some children sleep with night-lights in an effort to protect them from whatever threat that complete darkness may bring. Even as adults, we are apprehensive about the dark. We want to be able to see and if there is darkness, we are not certain of what may surround us. Some very simple examples of this can be found in our everyday lives. When we come home late at night, before entering a room, we flip on the light. Certainly, this also helps with navigation, but darkness is not associated with safety. Picture a dark alleyway for a moment. For
many of us, this image is eerie and creepy. What exists in the alleyway is unknown. (No wonder cinema loves to utilize dark alleys in the most unsettling and suspenseful scenes!) On the other hand, lightness is seen as positive.

When I picture light, I immediately imagine a sunny, summer day – and oh, how good that feels. Light is associated with heaven (such as images of sunbeams peering through clouds in the sky), truth (such as “seeing the light”) and safety (such as a “well lit” street or college campus). Most relevant to OTR, out of the aforementioned examples, is in regard to a “well lit” place. When a place is well lit and bright, it is seen as being “safe.” You can see what surrounds you. You can see if you are in danger… because it is well lit. I can recall conversations with my parents when I first went to an urban college and lived off-campus: “Jacqueline, make sure you walk home on the streets with the most street lights!” We use light to see and to decipher our surroundings. When we are in darkness, we cannot see or know what could be approaching, and for many, this is scary or frightening, even. Bringing things “into the light” is a way of making things known, being transparent, being honest and truthful. That which is associated with light is commonly seen as a good thing. As I read the articles for this project, many of them portrayed the revitalized aspects of OTR as “light” and the way OTR was pre-gentrification as “dark.”

The changes in OTR are often referred to as a “renaissance,” which literally means “rebirth” (a central concept to be explored in the death/life metaphor). The Renaissance emerged out of the Dark Ages, which is the most overt connection to the dark/light metaphor. As Kinsley Slife and Annie Dennis (2014) state, “The renovation of OTR is portrayed as an urban renaissance, which carries the positive connotation of bringing life to an otherwise dark and dilapidated historic neighborhood” (p. 1). The latter end of this statement, “otherwise dark and dilapidated historic neighborhood,” implies that there was nothing going on in the time before
this “renaissance.” The word “dilapidated” insinuates negligence for instance. Susan Glaser (2012) also mentions this when she describes the time before the renovations as OTR’s “darkest years” (p. 2). Equating times in OTR’s history with the Dark Ages also indicates a lack of life during that time, which I will refer back to in the following section regarding the metaphor life/death.

The past continues to be portrayed as dark when Keirn (2014) describes a scene in OTR: “The grand Music Hall, built in 1878 and the longtime home of Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, once loomed over a dark and crime-infested Washington Park” (p. 2). There are various sticky language terms in this sentence such as “loomed,” “dark” and “crime-infested” (Ahmed, 2004). This description paints an image of a bleak (via “dark”) and dirty (via “infested”) place – not one that would sound appealing or inviting. All of these words work to convey an unsettling mental picture of the way OTR used to be (before the gentrification). On the other hand, the renovated parts of OTR, as well as the future of OTR, are described using light.

Washington Park, the neighborhood’s newest public park that underwent millions of dollars in renovations, is described as “a gleaming new oasis where exercise teachers lead racially mixed groups of sweating people” (Fisher, 2014, p. 8). The image of something “gleaming” portrays beams of light reflecting off of the park. Yet, according to Keirn (2014), not everything about the renovated areas in OTR are shiny and new, Keirn claims, “Over-the-Rhine’s renaissance hasn’t wiped clean the urban grit and replaced it with upscale sparkle” (p. 2). Something that “sparkles” gives off light, and though Keirn (2014) claims that the neighborhood is not all sparkle, she still indicates that what is thought of as “upscale” and “new” is sparkly – and when something sparkles, it gives off light. The shops and restaurants on Vine Street (which will be explored in the next chapter) are exactly that, too: upscale and new. Maxim
Alter (2015) may also agree that there is still some “urban grit” when he states that, “While the district is far from perfect… its future looks bright” (p. 3). In Alter’s (2015) statement, not only is brightness the goal, but the current state (hypothetically with traces of the “old” OTR), is not perfect. His point, however, is that it could be… because “the future looks bright” (Alter, 2015, p. 3). In Alter’s (2015) opinion, brightness, and therefore lightness, is the goal.

By portraying the renovated area(s) in OTR as light, these popular media publications attempt to ascribe security to the space, in place of fear. For some people the idea of darkness, as it is already a thing to be feared, gets tied to OTR pre-gentrification. Furthermore, by making reference to the “Dark Ages,” and therefore, alluding to OTR now as a renaissance, there is even suggestion of lifelessness in the neighborhood prior to the gentrified changes (Keirn, 2014; Slife & Dennis, 2014). Overall, we see that darkness can communicate fear; lightness can communicate security. The next metaphor, death/life, functions to portray these same emotions.

Death / Life

There are many references throughout the articles that speak to a metaphor of death/life. One overwhelmingly common reference that also related to dark/light is the connection between OTR and the “Dark Ages,” as well as the current activity as an “urban renaissance.” Like darkness, death is something that we, as human beings, are taught to fear throughout our lives. We are constantly trying to avoid death and consequently, prolong life. We fear what will happen if/when we die and if/when others die. Many of us avoid risky situations that could potentially harm us or put our lives in danger. We are often scared of that which threatens us. To protect our loved ones and ourselves, we avoid danger and threat. We try to protect ourselves; we have life insurance, for example. Life, on the other hand, is desired. When something or someone is “full of life,” we see them as exuberant, lively and full of vibrancy. For many, this can be an
aspiration. Language around life and death is often inseparable because, for example, in order for something to “come back to life,” it had to have once been dead.

As we will see in the articles, it is hard to discuss one without directly or indirectly referencing the other. Because of this, I try to parse out metaphors of death and metaphors of life; however, the two often are intertwined. As I read the articles about OTR, there was a clear metaphor of the way OTR used to be (dead) and the way it is or is becoming (life). For instance, death is seen as something to be feared in Greenblatt’s (2014) article as he describes the experience people had walking around Washington Park: “People going to the symphony in Cincinnati used to feel like they were taking their lives into their own hands,” risking death (and likewise, avoiding it) being the main focus of this statement (p. 1). Greenblatt (2014) describes OTR in 2000 as a “place of rot, with buildings either collapsing into the street or threatening to do so” (p. 5). In this instance, the comment about buildings threatening to collapse also instills a sense of fear, such as what if they do collapse? And, we may fear the answer.

As aforementioned, some have coined OTR’s gentrification as an “urban Renaissance” (Alter, 2014; Dutton, 2014; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014; Lopez, 2014; Rosen, 2015; Sievering, 2010; Slife & Dennis, 2014). “Renaissance” – literally meaning “rebirth” – is directly tied to life. The real Renaissance was a cultural movement marked by breathing life back into parts of the European culture that had been lost during the Dark Ages (i.e. the Middle Ages). The Renaissance is known as a cultural rebirth. This phrase suggests two things: that European culture was once dead, and that the Renaissance brought it back to life. By referring to OTR as an urban renaissance, the phrase functions similarly: suggesting OTR was once dead and is now alive.
Referring to the activity in OTR as an “urban Renaissance” also indicates rebirth. The Renaissance comparison suggests that OTR is experiencing a cultural rebirth, an association with life. In a *New York Times* article, the title read, “In Cincinnati Life Breathes Anew in Riot-Scarred [OTR]” (Maag, 2006, p. 1). This title implies that life was not breathing in OTR before, and that the riots may have caused this. This rebirth or breath of life is evident in many aspects of most of the articles I read. A quote from Slife and Dennis’ (2014) article, which was also used in the first metaphor, relates to a rebirth as well: “The renovation of OTR is portrayed as an urban renaissance, which carries the positive connotation of bringing life to an otherwise dark and dilapidated historic neighborhood” (p. 1). The activity and renovations in OTR were described as the neighborhood “flowering” (Greenblatt, 2014, p. 3). For a flower to grow is for it to come alive and flourish. If there needs to be flowering, the author alludes to the fact that there was not anything flowering (i.e. living) before. Flowers make another appearance in Greenblatt’s (2014) article when he discusses the buildings whose boarded up storefronts are painted to look like windows and doors, including small floral details. He states, “Many empty properties are covered with painted fronts to show how cute and charming they might look once they’ve been rehabbed” (p. 3). These painted fronts are made to look as though the buildings are full of life, as if someone is living inside and taking care of the outside (i.e. the painted fronts). When, in reality, there is most likely no one living inside, and the flowers painted at the bottom of the “door” are representative of the life that could be – not the life that is. Another mention of new life is in Bowdeya Tweh’s (2014) article, when talking about the retail and housing in the neighborhood, the author uses the word “revival” (p. 1). In statements like these, you see both life and death; in order for something to be revived, it had to die at some point. Karen Monzel Hughes (2012) states that now, “Over-the-Rhine is a nearly ideal framework for building a
successful urban community” (p. 2). “Building” a community assumes that there is not already a community there. As the articles constantly reference a lack of existence, they inadvertently refer to death.

The articles that reference bringing the neighborhood back from the dead are more literal mentions of the death/life metaphor. One example of this is an article published by the University of Cincinnati’s student-run newspaper, The News Record. In the article, John Barrett, 3CDC’s founder, states, “[We] are bringing [OTR] back from the dead… All of the beautiful Italianate architecture was old but needed attention” (Stockwell, 2013, p. 2). In reference to bringing OTR “back from the dead,” John Barnett refers to buildings, not bodies. The indication here is that the life of buildings matters more than people do, which simultaneously pushes any political and racial issues to the side – as we are dealing with buildings, not people. Though developers like 3CDC are renovating buildings, they are also kicking people out of those buildings in order to do so. The Italianate architecture became a huge focus and preserving these buildings became a major priority. The neighborhood was even placed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s list of Most Endangered Historic places (Glaser, 2012). Preservation, according to Hughes (2012), “means creating new uses for them – giving them a new life” (p. 3). Thus again, we see a suggestion that even the buildings were in need of new life. Use of the term “new” indicates that perhaps there was life there before; however, simultaneously, there is a suggestion that the existing life was not good enough. The title of a WCPO article claims there were three main moments for OTR: “The rise, fall and rebirth” (Alter, 2015). Greenblatt’s (2014) article’s also suggests that OTR was once dead with its subtitle: “How a lot of money and a little luck brought one of the nation’s most dangerous neighborhoods back to life.” To propose that OTR needed to be brought back to life indicates that there was not any life there before, or
perhaps, similar to Hughes (2012), there just was not any life worth mentioning. Statements like these demonstrate, as Thomas Dutton (1999; 2014), Professor of Architecture and Director of Community Engagement in Over-the-Rhine at Miami University of Ohio, suggests how some lives are privileged and recognized as worthy, and some are neglected, a concept that will be further explored in the implications, as well as the next chapter of analysis.

