

CONFRONTING GENRE: OPERA, MEMORIAL, AND JOHN GREYSON'S *FIG TREES*

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John Greyson's documentary-opera film *Fig Trees* made for one of 2009's most popular and critically celebrated screenings at international festivals.¹ Billed as "a tribute to the warrior saints of AIDS activism,"² the film offers at once a gorgeous, intensely moving portrait of loss and a withering parodic critique of the consolatory and mythologizing practices associated with public remembrance today. *Fig Trees* memorializes the lives of Canadian Tim McCaskell and South African Zackie Achmat, two survivors of HIV/AIDS whose decades-long campaigns against corporate control of anti-retroviral pharmaceuticals have led to major policy changes in their respective countries (Figure 1 and Figure 2).³ Traditional documentary film shares with memorial discourse the didactic functions of consciousness-raising and public education, as well as the rhetorical recourse to sentimentality or shock for public persuasion. But the political barriers to mourning the losses of AIDS and the ethical risks involved in portraying AIDS activists as martyrs or saints drives Greyson to stage a confrontation between collective grief and the artistic genres purported to express it most masterfully. Simultaneously deploying and scrutinizing these genres allows *Fig Trees* to explore why, in Greyson's words, "these heroic, operatic, tragic narratives have great legs, but ultimately neither serve their subjects, nor any of us."⁴

While *Fig Trees* appropriates and revises many cultural forms, its most sustained and complex engagement is with the avant-garde opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*, written by Gertrude Stein and composer Virgil Thomson and first produced in New York City to great popular acclaim in 1934. Greyson's filmic debate with Stein in the context of mourning AIDS centers on the problem of how to solicit affect through aesthetic form without automatically sublimating that affect into an artistic experience that would render it unavailable to notions of individual responsibility, agency, and sociality. Its deliberately failed attempt to memorialize "St. Tim" and "St. Zackie" aligns *Fig Trees* with a number of other queer cultural productions about AIDS whose embrace of highly emotive genres like opera is tempered by meta-narrative criticism on the limits of those genres to facilitate political change.⁵ For queer communities, the artistic sublimation of desire and affect demanded by traditional elegiac and memorial forms risks compliance with a culture that threatens queer realities with erasure or closeting. A queer politics of presence, articulated through the activist traditions of the American AIDS crisis and elaborated extensively by contemporary artists like



FIGURE 1: Zackie Achmat (right). *Fig Trees*, dir. John Greyson. Used by permission.

Greyson, insists instead on locating memorial practice in the body, and on locating that body within its determining social, discursive, and political contexts.⁶ *Fig Trees'* disruptive, self-reflexive refusal of opera's memorial trajectory—of the genre-dictated demands for martyred heroes, tragic plotlines, and emotional catharses—generates not just the argument but the affective force of the film.

Early in *Fig Trees* we are presented with a series of campy, MTV-style tributes to the “Top 100 AIDS Songs,” sung by muscular drag queens in hospital beds against backdrops of colorful pills and interspersed with footage from pop music videos, Hollywood AIDS films, and period news reportage. This is certainly not Greyson's first deployment of parodic pastiche: *Zero Patience* (1993) excited critics for its irreverent pop-culture quotation and the freshness with which it exposed the inadequacy of traditional discourses in accounting for AIDS.⁷ *Fig Trees'* melodramatic musical sequences go beyond straightforward critique of anachronistic thinking, however. They simultaneously introduce and problematize the film's memorial aims, dramatizing several of the questions competing for Greyson's attention in the project. What cultural vocabulary might make possible a process of collective grieving for the catastrophic losses associated with AIDS? How might the expression of such grief be seen to galvanize a community into political action rather than aestheticizing it into a melancholy *tableau vivant*? By what artistic schema might the heroes of AIDS activism be honored—their triumphs proclaimed, their sacrifices acknowledged—without simultaneously canonizing them or denying the material and political contexts of their struggles? And how might a contemporary viewing public, whose consumer appetite for displays of kitschy nostalgia typically supersedes any sustained interest in the past, be convinced to engage in an ethically meaningful act of remembrance?

