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Recognition of the transgender self: an examination of the apologia of the 'pregnant man'

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RECOGNITION OF THE TRANSGENDER SELF:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE APOLOGIA OF "THE PREGNANT MAN"

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all individuals who ever felt silenced and unrecognized because of their identity.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my biggest fans, my grandparents, Gerda and Dominic White, and in memory of Robert and Mary Thomas. Thank you for always believing in me and for giving me the confidence I needed to complete my education. I will continue to strive to make you proud.

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CHAPTER 1 THE PREGNANT MAN CONTROVERSY

On March 25, 2008, *The Advocate* published a first-person commentary by Thomas Beatie, a legally recognized male and transgender[1] man, who at the time was pregnant with his first child. In the article, Beatie shared a narrative of how he became Thomas and the joys and challenges that accompanied pregnancy as a transgender man. From this short first-person account was born a media frenzy, which birthed Beatie's widely recognized label – "the pregnant man." Although some media and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) groups dispute his title as the "first" pregnant man, he is acknowledged as the first transgender individual to receive international recognition and widespread media attention for his choice to live as a man with female reproductive capabilities.

In this chapter, I outline the importance of pregnancy and reproduction as a vital site of contest and struggle in contemporary society about issues of identity and rights. Next, I introduce Beatie as an extraordinary individual within this contested site and argue why he serves as an important test case for future discourse that challenges dominant notions of gender, sex, sexuality, and reproduction. Afterward, I review current

[1] According to Julia T. Wood, transgendered is the term for individuals who feel that their biological sex at birth is inconsistent their "true" sex identity. Transsexual, on the other hand, refers to individuals who have had surgery or other treatments to change their body to match the sex assignment that matches their identity. Wood explains that after surgery, some transsexuals describe themselves as post-transition male to female (MTF) or postransition females to males (FTM) (28-29). In her text, Julia T. Wood describes Beatie: "Thomas is a transgender FTM who is legally male and married to a woman named Nancy" (30). Judith Halberstam further explores this distinction, articulating the recent understanding of transgender in contemporary LGBTQ and academic circles.

> Transgender is for the most part a vernacular term developed within gender communities to account for the cross-identification experiences of people who may not accept all of the protocols and strictures of transsexuality. Such people understand cross-identification as a crucial part of their gendered self, but they may pick and choose among the options of body mortification, social presentation, and legal recognition available to them. (53)

literature about gender, sex, and sexuality and based on this review, I outline the central argument and research questions that will guide this project.

The importance of reproduction in contemporary times

The American public is increasing focus on the general topic of pregnancy. Whether it is fascination with some celebrity of the moment's upcoming pregnancy or marvel at the reproductive science that enables someone like the *Octomom* Nadya Sulema, we are a society that is current obsessed with pregnancy. In part, our society has always been fixated on reproductive issues due to dominant cultural codes and stigmas. As Dorothy Roberts explains, "The desire to bear children is influenced by the stigma of infertility and the expectations that all women will become mothers. Added to this is the desire to produce a genetically raised child" (249). In addition, pregnancy has become a vital site of struggle over a host of contested cultural and political issues. As James Poniewozik contends, the popularity of "megafamily" shows (e.g., *Jon & Kate Plus 8*, *19 Kids and Counting*, etc.) is illustrative of the cultural politics surrounding families and reproduction:

> That's the beauty of megafamily shows: left, right, and center can find reasons to love and judge. Family-planning is the ground zero where the personal meets the political – where the rubber, or lack of one, meets the road. It's the practical application of all those buzzwords: family values, life, choice, our children's futures. That's why we freaked over Octomom; it's why Sarah Palin's fans and foes fixated so much on her pregnancy and her daughter's. (18)

Thus, pregnancy and reproductive choices are frequent and popular topics among the public because the subjects draw together so many cultural values and ideologies. As a result, reproduction is a site where struggles over identity, rights, and oppression take place.

Despite years of permeation and mainstreaming of feminist and LGBTQ messages in contemporary American culture, hegemonic ideologies about reproduction, normative sexual relations, and American nuclear families persist in ways that mark debates about reproduction as contradictory and problematic. For example, as Michelle Stanworth illustrates, feminist politics paradoxically views motherhood as both a strength and weakness: "On the one hand, maternal practices are increasingly acknowledged as a source of alternative values . . . . On the other hand, feminists also recognize the pivotal role of motherhood in the subordination of women" (296).

Recent reproductive technologies complicate and intensify the cultural and political debate about reproduction and pregnancy. For example, around the time Beatie received wide media coverage, the Octomom Suleman also received extensive media attention and "widespread outrage" for her choice to have in vitro fertilization (IVF) and the subsequent birth of octuplets ("Right" A8). Addressing the growing number of controversies involving new methods for reproduction, Roberts argues that debates about new reproductive technologies such as sperm and egg donation, IVF, and surrogacy arrangements are laden with a number of ideological assumptions. For instance, Roberts maintains that racism is a significant factor that encourages and celebrates the use of these technologies in white families. In addition, cultural assumptions about family, gender, and sex also heavy shape the culture debate about these technologies. For

example, new reproductive technologies are most culturally accepted if predominantly used by heterosexual and gender normative individuals. Because society still primarily accepts marriages and sexualities based on their contribution to reproductive relations, adoption and the use of fertilization and reproductive technologies in LGBTQ communities are considered controversial, unusual, or unrecognizable (Butler, *Undoing* 102).

Beatie as the exemplar of reproductive controversy

Within this matrix of controversy, Beatie's pregnant body and defense of his choice to use his reproductive rights drew considerable attention as it produced powerful rhetorical effect. As one article on *Salon.com* explains, "the idea of male pregnancy carries considerable symbolic weight. Pregnancy remains one of the few human experiences still limited to biological women and even if Beatie remains, in part, a biological woman, the term 'pregnant man' sure does create a resonating frisson" (Rogers). As a result, Beatie is notorious for having lived as a man expecting a child, which threatens the norms and assumptions of sex/gender differences. Before we can understand the reasons why Beatie is a significant test case through which to understand the current and future controversy surrounding reproductive technologies, we must first review Beatie's background and life to view the complexity and importance of the case.

Beatie's Story

Beatie was born Tracy Lagondino in 1974 and was raised as a girl. Frequently and in every text that includes Beatie's voice and at varying degrees of disclosure, details about Thomas/Tracy's childhood are made known, including the facts that he/she grew up in Hawaii, was the child of a multiracial marriage, experienced abuse at the hand of

his/her father, and lost his/her mother to suicide in 1986. In his memoir, Beatie discusses how he knew he was different from other children at a young age, although he was not yet able to understand or define these feelings as gender confusion. As early as elementary school, he recalls being mistaken for a boy and unintentionally confusing and angering his classmates. As Beatie explain, "Imagine learning at such a young age that your very appearance – your very identity – is enough to trigger such confusion and animosity. Imagine knowing that people will hate you for no reason other than you are who you are . . . . This was the first awkward overture of my life's central theme. Little Tracy can make you hate her without even trying" (77-78). When Beatie made an appearance on "Oprah," he explained feeling confused about his gender during puberty:

> BEATIE. When I turned, I think it was about 14, I started to grow breasts and I thought –
>
> OPRAH. We all do.
>
> BEATIE. Well, it was kind of a shock to me, because I didn't have my mother around and, you know, I was just used to catching footballs and, you know, balls and so it hurt and I just kind of thought, you know, "What's my body going through?" You know, "Is it betraying me?" (2-3)

Despite encountering these conflicted feelings, Tracy continued to publicly identify as a woman during her adolescence.

Interviews, the memoir and other news articles reveal details about Thomas's/Tracy's experience as a young adult: he/she was a model for a short time, then a body builder and martial artist. Tracy dated a few men before she recognized her

attraction to women and lived her life as a lesbian. In 1998, Tracy met her current wife, Nancy. In the interviews and testimonials, Beatie describes Nancy as his legal wife, the love of his life, the mother of his children, and the support system that gave him the courage he needed to begin transitioning to the male gender. Shortly after the couple's commitment ceremony, Tracy began to transition and started testosterone therapy to acquire a masculine figure, facial hair, a deep voice, and an enlarged clitoris. Beatie also had a double mastectomy. In various texts, Beatie explains that he did not feel the need, "to undergo any more surgery to feel like a man." He also considered the health risks for "lower surgery" and decided that they were too high risk and opted to keep his female reproductive organs (Beatie, *Labor* 161). In 2002, Tracy applied for a legal sex change and shortly thereafter changed his name to Thomas Trace Beatie. In 2003, after the sex change was legal, Thomas and Nancy were married in Hawaii.

Beatie claims that as a young couple, he and Nancy considered having a child, "more dream than plan," although he admits to always wanting to parent. Because Nancy suffered from severe endometriosis when she was younger, she had a hysterectomy after the birth of her two daughters from a previous marriage and was now no longer able to carry children. Beatie discusses his decision to carry his and Nancy's child and frequently shared his experiences of seeking insemination, medical advice, and living as a pregnant man in his various interviews and writings. At age 34, Beatie was given the opportunity to use his biological reproductive organs. Beatie stopped his testosterone hormone treatments and, after artificially inseminating himself with donor sperm, he "went public . . . as the nation's first 'pregnant father'" (Trebay 1+). Most of the interviews and written texts end by discussing Beatie's present emotional state and feelings. In particular, they

discuss his love for his daughter, Susan, his goals and reasons for taking his pregnancy into the public sphere and providing his story to the mass media and his hopes for the future.

On March 25, 2008, *The Advocate* published Thomas Beatie's voluntarily written, first-person account, or "coming out" story, informing the public that he was currently living as the "first" legally pregnant man. Immediately following the article, websites, blogs, televised news segments, newspapers, magazines and tabloids picked up the story both in the United States and internationally. Beatie received numerous requests and offers from various news media to tell his story, but, despite the publicity hype, Beatie chose only to be interviewed by *People* magazine and appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in the month of April. During this time period, Beatie also finalized plans with Seal Press to publish a memoir and he signed on with Cutting Edge Films to participate in a British Documentary. After the birth of his daughter, Susan, on June 29, Beatie also agreed to an interview with Barbara Walters on a *20/20* Special entitled "What Is a Man, What Is a Woman? Journey of a Pregnant Man." In November and December 2008, the *20/20* Special and the documentary, *The Pregnant Man*, aired on television, and Beatie's book, *The Labor of Love: The Story of One Man's Extraordinary Pregnancy*, was released.

Public outrage over Beatie

Once his story broke in the media, Beatie stirred considerable public debate and faced numerous accusations and claims that his behavior and motives were immoral and false. As Beatie himself best summarizes, "Early on, it became apparent that the issue of my pregnancy was extremely divisive" (*Labor* 279). It should be noted that there were

positive reactions to Beatie and his choices. According to Judith Halberstam, "Much of the publicity about Beatie, in fact, was quite positive and confirmed a preference for loving parents over gender-conforming parents" (77). However, there were just as many hateful and offensive comments from members of the public and media, as Beatie's story incited anger, confusion, fear, and intolerance among the American public. These criticisms came from members of the general public, including some people in the GLBTQ community, who were vocal in letters-to-the-editors, blogs, and other public spaces. In media, news organizations frequently published statements that disapproved of Beatie's actions. For example, in April 2008, *People* published an article on Beatie and his pregnancy. In the follow up issue, the subsequent readers' responses, the majority of which "voiced strong disapproval," were published:

> "This is not a pregnant man," writes David Richardson via e-mail. "Mr. Beatie is a woman who has physically altered herself and now wants to be recognized as something she's not." Adds Michelle McHone of Gunter, Texas: "Men do not have babies." Anita Black of Sarasota, Fla., was most concerned for the Beaties' child, saying, "Shame on the Beaties for their insensitivity. Their child will be taunted and ridiculed as she grows up." (10)

Additionally, Beatie was further greeted with disapproval and criticism from the community from which he was expecting to support him and his intentions. While on *Oprah*, Beatie explained feeling shocked that the transgender community was not more supportive. He explained that he and Nancy contacted nearly all the transgender national organizations for advice and to ask legal questions. According to Beatie, "Half never

called back; most of the others discouraged him from the exposure" (Christensen). Furthermore, members of the LGBTQ community provided mixed responses to Beatie's publicity when interviewed by the news media. For instance, LGBTQ members offered multiple reasons for why they disapprove of or sought to remain silent about Beatie's decision. Some worried about the damaging effect that media attention may have on the family unit and on Beatie's daughter. For example,

> Transgender activist Jamie Green admits he was in this camp. He says he's thrilled Beatie's pregnancy is healthy and that he knows other transgender people who have had children, but none have been so vocal about it. "I wish he didn't turn himself over to the media," says Green, author of *Becoming a Visible Man*. "It makes me wonder, down the line will all this publicity hurt them or hurt their child? Will the media ever leave them alone?" (Christensen)

Other members of the LGBTQ community are concerned about the impact this development might have on the larger transgender community. For example, Christensen reports the response of Cathy Renna, a communication strategist for LGBTQ organizations. Like other activists, she worries about a sensationalized story and the reaction of an uneducated and closed-minded public. Although LGBTQ movements are making progress and notions of gender as well as laws and norms continue to adapt, change is slow, which Renna describes as "still doing Trans 101" with the public and mainstream media. Other activists react similarly to Renna in asking: why does this story garner more media attention than other transgender issues, like hate crimes or suicides? For instance,

> Mara Kesling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, says Beatie's case is an example of the media's tendency to sensationalize the trivial and ignore the significant when it comes to reporting on the transgender community . . . "I don't begrudge Mr. Beatie or anything, but for most of us it was a very puzzling story – I mean, puzzling about why it was a story," Kelsing says. "Every day transgender people are being murdered and fired, and even having successful lives." (Kalter)

Yet other scholars and activists encouraged and endorsed Beatie's publicity about his pregnancy. In *The New York Times*, Eve Sedgewick argues, "The Beatie case seems like a way of having some of the Trans 101 discussions publicly, giving them one kind of a face and doing it in a way that's not asking anybody for anything." (Trebay 1+). As a consequence, much like the general public, the LGBTQ community remained split on their endorsement of Beatie's actions and publicity.

Public accusations against Beatie

The public frequently expressed three primary accusations against Beatie. The first general category of accusations labeled Beatie as troubling, scary or deviant. For example, some people claimed that Beatie made them "uneasy," and they viewed him as "unnatural," a "freak," and "disgusting." In her commentary, Barbara Walters summarizes the criticisms against Beatie in stating, "Some see him as a freak of nature; someone you would find inside a carnival tent." Likewise, Beatie describes some of the criticisms that he received from members of the GLBTQ community: "They feared that I would be seen as a freak, this tarring the image of everyone in the community" (*Labor*

255). In some extreme instances, people called Beatie or posted comments telling him that he deserved to die for what he has done and his and his daughter's lives were frequently threatened. As Beatie notes, "Mostly we've been exposed to comments that are online and they tend to be mean. Negative comments range from, 'I'm going to kill you' to, you know, 'I don't believe in abortion but I hope he miscarries" ("Pregnant Man").

Talking heads and media authorities also passed judgment, expressing disgust or disapproval toward the pregnancy. According to Beatie, "Some of the most mainstream negative reactions were the most shocking to me, because they came from TV news anchors who are ostensibly impartial journalists" (*Labor* 283). For example, Rogers describes MSNBC's "Morning Joe" as "appalling" and as "a breathtakingly xenophobic display" because the story was discussed under the title, "weird news items," and included negative commentary, like "I'm going to be sick." When asked specifically about a Fox News program, Beatie tells Walters, "They had a horrible piece on me. People said [um] that they wish I'd die while giving birth." These harsh reactions to Beatie's pregnancy were indications that the public saw Beatie as guilty of deviance and should be ostracized. Furthermore, the comments illustrate the continued intolerance of many American citizens who are uncomfortable with the troubling of gender and sex in bodies and social roles.

The second primary accusation that Beatie faced after his disclosure was a questioning of the legitimacy of his manhood. Numerous claims were made that Beatie simply is and should not be considered a man. For instance, comments from blogs and similar websites said, "Tracy is just a bearded woman who should be thrown in a crazy

bin, sterilized, and lobotomized!", and, "We need to have laws for basket cases like this" (Beatie, *Labor* 285). In sum, people argued that the artificial creation of Beatie's manhood, testosterone injections and the mastectomy did not nor will not make him a man. Additionally, rather than attacking his gender's authenticity, some people questioned Beatie's sexuality, arguing that Beatie is, "just a lesbian." As Beatie notes, "People tell me all the time, 'you're not a really man' or 'you're not really married'" (*Labor* 259). As well, others acknowledged that Beatie could have been considered a man, but because of his pregnancy, he can no longer hold that status. This perspective is represented in the documentary, *Pregnant Man*, when the narrator explains, "Thomas's decision not to have his womb and his ovaries removed has caused many to question whether he can really be considered a pregnant man." As Beatie further clarifies, "One of the major criticism is that I'm not a man, you know, why is the media continually perpetuating the story as a pregnant man . . . . it followed by calling me by my first name, my former name, Tracy . . . . No one is recognizing my legal status as male." Additionally, observers also argue that if Beatie truly felt like a man, then he should have wanted to (or be required to) remove his female reproductive organs and opt for a "lower" surgery. As one blog comment argued, "A true trans f-to-m would not want to produce a child. This is so damaging to the gay community, as we are entangled in the trans movement. WTF? Should we really include this "confused" man's/woman's in our movement. This is so damaging!!!!!!!!!!!!!" (Beatie, *Labor* 286-87). Furthermore, some people claim that Beatie tries to, "have it both ways," by acting like a man and a woman simultaneously. For example, as Beatie explains, "I have been criticized for switching genders so I could marry Nancy. I have been told I want to have my cake and eat it too"

(*Labor* 176). As this accusation is one of the most challenging arguments that Beatie needs to consider, his response to these types of claims remain one of the driving themes in his self-defense rhetoric.

The third general accusation made against Beatie included criticisms of his choice to expose to the public his body, situation, and story to a mass audience. As one criticism notes, this move was, "partly a carnival slideshow" (Trebay). In explaining his intentions in going public, Beatie suggests that,

> Nancy and I did not go public with my pregnancy for fame or money . . . . We came forward because there was simply no way I could hide from the world – a pregnant man is, after all, pretty hard not to notice. We knew that people were starting to talk about us . . . . I could slink around and wear really bagging clothing, or I could stand up proudly and face the future head-on. Nancy and I chose to stand up. (*Labor of Love* 9)

Many people argue that Beatie should have kept the pregnancy a secret. Even Barbara Walters argued this point, in stating, "Listen Thomas, you could have kept this secret somehow or other; had this baby and not had the uproar that you created."

Others argued that Beatie simply wanted to be famous and earn money, exploiting his pregnancy and his daughter, which was irresponsible and unfair to his daughter. Discussing the criticisms forwarded by lawyers and officials working for LGBTQ communities, Beatie argues, "They accused me of being selfish and immature. They suggested I might not be sound of mind, and that my motives for doing what I was doing were based on doing something that was "potentially lucrative" (*Labor* 256). Finally, in a related line of thought, people claimed that Susan would suffer for this decision, both

now and later in life as she would feel unhappy, confused, and encounter teasing and torment from peers. For instance, an anonymous blogger maintained, "My greatest pity goes out to the Beatie's poor baby, and the miserable life of confusion and mixed messages that poor kid will have to grow up with. If he or she manages to be even half normal, that will be the true miracle" (*Labor* 287). Another comment argues that Beatie is an irresponsible, dangerous and even abusive parent: "The kid should be taken by social services and given a proper family. Short of actual physical abuse, I never thought I'd consider Britney Spears a better parent than someone else. Brittany meet Beatie" (286).

Regardless of the range of negative and positive reactions, Beatie describes his personal choices as something that will affect everyone and ends his commentary in *The Advocate* by stating, "Our situation ultimately will ask everyone to embrace the gamut of human possibility and to define for themselves what is normal." As a result, Beatie's choice to go public with his situation, to defend his actions, and to stir controversy in both the general public and the LGBTQ community is one of the most significant elements of his story. More specifically, for the purposes of this project, I seek to understand how Beatie's apologia responds to these accusations and outrage in an attempt to defend his choices and publicity.

The significance of Beatie's case

Beatie is an important test case because it intersects a number of critical issues and controversies. First, Beatie's case serves as an exemplar for other similar simulations. On one hand, his sex assignment as female at birth and his biological female reproductive system normalizes Beatie's pregnancy. As a result, why are members of

society shocked that a reproductively capable individual would reproduce? However, Beatie is legally and performatively a man. This transgender embodiment is deviant enough to upset society's sensibilities and, as such, Beatie provides a litmus test for the willingness of society to accept or reject queerness or gender troubling.

Furthermore, Beatie's personal experience of living as a pregnant man causes him to acknowledge the social risks and cultural uncertainty that develops from such a lived condition. In *The Advocate*, Beatie states, "Our situation sparks legal, political, and social unknowns" ("Labor"). Beatie's claims are important as it remains unclear how social and cultural institutions will respond to Beatie and other individuals who problematize bodily and communal norms. For instance, questions arise, such as: Is Beatie the legal father or mother of the child? Will the federal government or state governments pass laws to discourage additional transgender men from carrying their children? Do "pregnant men" incite anger from women and even some "feminists" who view pregnancy as their biological right? Or, do some women and feminists, who view pregnancy as "oppression" and seek to alleviate the patriarchal "Motherhood Myth,[2]" welcome his decision to alter traditional gender roles?

Because Beatie's situation raises so many important cultural and legal questions, his public appearances, specifically his representations and discourses, are examined to determine whether they operate to give Beatie recognition and trouble sex/gender norms. Additionally, this particular case might prove to be illustrative for future gender troubling or controversial reproductive choices. As Beatie attempts to discursively navigate a highly hazardous terrain of public opposition and outcry, his rhetorical strategies and

[2] In her essay, "Motherhood: Who Needs It?" Betty Rollin identifies Western society's "Motherhood Myth" as "the idea that having babies is something that all normal women instinctively want and need and will enjoy doing" (392).

choices might illuminate how future cases should best approach publicity and self-defense.

Second, Beatie is significant because of the implications his case has on definitions of sex and gender. As Julia Wood argues, "In Thomas' case we have a person whom the law defines as a male relying on female sex organs to carry and deliver a baby. People like Thomas (he's not the first FTM to give birth) make it clear that the links between sex, gender, and sexual orientation are not absolute, necessary, or standardized" (30). What is interesting to note in Wood's argument here is that the law recognizes Beatie as a man. As such, he has a certain grounding in which to anchor claims about being a recognizable man yet the status of his pregnant body obviously callings into question that very claim. As a result, Beatie's call for recognition and his defense of that call may problematize conventional norms about sex and gender.

Third, Beatie's publicity is rhetorically significant because it explores the conflicting approach to gender studies that Sloop describes as, "either understanding cases of gender ambiguity or transgenderism as literalizing gender, and hence working hegemonically, or de-literalizing it, working subversively" (8). The following literature review in the next section examines the social importance of visibility of transgender bodies and the potential liberating significance represented in bodies, like Beatie's. Additionally, the review explores the cultural trends that attempt to marginalize or normalize gender-troubled bodies. As a result, evidence of ongoing cultural struggles is most clearly expressed through the body of knowledge known as sex and gender studies.

Current trends in academic research in gender studies

Early deconstruction of sex and gender binaries and norms

During the 1990s, grassroots political mobilization in LGBTQ communities led to new configurations of discourses, lifestyles, and academic trends. Susan Styker, in 1998, argued that, "a generation of scholarship is beginning to take shape that can better account for the wild profusion of gendered subject positions, spawned by the ruptures of 'woman' and 'man' like an archipelago of identities rising from the sea" ("Transgender"148). Today, it is difficult to enumerate the wide-ranging purposes of scholarship conducted under the umbrella of Gender or Queer studies. This section provides a review of some of the most influential theories in the field to illustrate why the transgendered body remains an important focal point of such studies.

According to Sloop, "since the mid-1980s, it has become, if not chic, at least more comfortable to make the focus of one's study gender and sexual ambiguity and/or *to be* gender/sexually ambiguous" (6). Yet, this current trend within academic studies does not parallel the attitudes and messages in our culture. In the American public sphere, discourse concerning LGBTQ identity politics is tenuous and divided. On one hand, cultural changes illustrate growing acceptance for queer bodies. For example, the recent congressional repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell" and the mainstreaming representations of queer characters on popular television shows and films, like *Glee*, *Nip/Tuck*, *Modern Family*, *Transamerica* and *Milk,* remain signs of tolerance found in the American public. However, on the other hand, other American messages and experiences illustrate an alternative view. For instance, after conducting one of the largest studies of transgender discrimination, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality released the following findings:

> one quarter of transgender people lost a job for being transgender . . . . double the rates of poverty for transgender people compared to the general population . . . . transgender people have higher vulnerability to violence . . . more than half of transgender and gender non-conforming people who were bullied, harassed or assaulted in school because of their gender identity have attempted suicide. ("Task")

These statistics, in addition to the continued political action premised on conservative social values like the 2008 passing of California's Proposition 8, illustrate the many heteronormative, homophobic, and intolerant views directed towards LGBTQ individuals. Thus, the struggle for LGBTQ rights is a discordant issue at the forefront of American culture and politics.

Yet, unlike the contradictory discourse found in the American public, academic studies on LGBTQ issues generally agree that perspectives of sex and gender need expanding and that status quo norms are too restrictive and harmful. Nearly all gender and queer scholarship opposes dominant rhetoric that seeks to marginalize, oppress, or discriminate against the LGBTQ community. Furthermore, various studies of gender ambiguity examine the current practices of gender and sexuality and argue that such actions must be transgressed to undermine problematic and restrictive norms.

Although the work of late-twentieth century academics and activists are beginning to influence our culture, American social, religious, and medical institutions largely maintain conservative and essentialist beliefs that only two, "true" or "natural" sexes exist and that heterosexuality is the "correct," normative sexual practice. Feminists, gender scholars, and critical theorists have worked against these ideologies by arguing

that sex and sexuality are complex constellations. As Styker explains, "This literature, along with its explication within the social science disciplines, demonstrates a perpetual European fascination – and more than a little Eurocentric unease – with the many ways that relationships between bodily sex, subjective gender identity, social gender roles, sexual behaviors, and kinship status have been configured" ("(De)Subjugated" 14). Thus, one trend among the studies produced by gender scholars is the deconstruction of the attributes of "natural" or "biological" assumptions inherit in the conceptions of sex and gender.

For instance, Iain Morland's research reveals that sex identification is too complex to truly understand or predict. He explains that the medical field recognizes at least four bodily characteristics that delineate sexual difference: genes (XX or XY chromosomes); gonads (reproductive sex organs); genitals (external genitalia); and the brain (or, the brain's sex develops in response to hormones released in utero). As Morland contends, "Identifying the different parts of sex is not easy. One of the problems with defining sex is ascertaining whether an attribute is an essential part of sex, or something that is sex-linked" ("Is Intersexuality Real" 530). As such, the medical field may have identified various attributes of sexual difference, but is unable to determine how much these attributes determine the sex that one experiences. Thus, gender scholars argue that a more accurate theory should maintain that that the elements believed to define sex frequently develop from material and embodied experiences, cultural assumptions, and social practices rather than from strictly ontological or essential foundations. As a result, we cannot truly know the biological factors, nor predict the social and cultural influences, which influence gender identity or sexuality.

Theoretical variations of social constructionism

Other studies reveal the ways in which discourse and representations uphold the dominant two-sex model, specifically analyzing texts like medical, social or legal discourse and norms. For example, Georgia Warnke explains that bodies and sexual features, "seem to be requirements of gender rather than of biological sex. Because we associate certain activities with certain genders, we reconstruct and assign anatomies in sexed ways" (129). Likewise, Thomas Laqueur concludes similarly by tracing the historical and medical accounts of Western sexed bodies from ancient Greece to the Enlightenment. He illustrates how medicine and science created and influenced contemporary notions of "natural" sexual difference. Discourse, cultural knowledge and power relations, rather than biology and science, inform the dualistic, two-sex model. Additionally, Laqueur's work shows that a space exists between the "real" transcultural body and its representations:

> Sex then, as today, determined status, gender. But one has a distinct feeling that in text's . . . somehow 'there is not there,' no ontological sex, only organs with assigned legal and social status. At the very moment when genitals seem to display their full, unambiguous extralinguistic reality – when the language of one sex collapses – they also assume their fullest civil status, their fullest integration into the world of meaning. Corporeal solidarity is shaken when it seems most stable, and we enter the shoals of language. (139)

Academic studies, which examine gendered bodies as texts, reveal both the human body and sex as rhetorically contested material, largely based on social relations

and cultural norms. Rhetorical studies of the body emphasize, for instance, that, "we first must read the body as the site of cultural inscription, self-regulation, and resistance" (Patterson and Coming 7). Additionally, John W. Jordan argues that the malleability of human bodies by surgery illustrates that bodies are "plastic," a changeable substance. Therefore, Jordan concludes, "the cultural definition of the plastic body is produced rhetorically through a contentious amalgamation of individual desire, cultural knowledge, and institutional disciplining" ("Rhetorical" 348).

Because of this materiality and malleability, transsexual, transgender and intersexual bodies become persuasive messages and evidence that signify the myths of sex and gender. For example, in his study of bodies born intersexed, Morland argues that genital surgery on intersexed infants acts as proof that sex is socially constructed. He states, "The power of authorization enables science to sustain certain cultural norms . . . science does not simply report on sex; it actually produces sex by its repetition of sexual difference" ("Is Intersexuality Real" 532). In other words, Morland argues that rather than thinking of the sex of intersexed children as ambiguous, we ought to see that "children's ambiguity *is* their sex difference" ("Is Intersexuality Real" 528). Consequently, Morland maintains that sex science is an apparent contradiction; even though science privileges the knowing of sex over "telling," science needs words to produce and maintain its privilege. He argues that reading the intersexed body as a textual surface proves that the division between genital surface and depth is "constructed" and "bogus." In an age of medical advances and technological achievements, the construction of sex is made apparent through medical practice: "possibilities for surgically shaping bodies have rendered medical testimony alone insufficient for

justifying medical intervention . . . bodies are shaped first by definition, and then by scapels" (Jordan "Reshaping" 21). Thus, when examining traditional assumptions, an irony is revealed by reading the surgically-altered, sexed body: the reality is that sex *is* a construction and requires reiteration from the scientific community to maintain its existence (Morland, "Is Intersexuality Real" 533).

