

ABSTRACT

The Rhetorical Dimensions of an Apology for Slavery

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This paper will discuss the theoretical and practical applications of an apology for American slavery. It will focus upon former Representative Tony Hall's 1997 and 2000 request for a congressional apology for slavery. The rhetorical dimensions of the sociopolitical apology in regard to American slavery process will be the primary focus. Three methodologies will be utilized 1) historical materialism, 2) Dialogism, and 3) Living Systems Theory. Each methodology will focus on different aspects of narratives in both African American and European American communities in order to better understand the rhetorical processes that would need to be utilized in order to create a viable and meaningful apology for slavery.

The Rhetorical Dimensions of an Apology for Slavery

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife and my family, without there support I would have not been able to do this.

CHAPTER ONE

A Look at the Current Status of an Apology and Tony Hall's Proposals

The issue of race in the United States is one that raises more questions than the American people or their government can fully answer. The biggest question though comes with respect to the history of slavery, and what can be done to change the racial divisions that persist to this day as a result of the peculiar institution. The troubling statistics available in census reports, news media, and academic reports still show a tangible disparity between the quality of life for African Americans and white Americans. There are those that believe that this differential is the result of years of discrimination dating back to slavery, and then there are those that are reluctant to take this assessment for different reasons. Black and white Americans reach different conclusion, as to the degree to which African Americans are disadvantaged and what causalities contribute to race inequity.

To date there has been no formal acceptance of responsibility on the part of the United States government, or a formal statement expressing remorse for slavery. The government has issued apologies for the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment (1932-1972), Japanese Internment Camps (including reparations), has made reparations to Native Americans for the harms done to them, and has apologized to native Hawaiians for displacing their government.

Given all of these apologies it seems that the American government would have long since apologized for their role in slavery, but no President or Congress has made a

formal apology to African Americans on behalf of the government. The failure of Reconstruction and the subsequent evils endured by African Americans are a direct result of slavery. The country's bloodiest war was in large part motivated by slavery, and many human rights violations within the Civil War targeted African Americans including the massacre at Fort Pillow, unfair conscription acts, and contraband camps.¹ The struggle against Jim Crow laws in the late nineteenth century and the modern Civil Rights Movement tried to guarantee the promises made by the Constitution, but nowhere along the way did the American government seek forgiveness for the indiscretion at the root of all of this.

Some American groups have made apologies for slavery, including the Southern Baptist Convention, the United Methodists, and other religious organizations. There are numerous precedents of sociopolitical apologies. Germany has apologized for the Holocaust, The United Kingdom for neglecting the Irish Potato Famine, and Truth and Reconciliation Committees have been set up in several Latin American countries and South Africa. Recently, Tony Blair has apologized for the United Kingdom's role in the slave trade. All of these countries move past historical denial and have made decisions to take responsibility for their actions, which is something America has not done despite the lingering effect of slavery's legacy on the American psyche. In each of these situations there were different results, but in each case there was tangible dialogue that took place as a result of the apologies. Dialogical construction of self and others is where reconciliation can take place, but that reconciliation is usually initiated through an apology.

There are educational and socio-economic disparities that still persist between blacks and whites in the United States. Whether or not people resist the notion of racial disparity between blacks and whites, there are indisputable facts that show African Americans incur poverty at almost three times the rate of non-Hispanic whites with 24.4% of blacks living in poverty, while only 8.2% of whites live in poverty.² Blacks make up 12% of the United States' population, but control a meager 1.3% of the nation's wealth.³ This disparity stems from socio-economic barriers that have been present since slavery, and that are a direct product of African Americans being held in bondage with no compensation of any kind. There has never been a time when African Americans enjoyed prosperity at the same rates that whites have.

Further census data shows that the median income for white households is around fifty thousand dollars while black households earn almost a third less at thirty thousand a year; home ownership is also significantly lower among black families.⁴ These disparities indicate predatory lending practices, lack of education about homeownership for minorities, zoning restrictions on multifamily housing units, and violations of the Fair Housing Act.⁵ Such actions, regardless of whether they are conscious efforts, perpetuate a cycle that keeps African Americans from reaching equal footing with white Americans.

Discriminatory housing practices lead to disparities in education because of the way that school districting works in most states. Poor districts and areas with high crime rates receive lower marks on educational assessments. Deficiencies in education from the primary levels through high school translate into African Americans having to work harder to gain entrance into college or receive better employment opportunities. Many

states still have nearly segregated school systems despite the Supreme Court desegregation schools over fifty years ago.⁶

These disparities are often the subject of political discussion. For example on the 50th anniversary of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* Senator John Kerry and President George Bush made campaign speeches during the 2004 Presidential election in Topeka, Kansas. Kerry and Bush acknowledged racial inequity as they commemorated the legal desegregation of schools.

“As far as we've come, we still have not met the promise of *Brown (v. the Board of Education)*, we have not met the promise of *Brown (v. the Board of Education)* when one-third of all African-American children are living in poverty. We have not met the promise of *Brown (v. the Board of Education)* when only 50 percent of African-American men in New York City have a job. We have not met the promise of *Brown* when nearly 20 million black and Hispanic Americans don't have basic health insurance,”⁷ said Senator Kerry.

Bush told an audience including descendants of the students who had been part of the 1950's integration process, “Many African Americans with no inheritance but their character need access to capital and the chance to own and build for the future, and while our schools are no longer segregated by law, they are still not equal in opportunity and excellence.”⁸

At the highest levels there are acknowledgments that American citizens are not receiving equitable treatment on the basis of race. However, there is still not an admission of culpability from the government, or an admission that slavery is at the root of the racial divide. Debates about an apology for slavery are riddled with conflicting opinions

involving efficacy and saliency for the greatest number of people, and whether or not an apology is even appropriate. However, knowing that there are such large inequities that can be observed as direct products of race there must at least be a discussion about whether an apology can begin to traverse the long and arduous path toward reconciliation.

Representative. Tony Hall (D-OH) sought to develop a step toward reconciliation in the race debate in 1997 and again in 2000 when he asked the United States Congress to adopt a resolution apologizing for slavery. Hall had stirred up a hornets' nest full of racial enmity, finger pointing, and hate mail with his request for an apology. Hall's efforts to secure a congressional apology are important because they reveal the rhetorical implications of dealing with race in the United States. The process of sociopolitical forgiveness is complicated, and it becomes evident when examining Hall's efforts that there are many rhetorical facets that must be considered when crafting an apology for slavery. A close look at each of Hall's attempts and the reactions they garnered helps to highlight the issues at play.

Hall's 1997 resolution was simple, "That this Congress apologizes to African-Americans whose ancestors suffered as slaves under the Constitution and laws of the United States until 1865." The apology does two things rhetorically; 1) it accepts responsibility for the government's Constitutional shortcomings in dealing with slavery and 2) it expresses remorse. This apology includes no mention of the subsequent problems that were a result of slavery, and it asks for no action to be taken to reinforce the apology. It is concise and only serves as a symbolic action. In essence, this apology, had it been passed, left any reinforcing conciliatory actions to individuals.