Such questions are not specific to *Fig Trees'* commemorative project, of course, and the ironic inappropriateness of making a Greatest Hits playlist for AIDS reminds us forcefully of the barriers—both historical and ongoing—to mourning and commemoration in the context of AIDS. In fact, public memorial initiatives face genre-related challenges no matter what their subject. Remembrance is threatened by the overabundance of heritage-related production in a compulsively “musealizing” culture industry that, with the help of the digital archive, now forgets its past as fast as it can store it.⁸ Memorials risk divesting their audiences of the responsibility to remember rather than the opposite, so that to erect a monument or curate an exhibit can become tantamount to externalizing and reifying a body of public concern.⁹ Affect in general is leached out of commemoration by the universalizing lexicon of tribute and sacrifice, and mourning in particular is stripped of its depth and complexity in a sentimentality-obsessed mediascape. The acute incompatibility between collective mourning and transformative symbolic or political action under AIDS in particular was famously observed by Douglas Crimp in the 1980s to inhere in popular variants of the labor movement slogan “Don’t mourn, organize!”¹⁰ The fear that grief is a privatizing, disempowering experience preventing one from productive engagement with the social order was made a reality during the early decades of the North American AIDS crisis by funerals that kept the victims closeted and a public culture of homophobic denial.¹¹ A social change agenda can therefore curtail or supplant mourning, to such a degree that communities stricken with the disease come to suffer from what Crimp identifies as collective melancholia. Projects like the AIDS Quilt compensated for this disavowal of grief by proffering a visibility and specificity for the victims of AIDS and giving their relatives and friends a memorial voice. But recent analyses have identified how the type of subjectivity achieved for victims and mourners through “democratic” memorials like this is constrained by passivity and pity: especially now that “anniversary” exhibits of the AIDS Quilt add a nostalgic veneer to its presentation, the position of queer citizen as “mourned-subject” amounts to a disempowering objectification.¹²

Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* demonstrated how the stereotype of the melancholy drag queen not only exposes the performative mechanisms by which gender is normally taken as the “natural” expression of sex, but also points to the disavowed losses (in particular, of same-sex attachments) that underpin these mechanisms.¹³ Greyson’s ironic restaging of this stereotype in the costume of the AIDS patient at once invokes the “mourned-subject” position and rejects it: the singer’s musical appeal to the benevolent “Dollar Bills” (Clinton and Gates) for charity is juxtaposed against interview footage in which former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa Stephen Lewis lambasts government inaction and the self-serving “celebrity culture” of AIDS-relief funding that never adequately fills the gap. The singing AIDS queens evoke not existential sadness or even mournfulness in the face of loss but political outrage at the relegation of affected citizens to the role of cap-in-hand supplicant. In what will become the film’s key rhetorical strategy for dealing with Stein, juxtaposition here enables Greyson to stage confrontations on a number of levels at once. Because the AIDS queens look vivacious and handsome rather than ill, the invitation to pity the



FIGURE 2: Tim McCaskell (right). *Fig Trees*, dir. John Greyson. Used by permission.

“mourned-subject” of AIDS is thwarted by the spotlighting of the queer body in all its pain and desire. It’s also clear that the loss portrayed here occurs *after* HIV infection, due to government denialism and neglect, so that grief merges with grievance and mourning exceeds the realm of private affective experience. The portraits of victimhood are therefore both spectral and spectacular, in that they confront us with a demand that cannot be met within the framework of voyeuristic sentimentalism.

