ABSTRACT

Toward A Rhetoric of Symbolic Reparations:
Overlapping Genres in George W. Bush's Apology for Slavery

Zachary R. Wagner, M.A.

Committee Chairperson: Matt Gerber, Ph.D.

In 2003, George W. Bush apologized for slavery at Goree Island in Senegal, which was the site of the largest market for slaves during America's slave period. This apology contains both a mythic and a mundane frame for understanding the crime and sin of slavery, clearly separated by Bush's language choices. Examining both frames allows the best understanding of what Bush attempted to accomplish, displacing blame for a spiritual crime onto a mundane world.

This conception allows him to create an America which is mythic, rewrite the historical narrative with black agency responsible for emancipation, and begin a process of identification which is at the heart of reconciliation rhetoric. He both atones and engages image-restoration discourse, and in doing so, avoids many of the criticisms leveled at other examples of both his epideictic discourse and general presidential rhetoric regarding slavery.

The literature base surrounding the idea of reparations for slavery presents a clear space where this apology needs to go in order to move past the legacy of slavery and begin the process of reconciliation. I will examine here both the historical and current meanings of reparations, and show how Bush effectively engages reparations rhetoric.

This form of symbolic reparations is important, because it is distinct from presidential apology, atonement, jeremiad, reconciliation, and other genres, even though it mixes many of the strategies normally associated with one or more of those forms. Understanding the message is critical to unraveling a complex historical narrative of race regarding Bush, and understanding the current state of United States relationship with slavery.

Toward A Rhetoric Of Symbolic Reparations:
Overlapping Genres In George W. Bush's Apology For Slavery

by

Zachary Wagner, B.A.

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Matthew Gerber, Ph.D., Chairperson

Karla Leeper, Ph.D.

Stuart Rosenbaum, Ph.D.

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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

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DEDICATION

To BMW and bdw, for believing I could be something,
despite all evidence to the contrary, and to Tala, who deserves it

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Narratives of Race, Narratives of Reparations

Apology is alive and well in 2010. Tiger Woods' apology, for whatever it was worth, dominated news cycles and conversations, Toyota's recall and subsequent apology caused the automaker's stock to drop 20 percent in the early part of this year. Tylenol, once considered the hallmark of effective apology and public relations is facing a large scale recall and absorbing criticism for their failure to act quickly (Kavilanz 2010).

The past decade has seen corporate and celebrity image restoration on a large scale in virtually every year. In 2000, Firestone recalled its tires after Ford Explorer rollovers caused 350 deaths and 3,000 injuries. In 2004, Merck paid $4.8 billion in legal settlements and apologized for its drug, Vioxx, causing heart attacks and running misleading ads (Philips 2010). In 2005, BP CEO John Brown released a series of apologies for the deadly explosion at Texas City (Mayberry 2008). 2006 was the year the Pope apologized for anti-Muslim remarks, and Rush Limbaugh did the same for his comments accusing Michael J. Fox of overstating the effects of Parkinson's disease (Serrano 2006). In 2007, Mattel apologized for releasing toys with lead paint, and Blackwater attempted to rebrand itself after they were accused of killing 17 civilians. 2008 saw the largest beef recall ever, and Westland/Hallmark Meat Company apologized (Philips

2010). During this time, individuals apologized for their mistakes, including John Edwards, Michael Vick, Mel Gibson. Some of these were effective in regaining the public's trust; Vick, for example, is back in the NFL following one of the most public downfalls in sports history.

During all of this, one interesting apology stands out. Insurance company Aetna apologized, not for anything recent or forthcoming, and not for the quality of their products. Aetna apologized for insuring the value of slaves, and its resultant effect in bolstering the slave trade. Aetna made reparations. At the time, the United States had not apologized for slavery. In fact, congress had twice killed bills calling for an apology (Hatch 2006).

The Chappelle Show once famously featured a sketch imagining a world in which African Americans finally received reparations. One man bought a truck full of Kool cigarettes for his family, lines for check cashing stores went around the block, and the world's richest man amassed his fortune in an afternoon craps game. The premise was that once black folk got their payday, they lived out black stereotypes, and nothing had changed. Chappelle's vision is better read as a criticism of white stereotypes of black folk than as an interpretation of what would actually happen, but the point remains: envisioning a world of racial reparations is fearsome and unpleasant for white people.

This thesis is predicated on the argument that George W. Bush offered a legitimate conception of reparations for slavery during his presidency. While at first, the thought of our 43rd president offering reparations seems unlikely due to the traditional notion of what reparations look like, and the fact that Chapelle's

fantasy has not come true, his rhetoric during his address at Goree Island represents a form of symbolic reparations. In order to understand the significance of his apology, a complicated overlapping of rhetorical genres must be unfolded, including aspects of atonement, heroism, and authority. Then, a rhetorical dimension to reparations must be codified and evaluated, in order to see that Bush accomplished this goal.

This chapter will unfold in a chronological order, with each major section representing a chapter in the thesis itself. It is important to understand Bush's generic approach in his apology for slavery at Goree Island because of its implications for Bush scholarship, the new dimensions of previously studied genres this brings to light, and the formation of a new model of reparations for slavery, which I am calling symbolic reparations.

While the idea that Bush offered reparations may seem radical, this conclusion is grounded in previous scholarship of legal and extra-legal discourse. Therefore, in order to justify my conclusion I will employ a very close reading of relevant literature in all subsequent chapters, attempting to provide a holistic understanding of theories and the context in which they were first advanced, and what scholarly interpretations of the speech texts exist already. It is my aim to show that my conclusions are not a major break from the previously assembled body of knowledge in the field, but an inevitable continuation of them.

Slavery was a crime. It was the theft of a people from the land which needed them, it was kidnapping, it was rape and murder. For 250 years, America and Americans perpetuated one of the great crimes of history: the systematic

destruction of a race of people, with the additional cultural and spiritual destruction that signifies. Slavery was also a sin. It was the complete disregard for the laws of God and the natural law which represents the gossamer threads of humanity. Slavery was a result of American men and women, whose guilt cannot be denied and whose victims can never be compensated fully.

On July 8, 2003, at Goree Island George W. Bush made all of these claims, and he did it without blame displacement, guilt denial, or any face-saving strategy of self-defense. Standing on the spot where Africans sold Africans to Europeans, he chose to ignore any question of complicity which could exonerate the actions of his nation or his forbears. He did all of this so he could atone for an egregious act, carried out over centuries, steeped in sin, and a crime against all law of heaven and Earth.

The Competing Narratives of Clinton and Bush

George W. Bush has never had a successful relationship with African Americans as a voting populace. In 2000, Bush managed a meager 9% of the African American vote, as the incumbent in 2004, he raised that to 11% (Tisdall, 2004). In 2006, Bush ended his five year boycott of the NAACP by giving a speech at that organization's national assembly. He was met by mostly silence, with occasional jeers (Gawenda, 2004). As early as January 2001, before he had taken the oath of office, Bush felt moved to address African Americans, claiming he was elected to be the "President of everyone" (Kennedy, 2001). These remarks were spurred by ongoing questions of intentional suppression of the African American vote, fears that were brought back by the New York Times

before the 2004 election (Krugman, 2004). Chris Rock and Vanessa Williams aired a PSA in Florida stating that "thousands of lawyers" were waiting on the phone in case African Americans were denied their right to vote (Alberts, 2004). When a population feels so strongly that Bush does not represent their interests that he would attempt to undermine democracy in order to ignore their votes, it is clear that public perception rests with a negative narrative of George W. Bush. More specifically, Bush attempted to privatize social security, diminish the efficacy of welfare programs, often cited as effective examples of reparations, and it was remarks defending these stances which earned Bush his verbal assault at the NAACP (Gawenda, 2004).

Bush and Clinton are both southern white politicians, subject to the dual legacy of their upbringing and an often toxic racial political climate throughout the south. Clinton emerged from this atmosphere by choosing to embrace the most expedient political position, a rhetoric of understanding mixed with policies borrowed directly from the southern conservative playbook. Clinton could not have been better received, even if his policies were not always the most beneficial to black folk: "Bill Clinton, who garnered wide black political support … intuitively sways to the rhythm of black life; he stands on the transformed racial relations that the civil rights movement inaugurated…Despite his racial charisma, or perhaps because of it, he was able to do considerable damage to black interests" (Dyson, 2005, 23).

George Bush does not share this sophisticated gamesmanship, at least overtly. Bush also signals his support for the conservative white establishment

through policy, but, unlike Clinton, his rhetoric supports this position. Bush does not tell African Americans that he 'feels their pain.' Dyson (2005, 23) explains:

> "If George Bush lacks Clinton's racial charisma, he also lacks Clinton's grasp of the need to play the racial game at a high, if ultimately manipulative level. Clinton proved every bit the victim of the collective racial unconscious of his southern white heritage, except the lesson he learned was that one must survive by appearing to support black interests while exploiting them."

Dyson cites W. Fitzhugh Brundage, who claims that historical memory is the site from which negative southern attitudes originate, this shared memory "exalted white civilization, legitimated white power, and virtually excluded any admission of meaningful black agency in the region's past. White accounts seemed to insulate blacks from history. There was in white history, no acknowledgement of true suffering or real accomplishments among blacks…their lives were small" (p.24).

African Americans are naturally resistant to this. In an interview regarding his book on Clinton, Author DeWayne Wickham makes the case strongly in an interview with Salon.com's Suzy Hansen (2002): "Black folk have a built-in radar for B.S., particularly when it's racial B.S. It started with slavery, when the master would turn to the slave and say, "We need to clean this yard." The slave knew that "we" weren't going to clean this yard. That meant, "You better clean this yard."

Wickham would not support Dyson's claims that this applies to Clinton as well:

> "The key to Clinton was not so much what he sought to do, but how what he did was perceived by African Americans. For most African Americans, he was real, and he connected in a way that others didn't. Let's go back to

> this whole pandering suggestion that comes from a lot of folk: "He was just playing to the black community." OK, let's say that that's the case: Then he's better at it than anyone else in the history of the presidency. If that's all that there was -- and I would argue that that's not the case -- but if that's all that there was, then come on, whatever happened to the Gipper, the Great Communicator? Why couldn't he pull that off?"

The lack of consensus on the legitimacy of Clinton's race attitudes is wide-reaching. In the literature, authors seem unable to even agree on whether or not Clinton's race intiative was sincere, or even if his 1998 address, also at Goree Island, was an apology for slavery. Advancing Clinton scholarship is problematic without conclusion to this debate.

I intend to show that while this debate seems intractable, it largely ignores the significant watershed that Clinton's rhetoric, particularly the Clinton Race Intitiative (CRI), represents to the narrative fidelity of black agency. Claire J. Kim writes in 2000 that the CRI builds on the Myrdal and Kerner Commision reports from earlier in the century, by focusing on black agency. The two previous reports ignored the ability of African Americans to succeed without assimilation, instead citing white racism as the "crux of the race problem in America" (187). Instead, Clinton assumes a separate culture moving toward national unity with multiculturalism as its end point. Even though Carcasson and Rice (1999) are not nearly as accepting of the impact of the CRI, they admit his message of black agency is clear, and their complaints are all specifically contextualized versions of Johnson's reparations criticism, which I will discuss later. From this, however, it becomes clear that Clinton's national initiative on race has clear goals which are largely overlooked when discussing the efficacy of Clinton's presidency, and that these goals should affect his speech at Goree Island.

Clinton's Goree Island speech informs the rhetorical situation Bush faced when speaking on the same spot, on the same topic, five years later. Clinton spoke during a time of personal turmoil, but national peace, from a position which would have been perfect for atonement. He traveled to Africa with all of the positive rhetorical elements that Bush had, namely the ability to bring African Americans from his cabinet with him, and significantly less baggage than Bush, specifically he did not have the distrust of African Americans. While Clinton was attacked for losing the fight on welfare reform, Bush actively wanted to eliminate it. (Hansen, 2001 and Dyson, 2005). That said, his hope to limit questions of economic and external factors as causes of racial injustice comes through in his speech, and questions of black agency are lost in the face of a more obvious question: why discuss the global economy as a solution to Africa's woes when speaking from a spot where that same economy bought and sold Africans themselves?

When Bush did speak, he needed to do more than Clinton did previously. His message had to carry farther than his predecessor not only due to Clinton's failure, but because Bush also had to counter a dominant narrative in which Clinton was a successful president in race relations, while Bush was a dogmatic observer of a political philosophy which could be called functionally unfair to African Americans. This narrative can best be summarized in two tropes indelibly etched in the minds of Americans. The first is the description of Bill Clinton, offered by Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison (1998), that Clinton is the first Black President, "blacker than any black President who could be elected in

our children's lifetime." While Bush, as articulated so famously by rapper Kanye West, "doesn't care about black people."(Dyson, 2005)

Secondly, the counter narrative proposed by Michael Eric Dyson, who problematizes every aspect of Morrison's analysis as the specific purview of northern black folk when discussing southern blacks, does Bush no favors. It merely argues that Clinton was black person friendly in lip service only, and that both he and Bush are products of a southern political culture damning racial progress in politics.

With either narrative in place, the question which must be answered is why was it Bush, and not Clinton, calling slavery a sin and a crime in a speech on Goree Island? Why does Bush decry white civilization, restore black agency, and reinsert black folk into history? Why is it Bush who acknowledges the true suffering throughout the process of slavery? Why is Bush the one to feel their pain?

Atonement and Value for Bush Scholarship

It is somewhat surprising that George W. Bush should offer such an honest and open declaration of American guilt. In addition to his attacks on welfare programs long seen as part of reparations, his presidency was marked by an unwillingness to admit fault or mistake on behalf of himself or America. As I will show in the chapter on his apologies, he instead builds a perfect America for his audience, and uses a rhetoric of blame and focus shifting when faced with a difficult accusation, at least at the times he doesn't invoke executive privilege. The question becomes, then, how did Bush so eloquently create a message 140

years in the making? What does Bush accomplish in this speech to put it ahead of other post-reconstruction Presidents when discussing slavery?

George W. Bush is effective for a number of reasons. First, his ability to rhetorically create an America free from any faults allows him to engage in what Michael J. Hyde (2005) refers to as home creation, an effective strategy for delivering a people from suffering to hope, although it is not usually deployed for a foreign audience. This is separate from appeals to the American Dream, which assume an integrationist impulse of normativity, in which fitting in is most pressing (Roth, 2001).

Second, Bush avoids apologic methods of rhetorical self-defense as outlined by Benoit (1997 and 2006, Benoit & Henson, 2009), instead focusing on atonement, as outlined by Koesten and Roland (2004). This move allows Bush the freedom to condemn slavery from a religious standpoint, in his position as national priest, as suggested by Hart (1977). At the same time, it constrains his actions, preventing band-aid solutions, such as Walter Johnson's (2007) calls for reparations, forcing his rhetorical posture to rely on his ability to offer America as restitution, as facilitated by home creation. This also avoids the pitfall Clinton fell into, because of the infinite nature of the gift he offers as penance, the originality of offering a black narrative, and the idea that agency and Christianity are intertwined.

As a subject of discourse, slavery is external to the Bush Presidency, rhetoric of apology because it is absent an exigency and separate from the speaker's time. Its separation relegates it to the realm of old rhetoric; a subject

much of the nation believes it is past, even if it was never addressed. At some point, without being explicitly stated, the idea of apologizing for slavery transferred from pressing, to inevitable, to passé, without ever being said. Today, it seems like it should have happened back then, but back then we weren't ready, and its not like African Americans were allowed representation of their own.