Butler's *Gender Trouble,* like the work of Laqueur and Morland, challenges the "naturalness" of a biological and sexual difference. Butler maintains that it is nonsensical to define gender as a cultural construction if sex itself is a gendered category. She states, "Gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which 'sexed nature' or 'a natural sex' is produced and established as "prediscrusive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts" (*Gender* 11). As a result, Butler engages in a radical rethinking of the construction of identity and argues that gender is "a repeated stylization of the body." She explains that these repeated acts or "performances" occur rigidly and regularly, producing an appearance of substance and ontology of gender. We create surface politics of the body as corollary depictions of gender and we further produce disciplinary productions on that surface. These notions of gender and sexuality produce a false stabilization of gender. On the surface of the body, a desire for idealized effects of corporeal signification plays out. "Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity . . . are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests . . . it has no ontological status apart from . . . acts that constitute its reality" (*Gender* 173).

After the publication of *Gender Trouble*, Butler was grouped into the camp of social constructionists and critiqued for overriding the notion of sex too quickly. She wrote *Bodies that Matter* to clarify her position that she neither supports the cultural construction of sex nor one that stresses biological sex; instead, Butler endorses a non-dualistic account of the human sexuality. Butler argues that we need to acknowledge a materiality of sex because it is physiology that grounds society's perspective of sexual difference; however, she also argues that the body is still always already linguistically constructed. For Butler, "matter" is ingrained into our discourse of sex and sexuality. This matter and bodily materiality are constructed through a preordained gendered matrix. She contends that a rethinking of our conception of matter as a process is necessary. Butler states "What I would propose . . . is a return to the notion of matter, not as a site or surface, but as a *process of materialization* that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter" (*Bodies* 65).

Butler concludes that construction is not a single act, a causal effect, nor an inscription, but rather a temporal process intertwined and reiterated within a materiality of sex. Returning to her theory of performativity, Butler explains that sex is always material through regulatory norms, in particular, it is always referential or performative. Gender is not something we can decide to act on or discard at will; rather it is a highly constrained process, regulated by our society and culture. Butler explains that performativity is mobilized by the law and thus it is not a singular act – it reifies norms yet conceals the conventions of its repetition. Thus the performance of gender is 'citational,' meaning that it refers to the previous practices, conventions, and norms ordered by society (*Bodies* 62). Although the sedimentation of materialization is cited

through current forms of power, the performativity of sex has the capacity to counter the regulatory norms and destabilize notions of sex. According to Styker, Butler's work and the application of the model of linguistic "performativity" has been influential in transgender studies because of its "postreferential epistemological framework." Although Butler has encountered criticism from the transgender people, Styker argues that their feelings of an ontological inescapable personhood are not inconsistent with Butler's theory. As Styker explains,

> To say that gender is a performative act is to say that it does not need a material referent to be meaningful, is directed at others in an attempt to communicate, is not subject to falsification or verification, and is accompanied by "doing" something rather than "being" something. A woman, performatively speaking, is one who says she is – and who then does what woman means. The biologically sexed body guarantees nothing; it is necessarily there, a ground for the act of speaking, but it has no deterministic relationship to performative gender. ("(De)Subjugated" 10)

Butler's theory of performativity and materiality explain the fluid nature of gender differences – because norms are materialized, transgender identity perform its "true" gender identification and therefore reveal the critique or subversion of gender reification.

This study claims, first, that through his speech act and iteration of various contextual forces Beatie engineers a survivable space for himself and, second, regardless of the reception from the public audience, Beatie's speech act sets a template for the future. For this reason, the study will not attempt to prove specific audience reception (as

in the form of acceptance or rejection of Beatie's persuasive messages); rather, it will illustrate that a shift of context occurs from Beatie's rhetoric. By examining Beatie, this project further explores the significance of speech act theory and performatives for understanding the implications of language use and for altering traditional measurements of effectivity in rhetorical studies.

Since the 1960's, rhetoricians have grown skeptical of effect claims, since it is both difficult to ascertain a rhetor's success or failure with his or her audience as well as to accurately collect or measure public opinion (Campbell 453-4; Benoit, "Another" 42). Even when an effect seems apparent, proving a causal link is difficult. For example, a rhetorician may interpret a corporation's loss of stock as an indicator that the company's leadership failed to publicly and appropriately account for their mistakes. However, it is not always apparent whether the rhetorician has accounted for all of the other plausible explanations.

Rather, my research asks: how does Beatie's performance alter his environment as well as set the conditions for future speech acts? By answering this question, I demonstrate that rhetoricians need to be more attentive to different types of rhetorical "effects" and the way in which effect is measured in regards to speech act theory.

Transgender bodies as transgressive theory

Transgender bodies play a particularly important role in understanding the materiality of these gender theories and for acting as a form of proof. Styker argues that just as the postmodern condition has led to the crisis in previously dominant and socially modern beliefs, the transgender body carries similar weight in contemporary gender studies. "That the signifier does not point to its signified in any direct manner has been

something of a first principle in linguistic theory for most of the twentieth century; only more recently however, has it become socially significant that the signifier "gender" does not reference a signified "sex" in quite the direct way assumed by the idea of a "sex/gender system" (Styker, "Transgender" 147). In other words, the presence of queer bodies and identities, such as transsexuals, transgenders and intersexuals, expose the institutions' normalizing logics. Butler further explains this significance in asking, "How do drag, butch, femme, transgender, transsexual persons enter into the political field? They make us not only question what is real and what "must" be, but they also show us how the norms that govern contemporary notions of reality can be questioned and how new modes of reality can be instituted" (*Undoing Gender*, 29). Based on this notion, numerous studies developed in the late twentieth century under the discipline "Transgender Studies."

Early transgender studies were a combination of political and intellectual works. Its emergence paralleled the development of queer studies in the 1980s and arguably owes its emergence to feminist and queer studies, which clearly paved the way for its identity politics, but fell short of exploring the complex gender identities of individuals who are transvestites, drag queens, cross-dressers, hermaphrodites, transsexual, transgender, or other queer identities answering the call to mobilize. According to Styker, transgender became the eventual umbrella term for these individuals, defined as "somebody who permanently changed social gender through public representation of self, without recourse to genital transformation" ("(De)Subjugated" 4). The work which became most widely recognized for coining the term, transgender, is the pamphlet "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come," By Leslie Feinberg.

Shortly thereafter, "The *Empire* Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto" by Sandy Stone was published. Both works trace the oppression of transgender/transsexual individuals in such spaces as world history and in academic writings and then calls for liberation through intellectual and creative political work and other critical practices. As these works and other transgender studies show, the feminist and queer studies require a separate examination of transgender phenomena, because transgender inclusion problematizes many of the frameworks endorsed by feminist and queer scholarship since they typically avoid examination of transgender experience. As Styker posits,

> Transgender studies enable a critique of the conditions that cause transgender phenomena to stand out in the first place, and that allow gender normativity to disappear into the unanalyzed, ambient background. Ultimately, it is not just transgender phenomena per se that are of interest, but rather the manner in which these phenomena reveal the operations of systems and institutions that simultaneously produce various possibilities of visible personhood, and eliminate others. ("(De)Subjugated" 3)

Today, the same scholars who conducted early research on transgender individuals recognize the progress of LGBTQ rights due to the visibility to make intelligible transgender bodies. For instance, Debra Rosenberg explores the growing recognition among transgender individuals. Even though the estimated numbers—between 750,000 and three million Americans—remain relatively small, transgender Americans are publicly addressing their struggles and identities for the first time (50). Such vocal and political individuals and movements can produce greater tolerance and sex/gender diversity in the United States. As Halberstam explains,

> With the rise of a visible transgender community in the last two decades and the boom in queer families, U.S. publics have had to contend with real and abiding shifts in their understandings of kinship, belonging, normativity, and gender stability. As more kids come out and at younger ages to their family and as more and more children grow up in queer homes, the enduring discomfort with non-traditional households has ebbed somewhat. (77)

Likewise, David Valentine conducts ethnography to illustrate the importance of the emergence and adoption of "transgender" as a collective identity – the term allows for clarification as well as a political identification that eliminates exclusive and oppressive categories within queer communities. He argues that the term, "has become useful to accommodationist gay and lesbian groups (apart from its usefulness to transgender-identified people) precisely because it has been able to absorb the gender transgression which has been doggedly associated with modern (and especially male) homosexual identities for more than one hundred years" (64).

The need for recognition and the continued importance of rhetorical studies in queer and transgender studies

Despite the large amount of consensus within academic studies and the growing public support of LGBTQ individuals, academic scholarship in the areas of queer and transgender studies is still needed to assure that positive change continues and new forms of reality and embodiment are embraced. Sloop warns that the highlighting and encouragement of "de-literalizing aspect of gender ambiguity" is done "at the expense of critiquing the very persistent ways in which cultural expectations and mechanisms

continue to discipline each of us to practice "proper" gender behaviors" (12). Thus, thoroughly examining and diagnosing discursive strategies involving gender and sex norms allows rhetoricians to thereafter change the power relations. Additionally, Butler maintains that progress and change in attitudes toward the LGBTQ community has not gone far enough. For all marginalized persons, the need to confer intelligibility, gain political recognition, and yet do so while continuing to challenge those norms of intelligibility and recognition is critical for future political and cultural progress. As Butler rightly suggests, "the dilemma with which we are faced in the end has to do with the terms by which social recognition is constrained" (*Undoing*, 100). In other words, marginalized groups are restrained by the acceptable intelligible discourses of our time.

Yet, as Butler also argues, this incomplete and impossible recognition—to gain recognition as a man yet fit the cultural codes of a pregnant person—is absolutely necessary to strive for as survivability as a subject is linked to a desire for recognition. As Butler explains, "our very lives, and the persistence of our desire, depend on there being norms of recognition that produce and sustain our viability as human. Thus, when we speak about sexual rights, we are not merely talking about rights that pertain to our individual desires but to the norms on which our very individuality depends" (33).

While Butler's argument accurately describes the importance and dilemmas posed by visibility and recognition, she fails to investigate visibility/recognition and the strategies most useful for those persons who are marginalized by their sex/gender/sexuality choices to resist hegemonic ideologies. Additionally, although the examination of transgender individuals and texts are prevalent in many academic circles, most rhetorical studies of individual or self-defense discourse fail to analyze the

messages on the topic of trans-embodiment and the acceptance or rejection of such identities.[3] Additionally, they lack rhetorical examinations of gender blurring and fail to consider the impacts of specific persuasive texts on current or changing social norms.[4]

Aims of this project

This project, through a rhetorical examination of Beatie's rhetoric, seeks specifically to address these shortcomings in the study of the discursive strategies for recognition of transgendered people. This study is an examination of the rhetoric and iconic visual image used by Thomas Beatie while his pregnant body received coverage by national and international mass media outlets. In particular, it uses the framing and theories of apologia rhetoric to understand Beatie's discursive strategies and rhetorical choices directed toward the American public. I will illustrate that Beatie's discourse is an important test case on its own merits and as a template for future instances of transgendered and new reproductive progress. In exploring Beatie's discourse, I identify his apologia strategies and assess the following fundamental questions about his discourse: to what degree does his apologia rhetoric operate as recognition? How well is he able to construct persuasive messages of apologia that allow him to be recognized in codes of pregnancy and masculinity at the same time?

In interrogating these questions, I will demonstrate the impossibility of being recognized as both an intelligible[5] pregnant body and man and, as such, why Beatie

[3] A search for the terms, "apologia" and "queer" or "sexual minorities," in prominent databases did not yield any results. I will show in the next chapter that most scholars apply apologia and image repair theories to the rhetoric produced by political individuals, celebrities, organizations, or corporations.

[4] Besides the work of John Sloop, contemporary communication scholars have not examined the significance of persuasive popular culture texts on the understanding or altering of social gender norms.

[5] By suggesting that Beatie is unintelligible I do not mean that his discourse is insignificant nor do I mean that it cannot be made understandable through non-normative categories, such as Beatie being labeled and understood as "freak" or as monstrous. I understand intelligibility through the writings of Michel Foucault and Butler as one who is recognizable and fits within the norms, codes, conventions, and discursive

cannot rely on certain elements of recognition or defend certain choices or aspects of his life because his recognition is always incomplete and impossible. As a result, certain apologia strategies and tactics may be available or unavailable to Beatie. Yet, this impossibility may not mark Beatie's efforts as a Sisyphean task. Instead, his partial success and partial failed recognition may be necessary to disrupt long-standing sex and gender norms and cultural assumptions about the transgendered body. In order to understand Beatie's discursive effect, this project will track changing context as opposed to making claims about the audience reception of Beatie's persuasive arguments. I will examine how Beatie's performance is read as process for altering future contextual references, recognition, and for deconstructing social policies and political assumptions. As I will show through theories by Derrida and Butler, acceptance or approval from all audiences are not required for a discursive alteration to occur and influence future utterances. I will trace alternative proof of effect that illustrate that, in this case, the performance is adequate to shift the contemporary context.

To complete this task, this dissertation has five chapters. In chapter two, I outline the study of apologia rhetoric and the current trends in the field's application of the theory. In doing so, I describe the history and development of the study of apologia and explain my methodological approach, the factor analysis by Ware and Linkugel. In order

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formations of the current culture. According to Foucault the biologist, Gregor Mendel is an example of an individual who was viewed as unintelligible because of his scientific claims. Foucault states:

> Mendel spoke the truth, but he was not *dans le vrai* (within the true) of contemporary biological discourse: it simply was not along such lines that objects and biological concepts were formed. A whole range in scale, the deployment of a totally new range of objects in biology was required before Mendel could enter into the true and his propositions appear, for the most part exact. Mendel was a true monster, so much so that science could not even properly speak of him. (224)

Like Mendel, Beatie is unrecognizable in contemporary times based on the limitations in American social discourse.

to explain and understand Beatie's persuasive strategies, I am applying Ware and Linkugel's framework to his rhetoric. As explained earlier, Beatie came forward and publicized his story, in order to justify and defend his actions to the public. Beatie's public appearances and personal testimonies contain many rhetorical strategies (discursive and visual) found in apologia rhetoric.

My method reveals that apologia studies are important, allowing us to think through social examples and understand the ways in which rhetoric produces social moves and negotiations. The arguments and rhetorical strategies inform the evaluations of the interventions made by the rhetor and explain the significance of Beatie's demand for recognition. More importantly, apologia rhetoric is useful because it shows rhetoricians the conditions of possibility that exist when one is required to repair an image or defend oneself. Understanding the template of apologia discourse becomes the groundwork of future subjects' rhetorical sensibilities.

Chapters 3 and 4 describe, classify, and analyze Beatie's messages according to Ware and Linkugel's factor analysis theory. By situating the discourse disseminated in the public, by the mass media, I specifically look for ways Beatie creates agency, identification and troubles or un-troubles his sex and gender identity. In order to draw these conclusions, I will examine five primary and well-publicized texts in this chapter. During the time between March and December of 2008, in magazines, tabloids and television programs appearing across the world, the story of Beatie, was publicized and discussed an incalculable number of times. Although Beatie periodically received attention from the media until 2010 when he delivered his third child, the first nine months in 2008 contained the most significant media coverage of "The Pregnant Man,"

specifically including various mediums in which Beatie articulated his self-defense. Beginning with the first-person account that appeared in *The Advocate* and continuing until December 2008 when The Discovery Health Channel premiered a British Documentary entitled, *Pregnant Man*, five dominant texts6 appeared in the mass media, which included Beatie's own voice and his apologia strategies.7

I argue that Beatie's discourse contains all four strategies: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence. Specifically, in chapter three, I examine Beatie's use of denial to show how he constructs agency, his use of bolstering for creating identity through the reference of popular American ideologies and his use of differentiation to articulate his recognition and blur gender identities and assumptions. In chapter four, I illustrate the ways in which Beatie uses transcendence, discursively and visually, to formulate an ideographic change in the term, <pregnancy>, and the ways in which he uses his story to embrace a more pivotal and progressive principle. Where necessary, I offer modifications or additions to apologia theory, such as the benefits of including ideographic analysis when understanding the strategy of transcendence. The analysis of the five texts that appeared at the height of his media coverage, allows for the consideration of possible differences and/or similarities in the rhetorical strategies used over time, but more importantly, they illustrate the ways in which Beatie creates a

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[6] I analyze Beatie's defense and arguments included in the article "Labor of Love" that is published in The Advocate and his autobiography, Labor of Love. Second, I also examine three of his most well-known televised appearances, including the transcripts of his interview on "Oprah," which took place on April 3, 2008, his televised interview with Barbara Walters, which aired on November 14, 2008, and the documentary, "Pregnant Man," which premiered on Discovery Health on Tuesday, November 18, 2008. The documentary cites additional visual imagery and interviews from Beatie and members of the public and promises to provide "the only all-access look inside the everyday household of America's most unconventionally conventional family" (Discovery Health).

[7] It is important to note that while Beatie has control over his messages presented in his book and televised interviews, it is impossible to know which messages, if any, were edited, removed, or strung together differently by the editors, producers, publishers, and even his book's co-writer, Alex Tresniowski.

performative statement that makes recognizable his identity and creates gender troubling in contemporary American culture.

Finally, chapter five will draw conclusions based on the examination of Beatie's rhetoric. I evaluate Beatie's strategies and determine how they inform conclusions about apologia rhetoric, performatives, and influence the current ideologies on sex and gender in the American public. In this chapter, I will conclude that Beatie acquires a sense of control at the same time that he asks for recognition of a body that is unintelligible to the public. I show how Beatie's rhetoric is both available and unavailable, radical and conventional. As such, his demand for recognition and its inevitable failure to make himself intelligible confounds the present system and makes him an individual that is difficult to tack down according to the contemporary sex/gender binary.

CHAPTER 2 APOLOGIA AS METHODOLOGY

In its most traditional understanding, the study of rhetoric examines how speakers adapt to and have persuasive effects on their audiences and the circumstances that they face. For example, Wayland Maxwell Parrish, one of the early explicators of our discipline, makes his case for studying speeches by reminding us that, "Aristotle defined rhetoric as 'the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.' Note first in this definition that rhetoric is *faculty*. That is, it is not a definite technique with fixed rules of procedure, but merely the ability to find the elements of persuasion in a given speech" (41). Despite the recent influence of critical/cultural studies, the center of the field remains committed to understanding orators, rhetorical situations, and the influence and power of persuasive discourses on others. In perhaps no other circumstance is rhetoric and persuasion more important to individuals than when one needs to defend his or her actions to others. For this reason, the rhetoric of defense is one of the earliest forms of discourse examined in the field of rhetorical studies. Although it is an old form, the rhetoric of defense continues to have great significance and value in the twenty-first century. While scholars have examined defense, or *apologia*, for its effects and constraints, the rhetorical situations which cause individuals to engage in this type of discourse continues and arguably expands in times that are inundated by the mass media and influenced by the erosion of the public/private spheres.

When Thomas Beatie and his wife decided, "to let people know [their] story [their] way" ("Oprah," 22), the message was paradoxically recognized as uniquely controversial and simultaneously reminiscent of the publicized defenses used by celebrities, politicians, and entertainment figures. Thus, in order to best explain and

interrogate Beatie's rhetorical strategies and their significance in our culture, I am applying the framework of apologia to his discourse. As explained in the previous chapter, Beatie came forward and publicized his story in order to justify and defend his actions to the public and engage in "face-saving" techniques. But in doing so, the public fought against his image as a transgender man, attempting to normalize his body and settle the status of his gender. Because of the attention and judgment that he encountered, Beatie's public appearances and personal testimonies seem to contain similar discursive strategies that are found in apologia rhetoric. Within Beatie's defense is an attempt to justify a nonnormative identity/lifestyle and a destabilization of a rigid sex/gender identity. Beatie moved beyond the norm and, through defending his choice, he provides arguments and seeks recognition from the public for his lifestyle.

In this chapter, I outline the textual analysis method to studying apologia rhetoric. In doing so, I first examine apologia's relation and significance to genre theory, illustrating that a generic approach to apologia does not require a focus on form and formulas, but rather its purpose has expanded to the study of situation and the expectations in the social imagination. Second, I explore seminal apologia studies that have led to the development of our contemporary understanding of apologia and image repair and the implications and limits of those works. In particular, I focus on the major apologia factors developed by Ware and Linkugel as a methodological framework appropriate for reading Beatie's discourse. Finally, I present a theoretical rationale for this project.

Apologia as genre

Apologia is characterized as the rhetoric that forms when an attack or accusation is made against an individual. As such, apologia is a recurrent form of discourse, grounded in specific circumstances, and "constitutes a discrete genre" (Kruse, "Motivational" 13; Ware and Linkugel 418). As a result, many rhetorical studies examining apologia according to previously established features and forms of that genre.

Classification of types of discourse began with the writings of rhetoricians in Ancient Greece, starting with Aristotle, who defined three broad categories of discourse: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. Today, genre analysis is conducted across a broad range of fields, including literary, film and rhetorical criticism due to a common interest in examining how particular situations provoke specific needs and expectations in audiences and, therefore, call forth a particular type of discursive response.

Within contemporary rhetorical studies, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson argue that Edwin Black offered the first endorsement of genre studies as a methodological tool. Black critiqued the prevalence of the neo-Aristotelian approach used by critics, arguing that classical approaches did not trace or examine recurrent forms. While Black's work did not outline a specific method for generic criticism, it sparked studies of situations, rhetorical motives, and the corresponding audience expectations (Campbell and Jamieson 403-404). Consequently, in the late 1960s, genre criticism and specifically a generic approach to interrogating apologia discourse became a major focus within the study of rhetoric.

These early studies aimed to understand rhetorical practices by discerning the similarities in the context/situations and the ways in which rhetorical forms respond to those conditions. In his discussion of political discourse, Bruce E. Gronbeck emphasizes

the importance and significance of generic speeches as political performances. As he contends, "Whether understood as matters of language use (speech acts) or as special kinds of cultural conditioning (as in Kenneth Burke's conception of rhetorical form), genres of political discourse in most societies give rise to public expectations for adequate or inadequate, proper or improper, communicative performances" (Gronbeck). In other words, genres are important for structuring collective understanding and creating a set of formal standards for recognition. Individuals then evaluate ritualistic discourses for their agreement with explicit cultural expectations. In the case of apology, features of this genre include discourse that identifies victims, allocates responsibility, and makes amends for those actions (Harter, Stephens and Japp 24).

In their defense and broadening of the concept of genre, Campbell and Jamieson identified some potential problems with previous rhetorical studies of genre. For example, many scholars could not justify the appearance of different forms in particular genres. Furthermore, circular argumentation develops when deductive approaches are applied that result in a priori identification of genres. To avoid such problems and to encourage a "generic analysis" rather than a mere "classification," Campbell and Jamieson further develop and define genre as:

> groups of discourses which share substantive, stylistic, and situational characteristics. Or, put differently, in the discourses that form a genre, similar substantive and stylistic strategies are used to encompass situations perceived as similar by the responding rhetors. A genre is a group of acts unified by a constellation of forms that recurs in each of its members. These forms, *in isolation*, appear in other discourses. What is distinctive

> about the acts in a genre is the reoccurrence of the forms together in constellation. (408)

Rather than act as a crusade to determine and categorize new genres, Campbell and Jamieson contend that generic criticism should ascertain the dynamic fusing of substance, style and situational characteristics within the text in order to identify reoccurring formal elements. In doing so, the critic is engaged in utilizing a generic perspective toward criticism. Campbell and Jamieson argue that such methods recreate a symbolic context from which the rhetorical artifact first emerged, so that we can learn about the nature of human response and the ways in which rhetoric is shaped, enabled, and constrained by prior rhetoric, culture, and other contextual formulations.

Despite these attempts to revise notions of genre, the field continued to place the distinctive rhetorics into categories while other rhetoricians continued to criticize generic methods. Following the post-structural/modern turn, many scholars shifted away from the use of earlier methods where "the 'content' of the speech is summarized, synopsized, its assumptions spelled out, its world view abstracted and handed over virtually intact in the act of displaying its formal characteristics" (Wander 8). This trend in rhetoric studies to use postmodernism and post-structuralism as theory, method, and praxis emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and coincided with the questioning of universal truth claims. Consequently, these critical rhetoricians rejected methodologies that were deemed too formulaic and based in prescribed rules grounded in classical approaches. For example, critics such as John H. Patton and Thomas M. Conley claimed, "genre criticism requires too much critical discourse between the text and the reader and thus leads to assessments that are not fully responsible. Genre criticism . . . .invites reductionism, rules, [and]

formalism" (Miller 151; Downey 42-43). Undoubtedly, many early genre studies are guilty of perpetuating the notion that genres are an inherent structure or rigid classifying system and, as a result, simply evaluated discourse by whether or not they fit within a particular genre. Additionally, early scholars using generic methods were responsible for encouraging forms of comparative criticism in which rhetoric was solely evaluated on its effect to enumerate or meet expectations of generic forms. Consequently, these studies continue to apply formulaic and reductionist deductive logic to identify organizing principles, emphasizing the substance and form but failing to truly consider the influence and interaction of the situation. Miller argues that in the analyses by early genre scholars, like Northrop Frye and Edwin Black, "situation serves primarily to locate a genre, it does not contribute to its character as rhetorical action" (153).

Building off of Campbell and Jamieson's efforts, Miller attempts to reevaluate the importance of genre criticism and advances a rethinking of the concept of "genre" as rhetorical action in order to better understand rhetoric's role in meaning-making, investigate situations (both recurring and non-recurring ones), and determine the actions that discourse seeks to accomplish. Miller argues that, unlike earlier genre theorists, Campbell and Jamieson understand genre not as a "formal entity," but as "fully rhetorical," so that the concept of the situation becomes a primary focus of the rhetorical study (153). Additionally, Campbell and Jamieson use an inductive method to view genres as an "open" and "evolving" method. Thus, Miller advocates understanding genre as, "a classification based in rhetorical practice, open rather than closed and organized around situated actions," in order to explain the knowledge and theory that rhetorical practices create (155). As Miller further elaborates,

> To consider as potential genres such homely discourse as the letter of recommendation, the user manual, the progress report, the ransom note, the lecture, and the white paper, as well as the eulogy, the apologia, the inaugural, the public proceeding, and the sermon is not to trivialize the study of genres; it is to take seriously the rhetoric in which we are immersed and the situation in which we find ourselves. (155)

As Gunn reinforces, it is time to broaden our understanding of genre to include more than examination of invariant structures. Instead, genre criticism should be broadly understood to include what is discursively possible and permitted in popular imagination and "restore social forms to their verbal character" (Gunn 151). Thus, using genre theory as starting point is necessary to determine what discursive strategies permit or prohibited in particular rhetorical situations.

Theorists B. L. Ware and Wil A. Linkugel emphasize the relationship between generic criticism and apologia discourse, stating "we believe apologetical discourses constitute a distinct form of public address, a family of speeches with sufficient elements in common so as to warrant legitimately generic status" (418). For Ware and Linkugel, specific and dominant factors are found in nearly all examples of apologia. As my literature review will illustrate, generic analyses are not the only means to investigate apologia rhetoric, although the rhetoric's connection to the form is an important assumption behind the development factor analysis, the method outlined by Ware and Linkugel. However, studies by Campbell and Jamieson and Miller illustrates that by using generic assumptions as a starting point, the examination of a speech of self-defense reveals the development of social action and the process of meaning-making. Rather than

conducting a generic analysis, by simply describing the factors and Beatie's ability to conform to the generic expectations, I will use these factors as foundations for explaining the rhetorical strategies and limitations and effects of Beatie's discourse, as constrained and enabled by this particular rhetorical situation.

Apologia rhetoric and the evolution of the study

Early definitions and characteristics of apologia

Apologia has been identified as one of the earliest rhetorical forms. For instance, Noreen Kruse argues that, "apologia as a genus is as ancient as rhetoric itself" ("Scope" 279). As Kruse further explains, Plato, who authored the well-known apologia of Socrates, initially identified "accusation" and "apology" as the only two rhetorical genres. In addition, John B. Hatch further clarifies the meaning of apologia, explaining the defense of self as slightly different from reconciliation rhetoric. As Hatch argues,

> In virtually all the rhetorical literature to date, public apologies (in the contemporary sense of expressing regret for wrongdoing) are treated as a form of apologia. This move is understandable, given the etymological and historical connection between the two terms. However, theories of apologia have been so deeply rooted in the classical Greek notion of apology – defense against accusation – that their application in these cases tends to deflect attention away from the intentions and ethics we associate with the word 'apology' in everyday contemporary life. (187)

Likewise, Sharon D. Downey first identifies the development of the apologia genre, or speeches of self-defense, in Ancient Greece. She describes the situational factors that resulted in this kind of rhetoric:

> Classical apologia were managed similarly to the way all judicial proceedings were conducted. When accused of a misdeed, the apologist composed and delivered a speech of self-defense in the presence of her/his accuser(s) and the voting body of the General Assembly who, upon completion of the address, rendered a vote and, if guilty, a sentence immediately. Legally and culturally explicit, the accused was entitled to a defense. The rationale for this stemmed from the value Greeks placed upon the rights, honor, and the integrity of the individual, the operable laws at the time, and the stature of pure reason and rationality. (46)

From this early understanding of apologia as self-defense, Kruse defines apologia as, "public discourse produced whenever a prominent person attempts to repair his [sic] character as it has been directly or indirectly damaged by overt changes, or rumors an allegations, which negatively value his [sic] behavior and/or his [sic] judgment" ("Motivational"13). Kruse was the first critic to outline two general characteristics of the genre that set up parameters of what qualifies as apologia discourse. First, she argues that rhetors' actions lead, "to public criticism of their characters," or that they are viewed as immoral and unethical ("Scope" 280). The implication of this claim is that the accusations are "real" or lead to material consequences for the accused, which "hinder one's ability to achieve goals" or "function as a leader" (Gold 307). As a result, the need for a response to these accusations is the most important consideration, not the medium for delivery by which the message is made. Secondly, Kruse argues that apologia results in an "answer" or production of discourses that defends the individual's public image and his/her motivational basis (Scope" 283). Thus, apologia is a response that one expects

from individuals found in dramatic or controversial scenarios. In an age of heightened interest and scrutiny directed at public figures, it is no surprise the prevalence of the generic form in contemporary society.