When Hall introduced this simple resolution in 1997 he had bi-partisan, albeit limited, support. Nevertheless, he was surprised by the reaction he received from the American public and some of his peers. Hall received a deluge of mail that his staff sorted into three piles: for, against, and hate. Some were supportive of the resolution, saying that it offered a starting point for further discussion. The against pile provided a myriad of reasons for not supporting an apology. Those reasons included one woman who wrote that Hall was only “trying to pick the pockets of American taxpayers”⁹ because he was only after reparations, even though Hall said nothing of any sort of reparations in his proposal. Another woman wrote that “racism can only be dealt with as individuals”¹⁰, while others believed that an apology was unfair because they feel they had not perpetrated any wrongs themselves. A common argument was that many Americans were descendants of immigrants who came to the United States after slavery and felt that they had no reason to apologize for slavery. The hate mail Hall received contained sentiments about reinstating slavery, as well as threats on Hall’s life.

Editorial boards across the country reacted with conflicting emotions about the need for an apology, and whether or not an apology was fair to whites. Some said that slavery could not be addressed by an apology at this point in time because there were no survivors from that era. One headline in Hall’s home state proclaimed “Bones Can’t Accept Apologies”.¹¹ Others joined the line of thought that this was only meant to be a stepping stone to reparations, while still others claimed that an apology would create further racial polarization and that Hall should apologize for proposing an ideal that was counterproductive.¹² There were some editorial boards that felt that Hall’s intentions were well placed, but an apology would do nothing to curb racism, even if passed. Those that

supported the apology felt that it was a step in the right direction, and something that would start discussion that could eventually lead to progress in race relations. These editors applauded Hall for his efforts.

The mixed reactions of Congress to the 1997 proposal are also interesting. There were those in Congress, among them Tom DeLay and Newt Gingrich, that oppose the ideal because they believe that it is simply a stepping stone toward reparations, though as mentioned before Hall makes no mention of reparations in either of his congressional proposals or his subsequent address in West Benin. Gingrich said that an apology was only “emotional symbolism”¹³ and would achieve nothing. Some like Representative John Conyers (D-MI) did endorse the bill; Conyers has introduced a bill to start a committee to look into reparations every year since 1989. Others like Representative Jesse Jackson III (D-IL) believe an apology be a good point to start a dialogue about race because it would show a certain amount of remorse. The leader of the Black Caucus would not mobilize her groups support because, “One of the things about the culture of the apology is that you don’t ask for it,” Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) said. “I think we should sit back and watch whites handle this.”¹⁴

All of the discussion that followed the 1997 proposal illustrated one point very clearly; there is plenty to talk about when it comes to race relations and apologizing for slavery. Hall’s proposal for an apology was polarizing in 1997, and it produced emotional responses from those supporting it and those opposing it. The fact that an apology would be a noteworthy occasion is bolstered by the vehement rejections and sincere acceptances of the ideal simply because either response proves that an apology is evocative enough to produce dialogue that forces people to confront issues.

Hall upped the ante on his 1997 apology considerably when he reintroduced the apology in 2000 as one of his last acts before taking a post as an ambassador to the United Nations. Even though the last apology had not been passed, asked for an admission of far less, and did specifically excluded budgetary support from Congress. Hall included a sizeable introduction to the bill before he presented it to the House that explained his reasoning for reintroducing the bill. Starting with an ominous quote from Alexis de Tocqueville concerning the looming shadow of slavery, Hall sights personal experiences and historical justifications for apologizing. He chronicles his experiences with the 1997 proposal, and begins to answer some of the criticisms that were offered then through his expressions of incredulity and assessments of his respondents' claims. He defers to his supporters for justifications of his purpose by using a handful of quotes from newspaper articles and letters that looked favorably upon the 1997 proposal.

After Hall warms up with what is essentially an abbreviated and toned down version of a previous speech in Benin he begins his introduction of the Bill. His remarks far surpass the thirty words he offered previously in scope and breadth even before he gets to the resolution itself. Before the resolution Hall includes descriptors that outline the strife of African Americans as a result of slavery, and build the possible impact of the apology as a conciliatory gesture in light of the inequity that is endured by African Americans.

The 2000 apology included not only a more detailed and descriptive apology, but a series of actions designed to reinforce the conciliatory effect of the apology. The apology included the following:

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), *That--*

(1) the Congress--

(A) acknowledges the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies;

(B) apologizes to African-Americans on behalf of the people of the United States, for the wrongs committed against their ancestors who suffered as slaves;

(C) expresses condemnation of and repudiates the gross and wanton excesses perpetrated against African-Americans while the institution of slavery existed;

(D) recognizes the Nation's need to redress these events;

(E) commends efforts of reconciliation initiated by organizations and individuals concerned about civil rights and civil liberties and calls for a national initiative of reconciliation among the races; and

(F) expresses commitment to rectify misdeeds of slavery done in the past and to discourage the occurrence of human rights violations in the future;

This merits a point by point examination, especially in light of the brevity of his first proposed apology. The first point expresses true disgust at the egregious human rights violations committed in the United States during slavery by referring to the institution as inhuman, unjust, cruel, and brutal. This language takes a much larger step than the 1997 apology because it attributes these qualities to what Hall describes in his introduction to the bill as a deficiency in the Constitution. The second point repeats the sentiment of the 1997 apology, but it includes one significant change. The apology is on behalf of the American people, not Congress, this shifts blame from the governing body to the people who sanction the body. Rhetorically, this is an interesting change considering that some of the most vitriolic responses that Hall received from people who felt they had done no wrong. The next point highlights the greediness underpinning the institution of slavery. The last three points of the apology are big steps because not only do they call for the nation to denounce its past actions, but they constitute a call to

actively pursue better race relations and treatment of African Americans. Hall is making the point that action must be taken to illustrate remorse. He then proposes that the government pursue the following actions,

- (A) a commission should be established--
 - (i) to examine the institution of slavery, subsequent racial and economic discrimination against African-Americans as a matter of law and as a matter of fact, and the impact of slavery and such discrimination on living African-Americans;
 - (ii) to issue a standardized, historical curriculum for use in public schools on the institution of slavery in the United States; and
 - (iii) to explore the possibility of establishing a scholarship and research fund; and
- (B) a National museum and memorial should be established regarding slavery as it relates to the history of the United States, and other significant African-American history.

Hall is making large steps here. He is not calling for reparations, but he is calling for the government to take significant action to show that it is truly sorry for slavery. More importantly, the actions are designed to educate the American people, and honor the memory of those who were held in chattel bondage. The first point calls for a committee that will study the effects not only of slavery, but how slavery essentially poisoned the well of economic resources for African Americans living after the institution was abolished. The following sub-points promote educational improvements from the top to the bottom of the American education system and focuses on educating the public about slavery and discrimination. The second point calls for a physical symbol of apology from the government that would sit on the “holiest” American ground available. In trying to create a solvent apology for slavery Hall goes further in this proposed apology than any other politician that preceded him.

This issue garnered significant attention from the media and the public, and coincided with President Clinton's racial dialogue in 2000. Clinton appointed a committee to conduct town hall style meetings across the nation where people could talk about race. The committee, chaired by John Hope Franklin, spent a year compiling information on the state of race relations. The committee ran into difficult issues concerning on how far reaching an apology should be, and whether it would have to include all the transgressions against African Americans subsequent to slavery. Clinton, who felt that the timing was not right, did not support Hall's call for an apology. He adopted this position after receiving the committee's recommendation not to issue an apology. During this time Clinton received considerable criticism from other politicians who believed he was coming too close to sanctioning an apology by speaking frankly about slavery being a regrettable part of America's history. Representative Tom DeLay (R-TX) even went so far as to break the unspoken rule of not criticizing the president while he is abroad when he derided Clinton for being "critical" of America during a visit to Africa.