Due to the constraining the nature of rhetoric, with each passing generation the lack of an apology for slavery has limited the ability of presidents to speak to it, while increasing the urgency for just such an admission. Which leads to an unusual element of this speech: its lack of exigency. The speech was not delivered on a specific anniversary of the freedom struggle; this speech had no crisis motivating its delivery. Instead, part of the lack of notoriety of the Goree Island speech stems from its lack of a larger context to fit into news cycles.

Method: Generic Criticism

The literature review of this chapter is one which engages genre criticism in interesting ways. Goree Island represents a unique speech of atonement, as identified by Koesten and Rowland (2004), in that it meets the general taxonomic outlines of stylistic elements which provide the essence of atonement. However, the literature base on both atonement specifically and rhetoric of self-defense more generally, fails to account for an important element, which is the act of an individual speaking on behalf of a group. They attempt to fix this, but the article they cite, by Glynn (1995) is from political science, is not specific to rhetoric, and frankly, is tangentially related to his point at best. Others mention this dynamic in passing, but no overt work has been published outlining the generic elements

which separate traditional self-defense rhetoric and defense rhetoric when the speaker is speaking as a representative of a separate group, separated not only by time, but by allegiance. Some work has been done in organizational apologia, where corporate values can replace national ones, but this would ignore the value history has to the nation in general and the president him or herself.

Most obvious on this point are Campbell and Jamieson (2008), when discussing presidential self-defense. One would assume that presidential self-defense would necessarily include self-defense for America or at least political party, but they do not conceptualize it in this way. For them, self-defense rhetoric is engaged only when faced with either formal charges or when those charges seem inevitable. This definition only includes seven incidents ever. As I will discuss in the chapter on Bush's epideictic discourse as well, Campbell and Jamieson's analysis on most genres exchanges exhaustiveness for internal consistency, and is therefore more useful as a starting point than to use as effective measures of genres.

My goal is to outline the generic elements which separate defense of a group from defense of an individual. While doing so, I will isolate those elements which are specific to apologia, and which are relevant for atonement.

Rowland and Jerome (2004) attempt to rectify the absence of comprehensive theory on apologizing for others by addressing the lack of consensus for organizational apologia (207). Unfortunately, their conclusion is that apologia itself is closely analogous to argument fields, and competing interests between the rhetor and the group make ontological categorizations

impossible. This does not have to be the final word, however, if a speaker and the corresponding group for whom the apology is offered can find common ground.

Therefore, it will also be revelatory to determine which aspects of group self-defense are specifically relevant to this speech, in which Bush himself is not part of the group for whom he is atoning. Generally, at least part of the blame for an act is on the speaker when he or she speaks, but for Bush, slavery is a past act, and those responsible have long since passed away. Instead, the exigency Bush faces must come to grips with the legacy of the crime of slavery, and requires Bush to choose between distancing himself from slaveholders and embracing all of American history as part of his conception of America. This choice informs Bush's ability to engage in home-creation, a cornerstone of Bush's rhetoric.

In this section I will also delineate atonement, in general, from its parent genre of apologia. Much of this work has already been done, but a cursory examination of the literature base, particularly Shepard's concept of false atonement (2008), indicates that the boundaries are still somewhat up for negotiation.

I will also perform a perfunctory generic analysis with other genres, to confirm that Bush's Goree Island speech would not more effectively fit in another classification. In order to avoid the concerns outlined by Brummett (1990), it is important to falsify all taxonomic claims. Of particular interest is the jeremiad, whose use of city on the hill imagery, religious themes, and narrative of an America which has lost its way seem to fit Goree Island very well. (Jones and

Rowland, 2005) I intend to show that jeremiac elements may be present, but questions of internal consistency prove problematic for this conclusion.

For atonement to function, the speaker must attempt no scapegoating, blame displacement, or harm denial. I will address the most common forms of each of these, applying them to the text of the Goree Island speech, and in doing so, show that while Bush engages in apologia, it is more descriptive to show that he attempts a form of atonement.

The final generic element which I will discuss is the idea of gift giving as a form of atonement. While most accounts of atonement assume a judaically influenced form (Perlman, 1998), informed by Tikkun and heavily borrowing from Jewish texts, Bush's explicit Christianity requires that atonement involve repentance. Bush offers a gift of home creation which represents a bond or agreement, unconditionally offering proof of repentance. The idea that he can create a perfect America, and deliver the audience there, is his form of actualizing his repentance.

I will use Hyde's definition of home creation here, and spend the next chapter examining different uses in order to create a generic theory of home creation, because one is absent from previous literature. By inductive interpretive analysis, we can determine the generic elements common to acts of home creation. Then, contrasting those elements to Bush's 9/11 speech and Hyde's analysis, we can determine what fails that test. In the conclusion of this section I will attempt to process the Goree Island speech through this framework and determine if it meets the criteria to be considered an exemplar of the genre.

Literature Review and Theoretical Justification

It is important, at the outset, to understand what Bush attempts to do with this speech. In order to do so, we must investigate the form of the speech, and classify it into a specific genre in order to isolate the expected outcomes and tools available to Bush. In doing so, we can hopefully gain understanding of why Bush gave this particular speech in the time and place he did. As Kathleen Hall Jamieson(year?) explains, borrowing from Northrop Frye: "the purpose of criticism by genres is not so much to classify as to clarify…traditions and affinities, thereby bringing out a large number of relationships that would not be noticed as long as there were no context established for them (168)." For Bush's Goree Island speech it is important to understand first the tools of the genre available to him, then compare his work to others in the same genre to understand how effective he was at deploying the tools necessary to accomplish his goals. As Jamieson concludes, the task of the genre critic is to isolate and explicate those tools and goals, because without generic criticism the critic "risks clouding rather than clarifying the rhetoric he [or she] is attempting to explain (169)." J.M. Jones and Robert Rowland explain the implications of generic criticism in 2005: "The rhetor may be influenced to follow the generic form by some combination of purpose and recurrent exigency or he/she may follow the form as strategic choice (160)." The importance of this is that generic criticism may have predictive power in addition to explanatory power.

While this speech is a public apology, it does not fit the mold of a traditional apologia. Apologia stems from a specific exigency, is meant to repair

public image, and attempts to divert blame. This speech better fits the sub-division of apologia known as atonement, which has a spiritual component, can be used for less temporal transgressions, accepts blame, and asks forgiveness. Additionally, atonement can be used on the part of a larger organization more effectively because of the lack of blame displacement.

First, apologia requires a specific exigency. As Ellen Reid Gold argues in 1978, apologia is an immediate response to an immediate problem, and due to the immediacy of the 24-hour news cycle, can become an interactive event constantly reevaluated and reinterpreted, a sort of trans-exigency. The immediacy of apologia also stems from its unavoidability. In a perverse situation, some sins are so egregious that they move past the ability of deflection and face saving required in apologia, and are therefore left undiscussed. Slavery is such an issue.

Atonement can be more general, especially because "guilt is essentially undeniable (Koesten and Rowland, 2004)." While it would seem that this is limiting to the speaker, instead it is often liberating. For a speaker who is able to avoid immediate backlash, the sin can become so distant that its undeniabilty combined with an absence of discussion eventually creates a burden to speak which is emancipatory and cathartic when finally released. Ware and Linkugel (1973) argue that in apologia, the function of differentiation "is often signaled by the accused's request for a suspension of judgment until his [or her] actions can be viewed from a different temporal perspective." With atonement, the undeniability of sin forces the speaker to avoid this strategy completely. Only two situations can create a need for atonement: a sin so grievous that a temporal

perspective will not improve it, or a sin made worse by a long passage of time, which allows a speaker to address the subject from a different standpoint and decry the act as a universal sin, regardless of perspective.

Atonement also allows the speaker more freedom for whom he or she represents. While apologia tends to be concerned with the speaker him or herself, atonement allows a speaker to function as a larger group, even a state. As Steven Glynn concludes in 1995, nation-states are uniquely positioned to take advantage of strategies of atonement to "heal violent wounds." Glynn also indicates that the United States is uniquely situated for speeches of atonement, because "America was, at its origins, the very embodiment of the idea of the fresh start." He reaches this conclusion because the enlightenment philosophers on whose works the founding principles of America were based stressed tolerance in the social fabric, and that America's history as a melting pot has required a certain amount of tolerance and atonement. While not a rhetorical scholar, he would probably agree that one of America's unique rhetorical forms, the jeremiad probably also contributes to this. The jeremiad, after all, is a call for atonement on the part of the audience.

Apologia must attempt to repair public image, therefore it attempts to divert, displace or avoid blame. William Benoit notes that apologia is marked by "image restoration strategies" including self-exoneration, self-absolution, self-sacrifice, and self-deception (1995). For Ware and Linkugel, adopted from psychologist Robert P. Abelson, the strategies are denial, bolstering, differentiation and transcendence (1973). Ellen Reid Gold uses the Linkugel and

Ware approach for her significant work on the subject in 1978, but Koesten and Rowland prefer the broader and more exhaustive approach favored by Benoit. In either case, none of these strategies is present in the Goree Island speech, except perhaps transcendence, as we shall see. Instead, Bush occasionally attempts the opposite of some of these strategies. It is likely that the reason these are absent stems from the lack of exigency as well; most of these strategies are at best defensive and partial in nature.

The only reason to engage in rhetorical strategies designed to lessen the blow of a negative reaction is if the negative reaction is immediate and unavoidable, and therefore no other option is available. The tools available to a rhetor engaging in atonement are far more aggressive in nature, by addressing sins, especially the sins of others, as Bush does, the speaker can garner goodwill or seek repentance from a position outside of blame. The speaker can either become a lightning rod or a prophet, similar to a jeremiad, bringing the audience to a level of understanding or judgment. As Koesten and Rowland conclude, "The important point is that in each case [of apologia] the focus has been on denial, deflection, or justification to restore a damaged image, as opposed to accepting responsibility as a sinner."

This is particularly clear for a speaker who seeks atonement on behalf of a larger organization for sins of the past. The speaker has the luxury of both being outside of the blame and at the same time, by placing him or herself in the place of the sinner; he or she can receive perdition.

Atonement is also distinct from a jeremiad by more than the target of blame. Obviously, atonement accepts the sin onto the speaker while the jeremiad isolates the wrong-doings of the audience. Outside of that, the jeremiad, according to J.M. Jones and Rowland, has three distinct characteristics: "identification of sin reflected in violation of values so basic that they can be treated as a covenant, a warning that disaster threatens society because of the sin, and a call to return to the basic values in order to eliminate the sin and prevent the disaster threatening the society (160)." While the first and third are relevant to atonement, the lack of immediate exigency invalidates the second. Jeremiads can be used as a method of understanding a speech of atonement, but atonement as a form is distinct from jeremiad. Jones and Rowland argue that the choice of jeremiad can alienate an audience, and the choice of atonement avoids this. Because the audience is disinterested in being blamed, the greatest weakness of jeremiad is resolved by atonement, which places the blame far from the audience. It also divorces the audience from a responsibility to act. Atonement's act of repentance requires the speaker to act instead.

Potential America: Bush's Hybrid-Epideictic Discourse

At the heart of Bush's apology for slavery is a mythic/ideological construct of America which draws upon themes of authority and home creation to step outside of traditional epideictic rhetoric in order to exhort the audience. I am calling this construct potential America. The chapter on potential America will examine the development of those themes through three examples of Bush's epideictic rhetoric: his first inaugural, his address at the National Day of

Remembrance following the terrorist attacks on September 11th, and his address to the nation following Hurricane Katrina.

This will also serve as a miniature referendum on Bush's epideictic rhetoric as a whole, because a single thesis does not provide nearly enough space or time for a full-scale research project into a body of work with such a vast scope, but there remains a question of the place of traditional epideictic rhetoric in the presidency. I will explore the notion of hybrid exhortational, rather than strictly ceremonial, discourse. As such, the main theories discussed will be applied to all three works and extrapolations will be drawn as if this constituted the entirety of his rhetoric. These works were chosen due to the fact that at least one of the theories involved in the crafting of the model of symbolic reparations has been applied to both the inaugural and the 9/11 speech, and it will then be much simpler to address the speeches and theories in a limited amount of time. The Katrina speech is chosen because of its similarity in theme and content to the 9/11 address, and the obvious applicability of race and apology to an exigency based on mishandling a crisis affecting a predominantly African American population.

While these are all forms of epideictic rhetoric, and it could be argued that the Goree Island address is not, it is unclear whether any piece of presidential rhetoric can truly be considered entirely epideictic. Because of a constraint in time and availability in audience, most presidential rhetoric serves multiple audiences and functions. To offer a piece of discourse without a persuasive or exhortational element seems wasteful. Additionally, in the analysis of each of

these pieces, I will specifically argue that the exhortational dynamic Bush offers is of particular import to understanding the Goree Island address, and it is the fact that he repeatedly adds these elements to his epideictic situations which makes them unique.

It may seem that my lack of commentary on Bush's addresses regarding the war in Iraq is a gross oversight, but in fact, it is not. Presidential war rhetoric is its own unique genre of address, one which does not mesh well with his apology for slavery, and is not particularly on point or informative for his address at Goree Island. Shepard does good analysis on Bush's attempted atonement in response to Abu Gharaib, and this anlaysis will be noted in the chapter on atonement, but epidictic rhetoric, and its lack of traditional exigency is more synonymous with Goree Island.

I will address the idea of exigency for the mythic/ideological construct I will term 'potential America', then the chapter will move to analysis of the speeches themselves. That will begin by addressing the inaugural and 9/11 speech in terms of the generic analysis offered by Campbell and Jamieson, relating them to each other and in terms of the body of work to which they apply. Next, it will address the idea of the national eulogy in terms of the 9/11 speech and the Katrina speech. Once this groundwork has been completed, I will offer an explanation of the theories being explored, and use examples from each of the three speeches in order to make the case that Bush often used mythic themes of America in order to construct a home for his audience, presenting a gift strongly analogous to, and predictive of, his rhetorical reparations.

As outlined above, Bush uses a technique known as home creation in order to ease his audience's suffering. This concept comes from Michael J. Hyde's paper *The Rhetor as Hero and the Pursuit of Truth: The Case of 9/11* which highlights Bush's use of religious imagery and roles in order to pursue a deconstruction and reconstruction of the truth for his audience in order to answer 'primordial' questions of being brought to light by traumatic events. The real, or the 'always there-ness of here,' is lost in times of great national tragedy, allowing the rhetor, in this case the president, the mantle of heroism in order to deliver the audience to a feeling of security.

The heroic exigency stems from the 'death of similes,' where meaning seems to be lost. The rhetor can provide that meaning, but can only be heroic if he or she can effectively deconstruct and reconstruct meaning while being open to truth, otherwise the act of fluency puts "weapons in the hands of madmen."

The hero, in this way, becomes "godlike," and it seems that Hyde equates the concept of achieving heroism as approaching godhood, able to create, arrange, and adjudicate what is good, right, and true. True, for Hyde, are those statements which correspond with real-world facts, and is decided by an act of remaining open to possibility.

What is important for the study of Goree Island is the function of this heroism. The hero, in an effort to comfort those faced with the heroic exigency, creates a home for his or her audience. This aspect is true of Bush's Goree Island address, and it is not true of Clinton's speech. The home that Bush creates is a unique America, in touch with the crimes of the past, open to the possibilities of

perfection, and available as part of his act of atonement. In order to argue both that this meets the needs of atonement and that it fulfills the requirements of reparations, I will perform a systematic analysis of three incidents in which Bush faced a heroic exigency, and the rhetorical approaches he attempted in all three cases. While he did not always succeed, the strategies highlight an overall rhetorical strategy fundamental to the Bush presidency: the ability to rhetorically construct a perfect America as an image worth striving for and possible to attain.