Apologia's effect on audiences

In the 1960s, accompanying the popularity of genre studies, Lawrence Rosenfeld conducted an "analog criticism" which compared two apologia speeches so as to reference a standard for the other one (Butler 281; Campbell and Jamieson 405). Rosenfield's essay signals an emergence of essays that attempt to classify and identify the form, style, and situations inherent in apologic discourse. In conducting this research, Rosenfield compares the situation and genre of apologia to determine form and characteristics in political apologias that appeared in the 1950s. This scholarship argues that similarities between the Nixon's "Checkers" Speech and Harry S. Truman's claims of Harry Dexter White's communist ties demonstrate the presence of four constants in broadcast apologetic discourse: (1) apologia is likely an element of a "short, intense, decisive clash of views"; (2) speakers are unlikely to limit themselves to strictly defensive rhetoric; (3) the middle third of speeches contain a large amount of facts; and (4) the individual will construct previously used arguments from "the national rostrum" (Rosenfield 449). Sherry Devereaux Butler later used these four characteristics when investigating Edward Kennedy's "Chappaquiddick" address. Butler concludes that Kennedy's address met only two of the four standards outlined by Rosenfield. In particular, Kennedy's address differed because it incited new questions and criticisms from his audience, resulting in a longer confrontation from the public. Additionally, Kennedy's speech could be categorized as more defensive than earlier apologia. Unlike

Truman and Nixon, Kennedy could not identify a "well-delineated enemy," admitted guilt, and asked his audience for more sympathy and pity than previous speakers. Attempting to determine whether the form of genre was shifting, Butler argues that audiences in 1969, "identified the genre as a familiar one," signaling that, "the style and form of the genre had not changed to a significant degree" (286). Rather, Kennedy's failures were illustrative of American culture growing savvier toward mass-mediated images and defensive strategies. Most significant, Butler argues that Rosenfield failed to note the importance of a reliance on traditional America values. This company of American values, which are violated and missing from Kennedy's speech, are prevalent in Nixon's and Truman's addresses.

Apologia and motives

While Rosenfeld and Butler examined the effect of apologia rhetoric and audience responses, communication studies began to examine rhetors' motives and what the rhetors, in turn, motivate through persuasion. Once again, scholars were incited by Burke's work on motives, much like they were inspired to examine genres due to Burke's previous work on rhetorical forms. In "A Motive View of Communication," Walter R. Fisher argues that, "a communicator perceives a rhetorical situation in terms of a motive, and that an organic relationship exists between his [sic] perception and his [sic] response to that circumstance; his [sic] perception determines the characteristics of his [sic] discourse and his presentation" (132). Although not explicitly connected to apologia rhetoric, Fisher provides a typology for the communicator who understands rhetorical situations in terms of motives. Although Fisher defines image broadly and does not restrict it to the context of image repair, many of Fisher's examples are political or

scholarly figures who were required to defend themselves or their ideas. He examines four motivationally-situated rhetoric types: (1) "affirmation," "when a communicator addresses potential believers in an effort to get them to adopt a 'new' concept" (132); (2) reaffirmation, or reviving a belief already held by others; (3) "purification," this rhetoric is found in instances when an identity is questioned, requiring a refinement or clarification of an individual's beliefs or values; and (4) "subversion," a strategy that aims "to weaken or destroy an ideology" (137).

Although Fisher and other scholars maintain that all discourse derives from motivations, the motivational view soon influenced the specific study of apologia rhetoric. In particular, scholars argue that apologia is rhetoric motivated from accusation and, more importantly, that it motivates an audience. For example, Kruse argues that motives remain a critical factor influencing apologetic discourse, although it is one that critics have largely overlooked. She contends that the needs of a speaker, along with the circumstances, determine the deployment of a particular discourse. Identifying a grouping of needs drawn from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Kruse develops sub-classes of non-denial apologia. She determines that non-denial apologia rhetoric takes one of three forms: (1) survival responses; (2) social responses; or (3) self-actualized responses. Additionally, Kruse contends that, "apologists who employ strategies other than denial in their messages do so to (1) maintain moral and ethical equilibrium; (2) secure or reaffirm status, mastery or a place in groups; or (3) preserve their lives, positions, fortunes, souls or something of a similar nature contributing to their well-being" (21). Judith D. Hoover explains the value in this approach in stating, "Apologia theory includes explorations of motivations as well as definitions and boundaries, and so we have a well marked path for

finding what communicators do and why they do it" (247). Additionally, because of the identification of generic discrepancies and the difficulties that arise in attributing the cause of audience reception and "effectiveness" as represented by the work of Rosenfield, Butler and others, rhetoricians used motivation as a new justification for the study of apologia. Thus, Kruse's work on motives is important because it encourages a study of speaker motives so that critics may escape the challenges and restraints in measuring audience effect as the sole determination of a speech's success or failure.

Ware and Linkugel's apologia methodology

Now that I have reviewed the field's early works concerning the study of apologia, I examine an approach to apologia that concentrates on the reoccurring rhetorical strategies – rather than form or motive -- that are present in apologia discourse. As a result, this approach avoids many of the limitations found in previous work yet recognizes that certain rhetorical situations give rise to certain discursive strategies that can teach us a great deal about how particular situations enable and constrain future rhetor's choices.

Ware and Linkugel's Factor Analysis

Similar to the motive-approach, scholars continued to provide a comprehensive list of rhetorical strategies found in apologia address. In 1973, Ware and Linkugel provided an explicit framework for the rhetorical critic by closely examining a sampling of self-defense speeches (418). Today, Ware and Linkugel's theory remains one of the most frequently used frameworks in the examination of rhetorical apologia studies. Before justifying my decision for adopting their method for my analysis, I discuss the assumptions behind and description of "factor analysis" and why it is valuable. Finally, I

describe and differentiate Benoit's image repair theory from Ware and Linkugel's work in order to further articulate my methodological goals.

Ware and Linkugel argue that apologia is a recurrent form of discourse, a necessitated response and strategy, and one that results from specific occasions. Additionally, they argue that apologia is equally as relevant in contemporary times as it was in previous years despite the presence of legal representation and public relations experts. The frequent and regular media attention and public recognition of self-defenses in recent cases such as Tiger Woods, Mel Gibson, Jesse James, or Senator Anthony Weiner proves the ongoing importance of this generic form. In an attempt to conduct a "true" generic criticism by identifying the types of discourse found in apologia, Ware and Linkugel outline the factors or strategies which characterize the apologetic responses, identifying such modes as "denial," (denying accusations) "bolstering," (identifying oneself with a thing, sentiment or characteristic viewed favorably by the audience), "differentiation," (separating from or constructing a new, different meaning from the larger context), and "transcendence," (joining or transforming the meaning to a new factor, sentiment or fact).

Denial

The first category, denial, is simple disavowal of facts, opinions, relationships, etc. This strategy is useful to the extent that the rhetor's negation cannot be disproven or that it does not conflict with the audience's beliefs. Ware and Linkugel consider denial "reformative," meaning that they do not change the audience's interpretation or meaning of the issue or event in question. Gold explains that denial can take many forms, including the denial of fact, denial of intention, or denial that the appropriate amount of

information provided about the situation is sufficient (308). Ware and Linkugel note that denial of intent is often viewed as a persuasive and attractive option if, from the perspective of the audience, it is too difficult to escape the stigma of the offensive act. Benoit and Drew also include the category of "shifting the blame," or claiming that another individual or entity is responsible for the act, as a tactic of denial (155).

Bolstering

Ware and Linkugel's second factor, bolstering, refers to rhetoric strategies that reinforce ideas or actions considered favorable by the audience. Like denial, this strategy is also reformative because it does not attempt to change the audience's attitude toward that feeling or belief; in other words, drawing upon this sentiment is limited by the audience's already existing knowledge. For example, in his study of House Speaker Dennis Hastert's preemptive apologia for the removal of the Armenian Genocide Resolution from debate on the House floor, Alfred G. Mueller argues that the strategy of bolstering is conducted when Hastert affirms his support for the resolution and validates the Armenians' suffering at the hands of Turkey. Similarly, Ware and Linkugel describe Edward Kennedy's emphasis of the sentiments of "belonging" and "family" in his "Chappaquidick" address, elements that are identifiable and viewed favorably by Americans. In addition, bolstering strategies can directly relate more to the rhetor. As Gold explains, it "involves reminding the audience of previous occasions in which the accused was viewed in a favorable light; the inference is that such a drastic change in behavior is unlikely" (308). Also, testimony from other well-respected members of the community can also be used to strengthen the reputation of the rhetor and/or strengthen

the defense. Lastly, the rhetor can also minimize the negative opinions associated with the alleged behavior.

Differentiation

Ware and Linkugel's next two strategies, differentiation and transcendence, are considered "transformative" in that they intentionally attempt to alter meanings and reality or place "the accused above the reality" (Hoover 240). As Ware and Linkugel maintain,

> Differentiation subsumes those strategies which serve the purpose of separation of some fact sentiment, object, or relationship from some larger context within which the audience presently views the attribute. The division of the old context into two or more new constructions of reality is accompanied by a change in the audience's meanings. At least one of the new constructs takes on a meaning distinctively different from that it possessed when viewed as part of the old, homogenous context. (421).

In other words, this strategy takes whatever the audience considers reprehensible and places it into a new perspective. It often includes distinguishing and particularizing the accusations against the rhetor. Gold further explains that, "the charge is made less abstract" (308). Additionally, Ware and Linkugel contend that this strategy is commonly deployed by the accused to request postponement of judgment until the audience understands the act according to a different time and context. For instance, in the case of Edward Kennedy, he attempts to differentiate his "normal self" from the conduct and choices made the evening of the Chappaquiddick tragedy by noting that he took proper action in the morning when his mind was clear and lucid.

Transcendence

Ware and Linkugel's final strategy is transcendence, one which is closely related to and considered the obverse of differentiation. According to Ware and Linkugel, transcendence, "cognitively joins some fact, sentiment, object or relationship with some larger context within which the audience does not presently view that attribute . . . any such strategy affects the meaning which the audience attaches to the manipulated attribute" (422). In short, the strategy results in an alteration of the identifications and meanings of the act or view of one's character in an attempt to place the person or action in a more favorable view. Examples of transcendence are found in Eugene V. Debs's speech presented in Canton, Ohio after he was indicted for violating the Espionage Act. In defending himself, Debs frames his arguments in terms of the First Amendment, placing his actions in a context more favorable to the public. Additionally, in the case study of the apologia by House Speaker Hastert, Mueller identifies Hastert's strategy of transcendence in his discussion of the H.R. 596 as related to broader global issues of American security and geopolitical interests in the Middle East. As well, Emil B. Towner notes the rhetorical effect transcendence can have on an audience:

> In short, the rhetorical force of transcendence is that the act is linked and legitimized by the higher-order, abstract value. Digging deeper, one could argue that by linking a specific incident to a higher-order value, the strategy of transcendence has a dual effect. First, the abstract value shapes the way a society views a specific act. However, the converse effect is that the specific act or context shapes how a society defines the abstract in action . . . Based on this, transcendence ultimately allows the accused to

> deny guilt and legitimize an act through a more concrete definition of an abstract value. (300)

Examining the Dixie Chicks' apologetic rhetoric in response to their criticism of President George W. Bush, Towner argues that the Dixie Chicks avoided apologizing and transcended the accusations of being un-American by linking their actions to high-order values of "patriotism" and "American." The success of the Dixie Chicks' persuasion depended on the audience agreeing or disagreeing with the definition of these core values.

Ware and Linkugel clarify that the factors are not found within the speech; rather, they act as classifying instruments identified by the critic so that rhetorical strategies can be grouped, understood, and therefore studied. Thus, although some studies that employ Ware and Linkugel's factors misuse the role of genre, the method does not inherently suffer from the criticisms of formalism and reductionism. Indeed, Ware and Linkugel are the first to acknowledge the likely objections to the scientific rigor and variable-approach to human behavior. However, they do not view their theory as a cookie-cutter or social scientific approach to rhetorical criticism, arguing instead that it, "serves merely as a source for a new departure in thought" (418). Specifically, the method calls for more than just classification; instead, the ambiguity of the factors/strategies requires the critic to determine how the strategies operate rhetorically in the speech of self-defense. As Ware and Linkugel clarify, "The factor terminology forces the critic to discern which choices a given strategy represents. The total import of these factors of apologetic discourse, however, become apparent only after we consider the ways in which the speakers usually combine them to produce that human behavior we term the speech of

self-defense" (423). In other words, after using the classification it remains the critic's duty to problematize and theorize the rhetorical significance of the speakers' choices. The method simply provides a terminology and framework to conceptualize the approach.

Contemporary apologia and applications of Ware and Linkugel's factors

In several studies, rhetoricians applied Ware and Linkugel's taxonomy in order to understand and evaluate various self-defense rhetorical strategies. For example, Gold examines political apologia from the late 1970s to show the dependence on strategies of denial and bolstering among political figures. Although she begins by simply classifying the various strategies, Gold draws conclusions from these rhetorical patterns, arguing that the unique social context and the significant presence of the mass media impacted the discourse used during the 1976 elections. In conducting her research, Gold demonstrates that while Ware and Linkugel's taxonomy is very useful in describing strategies in apologia, wider implications about the social context and changes taking place in both the culture and broader public discourse can be drawn.

Other studies have built on the work of Ware and Linkugel by further operationalize the genre's classifications. For instance, some studies shift away from the term "apologia" and instead explore image repair, "a recurrent mode of discourse," that, "attempts to restore face, image, or reputation after suspected wrong-doing" (Benoit and Drew 153). Benoit's theory closely resembles the work of Ware and Linkugel and even borrows specific concepts from their framework. However, Benoit removes the ambiguity of the classifications and broadens the theory by adding additional factors with which to classify image repair apologia discourse.

Benoit's theory establishes fourteen image repair strategies, which fit into a comprehensive model with five broad categories. Benoit's first category is "denial." Benoit argues that denial takes two forms: (1) simple denial; and (2) shifting the blame to another. The second broad category, "evasion of responsibility," contains four sub-categories; (1) the accused can claim that the act was a response or reaction to another's provocation; (2) the act of "defeasibility" alleges that a lack of information exists concerning the situation; (3) one can claim that the offensive act was accidental; and (4) the offensive behavior can be framed as done with good intentions. Benoit's third strategy is "reduce offensiveness." This image repair tactic contains six distinct versions: (1) bolster (strengthen positive feelings); (2) minimize the negative feelings toward the offense; (3) differentiation (distinguish the act from an offensive action); (4) "transcendence" (frame the action in a favorable view); (5) attack one's accusers; or (6) engage in compensation for the offensive act. Similar to compensation, Benoit's fourth general category is "corrective action," which results in a person or corporation offering to correct the offensive act and, often, to prevent further problems. Finally, the fifth general strategy is mortification, as first conceived by Kenneth Burke, as confession or the act of begging for forgiveness (Benoit 179-181).

In each of his studies, Benoit first diagnoses the strategies used by the accused, evaluates the image repair effort, and then draws implications from the combinations of the strategies and the outcome that results. Benoit's theory illustrates that specific elements of the situation or context have implication for the audience's reception of image repair. For example in his examination of Hugh Grant's image repair discourse in response to his arrest for inappropriate behavior with a prostitute, Benoit concludes that

Grant's strategies of mortification, bolstering, and denial, "suggests that he made most of the appropriate choices in his defense" (263). Examining Kenneth Starr's same tactics of denial, bolstering and some mortification, Benoit and McHale conclude that Starr's image repair discourse was ineffective. A close textual analysis of these strategies reveals that Starr failed to make persuasive claims or supply sufficient support; therefore, "Starr's defense failed at the important level of implementation" (276).

Although more social scientific in its approach to image repair, Benoit's work is useful for further understanding apologia rhetorical strategies and the distinct goals and implications of a rhetor's choice. Where it is appropriate, I reference Benoit's definitions to further clarify the categories and descriptions theorized by Ware and Linkugel. However, I do not use image repair discourse as my primary methodological framework for multiple reasons. First, I am studying an individual's discursive tactics rather than an institution's. Although Benoit's theory is used to examine individuals' rhetoric as well, image repair is most applicable to instances of crisis communication, public relations, and organizational communication. Thus, I use Ware and Linkugel's methodology because it is most frequently used in rhetorical studies of an individual's rhetoric.

Furthermore, the name, "image repair" implies that the individual or organization had a previous public image that was later tarnished. However, this is not the case for Beatie, who is an unknown individual prior to his preemptive apologia. As a result, to understand Beatie's self-defense, factor analysis remains most relevant for the examination of his texts. In addition, an initial survey of Beatie's rhetoric reveals that he primarily uses only two categories established by Benoit: denial and reducing offensiveness. In comparison, Beatie employs all of Ware and Linkugel's strategies.

Hence, Ware and Linkugel's theory seems more appropriate for the actual discourse used by Beatie. Additionally, Benoit approaches the rhetoric of image repair assuming that the primary goal of the rhetor is to maintain a positive image. In the case of Beatie, his goals appear more complex. Although I acknowledge that his rhetoric qualifies as self-defense rhetoric, it is unclear whether his primary objective is to save his image.

Finally, Benoit uses his assessment to evaluate the success or failure of image repair rhetoric. While it is important to consider audience reception, it is difficult to accurately measure the acceptance or rejection of the speaker's messages. Benoit acknowledges the critiques of his colleagues who argue that it is very challenging to ascribe causation to discourse ("Another" 42). In the case of Thomas Beatie, it is nearly impossible to gauge the audience's reception of him solely based on his apologia discourse. Unlike Presidents, political leaders, and even actors, polls and other signs of popularity are nonexistent in this circumstance. Although I assess Beatie's rhetoric, I cannot begin to hypothesize changes in the acceptance or rejection of his image based on his discourse.

Several contemporary rhetorical studies have utilized Ware and Linkugel's methodology to expand and develop our knowledge of apologia. For example, Lynn Harter, Ronald Stephens, and Phyllis Japp examine President Clinton's speech of apology for the Tuskegee Syphilis experiment as an example of institutional apologia. Likewise, Hoover analyzes the discourse of former governor of Tennessee, Ray Blanton, in order to understand the influence of personal values as a key factor that may aid or restrain the effect of apologia. Hoover concludes that Blanton was constricted not simply by his choice of strategy but by his personal values and the cultural values held by his audience.

Additionally, Mueller, as previously discussed, examines the press release by House Speaker Hastert and his defense of the removal of the Armenian genocide bill from the House floor. In his analysis, Mueller contends that in addition to form, critics examining apologia should interrogate the motivational factors or lines of argument used by the rhetor. Lastly, Towner combines Ware and Linkugel's apologia theory with ideographic analysis, defined by Michael Calvin McGee as a key term that constitute ideological beliefs, to show first that, "apologia and ideographs share an emphasis on ideology" (301). Second, Towner demonstrates that the strategy of transcendence often corresponds with a rhetor's attempt to redefine a social value, much like an ideograph. Although the study of apologia rhetoric continues to expand and rhetoricians consider additional theoretical elements of apologia, these studies illustrate that Ware and Linkugel's framework remains an important starting point for interrogating discourses of self-defense.

Understanding Beatie's rhetoric through the framework of apologia

There are several reasons why Beatie's discourse should be examined through the framework of apologia. First, previous research on apologia rhetoric or sex and gender have not examined the specific content or context of self-defense messages that simultaneously challenge sex and gender norms, which is central to the Beatie example. Additionally, Beatie's public status, or more appropriately, lack of status, makes him a unique and important instance of apologia to examine. Specifically, Beatie is only recognized because of his public defense of his transgender identity and non-normative pregnancy; he was not publicly known before the controversy. While his sexual identity makes him uniquely different from other American citizens, what makes his apologia

potentially significant is that before coming out or engaging the public through a digital speech act, he was not famous or publicly recognized.

As well, current apologia studies too narrowly focus on particular types of public beings. For instance, Benoit and McHale explore repair rhetorical strategies used in specific contexts such as corporate, political, entertainment, religious, and royal settings while scholars such as Kruse and Benoit and Hanczor examine the apologia rhetoric of sports figures. Outside of these categories, scholars have not examined the defensive rhetoric from other individuals in other contexts. In particular, Beatie does not fit in any of the aforementioned categories and his situation is defined more by the context in which he emerges rather than his occupation or status. As a result, his discourse may provide some new insight into apologia strategies.

Second, Beatie, a marginalized and unknown individual, willingly chose to come under the scrutiny of the public to defend his personal choices and lifestyle. In other words, one difference between most apologia rhetoric studies and this study is the context that surrounds the nature of Beatie's defense. Typically, individuals and organizations are obligated to construct or preserve their image in response to personal controversies and crises that are exposed by the media, government regulations, or members of the judicial system. However, this is not the case for Beatie. In his study of Hastert's defense, Mueller maintains that Hastert's discourse represents a form of *preemptive apologia rhetoric*. As Mueller maintains, "What made his case so unique, however, was that Hastert issued the statement via the Internet before any criticisms materialized. In effect, Hastert employed a preemptive apologetic strategy, turning a traditionally defensive rhetorical posture into an offensive rhetorical move" (25). Like Hastert, Beatie was not

called upon to defend his actions to the public. Rather, he willingly called on the media to spread his message and allowed the media to construct him as a controversial public figure. To date, the examination of Hastert's discourse is the only rhetorical study of preemptive apologia, thus justifying additional examinations of this type of apologia.

As a result, Beatie's case raises a number of theoretical questions that can aid our understanding of apologia discourse: How do the traditional strategies of apologia rhetoric inform the rhetoric of a self-created public figure like Beatie? What types of social values and messages are articulated in Beatie's preemptive apologia rhetoric? And, lastly, what discursive lessons are learned from the timing and the content of Beatie's discourse?

Methodological procedures

Textual analysis of apologia factors

In order to understand the role of apologia used in Beatie's discourse within the contemporary context of shifting LGBTQ politics, this study employs a textual analysis of several key discursive texts produced by Beatie. The project utilizes Ware and Linkugel's factor analytic methodology and applied the four factors outlined earlier that are most commonly used when an apologist faces accusations or offensive charges. Using the factors and their related subgenres as a framework, this project will investigate the discursive strategies available to Beatie and how these stratagems assisted or hindered his demands for acceptance and public recognition, particularly in a challenging context where Beatie did not enjoy support from much of the general public and parts of the LGBTQ community. Additionally, this study assesses how the visual presentation of Beatie's body enhances or undermines his discursive apologia strategies. In short, the

project analyzes Beatie's apologia discourse to determine how it affects his situation and related situations.

Texts

Five primary and well-publicized texts are explored to understand Beatie's apologia discourse. Although Beatie's story was widely discussed from March 2008 (when his story first broke) through 2010 (when he delivered his third child), the first nine months of 2008 were the height of media coverage of "The Pregnant Man." As a result, most of Beatie's most important self-defenses occur during this time. For this project, I interrogate five primary texts that appeared in the mass media that expressed Beatie's own voice and outlined his apologia strategies. Specifically, I analyze Beatie's defense and arguments included in the article "Labor of Love" that is published in *The Advocate* and his autobiography, *Labor of Love*. Second, I also examine three of his most well-known televised appearances, including the transcripts of his interview on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, which took place on April 3, 2008, his televised interview with Barbara Walters, which aired on November 14, 2008, and the documentary, *Pregnant Man*, which premiered on Discovery Health on Tuesday, November 18, 2008. The documentary cites additional visual imagery and interviews from Beatie and members of the public and promises to provide, "the only all-access look inside the everyday household of America's most unconventionally conventional family" (Discovery Health).

CHAPTER 3 DENIAL, BOLSTERING, AND DIFFERENTIATION AS RHETORICAL AGENCY

The number of people reached through the national and international press spurred by the publication of Thomas Beatie's article in *The Advocate* should not be underestimated. Beatie describes the immediate public and media attention that developed as a result of his appeal for recognition:

> Reaction to my essay was shift. *The Advocate* immediately regretted not making a bigger issue of my story . . . Within a day, the story had been picked up by more than one hundred other websites; within a week, a Google search of my name yielded more than one hundred thousand pages. Dozens of media outlets somehow got my personal cell phone number . . . We heard from every major United States network, as well as from newspapers, radio stations, talk shows, documentary filmmakers, and networks across Europe. We also heard from all the tabloids in the U.S. and many more around the globe. Webpages in foreign languages prominently displayed that pregnant picture of me. Our story was being talked about in over fifty different countries, from China to South Africa, Malta to Brazil. (*Labor* 266)

As indicated by this passage, Beatie's apologia rhetoric and the media's coverage of the story were widely disseminated through the public. Beatie's texts and discourse require careful and close examination not only because they reached a large audience, but because, as I will show, they became part of a larger discourse on the treatment of personal recognition and gender troubling in American popular culture.

In this chapter, I catalog Beatie's use of three rhetorical, apologic factors, denial, bolstering, and differentiation. Beginning with his use of denial, I identify and analyze his responses to two accusations made against Beatie: (1) Beatie is not a man; and (2) Beatie is profiteering and seeking fame. I argue that while one of the most pressing issues facing Beatie is his defense of his male gender despite his use of his female reproductive organs, his defense of this claim is more closely examined in his differentiation argumentation because of the nuances developed throughout his rhetoric. As a result, in my examination of denial, I identify the lines of argument that inform his denial of profiteering: (1) his action was unavoidable; (2) his publicity was akin to coming out and telling his story; (3) he was seeking medical and legal information; (4) he did not profit, and when he did receive minimal gain, it aided his family; and (5) he did not seek continual attention and remained reclusive post interviews. Next, I examine two lines of arguments forwarded through Beatie's use of bolstering. First, I identify the way he creates a narrative of overcoming adversity that includes stories about his tragic, family history and his past and current experiences of discriminatory treatment. Second, I explicate how Beatie uses bolstering to gain identification with audience values, through his articulation of desire for family, the American Dream, and the pursuit of happiness. Finally, I examine Beatie's strategy of differentiation, and his three arguments: (1) Beatie is different than the average subject; (2) Beatie resists current conventional trans narratives; and (3) Beatie contests definitions of "man"/gander norms.

An analysis of the three various factors reveal ways that Beatie constructs his agency. I will show that through his rhetoric of self-defense, Beatie both aids and, at times, inhibits the construction of agency and his development a singular subjectivity. In

other words, by attempting to construct agency, Beatie seeks a livable stance, in which, despite rules and norms, he can survive and be made recognizable because he operates in control of his subjectivity and choices.[8] I argue that even though Beatie can be understood as a figure limited by particular discourses and current understandings of intelligibility, I will show that Beatie sets up circumstances to ultimately overcome them and develops his personal advancement and rhetorical agency through these strategies.

Beatie's denial

There are two main charges against which Beatie employs denial: first, his motive for going public and, second, the question of whether or not he is indeed a man.

Beatie's denial of fame and money

Given that Beatie initiated his publicity, his first rhetorical act of self-defense is preemptive. For this reason, there are no instances of denial in *The Advocate*, as Beatie could not foresee all the criticisms that he would hear from others. He admits to Walters, "I didn't realize that there'd be such a negative backlash." Thus, although not the exclusive strategy, in his later rhetoric Beatie frequently engages in denial in response to charges that he is merely fame-seeking or profiteering.

Beatie denies the reasons that others have forwarded as his rationale for making his pregnancy a public matter. He denies exploiting his child and going public with his story to make a profit and become famous. Beatie states: "Going public with our story did not stem from a narcissistic desire to be famous, which many people have since accused us of" (*Labor* 263). Over the course of his carious lines of counter-argument to the

[8] According to Raymie McKerrow in his essay, "Critical Rhetoric," when a subject is constituted through agency, "the rhetor is capable of participating in a "dialectic of control" to shape the ongoing nature of the social relation being sustained or entered into. In fact, to the extent that a person fails to enter into a dialectical relation with the ideology, that individual ceases to function as an agent in the social system (see Giddens, 1979, p. 148)" (452-53).

profiteering charge, Beatie consistently provides alternative justifications for his action, which not only lends his discourse air of legitimacy, but shows him full-throated in defense of his actions. At times these strategies generate a certain amount of tension between the positions – as in, for example his nostalgic "everyman" embrace of Americana and in his recitation of his own troubled childhood, and yet he overcomes these limitations by portraying his "choices" as liberating.

Beatie offers several rationales for going public with his pregnancy. The principle line of argument advanced is that it would have been implausible to carry out the pregnancy as a private affair as he and his wife had intended. In his memoir, Beatie spends more than one chapter explaining how withholding the truth of his pregnancy became increasingly more difficult since Nancy was forced to do strenuous chores while trying to maintain the lie that she was the one expecting the child. In both his book and in the *20/20* interview, Beatie states verbatim the same analogy for their dilemma: "Hiding a pregnant man is like hiding an 800 pound gorilla" (*Labor* 260). From a practical standpoint, the Beaties began to realize that they could not hide the pregnancy and eventually the story would leak to the public. "By week nineteen, I was really starting to show . . . . We believed most people would assume I had a beer belly, but with more and more doctors and nurses learning about us, how much longer would it be before everyone in the neighborhood knew about the pregnant man?" (260.)