Not only are some lives neglected, they are also completely omitted from the retelling of the history of OTR – the ultimate symbol of death. The time period that is often left out of the retelling of OTR’s history is also the time period that the neighborhood was inhabited by mostly the poor and African-Americans. Most of the articles that I read discussed the German settlement and the booming economy in the late 1800s and early 1900s. There were rarely a couple of lines dedicated to what happened in between, such as, “What was once an explosion of culture and energy [during the time of the German settlement] became one of several declining neighborhoods in the city’s ring of slums” (Alter, 2015, p. 2). Then, they jump to mentioning the 2001 riots and quickly move on to “today” (i.e. 2012-2015). In Glaser’s (2012) article, she opens with a brief account of OTR as a historic, German neighborhood, dedicates one sentence to the 2001 riots, and then states, “Fast-forward to today” (p. 1). By “fast-forwarding” to today… we land eleven years later. This fast-forwarding ignores eleven years of life; perhaps this could indicate that what had been happening for the last decade or so was not worth the word count. Inadvertently, this fast-forwarding suggests that there was no life to mention, but we know that this was not true. There were still residents of OTR, even in its least populated years, something that many do not recognize or mention.

Following the urban sprawl and white flight, the majority of the neighborhood was African-American. Descriptions of this time period, which was pre-gentrification, heavily relate
to death and deterioration. In Sarah Wesseler’s (2013) article, she states, “The neighborhood was notorious for crime, drugs, and homelessness” (p. 8). Glaser (2012) says, “Over the second half of the 20th century, the neighborhood… became home to hundreds of vacant buildings” (p. 2). This quote suggests that OTR was not home to people – to life – but rather to the absence of life (i.e. death). Vacant buildings, not the people that still filled some of them, characterized the neighborhood, based off of this quote. According to Wesseler (2013), this was due to “the area’s physical and social infrastructure steadily [declining] and residents [leaving] in search of better conditions (p. 4). But… what about the people that stayed? This quote from Wesseler (2013), like the one before it (Glaser, 2012), suggests that there was no life in OTR. The neighborhood is described as being “derelict,” characterized by “crime and neglect and deterioration,” and that it had become a wasteland, and a desolate, scary place (Greenblatt, 2014, p. 7; Wesseler, 2013, p. 25; Glaser, 2012). In one article, the pre-gentrified neighborhood was called a “dumping ground for the poor” (Greenblatt, 2014, p. 5). The area was known by some for its “decades of decay,” which some describe as “plaguing” the neighborhood (Maag, 2006, p. 1; Greenblatt, 2014; Keirn, 2014). The word “plague” is used a couple of times. First in Keirn’s (2014) article, when he states, “The neighborhood was once one of the most economically disadvantaged in the nation and plagued by rampant crime” (p. 1). Secondly, in Greenblatt’s (2014) article, he refers to the area being “plagued” for decades with disinvestment. “Plague” appears to be a very intentional word here, naturally carrying the connotation of disease and death. Plagues have greatly affected various parts of the world for hundreds of years, as well as killed countless people (also see: The Black Plague in the 1300s). By using a word like “plague,” the authors parallel the consequences of and sentiments toward an actual plague with the happenings in OTR: death, disease, destruction, fear, threat, etc.
However, according to many of these articles I have cited, something changed. OTR changed and continues to change as time goes on. Many people, who may not have come down to OTR before, now want to “bring their families to see the renaissance that’s going on,” but something had to happen in order to attract the families in the first place, as we know that they were not spending their time in the neighborhood prior (Alter, 2015, p. 3). In order to do so, the media must portray the area as safe and welcoming: one additional way they do this is through the metaphors that reference life.

Life, like light, is another attempt to stick OTR with security, in place of fear. Death is characterized by inactivity; whereas, life is characterized by activity. Greenblatt (2014) discusses the neighborhood’s new activity compared to the old: “the neighborhood… was marred by hundreds of vacant properties just a few years ago, [and] is now home to a Pilates studio, a shop selling vintage posters and a venture capital firm called The Brandery” (p. 6). According to some of these articles, it is now home to life. The neighborhood that was once dead and activity-less is now home to all sorts of things to do, and many of these articles encourage people to travel to OTR to experience it for themselves.

*Immobility/Mobility*

The third and final metaphor that I identified within the articles was immobility/mobility. Dutton (2014) claims that gentrification, at its core, exists to “[make] people disappear” (p. 12). In this section, we see that rhetoric can do that, too. Immobility is a key sign of death. When something or someone is pronounced “dead,” they no longer move about the world in any way; they no longer have the capacity to move. When a body dies, it ceases to move; it is stagnant; it eventually begins to decay. This metaphor of immobility/mobility has to do with the way bodies can or cannot move freely within OTR. The ability to move as one pleases, regardless of the
space, is propelled by the comfort and confidence to do so. For example, in our everyday lives, when we are close to a friend and comfortable in their home, we may help ourselves to a glass of water or something from the fridge. Mobility in certain circumstances can be limited. For example, when you visit someone’s home for the first time, you typically do not take the liberty to walk upstairs without permission or open drawers at your own liberty. On a bigger scale, if you do not feel safe or comfortable in a public space, you typically do not visit it. For example, notoriously crime-ridden neighborhoods or specific blocks are not usually where you would find the city’s most well known restaurant. The ability to walk to and from wherever you please means that you do not have to give much thought to your surroundings – because you are free to encounter all of them. On the other hand, when you feel restricted in any way, this restriction may be based in fear, such as being “too scared to move” would suggest.

As we saw in the previous metaphors, OTR is often communicated as having been a threatening and deteriorating neighborhood in the past, but a safe and inviting area now. Many of the articles portray OTR as a place that you can now roam around freely and safely – something that, some authors suggest, you could not do before. Based on most of the articles that I read, OTR is depicted as a place where now you can walk around freely due to the various changes the neighborhood underwent, and the people “who used to consider being in OTR unimaginable, now are the ones taking up the parking spots” (Keirn, 2014, p. 3).

In Ahmed’s (2004) book, she writes about fear playing out in the politics of mobility – this idea is reflected in the rhetoric. Ahmed (2004) writes that there is vulnerability in opening one’s self up to their surroundings, and “… the openness of the body to the world involves a sense of danger, which is anticipated as a future pain or injury” (p. 69). As a person walks around a space, they are opening up their bodies to any possible encounters. When the body is
fearful, “the world presses against the body; the body shrinks back from the world in the desire to avoid the object of fear” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 69). This quote can be used to explain why some people, when they felt fearful of OTR, shrunk back and refrained from visiting OTR and walking around OTR. Ultimately, many people were avoiding OTR. This quote can also be used to explain why these same people now feel comfortable walking around OTR: they may feel as if there is nothing to be feared. Ahmed (2004) continues and says that fear can, at times, contain some bodies and restrict them, affecting the social space. In OTR, as time has proven, many people that once thought of OTR as fearsome, now feel free to walk around the neighborhood. This increased freedom for some people to roam is a concept that Ahmed (2004) comments on in specific relation to race. She states, “fear works to restrict some bodies through the movement or expansion of others” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 69). As the fear shrinks for some people, their mobility increases, which decreases the mobility of (or restricts) others, an implication that I will explain in depth at the conclusion of this chapter.

Many of the articles I analyzed speak to the increased mobility of some. According to some, OTR was a place that most residents – let alone tourists – had no reason to visit except for occasional trips to Findlay Market [the city’s oldest and biggest farmer’s market] and Music Hall [the city’s historic music venue and home to the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra]. (Glaser, 2012, p. 1)

Following a mention of a symphony performance outside at Washington Park, OTR’s public park, Isaac Watras, OTR resident since 2004, claims this event would’ve been unthinkable a decade ago… during a jog shortly after moving to [OTR] … [he found] a dozen rats running around its grand gazebo eating garbage. Contrast that with this spring,
when he spotted actress Cate Blanchett enjoying a day at Washington Park while in town for a movie shoot. (Keirn, 2014, p. 2)

By juxtaposing how things *used to be* with how they are *now*, authors highlight a stark difference in mobility between then and now.

Within the umbrella of mobility, the ability to *walk* is frequently mentioned. In her article, Wesseler (2013), a Cincinnati native who has lived away from the city for quite some time, claims that if she were to move back, OTR would be at the top of her list. She claims, “If I were to move back to my hometown, Over-the-Rhine would be at the top of my list of places to live – particularly as it’s one of the most pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods in a car-dependent city” (Wesseler, 2013, p. 12). This emphasis on the freedom to walk around continues as she states how enjoyable OTR is “as a beautiful, walkable, amenity-filled historic area…” (Wesseler, 2013, p. 22). An article regarding one of Cincinnati’s music festivals, MidPoint Music Festival, discusses the newfound freedom to explore all of OTR as well: Dan Bockrath, one of the festival’s executive producers, states, “We took a venue like Grammer’s and people thought we were crazy having our stage, pre-dating Washington Park [and other large gentrification efforts], at the corner of Liberty and Walnut [the northern part of OTR]” (Behle, 2014, p. 1). Now, MidPoint draws people from outside of Cincinnati, and the festival promotes and advertises ways of getting around. This past year (2014), the festival advertised walking, riding bikes and using the bus system to and from performances, which encourages people to move freely throughout the neighborhood (Behle, 2014). MidPoint is one example of an attempt to get people, who perhaps have not been to OTR before, into the neighborhood.
There are also many references to people, who may not have visited the neighborhood before, now feeling comfortable to do so. Bill Cunningham, a well-known radio and talk show host, is quoted in Wesseler’s (2013) article stating,

A few years ago the odds of Bill Cunningham and Penny Cunningham… walking through Over-the-Rhine was zero. Zilch. Kevlar. Wouldn’t have happened. Most dangerous zip code in America. Crime. Terrible. Drugs. Prostitution. We walked four or five blocks from Central Parkway north on Vine Street, and I felt as warm as if in my mother’s arms… (p. 20)

The most significant part of this quote is the last statement: he felt as if he were in his mother’s arms. Mothers are symbols of home, and as Ahmed (2004) claims, the reaction to fear is often to turn toward home, “as a fellow feeling” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 74). By creating an atmosphere that gives people a warm feeling, a feeling of being in their mother’s arms, the developers and designers of the renovations could be attempting to create a place for people to call home – even though there had been people calling it “home” for decades. Though OTR is becoming an ever-increasingly popular place to live (for those who had not lived in the neighborhood pre-gentrification), even “… visitors flock to new stores and restaurants” (Pender, 2015, p. 1). Local Cincinnati attorney, Eric Cross, was quoted as saying that four years ago, neither of his parents would’ve been caught dead in OTR, especially at night; whereas now, his parents feel safe and able to walk around the neighborhood freely – Washington Park specifically (Greenblatt, 2014). A lot of these people are visiting OTR for its various restaurants, bars, shops, parks and more.