Hall was unable to do more than bring the apology back into the national spotlight for a period because Clinton essentially labeled the apology a dead issue. Hall was unable to further pursue the apology once Clinton turned his back on it. The presidential candidates, Vice President Al Gore and President George W. Bush, avoided the topic in their campaigns. The 2000 proposal for an apology again opened up dialogue, but it produced a less intense media and public response than the 1997 apology. Hall then moved to his post at the United Nations and no one has taken up his charge since.

Hall was able to offer a good example of what an individual apology for slavery might look like when he addressed members of a group discussing the historical significance of slavery and race reconciliation in West Benin Africa just prior to his 2000 Congressional proposal. The council was put together by President Kérékou of Benin, and included dignitaries, politicians, and religious figures from around the world. Sociopolitical apologies are different from traditional apologia because they involve representative bodies apologizing to individuals or groups of people. Institutional apologies must be crafted in a way that is representative of the institution. This makes framing an apology difficult, especially in determining what must be said to make it conciliatory. But in West Benin, Hall is freed from that burden. As a result the latitude for this speech is much greater. Outside the rhetorical bounds of a Congressional apology, Hall was able to speak more emotionally and frankly about his feelings without the burden of representing a piece of legislation that is supposed to be representative of the United States' government.

In the Benin address Hall uses self-deprecation and speaks openly about his religious convictions driving him to pursue an apology from Congress and compelling him to apologize personally. Hall jokes openly about the contradiction of being a politician and a Christian. He makes clear statements about atonement from a Christian theological standpoint that likely would not be made on the floor of the House of Representatives. As a member of Congress, Hall represented people of many faiths which makes such religious declarations difficult. In Benin he is only responsible for representing his own beliefs. Hall speech spends a great amount of time explaining his experiences introducing the 1997 the apology in Congress. He emphasizes his religious

beliefs and his pursuit of living a good Christian life. Hall uses anecdotal evidence regarding the apology to reinforce his point that race relations in the United States are still influenced by slavery. By explaining his motivations and his experiences Hall begins to get the audience to identify with him. This accomplishes one important thing; it provides the context for his conclusions and the personal apology at the end of his speech.

As the speech continues, Hall references the Sermon on the Mount and says that “the Bible is a mandate for reconciliation”.¹⁵ The religious conviction in the speech provides strength for the apology because Hall is espousing his most personally held convictions in a manner that is not available to him as a Congressman. Hall quotes Galatians and Acts, and says that he convenes a prayer group every Wednesday morning in the Martin Luther King Library in Washington D.C. Here Hall is able to establish an ethos with his audience that shows his sense of values and morality that is, sadly, hard to do as a politician. Tony Hall humanizes himself by separating himself from his position of power; this humility gives his apology agency. Others at the conference like Senator James Inhofe did not establish such a humble and clear position.

He moves forward giving two prayers entitled “A Slave Woman’s Prayer” and “A Prayer for Freedom from Race Prejudice”. The two prayers are well chosen. The first is a call from a slave woman asking God to forgive her master, and to forgive her for malevolent thoughts against her master. Hall’s second prayer asks that people see the likeness of God in every person and act accordingly, so as not to discriminate against the image of God. The prayers offer two examples for the audience; one that shows forgiveness and love from someone who has been egregiously wronged and the other

offering a model for looking at all people with reverence. These two prayers are offered only after Hall has established himself as a man of religious conviction, and after he has disarmed the audience with self-deprecation and humor. These examples give his audience, especially the black members, a rubric with which to judge Hall's apology.

The most important part of Hall's Benin apology is the final paragraph, which reads:

So in conclusion, I can't pass a law. I don't have the authority without my colleagues in the Congress to apologize to African Americans. But as a person and a citizen of my country, and a US Congressman, I can apologize. I can say to you that I feel very *[voice breaks with emotion]* inadequate to stand up here and say that. I don't have the words. I haven't experienced the suffering. I feel it in my bones that it's right. I'm very sorry for what's happened. I hope that you'll forgive me because it's easy to pray, "Well, it's those other people that did it." No, I'm part of it, too. Forgive me. Forgive me for my sins. Forgive me for my ancestors, and *[Applause]* . . . This is just a start. It's not the end. It's the beginning. And maybe God, hopefully God, will take this conference, take these apologies and start to heal, start to close this wound that's there. Amen.

Here is where Hall excels. He explains his inability to pass a law as a single member of Congress, and totally minimizes the position of power that has earned him a seat at this conference. Hall establishes his position with his audience as an individual, and then gives a warm personal apology and statement of remorse for his actions. His apology from an individual standpoint includes confession of complicity in a system that provides advantage to people on the basis of race. This is a direct statement to his critics at home, some of whom believe that they no have responsibility to apologize. He also requests forgiveness for his ancestors as an answer to those that criticized him with the same justifications. Hall is making a clear statement that any white person in the United States who has enjoyed the privileges that are a result of discriminatory practices of the past still needs to apologize in order to begin the healing process. Hall is leading by example, by explaining why feels he that he needs to be forgiven. In this way, Hall is able

to answer the arguments of those who oppose an apology without harsh words or direct confrontation. Hall then states that this is only a start. He affirms that an apology will not fix race relations, but that apologies are foundational in reconciling groups of people.

While Hall failed in securing an apology from the government, he did open up a dialogue about the problematic situation created by America's past and the present that faces all Americans as they continue to construct their identities in relation to one another. The rhetoric surrounding an apology for slavery and what would constitute sufficient atonement for the ugliest chapter in United States' history generates many questions that a rhetorical critic must consider when trying to assess the situation. The spectrum of emotions evoked in this debate is a result of two hundred plus years of frustration in the relationship between whites and blacks on American soil. The institution of slavery created chasms that bled into a civil war, and the wounds that were left open have festered through Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, and into the present. How then is it possible to create coherence and reconciliation between the groups entangled in the ongoing struggle for race parity and recognition of the wrongs of slavery?

The question that this paper will pursue, largely in the context of Hall's apologies, is "What kind of an apology for slavery has the most potential to move the United States toward coherent reconciliatory race relations between blacks and whites?" This question assumes that an apology has the power to change race relations, but it assumes so with trepidation, knowing that the answer will likely include some sort of reparations, as well as acts outside of words that are incorporated within the apology. The main point of concern here is identifying points that would help create a sociopolitical apology that

allowed Americans to move toward a country that provides equal opportunities to its citizens regardless of their race. An apology on this level does not assume that all of the individuals that have perpetuated racism and inequity will change their dispositions. It does assume that an apology is a starting point for dialectical redefining of terms through rhetoric and action. In the second chapter the literature concerning Hall's speeches, other apologies, and apologia will be discussed. The third chapter will present two methodologies that examine an apology for slavery; these methodologies are historical materialism and dialectics/dialogism. The fourth chapter will use a living systems methodology and offer some theoretical positions on what a living systems approach could mean in the context of an apology for slavery. The fifth chapter will look over issues concerning some on going apologies, and look at the elements that future apology proposals should use.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Traditional apologia literature is not reflective of the sociopolitical apology being sought by Representative Hall because the apology taking place is between a government and a vast constituency of its people, rather than between individuals. Hall's attempts to secure an apology for slavery have been analyzed by rhetorical critics, as have other sociopolitical apologies. The literature available on sociopolitical apology delivers some insight into what America faces in working toward reconciliation. The literature reviewed will encompass pertinent literature dealing with human rights violations, sociopolitical apologies, and construction of African American identity will be included. This will be covered in three parts, the first part will deal with the theoretical propositions surrounding apology, the second part will focus on literature that deals with specific instances of apology in South Africa and Latin America, and the third will discuss literature pertaining to African American identity and Hall's apology proposals and West Benin apology.