In his denial, Beatie shifts blame to circumstances. David Ling, in his pentadic analysis of Edward Kennedy's Chappaquiddick address, identifies the use of denial on Kennedy's address and illustrates the strategy as an attempt to blame the situation, or the scene, as controlling. Kennedy's emphasis on the unlit road, the sharp angles, and the

deep pond, ordered the scene as one that took away his personal agency. As Ling notes, "such a statement placed Kennedy in the position of an agent caught in a situation not of his own making. It suggests the scene as the controlling element" (226). Similar to Kennedy, Beatie's denial revolves around his insistence that while the pregnancy was his choice, he was forced into making his situation known to avoid humiliation and ostracism from others who would soon find out what he was concealing. However, in the same texts, he attempts to regain his agency by identifying the liberating nature of his choice. Although he discusses the hassles of being a silent, pregnant man, he places greater emphasis on the emotional burden of hiding and the importance of telling his own story.

His second justification for denial, that he and Nancy wanted to tell their story themselves, becomes portrayed as a liberating act of "coming out". When asked by Oprah: "why did you decide to go public with it?" Nancy answers, while Thomas nods in agreement, "We thought that it was best that we tell our story instead of other people telling the story for us." Beatie provides the same response to Walters: "There was no way that I was going to hide my pregnancy. And you know, honestly, Nancy and I wanted to tell our story from our own mouths before it got out." In his book, Beatie admits to wanting to keep a secret but knew that "the better course of action, we knew, was to come clean about my pregnancy – tell our friends, tell our neighbors, tell everyone. It was becoming increasingly clear to us that the most straightforward course of action would be to do something we'd actually dreaded: go public with out story. Our days of blending in were over" (261). By telling his story, Beatie fuses his personal action as a political one that claims agency for himself.

Beatie further explains, "I was tired of hunching over and hiding my belly . . . Part of us wanted to keep our secret forever, but another part no longer wanted to act as if it were something shameful" (260). In this passage, Beatie reveals the physical and emotional difficulty of "hiding" one's "true" identity. Here, Beatie aligns himself – if only for the moment – with a common argument advanced by the LGBTQ community in recent years: that when a person hides or closets oneself, the person implicitly participates in the hegemonic assumption that they have a shameful characteristic that requires hiding or shielding from others. According to Larry Gross,

> The influence of the civil rights movement's "Black Is Beautiful" rhetoric can be seen in the central emphasis gay liberationists placed on the affirmation of gay pride; but for this to be a political as well as a personal achievement, gay identity needed to be publicly affirmed. The new movement was founded on the importance of coming out as a public as well as an individual act. (356-57)

Although I will have occasion in the concluding chapter to raise questions about the effect and effectiveness of this maneuver as a political strategy, since the 1990's the action of outing (oneself) has been viewed as liberating. Framed in this manner, Beatie's action is portrayed as a strategy to gain agency and reveal his subjectivity to the public.

Furthermore, by emphasizing his control over the situation, Beatie's discourse is accented with two values that likely help garner he and his wife a deal of popular support: integrity and honesty. From a slightly different angle, it is also clear how, in defending himself against the "star-seeker" charge, Beatie is also able to launch one of the numerous instances/variants of an argument that becomes central across a number of his

apologia efforts: the importance of being able to communicate and control his own story and to dictate the terms and language of that story rather than to have an unknown body (the media, society, e.g.) take over that role.

In a media-savvy generation, most Americans understand that the mass media frequently distorts and constructs, and unfairly represents news stories. By emphasizing that they are telling their story, and supporting these actions by actively participating in the retelling of their narrative, the public likely recognizes their argument as legitimate and their intentions as valid. More importantly, the public can see Beatie as taking ownership of his identity and attempting to control his representation. Sloop reminds us that the mass media is one of the disciplinary mechanisms that continually normalize gender/sexuality and that make "changes in identity categories and ideology so difficult" (103). For this reason, we cannot assume that *all* representations of Beatie present his gender identity as consistent with his own subjectivity. However, in these instances and the rhetoric examined, Beatie is constructing his "own" discourse and attempting to assert an agency that exceeds most gender queer public figures.

The third and final persuasive justification for going to the public was to seek advice, support, and gather information about the legal implications of their pregnancy. Although this argument initially seems to highlight Beatie's insecurity and lack of control over his current situation, he again uses this justification as a means to gain credibility and portray himself as an agent, in the general sense, for LGBTQ issues.

First, this argument gains legitimacy since it is traced back to Beatie's preemptive rhetoric. He states in *The Advocate*, "Our situation sparks legal, political, and social unknowns." In both the essay and in his memoir, Beatie chronicles the numerous doctors,

lawyers, and LGBTQ advocacy organizations that dismissed him or refused to provide him services. He and Nancy ran out of institutions to turn to for help. He tells Oprah, "We initially tried to contact every organization we can find, every major national organization and ask questions. Because, we hadn't heard of this happening before and we had legal questions to ask, you know, because we're married . . . And, you know, half of them didn't get back to us. The rest of the half, they basically converged on us . . ." Beatie further explains his reasoning for selecting *The Advocate*, "we decided we wanted an outlet that would allow us to stand up for what we believed in. On February 4, 2008 I sent an email to *The Advocate*, a well known, gay-themed magazine with a circulation of about ninety thousand readers – a pretty small figure by most standards – describing our unique situation and essentially reaching out for help" (263). Based on this disclosure, we come to view Beatie's decision to go public as one that is brave and personally empowering. The fact that he continually encountered resistance when reaching to those individuals he portrayed as safe and supportive make his action appear noble. First, he was determined to find answers, support and recognition for his situation. Second, he wished to expose the hypocritical and silencing tendencies of the LGBTQ activist community.

Beatie also uses the strategy of denial to claim that he and Nancy were never motivated by money (*Labor* 307), and to further assert his personal choice as political. He states: "One of the biggest misconceptions is that we sold our story for vast sums of money – that we exploited our daughter for financial gain. Nothing could be further from the truth" (267). In his support for these claims, he not only makes a compelling argument that money did not drive his motivations, but he also provides two additional

reasons for going to the public: suggesting, again, that he does not covet fame, and noting how he could use his publicity not for financial gain but as a mechanism to accrue agency and recognition.

> WALTERS. What do you say to people who say, you're doing all of this, the book, the appearances, everything, to make money?
>
> BEATIE. Well, that's the furthest thing from the truth because we've turned down about 2 million dollars altogether from people wanting to do all sorts of things with us, but, and, I also didn't write a book to make money, it actually it's been a work in progress since I was seventeen years old but as far as, you know, doing it for the fame, I'd have to say I'm infamous, I mean who wants to be unpopular, controversial, and despised.
>
> WALTERS: We should point out we're not paying you for this interview either.
>
> BEATIE: No you are not.

Although viewers can only trust that Beatie is telling the truth in this instance, Beatie strategically includes other support, such as the testimony of the news media and trusted talking heads, like Barbara Walters. Also, in *Pregnant Man*, when referring to the article published in *People*, the narrator explains, "They agreed to an unpaid, exclusive photo contract, and pictures featuring Thomas, his bump, his parrot, Darwin, flew off the news stands." Beatie further backs this claim in his book, arguing that *People* came to them as journalists, and as a result, "they cannot pay the subjects of news stories for their cooperation" (268). Furthermore, Beatie argues, "Nancy and I did not make any money

at all from the media during my pregnancy – *not one single dime*. On the other hand, *People* magazine and the prominent talk show we were interviewed on did benefit from telling our story" (267).

Through this claim, Beatie further differentiates his personal motivations from the motivations of mass media. His actions are portrayed as more noble because he does not accept money for his story, whereas, we are forced to question whether the media presents Beatie's story as a progressive act or for financial gain. Implicitly this indicts those who would accuse him of profiteering, which the Beaties would not speak to, as questionable and merely self-interested in the story. This claim also illustrates that Beatie's ownership over his story and his agency could not be bought or sacrificed for profit.

Beatie further gives instances of how they arguably lost money, including the fact that it was necessary to take time off of work to accommodate the shoots and interviews. In his memoir, Beatie provides a justification similar to those made in the interviews:

> I would guess that we passed up anywhere from $1 million to $2 million. But money was not the reason we were doing this – it never has been. Even down to the manuscript. Writing this book has been a pursuit of mine since the age of seventeen. After everything is said and done here, it's actually cost me thousands of dollars to achieve this goal. Believe me, there are easier ways to make money than to become a controversial and potentially despised and threatened public figure. I'm aware that certain people will always be skeptical about our motives, and I am sure that there is nothing I can say to convince them otherwise, but I still feel it's

> important to be clear that Nancy and I went public not to make a profit, but to take a stand. (269)

Beatie uses the denial of profit as means to secure the view that his actions are political. Although Beatie is somewhat disempowered by a social situation influenced by institutions that reinforce gender binaries and essentialism, Beatie must openly challenge the system and present rhetoric outside of intelligible discourse to maintain an identity and agency. The claim made by Beatie, that going public was intended to take a stand against hate and discrimination, not only provides further justification for his denial, more importantly, it sets up a discussion of rights and the risks inherent in challenging discrimination.

Beatie reminds viewers and readers that he has faced scrutiny and even received death threats. As the *Pregnant Man*'s narrator explains, "Since going public with the news that it's Thomas, not Nancy who is carrying the baby, the Beaties have come under attack." Segments of his book, the documentary, and the *20/20* interview include actual threatening phone calls, hate mail and negative comments published on blogs, YouTube clips, and even news publications. These quotes provide additional support that Beatie's decision was not an easy one, but that his noble and political action was more important than his personal safety and security. By facing the risk of danger, Beatie is made more vulnerable but also reveals his ability to stand up to and challenge his critics and opponents.

Additionally, nearly all the sources, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *20/20*, *Pregnant Man*, and *Labor of Love* discuss how the Beaties went into hiding after their appearance. As Beatie tells Oprah:

> I think we're just going to – we just want to have the baby now, and rest, we wanted to let people know our story our way. And if we have to, we'll go hide. And we're not going to be obviously be able to keep our business running, but that's something that we knew that would possibly happen.

Home video footage captures the Beaties hiding from the press and installing security cameras in their home. The choice to avoid the paparazzi and the media storm is evidence that the Beaties' behavior supports their explanations that they are not hungry for attention or willing to sell their story to anyone. Instead, Beatie chose to appear in a limited numbers of publications and news programs but did not contribute to or appear in all segments.

The public can certainly read his decision to hide as one that reflects his loss of agency through this process. However, members of the LGBTQ community are consistently faced with a trade-off to live openly and freely. Early activist and younger generations understand the inherent oppressive nature of a heteronormative society and recognize that their sense of personal agency is always limited in such a culture. According to Gross,

> The gay liberation movement that placed coming out at the top of its agenda was largely a young person's movement, made up at least initially of New Left activists of counter-culturalists who 'had already decided that American society was corrupt and oppressive' (D'Emilio, 1983, p. 246) They had relatively little to lose by coming out. (357)

Thus, Beatie shows that once his story was out, he saw no further benefit in pursuing media attention; the goal, to tell his story, to claim his agency, and make known his

identity, was complete.

In one instance, in one of his last public interviews on *Pregnant Man*, Beatie is directly questioned about his acceptance of the fees attached to his appearance in the documentary. Although this claim threatens to contradict his earlier claims, it is important to remember that *Pregnant Man* was one of his last rhetorical texts to be released. In the documentary, Beatie is responding to this question after the birth of Susan. Consistent with his earlier claims, he did not necessarily receive payment during his pregnancy, rather he contractually agreed to the publication of the book and the film late in his pregnancy. Most importantly, Beatie turns this question into an opportunity to sound like an unselfish and responsible parent by stating, "at the beginning of all of this [um] people were just making money off of us, but it's great, you know, that we are getting paid a little bit of money to do this because that's going to help our family better provide for our daughter, which is wonderful, fantastic, but, we wouldn't, I mean, none of this is for the money, not one bit of it." In his memoir, Beatie explains that the "modest" amount of money is, "enough to start a college fund for Susan, which is exactly what we did" (307). In some instances in the public, Beatie was accused for being a bad parent, both for bringing a child into an "unhealthy" and "unnatural" environment and for exploiting his daughter's birth for fortune. By arguing that the money is only going toward her benefit, Beatie appears as a generous and sacrificing parent, looking out for his child's best interest.

Overall, Beatie's various techniques for denying any base motive in seeking to tell his story center on his desire to be recognized as an agent in charge of his own quest for personal and social advancement. It is, to be sure, crucial that he and his wife appear

to have the noblest of intentions in pursuing this uncharted goal. If the belief persisted that Beatie was motivated by money, this would defeat the political meaning behind his "outing." Altogether, these justifications show provides legitimate grounds for his claim that fame and profit was never an intention for making the pregnancy publicly known. In these examples, denial is occasionally framed in ways that would appear to limits Beatie's control, but his arguments ultimately present him as a liberated, rhetorical agent, who can overcome the oppressive circumstances of contemporary society and politics.

Response to the charge Beatie is not a man

Because Beatie previously identified as a lesbian, later transitioned to the male gender, then legally married his partner, Nancy, affording them the same rights as heterosexual couples, and, after, chose to carry their child, accusations surfaced that Beatie was strategically adjusting his gender in order to attain federal and legal rights not afforded to other LGBTQ individuals. When faced with the accusation that he wants to live as both a man and woman, Beatie consistently denies the claim that his pregnancy means that he could be considered both a man and a woman, or that Beatie is *really* "just another woman." In his memoir, he explicitly responds to this allegation with denial: "I have been accused of toggling back and forth between genders to suit my current mood. None of this is even remotely true "(176). Although the denial claim eliminates some level of gender ambiguity, it still becomes an opportunity to de-essentialize gender norms and trouble Beatie's identity. For this reason, I also argue and will later show, that when Beatie responds with these instances of denial, his discourse also operates to enhance the legitimacy and significance of his differentiation.

Beatie defends his denial of his womanhood in two key ways. First, he argues

that he does not shift his sexuality for personal benefit. Beatie contends that if he could have legally married Nancy when they both identified as lesbians, he would have, but "Tracy" would have inevitably transitioned to the male gender. As such, he insists that his gender is stable despite his pregnancy. Furthermore, he emphasizes that his relationship with Nancy and his gender identity are two different issues. In his interview with Oprah, Beatie states: "Sexuality is a completely different topic than how you feel as your gender." In the memoir, he explicitly denies that he can now identify as a lesbian:

> It's strange to me when people ask me if Nancy and I aren't just two lesbians. By definition, a lesbian is a woman who is sexually attracted exclusively to other women. Therefore, because I am legally male and identify as male, I am not a lesbian. Years ago, before I decided to transition, I lived my life as a woman, and I was attracted to other women. But even then I knew inside I was a man. (*Labor* 311)

Beatie insists that he is a man despite his reproductive organs, his previous lived experiences, and his choice to become pregnant. Beatie explains: "I am our baby's father . . . I was the one who gave birth to our child, and existing definitions equate "birth parent" with "mother" – but that is only because no one like me has ever come around before. By those same definitions, all mothers are female – and I am legally and unequivocally a male; therefore, I can't be a mother" (*Labor* 310). The separation between gender and sexuality and the severance between gender and pregnancy are ever-present elements of Beatie's discourse. The use of this discourse is so prevalent throughout Beatie's discourse that it is used in various ways and in the forms of more than one strategy. While categorically this rhetorical device is denial, because of Beatie's

nuanced explanation, I will exhaustively examine his discursive moves as differentiation and transcendence. Rather than straightforward denial, Beatie must combine his refutation with claims that complicate our understanding of his identity and the demand for recognition, and reveals how his speech act is reliant on the law that ultimately troubles the sex/gender binary.

Bolstering: Moving from victim to hero

According to Ware and Linkugel, "bolstering is a source of identification" and "any rhetorical strategy which reinforces the existence of a fact, sentiment, object, or relationship" (420). For Beatie, bolstering is a dominant strategy that plays out as a dominant fairytale-like narrative or theme. Beatie constructs his personal story as one in which he moves from the role of victim to hero. It is used consistently in all of his discourse and relied upon most heavily in his memoir. Beatie enacts the strategy of bolstering in two general ways, however, I will primarily focus on his first use of bolstering, in which he first presents his life as a tragedy and eventually becomes the hero of his own story.

In the first bolstering strategy, Beatie describes himself as a tragic figure. He wants people to know how various tragedies in his childhood, early family life, and early relationships created his current desires and motivations. Ware and Linkugel explain that when a rhetor bolsters, "a speaker attempts to identify himself [sic] with something favorably by the audience." In the following examples, the images conjured in Beatie's rhetoric are not necessarily "favorable" and they do not result in positive identification, however, they are events that gain a readership's or viewership's sympathy, crafting Beatie as a victim. His memoir most predominantly consists of numerous narratives that

end in sadness, and he frequently mentions these dominant tragic themes in his interviews. Beatie temporally begins his story at the point of his first ultrasound and then, in a rhetorical strategy that resembles a flashback, proceeds to tell his life story from the beginning, starting with his parent's relationship before he was born. Before chronologically preceding through his various experiences, Beatie foreshadows the structure of his narrative:

> In the fall 2007, I went in for a check-up soon after a home pregnancy test told me I was expecting. I had an ultrasound and watched the monitor as a grainy image appeared . . . But then something happened on the monitor, a weird pulsing some kind of flashing, and quickly the most awful thoughts took over . . . After all people who rejected me because I transitioned to a man; after so many questioned my love for Nancy and believed we should not get married; after all the taunts and threats and even bottles hurled at us; after doctors turned us away and told us we made their staff uncomfortable; after psychiatrists rooted around for signs of deviance and mental illness; after relatives shunned us and hurt us in ways we could never have fathomed; after my own brother told me my baby would be a monster – after all of that, it had come down to this strangely blinking light on an ultrasound? (11)

In this foreshadowing passage, Beatie presents a sad story, but one with a happy ending – the happy ending is the birth of his daughter. By presenting all that he has endured and lost, Beatie portrays Susan as a blessing or a reward, rather than as an "abomination," the term that some individuals used to describe Beatie's unborn baby. This passage also

foreshadows Beatie's strategy, which overcomes his role of a victim by crafting his biography as the story of a heroic agent.

Before presenting his ability to overcome these challenges, he must establish the difficulties and challenges in his past to show the ways in which circumstances controlled much of his early life. Beatie describes many of his negative and repressive experiences in detail in the memoir. When describing his parents, Beatie contrasts his mother ("soft" and "kind") to his father ("savage") and explains that those differences "created a schism that destroyed our family" (*Labor* 16). He acknowledges that both his mother and father were determined and strong, but that these personality traits did not spillover to their marriage. As He states,

> Looking back, I feel it is inevitable that we would not survive the ill-fated pairing of my parents, and that their marriage would end in tragedy, as it eventually did . . . . But as a family they were not nearly as strong, and I think I know why – because they were, from the start, a flawed doomed pair . . . Soon I would know the consequences of the rupture of our family (*Labor* 16-17)

The idea that his family was doomed or cursed further fuels the notion of a tragic form and of Beatie as a tragic character.

Two details of Beatie's childhood are recalled to help convey this narrative to his audience: his father's abusive nature and his mother's suicide. When discussing the abuse that he and his mother endured at the hand of his father, Beatie explains, "Like a lot of the violence in our home, we didn't talk about it. We just endured it, sealed it away, moved on" (30). Beatie discusses the various instances of beatings, harsh

criticisms, emotional abuse, and even death of pets that resulted from his father's violent temper. In his other interviews, Beatie does not disclose descriptions of the abuse, however, he always acknowledges his difficult family life and lack of support from relatives. In his interview with Oprah, Beatie explains that his father will not see him as man, and that "that kind of hurts." He describes his lack of a relationship with his father: "I think he's always had a hard time accepting just Tracy or Thomas." In the documentary, he remains vague about the abuse but, again, the subject is introduced. Beatie states: "My family, um, it's kind of a tough subject to talk about because they haven't really been there for me. Ever since the death of my mother, we just haven't been a family" (*Pregnant Man*).

Likewise, during his interview with Oprah and Walters, Beatie's mother's suicide is portrayed as a tragic experience that defined the end of his childhood. In his memoir, Beatie emotionally describes what the loss of a mother does to a child: "It shreds you to the core, caves in your chest, and hollows out your heats, and tears up every bone and sinew in your body . . . It produces a pain that cannot be relieved, a grief that cannot be consoled. The person I was . . . died on that day, too. I have been someone different ever since" (64-65). Thus, both his father's violent temperament and his mother's early and heartrending death act as significant events that act as turning points in his like.

A second tragic theme found throughout the narrative is the social rejection and disapproval that Beatie frequently encountered when trying to live as his "true" self. According to Beatie, "Not fitting into people's preconceived notions was then, and remains now, a major theme of my life" (*Labor* 174). In his memoir, Beatie tells the story of Natasha, a girl in his elementary school who developed a crush on him, mistaking him

for a boy. When she found out that Tracy was in fact a girl, she grew angry and hurt. Beatie frames the narrative in the following manner: "Imagine learning at such a young age that your very appearance – your very identity – is enough to trigger such confusion and animosity. Imagine knowing that people will hate you for no reason other than you are who you are" (77). Beatie presents himself as an innocent victim. He also emphasizes that he was vulnerable to the hatred and discrimination of others. In many instances, as illustrative in the quote, he specifically connects his feelings, desires, and pain to sentiments also felt by his audience.

Rejection by others continued when Tracy transitioned to the male gender. Beatie discusses being rejected by his "friends" in the lesbian community because Nancy and Thomas were no longer lesbians, but a heterosexual couple (*Labor* 174). After becoming pregnant, Beatie encountered discrimination from doctors and members of the LGBTQ community. When asked about seeking medical advice, Beatie tells Oprah, "We got rejected by our first doctor because he said that his staff felt uncomfortable working with someone like me." Beatie shares the same story in his article in *The Advocate* and in his memoir. Oprah also verifies that LGBTQ advocate groups discouraged Beatie from telling his story, a subject that is also discussed on "20/20."

> WALTERS. Gay and transgender groups did not support you.
>
> BEATIE. They didn't. They were basically trying to scare us into being silent and it hurts.

Beatie also summarizes discrimination in *The Advocate*: "We have only begun experiencing opposition from people who are upset by our situation. Doctors have discriminated against us, turning us away due to their religious beliefs. Health care

professional have refused to call me by a male pronoun or recognize Nancy as my wife. Receptionists have laughed at us."

Beatie's descriptions likely generate identification with his audience since many people can relate to stories of abuse and loss, or can at least empathize with the feelings or resentment that they create. On one hand, his lack of control over certain aspects of his life relieves him of personal responsibility and guilt. The tragedy of his abusive, sad family only makes him yearn for a family of his own. Additionally his natural gender identity relieves him of his responsibility for creating feelings of uneasiness in others. On the other hand, this clearly portrays Beatie as a victim without control over his circumstances. Once again, Beatie conducts a similar strategy as Edward Kennedy. Kennedy played upon the notion of a Kennedy curse, in the same way that Beatie described his own family as "doomed." Ling explains: "Kennedy provided an even broader context for viewing him as the victim when he expressed the concern that 'some awful curse did actually hang over the Kennedys.' What greater justification could be provided for concluding that an agent is not responsible for his act than to suggest that the agent is, in fact, the victim of some tragic fate" (226). Thus, Beatie's initial use of bolstering seems to limit the amount of authorship he can claim over his identity. For this reason, it becomes essential that Beatie overcomes these limitations.

According to Kenneth Burke, humans construct their views and experiences of the world through "frames," similar to a frame of reference. Joseph R. Gusfeld explains that cultural language forms, such as tragedy, comedy, etc., are the elements that compose the framing process; "to understand them is to understand the structure of thought, the grammar of motives by which explanation and justification is arrived at" (14). Burke's

symbolic forms, like the tragic frame, illustrate how attitudes are shaped ideologically. Ott and Aoki explain: "Literary forms such as epic, tragedy, and comedy are frames of acceptance because they equip persons to "come to terms" with an event and their place in the world" (230).

In one of the most common descriptions of Burkian tragic frames, a person, or scapegoat, is often blamed for a particular problem, creating a hierarchy between the scapegoat and society and alleviating the society of collective guilt. "Since the symbolic transformation involve a sloughing off, you may expect to find some variant of killing in the work. (I treat indictment, vituperation, vindictiveness against a "villain," etc., as attenuated aspects of his same function.) So we get to the "scapegoat," the "representative," or "vessel" of certain unwanted evils" (34).

In framing his tragic experience, Beatie turns his father into a literal villain or scapegoat. Beatie states: "before long my image of my father was set – he was unpredictable, dangerous, a villain" (*Labor* 16). Indeed, his narrative casts he and his father as increasingly at war with one another as he grew older. "I knew I had to learn how to defend myself better because of my ongoing relationship with my ultimate antagonist, the one who had harmed me most of all – my father" (*Labor* 99). Finally, he discusses the hurt that he endured: "My father struck at me in my weakest place of all – in my heart, which had been ravaged by a lifetime of family disappointment" (170). By fashioning his father as the ultimate villain or scapegoat, Beatie is able to differentiate his "guilt" and "crimes" from those of his father. In comparison to his father, we come to see Beatie as kind, gentle, sensitive and loving. He never deliberately hurt anyone; rather he was the victim of others who caused him pain and harm. Although people may not

agree with his choice to become a pregnant man, they cannot say that he is a "bad" father when compared to his own father, Abraham. More importantly, the identification of Beatie's father as villain implies that Beatie is the obvious hero. While Beatie has been the victim throughout most of his early life, his self-defense and publicity as the pregnant man and all that it accompanies (financial sacrifices, loss of his family, scrutiny and persecution), becomes an opportunity to acquire – finally, the narrative suggests – control over his own life.

In *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke also describes the "dialectic of tragedy" in ways much more akin to those that might appear in Shakespearean or Greek plays. Burke states:

> Stated broadly the dialectical (agnostic approach) to knowledge is through the *act* of assertion, whereby one 'suffers' the kind of knowledge that is the reciprocal of his act. This is the process embodied in tragedy. Where the agent's action involves a corresponding passion, and from the sufferance of the passion there arises an understanding of the act, an understanding that transcends the act. (38)

For Burke, dialectic means that the transformation of meaning occurs through change, through the experience or knowledge gained from events. In the description of his present life, Beatie shows his audiences that his choice to become a father is directly related to his ability to overcome his tragic past. Burke further explains that during the tragic vision, when the misfortune impacts the act, the act is then felt on the character of the agent. Although Beatie is initially limited and impacted by the tragedy in his life, he also describes his present state as one that can transcend this pain.

First, Beatie expresses the redemptive nature that exists in choosing to live his life in the memory of his mother. In *Pregnant Man*, he summarizes both the significance of the event of the death of his mother and her importance on his identity: "My mother passed away when I was twelve. She was allergic to a drug that she was prescribed and she spiraled into a depression and ultimately killed herself. My mother was the most important person in my early childhood life and even today as an adult." Although Beatie's mother died when Tracy was twelve, Beatie sees her influence and love as a guiding force throughout his life.

In addition to honoring the memory of his mother, Beatie considers the loss of his friend, Christine, another significant tragedy in his life, as a sign that transcendence of these tragedies is necessary. He states: "*What is the meaning of it all?* I thought . . . Life is so precious, so fragile, so fleeting, that to waste even a minute of it is a terrible crime . . . How do we remember and honor those we lose? We honor them by living our lives in a way that would make them proud" (193-194).

Having the opposite effect of his mother, Beatie's villainous father alters his life by both causing tragedy but by more significantly allowing Beatie to transcend his tragic upbringing. After experiencing years of abuse, both Beatie and Nancy are temporarily convinced that they will follow the path of their tragic families. After meeting Nancy's biological father for the first time, they begin to change their minds, explaining that "meeting Jim convinced us that we wanted to have a family of our own, that we weren't at all doomed by the bad examples of fatherhood from our pasts" (189). In the acknowledgements of his book, Beatie recognizes his father acknowledging that many of his drives and successes are credited to his father. He states: "in a strange way, I learned

from his mistakes what it means to be a good father" (329). Beatie concludes his story by showing how he has learned and overcome his tragedy. "I have lived through the experience of an unhappy family, and the things I saw shaped me and led me to this moment in my life" (*Labor* 5). Specifically, Beatie argues overcoming his tragedy and the evil tendencies in his father has become a defining mission in his life; his quest for a family and a stable life generated, in some way, by his desire to own his life and to be able to choose something different than he himself had:

> Part of me has always feared that nature would pull me toward my father's terrible traits – the selfishness, the cruelty, the deliberate shunning of emotion . . . Whatever foul residue of my father dwells inside my being must share apace with powerful, nourishing legacy my mother left. I can choose to live my life the way she lived hers, and I make this choice every single day. I choose to live with love and with kindness. I choose to celebrate my mother through my words and actions. I choose to keep her alive inside of me, shining brightly, forever with a smile" (*Labor* 71).

Not only does Beatie's tragedy allow the public to view him as a figure deserving of sympathy and in opposition to his "evil" father, it also illustrates that he can regain the agency he lost. To those ends he underscores the redemptive nature of raising a daughter and how it allows him to overcome the discrimination he did and continues to face. "I had a specific reason for wanting a girl: I felt I could equip a daughter with enough integrity and independence and confidence to smash through society's limiting expectations of her. Having a girl would be redemptive; as my daughter, she would not have to face the same trials had" (*Labor* 245). By showing how he chooses to transcend

his tragedy and victimization, Beatie attempts to reverse some of the loss of his agency created by his emphasis on circumstances and tragedy.