Many of the authors describe the entertainment of the neighborhood as being one of its most attractive qualities. Greenblatt (2014) refers to OTR as an “urban playground” and goes on to talk about the neighborhood as a dining destination, in which people wait for upwards of two
hours for a table at a restaurant. Some authors describe the neighborhood as the perfect place to grab a bite to eat, attend a festival or snag a local beer (Alter, 2015). OTR, according to many of the articles, is now a place to spend time in; it is a hangout destination. Dr. Alice Skirts, who is considered a leading expert in OTR’s gentrification, stated, “Buildings that were once the homes of families are now glitzy bars, coffee shops and restaurants” (Slife & Dennis, 2014, p. 2). This entertainment factor is one that is geared toward the people that come to visit OTR, not those who are longtime residents of the area. New restaurants’ and retail stores’ price points are much higher; rent has skyrocketed. Here, as with the death/life metaphor, we see some people’s lives privileged and some people’s lives neglected through the focus on entertainment and the neighborhood as more of a destination and less of a home for some.

Those people who are being pushed to the margins are experiencing a restriction of mobility, a type of immobility not talked about in the articles. As developers continue to open stores, restaurants and apartment complexes the way they have been, the harder it becomes for longtime residents to afford the neighborhood. Whether or not this is “intentional,” the actions exclude some people. The articles I read emphasize the increasing freedom of mobility in OTR – yet fail to mention that the mobility is only for some, not all – in yet another attempt to ascribe security to the neighborhood, in lieu of fear.

Conclusion of Chapter Two & An Alternative Perspective

In an effort to make fear disappear (for those who felt fearful before), many writers in the media have tried to change the perception of the neighborhood through three metaphor: dark/light, death/life and immobility/mobility. As I have proven, fear can exist in darkness, death and immobility. In order to portray the neighborhood as no longer fearsome, the authors of these
articles used metaphors of light, life and mobility as rhetorical devices ascribing security. Overall, these metaphors work to unstick the emotion of fear and, in its place, stick security to OTR. In each of these metaphors, you can see that they privilege certain subjects (i.e. lives) and make others invisible, a concept that will be further discussed in my next chapter.

In the dark/light metaphor, we see OTR pre-gentrification depicted as deteriorating and decaying; we also see the newness of the recently opened shops and restaurants as sparkly, shiny and desirable. In the death/life metaphor, we see that OTR pre-gentrification is depicted as dead. Many articles allude to the “rebirth” of OTR, as if at one point, as if it had become lifeless, and needed to be brought back to life. Finally, in the immobility/mobility metaphor, pre-gentrified OTR is shown as a threatening place to be avoided; whereas, OTR after some massive changes and gentrification, is portrayed as a place that someone (typically white, upper-middle class) can now move around freely, comfortably and be entertained in the process. In each of these metaphors, the pre-gentrified OTR is presented as a completely different place than OTR in its current form. For some, OTR before gentrification was fearsome. If these people still saw the place as a source of fear, they would not want to visit it, spend time and money in it, etc. Through the use of these metaphors, some popular media outlets have communicated OTR as a place that is now safe and secure.

OTR is portrayed as dead, dark and immobile before the gentrification efforts. Additionally, what this serves to do is to erase the previous residents and perhaps assuage potential guilt people (typically white; those people that gentrification serves) might feel for the displacement of people. Through denying the existence of life before gentrification, no one feels guilty for “moving” these lives, because according to some, they did not exist. Thomas Dutton (2014), who has researched and written about OTR for many years, suggests, “What seems to
make everyone so happy is now codified by the term ‘urban Renaissance,’… Equating Over-the-Rhine with the Dark Ages effectively erases the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement and its multiple gains” (p. 7). Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement was an anti-displacement faction that made countless efforts – and gains – in helping displaced people in OTR (Dutton, 1999). Dutton (2014) also discusses how the Dark Ages were characterized by absolutely nothing, and by comparing OTR pre-gentrification with the Dark Ages “so too the claim is that nothing of consequence happened in Over-the-Rhine in the last four decades” (Dutton, 2014, p. 12). It is as if the neighborhood used to be dead.

Dutton (2014) offers a perspective that not many in the mainstream media portray. Unlike some of the other authors, Dutton acknowledges the life that did exist and still exists in the neighborhood prior to and outside of the gentrified areas. In regard to gentrification efforts, he discusses the effects on specific groups of people and states, “… whole peoples are being ignored, excluded, abandoned, written off, disposed of, erased, [and] left to their own devices” (Dutton, 2014, p. 6). Specifically, Dutton (2014) states that the decisions in OTR “violently [remove] all traces of the poor and homeless” (p. 5). This erasure and removal of all traces of existence denies something’s existence in the first place. This chapter shows how the physical disappearance of these people is also reflected rhetorically. We see the physical disappearance reflected in metaphors of death, darkness and immobility. It is as if “it” (in Dutton’s example, “it” is the poor and homeless) never existed – or lived. According to Dutton (2014), it should then come as no surprise that “Experiencing their own disappearance, citizens [of gentrified neighborhoods] slide from ‘helplessness to hopelessness to nothingness’” (p. 7). This sense of nothingness is as if they were dead – and some authors suggest that the neighborhood therefore needed to be brought back to life.
In this chapter, we have seen how the discourse within some popular media outlets constructs OTR, then and now, as fearsome and secure, respectively (for some people, of course). In the next chapter, I ask how the place then comes to reflect these emotional responses (fear and security) via its material rhetoric. In my literature review, I discuss how, in order for the rhetoric to stick – for OTR to be interpreted as safe – the material rhetoric must mirror the discourse. You can call something “safe” or you can call something “scary” as much as you want… but unless a person feels that way when they experience that “something,” the emotion does not stick. For example, if I am told that a place is “safe,” but then I visit and do not feel safe, I will not consider it a safe place. I now ask, how does a place feel secure or feel fearsome? How do the material aspects of the place compare to the discursive metaphors? Encompassed in that overall question, I will look for signs of darkness, lightness, death, life and mobility or the lack thereof, in the physical space (see: next chapter). Concurrently, I am looking for indications of privileged and neglected bodies/lives, as that was also a significant finding in this chapter. To uncover whether or not the material aspects of OTR were in line with the discourse about OTR, I conducted a walk down Vine Street, the busiest and most gentrified street in the neighborhood, which is my next chapter.

As aforementioned, the death/life metaphor reveals that some lives are privileged (mostly white, upper-middle class people) and some are neglected (mostly African-American; those living in OTR before the gentrification). This metaphor also reveals how there may be efforts to assuage (mostly) white guilt. In order to open the fancy restaurants, build the million-dollar condos and make way for juice bars and fitness studios, people had to be kicked out of the buildings (i.e. their homes). Buildings were (and continue to be) bought up by developers, and in order for the developers to “flip” the buildings, the people living in them must go. However,
when the media portrays the place as “dead” before, as many of them do, they assuage any (white) guilt that would or could exist because of these decisions. In a sense, they communicate that there is no need to worry about the renovations/gentrification/changes because there were not any lives to (negatively) affect. *It needed to be brought back to life*, according to many (see: articles aforementioned).

Greenblatt (2014) shows this to be true in his article, in which he mentions Cincinnati city councilman, Chris Seelbach’s response to the renovations in OTR:

> Due to earlier population loss, the rehab has avoided the usual arguments about gentrification: there was almost no one to drive out… [Chris Seelbach, city councilman, claimed,] ‘We were able to do this because everything was boarded up and hardly anyone was living there.’ (Greenblatt, 2014, p. 2)

In other words, there is no reason to feel like, by gentrifying the area, they are negatively affecting anyone’s lives… because, according to Seelbach, *there was no one to drive out*. The way that many of the popular media describe the neighborhood pre-gentrification may contribute to Seelbach’s and others’ assumptions that the neighborhood was uninhabited and in bad condition in the first place. Almost all of the people that lived in the buildings prior to gentrification of the neighborhood were African-American. The indication that their lives did not exist or matter speaks to the way that their lives are treated frequently in media, politics and urban gentrification.

According to Dutton (2014), “[Black] history is retold in ways that edit [blacks] out” in a neighborhood like OTR (p. 13). We saw an example of this in Glaser’s (2012) article, when she skips over the years between the 2001 riots and fast-forwards to “today.” Many recount the history of OTR in a way that does not suggest any form of life in this time period that Glaser
neglects. Urban gentrification involves a city “[turning] a blind eye on its duty to protect the area’s already-existing communities” (Slife & Dennis, 2014, p. 1) A longtime resident of OTR who lives right next door to The Anchor, a “trendy seafood place,” states, “People like myself, I can’t afford to go in these restaurants… I wouldn’t mind going, but I can’t” (Nichols & May, 2015, p. 1). This may be because “[OTR] has seen an influx of new, more affluent residents and businesses that cater to them and to people who visit to eat, drink and shop” (Nichols & May, 2015, p. 1). As OTR was a primarily African-American neighborhood for the years before the 2001 riots and leading up to the gentrification efforts, African-Americans are those lives that are being neglected. Quincy Moore, OTR barbershop owner, recounts his various encounters with the police force: “Go three blocks down Vine Street and the white people sit in front of their businesses and nobody bothers them. Out here, the cops are pushing blacks around to make a more expensive environment, to make it safe for the people who can afford these new condos” (Fisher, 2014, p. 2). The freedom of mobility is increasing for some people, but not everyone. The longtime residents of OTR are being restricted, whereas the new bodies in OTR are experiencing more freedom of mobility. In the un-gentrified area, “northern edge of [OTR], police have become more aggressive as nearby blocks have grown more upscale” (Fisher, 2014, p. 2). This way of “keeping the have-nots at bay” is one of the segregating effects of gentrification (Dutton, 2014, p. 6). We see this segregation rhetorically in this chapter. My project shows that rhetorically, mobilization is celebrated; OTR is shown as a space that “everyone” is free to visit and enjoy. However, what is made invisible is the flip side: the restriction of mobility of those who have been erased rhetorically, the “have-nots.”