Four Saints in Three Acts’ hagiographical theme makes it an appropriate target for parodic investigation in a production proposing to memorialize the saint-like strivings of AIDS activists. In its historical form as didactic religious narrative, hagiography presents its saints as instruments of spiritual instruction, so that whatever their martyred bodies might be suffering, the real drama is understood to inhere in the conflicts between the invisible, eternal forces of good and evil.¹⁴ In Stein’s hands even these conflicts disappear altogether: “A really good saint does nothing,” she declares in *Everybody’s Autobiography*. “They are very busy but they do not have anything to do.”¹⁵ No narrative progression or character development distracts from the lavishness of the opera’s cellophane-draped sets and the artfully arranged stasis of the singers’ bodies. The libretto maintains a mode of prologue-like declamation throughout, so that “those relatively discursive moments of the opera read not like drama but like stage directions for a drama.”¹⁶ And while the gorgeous physicality of Stein’s staged bodies is undeniable, the very passivity of these bodies makes the emphasis seem voyeuristic and more than a little racist to most modern critics. Barbara Webb, for example,

observes the shopworn traces of minstrelsy and blackface performance in Stein's troping of the black singer and quotes Virgil Thomson's telling director's notes on the black actors: "I don't really want them to act. I want them to be moved."¹⁷ Here aesthetic form trumps affective complexity and individuality, an enterprise Stein refers to as the transformation of narrative into "landscape" onstage.¹⁸ An experience of sublime depth is meant to be achieved through emphasis and repetition (what Stein calls "insistence") rather than development or movement.¹⁹ As in traditional hagiographical writings, the lives of the saints are abstracted, mythologized, and so brought into the service of a meditation upon transcendent, universal themes.

The hyperbolic reification of its subjects makes of *Four Saints in Three Acts* a worst-case scenario for a memorial enterprise intent on refusing aesthetic sublimation in favor of foregrounding the affective and political realities of the sick body. Indeed, Greyson's eventual rejection of Stein's priorities will create the fulcrum on which *Fig Trees* pivots. But his parodic treatment also reveals vital links between his own and Stein's rhetorical concerns. After all, as Linda and Michael Hutcheon point out, "as an art form, opera has a history of calling attention to the real corporeal body"; the display of artistic control and technical virtuosity is balanced in operatic production by its reliance on "warm bodies immediately present" onstage.²⁰ The emphasis on the physical body as a site of inscription and hermeneutic contestation may be heavily ambivalent in *Four Saints*, but this very ambivalence leaves room for "camp" readings wherein racist norms are seen as being refracted and critiqued rather than simply cited.²¹ In part because of the homosexuality of its creators, the opera invites scrutiny through a queer lens, and in *Fig Trees* the invitation is readily taken up by musicologist Wayne Koestenbaum, whose commentary on Stein's anal-erotic wordplay and modes of inversion lauds *Four Saints* as a model of queer subversiveness. If *Fig Trees'* citation of Koestenbaum is itself parodic (as the critic riffs on Stein's famous line, "Pigeons on the grass, alas," the tape is rewind and replayed on still-frame, with arrows directing our attention to a pigeon flying past the window), Greyson nonetheless aligns himself closely with readings of *Four Saints* as a meta-narrative inquiry into the problems of capturing exemplary lives. Such a view contends that Stein's project of defamiliarizing language, ongoing throughout her corpus, allows her opera to dramatize and expose "the totalizing effects of conventional musical and narrative development."²² Like *Fig Trees*, then, *Four Saints in Three Acts* can be seen as a self-aware parody of opera itself—dabbling in its myth-making functions but simultaneously subjecting them to alienation and critique.

Rather than rejecting Stein outright, then, Greyson can be seen as picking up where she left off. The rhetorical approach might be described as incorporative rather than combative: *Fig Trees* sifts through *Four Saints* for raw material and mines its allusive richness without committing wholly to its artistic vision. Steinian wordplay, for example, becomes a central hermeneutic feature of the film. The palindrome, whose invention is attributed to Saint Martin's confrontation with the devil in *Fig Trees'* first lines, also has the last word: the film ends with the palindromic coda, "No devil is as selfless as I lived on." As in Stein's poetry,