Home creation, as an aspect of heroism, has at its base the 'call to conscience' which Hyde (1994) takes from Heidegger's work. He explicitly states that this is a rhetorical act: "the call to conscience…summons us to become authentically concerned with the essential nature of our Being…Heidegger contends that once this responsibility is enacted, and other one comes to the fore: that of becoming a voice of conscience for others" (376).

Additionally, the religious pose which Bush adopts requires his ability to be a literal author, in the traditional sense of the word, creating meaning through invoking the establishment of the superstructure to which he is responsible. (Murphy 2006). This concept of authority, key to Bush's ethos, is originally articulated as early as his first inaugural. The religious aspect of this is highlighted by John Murphy, who reminds us that "the story of modernity and postmodernity is a narrative of God's withdrawal from this world, his replacement by the transcendental human subject, and the eclipse of that subject by a 'discursive foundation.'" From his inaugural, where he proved his authorship in the ability to create meaning through the discourse of American foundation,

through his home-creation attempts in the cases above, Bush has adopted this mantle both expertly and often.

While the concepts of home creation and authorship seem innately similar at first glance, it is important to understand the distinction. Home creation requires an acceptance and delivery of an external, although not necessarily objective, truth, authorship relies on invocation of the founding of America in order to generate authority. One speaks to his message, while the other defines his ethos.

I will address his use of authority in all three speeches as well. In doing so, I will use Murphy and Arendt, and will touch briefly on Bush's first inaugural. I will apply the theory of home creation here as well, due to the fact that the results of the 2000 election are necessarily a crisis which creates a heroic exigency, in as much as their unprecedented state removes the ability for simile and resembles the breakdown in civil order Bush experienced during Katrina.

Finally, after I complete those brief analyses I will use them to show how Bush's rhetoric of home and authority precede actual action on the issues, which is a strong analog to how symbolic reparations will function. In order to make this claim, I will support it by citing Hart's use of sociologist Martin Spencer, which argues that "public discourse is a unique phenomenal object possessing both symbolic and performative power, qualities that allow it to exert pressure on social actors by materially constraining their political options." While this seems somewhat typical on the surface, Hart's reading of Spencer (2006) operates with great power because its prescriptive claims reason that rhetoric is as powerful as

any structural force, but often occur before change, forcing the change by speaking truth to power and causing agents to act in certain ways. As Spencer artfully states: "Today's arguments are tomorrow's premises." His work is particularly enamored of the rhetoric of law, which Hart says "is more important…than the law itself" (257). This is especially true for a Heideggerean notion of rhetoric, such as the call to conscience, which concerns itself with moral law, rather than judicial strategies, which define herd morality (Hyde, 1994, pp. 375-6) I will use this in the context of the two quasi-religious theories above to show how Bush, inventor of the rhetorical veto, uses his rhetorical tools to sculpt an America he wants out of the America to which he is beholden for the good of his audience.

Reparations

As for objections to this interpretation of the Goree Island text, the major complaint in the literature is that Bush lays the groundwork for a radical act, but fails to deliver. This idea is given voice by Walter Johnson, who argues that Bush should offer reparations, and that his rhetoric fails to engage the historical narrative in a meaningfully critical manner. Additionally, during classroom discussions last spring, Martin Medhurst intimated that he has an article due for publication on the same subject, also arguing for reparations. This sentence is merely a placeholder until that article is published, and I can analyze it.

In my chapter regarding these objections, I first pursue the line of thought that Bush should offer reparations as part of this speech. Absent an overarching conversation about the potential benefits or deficits of reparations themselves, I

take a more systematic approach to the rhetorical choices surrounding reparations. Focusing mainly on the work of Jacqueline Bacon (2003), among others, I isolate the various arguments chiefly favored by rhetors who oppose reparations. Using this taxonomic approach, I show that Bush clearly avoids all of these attempts at blame denial and responsibility shifting. Since he avoids the traditional methods of sidestepping the debate or refuting reparations on face, while maintaining his stance of atonement, it is clear that Bush intends a radical act of some sort.

My contention is that Bush's idea of a radical act is part of his home creation, that by rhetorically constructing a perfect America, and offering his audience a chance to participate, he creates the necessary space to both demonize the past and offer a gift for the future.

This interpretation is preferable because it meets most portions of Johnson's criticism while taking into account the rhetorical tradition which isolates the means of persuasion available to Bush. I will also analyze Johnson's framework for critical race relations, problematizing radical notions in the context of a pragmatic rhetorical approach. There is a forced dichotomy created in which on choice of narrative necessarily forecloses the other, when the overall goal of both pragmatic and critical understanding is similar if not the same.

Finally, I employ Derrida's theory of the gift, which argues that, when part of a democratic tradition, a gift (such as emancipatory legislation) from the majority to the minority necessarily has one or more of three intentions: narcissism, to create a sense of debt, or to foreclose real change. (Williams and Arrigo, 2000 and Arrigo and Williams, 2000) By studying Delgado and Stefancic

(2004) we see that reparations would fall into this trap, specifically the third aspect, ending questions of guilt and foreclosing future change. Additionally, this would have a chilling effect on future legislation to aid other minority groups, as they indicate is empirically the case. (10)

Home creation does not have to succumb to this, however. The act of ending, which Derrida opposes, is avoided if the gift in question is one of infinite value, rather than a discrete, finite value. For Bush, America is such a gift. The act of reconciliation is an iterated series of identifications, as I will explain, meaning that ending does not have to occur.

The ongoing process of reconciliation highlights the effectiveness of rhetoric. While it may seem less tangible than financial or legal redress, rhetorical acts do not have to end or be finite in any way. Instead, rhetorical acts can act as constraints on future presidents, or be powerful precisely because they are not as tangible, and limited to strict rules.

This is especially true when discussing the president. He or she engages in rhetoric of unique power, whether in terms of influencing mass audiences or establishing future constraints on the office of the president. For Bush, he may never say the word "sorry" or "apologize," but in doing so, he avoids the act of ending so indicted by Derrida. What he does, however, is to take the blame for slavery onto mainstream American history, rewriting the narrative of emancipation in the process, placing the agency for liberation with African Americans. That can not be undone, and it does not end.

Other non-concrete acts bolster his efforts. When Richard Nixon went to China, it was impressive not merely because he was the president. He was also a strident anti-communist and former member of HUAC. Bush's racial legacy follows him to Goree Island, and highlights the radical nature of what he is doing. This seems completely out of character. Perceiving this, Bush couples it with his faith, discussing Christian aspects of slavery, meaning that he pairs his authentic perception and one that is not nearly so easily accepted.

Definition of Reparations

Law reviews tend to take a fairly myopic approach to reparations, limiting reparations schemes, somewhat unsurprisingly, to legal remedies. When discussing the definition of reparations, Eric A. Posner and Adrian Vermuele (2003) posit a legal perspective, but goes a step further, claiming "a wide variety of policies, programs, and decisions have been described as reparations, and the various cases are connected only by a series of family resemblances…we might, without linguistic impropriety, use the word 'reparations' to describe a scheme which dispenses with any of them." (691) It is for this reason which Posner attempts no definition of his own, only creating guidelines. Other authors do attempt to define reparations, but little consensus exists as to what constitutes an act of reparations other than the most obvious and benign element, it must compensate a group done wrong by the group who did wrong. There is no conclusive consensus that it must be financial, legal, or even be declared as reparations. Some scholars accept, either tacitly or explicitly, the idea of rhetorical reparations, a symbolic act, carried out through rhetoric, apologizing for

a crime and attempting to reorient dominant discourses. For some authors, only a phenomenological idea of reparations is possible, it must be a big event, akin to the publisher's clearing house sweepstakes, complete with oversize novelty check. For quite a few, affirmative action, welfare, and other programs are reparations.

Bush does not offer phenomenonological reparations at any point in his presidency, and there exist a multitude of possible reasons for that. It is interesting, though, that he does not, explicitly or implicitly, offer any of these excuses in the speech. Even though his speech does not center on reparations, one might expect any speech as overtly racial in composition given by the chief executive to suggest the use of rhetorical strategies which justify a lack of action on the issue, and the fact that Bush strenuously avoids these arguments is telling in and of itself. By studying the common strings of arguments put forward by opponents of reparations, we can get an understanding of what Bush opts out of saying, not just to avoid the conversation about reparations, but to sidestep similarly radical legislative proposals. If he does not choose these strategies, then it stands to reason that he has a different approach in mind, something significantly radical, in order to assuage his audience.

After the rhetorical discussion, I will investigate the epistemological criticism Johnson offers, and determine if Bush is indeed guilty of propagating problematic histories. By juxtaposing the pragmatic concerns of reparations with the critical discussion of Johnson's historical criticism, a difficult dichotomy emerges, with heated argument over the idea, place, and value of agency which is

impossible to ignore. For the pragmatists, concern is centered around the question of place, whether or not the agency of liberation is placed in the hands of Africans in America. Johnson and his critical peers believe this is a false starting point, and want the question of agency removed from examination, as it represents another form of white gift of freedom which is not theirs to give. From this duality, it becomes impossible to choose an approach which does not violate at least one approach.

Finally, I will propose what I believe Bush offered instead of phenomenonological reparations. Rather than offer a dollar figure, which is discrete in nature, and therefore must correspond to a discrete crime, he offers America as he envisions it, capable of the kind of perfection required to be a suitable offering to those born into the legacy of slavery. Using Derrida's theory of the gift, I will argue that this approach is preferable to reparations for a variety of reasons, particularly that it avoids the pitfalls Derrida highlights of obfuscation, narcissism, or a demand for reciprocity, while reparations would be guilty of all of these.

The Reparations Debate

For Bush, his objection to reparations in general is somewhat immaterial. Whether he opposes them for economic reasons, due to expediency, or from an ideological perspective, the end result is the same. Bush would never offer reparations, so he won't make that concession in this speech. Maybe he should have offered them at some time, maybe not. What is more important is that Bush was aware of the debate around reparations, and chose not to engage the easy way

out offered to him, instead creating an atmosphere in which approaches as radical as reparations are valid conclusions. Bush could have used any of a number of excuses, or tailored his speech differently, but instead delivered a speech which could cause him problems.

Jacqueline Bacon (2003) has done important work delineating the arguments generally employed in the reparations debate. Her analysis offers the following approaches for opponents of reparations: construct historical narratives of white innocence, denial of injury and/or responsibility, construct a narrative of white heroism, privatization (separating current whites from historical inequity), selective forgetting, and the use of discrete, dualistic categories (traditionally a Bush favorite). The first three approaches constitute rewriting the historical narrative regarding whites' and blacks' roles in slavery, while the last three reorient the speaker/audience's position vis-à-vis that narrative. (174)

Occam's razor seems to suggest that Bush should either offer reparations or take an easy out to avoid the criticism that comes with the lack of legislative action accompanying this speech. The fact that neither approach is chosen, then, leads to a different set of conclusions. Either Bush is cynically pandering to a segment of voters he historically struggled to reach, or Bush is offering a singular moment of racial transcendence in an otherwise insensitive presidency. As unlikely as it sounds, the latter is the approach which makes more sense. There are simpler ways to pander to his voters. First, why threaten the rich white population, which constitutes his base? Second, there would be simpler ways to pander. Perhaps taking one of the easy outs highlighted above would be

successful. Keep in mind, this speech predates Katrina by nearly two full years. What we are left with is a president who is using his powerful ability to rhetorically create a perfect America to ease the pain of slavery.

Conclusion

Therefore, this thesis will follow the guidelines and order of the prospectus itself. I will address Clinton's speech generically and as a means to inform the exigency Bush faced. Next, I will generically categorize the Bush speech and perform analysis to see why he used atonement and whether or not he succeeded. I will follow that with the quick case studies of Bush's inaugural, his National Day of Prayer speech, his two speeches at the opening of hostilities in Iraq, and his address during Katrina. I will explore all of these for generic elements of home creation and authority in order to understand how Bush employs religious roles, and how they fit his overall rhetorical strategy. I will then apply both of those theories to his Goree Island address. Finally, I will prepare a theoretical and taxonomic approach to symbolic reparations, because if Bush can successfully create a gift worthy of the mantle of reparations, he can certainly achieve both atonement and heroic status. All three of these concepts are key to understanding the rhetorical choices Bush makes during his presidency, one which takes the modern rhetorical presidency in new directions.

CHAPTER TWO

Atonement and Law in Redress for Slavery

Before Apology: The History of Reparations Proposals in America

The entire history of successful lawsuits for reparations by an aggrieved group in America is incredibly short. The only time the United States government has given reparations in this model was after World War II, when it gave reparations to the Japanese-Americans who were relocated to internment camps. This is also the simplest of legal cases regarding reparations: the aggrieved were alive, had been recently harmed, and could show both legal violation and present a bill for the loss of property.

Of the three groups most often discussed in regards to reparations, African Americans probably have the worst legal case to receive them. African Americans, Japanese-Americans, and Native Americans all suffered heinous human rights abuses, but in addition to the Japanese-Americans' case, Native Americans could show specific treaties, signed in good faith by representatives of the government, which were violated. African Americans can not ever do so, as horrific as the crimes against human rights that they suffered were, those actions were not against the law of the land. While a lawsuit against insurance company Aetna was brought for their role in the slave trade, insuring the value of slaves was not illegal. Aetna apologized and established a trust for minority

scholarships, but the other companies named in the suit were not as willing to come forward.

That is only one part of the reason that the courts and legislature have been reluctant to offer reparations. The courts do not have jurisdiction to rule outside of a legal framework, and legislators are dealing with an unpopular proposition with thorny moral underpinnings. No slave or slaveholder is still alive, large portions of the population were not here during the time of slavery, and even those whose families were here can make a valid case for the difficulty in tracing guilt: less than 5 percent of the population during the antebellum period owned slaves. Contrast this with Bush's claim that 1 in 7 people in America at the time were the property of another, and a vivid image of severe economic disparity arises.

While it is clear that slavery was a gross and flagrant violation of moral and ethical standards, and a betrayal of the founding principals of America, the victims of which were undeniably harmed, what is less clear is who the perpetrators were, their connection to modern-day America, and what process should be used in order to compensate the victims.

Corlett warns us against using that difficulty to side step the moral question of reparations. For him, reparations should occur, no matter the difficulties in implementation: "even if it were the case that no proposed reparations policy to date is plausible for whatever reasons, it would not follow logically that African Americans are not owed reparations of a *just* nature." (Emphasis original, 192) He continues, explaining that using the lack of

pragmatic solutions to prove the lack of necessity for reparations reverses the logical flow of causality. Roy Brooks, whose work in the field is excellent, concurs: "Focusing on compensation before apology is the moral equivalent of placing the cart before the horse. And the attempt at punishment slakes the appetite for revenge but does little to foster racial reconciliation in a society like ours" (142).

McWhorters explains that this motivation for reparations has come into fashion in the last 45 years as the rhetoric of Jesse Jackson has dominated the stage of racial politics. He contrasts this with W.E.B. DuBois, whose perspective did not accuse white folk, but glorified African Americans, and finds that emancipation narratives now focus on guilt rather than redemption. This is crucial, because recent movements repopularizing the debate over reparations focus on guilt, and therefore are willing to adopt a new strategy: seeking apology. Again, Brooks explains this well: "Racial reconciliation should be the primary purpose of slave redress. It is what gives the idea of slave redress its forward looking quality." Reconciliation, thus, "necessarily begins with the government tendering an apology…This path to slave redress - the atonement model - embraces the core belief that redress should be about apology *first and foremost*" (Emphasis original, 141-2).