Part I: Theory

First, it is important to examine research done on apology, and focus on literature concerned with studying apology as a genre of communication. It is imperative to understand the position of the people involved in such a form of rhetoric because it illustrates what is required of both parties in the apology process. Generally speaking there are three ways to apologize: 1) the Socratic or defensive apology, 2) the apology as

an excuse, and 3) the moral apology.¹ Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd (a member of the South African TRC) clearly lay out some useful distinctions between these apologies and tie those distinctions to the realm of what they refer to as public or institutional apologies. This classification is equivocal to what has been referred to here as sociopolitical apology. The three types of apology are simple, but it is only the moral apology that “implies a request for forgiveness and movement toward reconciliation.”² Govier and Verwoerd suggest that moral apologies are weakened if they include elements of justification or excuses as to why the perpetrator committed the act in question. The apology is cheapened because justification of a wrong (like slavery) “is alien to the spirit of contrition.”³

Govier and Verwoerd rely heavily on sociologist, Nicholas Tavuchis, who refers to apology as a mysterious phenomenon that calls upon one to forgive another as a result of an expression of sorrow and remorse. Tavuchis’ perspective places a large emphasis on the benevolence of the victim; he is showing the situational power reversal in which the guilty must ask the forgiveness of the innocent. Tavuchis states the mystery of apology as, “The helpless offender, in consideration for nothing more than a speech, asks for nothing more than the conversion of righteous indignation and betrayal into unconditional forgiveness and reunion.”⁴ With the offended person(s) being so clearly seated in the position of power in situations of apology it becomes clear that excuses and justifications are simply a waste of time because they circumvent remorse, which is the driving action towards an acceptance of an apology.

Tavuchis’ work is focused only on what Govier and Verwoerd have classified as moral apology. He suggests that all apologies are dyadic, because at the “bedrock” there

is the offended and the offender.⁵ Within that Tavuchis has created four classifications concerned with the number of people involved 1) one to one, 2) one to many, 3) many to one, and 4) many to many.⁶ Tony Hall's congressional apologies were more difficult than his Benin apology because Hall was attempting to deliver a many to many apology as one in his Congressional proposals. Tavuchis believes that emotionality is diminished in institutional apologies, which handicaps any Congressional apology. In Benin Hall only had to convince his audience that he was sorry, which is a more manageable task, especially without diminished emotional credibility. In a Congressional apology convincing the many for whom the apology is intended that the many that the apology is being delivered on behalf of acknowledge their part in the situation.

Acknowledgement of wrong-doing is a prominent theme in literature analyzing apologia because it indicates that the offender respects the "human dignity, ... moral worth, ... and the feelings of resentment" of the victims.⁷ Feelings of resentment and self-deprecation after an offense is "an extremely natural response" an acknowledging this "gives the victim a reason to forgive."⁸ Apologies serve to restore the self-worth of the victims because they acknowledge a justifiable sentiment of resentment towards the offender, who has violated the moral standing of the offended. Prior to an apology there is a distance that requires an "other" based rhetoric showing the offenders' willingness to admit their actions have created a separation between them and the offended.⁹ Recognition of an apology as an "other" oriented communication that seeks to promote reconciliation and promote communication that is not "other" based is an important step in understanding the position of the American government in apologizing for slavery.

Acknowledgement also serves to answer the question, "... what happens then to the current and future meaning of the broken rule..." or that, "something more than the immediate or personal interests of the offended may be at stake?"¹⁰ Aaron Lazare describes the difficulty in acknowledging an offense because it may include up to four parts 1) identifying the offenders and the offended properly, 2) documenting the offense adequately, 3) recognizing the impact of the offense, and 4) confirming the offense was a violation of the social or moral contract between the parties involved.¹¹ Lazare illustrates these points, to varying degrees of success, with examples from his own personal experience as a therapist and historical precedents that he feels meet the requirements that he has set forth.¹² A Congressional apology for slavery must meet all four of these requirements because the reactions to Tony Hall's proposals raised questions concerning each of these four aspects.

Tavuchis describes another focal point in apologia, timing. The *kairotic* moment in which an apology becomes most useful because an apology too quickly given or an apology too long delayed loses its impact. There is no set temporal guideline for an apology because there are often dialogical steps toward culminating actions or statements that constitutes adequate contrition. What can be "telling" is the "not the length of time..., but the collection of injustices and the accumulation of recriminations" as time passes.¹³ Dialogical processes are often needed before an apology can be understood, or before an apology can be seen as an adequately contrite action. There must be recognition that the timing of an apology will determine the reach of the apology and the actions that must accompany an apology for it to seem like a sincere move toward reconciliation. There are elements that compound apologies when they are given at the wrong time.

Lazare discusses delayed apologies; one could argue that an apology for slavery is long overdue. However, given Tavuchis criteria of dialogical progress it could be argued that only now is there dialogue that is substantive enough for an apology to mean anything. Lazare also believes that apologies can include a dialogical process, as opposed to a sender-receiver model of acceptance or rejection of an apology. Lazare divides these delayed apologies into four categories 1) apologies seeking to relieve unbearable shame or guilt, 2) apologies arising in the face of aging or death, 3) apologies arising out of a new recognition of value of the relationship offended party (Lazare describes this as manipulative posturing), and 4) apologies motivated by a new understanding of an ethical or moral standard.¹⁴ All of these qualifications become important when examining Hall's attempts to secure an apology, and analysis that have been made in regards to them.

These theoretical pieces on apology all eventually come to a question of what must be done for an apology to be accepted. Almost any discussion of apology eventually comes to reparations, and whether they are required for an apology to carry weight. One of the best summary explanations of reparations comes from Govier and Verwoerd who suggest that the key to a successful apology will include these theoretical elements, and culminate in people making "practical amends" through appropriate rhetoric and actions.¹⁵ Practical amends are reparations that are not necessarily material in nature, but they are actions and communication that make steps toward reconciliation. This could include monetary or material action, but Govier and Verwoerd point out that material compensation could serve to belittle the pain and suffering of the offended if seen as an attempt to buy their forgiveness. These practical amends will vary with the situation, and

could consist of almost anything, but this a valuable term in considering constructing meaningful acts of contrition.

PART II: Literature that deals with specific accounts of South African and Latin American sociopolitical apology.

The best available example of an outright apology for gross human rights violations is the work of Truth and Reconciliation Committee in South Africa. Eric Doxtader has put together a fine body of work examining the situation in South Africa and positing theoretical frameworks about apology and reconciliation. Doxtader's books To Repair the Irreparable and Through Fire with Water offer insight into what it takes to make steps in race reconciliation. Doxtader illustrates the point that reconciliation is not a process that can take place quickly or without much difficulty. Doxtader co-edits the volume Through Fire with Water, which provides a rich descriptive text concerning the mindsets of those who have been oppressed. To Repair the Irreparable gives the kind of account one would expect from the title, the common theme being that patience and time are needed to repair a relationship that has been damaged so badly. Though there are differences, the South African example is applicable because it provides a template for moving toward reconciliation.