For this reason Beatie's use of bolstering, ought to be contrasted to forms of vicitimization used by others. In particular, we can compare Beatie's rhetoric to Kennedy's rhetoric in a few distinct ways. First, Ling's analysis shows the ways in which denial successfully shifts blame away from an agent making the agent unaccountable but then can lead to disempowering strategies that places responsibility on the audience. In this sense Kennedy's speech diverted an investigation and secured his future senate scene. In the case of Beatie, deflection of blame and victimizing has a different effect since Beatie ultimately seeks to use his agency and control the construction of his image. Second, it may be the case that when obscure and unknown persons who are not political figures are asked to defend themselves, they may have the option of more apologia strategies than a famous or political figure. Sherry Butler, drawing a different conclusion than Ling, makes the following observation about Edward Kennedy after examining audience reaction to his "Chappaquiddick" speech:

> He could only incite sympathy in his listeners, not anger or the more powerful emotions. Just as Americans disdain a man who cries, so do they look distastefully upon one who too openly asks for sympathy. When Kennedy spoke of the curse hanging over his family, many Americans balked. Perhaps, if Kennedy had not bee restricted to a defensive apologia, the outcome would have been somewhat more favorable (287).

Butler's argument seems accurate in the case of Kennedy; Kennedy was a potential presidential candidate – a role that most Americans want to be filled by a strong (not

weak or pathetic) leader. However, the stories of tragedy presented operate differently and more strategically for Beatie than for Kennedy. They appear to be useful tactics, because through them he likely garners sympathy and compels identification with his audience. Additionally, and unlike Kennedy, he attempts to illustrate that he can overcome the tragedy that he experienced. Although he viewed his family's relationship as "doomed" at an earlier time, he does not characterize his own future in this way. He has learned from the mistakes of his family and wishes to alter his fate by transcending the tragedy.

Beatie's desire for a family and the American Dream

If reclaiming his life from tragedy is one bolstering strategy, yet another broad category of bolstering claims is his endeavor to establish identification with his audience through his claim that we wants nothing more than to seen as a normal and traditional family pursuing the American dream.

First, Beatie's discourse reinforces his desire to acquire a family. "The other driving impulse in my life, besides the certainty that I am male, has been the desire to create what I lacked in my childhood – a loving, nurturing family" (*Labor* 6). Beatie emphasizes that he never intended to gain media attention and or challenge the beliefs of the American public. "I'm not saying that I wanted to pick a fight –all I wanted to do was have a family" (249).

Given cultural expectations of gendered behavior and the use of reproduction and parenting as gender signifiers, it is hardly surprising to see identification with an American, heteronormative audience attempted by stressing the desire for a family. According to Sloop, "the logic of public heteronormativity does not allow for any

satisfactory reason for the lack of reproduction . . . this is part of the overall cultural narrative that we collectively expect to unfold and therefore we collectively *encourage* subtly and overtly" (117). Although Beatie does not explicitly endorse heterosexual reproduction, his appeal to "family" limits broader interpretations of kinship. According to Butler, in American culture, families are always already considered heterosexual. She states: "The topic of gay marriage is not the same as that of gay kinship, but it seems that the two become confounded in U.S. popular opinion when we hear not only that marriage is and ought to retain a heterosexual institution and but also that kinship does not work, or does not qualify as kinship, unless it assumes a recognizable family form" (102). Thus, Beatie's rhetoric risks perpetuating the notion of family as nuclear and heteronormative at the same time that his gender differences provide the possibility of expanding our notion of family.

In his memoir Beatie further reiterates the shared desire of attaining a family: "why does anyone want to have a baby? It's more than just the American dream. It is a fundamental imperative of families everywhere to procreate and bring children into this world . . . Anyone out there who is in love, or has had a child, can certainly understand this" (*Labor* 304). The choice to use the word "procreate" begins to problematize Beatie's identification. The emphasis on conception emphasizes heteronormativity and conception, which removes the possibility of many LGBTQ families as well as other forms of kinship such as adoption and foster families. Beatie reiterates that his family already qualifies as a "normal" family – suggesting a traditional, heteronormative nuclear family.

It is clear that Beatie's constant affirmation of family and family values is intended to make him more accessible to his audience. The Beaties felt secure as parents, in the roles of husband and wife, and as a result, he argues that they are "the classic nuclear American family" (197). In his interview with Barbara Walters, when asked whether they view themselves as a traditional family, Beatie explains: "We do. We are man, woman, and child. It's ironic that we are so different but yet we're just a family. Just the same as anyone else." For his family's benefit, Beatie emphasizes the normative gender roles in his family. While this appeal helps to relate his situation to others it also operates to further ostracize gay, lesbian, or other queer families that disrupt heteronormativity and challenge current constructions of kinship.

Beatie further clarifies:

> All Nancy and I ever wanted was to have a family, just like couples in love everywhere . . . Our story is about so much more than just a man giving birth. This is a story of being true to oneself, following one's dreams despite the challenges, and overcoming adversity. It's about reconciling the past, defining and embracing family, and finding one's place in the world. Moreover, this is a love story. I'm sure everyone can see a little bit of themselves in us. Our journey has been uncommon, our path unfamiliar – but then, all of our adventures are distinctly our own, original, and entirely new. In the end, we are a family, no less, no more. That is all we ever wanted to be. (*Labor* 321)

This passage contains the potential to broaden the meaning of family yet Beatie does not explicitly opt to engage in redefinition. In another source he explains: "Pregnant man

aside, we're just a normal, regular family. We're not weird, we're not strange, we're not alien or foreign. We're a typical American family but, you know, no two families are alike" (*Pregnant Man*).

Clearly Beatie's rhetoric is intended to dampen the radicality of his actions, but in so doing his discourse opens an avenue for rethinking the traditional strictures of the nuclear and heteronormative family structure. That is, Beatie appears to complicate and arguably queer his familial relations as simultaneously "normal" and "different", yet the vagueness in much of Beatie's rhetoric allows the audience to consider embracing his account without having to confront more destabilizing polysemic interpretations of "family."

The second theme that is found is equating his desires of family as part of the "American dream." Frequently, in his discourse, he characterizes his choice to become pregnant as "more dream than plan." This is consistent with his rhetoric that emphasizes specific ideology of the American dream.

Beatie begins by emphasizing his American roots. Beatie shares details about his ancestors, specifically that Patrick Henry was his great-great-great-great-great grandfather, and that he is a direct descendent of two former presidents: William Henry Harrison and Benjamin Harrison, the twenty-third President. He states: "My blood is the blood of America, and the roots of my family run deep in American soil" (18). When discussing he and Nancy's choice to tell their story in *People* Magazine, they justify it in the following way: "It is, in many ways, the voice of America, and to Nancy and me our story is a quintessentially American one" (*Labor* 268). Through such rhetoric Beatie gains identification with the national public. He also limits his own perceived "deviance"

and racial difference by showing his connection to an American forefather, who mythically represents a paternal relation to our own. Additionally, Beatie's emphasis of his American ancestry is an interesting rhetorical move because he also briefly acknowledges his identity as an Asian American; Beatie's father is half-Filipino, half-Korean. However, through his account of his American family he downplays his racial differences and attempts to identify with Caucasian members of his audience. This strategy can be read as an attempt to gain a wider identification with White Americans and perhaps further "normalizing" his desires with the most powerfully dominant portion of the American population[9]. Nonetheless, these articulations also operate so that he acquires recognition and agency in the dominant culture.

In later passages, he further draws upon the ideological characteristics of the "American dream." The imagery is present in his first text, when he states: "Our desire to work hard, buy our first home, and start a family was nothing out of the ordinary" ("Labor of Love"). In his memoir, Beatie explains: "Both of us wanted the same thing – a big house with a white picket fence and maybe a deck where we could snuggle under the stars, and a lawn we could mow and a chime outside and a bird feeder in the back. You know, the classic American dream" (180). Finally, "American dream" rhetoric is present in one of his last statements in the documentary, which appears as he and Nancy play with Susan in a park. He states: "We're just a private family, wanting to have a

[9] This project does not provide an in-depth examination of race as an independent factor in Beatie's call for recognition. The issue of race is a minor issue for Beatie as well as for the public. Race does not register frequently in his discourse or in public discourses about Beatie. Although race is an important factor that can be used as the basis for a similar demand for recognition, the project cannot speak to such conclusions through Beatie's case study. Beatie's media frenzy and social significance are coded as a sex/gender/sexuality difference, therefore I study the case according to its implications for understanding or changing sex/gender/sexuality relations in American culture.

baby, we're in pursuit of the American dream and just trying to be happy" (*Pregnant Man*).

The 'American dream' is an ideology of triumph that is reinforced in American culture. As Dana Cloud explains, "Rooted in the Protestant ethic and popularized in novels and self-help literature, the success myth is continually belied by the realties of class, race, and gender stratification in capitalist society" (166). Thus, racial or sexual minorities are often closed off to the American dream because of the various oppressive structures that make it difficult for them to achieve equality and success. By referencing American dream ideology, Beatie attempts to overcome the structures that limit his chances for success and happiness. Additionally, the American dream myth plays directly into the ongoing tragic/transcendence narrative established in Beatie's use of denial. According to Cloud, "One way in which biographical and autobiographical narratives encode the American Dream is through the invention of the classical liberal self who is the hero of the story, which is presented as 'true'" (119). With Beatie as the "hero" in his personal narrative (in opposition to his father), he is able to reinforce imagery of the 'American dream' and align his story with attaining "American" desires such as a family.

The American dream ideology is one that an American audience can understand and unite behind. This is important since Beatie's statements attempt to speak directly to an audience who is likely different from him (not queer or transgender). This is made clear by the way in which he addresses his audience: "I hope that when you read this book, you will see something of your own family in my story, and that, if I have told it well, my story will make you take stock of the ones you love, and how they love in

return. Of course, the path I have taken to create my family is very different from yours" (5). Despite these differences, Beatie attempts to relate based on American desires, dreams, goals, and other fundamental human needs. Although there is a risk that the American dream reiterates heternormativity and the nuclear family, the concept of the American dream can also be broadened to various desires of self-actualization. According to Joanne Meyerowitz, in her examination of the history of transsexualism in the United States. During the 1950's, transsexuals aligned their personal desires with the cultural trends in modern America. In this example, the American dream was expanded to everyone despite their marginalized status.

> In the mid-twentieth century Americans routinely encountered prescriptions for how they might remake themselves in pursuit of self-fulfillment. Humanist psychologists called for "self-actualization"; advertisements for cosmetics and diet aids invited people to refashion their faces and bodies; educators and book publishers promised to improve the minds of students and readers. Democratic ideals, however imperfectly practiced, suggested that all people had or should have equal opportunities to change their station in life, and twentieth-century liberal individualists increasingly insisted on the rights of "consenting adults" to determine their own course as long as they refrained from behaviors that might cause harm to others. In a society that valued self-expression and self-transformation, why not permit people to decided whether they wanted to live as men or women, and why not allow them to change their bodies in the ways they desired? (Meyerowitz 363)

Since appeals to self-actualization succeeded in earlier cultural times, Beatie is strategic for drawing upon this ideology to gain identification with the public,

The final theme, established through bolstering is another universal dream and a desire shared by all Americans: safety and equality. Beatie explains in his memoir: "I do believe that my family deserves a fair shot at happiness, same as anyone else's. I feel that we deserve respect, as well as equal treatment" (10). Regarding partnerships, Beatie relates to his audience through the desire for support: "We all dream of finding a place where we feel safe and loved and encouraged to chase our dreams, and I was lucky enough to have found such a place, right by Nancy's side" (152). Finally, Beatie emphasizes that his story is relatable because everyone encounters challenges in their lives. "I think my story is worth telling, for anyone facing long odds and daunting obstacles on the way to achieving the life they want" (Labor 9). Beatie relates to his audience through family values, the American dream, and pursuit of equal rights. The emphases on these values seem to help him gain understanding from his audience, even though it also risks reaffirming aspects of heteronormativity and traditional, conservative views of the American family. Halberstam is critical of Beatie's strategy explaining, "his story ultimately came to rest upon an all too familiar narrative of humanity and universality – it is universal to want a child, it is only human to want to give birth, The Beaties just wanted, in other words, what supposedly everyone wants – the good life . . ." ("Pregnant" 78). Certainly, Beatie explains that he has the same desires as all other Americans, which risks normalizing his identity. However, he also vaguely differentiates himself and his circumstances so that the audience likely comes to recognize and even understand his motives. In the conclusion, I further analyze the tension within this factor

to reveal the strategic nature of his rhetorical move since it makes him intelligible to the public, and yet, not conventional enough,

Differentiation as Beatie's gender blurring

The center of Beatie's public controversy centers on his blurring and queering of his gender identity. Hatred toward Beatie is likely exacerbated by the fact that he is an openly transgendered male who is also pregnant; however, Beatie likely encounters hostility from the public simply because he is transgendered. Judith Butler describes the antagonism toward trans individuals: "Transgendered and transsexual people are subjected to pathologization and violence . . . The harassment suffered by those who are "read" as trans or discovered to be trans cannot be underestimated. They are part of a continuum of the gender violence that took the lives of Brandon Teena, Mathew Shephard, and Gwen Araujo" (6). Because of the ongoing biases and discrimination against transgender/sexual individuals, Beatie was most frequently asked to defend his gender identity, especially since it is further queered by his pregnancy.

Beatie uses the strategy of differentiation to trouble his identity and challenge notions of gender essentialism. Differentiation is a form of discursive particularization, and often involves constructing distinctions between the accusation(s) (or supposed problematic actions) from other less favorable actions.

Beatie consistently shapes his discourse by differentiating his gender identity in three distinct ways from other mainstream, discourse surrounding LGBTQ issues.

The first way in which Beatie engages in differentiation is rather literal. He attempts to distinguish himself from others. He starts to identify himself from others in his childhood, reconstructed in his narrative: "I had always known that I was different

from other children" (77). He clarifies that there is no one else like him, as evidenced by his continual assertion that he is the first pregnant man and that there is no legal precedent for his action. He separates his gender/sex and sexuality identity from his audience. "My point is, I know I am different, and I am used to people giving me strange looks. It has been the story of my life." (248). Furthermore, Beatie differentiates his family from traditional families. In his documentary he states: "Everybody has a different family and we're just one of many. We're just the face of a different family. No more, no less, just the same" (*Pregnant Man*). Beatie's use of differentiation is an interesting choice because it appears to have tension with many of his earlier bolstering claims. While he makes a more persistent effort to construct his family as traditional and "American," he nonetheless proceeds to differentiate his family and acknowledge that his traits and choices are not common.

In Beatie's second use of differentiation he argues that he was born in the *right* body, despite feeling like a man but being born biologically female. This distinction was developed frequently in his interviews. Both Oprah Winfrey and Barbara Walters have interviewed other transgender/sexual individuals and children. Consequently, they are familiar with the "I'm in the wrong body" claim frequently articulated among transgendered individuals. The notion is consistent with the gender identity disorder established in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder*s. Butler describes the diagnosis, which is required of individuals seeking transition. She states: "It subscribes to forms of psychological assessment which assume that the diagnosed person is affected by forces he or she does not understand. It assumes that there is a delusion or

dysphoria . . . that certain gender norms have not been properly embodied" (77). Oprah asks directly about Beatie's psychological feelings:

> OPRAH. How did you feel growing up as a girl?
>
> BEATIE. That's an interesting question, because growing up I didn't really have that perception of myself.

Later he explicitly states: "I don't feel like I was born in the wrong body. I felt like I was meant to be exactly who I am today." In his memoir, Beatie describes his conflicted identity but also the acceptance of his body. He states:

> In 1974 I was born female, and I lived the first twenty-four years of my life as a woman. But as long as I can remember, and certainly before I fully knew what this meant, I wanted to live my life as a man. When I was young I was a tomboy: I dressed in boys' clothes, I did boy things, I resisted the trappings of girlhood – dolls, dresses, all of that. I identified with the male gender in every way. I never thought I was born in the wrong body, however, nor did I ever want to be anyone else. I was happy being me, because I knew who I was inside. (*Labor* 6)

By breaking away from the logic and the familiarity of the justifying script frequently cited and articulated in the public sphere, Beatie begins to problematize gender identity and transgenderism/transsexuality. This claim directly clashes with the frequently articulated experience of most trans-individuals, who argue that they were born in the "wrong body." John Sloop explains that heterosexuality and gender normativity are often maintained through a transgender/sexual claim to an essential identity. He states:

> there is an articulation of gender identity as based in the 'soul' or brain, and of the preoperative body as birth defect . . . there is an overall argument that the transition to the 'other' gender was made because the person was already essentially the other, that only a 'defect' kept one from one's natural body . . . essentialism has not disappeared in such an equation; it has only moved deep inside, and is thus more difficult to dislodge. (Sloop 138)

In these quotes, Beatie's rhetoric begins the process of dislodging essentialism. However, in other passages, Beatie clarifies that his "true" gender identity is found in his brain, arguably re-essentializing his sexual identity and reaffirming a stigmatization that attempts to normalize the minds/bodies of transgender/sexual individuals.

> WALTERS. Thomas, what is a man?
>
> BEATIE. I feel that you are not born a man you become a man
>
> however I also do feel that I was born biologically a male, up in my brain.
>
> WALTERS. So it's what's up in my head?
>
> BEATIE. Yes. When I wake up in the morning, I feel like a man.

Beatie further describes his "true" identity:

> I was never confused about my gender identity – I always knew, long before I could articulate it, that I was really male. If anything, I was sometimes confused about how to make the rest of the world understand my situation. But I never struggled with my identity, or fought it or tried

> to change the way I felt. It was just the simple fact of my existence: Outside I was female, but inside I was male. (*Labor* 6)

Although he identifies a stable male identity, he also remains vague about the significance of his body and its influence in a greater understanding of gender identity. He states: "I don't feel like I was born in the wrong body, I've chosen later in life to to [sic] match my outsides with my insides, [um] I started taking testosterone. Within 4-5 months, I noticed real changes in my body" (*Pregnant Man*). Beatie uses differentiation when he continues to characterize his body as appropriate to his identity. Rather than describing himself according to a gender, in some passages he simply refers to his identity as "me." He asserts throughout all his texts that he was simply living as it felt natural; implying that there is a truthfulness or legitimacy to his embodiment.

> WALTERS. Growing up, did you feel male or female?
>
> BEATIE. I just felt like me, as me, I felt rough and tumbly. I didn't like girlie stuff.

While Beatie describes and emphasizes his desires and performances of masculinity, he also complicates his relationship to his body and seems to resist completely aligning his gender, sex, and sexuality.

> BEATIE. And I realized that I wanted to be free again like I was when I was younger, when I didn't see the world as male or female. I just wanted to be myself and so I --
>
> OPRAH. But the world is male and female.
>
> BEATIE. It is.
>
> OPRAH. Okay.

> BEATIE. But for me, I'm a masculine person and I preferred wearing clothes that made me feel comfortable and so that was just a natural progression. It wasn't something that I analyzed. It just, you know, I woke up in the morning and I said "This is what I want to wear today.

Beatie is again vague about his gender identity in the following passage:

> Who I am today is who I always was, from the beginning. My parents were huge influences on me, same as anyone's parents, but they did not shape my sexuality. . . I simply had to discover who I was deep down, and somehow become that person . . . I was born a woman, but I always felt more comfortable living like a man . . . The truth is, I had exactly the body needed for my life. (*Labor* 81-82)

Butler notes that such discourse is risky, especially when attempting to gain a DSM-IV diagnosis. "You would be ill-advised to say that you believe that the norms that govern what is a recognizable and livable life are changeable . . . you cannot explicitly subscribe to a view that changes in gendered experience follow upon changes in social norms" (81). Thus, Beatie's rhetoric successfully differentiates or blurs his notion of himself by speaking outside cultural scripts. Additionally, Beatie argues that gender identity and sexuality are not the same, working to disrupt another traditional binary.

> BEATIE. Sexuality is a completely different topic than how you feel as your gender.
>
> OPRAH. Yeah.

> BEATIE. The gender role in society that I wanted, that I felt most comfortable being or gravitating to, was a male gender role. And it's hard to explain how it is a separate issue.

The lack of "facticity" in this dichotomy becomes part of Beatie's justification for his choice to become pregnant. Furthermore, this rhetorical move problematizes sexuality and gender identity. According to Sloop, public discourse typically "protects cultural norms as a whole, assuring all of us that the iteration of gender essentialism and compulsory heterosexuality remains stable" (67). Although Beatie embraces a "true" male identity and arguably upholds heterosexuality with his relationship with Nancy, he still pushes the boundaries with his discourse. As such, Beatie exposes American biases and norms regarding gender and sexuality such as the claim that gender identity, sex, and sexuality must align.

Beatie's third strategy of differentiation is to problematize the definitions and characteristics that determine who is a male and who is a female and how individuals are required to live their lives. On one hand, Beatie is consistent that, by changing his gender, he was remaining true to himself. He explains: "As an adult, I felt free to stop trying to be someone I wasn't" (153). At the same time, Beatie recognized that, although he could accept his body despite his conflicting identity, society had a difficult time accepting him without a legal sex change.

> And so for most of my life I dressed like a man, wore my hair like a man, and cultivated traits that most would consider manly. This was never a strategic decision or something I imposed on myself – it was always just the natural, organic way I preferred to be. Later, when I was an adult, I

> learned there were things I could do to make my body look more like a man's body. This does not mean that I was unhappy with my body the way it was. It means only that I found a way to make the outside match up with the inside . . . I was finally the person I wanted to be, and believed I was all along (6-7)

A pressure is placed on transgender individuals to perform their lives consistent with their outward gender identity. This pressure was recounted by Beatie as he describes being chased out of women's bathrooms and the burden he faced when asked to explain his androgyny. As a result, Beatie describes wanting to switch genders not because he needed approval, but because he knew "that officially switching genders would make life easier" and permit the world to see him as he wanted to be seen (*Labor* 154). He further clarifies:

> I could have easily lived my life as a man without legally changing my gender; I always felt that I was simply me, in all my uniqueness. I didn't have to define my gender one way or the other for myself, because that definition wouldn't have affected the way I was living my life . . . But I realized the would I live in doesn't tolerate fence sitters when it comes to gender (*Labor* 248).

Based on these passages, Beatie crafts his sex change and transgenderism as more of a survival tactic in society rather than personal necessity to feel complete. As mentioned earlier, Butler argues that such discourse is unintelligible and especially dangerous when required to meet medicalized and psychological expectations. Thus, Beatie's rhetoric pushes the boundaries of permittable discourse when he articulates his identity.

Furthermore, Beatie troubles gender by claiming that one cannot truly know what makes a man or a woman. Even though he seems confident of his identity, he also seeks to show the arbitrariness of the gender assignments and sex differences. In a long passage in his book, Beatie factually describes the complexity of gender. He discusses intersexed individuals who are born with mixed chromosomes and hormones. He rhetorically asks whether a man who loses his penis in an accident is any less of a man. He explains that reproductive organs are not the final determining factor describing various biological conditions that exist in various populations. He discusses the complexity of the legal and governmental factors that determine one's gender. Finally, he states: "For me, the answer to the question "What makes a man a man?" is this: There is no scientific answer. It is a personal conviction – it is how you feel inside when you wake up in the morning. The traits of masculinity and femininity are blurred" (259). He shows how the logic is applied differently to each individual who blurs gender boundaries in order to further ostracize the individual.

> Usually that's what most people do, I mean, I would say that 99, 100% of people when you see someone and you see someone that looks like me, I'm going to be called male. People are now calling me female because I decided to use my reproductive organs what if I had gotten a surrogate, you know, what if we adopted you know, if we adopted a child I'd be the child's father. I would be, right? Isn't that what most people would see our family as? Father, mother . . . but for some reason, a lot of people have a problem seeing me as male. So does a penis make a man?" (*Pregnant Man*)

In the passage, Beatie exposes the assumptions grounded in American society. Specifically, he illustrates that people use genitalia as an indicator of sexual difference and as a "visible cultural marker" (Sloop 61). He then further complicates our notions of genitalia by pointing out that he "kinda has a penis." Rhetorically, Beatie questions the cultural discourse that iterates a strict sexual binarism. Additionally, Beatie blames social norms for inconsistently selecting the traits that define maleness and femaleness and maintaining a two-sex model. "The spectrum of gender an sexuality is constantly broadening, and far from fixed, yet the poles on either end – male and female – are, in our society, absolute" (*Labor* 248-49).

For Beatie differentiation is used to distinguish his feelings about who he is and what defines his gender. He distinguishes these truth claims from the norms he is expected to follow according to society. His examples and description problematize our assumptions of what consists of sex and gender differences. Furthermore, it becomes a preliminary statement for understanding Beatie's justification for becoming the first pregnant man.

In addition to differentiating norms of sex, gender, sexuality, the next chapter further reveals the ways in which Beatie challenges notions of embodiment and sex differences by transcending traditional understandings of pregnancy.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the ways in which three factors, denial, bolstering and differentiation are employed to create Beatie's agency in the minds of the public. I have analyzed the strategies of denying his desire for fame and profiteering, the bolstering of his image and his identity with the public, and his differentiation as singular subject

position. Even in instances when the agency seems restricted and couched in conservative ideals, Beatie strategically uses these factors to transcend repression and to craft a radical subjectivity. In this sense, he uses a constitutive rhetoric to make his identity and subjectivity visible through texts. As Charland reminds us, "constitutive rhetorics are ideological not merely because they provide individuals with narratives to inhabit as subjects and motives to experience, but because they insert "narratized" subjects-as-agents into the world" (143). Beatie's identity and his identification with the audience is constructed through these rhetorical effects, and, as I will later show, this has implications in the wider American discourse on demanding recognition and disrupting norms of intelligibility and gender norms.

CHAPTER 4 TRANSCENDENCE AS IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE AND SEX/GENDER BLURRING

In the previous chapter I illustrated ways in which Beatie creates identification with his audience and through his discourse begins to trouble sex/gender essentialism to permit his recognition. This chapter examines Beatie's self-defense by considering the two primary mechanisms through which he transcends the particularities of the situation and the charges against him. First, I trace the rhetorical reframing of the meaning of pregnancy by considering a number of arguments he makes to redefine what has – historically – been considered a bright line dividing "male" and "female" bodies and their capacities. Second, I analyze photographs, and in particular the photograph most familiar to those aware of his case, to make the argument that it problematizes and transcends a clear reading of his body as either definitively male or female. Throughout, my aim is to consider the way these initiatives work to change the context that seeks to limit unconventional identity, upset sex/gender binaries, and give Beatie a sense of agency and a singular identity. I conclude that Beatie's discursive and visual rhetorical choices promote a serious and engaged challenge, perhaps the most forceful challenge, to gender binaries and intelligible identities that we have seen, to date, from a nationally recognized figure.

Beatie's use of transcendence as reframing

Transcendence as Ideographic Analysis

The strategy of transcendence turns attention away from the particulars of a rhetor's situation to a wider, abstract ideology that is viewed in a favorable light by the audience. In this strategy, meaning shifts so that the audience understands the event differently. The act of transcendence often corresponds with a rhetor's attempt to

transform or redefine a social value. In this instance, apologia framework is further informed by an ideographic analysis,[10] which explores rhetoric that changes a term's ideological meaning. Emil B. Towner combines apologia theory with ideographic analysis to show that "apologia and ideographs share an emphasis on ideology." (301). Therefore, studies of apologia benefit from the addition of ideographic analyses because it examines a rhetoric's social impact on broader ideological changes in the culture. For example, Towner examines the rhetoric of the country music group, Dixie Chicks, to illustrate that when the group was under attack for making "unpatriotic" comments, they used transcendence to adjust the meaning of <patriotic> to include <freedom of speech> and protest.

According to Towner, ideographic analysis is helpful in diagnosing the social and political problems or accusations of wrongdoing and how they are negotiated through public discourse. Additionally, Towner illustrates the shortcomings of strictly applying Ware and Linkugel's factor analysis theory and identifying transcendence: "Although these strategies presuppose that social values and norms have been broken, they do not necessarily require the accused to explicitly reaccept those values. Ware and Linkugel's theory allows for the accused to merely identify or align themselves with those values." (299).

In order to better understand the role of ideographs and its influence on public culture, I explore the development of the method and its relevance to altering power relations. In his landmark essay, "The Ideograph: A link between rhetoric and ideology,"

[10] Ideographic analysis examines rhetoric from an ideological perspective. Michael Calvin McGee identified an ideograph as a key term that represents the ideological belief of a public.

Michael McGee argues that rhetoric needs a model for both ideology and myth[11] "which neither denies human capacity to control "power" through the manipulation of symbols nor begs the question of "power" on creating and maintaining political consciousness" (230). McGee proposes that rhetorical scholars examine slogans or "ideographs," "one-term sums of an orientation, the species of 'God' or 'Ultimate' term that will be used to symbolize the line of argument . . ."(233). He identifies popular terms, like "liberty," "property," and "religion," as examples of dominating and easily acceptable American ideographs.

> By learning the meaning of ideographs, I have argued, everyone in society, even the "freest" of us, those who control the state, seem predisposed to structured mass responses. Such terms as 'liberty' in other words, constitute by our very use of them in political discourse an ideology that governs or "dominates" our consciousness. In practice, therefore, ideology is a political language composed of slogan-like terms signifying collective commitment. (McGee 15)

Ideographs reveal the system and construction of public motives that influences society's "reality" in order to trace an ideology in practice.