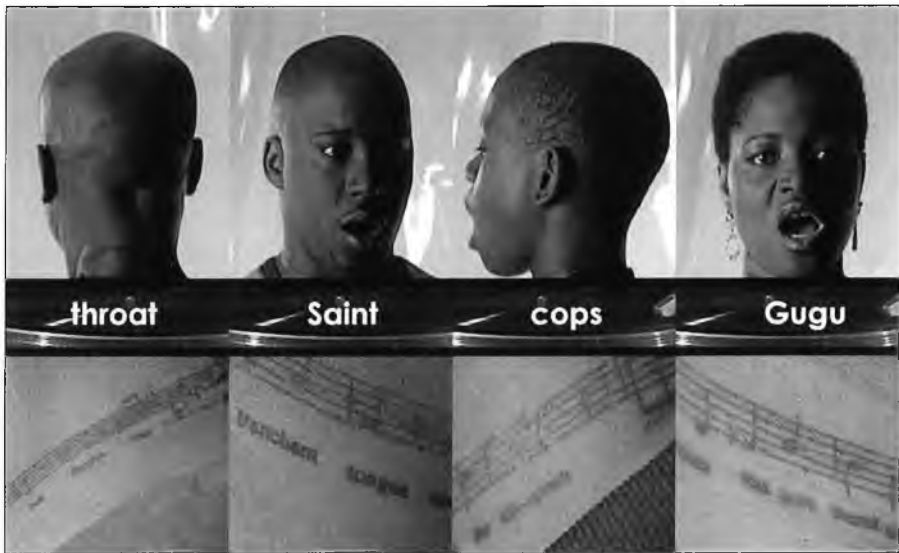


FIGURE 3: Four South African AIDS activists commemorated. *Fig Trees*, dir. John Greyson. Used by permission.

meaning inheres in both form and content of the wordplay. The line alludes to McCaskell's and Achmat's status as survivors: McCaskell, for instance, rejects the notion of sainthood with the comment, "The only reason I'm being interviewed is that I am one of the many people who worked with Aids Action Now, but one of those who didn't die." The palindrome form, along with the mirror-image photography used throughout the film, juxtaposes the Canadian and African contexts of AIDS activism and points out where the comparisons break down. "Gertrude" and "Virgil" are adopted as characters in *Fig Trees*, and we're informed that the endless sung variations they offer on the infamous "pigeons in the grass" line are the results of brainstorming titles for a new opera: "Four Stains in Twill Pants? More Sane than Twee Facts? Two Acts of AIDS Saints! Saint Tim and Saint Zacks!" The pair's *opera buffa* ploy to abduct Tim and Zackie serves as a sardonic allegory for Greyson's own opportunistic "hijacking" of the activists' biographies for artistic purposes.

As worried as *Fig Trees* may be about the risks of devitalizing and depersonalizing its subjects in the process of memorializing them, the film necessarily draws on the traditions of artistic commemoration in order to convey a sense of loss to its audience. Its self-consciously parodic attitude towards opera temporarily evaporates as we learn about four South African activists who died of AIDS in the last decade, and whose examples became instrumental in building the momentum of Achmat's Treatment Action Campaign. The scene begins with close-up frames, first of a needle being set to a record-player turntable on which a candle is burning, and then of tiny musical notes being drawn in pen on an actor's neck.