Doxtader focuses on the transformative processes that the South African government and the people of South Africa must undergo in order to truly reconcile. A primary focus in this work is what has been referred to as transitional justice. The changes made to end apartheid are only the beginning of the work to be done in South Africa, and Doxtader does well when it comes to illustrating all of the barriers present in this process. It is here that Doxtader's work becomes applicable because if an American

apology for slavery is secured there will still be tension between blacks and whites in the United States, just as there are tensions between blacks and whites in South Africa to this day. Doxtader's work makes it clear that this process is a matter of redefining self-identities, and the re-assigning value to the "other". This process is painful because it forces those involved with the Truth and the Reconciliation Committee and the reconciliation process to relive harsh realities about the way they were treated in the case of victims, or the way they acted in the case of perpetrators.

Govier and Verwoerd describe the South African Truth and Reconciliation process, and criticize F.W. De Klerk's failure to create an adequate apology for the apartheid government's role in murdering, torturing, and raping many of its citizens. De Klerk's apology was rejected by the African National Congress "with contempt." Govier and Verwoerd suggest this failure was a result of De Klerk's agenda to maintain his image and the image of the National Party. This of course violates the parameters of an actual moral apology. De Klerk was too concerned with the success of abolishing apartheid, rather than with asking for forgiveness for the evils committed while apartheid continued under his supervision. This is a prime example of pride fettering reconciliation. Archbishop Desmond Tutu was deeply disappointed at the missed opportunity to pour "balm on the wounds of many."¹⁶

Truth and Reconciliation Committees have also been set up in Latin American countries that were ravaged by corrupt governments from the late sixties in some cases all the way into the present. Edward L. Cleary describes an increased concern for human rights in Latin America as a result of four causalities 1) major social criticisms of governmental regimes that did not happen in the past, 2) the moral conscience of the

Catholic community that has caused people to step forward in making changes as a result of their faith, 3) Latin American governments inability to retain stronghold leadership tactics, and 4) international involvement of foreign governments and human rights groups.¹⁷ The Catholic committees have in some cases, like Guatemala and Brazil, assembled groups to collect information about governmental abuses so that documentation could lead to change and action. These Latin American examples illustrate the need for acknowledgement in apology and reconciliation. Official apologies in this setting are rare, but the attempts by some to illustrate recognition of the offenses committed are a move toward reconciling pieces of broken communities. In some cases government involvement in acknowledgement has happened.

Desafuero, which is Spanish for parliamentary immunity, was stripped from Augusto Pinochet in 2001 by the Chilean government. Pinochet was also indicted in Spanish courts for human rights violation, though later the charges were dropped because he was considered too ill to proceed with the trial. Although an apology was not issued, the Chilean government's willingness to strip Pinochet of his titles and immunity showed the Chilean people that his behavior was not acceptable and set a precedent for prosecuting future leaders who show a disregard for the well-being of their people. The persistence of Judge Juan Guzman in pursuing the case against Pinochet can be viewed as a government trying to reconcile with its people by holding itself accountable for past offenses. The Pinochet indictment in Chile is an excellent example of a growing sense of accountability for human rights violations, but the failure to prosecute is a painful reminder of how much progress still needs to be made.

In Guatemala Efraín Ríos Montt targeted the indigenous population with death squads that operated freely in the countryside, killing thousands of people. Bishop Juan Gerardi was assassinated on April 26, 1998 days after a Truth Commission led by the bishop published a volume of *Guatemala Never Again!* The report documents a long and terrible history of human rights violations in Guatemala. This, again, is an example of acknowledgement of offenses that have been committed by a government. The committee in this case is acknowledging the wrongs and trying to make them common knowledge, which could lead to governmental acknowledgement and apology. Sadly, the School of the Americas, now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, which is headed by the American military has been named as the training facility responsible for teaching many of the “exemplary torture” tactics used by the Guatemalan military¹⁸. In 2000 a graduate of the School of the Americas, Colonel Byron Disreal Lima, and his son were prosecuted for the murder of Bishop Gerardi.

In Brazil death squads picked up threats to the state and killed an unaccounted for number of homeless children on the streets. There are still problems with violence in Brazil, but there are attempts to hold people accountable for violent acts. In 2002 *Violence Workers* was published. This book was an attempt to show not only the atrocities that have been committed in Brazil under different governments, but also to show the psychological abuses endured by those that were made to perpetrate violent acts against the citizenry as part of their job. It includes the story of one man who joined a death squad after his childhood had been ruined when his mother was raped and his family killed by a death squad. This Brazilian account is similar to some of the Truth and Reconciliation Reports from South Africa because it illustrates the cycle of violence that

everyone in Brazil is trying to overcome as a result of years of martial law.¹⁹ While this is not a sociopolitical apology in the truest sense, it is an example of an attempt to create conciliatory rhetoric between the divided people of Brazil who have been victimized by abusive governing structures.

Part III: Literature concerning African American identity and Hall's apology.

Some of the most helpful treatments concerning American race relations and reconciliation are written by Mark Lawrence McPhail. McPhail's work deals largely with the concept of coherence. McPhail argues that dialogical coherence between blacks and whites is a goal that is hindered by the "demands of racial reconciliation."²⁰ McPhail offers that Afrocentricity, as described by Molefi Kefele Asanti, must reach equal standing with Eurocentricity if the coherence and reconciliation are going to be achieved.²¹ McPhail's works suggest a dialogical construction of race identity that aims to create equality among African Americans and whites through an agreement upon their relation to one another that accounts for past history and attempts to move forward through a sort of symbolic convergence that he calls convergence coherency. McPhail's work is useful because he incorporates black militants and separatists in his arguments to show how far the gap between current definitions and definitions that would be considered coherent are.²²

McPhail's literature is consistently pragmatic in its approach; there are careful considerations of the material historical objects that remain in place. These objects obstruct racial reconciliation. However, at the heart of McPhail's work is the need to address the metaphysical aspects of racial inequity, and he cites W.E.B. DuBois, "One forever feels his two-ness- an American and a Negro."²³ McPhail suggests the double-

consciousness, described by DuBois, “might be read as a form of rhetorical coherency, a capacity to integrate diverse conceptions of reality, that is grounded in the generative power of language.”²⁴ The dual identity construction that McPhail is describing is an important concept when thinking about an apology for slavery.

The ideal of coherency between these identities of the African and the American is vital to understanding the complications of crafting an apology. Coherence in this sense is an individual’s ability to reconcile their own competing identities. An apology for slavery must account for this, and work toward making it easier for the African to reconcile with the identity of the American. The American identity in this sense is an “other” within African Americans, so the crafting of an apology becomes that much more complicated. McPhail’s work incorporates Asante’s in promoting a uniquely black identity that leads to “pluralism without hierarchy.”²⁵ This unique identity must be negotiated as a process of self-narrative, however if an apology for slavery were incorporated into that narrative it could help to achieve for pluralism without hierarchy.

There are whites, as evidenced by responses to Hall’s proposals, who do not understand the concern of some within the African American community pointed out by Shelby Steele, whites benefit from being white regardless of their intentions and as such are complicit in the marginalizing of other races.²⁶ This phenomenon leads to what McPhail calls complicitous interaction, a process where racist attitudes and models of rhetoric are used on both the white and black sides of the color line creating the classifications and dichotomies that further fuel the divide between the races. In essence blacks responding to white racism sometimes incorporate white rhetoric and

classifications, and even in combating racism their arguments serve to perpetuate negative definitions of race between the two sides.