Rhetorically, we saw that mobilization is emphasized and for some people, their mobility has increased. Ahmed (2004) claims that mobility is able to increase when fear decreases. This
increase of mobility for some means the decrease (or restriction) of mobility for others. Ahmed (2007) states that “fear is felt differently by different bodies, in the sense that there is a relationship to space and mobility at stake in the differential organisation of fear itself” (p. 68). Ahmed (2007) suggests that there may be a common understanding that those people who are most scared are the ones that feel the most vulnerable. Vulnerability, a characteristic of a body, “involves a particular kind of bodily relation to the world, in which openness itself is read as a site of potential danger” (p. 69). When a person feels scared, they feel most vulnerable; in turn, their vulnerability closes them off or turns them away from the world. This is the restriction of mobility. Because many people who once felt fearful in OTR no longer do, their feelings of vulnerability have decreased, so their bodily openness has increased. Now, one could see that there is a new fear in OTR: that of longtime residents. They may feel fearful of losing their home, their public parks, their sidewalks and overall neighborhood. In fear, the world presses against the body; the body shrinks back from the world in the desire to avoid the object of fear. Fear involves shrinking the body; it restricts the body’s mobility precisely insofar as it seems to prepare the body for flight. (Ahmed, 2007, p. 69)

Put most simply, plenty of people have already been kicked out of their homes through various building renovations in OTR – this preparation for “flight,” then, seems almost natural. When bodies feel fearful, they turn toward home; they search for a fellow feeling, a connection (Ahmed, 2007). When some bodies (white) that used to fear other bodies (black) stop fearing those bodies, a kind of role reversal takes place, which Ahmed (2007) provides an example of:

If we return to the racist encounter… we can see that the white child’s apparent fear does not lead to his refusal to inhabit the world, but to his embrace of the world through the apparently safe enclosure formed by the loved other (being-at-home). Rather, in this case,
it is the black subject, the one who fears the white child’s fear, who is crushed by that fear, by being sealed into a body that tightens up, and takes up less space. In other words, fear works to restrict some bodies through the movement or expansion of others. (p. 69)

At the same time as the (mostly) white bodies’ movement expanded in OTR, the space for black bodies lessened. This is how fear becomes political; it dictates what bodies can and cannot do, where they can and cannot move. Ahmed (2007) argues, “the mobility of some bodies involves or even requires the restriction of the mobility of others” (p. 70). As we see in the rhetoric of the news articles, it appears that in order for some white people to feel safe in OTR, there must be a restriction of black bodies’ mobility. OTR’s gentrification is made possible by “… the regulation of bodies in space through the uneven distribution of fear which allows spaces to become territories, claimed as rights by some bodies and not others” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 70). Even in the rhetoric, we see that Gentrification works for white lives and against black lives.

Gentrification “targets communities of color and mobilizes their residents for removal, transfer or displacement” (Dutton, 2014, p. 5). Dutton, professor of Architecture at Miami University of Ohio, studies OTR and has dedicated his research to understanding the neighborhood for years. In one article, he looked at how a militarist suppression of people of color (and those homeless) [has come] in the form of expanding police forces, mass incarceration, war on drugs, and punitive legislation that seek[s] to regulate public space by evicting such ‘undesirables’ and criminalizing them.

(Dutton, 2014, p. 3)

This speaks loudly to how certain bodies have privileges, and certain bodies are restricted, directed and controlled. Described as “no tragedy,” a barbershop that has run its business in OTR for the last 40 years has had to close its doors and move locations (Faherty, 2015, p. 1). The
barbershop, as of January 2015, was located in a central part of OTR but was being relocated a few blocks over. Claiming that the building needs renovations, the landlord asked the barbershop to move. Though the landlord found a new location for the barbershop, this still speaks to the displacement of residents. The displacement happens as safety and homes are created for whites and the middle class. Places and voices, such as this barbershop, are the ones that are silenced and repressed in the process. One longtime patron of the barbershop says that the barbershop “feels like home a little bit” (Faherty, 2015, p. 1). Johnson, a barber working there since 1992, describes the shop as being like “the last of the Mohicans,” in other words, they felt like the last ones standing… but now, they are required to leave (Faherty, 2015, p. 2).

Ultimately, metaphors of death/life and dark/light make previous or longtime residents invisible in the media. This is seen in the language used to describe the neighborhood: such as the neighborhood pre-gentrification being called the “Dark Ages” and the current happenings coined “urban Renaissance.” Furthermore, the immobility/mobility metaphor portrays the mobility as now universal – as if everyone is welcome to walk around freely, when in reality, only certain bodies/lives are made mobile, while others are pushed away (and made immobile). This is seen in the example of the woman living close to The Anchor and not being able to afford it, as well as the man whose barbershop has to move after over 40 years of operation. As such, these metaphors ignore the political and race issue at hand by focusing on light, life and mobility, as well as assuage any white guilt about the gentrification through darkness, death and immobility. Whether the space is being portrayed as safe or as fearsome, the material qualities of the neighborhood must mirror the descriptions, which is why in my next chapter of analysis, I turn to the physical place and take a walk.
Chapter Three:

Material Rhetoric of Over-the-Rhine

Over-the-Rhine

Figure 1. This image is from Google maps and outlines the limits of Over-the-Rhine. For reference, the "downtown" district of Cincinnati is just south of the furthest southern boundary line, "42."

Background

Because fear is tied to a politics of mobility, and because, in OTR, this mobility is primarily pedestrian mobility, I approached reading the material rhetoric of OTR by walking through the space. Walking also has numerous advantages for my critical analysis. In a multitude of ways, walking slows things down. For me, this means my observations, my thoughts, my processing of the world in general – all of it slows down. I absorb more; I see more. Rather than being in a car, zipping by, I encounter my surroundings as I walk past them. As someone who lives close (in Covington, Kentucky, which is 2.6 miles away) to OTR and frequents the neighborhood often
(for dinner, meeting up with friends, yoga in the park, coffee, happy hours, Red’s Opening Day, and the list goes on), it would be easy for me to assume that I know the neighborhood well already. For about three years, I truly spent every weekend evening and most Sundays hanging out in the neighborhood. As I thought about each of the streets I would consider for this project, I went over what I expected to see. In my head, I walked the streets, pictured the buildings, sidewalks and intersections I would pass. I even imagined times that I parked in certain places or ran into friends in front of specific storefronts, but these memories caused me to stop. When you spend a lot of time in a place, it is easy to assume that you were observant those times you were there. You assume you were taking in more than you actually were. I say this because, as I walked down the street for this project, I found myself surprised by what I was noticing. All those times before – I had not picked up on much. There was so much that I had been missing. On each of the streets, there are countless buildings I never noticed, alleyways I did not recognize and the list does not stop there. I was taken aback by the amount of stuff that I had passed countless times, but had never noticed. Not even once.

Typically, as I walk around OTR, I interpret what I am seeing, hearing and feeling. This time was a bit different. The feeling aspect was not an aspect at all. Unlike times before, this walk had a specific purpose: I looked for signs of the metaphors from the previous chapter; I looked for signs of light/dark, life/death and mobility/immobility. In the last chapter, about the rhetoric, I found that these three metaphors are the persistent rhetorical devices used in the popular press about OTR. As we saw in my analysis, when the articles try to ascribe security to OTR, portraying it as now a safe place to go, they use metaphors of light, life and mobility. However, when they are trying to discuss the way OTR “used to be” or portray gentrification in a positive light, they use metaphors of dark, death and immobility. As aforementioned, in order for
OTR to fit the prior categorization made by the discourse (security vs. fear), the material rhetoric must evoke similar affective experiences (Damasio, 2003).

As I mentioned in the review of literature, if the material rhetoric does not evoke the same affective experience, the affections (the ways that a body comes into contact with another body) would not articulate to those emotions (fear and security) (Damasio, 2003). An example of this would be if a person does not feel secure in OTR, they would not walk freely down the street. However, there is not much of a question whether people believe the rhetoric regarding safety because, as we see in the articles that portray OTR’s gentrification positively, plenty of people are visiting the area. The rhetoric appears to be sticking: (mostly white, middle class) people consider OTR as “safe” and “secure.” As we know, in order for the rhetoric to stick, the material needs to mirror the emotional categorization (fear vs. security).

In order for people – mostly white, who may have believed the area to be threatening before – to believe that the space is safe and secure, the physical aspects of the space itself must communicate that same message. Following the chapter about discourse, I found myself asking… well what does fear look like (to the people who describe the place in these terms)? And, what does security look like? If the categorization of the neighborhood suggested by the articles evokes a strong sense of security, the place itself must also evoke a strong sense of security (and vice versa regarding fearfulness). Again, this is because “If we do not experience a certain body state with a certain quality we call pleasure… we have no reason whatsoever to regard any thought as happy. Or sad” (Damasio, 2003, p. 87). In order for either emotion (security or fear) to stick to the place, the affective experience of the place (OTR) must mirror that emotional categorization (security vs. fear) that we saw in the discourse. If the affective
experience of OTR does not match this categorization, the rhetoric within the news articles would not stick.

In order to see for myself whether the material rhetoric matched the discourse, I had to walk around the space – and this time with intention. For this chapter, my project seeks to uncover the ways that the material rhetoric may or may not match the discourse (via media coverage) about OTR. In the last chapter, I found a heavy presence of metaphors. These metaphors are what I lean heavily onto for this chapter as well. I looked for traces of these metaphors as I walked: I looked for signs of darkness, death and decay, for example. Simply put, does the “safe” area reflect light, life and mobility? In some of the articles, there appears to be an invisible line that separates the “new” OTR from the “old.” You could view this as a line where the gentrification becomes less prevalent and obvious. By walking the space, I see for myself whether there is a change in the material that reflects this “line.” By walking the space, I see for myself what the areas that are depicted as “secure” (by some) and the areas that are depicted (by some) as “fearsome” look like.

I did not walk around OTR to record how I felt while walking; I walked around OTR so that I could observe and record the various bodies – human and non-human – that have the capacity or potential to affect other bodies. I used my eyes and ears as observational devices. That said, the world around me was coming through a filter. Perhaps other people who went on the same walk would have picked up on different aspects of the neighborhood. For example, I can imagine an architect walking down the same road and paying more attention the buildings than the storefront decor. As I walked, I looked for differences in the material qualities of the bodies I encountered. Different areas of the neighborhood have different capacities and qualities. For example, if during one block of the walk there were no streetlights, but in the next there were
five, this difference would be important to record. Instead of reporting on my experience and my feelings, I attempt to report on the material characteristics of the place itself, and hope to illustrate what material features are associated with safety (and light, life, and mobility) and which are associated with fear (and darkness, death, and immobility).

If this were an ethnographic project or one concerned with my personal experience, then, necessarily, my racial and gender identity would play a major role. Reflexivity would be crucial in every step, critique and interpretation. As white and female, I have different capacities for affection, culturally trained, than perhaps do people of other races and genders. However, for the purposes of this research, I am not interested in my emotions, but in the affective bodies around me and their potential capacities. Though my racial, gender and socio-economic identity would influence my experience and interpretation of the space, that is not the goal of this research. As such, I have tried to bracket out my subjective experience of the place and focus on the material and aesthetic features of the street – the ones that any body would encounter. I did not record how other bodies responded to my own, as my race, gender and socio-economic (appearance) would certainly play a part if that were the case.