The emphasis, both in terms of italics and focus, on apology and justice as prima facie burdens for reparations help to delineate the aspects of reparations which are concrete and which are more ethereal in nature. For many readers, it may seem that reparations efforts are necessarily financially remunerative, and

exclusively so. This is not the case. Many aspects of a reparations regime require financial redress, but as we will see in the next section, those questions always stem from a need for African American access to white institutions, whether they are economic, social, or political. From Sherman to the present day, financial remuneration has been seen as a form of access.

Keeping the notion of access in mind, part of the history of racial politics in America has been to create institutions designed especially for access. Whether affirmative action, equal opportunity employment, and other social programs were originally conceived of as reparations or not, and regardless of the efficacy as institutions, their creation has changed the concept of reparations considerably in the last 40 years or so. Also keep in mind, as those institutions have failed, or at least perceptually failed, reparations efforts get replaced by repatriation efforts, a signal that a present day reparations regime would need to consider extant institutions created for access as at least a significant component of reparations.

What is still lacking, then, is the less concrete aspects. Returning to Corlett and Brooks, it seems like the two most important things which are lacking are justice and apology. Both of these can be handled rhetorically. The value of Bush's Goree Island Address, as a form of reparations, is that it can create identification, and begin a process of (re)conciliation, as I will examine in the next chapter.

Part I: Reconstruction Era Reparations

Before the end of slavery, redress had been discussed in legal circles. The first recorded effort toward slave redress was the repatriation movement, which began in 1759 in Massacheusetts. (Brooks, 4) This movement can be classified as the beginning of reparations, but for the purposes of atonement and political efficacy, these movements are not worth including in the frame. Individual suits create a terrible venue for rhetoric of atonement or dialogues of (re)conciliation. Instead, I will focus on reparations for groups. Brooks highlights the difference here as one between private and public reparations (5), which is valid, but this ignores the lawsuits against Aetna, which would be group apologies from private corporations.

Additionally, the repatriation movement of the 18th century was an inherently separatist movement, while reparations have always been much more the province of integrationist efforts. In any case, one of the intellectual children of this movement was Marcus Garvey, and his efforts will be detailed in the section on the Nation of Islam.

The first form of group reparations occurred during the last year of the Civil War, when General Sherman promised 40 acres and a mule to freed African Americans. By the end of the year, he had given out 400,000 acres of land to freed slaves. 40 acres and a mule was the start of a family farm, and began the debate over reparations. This was also the beginning of a quid-pro-quo policy with African Americans, which characterized reparations proposals not in remunerative terms, but as a way to stabilize equality of opportunity. Access to

economic success, and its resultant autonomy and agency, was available to anyone with a successful farm at the time, and this state of affairs offered employment opportunities that would not be seen again until after reconstruction.

Andrew Johnson did away with this policy after Lincoln's death. The policy of doling out 40 acres and a mule was never codified law, and was not even proposed on the floor of congress. Sherman enacted the policy by fiat, using "Special Order 15," as codification, and distributing land that his army had conquered. While Senate Bill Number 60 is often thought of as the first legal attempt at reparations for slavery, it did not include land grants. Johnson vetoed this bill anyway, and an amended version was passed after his second veto. Johnson was not a fan of reparations; he also vetoed the first Civil Rights Act, in 1866, the Reconstruction Acts, which would require states to register all African Americans to vote, in 1867; in 1868, congress voted to impeach Johnson, but were a single vote shy of the two-thirds majority necessary for a conviction.

There is an argument to be made that Johnson's politics, and not his ethics were really at fault. Historian James Ford Rhodes explained Johnson's inability to engage in serious negotiations:

> As Senator Charles Sumner shrewdly said, "the President himself is his own worst counselor, as he is his own worst defender." Johnson acted according to his nature. He had intellectual force, but it worked in a groove. Obstinate, rather than firm, it undoubtedly seemed to him that following counsel and making concessions were a display of weakness. At all events from his December message to the veto of the Civil Rights bill, he did not yield to Congress. The moderate senators and representatives, who constituted a majority of the Union party, asked him for only a slight compromise. Their action was really an entreaty that he would unite with them to preserve Congress and the country from the policy of the radicals. The two projects which Johnson had most at heart were the speedy admission of the Southern senators and representatives to Congress and

> the relegation of the question of 'negro suffrage' to the States themselves. Johnson, shrinking from the imposition on these communities of the franchise for the colored people, took an unyielding position regarding matters involving no vital principle and did much to bring it about. His quarrel with Congress prevented the readmission into the Union on generous terms of the members of the late Confederacy. For the quarrel and its unhappy results, Johnson's lack of imagination and his inordinate sensitiveness to political gadflies were largely responsible. Johnson sacrificed two important objects to petty considerations. His pride of opinion and his desire to win, blinded him to the real welfare of the South and of the whole country.

Before we continue, it is also worth noting that Johnson's impeachment was not due to his support of anti-reconstruction practices, and his political failings may be attributed to drinking. There is a case to be made that his impeachment followed directly from alcoholism:

> But the Radicals were delighted at their new opportunity. The *Independent* expressed its horror at the spectacle. In Congress and the Departments, word was passed that Andy had been intoxicated when he made the Washington's Birthday speech. "Last Thursday," one of the clerks of the House of Representatives wrote to a friend: "Andy made one of the most disgraceful speeches at the White House ever made in this country. He has been drunk for a week, and was when he vetoed the Freedmen's Bureau bill last Tuesday." With such canards as evidence, historians generally fix February 22, 1866, as beginning of Johnson's downfall. (Milton, 293)

When the Land Grant Bill was finally passed, it established the Freedmen's Bureau, a government agency designed to assist free slaves' integration into reconstruction-era America. It created 4,000 schools, 100 hospitals, distributed food, and helped to reunite families separated by slavery. The agency lasted until 1872.

Around the same time, most accounts say 1866, the Ku Klux Klan was formed in order to maintain a pro-slavery, anti-reparations system throughout large swaths of America. They brought significant political pressure and threats

of violence to bear on pro-reparations republicans, making any work in that arena significantly more difficult. As Jim Crow Laws went into effect in the south, both conventional and social pressures fought against reparations movements, and no significant change would occur for many years. Along with Johnson's Christmas Day Amnesty for confederates, and many southern and Midwestern republicans voting against party loyalties in Johnson's impeachment, political favor was against reparations for slavery.

This delay is significant, and as African Americans were deprived of voting through institutional and social pressures, should be noted. One of the main modern arguments against slavery is one of time-frame: for many modern Americans, the time for reparations was in the middle to late 19th century. The mind-set which allowed slavery, and its little brother, Jim Crow, to exist widespread at the time is responsible for a lack of reparations, and would need to be addressed in any modern apology.

The other important aspect to note is the control of access. The attempts to control or offer autonomy to African Americans at this time all relate to access. Sherman offered access to the economy, the Land Grant bill offered access to education and healthcare, and the KKK was designed to prevent access to voting and political power. Reparations were always a question of access, never of retribution, remuneration, or punishment. When modern objections to reparations occur based on the ethics of a policy, rather than the efficacy of finding the aggrieved or the perpetrators, they almost universally frame reparations proposals as punitive in nature, rather than as a form of equality of opportunity.

Part II: Black Nationalism

While black nationalism is not a traditional call for reparations, discussion of it is important because of the way that groups like the Nation of Islam articulated their motivations. The reasons given for black nationalism were questions of access and equality of opportunity, and they exemplified a notion that the institutions of reconstruction had failed.

Malcolm X, in "The Ballot or the Bullet," explains this feeling well: "[This] year [is] when all of the white political crooks will be right back in your and my community with their false promises, building up our hopes for a letdown, with their trickery and their treachery, with their false promises which they don't intend to keep."

The result of this is a situation, beginning with Marcus Garvey in the early twentieth century, in which the Nation of Islam and other Black Nationalists tried to create a public sphere of their own, in effect attempting to enact the changes of the Freedmen Act which had not come to fruition. The idea of black nationalism was to create a self-contained economy and society in which African Americans could interact with autonomy, similar to the schools and hospitals first proposed in 1866.

Malcolm explains what he thinks of as reparations, and it fits this model well:

> "The black nationalists, those whose philosophy is black nationalism, in bringing about this new interpretation of the entire meaning of civil rights, look upon it as meaning, as Brother Lomax has pointed out, equality of opportunity. Well, we're justified in seeking civil rights, if it means

> equality of opportunity, because all we're doing there is trying to collect for our investment. Our mothers and fathers invested sweat and blood. Three hundred and ten years we worked in this country without a dime in return -- I mean without a dime in return. You let the white man walk around here talking about how rich this country is, but you never stop to think how it got rich so quick. It got rich because you made it rich."

The NOI has not given up on reparations. Today, the National Coalition On Black Reparations in America (NCOBRA) has at its head several high level members of the Nation. They are not particularly active, their website is rarely updated and its links are broken. When modern discussions of reparations occur, the organizations most often referenced are the Reparations Coordinating Committee, or the organizations suing for apologies. While black nationalists have never made explicit reparations an a priori reason for their existence, calls for reparations have faded even further into the background of their causes. In the 1960s, ironically, it was civil rights which are a big part of this. The need for a separate black state is no longer a popular position, and the institutions against which groups like the NOI and NCOBRA aligned themselves are referenced in scholarly literature as examples of effective reparations efforts instead of tools of oppression.

Additionally, the perceived comparative success of Martin Luther King's civil rights movement successfully marginalized the ideas of Malcolm in reference to reparations. Soandso effectively argues that the loudest civil rights voice of the last half century, for better or worse, is Jesse Jackson's, and his efforts have focused on white guilt. This frame helps to explain common arguments against reparations, which focus on the difficulty in assessing and punishing white guilt. It also explains some of the lack of effectiveness of

nationalists' calls for separatism and equality of opportunity. Punitive notions of interaction require togetherness to be enforceable, and suggest that results, not opportunity are the correct barometers of civil rights progress.

All of this may be window dressing. While it is true that Nationalists wanted a series of policies similar to reparations, between reconstruction and the last quarter of the twentieth century, nearly 100 years later, there was not a significant social movement in favor of reparations, at least explicitly. It may seem curious at first that nearly a century goes by between popular movements or political pressure regarding reparations. In retrospect, this is rather self-explanatory; calls for reparations are less important when issues like civil rights are still up for negotiations.

Part III: Forman and Westley Revive the Debate

Along with Jackson's frame of white guilt, one other major change launched the resurgence in reparations within scholarly circles during the second half of the twentieth century. In 1969, James Forman delivered a speech called the "Black Manifesto," in which he argued for remuneration for African Americans from white religious institutions, he wanted money to set up a "socialist state within the United States," in order to repair the harms of capitalism, racism, and imperialism perpetrated against African Americans. Like Jackson, this renewed focus on racism pushed white guilt to the forefront of justifications for legislation. This call was answered by Westley who began to sketch legal arguments both for and against reparations. These legal solutions were punitive and retributive in nature, and sought financial reparations. This was

a watershed moment. While today, popular thought always seems to frame reparations as financial, this is the first instance of financial reparations qua financial reparations within the historical record of arguments for reparations. During reconstruction, financial and legal components were intended to create institutions which would give freed slaves the bare minimum of equal access, such as hospitals and schools which would not turn away African Americans on face. During the Black Nationalism push for its own state, the claim was that the institutions of the state had failed, and only a separate state could allow African Americans the ability to craft ones that would work.

From there, both popular opinion and academic research only viewed reparations through this frame for the rest of the century. Repeatedly, legal scholars attempted to justify the legal case for or against reparations for slavery, while the American imagination increasingly believed that giving reparations would involve a significant tax burden and a large check from the federal government to the descendants of slaves.

Some voices dissented from this. More nuanced scholars made the argument that social programs were forms of reparations, or that a trust should be created for investment in infrastructure in African American communities. For many of them, the discussion of whether America should give reparations was moot. They had been established, and the questions now revolved around allocation and redistribution of the money in those agencies. The agencies resolved the difficulties surrounding access, they represented a tax on the wealthiest to pay for the poorest (thereby punishing those who, in theory,

benefited the most for slavery), and since the legal scholars had significant difficulty reconciling their arguments with the fact that both perpetrators and victims are dead, this was the most likely proposal which could come to fruition.

While these voices are important in scholarly research, particularly when it comes to definitional questions and ones of rhetorical choices, in the popular consciousness the idea of reparations had become irrevocably intertwined with financial punishment, which would remain a stumbling block for any legislation up through present day.

Part IV: The Era of Apology

Finally, in 1988, Ronald Reagan changed the idea of reparations forever. Reagan offered the first Presidential apology to the victims of internment camps during WWII, specifically to Japanese Americans. Later congressional moves would lead to an apology for the treatment of Italian Americans during the same period. The direct result of this apology, in addition to any positive results among Japanese Americans, was a precedent that those in the groups of individuals who sought reparations, for the sake of simplicity, the three groups mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, receiving an apology.

For Gibney, this is an American version of a worldwide change, precipitated by World War II. The Catholic Church, which in many cases condemned the practice of the holocaust, did not explicitly condemn Nazism. After the war, the church began to discuss the various merits of an apology, a debate which continues to this day. This kicked off an era of apology around the

world, including South Africa apologizing for apartheid, a model which many scholars believe should be the model for an American apology for slavery.

From there, apologies for American crimes of the past became a somewhat common occurrence. By the end of the twentieth century, Presidents had apologized for the syphilis studies at Tuskegee, interment, and many other issues.

South Africa's apology may have been on Bill Clinton's mind in 1998, the year after his apology for Tuskegee, when he visited Goree Island. While scholars are split as to whether he intended to apologize for slavery, Fleming would call it a "near apology," which with a little variation on one side or another, appears to be the consensus. His Goree Island speech focused on the benefits coming to Africa as part of the global economy, seemingly oblivious to the irony that the last time the global economy came to Goree Island, slaves were the product.

As the twentieth century closed, then, the American government had granted reparations and apologies to Japanese Americans, but not African Americans. They recognized the importance of apologizing for specific racial monstrosities, such as Tuskegee, but would not do so for the entirety of slavery. The age of apology was not going well.

In 2000, soandso brought suit against a series of private companies for their roles in the slave trade. Most famously, she and her group sued Aetna Insurance for their policy of insuring slaves as property before the civil war. The suit sought an apology for slavery. It was later grouped with other suits her organization had brought to court against other companies, and rejected with

prejudice. Later, the decision was overturned, removing the prejudice but still finding against her. This change means that she could bring suit again, if new evidence were found.

Toward a Rhetoric of Symbolic Reparations

Within the literature base, there is little critical objection to the Goree Island speech, possibly because so little has been written about it at all. Fleming calls it an almost-apology, but generally, even in the context of books and articles discussingapologies and reparations, this speech is overlooked. The main argument against the speech comes from Walter Johnson, who advocates a more critical approach to the idea of slavery, which he concludes should lead to reparations. This point is worth addressing, because it leads to one of the most potent themes occurring in this speech: apologies for slavery, particularly in the context of atonement, are reparations for slavery.

Throughout the history of reparations chapter, I highlighted how reparations as a question of access have given way, first to retributive legal plans, and more recently to apology. As Corlett explains, racism as the prima facie factor of race relations was a very short lived intellectual movement, the guilt-redemption cycle was not in favor for long. Instead, the focus has been on agency, which means that white guilt should not be the cause of reparations. (Corlett, Fleming, Gibney). As Fleming succinctly stated: "Reparationists must not trade apologies for monetary compensation. Apologies are the prime objectives of most reparations efforts: acknowledging a wrong and committing oneself to make the wrong right (103)."

Fleming feels that atonement as a form of reparations is "making the past right by eliminating the systems of inequality that permitted slavery and segregation (97)." Robinson explains that reparations should make black America "whole." While Robinson references this from a monetary standpoint, the goal is sound. The question for those seeking monetary retribution: how much value do you put on lives and souls? By embracing Robinson's goal but dismissing his criteria, we can also avoid the criticisms of Horowitz, who believes that reparations are racist, in that they divide the country and punish white people who may not deserve it. As the apologists point out, these kinds of criticisms all assume financial retribution.