For McGee the study of ideographic usages reveal structures and interpenetrating systems of public motives, which have evolved over a period of time, or examine clusters of slogans or words that modify, specify, compliment or contradict meaning to form a

[11] McGee responds to the tension between symbolists and Marxists, arguing that the conflict stems from symbolists who are skeptical of the historical and scientific "truths" accepted in Marxist thinking and fail to recognize that myths are often forced upon society by a material power that influences and constructs social reality. On the other hand, traditional materialists neglect to study language and deny the unconscious, voluntary participation in belief systems and ideologies.

unity or consonance. McGee explains that the meaning of an ideograph forms through various usages and contexts that reveal a political consciousness, power structures, and the discourse's different signification across cultures. His analysis reveals that discourse is more than symbolic representation; it is also part of the creation, production, and maintenance material effects of power and ideologies.

McGee's essay influenced a branch of criticism that continues to explore the connections between language, power, and ideology. Critics have further theorized categories and characteristics of ideographs to explain ideological moves in Western cultures. For example, in their analysis of <equality> in the pubic discourse of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Lucaites and Condit conclude that, rather than simply creating contradictory rhetoric, the public motives articulated by these leaders' rhetorical choices allowed for two ideographic meanings to exist simultaneously. They created a dialogue contributing to an equally revised notion of <equality>, which allowed for change and modification of civil rights in the public sphere. In their studies, Charland and Delgado show that ideographs create political identities based on an ideological fiction, and that that fiction can become a materially constructed history. Both Québécois sovereignty movements and Chicano political movements rhetorically constituted a fictional, discursive history, but in doing so, created an identity, showing how persons become subjects and how transformation in subjectivity are allowed or restricted. In addition to showing that ideographs function to shift identity positions, Delgado shows that a production of identity ensures a collectivity that can again emerge to "be recaptured and rearticulated to fit the needs of the present" (Delgado 453). These studies illustrate the importance of studying shifting meanings in public discourse to understand how

ideologies construct identities and constitute power over individuals. Additionally, they reveal that a term's usage and relation to other discourse in situations can change and allow individuals to negotiate their position in society.

Towner explains that there is a connection between the strategy of transcendence and the persuasive nature of shifting ideographs. Transcendence permits the accused "to position an act in terms of abstract values and loyalties of a particular group" as well as change meaning for an audience. Because ideographs lack a definitive designation, their meanings are also repositioned and "are useful in justifying one's actions and positioning them in such a way that they do not clash with a society's values but rather uphold or even reshape them" (Towner 301). Finally, Towner contends, that further case studies are needed "to understand how corporations and even average citizens negotiate and attempt to redefine societal values through apologia" (307).

Beatie's transcendence of <pregnancy>

As part of his strategy of transcendence, Beatie discursively changes the meaning and understanding of <pregnancy>. Prior to Beatie's publicity, pregnancy was a term that had distinct meanings – a biological, maternal act, a female experience, and a choice. Although these distinctions seem difficult to overturn, Beatie's situation provided an alternative context for the meaning and understanding of the term. Through this discursive move, he further shifts the identity markers of femininity and masculinity. An analysis of his discourse reveals that Beatie supplements the concept of pregnancy with four (variably) new lines of meaning <pregnancy> as surrogacy, <pregnancy> as a human desire (non-gendered), <pregnancy> as paternal, and <pregnancy> as a right.

One of Beatie's usages of <pregnancy> is to redefine the concept as a process of surrogacy. Identifying and using the term "surrogate" is a means of disconnecting the traditional idea that only mothers experience <pregnancy>. The acceptance and adoption of surrogacy practices in society has created the notion that some wombs are simply a means to an end. After birth, the surrogate's job ends. In the case of Beatie, he is still a parent, but he seeks to end any association with traditionally maternal actions. Beatie states in his article, "Labor of Love," "In a technical sense I see myself as my own surrogate, though my gender identity as male is constant. To Nancy, I am her husband carrying our child." Additionally, Beatie implies that his body is gender neutral. He de-emphasizes a maternal connection to his unborn child as not maternal and describes his body as container or as a source of life support. "How do I feel being a pregnant man? I don't really feel like a mother. I feel more like a vessel, kinda, renting my body temporarily just, a, to bring this life into the world" (*Pregnant Man*).

If surrogacy is a job and not an identity then it changes the conceptualization of pregnancy being a strictly maternal act. Because surrogacy is becoming more common in American culture, it is assumed that some individuals have already come to accept the idea that pregnancy does not necessarily result in the act of mothering. However, Beatie asks us to stretch the logic to the notion that <pregnancy> is not a strictly female act. He states: "I didn't feel that carrying a child would compromise my identification as a male. I was a man who was renting out his body to perform this one miraculous feat. I was not switching back to being a female; I was, in my mind, fully male" (197). In this statement Beatie is temporarily loaning his body to a higher cause: the dream of creating a biological child. Beatie also uses differentiation to assert that pregnancy and child-

bearing does not dictate a female identity. Finally, Beatie explains in the final chapters of his book: "I chose to be my own surrogate – to use my own body to go through this process, and not someone else's" (*Labor* 305). In this instance, surrogacy is also associated with responsibility. This helps to further establish Beatie's credibility, since he has been accused of acting irresponsibly. In numerous contexts, he reiterates that he could maintain the most control and protection over the care of his child by carrying the baby himself.

The second iteration of the term, creating the notion of <pregnancy> as a "human desire," transforms the meaning of the word into an act that is not strictly male or female. Before explicitly describing this as a "human desire," Beatie begins to associate the act as a non-gendered process. The following dialogue takes place on *Oprah*.

> OPRAH. Now, so that's so interesting to me, because you wanted to have a child one day and yet you also felt like you were a man. In feeling like you're a man, men don't have, you know, don't reproduce through their bodies, children, obviously.
>
> BEATIE. Correct, typically.
>
> OPRAH. Typically. I mean typically, yeah. Until now.
>
> OPRAH. So was that a conflict in your mind?
>
> BEATIE. You know, I have a very stable male gender identity.
>
> OPRAH. Mm-hmm.
>
> BEATIE. I see pregnancy as a process and it doesn't define who I am.

When Beatie describes the pregnancy as "process" he means to say that this traditionally biological act is not inherently an identity marker. The implication is that our culture has

come to define pregnancy as a strictly female act because, prior to his publicity, pregnant men, like him, were not known to exist.

The notion of <pregnancy> as a human issue or desire is found consistently throughout Beatie' rhetoric, from his introductory piece in *The Advocate* to his memoir. He introduces audiences to his unique situation in the following passage: "Sterilization is not a requirement for sex reassignment, so I decided to have chest reconstruction and testosterone therapy but kept my reproductive rights. Wanting to have a biological child is neither a male nor female desire, but a human desire" ("Labor of Love"). In an interview with Oprah, he justifies keeping his reproductive organs and opting out of "lower" surgery to fulfill the perceived universal and non-gendered desire for a family:

> OPRAH. So when you decided, you kept your reproductive organs, because you thought, "Maybe one day I'll need them."
>
> BEATIE. Yes. Because I feel it's not a male or female desire to want to have a child. It's a human desire.

The same argument appears in his memoir: "I've always felt that the desire to have a child is neither a male nor a female desire – it is a human one" (*Labor* 197). In his interview with Barbara Walters, Beatie uses similar justifications to differentiate reproductive gonads with one's gender identity: "I don't feel like . . . removing your sexual reproductive organs will make you feel any more like man or any less of a woman and vice versa; um, I just don't see it that way" (*20/20*). Beatie also uses comparable logic in the documentary. He explains, "Well I knew I always wanted to have children and so I wasn't ready to, you know, surgically remove my reproductive organs [um] because for me, that was just a means to have a child, it wasn't um, some sort of identity

of whether I was female or male." (*Pregnant Man*). These statements operate to sever the notion of pregnancy from feminine identities. Through this lens, pregnancy becomes reframed as another performative action that has come to represent femininity but should not be understood as a strictly feminine/female characteristic.

In a similar manner, Beatie stresses that pregnancy is capable of being disassociated with gender and sex identities. "I didn't let pregnancy define who I was. I didn't say 'I'm pregnant, therefore I am a woman.' I had a solid male gender identity all the way through this and it just goes to prove that mother and father are social terms. You don't have to be biologically related to your child to be a mother or a father." (*20/20*). In addition to separating pregnancy with biological gender, this quote further problematizes the notions of family that Beatie describes in other discourse; "family" is redefined as kinship not dependent on genetic relations. However, Beatie stresses the maternal and paternal roles in a family, therefore maintaining the belief that family is tied heteronormativity. Although it is possible that Beatie would deny this limited interpretation of family, his rhetoric does little to unsettle the conventions of family.

The separation of pregnancy as a gendered, strictly female, experience appears in multiple places in his memoir. "People say that you have to be a woman in order to give birth, but I am proving that this is not so – I am a fully legal male, and I gave birth. My pregnancy challenged the socially accepted definitions of "woman," "wife," and "mother;" in other words, it's a social issue, not a biological one" (308). Beatie also writes: "There will surely be other transgender men who get pregnant down the road, and eventually they will be accepted as fathers, not mothers. I am neither a woman nor a mother – I am both our child's father and the person who gave birth to her" (310). Beatie

also attempts to describe some specific elements of pregnancy as gender neutral. For example, he states: "Being pregnant changed not only my body but my way of thinking. I felt more in touch with my emotions than I ever had, either as a woman or a man" (240). In this comment, Beatie describes psychological and emotional changes as simply different, removing its association with femininity, while also deconstructing gender stereotypes such as the notion that women are more "in touch" with their emotions. Finally Beatie reiterates that not only is the act of pregnancy non-gendered, but that one's goals and desires for a family typically remain universally consistent despite sex/gender differences. He concludes with a description of his experience as the pregnant man by stating: "Our dreams were not male or female dreams, and our hopes knew no gender. We are just people – blood and bones and beating hearts, unique and special and yet no different from anyone else, all at once" (*Labor* 321). By referencing themselves as "people" united by common elements regardless of gender, Beatie de-emphasizes gendered labels altogether and shows that the dreams of having a family are not dependent on heternormativity or biology.

In a third strategic and ideographic move, Beatie most radically alters the meaning of <pregnancy> by relating it to a feeling of paternity. Simultaneously, this strategy supports Beatie's earlier strategy of differentiation. He differentiates his feelings during his pregnancy from the feelings of most pregnant women. "I did not feel maternal or motherly or womanly pregnant. I felt like Nancy's husband and I felt like the father of my child" (*20/20*). A reiteration of his male identity and fatherly role denies the link between maternity and pregnancy and resists the assumption that pregnancy must "feel" or exist as a strictly maternal act. When asked if being a "pregnant man" is different

than being a "pregnant woman," he states: "Um, it's hard to make the comparison because I haven't been a pregnant woman. I don't know, I mean, I feel a really close bond with this baby that's growing inside of me [um] I don't have the maternal feeling about it, though, I have a paternal feeling" (*Pregnant Man*). During his interview with Oprah, Beatie describes his experience in a similar manner. "I'm a pregnant person, you know. Ironically, being pregnant doesn't make me feel anymore female or feminine. You know, it doesn't make me want to go shave my legs or something. I'm a man. I just happen to be a pregnant man." By reaffirming his identity as a male, Beatie uses this line of argument to further support his argument that he is a man despite his pregnancy. In combination with his use of denial and differentiation, transforming pregnancy as paternal acts as support for his claim that reproductive organs and the experience of pregnancy do not narrowly define gender identity.

> I wanted to be listed as the father, even though I was giving birth. I did not at all feel like what I was doing was maternal. I was not going back to being female in any way – I was not toggling between genders. Throughout my pregnancy, I would still be a man . . . I was a man before the pregnancy, and I would be a man after the birth, which made me the baby's father. (*Labor* 252)

Beatie also denies the claims that he is strategically choosing his gender to satisfy his social needs. As such, transcendence further supports and corresponds with his claims of denial, asserting his "true" male identity despite his current embodiment. Finally, Beatie portrays his claim as one that is supported by others. He attempts to bolster his connection with other men and make his decision sound less radical and marginal.

> I have actually spoken to a lot of men that said that they would carry a baby if they could. You know, if their wife weren't able to carry a child and they were, they'd absolutely carry their child and they wouldn't consider themselves any more female, you know, they're a husband or a father providing for their family, which is a way I see myself. (*Pregnant Man*)

With these remarks, Beatie reinforces the idea that having a child can be a "human desire," a general yearning associated with the act of parenting as well as an experience of men. Most importantly, pregnancy does not force a pregnant person into a feminine identity.

In addition to describing <pregnancy> as paternal, Beatie rationalizes his actions by claiming that <pregnancy> is a right. He tells Oprah, "I'm a person and I have the right to have my own biological child." Oprah immediately agrees with him. In his memoir he states: "I don't think anyone anywhere can begrudge me the right to carry my own child" (305). He also claims his personal right to happiness, one that few people can argue with given its constitutional basis. "Having a child should be one of the best and proudest moments of your life, and I wanted my pregnancy to be that kind of moment for Nancy and me. I have as much right to be pregnant as anyone else. And I also have the right to be happy and proud about it" (307).

Associating "rights" rhetoric with pregnancy is quite common, especially in the context of the abortion debate. The debate is frequently constructed as a conflict over rights – the right of a woman (or, in this context, the man) and the right of the fetus. Beatie effectively produces the perception of a force conspiring to preclude him from

reproducing. His outlook is not entirely far-fetched, since some angry Americans posted hateful comments on blogs and posts, arguing that Beatie should be sterilized and forbidden to reproduce. Beatie strategically relates to a broader audience by characterizing his choice as a right, since he can rally individuals from all sides of the political spectrum to his side. A person who identifies as a right to life advocate can hardly justify that Beatie's pregnancy should be terminated. On the other hand, those individuals who believe in choice and in having control of one's body must also deductively conclude that Beatie has the right to control his body. Moreover, in Western cultures, forced sterilization is rarely endorsed. It would be viewed as a barbaric and unjust act. Given these cultural biases, it seems difficult to counter the notion that Beatie has the right to use and control his body and reproductive capabilities. Additionally, by reiterating his personal right and control over his body, he further challenges his opponents' claims that his pregnancy is morally wrong and ought to be considered illegal. He states: "I was not breaking any laws by becoming pregnant – I was doing only what my body was naturally designed to do. I felt sure that, at least legally, I was on solid ground" (250). His choice to suggest that his body was "naturally designed" for pregnancy is a risky claim. Given that many individuals argue against Beatie's decision to live as a male, especially as a pregnant male, his use of essentialist justifications to stress that his body was naturally designed to give birth risks fueling the notion that, by living his life as a male, he is living "unnaturally." Beatie opens up himself to further criticism from those who will reference essentialist claims and logic against his transgender identity, as is frequently done in argumentation against gender queerness that is grounded in conservative and religious reasoning. For this reason, the transcendence

claim that Beatie's pregnancy is his right requires the strategy of differentiation to insist upon a consistent male identity. In combination, these arguments expose and problematize the assumptions behind cultural sex differences and reveal the repressive and insensitive logic endorsed by some of his opponents. Furthermore, and regardless of the risks that his specific argument imposes, Beatie's remarks transcends his "accountability" and "guilt" for living unconventionally by emphasizing the right of an individual to control his or her own body and the universal desire for a family.

Using another, more straightforward approach, of transcendence, Beatie places his pregnancy and even his decision to demand recognition from the public as part of a broader, higher mission. He shifts the focus away from the accusations made against him and instead presents his story as related to a higher social cause of fighting against inequality. Specifically, he uses his story of his pregnancy as an illustration of the global intolerance toward different or "non-normative" individuals. Piggy-backing off of the bolstering claim that reinforces the tragic elements of his personal narrative, Beatie describes his encounters with discrimination that ought to be resisted. For example, in each of his texts, Beatie discusses the obstacles that he faced from members of the medical community. He explains the reaction he incites from doctors: "I think that they were using their ethical/religious reasons to discriminate against us and discrimination is never okay, especially from the medical community" (*20/20*).

In the analysis of his bolstering claims, I have shown how Beatie faced discrimination from the general public as well as members of the LGBTQ community. Again, these comments are the backdrop that justify Beatie's use of his story and his experiences to stand up for his conviction of fighting discrimination. He states: "I could

slink around and wear really baggy clothing, or I could stand up proudly and face the future head-on. Nancy and I chose to stand up" (9). Transcendence, therefore, has the potential to construct Beatie's credibility as consistent and honorable. Beatie insists that he and Nancy were true to their actions: "standing up for our beliefs was much more in keeping with the type of people we'd always been" (264). In his memoir, he is able to support this claim with descriptions and photographs of his advocacy work for the LGBTQ community. Furthermore, Beatie explains to Barbara Walters, "You know, you're not living a true or authentic life unless you are being true to yourself. And in this life, we get to choose who we want to be and how we get to live our lives and that includes being a pregnant man" (*20/20*). Thus, in addition to fighting discrimination, Beatie makes the story about truthfulness, integrity, and the construction of a singular identity. Authenticity and pursuing one's happiness are two values deeply respected in America's individualistic culture. Beatie attempts to gain respect for his actions. He states:

> And now that I am Thomas, I am still the same person inside; my values, beliefs, my convictions are all unchanged. I am a realist, though, and while I don't like the negative feelings that people seem to have toward me, I have, to some degree, learned to live with them. That does not mean I am ready to stop fighting for acceptance and tolerance. I want this society to one day accept all of us who are different from the norm, and to realize that we just want what everyone wants – full, authentic lives (Labor 177).

The theme of fighting and remaining committed to his convictions are also asserted in the following passage:

> I will never run away and hide from who I am, nor will I change just to please someone else . . .Nancy and I are politically active people; we have strong opinions about issues and we stand up for those beliefs. Once we decided I was the best person to carry my own child, we didn't let the inevitable complications that lay ahead shake us from our convictions . . . But if accomplishing that goal meant having to fight for my rights as a human being then I was more than ready to do that" (249).

Beatie's message is more than a defense of his personal convictions; he argues for greater tolerance toward his decision and the choices of other individuals who threaten social norms. In *The Advocate* he explains, "our situation ultimately will ask everyone to embrace the gamut of human possibility and to define for themselves what is normal" ("Labor of Love"). At the conclusion of her show, Oprah reiterates this thought by quoting the line from his article. Beatie also fights the discrimination he and his family faces by stressing the importance of gaining fairness and equality in his memoir: "Nancy and I hope the world will catch up with us soon enough. But the one thing we both insist on is that we be treated fairly and equally – that people respect us and our cherished American right to have a family. That was the battle line we drew: respect, fairness, equality" (250). Bolstering and transcendence are combined in this passage to associate the "American dream" of freedom and equal rights with the action of challenging discriminatory treatment.

Furthermore, Beatie is able to directly connect the ideal of tolerance to his role as a parent by emphasizing that the values taught in Beatie's story will also be taught to his daughter, Susan. In addition to reiterating his greater message, this is a strategic way to transcend the criticisms that Susan will grow up to become a confused and unhappy child because of the stigma surrounding her family, claims and criticisms that frequently appear in blogs and mediated posts. Beatie explains that the value of tolerance will become an implicit lesson when the Beaties inform Susan of their family's differences, specifically her father's pregnancy. In the following passage. Beatie stresses the values that he will associate with their actions:

> We'll raise her with tolerance, dignity, and respect. We'll teach her that no family is exactly alike or better than any other, and that love is all that matters. The only way to combat prejudice is through education and compassion, and that is the best thing we can do for our child: raise her to be nonjudgmental, to be compassionate, to look past labels and love people for who and what they are. (*Labor* 312)

In his interview with Oprah, Beatie explains: "We want to be able to provide her with everything we possibly can. That means, you know, as far as education, yes, but also in the way that we see the world and the world sees us. I think it's really important to share that with a young mind. Because, you know, you're not born with intolerance." Beatie also stresses that he will raise Susan "acknowledging that diversity exists in the world and be respectful of other people" (*20/20*). Beatie concludes reiterating his feelings of goodwill for his daughter and the rest of the world: "It's nice to dream of what the world could be like without prejudice and with unending tolerance. This is the kind of world

we want Susan Juliette to live in. It is not a realistic wish, but it is something well worth fighting for" (*Labor*, 319).

Tolerance and equality are underlining messages in Beatie's story and, in many ways, they remain the most important points for the value of this story. When asked by Walters, "what is the significance beyond the shock value?" Stephanie Brill, an author and a nationally recognized midwife, explains that it helps us understand that "the face of family is changing." Thus, Beatie's strategy of transcendence attempts to create a conceptual space for his family and acts to create greater tolerance for different, nontraditional American families. Beatie's story not only symbolically achieves this goal, but Beatie literally cites and encourages this message.

My analysis illustrates how Beatie's explanation of pregnancy directly attempts to open the term to alternative understandings. Furthermore, it forces us to reconsider the relationship between sex, gender and sexuality and the essential assumptions behind the notion. Finally, Beatie's use of transcendence further constructs his story and defense as more pertinent because he is attempting to fight discrimination against unconventional identities. His rhetoric maximizes a sense of agency for Beatie, in that personal empowerment is considered achieved because he achieves a transformation of the pregnancy ideograph so that he meets the expanded meaning of the term. Although some individuals may challenge these articulations, Beatie's arguments create a "viable" position in which the people must take Beatie somewhat seriously. Rather than simply asking for recognition, Beatie makes the demand irrelevant by explaining how he already "fits" this term. Beatie not only uses transcendence in his discourse to attempt to carve space for his articulation of personal identity; he also uses his image to visually challenge

and transcend previous understandings of pregnancy and to assert himself as a singularity.

Image as Transcendence

Visual images that appeared in conjunction with Beatie's written and verbal apologic discourse played a significant rhetorical role that further impacted Beatie's apologia discourse. According to Beatie, the first publication of his most widely recognized photograph appeared on March 13, 2008 when *The Advocate* ran Beatie's story on their website. Beatie describes it, "It appeared alongside a striking photo that Nancy had taken of me, with my full beard, shirt off, and baby bump in full view. That photo remains, to this day, the single most iconic image of me" (*Labor* 265). As Beatie explains, the photograph shows Beatie in a maternity pose, displaying his body from above his waist. In addition to cradling his stomach, he poses with his other arm behind his head and reveals his naked torso that shows hair growth on his face, under his arms, and chest and also displays his mastectomy scars. I examine the iconic photograph and its relation to Beatie's apologia strategies, and argue that the visual image of his body supports his use of the strategies of differentiation and transcendence. As such, this photograph became a visual ideograph troubling gender, revealing the performative nature of gender identity, and crafting his desired recognition as one that is singular and one that has not yet been made translatable in contemporary society.

Early influence of media and images on apologia

Before analyzing Beatie's photograph and discourse surrounding it, I will present a short literature review that examines the relationship between apologia and other visual mediums. Many published studies on apologia rhetoric consider the impact of electronic

media on the rhetor's discourse. This is not unusual given that studies of American apologia developed in the 1960's, a time that was closely considering the influence of television and an increase emphasis of visual messages on public culture and knowledge. With the additional advent of cable, computers and other visual technologies, the concept of visually experiencing messages became an important consideration for rhetorical scholars. Naturally, the media and the visual sphere has become the primary means for experiencing public discourse. Richard Butsch emphasizes this claim: "given the growth in media variety, size, and convergence in the late twentieth century, media have become the primary focus and force for today's public sphere" (3).

Early studies on apologia discourse considered the impact of the mass mediated images on the discourse, the rhetor, or the audience. In one of the first, touchstone essays on apologia, Rosenfield acknowledged the importance of the media for Nixon and Truman since both their addresses were national radio-television broadcasts that include the features of apologetic discourse. In 1968, Rosenfield argued that the use of electronic media signals the seriousness that the Presidents attributed to their situations, although he also concedes that their choice "may have been in part a simply a symptom of things to come: we appear to rely more and more on the air waves for our contact with current affairs" (438). Rosenfield's prediction was accurate since, today, broadcasts remain the preferred method to communicate messages of self-defense. This is illustrated in Beatie's case, but also through the rhetorical studies that examine image repair or apologia rhetoric through mass mediated outlets, such as televised addresses and in programs, like *Eye-to-Eye With Connie Chung*, *Larry King Live*, and *20/20* (Butler 282; Benoit and Hanczor 422; Benoit 252; Benoit and McHale 266).

In some cases, the situation surrounding the apologia and/or the reception of the discourse was influenced or brought on by the mass media. Butler argues that the prominence of televised speeches was a distinguishing element that affected the public's reaction to Edward Kennedy's "Chappaquiddick" address differently from the speeches made by Nixon and Truman in the earlier decade. Butler explains:

> television was still a relatively new household phenomenon in the 1950's when Truman and Nixon delivered their speeches. But by 1969, this situation change. Kennedy spoke to an audience of Americans who listened daily to several hours of soap operas, an audience more likely inured to tales of scandal and tragedy . . . today's mass media viewers, all be they melodrama lovers, are at the same time more sophisticated, less likely to place automatic belief in the magic power of the television tube, more likely to question. (287)

Due to this observation, Butler, like Rosenfield, predicted that the nationally broadcasted element in apologia responding to scandals and controversy were unlikely to have as powerful of an impact of silencing and calming audiences, as they once did in the 1950s.

According to Gold, the presidential candidates of 1976 faced a similar rhetorical constraint from the media, which persistently presented them with the repetition of the same questions and portrayed them as guilty of offensive acts despite their apologic strategies. Gold argues that the media resulted in the candidates seeking "increasingly to incorporate symbolic or visual strategies into their verbal self defense, both to strengthen it and to meet the visual requirements of the press" (309). For example, politicians responded by changing the settings of where they presented apologia. Rather than simply

giving a televised speech, they entered other-controlled situations, such as Ford speaking in Congressional hearings and Carter holding interviews with specific representatives. They also used visible reminders of their transparency and authenticity, like phone calls and acts of hugging, to build identification with their audience and support of their character. Additionally, Gold claims that Carter's choice to change rhetorical strategies (from denial to restatement to the eventual admittance of guilt) proves the "interactive nature of contemporary self-justification" as created by the presence and role of the media. "It illustrates how, when media representatives control the communication setting, they may focus upon an incident until the candidate is forced to respond" (Gold 313). In short, the media displayed such a dominant role during this election by setting boundaries and limitations for regaining credibility that politicians avoided the formal apologia. Similarly, Benoit and Hanczor found that the public's "knowledge" of the Nancy Kerrigan attack was "shaped by media discourse" making it difficult for Tonya Harding to successfully repair her image through the strategies of denial and attacking her accuser. Gold concludes that "The convergence of the media upon this aspect of the campaign has elevated the ritual of self-defense to a highly important one" and that, as a result, apologia will "undoubtedly will continue to occupy newspaper columns and television news reports" (315-16).

Finally, in his study of the public apology of Bill Clinton during the Lewinsky affair, Gronbeck argues that one reason for the public not accepting Clinton's defense was due to the poor performance of the apology, which visually impacted the acceptance of his message. During the televised press releases, Clinton's sense of intimacy was missing and the language used was not reflected in his visual and vocal characteristics,

therefore, he violated the expectation of sincerity. When evaluating Clinton's discourse, Gronbeck maintains that Clinton's address points to an important implication for the mass media:

> Gold declared the mass-mediated apologia dead after the 1960s and early 1970s. Bill Clinton – both when he's successful (the Flowers affair) and not (the August 17 speech on the Lewinsky affair) – demonstrates that it's still sometimes, at least, a benchmark for assessing political competency, and, thereby, for providing the legitimacy needed by presidents to maintain their claim to power. (Gronbeck)

Thus, the media and visual mediums remain an important element when considering apologia. Evaluation of apologia cannot occur in a vacuum; rather, the media and visual components affect the situation, the choice of form, and acceptance or rejection of the strategies used.

Rhetorical theory can further benefit from an investigation into the impact of visual elements on apologic discourse. Although some apologia studies referenced earlier consider the role of mass-mediated mediums, such as broadcasting, more recent apologia studies fail to consider contemporary visual forms and their role in disseminating persuasive apologia strategies. Although the construction of the media's counter-discourse is often discussed, very few scholars choose texts that correspond with significant visual proof and visual arguments supplied by the rhetor and, therefore, they fail to examine the important function of image. Most importantly, in the context of Thomas Beatie, the visual image is a picture of his body, which has additional significance on Beatie's image, credibility, and audience reception of his material

identity. Finally, given the widespread dissemination of the photograph, the fact that the Beaties are the source of the photograph, and the reoccurring reference to the photograph in Beatie's discursive apologia, the study of the image of the pregnant man becomes another component necessary for understanding the rhetorical apologic factors used by Beatie.

The image of the pregnant man

Illustrated earlier, Beatie uses the strategies of differentiation and transcendence to challenge articulations of traditional sex/gender norms. As I have shown in my analysis of his differentiation strategies, Beatie claims that he was *not* born in the "wrong" body. This statement appears puzzling because cultural scripts about transgender/sexuality embodiment have taught society to legitimize trans individual experience so long as they iterate a need to align their identity and a gender-consistent body. While Beatie's discourse troubles the relationship between sex and gender identity/embodiment, visually seeing Beatie's masculine traits in combination with his pregnant belly further unsettles and complicates our understanding of Beatie. Oprah introduced Beatie by presenting the image of Beatie with mixed gender traits. She stated:

> You're about to meet Thomas. He's been happily married to Nancy for the past five years. They own a beautiful home, they run a successful small business and are expecting their first child this summer, but there is a twist. Take a look at this picture. Thomas not Nancy is the one who is pregnant. I'm going to let you take that in a minute.

Despite his stability and confidence of his inner male identity, Beatie's bodily characteristics still represent a gender blurring subject position capable of challenging hegemonic models of rigid sex and gender conformity.