John B. Hatch applies the theory of coherence as formulated by McPhail in terms of an apology for slavery, and provides the first discussion in the communication literature of Tony Hall's apology. Hatch's goal is to,

“show that public intergroup reconciliation- a phenomenon that has been largely neglected (in practice) until recently- can constitute a substantial rhetorical bridge between the reality of racism and McPhail's ideal of coherence in race relations... a *coherent* reconciliation that works to build a solidly grounded bridge from the racist past (and present) to a more just and harmonious interracial future amid the contingencies of racial history.”²⁷

Hatch continues by incorporating Doxtader's work along with Kenneth Burke's and McPhail's and postulates, “rhetoric as coherence to be rendered effectual... would need to incorporate aspects of rhetoric designed to respond to exigencies of hurt, guilt, shame, and related enmity in ways that offer hope of mutual redemption.”²⁸ Hatch uses all of these to create a tragicomic perception of race relations. Hatch believes the tragicomic perspective allows people to acknowledge and move past the guilt or anxiety felt in race relations. Through a careful consideration of the Burkean dramaturgical aspects of emotion empathy becomes more available to blacks and whites. Hatch suggests guilt, shame, resentment, and anger can all be accounted for in tragic and comedic perspectives, and using them as a starting point a conciliatory apology might be crafted.

Hatch's work is responded to in *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* by Kirt Wilson, Eric Doxtader, and Mark Lawrence McPhail. While all commend Hatch for opening up dialogue, each author provides criticisms of Hatch's approach. Wilson's first contention is that Hatch's appraisal of McPhail is weak at points because it makes McPhail seem too

self-effacing because *The Rhetoric of Racism* revisited still generally holds rhetoric in high esteem as a tool for battling the ills of racism. The second point of contention in Wilson's critique is that racism, is not as Hatch believes, so firmly rooted in the "psychological conditions of the body politic."²⁹ Wilson believes that history persists in too many facets of life for Hatch's assessment to hold true, and that some form of racial interest convergence must happen for reconciliation to take place.

Wilson gives examples of interest convergence in South Africa and the benefits that whites received as a result of ending apartheid. The dismantling of apartheid in South Africa was a step toward reconciliation, but it was only taken because the economic and social advancements of whites were at stake as well. The cost-benefit analysis must be advantageous for both blacks and whites; Wilson illustrates this with the South African model and the *Brown v. Board* decision in the United States, both of which helped to some extent maintain white power structures during times of struggle and uncertainty. Wilson's skepticism here correlates with Lazare's assertions about delayed apologies and manipulation of public opinion. However, the ramifications are not necessarily negative seeing as there has been some progress yielded in both cases.

Doxtader's criticism of Hatch is that he undervalues the magnitude of the atrocities and the hurt that the wronged community has been subject to, and that reconciliation does not lie on an easy path. Doxtader defines reconciliation as a symbolic death of the positions that are present born out of "ontological frustration."³⁰ The implications of the tragicomic approach that Hatch takes pervert or ignore the emotions of the parties involved, claims Doxtader, and takes a far too pragmatic approach concerning people's susceptibility to conciliatory rhetoric. Doxtader agrees that Hatch

has likely oversimplified the process of reconciliation because the definitions and what must be addressed in these situations are points of contention themselves, which will make the process an inherently messy affair. Doxtader's assessment is likely based on his extensive observations of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in South Africa.

McPhail assesses Hatch's argument as insightful and well wrought, but realizes through historical examples that a clean and easy rhetorical process is not enough to create the type of reconciliation that this country needs. In response to Hatch, he argues that for a true change to take place there will have to be a (re)-signing of the racial contract, which hinges on a more Afrocentric interpretation of the Eurocentric social contract. McPhail, as with the others, feels Hatch's ideals are an over-simplification, and that white's will have to take on a greater understanding of black sentiments regarding race parity and their complicit involvement in race structuration to reach reconciliation. His use of Malcolm X is particularly poignant because it implicitly illustrates the black community's distrust of whites. The only way for reconciliation to happen is for whites to atone and show genuine concern for dismantling systems of privilege that continue to create disparities between blacks and whites.

Hatch makes a compelling reply to his critics, answering questions about the solvency of his prior argument and expressing thanks that a dialogue has been opened concerning an apology for slavery. He replies to his opponents' criticism with a humanistic tone, writing that "the ethical obligation to pursue racial justice and reconciliation as ends in themselves"³¹ is something that cannot be ignored. This is inline with Lazare's and Tavuchis' arguments that there are compelling feelings from the

offender to make amends and a desire on the part of the offended to close wounds and put to bed feelings of shame and betrayal.

Hatch then turns to the work of legal scholar Roy L. Brooks to show how the legal system itself makes whites unlikely to be accepting of an apology like Tony Hall's because it violates white's sense of innocence. The frame work for the rest of the article is then predicated on Brook's model of reframing and restructuring the debate so that Hall's apology and an inclusion of a discussion about reparations can actually begin to restructure each parties (whites and blacks) depiction of the other in beneficial ways. Hatch takes into account the consequences of the tragic and comic frames respectively. The tragic frame that was in place, and in some instances still is, assures "the tragic experience of blacks in South Africa and the United States." The problem after moving past that frame is that people tend to move to a comic frame and ignore the prevalence of racial enmity that is in place in favor of "working diligently with the racial Other to eliminate them [racial problems]"³².

Hatch suggests Tony Hall's apology in Benin is an ideal model for future forays into reconciliation because it is self-deprecating. Hatch notes that Hall "pled rather than argued for forgiveness,"³³ which lines up perfectly with the tragicomic sensibility that Hatch endorses. Hatch is also following Tavuchis' ideal that there is a role reversal in apologies. Hall is shifting power from himself to others who have the power to forgive him. The tragicomic is very similar to the emotional process of recognition and acknowledgement that Govier and Verwoerd develop in there description of moving toward practical amends. Hatch seems to indicate that true sorrow and regret in this

instance could equate to practical amends. Hatch closes hoping that Americans will realize the “kairos” of an apology before any “social chaos” befalls the country.³⁴

Hatch’s most convincing argument comes in “Beyond Apologia: Racial Reconciliation and Apologies for Slavery” in which argues that Hall’s Benin address “brings together, in one address, some of the most prominent secular and religious arguments for offering a slavery apology to African Americans.”³⁵ In this essay Hatch synthesizes all of the arguments from his previous efforts, and responds (indirectly) to previous criticisms succinctly. Here Hatch references such authors as Tavuchis, Roy L. Brooks, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Lazare. Hatch gives Hall’s West Benin address a full examination qualifying Hall’s rhetorical decisions with the theoretical ground work on apologia. Hatch also includes comparisons with other speeches given at the conference.