The actor's head slowly rotates as he sings, so that it becomes clear he is singing the line now encircling his throat like a garrote (Figure 3). The libretto, subtitled on the screen as it is throughout most of the film, indicates that he represents the dead Simon Nkoli. A split screen juxtaposes the disembodied singer with news and other media footage that fills in the events of Nkoli's activist history. The turntable's candle is snuffed at the moment Achmat tells us that "to lose a leader of such great flair and courage [to AIDS-related illness] was a signal." This hypnotic sequence is repeated three more times with different actors and different musical variations—one a child, representing Nkosi Johnson, whose campaign to have his HIV status accommodated at school drew international attention to the ubiquity of infection and the inequalities suffered by victims. Despite the introduction of each character as a saint (Johnson, for example, is "St. Nkosi of the Ice Cream"), the words they sing explicitly refuse the status of martyr. Nkoli says "Don't deify me"; Johnson declares "I am not your innocent." But the eerie blend of unfamiliar and familiar tropes in the scene—the haunting harmonies, the sameness of the actor's unfocused gazes and collared necks, the rising candle-smoke—summon such an affective force that the viewing experience is somewhat akin to kneeling at an altar. The saints' repeated refusals to become objects of pity or reverence in fact intensify the scene's mournfulness rather than dissipating it: instead of being allowed to refer their deaths to a familiar scheme of sacrifice-to-a-cause or to sublimate them through elegiac models of continuance, we are forced into a prolonged confrontation with a loss whose hermeneutics opens only onto the still-yawning gulf of political injustice. The air of spectral bereavement thus refuses to be resolved into the consolatory narrative that typifies commemorative modes.

The rhetorical effectiveness of the mourning scene described above relies on its framing within the film's wider trajectory of skeptical, comedic confrontation with the norms of artistic tribute. Its very unexpectedness after so much Steinian silliness ensures we have had no opportunity to inure ourselves to the affective identification being solicited by its memorial apparatus. Such a context in the film, coupled with the scene's language of refusal, allows for a nuanced use of *prosopopoeia*—of putting words in the mouths of the dead. This device accrues an otherworldly authority to the saints' pronouncements: part of what moves us is our awareness of haunting, of being hailed by voices that transect and transcend the here-and-now. At the same time, *prosopopoeia* figures a disruptive subjectivity and agency for the dead—their refusal to be deified becomes, with the help of *prosopopoeia*, a refusal to disappear into the annals of innocent victimhood—that resists both the erasure attempted by homophobic constructions of AIDS and the relegation to the "mourned-subject" position. Greyson's saints speak not as ciphers for universal truths but as individual political agents whose bodily experience with plague and death gives them the right to be heard.

Also crucial is the musical trajectory by which the four voices gradually come into harmonic alignment, intensifying and lending emphasis to one another through unison, repetition, and echo. The oratorio underscores both the distinctness of each voice and the interdependence of the melodies they are singing. As Ross Chambers has noted of operatic quotation

in other films that adopt AIDS as a theme, the interplay of musical harmony and unison produces “a strong intimation of a mode of connectedness that admits and acknowledges, indeed depends on difference.”²³ The music buttresses a powerful moral argument for regarding the South Africans’ deaths not as a crippling sum-total of pain, nor as a series of stages in a social-change teleology, but as a legacy of individual struggles toward visibility, social resilience, and public justice. The affective impact of the “four-saints” oratorio carries forward through the more traditional memorial enactment in the film’s following scenes. Tim McCaskell and his partner visit the AIDS memorial site in Toronto, reading by candlelight the names etched into the monument and describing the role each victim played in their lives. Here, amid a more familiar set of remembrance-related gestures, the eerie orchestral score nonetheless re-invokes the previous scene’s estrangement and intensity, so that we experience the reading of names as an extension of an act of mourning that refuses to efface individual desire.

A sharp return to self-consciousness closes the contemplation of the activist legacy Achmat and McCaskell have inherited and, more generally, signals the film’s progressive disengagement from opera’s artistic and narrative concerns. Zackie and Tim circle around Gertrude and Virgil, binding them back-to-back with winding sheets of cellophane, and demand, “Why you two bright white artists fetishizing your negro cast? Why all this frothy absurd nonsense when fascists threaten Spain?” The saints in *Fig Trees* (cast by Greyson, again mimicking Stein, as mostly black actors) are given a capacity for individual agency and self-expression not permitted in *Four Saints in Three Acts*, and Greyson’s filmography includes a number of previous experiments in the defamiliarization of racial roles.²⁴ But if Stein is guiltier than Greyson of racism, the film cannot escape the activist characters’ wider criticism: that to engage in aesthetic reverie, even for the purpose of paying tribute to the past, is an ethically fraught enterprise while the fight is still raging. We watch as queer composers from throughout history line up to woo Zackie with their pitches for biopic-operas, pleading, “You on a bed, your hand clasped to your breast! . . . Only I can do your pain justice.” Zackie collapses under the imbroglia, and we cut to a coffin-like bed where he and Tim are laid out like corpses, surrounded by a sea of burning candles that hyperbolizes the snuffed-candle motif of the “four-saints” scene and thereby confers an air of campy irreverence to the tableau. The voraciousness of opera’s epitaphic appetite demands this level of stasis and passivity from its subjects—clearly, it would be better for *Fig Trees’* artistic project if St. Zackie and St. Tim were to die.