The photographs also back Beatie's strategy of transcendence, which alters the connotation of <pregnancy> to mean surrogacy, a human desire, a paternal experience and a right. The photographs of Beatie specifically act as additional support to the claim that pregnancy can be encountered by men, and arguably that a masculine embodiment alters and affects the experience. If a person were to only listen to or read his arguments, they would likely encounter skepticism. However, seeing Beatie in his photograph, his interviews, and in his home videos, readers and viewers undeniably encounter a "pregnant man." The following exchange takes place to reiterate this point:

> WALTERS. You make a great many people very uneasy.
>
> BEATIE. Why is that?
>
> WALTERS. Here is a man with facial hair with a mustache with scars under his breasts, pregnant. It is a disturbing picture, Thomas.
>
> BEATIE. I think that people are not used to seeing the image of a pregnant man, and, um, it's causing a lot of people to think. (*20/20*)

Although Beatie is unclear about how the image impacts the thoughts of Americans, the implication is that people will consider the spectrum of sex/gender/sexuality differences and identities and the changing nature of bodily capabilities. In addition to his discourse, the photograph pushes the intelligible limits of most mainstream discourse and challenges the assumptions of sex/gender identity. While the photograph risks being understood as demonizing or monstrous, the cliché expression, "seeing is believing," allows for people

to understand the performative and fluid nature of gender and sex constructions. According to scholars, bodies enact strategic and intelligible performances of cultural inscriptions, such as gender, and identities (Butler 30; Sloop 28). The body of "the pregnant man," is significant because it is referenced and visually shown in conjunction with his discourse to reveal a blurring of sex and gender in American public culture. Through the picture, he exposes gender identity as performative, plastic, and unstable.

In the documentary, *Pregnant Man*, Beatie describes his iconic image and reenacts the shot, which the narrator describes as the image that "sent shock waves around the world."

> This is the scene of the infamous photograph that my wife Nancy took, the one that was in T*he Advocate* Magazine [um] the photo that basically the entire world saw. And what it was every week I stand in front of my shower curtain to track the progress of this belly [um] see how big I'm getting, so, a, the one picture I took I was just holding my head and looking down like that and she snapped and and [sic] that's the photo. (*Pregnant Man*)

The photograph of Beatie shows his body performing masculinity through his stance, posture, dress and other bodily gender cues (such as body and facial hair). Although pregnant, Beatie maintains many of his secondary masculine characteristics. His pose upholds another norm of masculine iconography by leaving one hand behind his head, an image frequently found enacted by male models in such advertisements for fashion brands like Abercrombie & Fitch® and Calvin Klein®. Beatie's decision to

reflect a commonly recognized Western image of male models, celebrities or "pin-ups" is a significant action.

According to Schroeder and Zwick, advertising is a representational system, one that creates additional meaning that expands beyond the realm of the product, remaining responsible for the reflection and creation social norms. They state: "advertising representations influence cultural and individual conceptions of identity, and must be understood as the result of changing social and cultural practices" (24). In their study Shroeder and Zwick make an additional claims relevant to Beatie's photograph when they discuss the development of photographic conventions, which, over time, appear natural and spontaneous in advertising portraits, but can be traced in the historical context of visual representations (30). Beatie's image is striking because, in addition to its shock value, it symbolically upholds visual conventions of masculinity. In their examination of sole-male images reproduced in magazines, Kolber and Albanese observe common characteristics in advertising that represent masculine traits. For example, they find that "on the body type dimension, the majority of men have the physique of the traditional male icon— strong and muscular" (Kolber and Albanese 17). Additionally, they determine that a common gaze/facial characteristic is aloofness and detachment, which "are conveyed by the turned heads and averted eyes " and occur frequently throughout their sample (17). Such facial expressions are meant to make men appear tough (or stylish) according to Western, masculine ideals. Shroeder and Zwick make a similar point when they observe that a common convention in photographs is looking off camera at something outside of the range of the viewer's vision. Referencing the work of Dyer, they state:

> Looking up may imply an interest in something more important than his face or body, an "upward striving" that resolves some of the contradiction between masculine identity and male object of desire. Furthermore, male models rarely look at the viewer. When then do, they rarely smile as women do so invitingly. Looking and the gaze usually implies power, those with permission (and time) to look are generally more powerful than those looked at. Looking signals activity, being looked at, passivity. (Shroeder and Zwick 32-33)

These masculine conventions are present in Beatie's posture and gaze. In his photo shoot for *People* Magazine (which basically shoots slightly more stylistic shots of the original photograph), Beatie raises his arm, exposing his underarm hair as well as his muscular physique. Furthermore, he looks off to the side reflecting activity and detachment that is found in male photography. These photographic conventions are significant in a society immersed in visual images.

People use the mediated images to determine and understand cultural beliefs. According to visual scholars, Robert Hariman and John Lucaites, there is an inherent persuasive nature and political value that resides in images. Images fulfill just as many important functions in public life as important literary texts and public addresses. Most importantly, public images are undoubtedly *performative.* Representations and images create reality by teaching people how to behave or perform in our culture. Hariman and Lucaites explain: "Public spectatorship is exercised primarily through the experience of looking at images of a public world of actors, action, and events. Here the iconic image is illustrative . . . More important, the images are performative: imitations of civic life

that call for action on behalf of the community" (Hariman and Lucaites, 299). It is through these visual elements that we come to understand meaning and then teach and mimic the meaning through cultural "knowledge" and behavior. By employing these physiological (or plastic) and performative acts of masculine gender, Beatie reveals the cultural production of contemporary plastic bodies – bodies no longer restricted by corporeal form, containing the condition of possibility for invention (Jordan 327) – as well as Butler's claim that a body's construction is neither a single act nor a causal effect but a temporal process intertwined and reiterated within the materiality of sex and through 'citational' gender performance.

Simultaneously, Beatie embodies femaleness through his pregnancy[12]. In this same photograph, Beatie's body maintains a pose that signifies glamorization of pregnancy and proves his sexual ability to reproduce like a female. Again, Beatie acts on another convention: the traditional pose found in maternity photographs of expectant mothers. According to Heather Stout,

> Maternity photography used to be the purview of a few edgy urban artists, following the lead of Annie Leibowitz who generated shock waves when she photographed Demi Moore naked and pregnant for the cover of *Vanity Fair* in 1991. But the pregnancy genre is going mainstream and is now part of the spectrum of life events that photographers advertise they can document. (D1)

Like the conventional maternity image, Beatie is photographed cradling his pregnant stomach with this other arm and performing his pregnancy through a gesture that is

[12] Pregnancy is cited as female when viewed through the photograph, and in the event his rhetoric is not simultaneously interpreted as deconstructing of pregnancy as a female attribute.

typically constructed as feminine and motherly. Stout explains that the maternity photograph is being viewed as "a rite of pregnancy for an increasing number of women," "a yearning to savor every part of the experience," and a "part of the increasing glamorization of pregnancy." For all these reasons the maternity image traditionally eliminates non-verbal signs and performances of masculinity and instead stresses those characteristics associated with femininity. While half of Beatie's pose plays upon these conventions, Beatie upsets the female/feminine norm by maintaining obvious signs of masculinity.

Through these images, Beatie challenges the traditional and conservative message that the sex/gender dichotomy is stable. Visually, he dirsupts and troubles society's expectations by choosing to maintain bodily cues of both "maleness" and "femaleness" which successfully upsets social expectations of gender performances. The troubling is further evidenced by his mastectomy scars, which are obvious and unable to be hidden on his shirtless torso. Additionally, Beatie's sex identity is further blurred by the use of symbols in his photo shoot with *People*. These images are re-shot against the yellow wall of the Beaties' nursery – symbolically the background color represents the gender blurring and ambiguity of the body of Beatie.

When visual representations and conventions of bodies challenge traditional gender performances, for example, by combining the feminine image of pregnancy with the visual cues of masculinity, the image upsets public decorum and social expectations of gender roles. Rather than attempting to "pass" as a man, an action that is often associated with transsexuality, Beatie troubles society's expectations by choosing to maintain bodily cues of both "maleness" and "femaleness."

As I have shown through the analysis of Beatie's iconic photographs, images of Beatie support and reiterate some claims that are made through his discursive factors of differentiation and transcendence. Mostly, the photographs act as visual proof and may act as a rebuttal to counter the initial disbelief instigated by Beatie and the comments found on blogs, posts and letter-to-the-editors, which challenge his authenticity as a male/man, Beatie's appearance and masculine traits visually insist that Beatie is a man who is also pregnant. Although the pregnant stomach could halt acceptance of the belief that he should be considered a man in the minds of some people, Beatie is able to use the photograph as justification for why society should transcend our preconceived notions of pregnancy.

In much the same way that ideographs operate as a strategy of transcendence, visual ideographs also operate as part of Beatie's apologia strategy. According to critics, such as Janice Edwards and Carol Winkler, Dana Cloud, and Catherine Palczewski the visual influences our interpretation of ideologies and ideographs. Edwards and Winkler explain that there is no justification or rationale for why ideographs are only words and terms only located in language. Edwards and Winkler argue that many images constitute a representative form. They state: "A representative form transcends the specifics of its immediate visual references and, through a cumulative process of visual and symbolic meaning, rhetorically identifies and delineates the ideals of the body politic" (Edwards and Winkler 295). Excluding the "language term" condition, Edwards and Winkler explain how McGee's four characteristics of an ideograph are applicable to visual images. They conclude that such a conceptualization, which illuminates ideologies, also extends the significance of visual images and their functions within social contexts.

In her study of the ideograph <the clash if civilizations>, Dana L. Cloud argues that visual images of the War on Terror "are more than recurring iconic images that shift in meaning depending on context; they also index verbal ideographic slogans" (287). In other words, the existence and placement of these images make abstract ideographs more concrete. Additionally, the visual image constructs a type of "materiality" to the linguistic word or phrase and therefore solidifies the ideology's meaning in the minds of the public. Catherine H. Palczewski further advances the rhetorical theory of visual ideographs by relating visual icons in Anti-Woman suffrage postcards to the verbal ideographs of <woman> and <man> therefore expanding our understandings of sex/gender and how such norms are disciplined in a social context. Palczewski illustrates the ways sex/gender have both non-ideographic and ideographic usages. She clarifies that while saying "'John is the burnette man' is a non-ideographic usage . . . telling my department head to 'be a man' is . . . imbuing the word with an intrinsic meaning" (373). Her study provides another example of the way that visual ideographs act as a reiteration of (non)discursive practices and social norms and establish explicit understandings of sexual difference. As shown through these studies, ideographs, both discursive and visual, are important components for understanding the (changing) values, meanings, and ideologies referenced in apologetic rhetoric, like the messages in Beatie's discourse. In a visual and mediated age, the component of visual ideograph further allows Beatie to transcend traditional sex/gender norms.

At the same time, when public discourse and visual images attempt to change our notion of bodies and alter ideologies, the action frequently encounters resistance and consequence from the dominant culture. One effect is the attempt to use discursive

strategies to explain and justify the visual inconsistencies and alter singular articulations of identity. Because bodies are crucial sites of power, influence, knowledge, and symbolism, the public will often resist reading them as evidence just as frequently as the public embraces them. In the case of Beatie, some Americans are simply dismissive of his "new" identity, insisting he is really just a woman, trying to be a man. Since Beatie truly looks masculine, he is portrayed as a "freak" or "abomination." When displayed public bodies do not follow normalized gender performances, they face such dire consequences as social exclusion the dismissal of their identity, or even violence. While the shock value of the photograph may successfully dismantle the gender and sex binaries for some, it may also be counterproductive if the coordinating texts, from news pundits or the general public, attempt to reify the hegemonic gender/sex binaries.

Additionally, in some cases, the images, alongside Beatie's other discursive strategies, create additional tension between his claims. For example, in his strategy of denial, I show how Beatie denies the idea that he "toggles" between genders. Although Beatie's discourse is consistent throughout his text (confirming his male identity and rejecting his femininity), the inclusion of this photograph and a queer reading of it can challenge his argument and make him appear inconsistent and contradictory. Arguably, we can interpret some of Beatie's own discourse as un-troubling the libratory power of the photograph, since he identifies himself as a heterosexual male and does not radically queer his own identity through his discourse. Nonetheless, even though it risks contradiction, the photograph creates instability in visual gender norms that will result in a rethinking or blurring of sex/gender/sexuality at some level.

In short, bodies are a locus where identity, construction, and materiality simultaneously reside. In some cases, bodies and their visual representations act as more persuasive and indirect evidence than an explicit text. In all cases, and especially obvious in the case of Beatie, bodies are unique rhetorical forms with the capabilities of signifying cultural meanings through varying rhetorical productions. Although Beatie's body will not instantaneously solve the problem of intolerance towards "otherized" bodies, it makes it possible to counter or question textual, linguistic, and philosophical assumptions and ideologies regarding sex/gender binaries. Thus, the use of Beatie's photograph as form of proof and a strategy of transcendence, remains an important first step in the deconstruction of current, constricting sex/gender norms. Beatie's photographs expose the performative nature of sex/gender norms and remind us that our sex and gender acts are reiterations of cultural expectations.

CHAPTER 5 BEATIE AS A TEMPLATE FOR FUTURE IM/POSSIBILITY

The preceding readings of Beatie's discourse and image illustrates that he asserts a claim to an unconventional identity as part of a strategy of self-definition and survival. He defines himself as something impossible and exceptional – indeed, a singularity, i.e. a *pregnant man*, born in the *right* body, because, at least at the moment of his writing and publicity tours – he occupied a category inhabited solely by himself. He demands recognition despite his refusal to embrace a previously established identity politics and his lack of corresponding support from the LGBTQ community; the group most likely to accept and recognize his personal description of himself. For this reason, Beatie deploys one of the most widely documented and radical claims of self-recognition and also one of the most significant challenges to the traditional sex/gender binaries in contemporary American society.

Although I have demonstrated that Beatie couches his argument in ideologies and discourses that are conventional and resonate with the general public, I have suggested that his persistent and unapologetic rhetoric nevertheless fashions agency for himself and, by opening a space for future articulations, further chips away at essentialized and culturally hegemonic gender roles.

This chapter delivers on the promise of those arguments by examining Beatie's rhetorical choices as apologic, performative utterances and considering their intricate and widespread implications. To be sure, most apologia studies identify a specific rhetorical posture and evaluates the self-defense strategy based on the audience's perceived success or failure of the persuasive message. As this study made no attempt to assess the immediate reception to Beatie's rhetorical strategies, it is not clear which – if any – of his

specific and numerous lines of argument may or may not have swayed audiences. However it seems clear that structural elements of his discourse are successful while others are possibly doomed to failure at the outset. I will not claim to speak to the "reception" of Beatie's choices because, I argue, it is both fundamentally indeterminate whether Beatie's rhetoric wholly succeeds or fails and, to the degree that it creates a template for future individuals who seek recognition despite their intelligibility, "success" or "failure" is not the only relevant consequence forced by the emergence of his discourse.

As such, in this final chapter I consider the strategic use of various factors to explicate the manner in which Beatie creates an agency for himself and demands a space for his singularity. Specifically, I argue that Beatie's discourse reveals and exploits anxieties over new articulations of identity that is exhibited in the mass media discourse and public commentary surrounding Beatie's coverage. Indeed, despite the attempts of the dominant culture to relocate social norms, Beatie's self-defensive speech acts work to counter the hegemonic and gender normalizing images and discourse that are represented in the public. Beatie achieves this by employing an irreducible impossible speech act that positions him as an untranslatable and wholly "other" subject that nevertheless demands recognition by the very codes and conventions that – in recognizing him – must experience an unsettling disturbance. Furthermore, I argue that Beatie's rhetoric has both utilized and blurred conventions of apologia, enacting his self-defense as justification for his demand for an intelligibility that is inherently unintelligible. As such, Beatie's rhetoric is significant for drawing our attention to the ongoing challenge to various codes and conventions of gender/sex recognition – challenges that are opening the possibility

for unpredictable and transformative future articulations.

Beatie's performance – The impossible demand for recognition

Recognition as survival

Since the 1960s, social movements and civil rights discourses have portrayed the reception of recognition as an essential step toward gaining political action. Early gay liberation movements fought for recognition through the, "we're here, we're queer," mantra of presence and demanded recognition despite refusing to conform to heteronormativity. Recently, many LGBTQ movements strive to construct their similarities with the dominant culture, arguing for the legalization of gay marriage and the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell legislation by minimizing their differences with the heterosexual population. As such, recognition (based on similarity) becomes an important strategy and ongoing trend in multiple identity politics movements because identification determines, both figuratively and literally, the life or death of an individual.

Conceptualizing the self becomes critical in disrupting the current restraints on the expression of subjectivities and overturning restrictive norms that discriminate against individuals. According to Butler, individuals must be, "constituted bodily in the public sphere," because recognition assures an ethics inclusive of the other (*Giving* 33). Furthermore, if a subject occupies a subaltern position in society, he or she is not simply marginalized but unknown. Butler explains that, in many cases, gender/sex minorities are recognized and oppressed because of their identity. Perhaps more problematic are the subjects who are not even intelligible and, as a result, they cannot even begin to fight their marginalization. As Butler notes,

> To find that you are fundamentally unintelligible (indeed, that the laws of culture and of language find you to be an impossibility) is to find that you have not yet achieved access to the human, to find yourself speaking only and always *as if you were* human . . . . that no recognition is forthcoming because the norms by which recognition takes place are not in your favor . . . . This has consequences for how gender presentations are criminalized, and pathologized, how subjects who cross gender risk internment and imprisonment, why violence against transgendered subjects is not recognized as violence, and why this violence is sometimes inflicted by the very states that should be offering such subjects protection from violence." (*Undoing* 30)

People viewed as unintelligible are frequently required to use terms, language and representations to make their identity less radical or simply to be recognized. At the same time, making oneself translatable has grown more challenging because of a changing social climate in which individuals are increasingly asserting authorship over their idiosyncratic and putatively singular identities. Butler identifies the paradox encountered by individuals attempting to demand a singular or exceptional identity, and the resulting difficulty in negotiating their subjectivity. As she contends,

> Yet, it is through the body that gender and sexuality become exposed to others, implicated in social processes, inscribed by cultural norms, and apprehended in their social meanings. In a sense, to be a body is to be given over to others even as a body is, emphatically, "one's own," that over which we must claim rights of autonomy. (*Undoing* 20)

In short, recognition matters. However, the twenty-first century has shown that individuals and groups disagree on how best to attain recognition. My case study of Beatie's discursive strategies illustrates the current challenges that exist when an individual attempts to achieve recognition. As my analysis demonstrates, Beatie showcases the general move to present the radical and untranslatable as normal, while also simultaneously separating himself from current identity groups and normative conventions. Regardless of Beatie's "success" to gain recognition, I will show that he manages to trouble the meaning of normal.

Social anxiety surrounding Beatie's recognition

The ongoing demand for recognition takes place alongside shifting social norms and ongoing cultural negotiations resulting from cultural debate. When society encounters changing principles anxiety occurs and there is a corresponding backlash or demand to resettle those original norms. Advances in and changing gender relations and social advancement for sexual minorities result in cultural attempts to reclaim conservative and essential understandings of sex and gender. For instance, John Sloop's study of gender ambiguity in late twentieth century America is an illustration of the ways dominant discourse by social institutions attempts to normalize expanding notions of diversity and difference. As a result, he argues, LGBTQ rights are shifting, vulnerable and uncertain.

Academics and activists frequently (and perhaps too easily) accept that nearly any representation and visibility of LGBTQ individuals in the mass media has positive effects on LGBTQ advocacy and are useful in encouraging the public to accept of a range of sexualities and subjectivities. Media theorist Lynne Joyrich typifies this assumption in

suggesting, "sexuality is considered something 'inside' of each subject – permanent yet invisible unless brought to light, and thus calls to make it visible (not only as strategy for each person coming out, but as a demand for public representation) have been central to GLBTQ politics" (17). In short, there is long-standing belief that silence and invisibility results in a community's death and that coming out narratives strengthen the community's political power. For example, Peggy Phelan critiques progressives' failure to interrogate the relationship between visibility and political power. As she contends,,

> In conflating identity with visibility, cultural activists and some theorists have also assumed that "selves" can be adequately represented within the visual or linguistic field . . . . If representational visibility equals power, then almost-naked young white women should be running Western culture. The ubiquity of their image, however, has hardly brought them political or economic power. (10)

In this frame, revelation and recognition are interpreted as progress for the group and instrumental toward achieving tolerance.

However, there is cause to be concerned about "mere" visibility however courageous and politically ambitious it may be. Sloop contends that after the publication of Butler's *Gender Trouble*, critics were encouraged, "to celebrate de-literalization at the expense of critiquing the very persistent ways in which cultural expectations and mechanisms continue to discipline each of us to practice 'proper' gender behaviors" (12). Despite the transgressive signs of increasing gender ambiguity in American culture, the mass media reinforced traditional views of sex/gender/sexuality. According to Phelan,

"In framing more and more images of the hitherto under-represented other, contemporary culture finds a way to name and thus to arrest and fix, the image of that other" (2).

In his examination of David Reimer[13] (also known in the media as the Joan/John case), for example, Sloop illustrates how gender binaries are continually upheld, rather than troubled or dismantled, in the coverage and references of the case. First, he shows that the enactment of David's heterosexuality is signified as a norm of appropriate gender performance; such as, David's sexual interest in women is used as evidence for his masculine gender identity. Sloop also shows that feminists and members of the medical community strategically select evidence from David's story as proof to support their preferred ideologies and understandings of sex/gender. Despite the story's potential for overturning traditional notions of sex and gender, the mass media alleviates gender ambiguity by citing signs of "normal" gender expectations and essentialized sex roles as evidence of the significance of Reimer's story.

During the Beatie controversy, a similar attempt was made by media outlets to normalize the blurred aspects of Beatie's identity and to settle the anxiety caused by his demand for recognition. In earlier chapters, I have shown how Beatie maintained a discourse that problematized his identity and served as a platform for his voice. Despite his rhetoric, much of the media coverage attempted to tell his story from their slant and to normalize his identity. In an article addressing the complexity and problems that exist

[13] The story of David Reimer is about a baby previously named Bruce and later renamed Brenda who lost his penis as an infant during a routine circumcision. He received care from the infamous Dr. Money, whose research concluded that gender identity is completely malleable, and argued that "Bruce" should be raised "Brenda." Under Money's care, "Brenda" was given a vagina and an indefinite treatment of female hormones. Money considered "Brenda" a success story comparing Brenda's development to the development of "her" twin brother, Brian. At age fourteen, "Brenda" rejected "her" gender assignment and, in adulthood, had the surgeries necessary to become a man, changing his name once again to David.

when giving exposure to transgender issues, Lindsay Kalter describes the contemporary state of reporting as "bipolar." She explains that, "the media struggle to evolve with the times – and don't always succeed . . . . Stories ricochet between extremes: sensational and fair, confusing and enlightening, insipid and insightful" (10). Ironically, Kalter participates in the same problematic discourse that she appears to be critiquing when she later downplays the importance of Beatie's coverage and his representation to the American public. For instance,

> The headline and image promised the reader a medical breakthrough. But despite the media attention surrounding transgender male Thomas Beatie, he is no scientific oddity. His pregnancy did not defy any laws of nature: Beatie's reproductive organs are female, which allowed him a successful pregnancy and the birth of a healthy baby girl. (Kalter 10)

In this example, we see one strategy frequently used by the mass media – the attempt to make Beatie intelligible (according to current norms) by removing the fluidity made possible by his articulation of identity. In his interviews, Beatie frequently exposes this problematic trend in media coverage. As Beatie states, "One of the major criticisms is that, I'm not a man, you know, why is the media continually perpetuating the story as a pregnant man . . . it followed by calling me by my first name, my former name, Tracy . . . no one is recognizing my legal status as male" (*Pregnant Man*). The attempt to normalize Beatie and minimize his importance as a representation that complicates sex/gender is also included in an article by Natalie Clarke in London's *Daily Mail*:

> It seems strange that, knowing he wanted children, Beatie had a sex change operation. By the same token, he says he wanted to be a man, but

> didn't have surgery to remove his female organs. Further evidence of this couple's obsession with their sexuality is the name of their screen-printing business Define Normal. Well, in this case, a child will be born of a bearded man and his lesbian wife from donor sperm taken from goodness knows who, conceived in DIY operation at home using a syringe that vets use on animals. Just how do you define that?

Not only does this quotation reveal the offensive way that members of the media frequently discuss non-normative sex and gender issues, it also shows the ways in which the media attempts to regulate Beatie – drawing attention to his *female* reproductive organs, his contradictory desires, and even referring to Nancy as his *lesbian* wife rather than simply his wife. Furthermore, Clarke draws attention to the most obvious desire of the public – the need for definition – when she asks, "just how do you define that?" and implies that a normalizing, intelligible label is a prerequisite for recognition in society.

Making a similar argument to Sloop, Halberstam also argues that members of the transgender community gain attention from biographers, filmmakers, talk show hosts, doctors and journalists – all of which is true in Beatie's case. Furthermore, she argues that there is a dedication to try to make the transgender subject "make sense." Again, we have evidence that the media consistently attempts to stabilize Beatie and other transgender individuals. Halberstam describes the "project of rationalization" that provides a reasonable explanation for the non-normative identity, the "project of trivialization" that describes elements of the transgender life as "nonrepresentative" or "inconsequential," and finally, the "project of stabilization," which illustrates transgender narratives as "weird," "pathological," or "uncharacteristic" (54-55).

Additional examples in the media show these various strategies downplay sex/gender fluidity and also revels the impact of the media in influencing social reaction to Beatie's intelligibility. On MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, Beatie was ridiculed and shamed by Joe Scarbough and Mika Brzezinski when they described Beatie as "disgusting" and claimed that his story was the "kind of news" that "makes our business terrible" (Rogers). Furthermore, *The Advocate* tracked a timeline of Beatie's story and identified some of the disconcerting moments in the mass mediated discourse, including when David Letterman identified Beatie as an "androgynous freak show" and when *The View*'s conservative host, Sherri Shepherd, argued that Beatie should make the choice to be all male or all female and received applause from the live audience (Dailey).

But despite these continual attempts to standardize Beatie's intelligibility, I contend that Beatie's self-defense operated to work against these reterritorializing representations. Although dominant culture attempts to detain images of the Other, Phelan argues,

> Representation follows two laws: it always conveys more than it intends; and it is never totalizing. The 'excess' meaning conveyed by representation creates a supplement that makes multiple and resistant readings possible. Despite this excess, representation produces ruptures and gaps it fails to reproduce the real exactly. (2)

Beatie's rhetoric illustrates that one emerging trend in the contemporary situation is a social articulation of individualism outside of traditional identity politics. For instance, Beatie differs from those transgendered individuals who have attempted to unify with other gay liberation movements, articulate their identities based on culturally approved

scripts, and minimize their difference with the rest of the public. As illustrated by the vocal backlash articulated by members of the transgender community, many trans individuals disagreed with Beatie's publicity and worried about the implications that his recognition would have on the community. As a result, we can view Beatie's statements as a performative speech act[14] of a nonconventional conception of a singularity through the biological impossibility: the statement "I am a pregnant man." Beatie's discourse is singular because, of course, he is the first known person to make such a claim, but also – as I have shown in the preceding chapters – he has given an account of himself that is so unique and so solipsistic that it violates the presumed assumption of identity politics that advancement comes in fidelity to a communal identity category. Thus, Beatie's effort is not merely significant because he is "coming out;" rather his coming out exceeds "mere" visibility and thus counters the attempt made by the popular culture to reterritorialize him. Furthermore, I will show that his unique erosion of convention exceeds their control of his image/representation.

Speech act theory and the role of Beatie's performative

Beatie's speech acts are means for demanding agency/recognition, challenging society's limited representations of him, and confounding the dominant political and legal system. Before examining Beatie's use of performatives, it is essential to clarify the role of a performative and its importance for making one's identification known. A performative statement, "indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something" (Austin 6-7). For example, if one says "I do" during a marriage ceremony, the individual is actually

[14] In his 1962 study, *How to do things with Words*, J.L. Austin identified the specific utterance, known as a performative, which is unique for being an act of doing.

marrying, rather than describing or reporting the act of marriage. Austin's theory of the performative emphasizes the importance of convention to safeguard and protect the sanctity of performative effects. He simplifies the rules[15] and roles of performative statements to thoroughly theorize the significance of these statements so that people can disregard infringements against their inviolability and assure a way for individuals to discursively claim action and agency through their rhetoric. Austin's theory of performative speech acts remain the predominant understanding of such discourse, however, in the late twentieth century, scholars have challenged the limited interpretation of a performative's success or failure, as first explicated by Austin.

In *Excitable Speech: A Politics of Performance,* Judith Butler uses the performative to explore how subjects and their identifications are formed through language by the constitution of a name and identity. Butler contends that language is "mostly" thought of as agency, but predominantly understood as an "extended doing." For Butler, Austin's theory of the performative is important because it reminds us that, "we do things with language, produce effects with language, and we do things to language, but language is also the thing that we do. Language is a name for our doing: both "what" we do (the name for the action that we characteristically perform) and that which we effect, the act and its consequences" (*Excitable* 8).

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[15] Throughout his study he defines and categorizes various performatives and attempts to outline the instance that make the performance invalid. He states:

> Let me first remind you of rule A. 1, that there must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances; and rule A. 2 of course, completing it, was that the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked . . . If somebody issues a performative utterance, and the utterance is classed as a misfire because the procedure invoked is not accepted, it is presumably persons other than the speaker who do not accept it (at least if the speaker is speaking seriously) . . . This may be carried so far that we reject what may be called a whole code of procedure . . . (26-27)

The performative act of naming is necessary for providing an individual with agency and a precondition for recognition. It introduces a person into the social collective so that they can begin to operate as an agent. In society, members of medical and legal communities have the uncontested power to pronounce such performatives as "it's a boy" or "it's a girl," situating the subject according to social standards. However, subjects can iterate or challenge the claim: "the power to gender, precedes the "one" who speaks such power, and yet the one who speaks nevertheless appears to have that power" (*Excitable* 49).