Hatch juxtaposes the apology given by Hall with some of the other work done at the conferences. Hatch discusses Hall’s continual qualifiers within his apology, and speaks to the effectiveness of Hall’s approach in this regard. Senator James Inhofe failed to take this approach and Hatch feels that he gave the appearance of being aloof and insensitive, a critical mistake in the eyes of Hatch. The most important thing for Hatch is that Hall’s apology “opens up space for reconciliation as a dialogic process in which the Other stands (and acts) as an equal subject.”³⁶ Hatch is endorsing the theoretical assertions being made by Tavuchis that this is an “other” oriented communication, and that the goal should be to create parity between the parties involved. He also classifies Hall’s speech in Tavuchis’ one to many typology, and explains how the position that this puts Hall in at the conference as opposed to Congress. Hatch mentions the religious convictions and the theology related to forgiveness, and Hall’s exceptional use of

Christian models of forgiveness. He concludes saying that he believes that in a larger setting Hall's speech could serve as a fine example for someone trying to craft an apology that would make a step toward reconciliation.

The literature discussed in this chapter gives a framework for the work that has analyzed apology as a genre, as it occurs in history, and as it pertains to Hall's attempts. This should provide a context for the methodologies that will be used to examine the situation surrounding crafting a sociopolitical apology for American slavery. These pieces of work provide some guidelines concerning the type of rhetoric to be employed, the breadth and scope of an apology, and how to deliver a conciliatory message that can move America toward race parity. Appropriate expressions of sorrow and regret for the events of and related to slavery in the United States will be difficult to deliver in a sense that makes the American government and its people seem adequately contrite. Using the literature reviewed and the methodologies in the next chapter, hopefully there will be some realizations as to what steps need to be taken in that process.

CHAPTER THREE

Historical Materialism and the Creation of Narratives through Dialogue

A critique of Hall's approach is unfair if there is no framing of exactly how much ground Hall had to cover in crafting his apology if were to be successful. It seems that Hall learned a great deal about just how much ground he had to cover when he made his first proposal in 1997. There must be an understanding of what an apology would have meant at different points in history if anyone is to understand what an apology would mean in the present day. Historical materialism offers a prospective that shows the amount of distance that a reconciliatory bridge would have to cover. There is an accumulation of (in)actions that has made the process of crafting an apology for slavery an increasingly difficult proposition. Tony Hall was not faced with only the persistence of slavery from 1619-1865, but he was confronted with the task of overcoming racial discrimination that has been festering since 1865. Moral indignation over the lack of racial parity in the United States has birthed many ideals and schools of thoughts among blacks and whites. An apology for slavery would not have to address every wrong since Emancipation individually. There have been too many incidents and misunderstandings along the way for that to even be a possibility. However, there must be direct recognition of egregious violations of trust during the periods of Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the civil rights movements, all the way to the present. There would have to be a recognition of the events that have produced enmity and distrust between blacks and whites to understand the what an apology would have to overcome.

This chapter will examine the viability of an apology for slavery through the years since 1865, and consider whether an apology at these points would have been possible. This will illustrate the difficulties that persist to this day in crafting an apology because of the unfulfilled promises and unfortunate events that have been incorporated into the identity of the American people. Taking this historical approach by incorporating the rhetoric of the times being discussed will allow for an understanding of the evolution of the worldviews of the different groups involved in the process of reconciliation.

One of the issues that an apology must deal with is the evolution of the narrative of African Americans as a group. The events and the rhetoric provide context, but how does that context produce the identity of an African American or a white American? An effective apology will need to incorporate the narratives of blacks and whites as they have constructed identities in relation to one another. Mikhail Bakhtin developed dialectics and dialogism as theories that allow for both/and interpretations of self and other rather than the more traditional dichotomous terminologies that deal in either/or delineations between group narrative and identities. This approach attempts to overcome gaps in understanding between groups by redefining positions and definitions through dialogic constructions of reality.

Identity and perception of reality “cannot be broken off from the preceding links that determine it from both within and from without, giving rise within it to the unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic reverberations.”¹ In other words, creating an apology will be a matter of finding points from inside and outside black and white communities that give rise to dialogic reverberations that are useful in the reconciliation process. Throughout the historical analysis of what an apology must take into account

dialogical processes and dialectical tension will be examined in order to show that reconciliation as a process cannot be a monological process where an action, such as Hall's apology, could immediately and unilaterally alleviate all of the problems at hand.

A Look at the Historical Aspects of an Apology

Some would say that slavery has already been atoned for by Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address is a document that some consider an adequate rhetorical act of contrition for slavery.² While this is one of Lincoln's finest speeches to say that this speech is an act of contrition that was truly conciliatory is to overstate the actual effect that the speech had on African Americans, as well as to misconstrue its intent. The emancipated blacks certainly felt indebted to Lincoln. However few attended the inauguration, and only a small number were literate and could read copies of the speech after it was published. Furthermore, Lincoln's mind was on reconciling two groups, but the groups he was primarily concerned with reconciling were Northern whites and Southern whites. It was never assumed within the Lincoln administration that the possibility of race parity in the United States was a reality at the time, as evidenced by Lincoln's own words and his continuing support for colonization plans.³

Lincoln states clearly in his Second Inaugural, "the Government" wanted nothing more than to "restrict the territorial enlargement of it (slavery)" when the Civil War started. Lincoln continues by saying that he believes slavery is the cause of the war, and that the prayers of both the North and the South could not be answered in full because their fundamental positions in relation to each other were diametrically opposed. For Lincoln the war, while brought on by slavery, was primarily about keeping the Union together not about providing equality for all people in the United States. Black suffrage

and other aspects of civil discrimination are never touched in this speech because Lincoln knew that trying to push the rights of the newly freed African Americans would be politically impractical, if not impossible, in the wake of the Civil War. The Fourteenth Amendment was not proposed until a June 13th, 1865.

Lincoln condemned slavery as an offense against God and hoped for a quick resolution to the Civil War saying, “Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” Lincoln is judicious in his statement here. Slavery is an ill and an offense in the sight of God, but it is God that will dispense retribution at His own discretion. There is not a statement of contrition in this piece because Lincoln is not apologizing for slavery. Lincoln is trying to open some space for dialogue between whites that have alienated themselves from one another by accounting for the death toll of the Civil War in the terms of Divine Will.

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.” This now famous closing does some very specific things. First, Lincoln assigns no ill will toward Confederates or southerners as a group. Lincoln

is concerned with wrapping up what has been a war of far greater magnitude than either side was prepared to fight. Reconciliation, here, is a dialogical process between whites.⁴

Most importantly, Lincoln died less than a month and half after the delivery of the speech. As a result, the practical amends that could have made his rhetoric truly conciliatory between blacks and whites were never made because Andrew Johnson, a Tennessean, was not sympathetic to Lincoln's Reconstruction plans. Lincoln was embarrassed by Johnson, a heavy drinker, who was noticeably inebriated at the Inauguration. The years of Reconstruction that followed were arguably some of the worst in American history. Johnson was not interested in a dialogical construction of a new identity for the South. He was more interested in trying to maintain a way of life that kept dialogue between blacks and whites almost nonexistent. An apology, even if issued at this point would have carried little significance because the actions of the government were not actions that empowered or enfranchised freed slaves. Despite the abolition of slavery with the 13th amendment in 1865, the ratifications of the 14th and 15th amendments would not come until 1868 and 1870. For many Southerners and some Northerners it was as if "they were unable to conceive of a Negro as having any rights at all" according to Freedmen's Bureau Colonel Samuel Thomas.⁵