We are introduced instead to “the African martyr St. Caesura,” whose recitative explains that a *caesura* is “a break in the flow of sound; usually in the middle of a line of verse.” The *caesura* interrupts the film’s memorial itinerary and turns the documentary over to a reportage-style account of TAC confrontations with the South African government’s denialist rhetoric around AIDS. Interview footage informs us that Achmat has decided to end his treatment strike and begin taking anti-retroviral drugs. Gertrude cannot suppress her disappointment: “Tragedy averted! Catharsis denied! . . . There is no more opera!” The implosion

of the operatic project forcibly shifts the film's focus from individuals' losses and achievements to the connectedness and complementarity of global AIDS-activism initiatives. The montages of mass protests and marches that follow take up Achmat's call to remember "the thousands of people working hard, the thousands of people who grieve," a collectivity eclipsed by media's preference for charismatic leaders like himself. AIDS remembrance may comprise a lovely set of images, coalesce disparate issues into a common point of interest, or generate a sense of fellow-feeling, but it only makes ethical and political sense in a context of ongoing, international social activism. Achmat describes the challenge he faced when his strike ended: "I was no longer performing death for the whole world. I had to make plans for life." Relinquishing the trope of martyrdom casts both Achmat and Greyson into new narrative territory. Referred back to his affective, physical, and social contexts, Achmat becomes a figure of survival and continuance; the film's parallel refusal of tragedy makes for an act of remembrance that better serves its subjects and its wider activist intentions.

According to Stein, "The only thing that is different from one time to another is what is seen and what is seen depends upon how everybody is doing everything."²⁵ Public perception of AIDS has been skewed throughout the crisis' history by homophobic policy-making, corporate jockeying for pharmaceutical markets, and a proliferation of media images featuring helpless, sacrificial victims of illness. To memorialize AIDS losses without reiterating the errors of prior accounts calls for a dramatic re-drawing of the scene. Aware that the heroic-tragic paradigms of opera "have great legs" in that they mobilize an immense rhetorical force, Greyson deploys this force in the service of a memorial experience governed by self-critical estrangement and disorientation. Stein's opera in particular models a playful ambivalence that *Fig Trees* expands upon and exploits in its bid to canonize "St. Zackie" and "St. Tim." Greyson's memorial work thus acknowledges the need for "an anti-homophobic counter-myth" that can engage with and resist the myth-making force of conservative political and religious discourses that exacerbate AIDS in North America and Africa.²⁶ But in resisting the sublimation of affect and desire that accompanies artistic consolation, the film proves the pitfalls of hagiographic myth-making in the context of AIDS. To juxtapose operatic apotheosis against the realities of activist struggles articulates new possibilities for a remembrance practice that neither erases individual agency and desire nor idealizes individual sacrifice at the expense of sociality and connectedness. As such *Fig Trees* imagines a public and political horizon that is re-enlivened rather than paralyzed by mourning.

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NOTES

¹ John Greyson, *Fig Trees* (Vtape Distribution release of Greyzone production, 2009). I would like to thank John Greyson and David Wall for their ready generosity in making *Fig Trees* available for my research, both in transcript and pre-release DVD format.