Since material characteristics of a neighborhood do not typically change per person, my encounters walking down the street are not unique to me besides the date and time of my walk. Admittedly, I was incapable of recording each and every detail; there are sure to be things missing from my observations. Furthermore, it is important to note that the neighborhood continues to change each day. There have been multiple store/restaurant openings, more construction, etc. Therefore, it is impossible for my observations to function as anything more than a representative snapshot. Toward the end of this chapter, I chose to methodologically bracket my encounters via the “line” mentioned above – not because it officially exists, but
because I found my observations to differ from one half of the walk to the other. I bracket the street as follows: Central Parkway to 14th Street, and then, 14th Street to Liberty Street. In two respective columns, I compare my encounters during each “leg” of the walk. Though this bracketing will admittedly be imperfect and lack an element of being all-encompassing, the bracketing is the best access I have in the comparison of fear versus security. Aspects of the walk such as the time of day, time of year and other factors of chance influenced what I recorded, but this is unavoidable. I did not choose to walk at night because of the lack of activity and visibility on the street. I chose to walk alone because I did not want to become distracted or speak to anyone about what I was seeing. With the use of recording device, I “jotted” down my observations and kept walking.

In short, I was not recording my emotions. The point of the walk was to take firsthand notes of the potential encounters that any body would have walking down that same street. All of the bodies/things that I encounter while walking have the potential or the ability to affect anyone else that might walk down the same street(s) – and perhaps they would affect each person differently. As I walked and analyzed the walk, I asked myself the following questions: What does the security portrayed by the discourse look like? What does the fear portrayed by the discourse look like? What material features and aesthetic qualities are potentially interpreted as fearful or as safe?

Ultimately, I found that the southern half of Vine Street (more gentrified) appeared to be cared for and maintained; whereas, the northern half (less gentrified) appeared to be neglected. This chapter established this rhetoric of maintenance versus neglect through a detailed outline of what I saw. As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, this difference speaks to more than the physical space: it speaks to the privileging of some lives and the neglecting of others, which will
be further discussed in the conclusion of this chapter. An analysis of the material qualities not only shows how security can be made to stick to a place via material rhetoric for some people, but also can help explain why gentrification generates outrage and anger from some others. This conclusion can be fruitful for future revitalization efforts by suggesting different approaches for revitalization that would mitigate rather than exacerbate class and racial division. Different approaches include efforts to preserve communities for *all* residents, not just the “right” ones (as according to some, especially those in the news stories I reviewed).

In this chapter, I will first justify my decision to focus my analysis on Vine Street specifically. After a short overview of the street, I will walk the reader through the walk. I will recount my encounters on Vine Street from Central Parkway to Liberty Street. After I describe the walk at large, I will discuss some differences I noticed along the way. My encounters significantly changed a little over half way through the walk. I found that my observations from Central Parkway to 14th Street (southern half) were notably different than my observations from 14th to Liberty (northern half).

*Introducing Vine Street*

There are many streets that make up OTR, as shown in the map above. I chose to walk down the street that has the most activity, construction, development and gentrification: Vine Street. This street has the most hustle and bustle regardless of the time of day. Not only does this street consist of the most activity, but also it encompasses all types of bodies (non-human): some old and some new. Someone unfamiliar with the area would be able to easily point out what aspects of the neighborhood are newer. You simply can tell whether a building’s paint is peeling off the sides or their landscaping is brand new. Because I am very familiar with the neighborhood, I am more easily able to identify new structures, know whether or not things have always been there
or decipher between “new” and the “opened-last-week” restaurants on the street. This knowledge gives me some advantage in knowing what is a new addition and what is not, but again, it is relatively easy to see which buildings, parking meters, light posts or sidewalks are newer or older than others.

Vine Street continues in both directions past where I started and where I ended my walk. I chose to only walk between Liberty Street (on the northern end) and Central Parkway (on the southern end and labeled as “42” on the map). Walking the blocks between these two streets included a combination of structures that have been there for years and buildings that opened in the last couple of weeks, which provides for a plethora of bodies and observations. Additionally, this stretch makes up most of the diameter of OTR (from south to north, at least). Stopping my walk at Central Parkway had to happen because that is where OTR cuts off and the “downtown” district begins. Liberty Street makes up one of the biggest intersections (Vine Street & Liberty Street), which contributed to my decision to end the walk there.

I completed the walk in November 2015 and returned twice in the next month to take additional notes on the specific characteristics I had left out during my first draft of this chapter. For example, I had to return to Vine Street to count the number of abandoned buildings. I chose to count the number of abandoned buildings on the street because one day as I was driving (post-first draft), I noticed there were far more empty buildings on the northern half of the street. For some reason, this was a characteristic of the street that I had not picked up on at first. When I returned to the neighborhood to take additional notes, I used a pen and paper, which differed from the first walk. During my original walk in November, I used my iPhone as a recording device, simply speaking into the Voice Memo app. There are some gaps in my audio recordings from the moments that I was looking around and observing in each direction from where I stood.
Because I am very familiar with many parts of the neighborhood, I wanted to make sure I observed all that surrounded me, versus just what immediately caught my eye. As I began the writing process of this chapter, I used Google Maps to keep me on track as I wrote about each block’s differing experience. By taking the time to slow down and observe more than just what catches the eye, I was able to record the material bodies that anyone could encounter while walking down Vine Street in OTR. Again, perhaps certain qualities struck me – as the observer in this case was made up of my ears and eyes – and perhaps someone else would have picked up on different aspects. However, the material bodies that I did record anyone could encounter.

What I found to be the main differentiating characteristics between the northern and the southern halves is neglected versus maintained, respectively. How this observation fits with the metaphors will be discussed later in this chapter. The southern area is a more commercial, gentrified area; the street is cared for and clean, and ultimately maintained. The northern area is more residential and has witnessed less gentrification; the area is ignored, and ultimately, neglected. There are many affective bodies, as will be shown and discussed shortly, that contribute to this overall “maintained” and overall “neglected” sense of the street, and I argue that it is these qualities that contribute to OTR being interpreted as, respectively, secure and fearful.

**Walking Vine Street**

On the walk, I started at Central Parkway (the south side of OTR) and walked north, toward Liberty Street. Once I reached Liberty, I had to turn around and walk back to where I had parked. Because I did retrace my steps, my descriptions of “walking down” the street are not entirely linear. For instance, I used observations from walking in both directions to describe each block.
on the walk. As I recount the bodies I encountered, I begin at Central Parkway and detail the experience walking to Liberty, and end there. I also chose to begin the walk on the southern end because that is the area that has had the most renovated buildings, restaurants opened and new housing/parking garages/etc built. Likewise, this is the area that the rhetoric about the place emphasizes the most (the “new” OTR). Capturing my surroundings as if I am walking in one direction shows what happens and what changes from one end of OTR (south) to the other (north). I look for differences in (human and non-human) bodies as I walk. The experience of walking shows the differences in bodies as they happen from block-to-block. Now, let us walk (up) Vine.

It is about 2:00pm (Eastern Standard Time). As I stand at the corner of Central Parkway and Vine Street and gaze north, you see rows and rows of businesses, cars and pockets of people. I hear the subtle murmurs of conversation around the city, as well as the occasional honk, squealing of wheels and general hum of cars as they drive past. The first quality I notice is the newness of the street. On one side of the corner is an all-glass building that is filled with Segways. This is where you go if you are interested in going on a Segway tour of Cincinnati. The building is new and connected to the back of it is a parking garage where “monthly” parking is available for people who work downtown (note: Kroger’s headquarters are across the street). On the other side of the street, there is a parking lot and apartment buildings. There are some cigarette butts scattered around the sidewalk, but other than that and the occasional piece of trash, there is not a lot of litter for the next few blocks. As I leave the corner of Central Parkway and Vine Street and walk north, there are parking meters that line each side of the street. The parking meters now run from 9:00am to 9:00pm. (This is a new law and just a couple of months ago, they only ran from 9:00am to 5:00am, and did not run on Sundays. Now, they run every day.
of the week.) All of the meters are new; they all accept credit cards – and cost about $2.00 USD/hour. There are also planters lining the sidewalks, along with ~15 foot tall trees planted every ~10 feet. Many of the trashcans on this street are also noticeably newer. In most areas of the city, the trashcans are your “normal” type bin with a circular opening for trash. They are nothing special, just a can. Though there are some of these normal-looking trashcans, there are other trashcans in these blocks: these trashcans (in the southern blocks of OTR) look like tall boxes with metal handles on each side. There are even little drawings of people throwing away trash into a trashcan on the side of these trashcans. There is a handle on the side that allows for easy throwaway, and then conceals the trash inside.

As I continue, I next notice the street’s qualities of light. Streetlights line the sidewalk (as it is daytime, they are not turned on). They, like the trashcans, are notably shiny and clean. It is the middle of the afternoon, so the street lights are not turned on, making it impossible to tell how well lit the street would be in the evening. However, based on the number of streetlights, one may presume that when they are turned on, the street is well lit. They are all black with a kind of lantern at the top. I will return to this comment on the streetlights later on in the chapter. As I continue, there is a large local theatre to the left. Their signage is made of big, flowing banners. The front of the theatre has four large pillars, and the entire building is bright white. Another place I see plenty of light is on the signage of each business. There is new (apply the same interpretation of “new” as cited above) signage hanging above businesses and a small light is set up to shine on it when it becomes dark outside. These storefronts are also very inviting with all glass fronts.

The third quality that I notice is the accessibility of the neighborhood. There is a bicycle locked to the bike stand outside of the theatre. These bicycle stations are outside of just about
every other storefront for a few blocks. When it is nicer outside, even more bikes are locked up to them. On the corner of 12th and Vine (the first intersection I come to), there is a men’s clothing shop, Article. The outside walls are entirely glass, so I can see inside of the shop. When I peer inside, the walls are dark and the inside is set up like a living room, complete with a leather couch, rug and floor lamp. I have walked inside of the shop before and know that if you grab a price tag, you are likely to see an amount that exceeds $100, regardless of the product (yes, this includes small items like neckties, too). The most obvious forms of accessibility are the small, stand-alone signs throughout the walk that provide maps of OTR, highlighting all that there is to “see and do.” There are sections on the map, categorizing “Dining,” “Entertainment,” and “Shopping,” among others. This map contains all that I will encounter for the next few blocks north, east and west of where I am standing. All of this is just in the first block.
Figure 2. This is an image of the sign placed along Vine Street, giving viewers a sense of where they can eat, shop, drink, etc.