Avoiding criticism is not the only benefit to apology as the frame for reparations. It is worth arguing that apologies for acts like slavery are crucial to the functioning of America. Hassman and Gibney summarize what an apology could mean for the victims of past atrocities:

> "Our hope is that these apologies will have political consequences; that they will lessen the level of bitterness, anguish, and desire for revenge among victims; and that they will engender in perpetrators a genuine feeling of remorse. If all this happens, in some if not all cases, it will contribute to reconciliation and trust, both elements, we believe, that are crucial for democratic civic interaction (8)."

The framework for that atonement was covered in the methods chapter, and can be explained summarily as an authentic attempt to address the wrongness of a group's actions, creating the space for a dialogue in which the other is valued, and a process of negotiated identification can occur. It must include repentance, penance, and a description of the sins committed.

The Role of Rhetoric in Reparations

The first question in an atonement reparations scheme should be: what is the function of rhetoric? Is it enough for a piece of rhetoric to stand on its own, or does it necessarily require action for it to have validity? Next, it is important to establish the criteria for reparations. Finally, we should look at the question of a gift, and what it means. Could a gift of reparations meet the criteria the speech outlines?

Terrill focuses on the specific question of the efficacy of rhetoric in political change regarding race in the first chapter of his book on Malcolm X. Terrill faces a similar challenge to the one facing an investigation into any racial rhetoric: how do we delineate successful and unsuccessful rhetoric when so many factors interact to create an atmosphere for change? For Terrill, the answer is to remove the question of efficacy entirely. Instead he believes that orators should be evaluated theorugh the interpretation of texts rather than an overall effect on the arc of history. His articulation, of rhetoric as action, not only justifies the interpretation most effective for this speech, without it, he argues, we lose entire bodies of work, in his case, that of Malcolm X. For those who want to discount Bush's rhetoric on race from the conversation, they have to be comfortable eliminating Malcolm as well.

Instead, there should be an evaluative quality attributed to creating space in which action can occur, or choosing not to foreclose action through rhetoric when it is likely that rhetorical choices could create an end point for movements already occurring in the status quo. 2-3

Specifically, this avoids the what orator does/might have done/effect from speech immediately/other effects debates which transpire in quantitative circles, and reorients study to the speech itself. Rodrick Hart highlights this problem in the thought experiment he proposes in *The Prospect of Presidential Rhetoric*. In it, he imagines a world where massive databases fail, and all statistical information about the presidency is lost. For him, the role of those who study presidential rhetoric is unchanged; we should not try to focus on the questions which can be answered quantitatively in the first place. Freed from those constraints, it becomes very easy to study the text of presidential address absent questions of before and after, cause and effect, or similar hypotheses which might better fit our neighbors in political science.

For Bush, this is an effective mode of study, because although as President he oversees vast power, his role when speaking at Goree Island is more akin to Hart's National Priest than it is to a chief executive. First, he is speaking in a foreign country, directly addressing a foreign audience, who are not subject to his power, although certainly could be made recipients of his largesse. Additionally, even to his American audience he is speaking from a pulpit which calls for near-religious sacredness, not crass pragmatism. Discussion of economics while attempting to atone for sin would be akin to discussing the dollar values of a will during the eulogy. Fleming makes this point as well, wondering how anyone could put a dollar value on the spiritual damage done during slavery. Bush discusses the crime of slavery as a spiritual crime, to pay for it in greenbacks would not fit.

Finally, the word "reparations" is dangerous. Certainly, the fascination within academic circles toward financial redress is matched in its myopic obstinacy only by the public view. As such, offering reparations explicitly, even in the context of apology, is politically charged in ways that would detract from the importance of the speech he was giving.

Walter Johnson

While Walter Johnson's critique concludes that Bush should have offered financial reparations at Goree Island, there are aspects of his premise which must be addressed as well. His general argument is that the Bush speech is meant to foster a culture which doesn't change, obfuscating the history of slavery. This is a serious charge, as it is impossible to both hide the past and fully atone for it. It is important to understand the crime for which Bush is atoning, both for him and for the audience. Without understanding, the audience is unable to acknowledge atonement.

There is an unstated forced choice in Johnson's argument. He wants the reader to accept that the Bush narrative is a "recapitulation of the terms of the nineteenth-century Christian proslavery argument that slavery was less a system of racial domination or economic exploitation than a vehicle of salvation." (43) The forced choice comes in with the interpretation of the Christian metaphor. Christianity, as an emancipation metaphor, is not exclusive to nineteenth century whites. Repeatedly, the figures of Christ and Moses are used by slaves as models for their freedom.

Additionally, the claim that Christianity could be the sole purview of any nineteenth century group is ridiculous. Throughout the history of American rhetoric, religion remains at the heart of study. Corlett notes that the act of devaluing slave narratives of Christianity is an act which actively strips agency and identity from the group in question.

For Johnson though, Bush "enlisted the history of millions of lives broken by imperialism justified in the name of Providence to the cause of, well, imperialism justified in the name of providence." (43) Bush does this by suggesting the slave trade "was God's way of revealing the true and underlying meaning of American freedom." The text fails to bear this out, however.

Bush does not mention God until the sixth paragraph of the speech, after isolating the dehumanizing nature of the slave trade, the misery of the middle passage, the heartbreak of separation from family and culture, the indifference of the law, and the violence perpetuated on slaves by their masters. Even then, he evokes slave narratives, rather than his own, so that Africans in America become masters of their own destiny. Again, the forced choice is apparent. Either we assume that Bush is cynically re-appropriating slavery for his own needs, or we can assume a legitimacy of intention belied by the text.

Johnson and Bacon make an unfortunate dichotomy: Either Bush places the efficacy of emancipation in the hands of whites, in which case he displaces fault and denies guilt, or he puts it in the hand of blacks, in which case he is guilty of using the argument of providence in a self-interested way. In either case, any attempt to apply meaning requires an interpretation of slavery which assumes

meaning where there may be none, except as interpreted from our privileged historical position. If assigning any sense of good results in a form of interpretive resentiment, then there can be no meaning present.

Johnson claims this is the problem. He sees slavery as a cliché, "emptied of any authentic historical meaning through their sheer repetition in connection with their supposed extinction at the hands of freedom." 43 I argue that the split between thinkers like Johnson, who see a privileging of the European perspective as an epistemological stumbling block, and the more taxonomic approach of thinkers like Bacon, who favor a pragmatic, present tense sense of narrative, creates an impossible barrier for all but the most schizophrenic critics.

This question of agency is particularly difficult for atonement strategies of reparations, which focus on the perpetrator, rather than the victim. Bush does a solid job of putting the agency of emancipation with the slaves themselves, but Johnson is right that this is something Bush needs to address.

Johnson splits his objection into three stories "structured by unquestioned assumptions and unarticulated arguments – metanarratives – that have reshaped the stories of African and African American [sic] slaves according to the master narratives of American history", all of which I will address here. The first story is "the history of the transformation of African slavery into African American [sic] slavery," 44 which is the way he articulates the question of eurocentrism in the standpoint scholars employ toward slavery. He comments on the factual discrepancy between stories of the middle passage, a phrase employed by Bush, and how the phrase itself assumes a European perspective. Bush avoids this

complaint, though, by acknowledging the loss of time and place Johnson problematizes, enumerated in the crimes of the first few paragraphs. Additionally, this fact-claim is not refuted by Bush, and its omission highlights the terrible dichotomy at the heart of this debate, if Bush were to reference the act of Africans enslaving Africans, he would be guilty of attempting to deny or displace white guilt, as examining the complicity of Africans would become a situation of blaming the victims.

Johnson's next complaint, about the temporal nature of the discussion of slave revolts only after the arrival of slaves in North America, is directly avoided by Bush when he references revolts on the journey over "delivering the closest thing to justice on a slave ship." Bush also, as discussed in the previous chapter, works outside of traditional time, favoring a mythic time frame which seems to avoid this complaint.

Finally, Johnson questions the idea of agency, the traditional description of which he operationalizes as emphasizing, "the fact that enslaved people successfully 'strove to preserve their humanity'" as opposed to humanity being a "simple predicate" for study.

This is where Johnson most specifically diverges from pragmatic criticism, indicating that attempts to restore slaves' agency (as a mode of study) "is an attempt to establish an ethics of the relationship between the present and past, one that frames history writing as a mode of redress." 53 If that is the case, then we must return to Corlett, who sees claims such as Johnson's as removing

authenticity from black narratives, contributing to an overall culture which says that there are no black narratives.

Bush does use history writing as a mode of redress. The difference from what Johnson criticizes is that Bush does not use the paradigm of historical perspective to argue that slavery was in the past and emancipation is in the future as an excuse to avoid action. Instead, Bush uses mythic time to create something extra that he can offer, he rewrites history to include black narratives, and he makes sure not to separate current time from the time of slavery.

But the question remains: Does Bush invoke divine providence to justify American empire? Yes, absolutely. Bush is in another country discussing foreign policy. He makes passing reference to his pet war on terror. This does not foreclose the possibility of legitimate atonement for slavery. Instead, he uses the idea of America, as he has created to offer Africa help with the challenges facing them at the time, and does not mention slavery explicitly at all when discussing his presence. He does not make the connection between America's history of slavery and foreign policy in a positive manner, instead indicating the negative history of America in Africa without equivocation or displacement.

Finally, both Hatch and Brooks view atonement as the first step of a long (re)conciliation project. This is not to say that future inevitably holds an egalitarian utopia, but instead it should be seen as a dialogue with a new opening chapter. Fleming, Johnson, and Brooks all refer to this as a failed apology, but that does not need to be the case. In fact, accepting that this speech is both and acknowledgement and repentance of sin is the correct way to view this speech,

and considering that less than five years later congress offered an official apology of its own for slavery, after rejecting the idea twice in the ten years preceding this speech, it appears to already be underway.

CHAPTER THREE

Generic Criticism and the Goree Island Address

It is difficult for a speaker to apologize without defending themselves or the organization they represent. Doing so requires a faith in the audience to forgive and a belief that there is no other option which will move the organization through the crisis. Any hope that another strategy might work tends to move the speaker toward the strategy which does not foreclose options by accepting responsibility.

Even as I write this, organizational apologia is in the news; the crawl on CNN reads "Toyota apologizes, problems persist." In response to their recall, CNN has set up a website just for this crisis, cnn.com/Toyota. Toyota has done their best to avoid taking responsibility on this issue, and now they are facing a 22 percent drop in their stock value as they have finally taken responsibility. Their advertising campaign plays inspirational music while a voiceover encourages the American shopper that a majestic organization is fixing a one-time glitch in the majestic narrative of Toyota's history of quality.

One surprising element of the Goree Island address is its seeming lack of exigency. The speech was not delivered on a specific anniversary of the freedom struggle; this speech had no crisis motivating its delivery. Instead, part of the lack of notoriety of the Goree Island speech stems from its lack of a larger context to

fit into news cycles. This is not a case where all other options were foreclosed, it is not the same as Toyota's.

Perhaps it is the lack of immediate crisis which allows this speech to function so well. 2003 was nearly 40 years after the civil rights act, it was 5 years before the election of Barack Obama. It had been 11 years since the L.A. riots, 40 years since the Newark riots, and 80 years since the Tulsa Riots. Race relations in America, while tense, were certainly not at the violent peak they had reached for much of the previous three centuries.

The closest thing Bush has to a crisis when he speaks is the ever present threat of terror. In this speech, Bush asks his audience to join the United States in the War on Terror, and in many ways, the speech itself is reminiscent of Bush's address at the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance on September 14, 2001. That speech is also epideictic in nature, and in it Bush must accomplish a complicated goal: he must communicate a threat to the terrorists and create a sense of security for Americans. At the time, Bush focused on his language, making sure to delineate between "America" and "my country," where the former was an idea which could be attacked, while the mundane America signified when he refers to America without naming it, would come through. This allowed him to both engage the rhetoric presented to him by Al-Qaeda (Koesten and Rowland, 2005), while at the same time offering a home to those who needed comfort and security (Hyde, 2005).

Bush does that again at Goree Island, distinguishing between America (when named) as an idea, and the United States (when unnamed) as a mundane,

earthly construct which is flawed and needs a new direction. This split is important, because it allows Bush to engage a mythic sense of America, which I call potential America, to use as a gift, a necessary part of Christian atonement (McNaughton). Additionally, invoking the authority of mythic America, particularly narratives of the founding, allows Bush a sense of authorship (Murphy, 2008), which means he can rewrite the historical narrative. Finally, the split allows a unique form of apologia, where Bush can unconditionally atone for "America," while diverting blame to his unnamed, mundane, nation.

I will begin this analysis with a search for the best generic fit for the speech. I subscribe to a post-positivist view of rhetoric, for a certain value of post-positivism, in which confirmation that a speech fits a category is not enough to establish a genre, but it is crucial, as well, to falsify; I will also show that similar categories do not fit. In doing so, I prevent both the bias of ideology and the bias of laziness from leading me to an easy and false conclusion about the speech.

After establishing the genre of best fit, I will analyze the specific mythic elements present in Bush's Goree Island address, using Rowland's "On Mythic Criticism" as a guide. While there, I will compare this to the address at the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance in order to show that this theory is indicative of a theme of Bush's rhetoric, not merely a specific speech. The mythic elements are important, because Bush's use of mythic elements not only solves a complex problem with multiple messages, it also allows for the continuation of authority, outlined by Murphy and Arendt (2008), granting Bush

the authorship necessary to deliver symbolic reparations, and facilitates home creation, as outlined by Hyde (2005). For the purpose of categorization, they are important to show how Bush achieves his apology; the benefits he draws which are external to this speech will be elaborated in the next chapter.

Apologia, Atonement or Reconciliation: Finding the Best Fit

It is important to make sure that we understand what we are looking for. While a careful taxonomic classification is crucial, it should not be the end point of this discussion. As Sharon Downey (1993) notes, in her seminal work on the subject, "taxonomical fascination…is problematic because it reveals a tendency among scholars to treat the classification of discourse as an end in itself" (42). The value of genres, then, is the predictive and explanatory power they have. Downey concludes that genres help to understand how speeches tend toward similarity, and classification pushes our understanding of the genres themselves forward. (43) John Murphy explains that his purpose in genre criticism: "critics care about the ends sought by a community and the means used to achieve those ends, the ways in which form follows function (608)." This understanding helps us to find the kind of genres with explanatory capabilities.

This leads, inevitably, to a brief discussion of the variety of genres themselves, as outlined by Rowland (1991). Heuristic genres share only non-essential elements, while ontological genres take meaning and existence from the shared elements. Analysis of the forms of these genres should show that they are ontological in nature. The value of determining whether this speech is atonement, apologia, jeremiad, reconciliation, or simulated atonement comes from the

separate goals and situations which are necessary to the genres themselves. Campbell and Jamieson highlight the limited, exclusive, and exhaustive nature of Genre research (1985, 1986, 2008).

Apologia is the rhetoric of self defense (Benoit, 1997, Downey, 1993, Ware and Linkugel, 1973), which contains an attempt to avert or lessen the consequences of wrong doing. Atonement confronts the wrongdoing without attempting to lessen it in any way (Koesten & Rowland 2004, Shepard 2009). Jeremiad uses traditional texts to invoke the religious and mythic dimensions of a bygone time in order to convince an audience they have lost their way (Vander Lei and Miller 1999, Spanos 2007, Bercovitch 1978). In spite of the overt religious tones of this speech, the group isolated as having lost their way is not the audience being addressed; the goal of the rhetoric is not to inspire change in the audience. Atonement is a singular occurrence, whose attempt at reparation and penance come from within the speech act, while reconciliation is an ongoing process. (Hatch 2006: Beyond Apologia, Hatch 2006: The Hope of Reconciliation). Finally, the separation of simulated atonement from the genuine is one of authenticity (Shepard 2009), a tenuous division for analysis, but a significant one in regards to the effectiveness of the message.