- ² Sholem Krishtalka, "Delight in Life Meets Outrage Over AIDS and Health Policies," *XTRA!*, 23 April 2009, Arts section, Toronto edition, 29.
- ³ McCaskell helped found AIDS Action Now in Toronto in 1988; in 1999, Achmat publicly refused drug treatment, a "treatment strike" that drew worldwide attention to the number of African victims who died without access to drugs. *Fig Trees* features numerous interviews with McCaskell and Achmat; the activists are also portrayed by actors in the film (the film's composer, David Wall, sings the part of McCaskell). For clarity I will use last names for the "real" men, while referring to the fictionalized characters as "Tim" and "Zackie."
- ⁴ Quoted in Krishtalka, "Delight in Life," 29.
- ⁵ See, among other examples, Tony Kushner's play *Angels in America* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1992) and Diamanda Galas's concert *Plague Mass* (Mute Records, 1991).
- ⁶ For an account of how the articulation of presence informs queer artistic practice in the context of AIDS, see Gregg Bordowitz, "The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous," in *The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous and Other Writings, 1986–2003* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2004), 43–67.
- ⁷ John Greyson, *Zero Patience* (Strand Releasing, 2005). Critical assessments of this film include Roger Hallas, "The Geneological Pedagogy of John Greyson's *Zero Patience*," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003), 16–37, and Robert L. Cagle, "'Tell Me the Story of My Life. . .': The Making of Meaning, 'Monsters,' and Music in John Greyson's '*Zero Patience*,'" *Velvet Light Trap*, 35 (1995), 69–81.
- ⁸ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 23–4.
- ⁹ James E. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory: The End of the Monument in Germany," *Harvard Design Magazine*, 9 (1999), 1–10, www.gsd.harvard.edu/research/publications/hdm/back/9young.html, 2.
- ¹⁰ Douglas Crimp, *Melancholia and Moralism: Essays on AIDS and Queer Politics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2002), 133.
- ¹¹ Ann Cvetkovich, "AIDS Activism and the Oral History Archive," *S & F Online*, 2, no. 1 (2003), www.barnard.edu/sfonline/ps/cvetkovi.htm.
- ¹² Erin J. Rand, "Repeated Remembrance: Commemorating the AIDS Quilt and Resuscitating the Mourned Subject," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2007): 665.
- ¹³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 137.
- ¹⁴ Melissa R. Jones, "Modernist Hagiography: Saints in the Writings of Joyce, Stein, Eliot and H.D." (PhD diss., Kent State University, 2004), 90.
- ¹⁵ Gertrude Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, 1937 (New York: Vintage, 1973), 109–10.
- ¹⁶ Robert Zamsky, "'A Narrative of Prepare for Saints': Lyric, Narrative, and the Problem of Nationalism in *Four Saints and Three Acts*," *Modernism/modernity* 11, no. 4, (2004): 740.
- ¹⁷ Quoted in Barbara Webb, "The Centrality of Race to the Modernist Aesthetics of Gertrude Stein's *Four Saints in Three Acts*," *Modernism/modernity* 7, no. 3 (2000): 455.
- ¹⁸ Stein, *Lectures in America*, 1935 (Boston: Beacon, 1957), 122.
- ¹⁹ Stein, *Lectures in America*, 171.
- ²⁰ Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Bodily Charm: Living Opera* (Lincoln, NB and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 119, 14.
- ²¹ Webb, "The Centrality of Race," 462.
- ²² Zamsky, "A Narrative of Prepare," 740.
- ²³ Ross Chambers, "Visitations: Operatic Quotation in Three AIDS Films," *UTS Review* 2, no. 2 (1996): 53.
- ²⁴ Scott Rayer, Donald W. McLeod, and Maureen FitzGerald, curators, *Queer CanLit: Canadian Lesbian,*

Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Literature in English (Toronto: Couch House, 2008), Exhibition catalogue, 39–40.

²⁵ Stein, "Composition as Explanation," in *Selected Writings*, Carl Van Vechten, ed. (New York: Random House, 1962), 516.

²⁶ Chambers, "Visitations," 29.