The street I am now standing at, 12th Street, is the beginning of a slew of newly opened storefronts, restaurants, parking garages and more. The trashcans, streetlights, planters, parking meters and landscaped trees continue as you walk from 12th Street to 15th Street. At the bottom of all of the planted trees, as well as inside the planters, is dark mulch, the color indicating the mulch is relatively fresh. As I cross over 12th Street, there is a huge pothole in the middle of the street (which the city has since filled), likely to be attributed to the construction for the
Cincinnati Street Car, the city’s future public transit system, but other than this pot hole, the street appears in good condition: the painted lines appear fresh and un-faded; the cement is nice and intact. There are a few groups of people walking in and out of the stores and restaurants. I am walking around during the tail end of lunchtime, so there are many people who are coming and going from the various restaurants on the street. The majority of people leaving these places are white. From 12th to 13th Street, I see two African-American men who appear to be leaving one of the restaurants, one of them wearing a suit and tie. I pass a few black men walking to the barbershop. I continue and pass a black woman pushing a stroller past me with a ~3 year old by her side. I also pass two homeless people, one is a man and one is a woman, both are white. Their clothing is dirty and torn along the edges. They are holding signs that read, “HOMELESS AND HUNGRY. ANYTHING HELPS. GOD BLESS.” Their shoes are very worn and the laces are mismatched. There is also one black man who I have encountered many times in the past. He appears to be mentally unstable; he is asking people for money as he walks up and down the street. (He does this often in various parts of the city, inside and outside of businesses.) The sidewalks are well-maintained: there are no cracks; each cement block is level and matching in color, ensuring that no one trips over them; there is very little litter, again there are some cigarette butts that fill the gaps in the sidewalks and along the street’s gutter. Additionally, there is a design of bricks lining the street side of the sidewalk, surrounding the trees/landscaping. The bricks, like the cement sidewalks, are well maintained and intact.

The following observations are all based on the general encounters that I experienced walking between 12th Street and 14th Street. There were so many commonalities between restaurants, architecture and other bodies, that speaking of them in general terms is most effective. These few blocks are the most inhabited, active and consistently visited. As I walk
these blocks, I pass ten restaurants (this number has gone up since my walk), a brand new condo building, a new parking garage, six retailers, an ice cream parlor, a donut shop, a juice bar, a gym and two bars. The restaurants are all homey and inviting, and I will detail why in the rest of this paragraph and the next. The restaurants are all in obviously renovated and restored buildings.

The front of every single restaurant – all ten – is made up of glass, encouraging me to peer inside and perhaps decide to come in. Each restaurant’s external design seemingly invites one in. At lunchtime (as well as dinner time), most of them are filled – some more than others, of course. Most of the restaurants have a sign hanging above the entrance door(s), accompanied by a light to shine on the sign when it is dark. The signs appear to be new – whether this means they are shiny, crisply painted, clean, etc. A commonality between most of the restaurants is the option for outdoor seating. There is either a way to open up the front of the restaurant or there is a designated outdoor space for dining or drinking during warmer seasons. Each of the restaurants has a bar as the main focus when I glance in the windows or walk in the doors. The bars are backed with lines of liquor bottles, beer bottles and wine bottles, placed with lighting behind the bar. Most of the restaurants (which I have visited in the evening) are dimly lit. Though each restaurant has its own style, they have many things in common: the dim lighting, focus on the bar, natural wood (either chairs, decorations or floors, for example), exposed brick, etc.

As with my encounters on the streets, when I look inside of the restaurants, the majority of people are white. Many of the people dining in these restaurants are dressed in “professional” clothing (though, important to note is the time of day, around 2:00pm on a weekday). Professional clothing, in this case, consists of collared shirts, suits and pencil skirts, just as a few examples. Most of these people probably work in the downtown area. The price point at these restaurants varies from place to place. Abigail Street is most likely the most expensive restaurant,
with entrees ranging all the way up to \(~$30/\text{plate}\); whereas, at The Eagle, a restaurant that focuses on fried chicken, you can get a meal for one for \(~$15. All of these restaurants are “eat-in” restaurants, accommodating couples as well as large groups. When you walk into the restaurants, there is a host there to greet you and find you a table – this exchange is typically formal. Hosts often address you as “ma’am” or “sir,” for example, but let’s return to the street.

As I continue to walk from 12\textsuperscript{th} to 14\textsuperscript{th}, you observe streetlights and trashcans. The state of most of the buildings would be labeled as “good.” The walls are not falling apart; the bricks are intact; the windows look new and are not broken or cracked. Small details of the building, such as the gutters, corners of the windows and cleanliness of the glass have all been taken care of consistently. Even the landscaping is tidy; there are no weeds. (It is November, so there are no blooming flowers, but in the summer, there are plenty.) Above all of the storefronts, there are apartments whose windows also look intact. I can see inside some of the apartments, especially at night. The apartments appear to be decorated nicely and consist of features such as exposed brick and high ceilings. From 12\textsuperscript{th} to 14\textsuperscript{th}, there are two uninhabited buildings that appear to not be utilized for anything. The brand new condo buildings have their own separate entrance. Like the restaurants, their external “walls” are all glass, you can see into many of them. Additionally, each condo has its own walkout balcony that is also made of shiny, new glass. Underneath the condo building, there is a parking garage with a guard standing outside of it. The guard is a black man, dressed in a uniform that you would see security guards typically wearing. He is standing at the entrance of the parking garage; he greets me as I pass. I did not take note of the number of people I passed from 12\textsuperscript{th} to 14\textsuperscript{th}, but the number greatly increased. The closer I got to 14\textsuperscript{th} Street, the less white bodies I encountered, and the more black bodies I encountered. Additionally, the more north that I walked, the greater variety of ages I encountered. Up to 14\textsuperscript{th} Street, I had come
across mostly young and middle-aged people, mostly professionals, based on their appearances. I cross over 14th Street.

Once I cross 14th Street, the number of abandoned or neglected buildings and “run down” buildings increases. While there were two abandoned buildings from 12th to 14th, from 14th to Liberty, there are sixteen (16) abandoned buildings. Many of the abandoned buildings have boarded up windows and doors. Some of the boards are painted to look like actual doors and windows. The paint colors are bright and colorful.

![Photo of painted building](image)

**Figure 3. Photo of painted building taken with my iPhone on Vine Street, just north of 14th Street.**

There are still a lot of people walking around outside, but now, unlike the walk from Central Parkway to 14th, the majority of people that I pass are black. As I continue down the street, I
begin to see more trash and more cigarette butts lining the sidewalks. There are empty soda bottles, chip bags, as well as random pieces of paper trash. There are a few planters from 14th to 15th, but they are not as frequent or well cared for – meaning that the mulch is not as recently placed or as dark as it was earlier on in the walk.

Once I pass over 14th Street, I see what appears to be a very old store sign that says “PAINT,” though there is no longer an open paint store below. Right past the old sign, there is a Kroger, Cincinnati’s biggest grocery store. There is a small parking lot with five cars parked in it in front of Kroger. Though there are not many cars out front, there are a lot of people. There are a group of black men standing outside and one man standing alone with bags of groceries in his hands. In front of the parking lot, there is a Red Bike station, Cincinnati’s relatively new bike rental system. Other than the Red Bike station, there are no bicycle stands to lock your bike to, as there were in the earlier half of the walk. There is a significant amount of trash in the parking lot and along the sidewalk in front and across the street from Kroger. There are quite a few empty, plastic Kroger bags tumbling around. As I walk past Kroger, I encounter an empty cigarette pack, chip bags, plastic bottles and countless cigarette and cigar/cigarillo butts. Diagonally across from Kroger was a men’s’ clothing and shoe store. This store recently closed and is now completely boarded up. What you can still see on the outside appears to have been there for quite some time. The signage for this store is all hand-painted. Above the windows, there are large letters advertising men and boys’ clothing, as well as the fact that the store cashes checks. Across the street from the store, there is a “Polar Café” sign that is fading. Similarly to the PAINT sign, there is no longer a business beneath the sign that advertises.

The sidewalk along this block is cracked in some places; however, there are not any potholes or major breakage in the cement. The meters along the road are the older meters – i.e.
the ones that do not take credit cards. They are manual and are a bit dirty and aged; this compares to the newer meters that are digital. The time limit on these meters is also less than those on the southern half of Vine Street. Many of these meters are yellow and have a 30-minute limit, whereas the meters that I encountered earlier on in my walk were 120-minute meters. I notice as I continue to pass Kroger that there are no longer planters or trees. What I do notice is that there are weeds/grass growing in between the sidewalk blocks. One of the boarded up, abandoned buildings has what appears to be grass growing out from underneath one of the boards. This overgrowth of plants is consistent for the next two blocks as I continue to Liberty Street.

Another difference that I notice during this latter half of the walk is the change in streetlights and trashcans. All the way up until Kroger, there are streetlights that are new, black and look modeled after an old street lantern. As soon as I pass Kroger, the streetlights are older, made of grey metal and have a completely different style. The trashcans changed before the streetlights changed, rather than a mix of styles, these trashcans are all the type you would “normally” see walking down any city street – they are a bin with an open, circular top for people to toss their trash.
Figure 4 & 5. Photo of older streetlight (left; just north of 14th St.) and newer streetlight (right; corner of 12th St. & Vine St.) taken with my iPhone.

Figure 6 & 7. Photo of older trashcan (left; corner of 14th St. & Vine St.) and newer trashcan (right; corner of 12th St. & Vine St.) taken with my iPhone.
I continue walking and see a partial sign for a discount store. Now the only letters left are those at the end; they read “SCO,” followed by a hand-painted “discount store.” There are outlines for an “R” and an “O” at the beginning, so the sign would say “ROSCO” at some point. Again, there is no store beneath this signage. Another change in scenery that I notice now is the lack of parking meters. There were a few in front of Kroger, but they are lessening as I walk toward Liberty. The cars appear to be able to park wherever they please from 15th to Liberty. On a few of the buildings, there is indistinguishable graffiti. I cannot read what it says, but it is written in black spray paint. I continue to walk.