In both the previous chapter and the next section of this one, I have detailed the aspects of each genre which are consistent and inconsistent with the Goree Island address. Where there is a disagreement in the literature, I have noted it, because as Rowland and Jerome explain: "although researchers consistently embrace an ontological approach, there is almost no agreement on

what defines a category…Absent a theory-based explanation for why organizational advocates choose (or should choose) particular strategies…apologia/crisis response research will be limited to heuristic description" (193).

Step One: What it Isn't

Reconciliation and Simulated Atonement

For this speech, the best fit could be reconciliation. This genre, or second-degree genre as Hatch (2006a, 2006b) would have it, seems uniquely suited to discourse over slavery. It is based on the communicative framework highlighted by South Africa's reconciliation period, which has obvious relevance to the United States' history with race relations.

Before I continue, I think it might be useful to rephrase the term reconciliation as (re)conciliation, as the literature refers to returning to a bygone era of racial harmony that never seems to actually have occurred in America. Instead, when dealing with the name of the genre, I will use this distinction as a short hand for this objection to rewriting history. This is more than a semantic game, because Bush makes an effort to rewrite the emancipation narrative, and it is important to delineate between a historical narrative which has no factual basis and one which is based on political potential.

Hatch begins by delineating classic apologia from modern apology, arguing that the self-centered perspective of apologia does not give agency to a speaker who is uninterested in face-saving techniques, undermining the ability of

rhetorical scholars to evaluate the needs of racial (re)conciliation discourse. The question of the speaker's authorship and agency is critical, because this determines whether or not the speaker can rewrite the historical narrative, a crucial component in rhetorical action in potential America.

Additionally, Hatch cites Doxtader, who finds that (re)conciliation is "a call for rhetoric and a form of rhetorical activity. In both, individuals locked in conflict employ speech to turn justifications for endless violence into mutual oppositions that set the stage for civil (dis)agreement and common understanding." (189) This seems, at first glance to be the framework that all apologies for slavery should meet. Certainly, it seems to have a more productive outcome than merely apologizing, (re)conciliation uses apology as a springboard for more action.

This is the first sticking point with categorizing the Goree Island address as a piece of (re)conciliation rhetoric: (re)conciliation rhetoric is inherently a piece of a larger process. Hatch characterizes this as the dialectic/dialogic aspect of (re)conciliation, that it is a communication between two parties. While Bush is available to create a dialectic, he does not create a dialogue.

The reason for this could be the multiple audiences with which he deals, a problem Murphy highlights well when explaining Aristotle's lack of clarification of the issue: "Aristotle failed to provide a coherent explanation of epideictic rhetoric that has led to proliferating perspectives…Particularly troublesome to scholars has been the audience (609)." Where the audience judges deliberative or

forensic rhetoric, Aristotle calls upon the audience in epideictic rhetoric to spectate or observe.

With epideictic discourse, the audience is problematic. That said, it is further complicated by the obvious fact that Bush has multiple audiences when he speaks. In front of him, he must apologize to the Senegalese, as representatives of the descendants of the stolen people of Africa. At the same time, he speaks to a mediated audience in America, which is in turn multiple audiences, consisting of African Americans and Non-African Americans dealing with the legacy of slavery there. Even if Bush could be argued to be attempting the first stage of (re)conciliation with his African audience, the message required from that would differ substantially from a similar starting point for his domestic audience, and the ongoing communication which would ensue would most likely be separate and discontinuous.

Bush's messages are not interchangeable. That does not mean, however, that Bush is prevented from engaging in rhetorical choices meant to eventually lead to communication of (re)conciliation from either or both sets of descendants of African slaves. Instead, it should be understood that (re)conciliation is by necessity a long-term goal, while apology, whether as an image-control/self-defense rhetorical act, or one full of genuine sorrow and repentance, is more temporal. Therefore, it could be argued that genuine apology or atonement is necessary for (re)conciliation in the long run, when an audience is varied, disparate, and distant. When the needs of audiences differ, so too must the long

term rhetorical strategies applied by a speaker when engaging those audiences be diverse.

The mythic frame Bush employs is not only diverse, but contradictory with his mundane frame. At Goree Island, mythic America is blameless, while mundane America is guilty of incredible sins. The contradictory nature of this discourse offers Bush incredible freedom to offer explanations to multiple audiences, but it also allows critics to indict whichever frame they see fit as either exceptionalist discourse (Johnson, 2006 and Hartnett & Mercieca, 2007) or not actually an apology (Johnson, 2006 and Fleming, 2008).

Authenticity

All of this hints at a larger question inherent in this speech, and possibly in any act of atonement or process of (re)conciliation as rhetoric: what is the goal of rhetoric? I subscribe, generally to an Aristotelian definition which favors persuasion, if for no other reason than it seems to be the basis of most of the literature base and has some prima facie resonance with me, but the Kenneth Burke (1950) definition seems especially useful here. What if we consider the end goal of the rhetorical act not persuasion, but identification? Certainly, Hatch agrees with this. For (re)conciliation, it is easy to see that the process of identification is useful. Each step of (re)conciliation is an attempt to articulate understanding of the other's position and identity, while attempting to make your own seem more palatable to the object of your speech act. Over time, this process iterates until identification, to varying degrees, has occurred on both sides.

When atoning, this need to identify with the harmed party is always necessary as well. In questions of authenticity, the ability to articulate the suffering of the aggrieved is a necessary first step to show that the speaker understand what needs to be rectified. From the Aristotelian perspective, this is an act of ethos, in which the orator shows that he or she has the qualification to speak.

This question of identification is not purely academic either. As a gauge of authenticity, this might be the simplest way to rectify Ryan Shepard's (2009) criticism of Bush's atonement rhetoric. For Shepard, Bush engages in what he calls simulated atonement, in which a rhetor fails authentic atonement because he or she does not sincerely believe the apology he or she is making. This definition is not without difficulty, however. While Rowland articulates the necessity of authenticity as the prima facie burden for the rhetor interested in atonement, trying to peer into the decision making 'black box' is impossible for any critic. Even a modified definition, looking at the perception the audience has to the orator's sincerity, is hardly better than scrying. At what point is the critic doing more than reading his or her own mind? This is particularly true in the case of Bush, who may be more disliked by rhetorical scholars than any other modern president. (Hartnett & Mercieca, 2007)

In order to resolve this, identification can be useful. Whether meant as the basis for ethos or as the goal of the rhetorical act, it can be understood that effective identification, in which the orator attempts to articulate the feelings of

the audience and gauge the significance of the harms for which he or she is atoning can be the basis for questions of authenticity, sincerity, and the like.

In the Goree Island address, Bush meets any threshold for identification which can be laid before him. In order to ensure that he identifies enough, he paints a picture of the crime of slavery two ways; for his audience in the United States, he uses the rhetoric of crime, and for his audience in Africa, he discusses the spiritual nature of the crime itself. This is important, because spiritual crimes are the highest crimes, but they are the purview of the almighty. Mundane crimes can be punished by people. Slavery is a crime of infinite nature, revealing the spiritual depravity of the people who engaged in it, but it is also something which we can resolve.

This perspective also resolves the question of multiple audiences with some elegance. As an act of identification, Bush obviously can not craft the same message to multiple audiences. Using multiple identification strategies for multiple audiences thus highlights the beauty of potential America as a rhetorical strategy. By differentiating between the two and displacing blame onto the mundane, he can offer a home to his African audience, something to share if the communicative process continues toward (re)conciliation. By placing the agency of emancipation with the Africans in America, he can identify them within a frame which allows the descendants of both slaves and slavers a chance to work together, sharing a mythic story, in creating potential America.

Christianity

The religious images Bush uses paint the picture of a faith accepted by slaves and slaveholders alike, with redemptive powers able to overcome the sin of slavery. In addition to subtle references to Biblical stories and an intentional conflation and juxtaposition of emancipation metaphors, Bush uses Christianity, as its own identity to establish the ethical framework and themes he will use in the speech. This allows him to make reference to divine crimes, use a Christian theory of atonement, and maintain a mythic dimension. At the root of this is the notion that freedom is divine, not given by humans: Bush argues: "Those rights were granted by the Author of Life, and regained by the persistence and courage of African Americans themselves."

McNaughton shows the value of Christian theology in illuminating the idea of atonement by explaining that while the traditional recompense for wrong-doing involves an active process in which forgiveness is strictly the purview of the aggrieved, Christian tradition does not require forgiveness to be offered for the wrongdoer to atone. Instead, "atonement is an attempt to annul, as far as is possible, the bad consequences of the wrong-doing," This is crucial, due to the one-way nature of epideictic rhetoric and public address.

Additionally, this offers a stricter and more relevant threshold than Tikkun, from the Jewish tradition, favored by Rowland and Jerome, and implicitly applied throughout the literature. Tikkun has three elements, according to Perlman: confession, a promise not to repeat the offense, and actually not repeating the offense. (2) The difference is two-fold: first, it is somewhat valueless for Bush to promise not to legalize slavery; there is literally no risk of

this happening. Second, Tikkun does not account for attitudes or mindsets underpinning the action. The Jewish proverb that a person cannot be punished for his or her thoughts necessarily precludes the ability to atone for ill feelings, negating the need for an apology for the mind set which allowed slavery to exist, and confirming that as ridiculous an interpretation as I may have offered regarding the legalization of slavery, Bush could not do more within the scope of Tikkun.

Instead, the Christian tradition, according to McNaughton, forces Bush to account for two sets of wrongdoing: "first, the harm done to the victim; second, the morally reprehensible attitude toward the victim displayed in the wrongdoing." (129).

Bush attempts to do this throughout the speech. His reference to the corrupted souls and twisted faiths of slaveholders are an act of both self-declaration of guilt and an indictment of the morally reprehensible attitude of Americans of that time. He also does not use time-frame as an excuse. He argues that the ability to see the wrongness of slavery is not due to historical hindsight, but lists emancipators at the time, including John Adams, who he cites as showing America the sin of slavery.

So, to conclude the section showing what categories the Goree Island Address does not fit: while reconciliation assumes a process approach, atonement does not. While the act of identification is crucial but not the end point of atonement, it does look to the idea of reparation and penance (McNaughton, 130). The important distinction here is that the act of reparation and penance come from

the act of atonement itself, rather than a further process. What that looks like will be addressed in the next section.

Step Two: What it is: Atonement and Apologia

Throughout this speech, it is important to understand a crucial distinction Bush makes with his rhetoric, essential to the creation of a mythic frame. While he engages in atonement for America as a mundane nation, guilty of the sin of slavery, he maintains an apologetic tone for Christianity. For Bush, Christianity is a common redemptive theme in his epideictic rhetoric, and he calls on the almighty in order to evoke the mythic side of America on a regular basis. In the Goree Island speech, this is most obvious in his linguistic choices.

Bush refers to "my country's history" when referring to slave ownership, he refers to "nations" in the western hemisphere, Equiano is taken to "the New World," "My nation's journey toward justice," and similar throughout the speech. The mundane America does not get a name. The mundane America is guilty of the crime of slavery. This is Bush's major act of blame displacement. America is not guilty, my country is.

America, by name, acts against these sins. "The spirit of Africans in America did not break," In America, Africans learned of the Bible. African Americans held up American ideals, by exposing laws that were unjust and mundane.

America, by name, is the province of mythic heroes. "The rights of African Americans were not the gift of those in authority." They were divine.

Phyllis Wheatley is a hero of emancipation in Bush's narrative, and she is identified as American. Americans, according to Bush "reexamined their hearts

These crimes were divine in magnitude, but mundane in nature. Bush equates them to temporal crimes. This split allows him to acknowledge the mind-set behind slavery, describe the harms of the crime as infinite, but still offer a penance as part of atoning. However, this penance must at least attempt to compensate for the infinite nature of spiritual crimes.

The effort of atonement here is a complicated move to atone for his nation, apologize for America, and if he can succeed in delineating the mundane from the mythic, then he can offer what remains of mythic America as a gift, which is the definition of potential America. The question now is how effective he can be at both of these strategies simultaneously.

Apologia

When evaluating apologia, the first question needs to concern the possible outcomes of the rhetorical situation. One of the rhetorical strategies highlighted by Jamieson and Campbell (1982), among others, is the outright denial of either the act or the blame. In this case, denying the factual basis of slavery is not an option. The blame itself is a more interesting question. Jacqueline Bacon (2003) has done the most on-point work here, outlining the rhetorical strategies most often used in denying the need for or the application of reparations, many of which include a displacement of blame, which focus on the causal relationship between slaveholding and modern day Americans. For many Americans, the

question of actual slave-holding does not apply to them, their families immigrated after reconstruction. For others, the legacy of slavery comes through muddied historical waters which obfuscate family roles, or more simply: just because great-granddad owned slaves does not mean I bear any responsibility. Temporal distance is the first opportunity Bush has to excuse modern America from blame.

Instead, Bush brings the narrative of slavery into the current time frame. Bush says that "My nation's journey…is not over," elaborating that bigotry did not end with emancipation or the end of segregation. His earlier examination as to the harms of the sin of slavery serve him well here; by avoiding a body-count driven, mundane analysis, he can place current faults directly in line with slavery.

I will discuss Jacqueline Bacon's finding in more detail in the chapter on reparations. For the next section, I will turn to Benoit's work on apologia. Benoit outlines a number of strategies organizational apologists can undertake in order to diver blame. I will show that none of these are on display in Bush's speech.

Before I do so, I want to briefly discuss why I am doing this. Obviously, no discussion on apologia can take place without discussing Benoit, generally the most recognized expert on the subject. That said, I am strongly persuaded by J. Robert Cox (1981), who cautions against an acceptance of argument by definition, in which categorical theorists use lists of elements they find in the literature as if they are exhaustive, without discussion of why the definition is the way it is. (1981)

The reason I use Bacon and Benoit is that I feel their work best represent two separate aspects of the literature base: Bacon is the most specific to empirical

examples of self-defense when regarding reparations, Benoit has the most broad categories in the apologia literature. His work is exhaustive, as long as one answers the question: is this rhetoric of self-defense? I contend that it is a defense of mythic America, but not mundane. In the next section, I will look more closely at the strategies Benoit articulates as the most likely to be used by a speaker when defending themselves or their organization. By showing that Bush does not use them, I hope to indicate that my reading of the speech goes beyond the surface level, where it appears that Bush atones. By using the specific measures of Benoit, I think I can show that.

Is the sin defensible? As argued above, Bush does not attempt to defend the sin of slavery, for obvious reasons. Slavery is as universally wrong as an act can be, and choosing a rhetorical strategy opposing this would be ineffective and morally indefensible.

Does he bolster? Some argument could occur here, as the final passage describing the war on terror could be an act of bolstering. If Bush believes that the war on terror will receive a warm reception with either of his main audiences, then it stands to reason that offering a place alongside him fighting terrorism to his audience is an act of bolstering. The temporal and logical displacement that this would require is substantial. Bush is more likely attempting to converge norms, and in doing so, the invitation flows in the opposite causal direction. It reads more easily that if the Africans (and African Americans) who constitute his audience accept his atonement for slavery, then he would like to work with them on policy issues regarding terrorism.