We come to understand and contextualize this need for recognition through the case study of Beatie, when he explains his desire for publicity despite the challenges and danger that he faces from individuals who view his actions as deviant or sinful. In *Giving an Account of Oneself*, Butler explains, "narrating a life has a crucial function, especially for those whose involuntary experience of discontinuity afflicts them in profound ways. No one can live in a radically non-narratable world or survive a radically non-narratable life" (*Giving* 59). Beatie emphasizes the importance of narrating his story as the ultimate goal of his memoir. As he notes, "This book, therefore, will not try to change anyone's mind about us. We know that we will always get our share of good and bad reactions. All I can do with this book is tell my story, plain and simple. It is not for me to force anyone to approve of what I am doing, as if I could anyway" (10). Making oneself known and using his statements to "be" an unrecognizable singular identity are the outcome of Beatie's publicity.

According to Halberstam, postmodern gender theory helps understand the greater gender fluidity among younger generations. As she maintains, "Many young gays and

lesbians think of themselves as part of a "post-gender" world" (Halberstam 19). During his publicity, Beatie frequently claims his identity as "man." At the same time, when Beatie embraces pregnancy and other troubling aspects of his embodiment, he reveals his complicated and singular identity and its difference from essential sex/gender identities. Many questions about Beatie's case emerged from the public and the mass media to illustrate the unrecognizable status and complexity of his identity. For example, members of the mass media, the public, and even individuals representing social institutions asked such questions, like: *Are Nancy and Thomas legally man and wife? Is Beatie the mother or the father of his child? What will the birth certificate state? How will the insurance companies account for Beatie's medical bills?* The unknown elements of the case and Beatie's attempt to explain them despite their lack of familiarity reveal that Beatie's body is a singularity and beyond recognition according to his public statements and account. In his interview with Oprah, Beatie is credited for "having courage," "evolving," and "redefining." In other words, he recognizes and Oprah acknowledges, that he is asking for a recognition that is not currently translatable.

> OPRAH. . . . And I can't imagine, you know, 50 years from now, 100 years from now, whatever, however people choose to live in harmony with themselves and their community, I don't believe people will be judging it as they do now. I think we are evolving to a new way of being.
>
> BEATIE. Definitely.

> OPRAH. Yeah. And a new definition of what diversity means for everybody, and redefining normal. And I really applaud you for having the courage to do it.
>
> BEATIE. Thank you very much.

Despite his conflicting attempts to make himself identifiable to the public, like stressing his family's "normalcy," in this exchange, Beatie does not contest his contribution and responsibility for being exceptional.

Further he uses apologia strategies to contribute to a singular recognition that demands agency. For example, through his use of denial, he emphasizes telling his *own* story. Rather than being motivated by fame or fortune, he argues that he desired to gain recognition and equal treatment from professionals, and simultaneously recognizes that no precedent exists for such treatment. Through bolstering, Beatie turns himself into a "hero" of a story, refusing to be limited by a situation that attempts to restrain him and discriminate against him and portraying himself as transcending over the scene. Most importantly, through differentiation, Beatie seeks to distinguish himself from others – he portrays himself and his family as unique from the norm, he claims that he was born in the *right* body, and he de-stabilizes the definitions, characteristics, and norms of traditional gender binaries and even the understanding of the "transgender" experience. Lastly, Beatie carves out a new interpretation of pregnancy, so that his experience of pregnancy becomes a unique subject position, identifiable and appropriate according to his feelings, experiences, and identity.

Beatie's intentions represent a growing trend among many LGBTQ individual in younger generations. Although identity politics remain a dominant strategy for the

LGBTQ community, some queer individuals are seeking singularities. As Halberstam argues, "One way in which queers and transgender have put themselves in the way of gender realness is to inhabit categories of their own making" (52). An article published in *The Advocate*, "Trans Positions," supports the claims made by Halberstam and further illustrates what Beatie has come to represent:

> Rose who transitioned in 2000, says Beatie's desire to tell his story is consistent with the general transgender experience. "I feel my own journey is about self-discovery and challenging notions of constraints," she explains. "That's what he is doing." On a much grander scale, Rose believes the story may help more people begin to understand that not everything about gender fits into this "neat little binary." (Christensen)

Beatie emphasizes the originality of his lived condition by acknowledging the challenge his new identity results in risks and dangers to cultural norms. As he states, "I realize that what I am doing is strange and new, and that my situation confuses people" (*Labor*, 9). Although this statement can be interpreted to mean that his action, living as a pregnant man, is "strange" and "new," my project shows that it is also Beatie's performative articulations and his deviation from existing codes of recognizability that are "new" and "confusing" elements for people. As a result, Beatie is a radical example of an individual who is rupturing or opening a crack in the reliance on identity politics. Some members of the media and the public have shown that they have a way of making sense of Beatie by stabilizing his identity as "female" or "freak;" however, he continually resists definitions by dominant institutions by stressing his differences and attempting to change meanings of a gender ideograph. At the end of Beatie's book, after recounting his

memory of giving birth to Susan, he states, "It occurs to me that I am no longer the Pregnant Man. I am a father now, and this is my family" (301). In this passage, Beatie's claim is significant because it insists on the oxymoronic label, "pregnant man." At the same time, he embraces a masculine gender role, thus maintaining some intelligibility according to traditional gender binaries. Nonetheless, his rhetoric requires recognition of a body that performatively resists normalization by embracing a male gender at the same time that he takes ownership of his pregnancy, gonads, and earlier gendered experiences. Beatie's complexity and his demand for currently unintelligible recognition is acknowledged in *The New York Times*:

> As the first pregnant transman to go public, Mr. Beatie has exposed a mass audience to alterations in the outlines of gender that may be outpacing our comprehension. In the discussions that followed his announcement, what became poignantly clear is that there is no good language yet to discuss his situation, words like an all-purpose pronoun to describe an idea as complex as a pregnant man. (Trebay 1)

Beatie refuses to participate in the dominant trend in LGBTQ advocacy, conventional identity politics. Instead, he seeks to engage in a more radical and emerging move, recognition as a singularity. He asks for recognition despite the social and cultural deficiencies for his intelligibility, which make him difficult to tack down in contemporary society.

Beatie's paradox – Exposing convention by performing an impossible demand

When an individual demands recognition through a speech act, the situation and power of the authoritarian's signature helps regulate whether the performative makes

sense and cements an indeterminant context. In her analysis of hate speech, Butler explains that responses have the capability to re-contextualize meaning and challenge authorization. People can re-signify the context of names or words by unlinking terms from their original context to change connotations or its initially intended deployment. For example, sexual minorities reappropriated the notion, "queer," and made a concept that was once a derogatory "slur" into a counter-hegemonic logic and an anti-essential advocacy. Thus, changing the conditions that define the performance is fundamental to altering the speech act. For this reason, speech acts become a rhetorical strategy, since, "their contexts are never fully determined in advance, and that the possibility for the speech act to take on a non-ordinary meaning, to function in contexts where it has not belonged, is precisely the political promise of the performative" (Butler, *Excitable Speech* 161). Speech acts are a condition of possibility for counter-hegemonic and deconstructive discourse.

Butler cites Derrida, who argues that "context" and "signature" matter in the authorization or de-authorization of performative statements. In other words, Austin's emphasis on the rules and safeguards of legitimate performatives distract from the contextual conditions that make the performatives "successful." It also premises the rights and conditions of the performative statement on law and authority that are never actually definitive. For example, actors participating in a wedding in television may cite the performative statements but they will not become legally married as a result because they "signs" are considered wrong. While Austin argues that intention keeps the order, Derrida maintains that it is the role of context which is assumed to keep the act legitimate. In the case of gay marriage, for example, a legitimate intention exists in the

minds of the couple, but the system permits and restricts the stability and legitimacy of the action.

Where Austin presents a somewhat formulaic account of speech acts, one which presumes that mere rule-following guarantees a felicitous outcome, Derrida's work demonstrates a much less stable and less assured – and therefore more rhetorical – account of the performative. In part, Derrida argues that context is never stable since acts require a citation, or a kind of iterability, of the same scene and discourse. As Derrida contends, "given the structure of iteration, the intention animating the utterance will never be through and through present to itself and to its content" (18). Moreover, he suggests that for some performatives to succeed there must be yet others that fail or those are excluded and gauged to be infelicitous. Performatives and their occasional failures are needed to produce the possibility that some speech acts will be taken as a success. In short, speech acts reveal the fluid and flexible nature of context. As Butler notes, "Derrida's formulation offers a way to think performativity in relation to transformation, to the break with prior contexts, with the possibility of inaugurating contexts yet to come" (*Excitable* 151-54). Thus, for Derrida and Butler, performatives reveal the social construction, limited nature, fragility, and danger of codes and conventions that permit people to be made intelligible *only* according to social practices and pre-existing identities.

Beatie's citation of speech acts results in the form of deconstruction discussed by Butler and Derrida. By identifying himself as a "man" and a "father," Beatie reveals the deterioration of these markers (as well as codes of traditional sex differences) because he does not have chromosomes, genitalia or even gonads. Nonetheless, he remains a legal

man who is also pregnant and thereby challenges the legitimacy of the performative codes and conventions that attempt to keep his singular identity repressed. According to Alex Tresniowski in *People*, "Thomas is doing something that challenges the most basic definition of sexual identity – that it is the woman, the wife, the mother, who carries the child and brings life into the world." Additionally, he refuses the certification of a condition, like gender identity disorder, when he refuses to participate in the normative transgender speech acts sanctioned by Western psychiatry.

Early speech act theory presumes ascertaining a form of success tied to the conditions of the speech act. While Austin uses rules to determine the success or failure of a performance, Butler and Derrida contend that the way in which the performance operates within a context is more important than the audience's approval or acceptance of the performance. Butler and Derrida's theory and use of speech acts complicates the ways in which we understand and measure effects, making it difficult to determine the exact outcome based on audience reaction. Instead, it is possible to examine the shifts in situation and reveal that a reorientation has occurred.

Furthermore, the intention behind a performance is not determinative of the effects. In other words, this study's examination of Beatie's discourse does not imply that any individual making a similar speech act will result in the same type of contextual change. A simple articulation of a radical speech act by any person will not necessarily have as large of an imprint that resulted from Beatie's rhetoric. As a result, rhetoricians need to examine contextual clues, such as whether the nature of the term is altered or whether the form or experience of life has shifted as a result. In the case of Beatie, I cannot determine how many people approve, disapprove, understand, or misunderstand

his discursive strategies because each of these immediate effects is impossible to judge. Furthermore, drawing such conclusions is not the aim of this project.

Instead, this project reveals a change in the social context because of Beatie's speech act that demands recognition and troubles assumptions. I account for this effect by tracing the backlash in the public culture, the way in which contemporary individuals cite his claims and perform their recognition in a way that was not possible without Beatie's prior utterance. Furthermore, Beatie attempts to be made intelligible at the same time his discourse reveals cracks in the logic, institutions, and system by citing various signs in his speech acts, such as the law or the American dream ideology, or other concepts that seem unattainable given his unique recognition. As evidence of his impact, the quotes about Beatie cited from the public are illustrative of his effect, not because they can prove audience reception, acceptance, or rejection, but because they illustrate a larger social awareness for the problems caused by Beatie's demand for recognition. In other words, society has been reoriented by the rhetoric. This acclimatization is illustrated by the conflicting forms of expression that emerge in our culture, such as the use of Beatie as a citation, or the articulation of support for changes in institutional policies and his acceptance, or through backlash and the rejection of Beatie, corresponding with attempts to alter terms and concepts to reframe the ethical and social implications created by this debate.

Engaging in speech acts and challenging the contemporary context reveals the problems in current gender norms and convention. When an anxiety over context occurs, as we see in the cultural American scene surrounding Beatie, the signature becomes a way of fixing the performative. However, Derrida shows that the signature does not

guarantee protection from counterfeits, and in Beatie's case, there is no authenticity of his signature since without a previous citation to assure its regularity there is no measure of its accuracy. Therefore, Beatie, enacts his agency by participating in a performative discourse that demands recognition and deconstructs current recognizable categories because, ultimately, it cannot be verified as belonging to any existing code. In other words, he refuses intelligibility by iterating his category to the point that it becomes unrecognizable.

For a range of individuals that want to pursue gender hybridizations, Beatie's discursive and visual demands, by standing in defiance of translatable identities, alters the landscape in productive ways. His speech acts and his corresponding performance of an intelligibility, which should not be capable of being performed in the contemporary context, reveal the significance of his self-defensive rhetoric. The rhetoric reveals that context plays the most important role in evaluating and making sense of performative speech acts. Thus, Beatie's rhetorical choices can be understood as a performative enactment that reveals the destabilization of context surrounding the understanding of sex/gender differences. In other words, Beatie's discourse uses the rhetorical strategy of "enactment" to illustrate what he seeks to employ in our culture: a blurring of norms and a demand for currently impossible recognition (if not otherwise expanded).

To understand how Beatie's rhetoric operates in multiple ways to enact the blurring of context, I revisit Beatie's use of apologia and the ways he uses it conventionally and unconventionally to disturb contemporary logics and make his exceptional singularity noticeable. My earlier analyses of his strategies illustrate that Beatie's rhetoric does not contain one or two apologia factors, as is commonly found in

studies of apologia rhetoric[16]; instead, it includes all four strategies and evenly employs them throughout his discourse. Although some of his texts may slightly emphasize one strategy over others, the examination of all his texts over the ten-month period shows that all of the strategies are represented and that no single dominant strategy remains persistent in his overall defense. This is particularly significant since Beatie's combination of strategies creates tensions and inconsistencies[17] in the logic and arguments that he uses. On one hand, he uses denial to embrace his agency and individualism, while simultaneously using bolstering to describe the scene (a difficult family life and institutional discrimination) that he constructs as uncontrollable and limiting. Furthermore, he uses bolstering to create identification, as seen in his use of the American dream and nuclear family ideologies; however, he also differentiates his identity from men, women, and other LGBTQ individuals. Most significantly, Beatie seems to embrace some traditional ideologies while also transcending contemporary ideographs by altering social understanding of pregnancy and emphasizing the plastic and performative nature of his singular subjectivity. Through the use of multiple factors and corresponding content, Beatie appears "roguish," moving quickly and unpredictably to various arguments in prolific and unconventional ways. In this way, his unconventional rhetoric is a representation of the unconventional performance he pursues through his speech act.

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[16] According to Ware and Linkugal, rhetorical postures, most frequently seen in apologia, rely on the combination of two factors (425).

[17] Many rhetorical studies examine contradictory strategies and factors as counterproductive to the rhetor's motives and persuasiveness. In her study of Tennessee governor, Ray Blanton, Judith D. Hoover shows that the use of multiple cultural and personal values as well as the adjustments to his use of three rhetorical postures illustrate that antecedent rhetorical forms constrain and effect later responses. Ultimately, Hoover concludes that a "fitting response" was missing due to these choices because "his lack of consistency rendered him hard to trust" (249) and since Blanton also appeared "hypocritical" and "insincere" (246). Thus, contradictions are often viewed as an impediment to a rhetor's credibility (Benoit and Hanczor, 426).

Beatie's blurring of apologia strategies symbolizes the confusion and disruption that occurs when attempting to understand Beatie's singular identity and role in a socially conservative culture that maintains traditional gender/sex/sexuality binaries. According to Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Susan Schultz Huxman, "When there is enactment the speaker is or writer is proof of the claim that she or he is making. Enactment is both a proof and a way to present evidence vividly" (170). Enactment can be an especially powerful tool since members of the audience encounter proof vividly and directly and/or encounter the performance of the concept vividly.

One of the most common ways to exhibit enactment rhetoric, according to Campbell and Huxman, is through violations, which turns the convention, "on its head" (291). Thus, types of rhetorical acts, like those illustrated by Beatie, violate an audience's expectation for the purpose of a greater cause. In this case, a performative representation of a non-normative logic and an individualized subjectivity illustrate the necessary call to disrupt the limitations on personal identity for individuals, like Beatie.

As I have worked to show, we have two fundamentally different ways of explaining Beatie's rhetorical effect. On the one hand, Beatie makes an attempt to become recognizable and intelligible through his discourse. Beatie's rhetorical choice to emphasize his nuclear family and his desire for the American Dream is an attempt to make himself familiar, indeed "normal." Also, Beatie uses apologia rhetoric, a rhetorical form that I have shown is commonly understood and frequently accepted in American culture. Even though I have shown that he "wrinkles" some conventions/strategies and uses these modifications for enactment, he does not radically alter his communicative approach. The ideologies of the American dream and the nuclear family and Beatie's

rhetoric of self-defense may risk normalizing Beatie's identity but they also remain a strategic means of achieving recognition according to the contemporary discursive formations already set forth in society.

Likewise, Beatie also presents himself and his recognition as possible by emphasizing the way that he legitimately "passes" in the system. By far his most consistent and assured maneuver in this regard is his continual citing of "the law" as a guarantee of his identity. He incessantly cites the law by mentioning such elements as his legal status as male, his legal marriage to Nancy and the corresponding rights afforded to them, and the "M" printed on his hospital bracelet. But just as Beatie performs his masculinity to be male and through those acts reveals the performativity of gender and the discursive materiality of sex, Beatie's legal status reveals the performative nature of the law. Derrida argues that the law itself is performative, deconstructing the state's authority similarly to his deconstruction of the signature's authority.

In his essay, "Declarations of Independence," Derrida reveals the ways that the Declaration of Independence, for example, does not contain authentic authority; it is paradoxically offered in the name of a state and group of people that does not exist. Derrida argues that a constitution requires a signatory to engage and institute an act, and yet the members of the first General Congress of the United States signed their state into being without such authority. As Derrida maintains, "There was no signer, by right, before the text of the Declaration which itself remains the producer and guarantor of its own signature. By this fabulous event, by this fable which implies the structure of the trace and is only in truth possible thanks to [*par*] the inadequation to itself of a present, a signature gives itself a name" (10). Thus, documents, like the Declaration of

Independence reveal the vulnerability and fictional state of legal power. In much the same way as the first members of the American Congress asserted their authority, Beatie continually uses the same logic and precedent to authorize his singularity that ultimately depends on a law. In this sense, Beatie's performative must technically "succeed" to most Americans, since the law's performance is taken to be absolute, and the challenging of such law would begin to dismantle the nation's most fundamental convention.

If on one hand, then, his recognition efforts "succeed," on the other hand they are fundamentally unintelligible. Beatie presents himself in terms that do not translate and that so distort the context he relies upon that he is, structurally, unrecognizable. Beatie's contradictory rhetoric shows that it is difficult to immediately accept the articulations of an unintelligible individual and that giving an account, especially a new account, is not as simple or as easy as merely making a statement to the public. According to Butler, accounts of the other are important because they foster ethical relations. And yet, Butler maintains that many accounts, if not every account, are always already failures; indeed, it is possible to suggest that at some level recognition never quite succeeds. Subjects will always lack of "a story of our own" because structural norms, social conditions, and formative histories make giving a full account (of new, singular identities) impossible. As Butler contends, "The 'I' can tell neither the story of its own emergence nor the conditions of its own possibility without bearing witness to a state of affairs to which one could not have been present, which are prior to one's own emergence as a subject who can know, and so constitute a set of origins that one can narrate only at the expense of authoritative knowledge" (*Giving* 37). Borrowing from Foucault, Butler argues that narratives are always limited in a world where speech is not our own. As she states, "The

very terms by which we give an account, by which we make ourselves intelligible to ourselves and to others, are not of our own making. They are social in character, and they establish social norms, a domain of unfreedom and substitutability within which our "singular stories are told" (*Giving* 21). Beatie's use of traditional and conservative elements of American ideology in his arguments and claims and aspects of his image are proof of the limiting nature of his rhetoric, since they make him untranslatable and thus unrecognizable.

Butler contends that we should not only allow a future where new genders can possibly exist, but that we should facilitate a "legitimizing lexicon" of all existing fluid understandings of gender to become recognizable in such social institutions as law and psychiatry. In some ways Beatie works to make himself intelligible according to existing discourse, however he also, more frequently, acts as a "lexicon" to create space for the recognition of himself and other pregnant men.

Beatie's visual and discursive rhetoric illustrates that his speech acts both use some translatable forms of recognition and simultaneously asserts recognition for an unknown body. Despite his dependence on some intelligible discourse, Beatie's attempts to continually define himself and assert his own voice in the public illustrate the rhetorical significance of his publicity. Beatie's messages, more often than not, work against the present intelligibility and present a new articulation of a singular identity. Although his rhetoric is always at risk of being rejected or co-opted by the dominant hegemonic discourse, his attempt to blur both intelligible and unintelligible discourses are an indication that he is bridging the rhetorical situation as an opening for future articulations. Even though some media institutions attempt to normalize Beatie, Patrick

Letellier acknowledges, "to their credit, most media outlets did not dispute Beatie's gender identity," allowing a public citation of his unique singularity (15). Furthermore, the presence of Scott Moore, America's unofficial second pregnant man, points to evidence that Beatie's rhetoric managed to move the identities of other pregnant men further from the margins. For instance,

> What isn't crazy to Moore, and his husband, Thomas Moore, is the pregnancy itself. 'Thomas Beatie is not the first and we're not the last,' he says plainly, referring to the media blitz over Beatie in 2008. 'It's not that uncommon, it's just not talked about.' Helping to make trans male pregnancy an unremarkable occurrence was a factor in Moore's decision to come out, which he did in a January interview with *Closer*, a U.K. women's magazine, after he had posted a video about his experience on YouTube. (Drabanski)

In addition to creating a space for himself through the use of interview formats and his memoir, Beatie actively works against some pre-established notions of categories and creates a point of departure for future rhetors, as illustrated by the recent coming out of Scott Moore and Moore's citation of Beatie.

For these reasons, apologia should be considered a rhetorical strategy that can allow an individual to gain a sense of agency and articulate a singular representation of the self outside of the dominant discourse. One's voice, though at some level always limited by current discursive formations and ideological centers, contains the potential to challenge the media's and the public's constructed image. Beatie maintained control

over his image in the texts that allowed him to use his discourses and images to assert his agency and his complex notion of a singular identity.

Furthermore, Beatie's most influential template for future rhetors is one that point to the law for legitimacy, but in doing so, risks breaking down the contexts and troubling the very law which is expected to uphold the dominant paradigm. Regardless of whether the discourse succeeds or fails in the eyes of the public, it continues to erode the hegemonic system that attempts to restrict singularity and exceptional cases. Beatie's discourse is representative of an ongoing trend of seeking recognition, but it shows that even making the attempt to fit into the normative culture can work to disrupt contemporary systems of thought.

This study reveals that Beatie's discourse does not ideally match the original methodological factor analysis as developed by Ware and Linkugel since it does not categorize Beatie's discourse according to the original sub genres and since the goal of recognition is not clearly encompassed in Ware and Linkugel's original categories. It is important to consider that Ware and Linkugel were writing before the rise of recognition politics, and, as such, their work does not consider it. I do not imply (or deny) any developing elements of "recognition" or interpretations of their categories as related to "recognition." Simply, their categories provide heuristic value and guidance as I consider the different political and social climate of the day. It is certainly possible to imagine that recognition can be thought of as an act of "self defense" or that some may interpret Ware and Linkugel's categories more broadly to already include this goal. As such, it is worth considering whether and how recognition may be considered more formally with apologia's frame.

Future research

Based on this analysis, Beatie's rhetoric can be read as potentially signifying a new, emerging subgenre of apologia. In Ware and Linkugel's original theory, they contend that speakers usually assume one of four major rhetorical postures, *absolution*, seeking acquittal, *vindication*, transcending a specific charge, *explanation*, pursuing understanding that avoids condemnation, and *justification*, creating understanding for approval. Ware and Linkugel explain:

> We are not surprised to find that each of the four stances involves the combination of a transformative with a reformative factor. . . Nor are we surprised to learn that only four of the possible combinations of factors have found widespread usage . . . the four subgenres represent those postures which Western culture, customs, and institutions seem to dictate as being most acceptable in dismissing charges against a rhetor's character. (425)

Future research should determine the following: Are Beatie's goals and strategies in his self-defense different from "absolution," "vindication," "explanation" and/or "justification"? Beatie consistently emphasized the importance of his story for *recognition* among the public and in a system that attempts to restrict the unconventional individual. His ongoing theme of demanding recognition seems different enough from clearing accusations, or gaining approval, etc. etc. For example, Beatie explains in his interview with Barbara Walters: "I'm not trying to change people's minds, I'm just asking them to open them." He accepts his inability to gain approval from individual

members of society and argues that his actions should be permissible and accepted by those social institutions that provide accessibility and equality to all.

This particular study has not analyzed multiple case studies, nor has it approached Beatie's analysis as strictly generic, thus it does not provide enough support to claim that "recognition" is a unique subgenre in self-defense rhetoric. However, this study is a starting point to determine whether future discourses of self-defense are used for this purpose and continue to perpetuate a performance that demands recognition.

Although I am unable to definitively make the claim that a speech of "recognition" requires a generic category, it points to the importance of future research on this subject. Do other forms and examples of self-defense rhetoric exist and provide proof for this subgenre, "recognition?" What are the factors and characteristics present in this subgenre and how do they differ from existing subgenres? What is the relationship between giving an account of oneself, self-defense and "outing" rhetoric? Most importantly, if such a subgenre does exist, what are its implications? Does it risk working against the individual, removing his or her agency and limiting the potential of a deconstruction of categories, or is it a successful strategy for opening conditions of possibility for others? In short, future studies that examine rhetoric that reiterates the form and template created by Beatie will need to pay close attention on whether the discourse can contain the same potential, limits the potential for recognition, or possibly points to a wider generic trend emerging in American society.

Conclusion

Since 2008, instances of gender queering and ambiguity remain prevalent in international and national headlines. Beatie had two more children following the birth of

his first daughter, Susan. Beatie's family again received media attention (although much more limited), and it reinvigorated many of the same accusations and criticisms that were made when the story of his original pregnancy first broke. In 2010, Scott Moore was recognized in *The Advocate* as the unofficial "second" pregnant man. The 20-year-old transgender man was expecting his first child with his husband, Thomas. Similar to Beatie, he went public, "to remove the stigma for other transgender men who need medical care. He's hopeful that the more men come out about their pregnancies, the more doctors will be willing to take on patients like him" (Drabinski). In 2011, the Toronto couple, Kathy Witterick and David Stocker, received attention and caused divisive responses among the public for deciding to raise their third child, Storm, genderless. Most recently, Egalia, a taxpayer-funded preschool in Sweden, has become internationally known for its efforts to create gender equality among its students by breaking down gender roles and avoiding the use of gender pronouns.

Thomas Beatie and these most recent examples in the media show that unconventional gender issues will only increase and likely remain a focal point of media attention and public debate. Although many people question these choices, identities, and shifting norms, some accepting and socially liberal citizens share the sentiment of Witterick who asks: "When will we live in a world where people can make choices to be whoever they are?" (*Toronto Star*). My contention, as I attempted to show in this chapter, is that we have started to live in such a world, in part, because of Beatie's rhetoric, which reveals that an individual's speech act is capable of manufacturing a space of singularity for oneself, and possibly a space of exception for future individuals.

In this project I examined the self-defense rhetoric surrounding Thomas Beatie and his pregnancy and have argued that ultimately the rhetoric and image of "The Pregnant Man" has opened the possibility for future articulations of bodies and identities and have provided American society with a template on how to make an impossible demand for recognition. Although it is difficult to prove causation and/or success of Beatie's rhetoric with the public, the current climate is one that continues to discuss and debate unconventional gender issues, as more individuals who push social boundaries continue to come forward. Although Beatie's case also illustrates the limits on radical intelligibility, it proves that rhetoric that demands recognition and participates in self-defense contains conditions of possibility that should not be underestimated for its ability to conduct change.

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ABSTRACT

RECOGNITION OF THE TRANSGENDER SELF:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE APOLOGIA OF "THE PREGNANT MAN"

by

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Major: Communication

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

In 2008, Thomas Beatie, a legally recognized male, transgender man, became pregnant with his first child and approached the American mass media to tell his story and defend his decisions. Shortly thereafter, the public fought against his image, attempting to normalize his body and gender. Beatie's unique gender blurring, his choice for exposure and social recognition, and the resulting public controversy surrounding the incident makes for an important test case to understand Beatie's discursive and visual strategies directed toward the American public.

This study, a rhetorical examination of the discourse and iconic visual image used by Beatie while his pregnant body received coverage by the mass media, seeks specifically to address the shortcomings in the study of discursive strategies for recognition of trans individuals. It uses the framing and theory of apologia rhetoric to understand Beatie's rhetorical choices. This project classifies and analyzes Beatie's messages, specifically looking for ways Beatie creates agency, identification and blurs his sex/gender identity. In exploring Beatie's discourse, this dissertation assesses the following fundamental questions about his discourse: to what degree does his apologia

rhetoric operate as recognition? How well is he able to construct persuasive messages of apologia that allow him to be recognized in codes of pregnancy and masculinity at the same time?

In interrogating these questions, this project evaluates Beatie's strategies and determines how they inform conclusions about apologia rhetoric, performatives, and the current American ideologies on sex and gender. I demonstrate the fundamental impossibility of being recognized as both an intelligible pregnant man and explain why Beatie cannot defend certain choices or aspects of his life because his recognition is always incomplete and impossible. It concludes that Beatie acquires a sense of control at the same time that he asks for recognition of a body that is unintelligible to the public. His demand for recognition and its inevitable failure confounds the present system and makes him an individual that is difficult to tack down according to the contemporary sex/gender binary. Most importantly, his partial success and partial failed recognition may be necessary to disrupt long-standing sex/gender norms and cultural assumptions about bodies.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Erika M. Thomas is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication at Wayne State University, and first started the program in 2006. While attending Wayne State University, she held an assistantship with the Forensics Team, coaching policy debate and teaching courses in public speaking. Ms. Thomas's areas of study include rhetorical criticism and theory, specializing in critical theory and cultural studies. Her research interests include feminist rhetorical criticism and the rhetoric of gender, sex, sexuality and the body.

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