As I begin walking the last block leading up to Liberty Street, I am on the right side of the street. To my left, there is a street vendor. There are some shirts hanging from the fence behind the table. In front of the hanging clothing, there are two card tables. There is an assortment of stuff for sale including CDs, sunglasses, purses, t-shirts and other odds and ends. There is a black man sitting in an outdoor folding chair, wearing sunglasses and a hat. There are some black men and a few women hanging out around the table, but they do not appear to be shopping. This group is talking loudly and laughing, just hanging out. The building that the vendor is set up in front of is in poor shape with peeling paint, cracks in the cement and dirty windows. The door to the building is open. Though the building appears to be in bad shape, there is still someone living in the apartment above the empty storefront. There are curtains in the windows above that indicate inhabitance. I continue walking to Liberty and pass some more abandoned buildings. More boards are painted to look like they are windows and doors. There is one area right by a gated parking lot that has a few planted trees and landscaping with mulch. Next to the gated parking lot is K&A Market; this is a convenience store. They advertise that they sell i-Wireless, lottery tickets and will cash your checks. Other than the sign that indicates
the name of the store, there is a huge sign hanging above the store that reads “CHECKS CASHED – MONEY ORDERS.” There is a teenage, black male standing outside of the market. Between the market and the parking lot, there is a storefront that advertises “HAIR CARE CENTER” in the window. The sign is hand-painted and wearing off, and there does not appear to be anyone inside of the store at this moment. Across the street from the convenience store, there is a big, cement building: Crossroads Health Center. The Health Center provides care for residents of Over-the-Rhine and the surrounding Cincinnati area. Their goal is to provide health care to people who would not otherwise receive it. Their entrance is on Liberty Street, so from Vine, you cannot see inside. For guests of the center, there is a gated parking lot next door. Standing next to the center, on the corner of Vine Street and Liberty Street (my ending point), there are a few people sitting on the front steps of an empty business stoop. One man is not wearing any shoes. Two other people, both male, sitting nearby are wearing tattered clothing that looks especially worn along the bottom of the pants. Both of these people are wearing backpacks and sitting next to a bunch of reusable bags. The bags, like the clothing, are dirty and somewhat tattered. Next to the empty business is a school that is in session. Across the street, on the corner diagonal from me, there is another street vendor. This time there is a black male and female selling month-to-month cell phone packages in front of a church. This church has a few doorways that homeless people typically sleep in, though there are no people in the doorways currently (as it is daytime). This intersection is always incredibly busy. Liberty Street is a main street for access to highways and getting around downtown in general. As I conclude my walk, a black man rides past me on his bicycle. Before I turn off my recording device, I notice the graffiti on the streetlight pole. This concludes my walk of Vine Street from the southern end to the northern end – from Central Parkway to Liberty Street. As seen in my observations, what is
encountered at the corner of Central Parkway and Vine Street is vastly different that what one 
would encounter at the corner of Liberty Street and Vine Street. Now that I have discussed my 
observations in general, I must parse out the differences in experiences for clarification; I will do 
so by bracketing my experiences into two groups.

**Breaking It Down: From Central to 14\(^{th}\), From 14\(^{th}\) to Liberty**

During my walk, I noticed that the scenery and bodies that I observed differed greatly from the 
south end to the north end. My observations from Central to 14\(^{th}\) were all very similar, as were as 
my observations from 14\(^{th}\) to Liberty. I already discussed in great detail above what these 
differences looked like, but juxtaposing the two, in columns, presents an even clearer way of 
summing up what I encountered as I walked down Vine Street. Below is not a list of every single 
thing I saw, but rather some notable differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Parkway to 14(^{th}) Street</th>
<th>14(^{th}) Street to Liberty Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New parking meters that take credit cards</td>
<td>Older parking meters that take coins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trashcans with closed tops and handles</td>
<td>Trashcans with open tops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 abandoned buildings</td>
<td>14 abandoned buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 restaurants</td>
<td>1 restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 retailers</td>
<td>1 storefront and 1 street vendor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More commercial businesses than homes</td>
<td>More homes than commercial businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash is minimal</td>
<td>Trash lines the sidewalks and street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees and landscaping with dark mulch</td>
<td>Some trees, no landscaping, no (new) mulch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New parking garage with guard and parking lot</td>
<td>Two gated parking lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks in good condition with brick design</td>
<td>Sidewalks with mismatched cement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planters lining the sidewalk, typically with dark mulch inside</td>
<td>Weeds growing out from under boarded up buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean, shiny black streetlights</td>
<td>Dirty, less shiny grey streetlights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking meters along every block of the street</td>
<td>Less parking meters, but no parking meters between 14(^{th}) &amp; 15(^{th})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority of people on street were white</td>
<td>Majority of people on street were black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New signage above open businesses, noticeably hanging away from the wall and not handmade</td>
<td>Old signage (much is hand-painted/handmade) above closed or boarded up storefronts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand new all-glass condo building with</td>
<td>Apartments above closed storefronts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
private entrance  
1 Red Bike station and multiple bicycle stands  
Glass storefronts  
Map of OTR businesses/restaurants/etc.  
1 Red Bike station and zero bicycle stands  
Boarded up storefronts with painted windows and doors  
Kroger grocery store

Some of the qualities that, when juxtaposed, reveal a stark difference include the following: new vs. old, brightness vs. fadedness, white vs. black bodies, commercial area vs. home-focused area, inviting entries (glass) vs. barred entries (boards), rehabbed vs. disrepair, cleanliness vs. trash, manicured vs. overgrown (landscaping), maintained vs. neglected (buildings, streets and sidewalks) and cared for versus ignored. Mentioning that the southern part used to look much like the northern part is, again, important to remember and note. It is with the recent gentrification efforts that the southern half of Vine Street has started to look different.

To summarize the chart above, in the southern half of the street – characterized by new, brightness, white bodies, commercial areas, inviting entries, rehabbed, clean, manicured, maintained and cared for – all of these features convey a sense that someone is looking after the area, taking care of it and keeping it clean. We saw a similar trend in the metaphors from the last chapter. In short, the material rhetoric seems to reflect and reinforce the discursive. Metaphors of light, life and mobility were used to portray the space as secure. We see traces of light in the streetlights, the shine of glass, the new signage, and the brightness of the landscaping and new buildings. We see life present in the trees, mulch and landscaping. If we think of “life” in the way of “liveliness,” we could consider signs of life as the types of businesses that have opened up on Vine Street. Most of the businesses are related to entertainment, encouraging a lively nightlife and social life to occur. When it comes to mobility, this metaphor may be the easiest to spot. We see indications of mobility in the store for renting segways and in the design of storefronts: they are all made of glass, giving you full access to what is inside the store, hoping to lure you to open
the door. Mobility in perhaps its most obvious form—walking—is evident in the sprawl of businesses, having you walk to and from various parts of the street. Finally, mobility is clear in the signs consisting of a map of OTR, showing visitors exactly where they can find restaurants, bars, the park, etc. This map is the ultimate form of mobility as a map’s sole purpose is to show you where to go. Inversely, the map shows you were not to go. Additionally, there are bike racks for you to lock up your bike every other storefront, suggesting a constant mobility of coming and going on your bike.

Dissimilarly, the northern half of the street—characterized by old, fadedness, black bodies, home-focused area, barred entries, disrepair, trash, overgrown, neglected and ignored—lacks care, and order; there does not appear to be anyone looking after the area. In the discourse, we saw metaphors for dark, death and immobility. Reflecting on my walk, I saw signs of darkness in the lack of streetlights, in the boarded up buildings with no visible windows (the ultimate blocking of light), and in the general dirtiness. Dirtiness can be seen as related to darkness in this way: picture a dirty little kid. She comes in from playing outside, and the mom says, “Go straight to the bathroom. You’re so dirty!” What does the child look like? Her skin is covered in mud and dirt. This mud and dirt covers her skin with a dark color, hiding whatever color skin is behind it. When you think of something being “dirty,” you typically do not think bright, white, clean room; you typically think dingy, dark, unkempt room. You can also see darkness in the state of the streetlights and buildings, as they are not shiny. Death, one of the strongest of the metaphors, can be identified in the general lack of care. Typically, if something is living, you have to take care of it to keep it that way. There is clearly not a lot of care be taken in regard to the trash in the streets, cracked sidewalk cement, overgrown weeds and boarded up buildings. Finally, you can see immobility most clearly in the boarded up buildings; you literally
cannot go inside of them. Unlike the other half of Vine Street, there are not any bike racks for you to connect your bike to, which could also indicate a lack of mobility. There are no maps of OTR once you pass 14th either, which was one of the biggest signals of mobility in the southern half of the walk. Overwhelmingly, the differences between the two halves are cared for (southern; Central Parkway to 14th) versus not cared for (northern; 14th to Liberty Street). There are people visiting/inhabiting/walking around both halves, which indicates caring for some lives and not caring for others.

In OTR, black bodies have been pushed north (and perhaps those people living in the northern half have not yet been pushed out), outside of the commercial district (Fisher, 2014). Most recently, an urban developer, Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC), purchased one of the last large apartment complexes that had not been renovated yet (at the corner of 13th Street and Walnut Street), kicking even more OTR residents out of their homes – most of which are black. Various organizations pushing and forcing people out of their homes can explain the lack of care to the northern part of the street, and “experiencing their own disappearance, [OTR] citizens slide from helplessness to hopelessness to nothingness” (Dutton, 2014, p. 11). The main difference between the north and south sides is neglected versus maintained. Given what is commonly known about racism in America – that the presence of black bodies versus white bodies explains this overall disparity between maintenance and not, order and not, care and not, etc – white bodies are cared for, order and maintenance works for them; whereas black bodies are not cared for, they have been abandoned, order often works against them. Much of “urban policy today entails… a militarist suppression of people of color… in the form of expanding police forces, mass incarceration, the war on drugs, and punitive legislation that seek to regulate public space by evicting such ‘undesirables’ and
criminalizing them” (Dutton, 2014, p. 3). When organizations push people out of their homes (originally the southern part of Vine) and further north, or outside of OTR, they push them to a place where they do not have to watch over them or care for them.

There is also a class dynamic that works hand-in-hand with the racial one: the southern area is more commercial area, which means it is visited; it is a destination; it is not home to many of those who walk around the vicinity. The more commercial area is cared for and maintained (like a home). The northern area is more residential, which means it is inhabited; it is what people call home. The more residential area (northern) is neglected. This is somewhat ironic: the northern half, though it is residential and where many people live and call “home,” it is not cared for or maintained. On the other hand, the southern half is commercial – it is a place that many people simply visit – and yet, it is maintained and, importantly, made to feel like “home” (with its cleanliness, order and maintained care). Ultimately, the distinction between what is maintained and what is neglected is a basis for the emotions that people begin to ascribe to the place: security and fear.

**Conclusion of Chapter Three**

All of the observations I made in the sections, as well as the table above contain the capacity and potential to affect people that encounter them. Some people that encounter these affective bodies in OTR feel certain emotions (see: security and fear). Emotions become associated with bodies in the left column (southern part of the street), as well as with the right column (northern part of the street). Some of these emotions are negative and some of these emotions are positive.