Does he differentiate? This might be the simplest move for Bush to accomplish, and one of the most likely. If Bush could successfully differentiate the current American people, or America itself, from the ones guilty of the blame, he could successfully adopt a mantle of mortification and move on. Bush does not attempt to do this, identifying the perpetrators of slavery to be Christian and able to understand the immorality of slavery even at the time. Bush says, "We can fairly judge the past by the standards of President John Adams, who called slavery 'an evil of colossal magnitude.'" (2) He is not trying to argue that slavery was a product of the times in which it occurred, or a select group of individuals who are fundamentally different. Instead, he extends the time-frame and crime into the modern. For Bush, America's journey "is not over." (2)

Mundane Atonement

Bush accepts the blame for slavery, a crucial aspect for atonement, when in the fourth paragraph he says that "one in seven people were the property of another." Doing so allows him to take ownership of the sins outlined in the previous three paragraphs, even though each of those is not identified as having an actor. Throughout the speech, he indicates that America, in one form or another is guilty.

There are other significant aspects of atonement which are important when evaluating Bush's speech. Rowland (1991) argues that three factors are required within a consistent genre: "perceived needs, limiting purposes in confronting those needs, and societal limitations on appropriate rhetorical responses." Koesten and Rowland (2004) then delineate those three factors for atonement.

They contend that Clinton's speech seeking atonement for the Tuskegee experiments and his response to the radiation experiments are examples of atonement which respond to a perceived need within the country, who had developed significant sympathy for the victims of both experiments. The purpose, they continue was to confront public arena wrong-doing and purge public guilt. Clinton's approach does not follow the traditional method of apologia, but responds to the perceived needs of the nation and attempts to accomplish the dual goals of expurgation and confrontation.

Is Potential America mythic?

The two main questions regarding mythic discourse are what it is and why it matters. *Communication Studies* presented an entire issue dedicated to debating the qualifications for mythic discourse, explicitly answering the former, and implicitly the latter.

Myths are important because they are "a key aspect of all human culture (Rowland, 102)." From Joseph Campbell, Rowland explains that "myth serves mystical, cosmological, sociological, and pedagogical functions (102)." These functions serve as terministic screens, return a jaded aufience to the cosmic, and reveal truths which are considered timeless.

Myths are often a form of continuation of a glorified past, which helps explain why "myth serves as a means of helping humans deal with the crises of life (102)." In the context of the presidency, Campbell and Jamieson (2008) remind us that the primary function of the inaugural address is to tie together future and past using symbols from speeches by Presidents who have come

before, Murphy (2008) uses Arendt to explain that in these speeches, authority and authorship are intertwined, and are accessed by the speaker by retelling of foundational myths. It is useful to remember that the functions of myth for the rhetorical president are orthodox in nature; it is useful also to note that Skrownek's idea of political time would place Bush as the third in the Reagan political line, constraining his rhetoric to be an orthodox reformation or reaffirmation of the two previous presidents in his line.

For Bush, myth is a way to reaffirm and reform an orthodoxy by mobilizing extant, powerful symbol systems from the history of his religion and country, re-appropriating them if necessary. While his rhetoric is constrained, the power of myth can allow him to appeal to higher authority, and place his authority past his predecessors'. When Rowland discusses the various functions of myth, he eventually groups them under one common purpose: "answering human problems that can not be answered discursively (102)."

Defining Myth

In *On Mythic Criticism*, Rowland (1990) lays out the foundation of mythic criticism. He proposes a constellation of five elements present in myths: a story or narrative, loosely formed according to dream logic at minimum. Myths need heroes who can conquer evil, or I would add, are part divine, like Achilles, Hercules, or Gilgamesh. They occur outside of traditional time, either in the distant past or in millennial time, in which he explicitly includes the founding of America, tied to this is the setting of a heroic place, which I will address in length in a moment. The final aspect, which Rowland says may not be necessary, is

archetypal language, which Rowland indicates is the least important aspect and the most difficult to identify.

Most of these elements are obvious in potential America, both at Goree Island and after 9/11. Bush tells the stories of victims at both occasions. He creates heroes of divine nature at Goree Island, and explicitly discusses conquering evil after 9/11. He uses the founding of America, in both cases, as a form of authority and to create a distant time. As for the heroic place, the onset of powerful new symbols at the fall of the Twin Towers immediately turned Ground Zero into a mythic place, complete with capital letters. As for archetypal language, Bush uses rhetoric drawn from foundational documents at both occasions. At Goree Island, he invoked the Declaration of Independence, stating "life and liberty" are what was bought and sold there. At the National Day of Prayer and Rememberance, he is not given the choice to invoke the founding of America as explicitly, with its questions of freedom and independence. In order to comfort those mourning, he must invoke a shared foundational history of comfort, and he turns to religion. In that speech, he uses Franklin Roosevelt as an explicit example when he calls for unity, and then supports this with calls to the almighty to give courage and comfort to those who walk in sorrow, a reference to Jeremiah 31:13: "I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. (King James Version) And of course, the image of walking in sorrow, when deployed in discussion of 9/11, will also invoke Psalms 23:4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of

death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (King James Version)[1]

In both speeches, Bush crafts a simple Manichean narrative of good and evil. For the 9/14 speech, he does not give an ending, but he tells the story of sacrifices made by average Americans. He uses juxtaposition of before/after imagery so that he doesn't have to describe the act of terrorism: "They are the names of men and women who began their day at a desk or in an airport, busy with life. They are the names of people who faced death and in their last moments called home to say, be brave and I love you." He uses three-part juxtaposition next: "They are the names of passengers who defied their murderers and prevented the murder of others on the ground. They are the names of men and women who wore the uniform of the United States and died at their posts. They are the names of rescuers -- the ones whom death found running up the stairs and into the fires to help others." When he does this, he discusses the edges of his story without recounting the violence of the events. He discusses passengers (passive victims), uniformed representatives of the state (active workers who died doing their jobs), and rescuers, all of these seeming to act above and beyond the call of their duty. In each case, the implicit story is framed: 'passengers who defied' is a logical split marking the beginning of a story outside of normal action, men and women dying at their posts continue this disruption, and the rescuers run

[1] Two interesting notes here: The first, is how much the themes if Jeremiah fit the rhetorical situations of 9/11 and Goree Island. Neither speech is a Jermiad, but the themes of a great people who have lost their way and of a city destroyed are impossible to ignore.

The Second note is that this Psalm is one of the most famous passages in the old testament, and its message is one that fits the 9/11 speech so well. Bush wants people to put faith in a higher power, and he wants them to be rid of fear. Chapter 23 is full of this imagery - verdant pastures and cool waters – if anything, it is surprising that this passage is not more explicitly invoked.

back into fire and up stairs, returning us to the story of violence in an infinite loop. Bush identifies these as the stories of 9/11: "We will linger over them and learn their stories, and many Americans will weep."

At Goree Island, the narrative aspect is present as well. Emancipation, as Johnson notes, tends to be told as a narrative. For him, placing slavery in the past and total racial harmony in the future creates a narrative which discourages the need for action. Bush tries to avoid this, as I will discuss in the reparations chapter, but the emancipation narrative is certainly present. Bush refers to it as a journey and a story, and he tells it in a progressive order.

I have already discussed Bush's use of heroes in the National Day of Prayer and Rememberance speech to some extent, and it is also worth noting that in addition to telling the stories of sacrifice above, he also describes heroic action on that day from the point of view of some exceptional stories:

> "And we have seen our national character in eloquent acts of sacrifice: Inside the World Trade Center, one man who could have saved himself stayed until the end and at the side of his quadriplegic friend. A beloved priest died giving the last rites to a firefighter. Two office workers, finding a disabled stranger, carried her down 68 floors to safety. A group of men drove through the night from Dallas to Washington to bring skin grafts for burned victims. In these acts and many others, Americans showed a deep commitment to one another and an abiding love for our country."

He contextualizes that passage as indicative of the national character, which is not earned, but revealed:

> It is said that adversity introduces us to ourselves. This is true of a nation as well. In this trial, we have been reminded and the world has seen that our fellow Americans are generous and kind, resourceful and brave.

> We see our national character in rescuers working past exhaustion, in long lines of blood donors, in thousands of citizens who have asked to work and serve in any way possible.

For Bush, heroism is offered to the audience as part of being an American.

At Goree Island, heroism is a trickier subject. Being an American is not enough, instead heroism comes from truth. Hyde agrees with this, but might not agree with the value of truth Bush has in mind. The heroes of the Goree Island Address are those who could see the eternal values of America and Christianity, and strive to enact them in the face of great evil. He makes explicit reference to specific emancipators, and argues that their souls were more pure than their captors, due to understanding the universal values of the almighty. This might seem a bad value for truth, until you remember that truth in myths is both subjective and eternal:

> Mythic/ideological symbol systems are especially powerful because they serve as totalistic devices for explaining the world, providing a sense of identity, and putting the individual in touch with the transcendent…A myth in this sense is not a false story, but is a true story that is 'believed in one sense or another by the people who tell it' (Rowland and Frank, 2002, p. 26)' (58)

Finally, addressing Rushing's concern, Bush does not create anti-heroes, because this would reify the story which places agency for emancipation with white people. In order for Bush's myth to function, the white people of the story are made villains, while emancipation is the basis for heroism. This will be important when we discuss Johnson's criticism as well.

Without veering too much off course, simply arguing that the mythic aspects of Bush's Goree Island address fit Rowland's framework is not enough to merit that the speech is mythic. There are many criticisms of Rowland's frame,

and they should be addressed. The two criticisms fall, generally into two camps: those who say that Rowland is too strict, and those who argue that myth, as a frame, is a function of the critic's bias.

Janice Hocker Rushing (1990) exemplifies the work which calls Rowland too narrow. She problematizes the factors which he uses for categorization, and argues that some mythic systems are creative and progressive, rather than orthodox and reaffirming. Finally, she argues that many of the categories Rowland highlights are unidirectional, when bi-directionality is preferable. I will discuss this last one first.

The idea that most of these categories could be seen as a spectrum, with valid entries on either end is an interesting one. While myth necessarily has heroes, she says that it could also have anti-heroes and villains. The hero, she contends, is not crucial, but the idea of a character above mere mortals is. Examples include Satan or Frankenstein. For place and time, the myth could focus not on the past, but on the future, and not on an idyll but on a wasteland, examples here include the apocalypse, or any myth about the other, in which they are contextualized as evil or savage.

The categorical question is not a critical one, at least for this speech. Bush mixes heroes and villains (emancipators and slaveholders), and places and times of mythic greatness (America at its founding, America in the future) with their counterparts (the middle passage, America in the time of slavery, the slave exchange at Goree Island). Certainly, if this were the only criticism of the mythic frame, it would not be worth mentioning.

The question of reform is more troublesome. For some rhetors, the use of myths is not a reaffirmation of symbols, but a re-appropriation, redeployment, or reform of the symbols themselves. This can be an incredibly powerful use of myth, like when Bush invokes the "axis of evil" from WWII to demonize Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, or when Bush attempts to steer the gay marriage debate away from fundamentalism (Medhurst, 2008).

For Bush, however, this is not the case. He does not take the stance of the poet, but of the priest. While Rushing may be correct that this function is equally important, it is not necessary for our analysis. A similar argument will be made on the question of breadth which she raises.

Bush's speech matches, with great success, the narrow definition of myth which Rowland establishes. As such, it is easiest to argue that Rushing's question of breadth is inconsequential: if Bush meets a narrow definition, he will meet a broader one. Any loosening of the categorical definitions, role, or function of myth will still include Bush's speech, which is at the heart of the original frame of mythic discourse. At the beginning of this section, I discussed the functional nature of presidential rhetoric, and the orthodox nature of Bush. All of that should be read as reasons to affirm a definition which looks to the function and orthodoxy of mythic criticism.

More troublesome, then, is Brummett's objection, typifying those that do not care for Rowland's method of proposing a discourse. Rushing argues that Rowland's reformation of myth "imposes its own mythic worldview of functional empiricism on the conceptualization of myth, and encourages a sterile form of

criticism that reduces the interpreter to a passive recorder of events (136)." This is where Brummett picks up. While Rushing offers a sophisticated, close reading of Rowland, Brummett takes a similar thesis to Rushing and employs it more globally. The two of them look to escape structural empiricism, and its inherent relationship between form and function. This may not be the best approach for my work, simply due to the functional nature of presidential rhetoric. That said, Brummett offers an interesting perspective on how myth should be theorized. He argues that all categorical research is analogous to a child's toy blocks. The critic arranges the pile of blocks into one shape, say a castle, and argues that the blocks fit into the category of castle. That said, the blocks could as easily make a spaceship, or a robot, or any of a million other things. The act of preferring one shape or another is a creative act, and it originates in the mind of the critic, not the rhetor.

Brummett says that "Good criticism comes as a surprise…it must disrespect the discourse which has come hitherto." Brummett, Rushing, and Rowland bring to light an interesting conundrum for categorical theorists. By categorical theorists, I am not exclusively referencing genre studies; gender theorists, postcolonial thinkers, or anyone else who must label something as either 'meets standard x' or 'does not meet standard x' are in a similar situation. For these people, criticism is both more and less than the creative act that Brummett describes, simultaneously as disrespectful as he aims and as reverential as Rowland. What neither of these authors discuss is the possibility that categorical studies always require a thorough knowledge of the literature base so that the

category can appear to the critic. Additionally, determining not only best fit, but addressing which standards are the most applicable is a constant dialectic between extant thoughts on a particular subject. Finally, the act of organizing the symbols along the theory is, as Brummett describes, a creative act. It is all three: an act of revelation, of analytics, and of creativity. The critic then must constantly make choices among them and within each branch, and those choices must be justified. The critic must come to grips with his or her biases and articulate them in order to achieve some standard of objectivity, which is an act of deconstruction; and for me the final piece of the puzzle is one of a perverse act of devil's advocacy, attempting to use as many off-the-wall perspectives as possible toward a piece of rhetoric in order to falsify claims and add fresh perspectives to my work. It's likely that as pithy as Brummett may be, he neglects many facets of the critical lens.

Much of the sentiment here can be summed up by John Scalzi, who writes the popular blog *Whatever*, "Any idiot can follow rules; indeed, there's a good argument to [be] made that idiots can only follow rules" (2008). Scalzi continues to delineate the difference between Judaism, which looks for philosophical starting points in religious texts and the fundamentalist Christian sects which look to the same books for lists of rules, a move mirrored in the atonement literature. At some point, there is value in creating rules, and there is some in following them. The structural empiricism favored by categorical critics seems like mindless rule following from the outside, there is something to be gained. To say that a series of symbols is part of a category is to say that it follows the rules of

the category, and to be able to use a broad base of literature to understand how it falls in the continuum of symbols, what it means, perhaps even what the creator intended. In that way, it is a peak at authorship and authority, or the scientific impulse which Nietschze calls "looking up her skirts." (1989) If we say this speech is atonement, and we know that atonement functions this way, then we have learned about the function of the speech. Scalzi is right that idiots follow rules, but in the end it is not the critic who is following them, it is the text, and the point of categorical criticism is to take an elusive set of symbols, and let it explain what rule set it wants to follow, and for the critic to do everything he or she can to be prepared and willing to rewrite rules to fit the text.

All of this brings me to my final point, which is that potential America falls outside of traditional atonement, forcing us to rethink what the theory means. It offers something extra, which forces us to ask, what is this new thing and why is it here? Bush uses myth, authorship and authority to prop up a conception of America which can be deployed for an audience to feel at home, escape questions of mundane truth, and even apologize for slavery. But it does not end there. In the next chapter, I will explain how potential America is a form of reparations for slavery.