In my first chapter of analysis about discourse, we saw that popular media are using various metaphors to describe the gentrification in OTR. In order to mask the fear that some
people once felt about the space, the discourse ascribes a new emotion to the neighborhood: security. This ascription of security is carried out through metaphors of light, life and mobility, all of which we saw signs of during the walk from Central Parkway to 14th Street. In order to assuage white guilt and portray OTR as a place that needed a “rebirth,” discourse included metaphors of dark, death and immobility, all of which we saw indications of in during the walk from 14th to Liberty Street.

Based on the discourse from the last chapter and the material rhetoric in this chapter, it is clear that the two mirror one another. As aforementioned, the neighborhood is changing with each day; what I observed for this project may no longer be entirely true when it is finally published. However, through the analysis of the discourse, as well as an observation of the material qualities of the neighborhood (based on one street, important to note), the two seem to work hand-in-hand. When a person reads or hears that OTR is reborn, safe and revitalized, they may then read that they should check out Bakersfield, a taco and tequila joint, for dinner. They travel to Bakersfield and they experience all of the qualities listed in the left column (the southern, more gentrified half). Their thoughts around OTR being “secure” may then be affirmed… and so the discourse and rhetoric circulate… and so the emotion of “security” circulates. Likewise, when a person ventures north of 14th Street, they observe dilapidated buildings, trash, old street lights and boarded up windows. When they read that OTR used to be dark, dangerous and in need of renovations, they remember the state of the neighborhood – and perhaps they agree. So it goes. And, the discourse and rhetoric circulate… and so the emotion of “fear” circulates.

The more gentrified areas (from Central Parkway to 14th Street) are clearly more maintained and cared for; whereas, the other areas less affected by gentrification (14th Street to
Liberty Street) are more neglected and ignored. We see this to be true through the material features mentioned in this chapter, which may help to account for the different feelings (fear/security) ascribed to the place by some (seen in the discourse). Additionally, these material features can account for the outrage that some feel about gentrification.

Gentrification is a material sign of which bodies are cared for and which are not, which neighborhoods are maintained and which are neglected. For some, gentrification makes others invisible by making the place feel safe like home. In this chapter, some of the material aspects that make parts of Vine Street feel safe are the newness, cleanliness and homey-ness of the restaurants and storefronts. For others, gentrification serves as a material sign/reminder that they are neglected, abandoned, as well as a reminder that others are cared for and protected. In this chapter, some of the material aspects that make the northern part of Vine Street appear neglected are the boarded up buildings, the unkempt sidewalks and the lack of newness. When you juxtapose the material qualities of the gentrified areas and the non-gentrified (or, less gentrified, as the case may be) areas, there is a stark difference. This difference, as I noticed when I crossed over 14th Street, is one that some people pick up on. There is a clear material change as a person experiences the gentrified areas or the non-gentrified areas. As gentrification typically serves upper-middle class, (mostly) white people, gentrification is a naturally topic of race and class. Therefore, some people feel that these differences in the material are unfair and discriminatory – hence all of the attention to, discussion about and outrage over gentrification (in Cincinnati and all over the country).

I have heard many friends and strangers discuss the changes in OTR as an effort to “build a community,” and if that were the case, then all residents would be of interest and priority; all areas of the neighborhood would receive maintenance and care. However, as OTR has changed
up to this point, there is a clear privileging of some bodies over others. The material qualities of a neighborhood become symbols of the amount of care extended to the people living there. The discrepancy between the gentrified and non-gentrified areas suggests that any revitalization that wants to serve disadvantaged communities and avoid the racial and class inequalities need not preserve the area for one group, but instead should seek to preserve and maintain neighborhoods for all residents of the community. As it is now, the disadvantaged people within the community get run out to another neighborhood that is, again, not cared for or maintained. And, as privileged bodies move in to the revitalized community, they continue to be taken care of. Addressing this inequality means creating alternative neighborhoods, or consciously mixed-housing neighborhoods, that are cared for and maintained regardless of who lives there. If an area is only cared for when the “right” people move in (or simply start visiting), we will forever have neighborhoods strife with racial and class inequality. If this is the case, we will never create communities that work together and do so to contribute to and improve all lives. In my project’s conclusion, I will discuss the implications of both of these chapters and what we may take from them both in regard to the value of human life – regardless of ethnicity or income.
Chapter Four:
Discussion and Conclusions

Conclusions & Implications
My overall hope for this project is to contribute to the creation of a better neighborhood. The problem here, of course, is that each person’s definition of “better” is slightly different. For some developers in OTR, “better” means more expensive retailers. For other developers, “better” means mixed income housing. Somewhere in there, there is a middle road. We just have to find it. Though I have acknowledged that the scope of my project only scratches the surface of issues regarding race and class, what I hope to offer is a new lens through which we can look at gentrification. This lens is a material one. I hope to have shed light on the role of the material in a neighborhood’s gentrification, showing that material signs of gentrification do not just exist; recognizing their existence is not enough. These signs matter.

The fact that some neighborhoods are cared for and some are not sends a material message that says certain races and classes are cared for and others are not in America. Certain lives are privileged; certain lives are not. Most neighborhoods, as highlighted in my project, that are characterized by lower income residents, most of whom are African American or of another minority, are not taken care of. This lack of care in regard to the material aspects of these neighborhoods speaks loudly to the general lack of care for the people living in them. Furthermore, when other people drive (or walk, bike, etc) past (or in, through, etc) these same neighborhoods, they begin to associate that lack of order and care with the people who live there. Some people may begin to think that when they see certain physical characteristics in a neighborhood, it is where the “________” people live. When this happens, people can begin to use phrases like, “They live in that part of town.” This use of “they” creates a separation between
an “us” and a “them.” Then, we are all separate. No longer are we one people working together. Society separates itself, and instead of taking care of one another or feeling that we are all in this together, we fight for our own interest... because “that” is their problem, not mine.

The material speaks to us about issues of race. As of late, racial tension has been in the news quite frequently – just a couple of weeks ago a young man sat through a prayer meeting in one of the United States’ oldest black churches and killed nine African Americans in attendance. In the conversations about the deaths of unarmed African American men, there is talk about the tension between the police force and African Americans. Well, let us first turn to what the material may reveal in this situation. What if a mostly African American neighborhood were cared for and maintained? What if the stretch from 14th Street to Liberty Street on Vine Street looked like the other half of Vine Street? Then, would African Americans feel more cared for? As a society, if we ask anyone to care about their neighborhood, pick up their trash and respect their government officials, police force, etc.... should they not feel cared for first? Why would any person want to improve, beautify or secure their neighborhood if they felt that no one would notice if they did? The material aspects of a neighborhood do not just reflect the lack of care demonstrated by the residents, they reflect the lack of care for the residents.

If an area (like OTR) is only cared for when the “right” people come around, our neighborhoods will continue to exhibit inequality and hatred. We will continue to have neighborhoods strife with racial and class tension so thick you can feel it. We will continue to have neighborhoods that clearly function to serve some people and not others. We will continue to have separation and difference instead of oneness and harmony. In order to build and maintain a neighborhood fit for all who walk its streets, we must care for all residents and all blocks. As a society, we need to realize the power within the material. Discourse indeed goes a long way, but
as shown in this project, the material must mirror the discourse in order for the rhetoric/emotion to stick.

In this project, I demonstrated that in order to portray OTR as no longer fearsome, the authors try to ascribe security through metaphors of light, life and mobility. Through the metaphor of death, people living in OTR pre-gentrification are portrayed as nonexistent. The indication that their lives did not exist or matter speaks to the way that African American lives are treated frequently in media, politics and urban gentrification. Many decisions in the midst of gentrification continue to treat some people’s lives as if they do not exist. We need to take responsibility for the material. The material does not just happen; we let it happen. Now, if people hope to call OTR a successful *community* and hope for this to stick, they need to be prepared to ensure that the material mirrors the discourse. This mirroring cannot take place if the material qualities of the neighborhood reflect the concern and care for some people and the disregard of others.

**Limitations**

Though I sought to contribute to the study of rhetoric, both discursive and material, several constraints limited my research. While this research seeks to contribute to the study of material rhetoric, one of the clearest limitations of this project is my walk’s sample size. I only walked one street, Vine Street, and only walked five blocks of it. Vine Street is not the only street in OTR that has gone through massive changes in the last five to ten years. Surrounding streets have been gentrified as well, and the study of those additional streets would have added depth to my research. Some of these additional streets have more nightlife, others more residences. Initially, I intended to walk down four of the main streets in OTR. The incorporation of all of
these streets would have been ideal; however, for the sake of time and length of my project, I was unable to incorporate them. Furthermore, the time of day also influenced my walk. I walked in the daylight. I did not conduct my walk at night, which undoubtedly would have altered some of my experiences. Finally, I did not walk inside of the retailers, restaurants, bars, etc, when I was conducting the walk, limiting me to only observing what was going on in the street.

Another constraint of this project was the subjectivity that went into choosing media articles. I tried to avidly search for articles and keep myself informed as new articles were published; however, I chose to focus on 25 articles in particular. There are certainly more articles concerning gentrification (related and unrelated to OTR) that I could have incorporated, but chose not to. Finally, with the exception of two articles, all were published within the last three years, making their newness a potential limitation as well. Though these limitations constrained aspects of my project, future research could be conducted in order to overcome these constraints and continue to contribute to the study of gentrification and rhetoric.

**Future Project(s)**

With the project’s limitations in mind, there are many opportunities for future research. While this project contributes to the field of communication and rhetoric, future research is needed to fully understand emotion’s stickiness and its role in gentrification. In this project, I offer that discourse and material rhetoric must mirror one another in order for a communicated emotion to stick. I have merely scratched the surface. This concept of mirroring could be applied and expanded to many other topics and projects going forward.

My project discusses gentrification’s discursive and material effects on people but does not discuss this with any people. There could be significant value in incorporating interviews, as
well as day-to-day conversations with various stakeholders in OTR. For example, interviews with public figures, developers, long-time residents, new residents, visitors and local business owners would uncover multiple perspectives, opinions and emotions that could provide a more well-rounded understanding of OTR’s changes. There are some organizations doing work in the neighborhood that have very different opinions about the changes occurring. Conversations with these organizations (such as 3CDC and Over-the-Rhine Community Housing) would bring to life the opposing opinions that I highlight in the discourse chapter.

In relation to the project’s limitations, future research on this topic could include more media articles about OTR spanning a longer time period. Finally, any further research must incorporate additional main streets in OTR, as well as side streets that make up the neighborhood. Significant change occurred – and continues to occur – in other areas of the neighborhood that I did not cover, and walking these streets could add unique chapters to the story I have only begun to tell.
References


revitalization-without-gentrification possible/?utm_source=IDH+weekly&utm_campaign=96c8bd7117-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_49ee4c306a-96c8bd7117-200385729.