Analysis

In the first paragraph of his speech, Bush lays out the major themes with which he will be working, juxtaposing fear and cruelty with respect and friendship, addressing past wrongs, and making reference to the body of rhetoric which has aided in the transformation of America, specifically the Gettysburg

Address and the Declaration of Independence. The reference to Lincoln seems obvious, as the great emancipator his role in the abolition of slavery can not be understated, but what is more surpirising is that Bush moves to separate himself from Lincoln by the end of this speech, placing his moral judgement ahead of Lincoln's. He does this by placing the agency of emancipation with the slaves themselves, rather than Lincoln.

Moral judgement is at the heart of Bush's rhetoric. As he attempts to position himself as the rhetorical hero, it is his moral judgement which he places at the heart of his heroic competence. For Bush, the journey through history is a constant struggle of ethical choices: leaders selecting from competing goods, which creates heroism. For Bush, the Goree Island speech allows him to make moral judgements instead of ethical ones. His lack of exigency removes the notion of competing goods from his calculative frame, replaced by an opportunity to make moral claims, which is always simpler, even if the ability to speak seems more difficult.

The moral language he uses at the beginning of his speech also augments his later claims of America as the home for the world, right and wrong are drawn from the body of common texts in American history: "dedicated to the advance of human liberty" is taken nearly directly from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. "Liberty and Life," as he starerts the second paragraph mimic the language of the preamble to the Declaration of Independence, both a treatise on American freedom, and a later jumping off point for arguments in favor of civil rights.

Bush uses juxtaposition both explicitly and implicitly here. As he juxtaposed the fear and cruelty of those involved in the slave trade with the respect and friendship America has for Africa today, he also juxtaposed the language of human rights with the language of economics. He starts with the claim that "life and liberty were bought and sold" and continues to use economic language throughout the second paragraph, including: delivered, sorted, weighed, branded, commercial enterprises, and cargo. When he calls the forced migration of the slave trade one of the greatest crimes of history, the crime in his language is of a spiritual nature. The language of commodification is at the heart of his claims of brutality, and other than his depiction of the middle passage, he spends much of this speech relating crimes to spiritual damage. While a law is only valid if a harm can be articulated coming from it, Bush argues those harms are of a spiritual nature, originating from commodification rather than the physical, manifest harms of forced labor and genocidal practices of ethnic cleansing.

After his description of the middle passage, Bush returns to his juxtaposition of both positive and negative values to economic language: life to sold, anguish to unpaid labor, human bings to property, rights to commerce, and marry to possessions. He concludes the paragraph with an oxymoron: the "comfort of suffering together" which creates an understanding that the suffering experienced by slaves went beyond traditional suffering to an ontological suffering of a deeper level, the removal of the family unit creates a suffering qua suffering.

The suffering as the harm of slavery as crime is articulated at the beginning of the next paragraph: "For 250 years the captives endured an assault on their culture and dignity." The assault is not on their rights or bodies, but harm comes in with the destruction of culture and dignity, fundamental human rights, perhaps even fundamental to the ontology of humanity. Bush stops short of calling this a genocide, although the destruction of culture would meet the denotative definition. Perhaps Bush fails to identify slavery as genocide to avoid the obvious conclusion in the minds of the audience: that the crime of slavery is in lives taken or generations lost, instead of Bush's belief that the crime of slavery is a spiritual crime, violating spiritual laws, and causing spiritual harms.

Bush makes the claim that the Africans in America were not destroyed, that their spirits "did not break.." He then juxtaposes this with the spirit of their captors, which was "corrupted" The juxtaposition of the spiritual content of the two creates a stark contrast, wherein the divine nature of right and wrong is called in to mediate. He specifically cites Christian men and women for violating "the clearest commands of their faith," claiming that divine right and wrong should be invoked when evaluating slavery, and that Americans had failed that clear test.

While he goes on later to call slavery a sin, he begins the spiritual elaboration of sin and slavery in the old testament, using the phrase "hardness of conscience" which calls to mind the pharaoh in the Exodus story, a narrative which Bush calls on repeatedly as both an articulation of the crime of slavery and a metaphor for the struggle of freedom.

The exodus metaphor is used repeatedly in speeches from the freedom struggle, and here Bush first juxtaposes the old testament exodus story with the aspect of Jesus as emancipator, likening Christian ideals with slaves rather than Americans. He uses the Declaration of Independence here as a site of questioning of American ideals: when the Christian values of Americans have failed, and the enlightenment values of foundation documents are not being upheld, then American ideals have failed. This begins a major theme for Bush throughout the speech, which is using America as a transformative event: America can be both the problem and solution, and he starts the process of creating a home for his audience. He does this by extolling the virtues of the slaves themselves, suggesting that virtuous slaves transformed America.

His first reference to the virtuous slave is Olaudah Equiano, who invokes God's love and divine judegment to deliver spiritual salvation to the slaves, in much the same way that Jesus did for enslaved Jews…

Bush shows that African Americans, both slaves and free, have "upheld the ideals of America by exposing laws and habits contradicting those ideals."

Also, keep in mind the value of this religious discourse to both moral judgement and terrorism. (Conspiracy theory of evil)

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion, Future Research, and Ethics

Future Research

This thesis took quite a long time to come together, and one of the reasons for that is simply that I refused to make choices. Over the last several months I have deleted over 100 pages of false starts and extraneous chapters, usually in the early stages of development, but some tragically advanced. With this in mind, the idea of future research should probably begin with those questions currently cluttering up my hard drive.

The mythological component of the Goree Island address is endlessly fascinating to me. The idea that a speaker could maintain multiple contradictory frames across multiple existential spectra, and do so persuasively, deserves significant critical attention. Research looking into Bush's other apologies, for example Ryan Shepard's dissertation, which questions the validity of multiple uses of atonement by Bush, should be good places to start. I wonder how often and diversely he engages this strategy.

When he does not create potential America, there must be a reason. While it is important, according to Brooks (2008), to study apologies that do not occur, it is equally important to look at mythical frames he does not deploy. Speeches which require him to apologize for acts of mundane America may require this

strategy, but personal apologies for administrative scandals, Abu Ghraib comes to mind, may not.

The converse of this strategy is the enthymematic deployment of language to vilify his opposition. For example, his call for a ban on partial birth abortions or his "Clean Skies Initiative," both frame the choices of the opposition in morally repugnant ways. Since potential America is created simply by the use of specific terms, does the changing of terms affect opponents' ability to do the same?

Murphy (2008) has examined Bush's use of myth and authority in his inaugural, and both he and Campbell and Jamieson (2008) equate Bush's 9/11 speeches with a second inaugural. It would be interesting, then, to examine what elements of those speeches actually become part of his second inaugural, and which onesbecome a part of his overall ceremonial rhetoric. Once the contraints of the situation are removed, he has carte blanche to create mythic frames regularly, and elements of the inaugural should be examined.

At one point, I wrote an entire chapter looking at the theories of authority, home creation, and Rowland and Theye's (2005) *The symbolic DNA of terrorism.* I feel that Giorgio Agamben's state of exception literature, Hyde's (1994 and 2005) use of Heidegger, Hartnett and Mercieca's (2007) Baudrillard-based criticisms, and other such criticisms could be answered with ideas from the literature base surrounding myth. The creation of myth as an answer to these criticisms, with their appeals to truth and democratic ideals also offers an excellent jumping off point for a dialectic between axiology and ontology that informs so much of the presidential discourse field. At some point, scholars need

to decide whether they are citizens first, or if they feel an overarching pull towards objectivity. To my mind, much of their criticism starts from a concept of politics heavily influenced by democratic humanism in an unhelpful way.

Certainly, if Bush fits the mold of the rhetorical presidency, which he seems to, and the criticisms are valid, then it seems that the idea of the presidency is problematic. At some point, it would be helpful to understand where these points of interaction are, in order to better understand the field, and some of the ideological baggage it entails.

As for the reparations section of my thesis, future research should continue to look at apology, specifically after Bush's apology, and the formal apologies advanced by congress more recently. Once these apologies occurred, (re)conciliation should have begun. Whether or not that is true, I would also suggest a skeptical eye be turned toward anyone else who claims that America needs to apologize for slavery. While the distinctions made after both Clinton's and Bush's Goree Island address may be defensible in some contexts, in the wake of a formal apology, it seems that asking for more apologies from the government means an impossible standard, and delegitimizes much of what has been written about the power of apology.

It will also be interesting to see what Obama does about reparations. Claims of reparations are dangerous things, since the public is so against any plan which uses that word to describe slavery redress. Rush Limbaugh described recent health care reform attempts reparations as a way to mobilize conservative support, and no shortage of legitimate news outlets were quick to call this racist,

most indicative of this was CBS. Reparations, as a term, is politically charged. Of particular concern for Obama is the idea that social programs he suggests will be labeled thus in order to harm their chances of success, for no other reason than he is African American. Googling the phrase "Obama + reparations" gets no less than 3 different conservative outlets calling his actions reparations, each for a different plan: Frontpagemag refers to a secret agenda, Newsmax and the Conservative Times say he's giving reparations to black farmers, which are due to a secret plan to help African Americans, and several others make more general claims. One poorly spelled entry in PR-today suggests that as "presidet," "Barry" can not be trusted, even when he says he will not give reparations, because he has told other audiences he wants to. Clearly, what Obama does in terms of reparations, and what he does in terms of social programs, will be hotly contested.

Summary: What we Know

Simply put, at Goree Island Bush delivered an apology for slavery (or didn't, depending on whom you believe), he engaged atonement, which is the currently preferred framework for understanding reparations. The repearations he offered, then, are the potential starting point for a larger dialogue about reconciliation.

It could be argued that Bush took the lowest cost option. He didn't say the words "sorry" or "reparations," two words with dangerous political liabilities. He didn't follow this speech with a push for legislation which would change the financial outlook of race, either through institutions of social equality or through a rebate check similar to his tax cuts.

All of that misses the point. Bush took a much more significant strategy, one which required him too admit a spiritual culpability on behalf of Americans, during a time of war no less, when there was no specific impetus to make any concessions at all. Bush could have left the issue of reconciliation for the next president, as so many had done before.

It is also worth noting that the idea of the gift that Bush offers engages Derrida in an interesting way. Soandso note, in *The Racial Double-Helix,* that moves like Brown v Board of education function according to Derrida's notion of the gift, which goes from a majority group to a minority one in order to assuage a movement and stop it from progressing. It can also be used to show the magnanimity or grandeur of the giving party. Certainly, classic ideas of reparations could fall into any of those traps. The reparations offered at the time of reconstruction were rolled back, economic disparity which began to narrow during the Civil Rights Era of the 1960s have begun to widen again, and social programs certainly have hegemonic notions built-in, whether through blood quantum, or requiring milk for a largely lactose intolerant minority population.

Symbolic reparations do not have to do this. First of all, very few people seem to even know of this speech. Secondly, when offering an apology or agency, it is very difficult to take them back. In both cases, they remove hegemony rather than increasing it. Finally, the question of magnanimity is more thorny. There is literally nothing anyone can do that can not be argued is a way to make them look better. That said, the infinite nature of both sin and redress that Bush discusses balance out any claims of American blamelessness in a way that

best off sets this. Additionally, one must wonder which would better display American excellence more, an apology and admission of guilt, or simply cutting a check. Keep in mind that these do not have to go hand-in-hand; decades passed between legal redress for internment and Reagan's apology in 1988.

The way that we got to where we are was anything but straightforward; it could accurately be called the story of lowering expectations. Slaves started by wanting repatriation, and according to Brooks (2008), Thomas Jefferson was only too happy to give it when he could, believing that whites and blacks could not live together in America. Racial politics developed slowly over time, along the twin religious ideas that Americans were not acting like Christians, and that God created all people equally, among other philosophical threads. This integrationist move did not reach reparations activists until James Forman's "Black Manifesto" in 1969, by which time Malcolm X was dead, and the last of the Nation of Islam's repatriation, nationalist, and reparation efforts were seemingly dead with him. The after-effects of this convergence was a legal frame meant to increase integration through social programs and trusts which attempted to create equality of opportunity, similar in starting point to the proposals Andrew Johnson rejected a century before. Seemingly, all the minds were headed in the same direction, one which could never occur due to the politically poisonous nature of reparations schemes implicating current time-frame whites as perpetrators and beneficiaries of slavery.

When Reagan apologized for internment in 1988, he kicked off the age of apology in America. The movement for powerful corporate agents to apologize

to the powerless had been popularized by responses to World War II, particularly among the Catholic Church. Later, Clinton apologized to diverse groups of individuals, including the people of Goree Island in Senegal, and Bush finally atoned for the act of slavery on behalf of America.

Along the way, the calls for reparations changed from institutional and legal recourse to seeking atonement, as the loudest voices in the debate began to concede that the punitive nature of financial remuneration no longer fit the moral frame of slave redress. At the same time, they felt, *something* needed to be done. The rhetoric of reconciliation in South Africa seemed to be an ideal mold.

None of that should imply that groups do not seek financial reparation. The National Coalition on Black Reparations in America (NCOBRA) and others still exist, but have moved farther to the fringe. Groups like the Reparations Coordination Committee (RCC) have sought more moderate results, and have retained relevance.

These changes, and Bush's role in them, have not changed his perception among African Americans. As I outlined in the introduction, even after his 2003 apology for slavery, Bush was seen as a pariah among African Americans for his role in the Katrina debacle, and his attacks on social services. While Bush could offer African Americans a narrative of their own, the black community has been slow to return the favor.

Ethics of My Method

There can be no way around the fact that I am white. I am a straight, white, male, of suburban background. I will never understand the African American experience from the inside, and any intelligent observer would ask me to at least clarify my objectivity after reading a thesis which begs for a revisionist view of Bush's racial politics.

When I refer to whiteness, however, please do not assume that the whiteness of my skin is to what I am referring. Instead, whiteness is a concept best defined by Balfour (year) as point-of-view-lessness. From a standpoint epistemology perspective, my starting point is the hegemony which is being indicted in every article. As an attempt to shine light on my point of view, and not claim the hegemonic defense of the scientific method or of objectivity, I think it is worthwhile to explain how I see presidential rhetoric and genre criticism.

There is really no doubt in my mind about the masculinity of the field of presidential rhetoric. With the exception of Campbell and Jamieson, the reading lists which can be found in *Prospects of Presidential Rhetoric* and on syllabi around the country are astoundingly male dominated. Even for Campbell and Jamieson, the president is always male. I find it disconcerting within the literature base when authors refer to the president as 'he' when discussing potential presidents or discussing theory. This field places a significant amount of its legitimacy on studying the constraints current thought has on future presidential action and possibilities, and assuming masculinity can be seen as the

worst form of anti-feminism. Whenever possible in this thesis, I have referred to the president as 'he or she.'

This masculinity, as a form of normativity, underpins genre studies as well, which attempt to develop a series of boxes into which to sort discourse. The taxonomic impulse is one which isolates otherness and discovers what doesn't belong, reaffirming stable norms. As it were, Adam named all of the animals.

From this perspective I can find little recourse. I am not a post-structuralist; the work of Judith Butler is brilliant and useful, but not ultimately my end goal. Instead, I view masculinity through a Sartrean lens, which assumes 'man' is a construct structuring society, and 'woman' is a position all of us take in reference to that object. Attempting objectivity is an act of identifying with the construct. I find this problematic. While it may be a valid perspective that engaging in hegemonic masculinity is a necessary act of performing my gender, I doubt it is what queer theorists intended.

Rather than attempting to reconcile this or explaining it away by displacing it onto my source material, I will simply say that I try to remember it, and am conscious of it, while at the same time, I see no way around it. If one presents itself in the future, without endangering my intellectual project, or the objectivity I crave, I will be more than happy to engage it.

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