Nowhere was the impending failure of Reconstruction more evident than in the rhetoric surrounding the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1875. The discursive processes illustrated the hard line resistance to desegregation in the South. Charles Sumner introduced the bill on May 13, 1870, and it was widely regarded as a far too "radical interpretation of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, and it embodied a public revolution that African Americans and Abolitionists long had sought."⁶ The continued

mindset of genteel Southerners working out their problems through relationships with African Americans and letting time take its due course in regards to improving race relations was a prominent sentiment within the debate over the passage of the legislation that Sumner proposed. Kirt Wilson points out that Southerners were working within “then” and “now” frames in regards to antebellum and post Civil War positions that allowed them to reconcile the different narratives that had evolved without “betraying their pre-war position.”⁷ White Southerners were of the opinion that the bill that Sumner had proposed, which would essentially begin desegregating the South, was an unnecessary form of agitation. Members of Congress from the South described blacks as happy and content. Hiram Bell went so far as to say that blacks did not know or care “about the provisions of this bill” and that it would only disturb the good feelings and harmony between the races.”⁸ Radical Republicans gave prophetic statements regarding the potential of this question, if unresolved, to be a source of trouble in the years to come. Their narratives differed, and they believed that the law should set forth moral imperatives for people to follow in regards to race if there was going to be any positive change. This bill was a legitimating act because it upheld the moral standards that were put forth in *The Declaration of Independence*.⁹ The textual framing by Radical Republicans put forth the proposition that to deny desegregation in these terms was a denial of the documents and principles which the United States was founded upon.

When the bill was finally passed it lacked the power that Sumner had envisioned, and it was a poor homage to his legacy because it exercised no real practical amends. It required that the offended party in a case discrimination file a lawsuit, which was a fiscal impossibility for most African Americans. The Supreme Court also ruled the act

Unconstitutional in 1883. The concessions made by Radical Republicans and the arguments put forth by white Democrats were indicative of a country that was uneasy about rocking the boat when it came to race relations. To agitate the balance of power in the South was an action that was regularly denied through acts of political appeasement that continued to deny the advancement of African Americans in society. Wilson believes that the result of the Democrats rhetoric was the formation of the Jim Crow system.¹⁰

As the “Solid South” began to form there was a sense of urgency among whites to retain their privileged place. There was also a deep understanding among black leaders that Reconstruction had failed by 1878, and as a result their place had not improved remarkably, if at all, since slavery. An apology for slavery was not possible even at this point because there had not been a positive dialogical construction of African American identity among whites that would allow for a sincere apology that placed African Americans in a position to grant forgiveness. The government had failed to correct many of the problems that faced the country as a result of slavery’s longevity in the United States. In 1888, on the twenty-sixth anniversary of slavery’s end, Frederick Douglass spoke out about the conditions of former slaves with great anger. In “Emancipation a Stupendous Fraud” Douglass condemns the environs of the South as a haven for those that would still make slaves out of blacks, and makes a case that the Anglo-Saxon race’s taste for power in the South has been “fully developed” to the point that if unchecked they would become “masters of the nation.”¹¹ Douglass posited the belief that in some cases blacks were in worse conditions than they had been under slavery.

Douglass, the foremost African American figure in the United States, stated a sentiment that was very prominent during the time among blacks and some whites. If

there was an overwhelming feeling that the bondage endured by blacks was still being maintained by state laws and the actions of the master class, as Douglass refers to them, it seems that an apology for slavery would not have been contrite because of the continued abuse. Douglass makes a strong case that the tenant farming of the day was little more than a continuation of slavery. The inaction of the Federal government during this time is one of the obstacles that any leader like Tony Hall would have to account for in an apology. Slavery may have officially ended with the Emancipation Proclamation, but the trappings of the institution lived on in different forms in the South.

In the United States, the rhetorical construction of a black citizenry through law stood mostly as a hollow promise from a government that was unwilling to take practical action to promote the well-being of African Americans across the country, and especially in the South. African Americans still had not been incorporated into American society in a way that elevated their status enough for the American government to be in the position to offer a contrite apology. Reconciliation was a rhetorical impossibility when the actions of whites suggested that not only were they disinterested in reconciliation, but were actively involved in the sabotage of African Americans' rights to prosper and represent themselves. This environment spurred many reactions from African Americans about when or if blacks would receive the full promise of citizenship that they had been legally granted through the 13th (1865), 14th (1868), and 15th (1870) amendments. The divisions of African American leaders were becoming more pronounced than they had ever been during this time, and that led to the creation of very different narratives among African American communities following their respective leaders.

American culture had gone from incorporating blacks as a subjugated class without any rights of citizenship to a citizenship that was ostracized as an other; a lesser culture to be dealt with accordingly. Bakhtin points out that, “In the realm of culture, outsidersness is a most powerful factor in understanding.”¹² By making African Americans outsiders, and reaffirming their place as a different culture, whites, Southern whites especially, have opened themselves up to a different type of judgment. Bakhtin speaks of an interaction between cultures where there is not “merging or mixing..., but they are mutually enriched.”¹³ This is the kind of interaction that Molefe Kefe Asante and Mark Lawrence McPhail, respectively, advocate with the concepts of Afrocentricity and coherency. This was not the kind of interaction that was taking place in the United States. Dialogically, there was interaction between white groups trying to assess the position of blacks. There were also blacks trying to dialogically constructing their identities among themselves. However, an interactive dialogic construction between blacks and whites where open dialogue moved race relations forward was not a common activity. There was a sort of refusal to be enriched by the interactions of the two cultures because of the refusal by whites to participate in an interracial dialogue.

This refusal was evident in gross examples of whites usurping political power that had been gained by blacks through legitimate processes. These actions further fragmented African American communities. One of the most prominent examples came in North Carolina. After blacks and Populist had gained control of North Carolina’s government in 1894, a contingent of whites banded together during the 1898 election. Wilmington was the location of the peak of corruption in that election when nine African Americans were brutally murdered. In January of 1899 Reverend Charles S. Morris addressed this

particular event in the context of similar occurrences. A host of violent acts caused African American leaders to question the quality of Negro citizenship if the Federal Government would not intervene on behalf of its black citizens to quell the oppression they faced. State laws superseded federal laws because federal funding went to state governments regardless of their records concerning African Americans, and whether they honored the rights that had been established through the Constitutional Amendments guaranteeing the rights of suffrage and citizenship. Morris lamented that “no other civilized government would tolerate for a day” such abuse against a group of its own citizens.¹⁴ White violence against blacks to maintain white supremacy in the government without punitive action from government agencies at higher levels disenfranchised blacks to the degree that they were not, or did not feel like they were, in effect part of the citizenry.

The white person’s narrative is affected deeply by these points in history. There were open justifications for the behavior of whites towards blacks at every level. Legal justification was available through Jim Crow laws, which were exceedingly effective in maintaining white supremacy in the South. In this sense there were conflicting rhetorical constructions of black identity between state and federal levels of lawmaking. Through combinations of state and local laws coupled with extralegal actions from white supremacists and leaders in the South, African Americans were denied the rights of citizens that had been granted to them federally. Southern leaders were open in their justifications of exclusion and violence toward blacks in some cases. Senator Ben Tillman’s words represent a malignant spirit that was prominent in the early 1900’s, “So far as I am concerned, he (the Negro) has put himself outside the law, human or

divine.”¹⁵ Scientist warned of miscegenation and regularly professed the inferiority of the Negro race. This is a deep seeded hegemonic position among whites that persisted for well into the 1950’s. Responses from leaders like W.E.B. DuBois were met with mixed reviews from white communities and did little to change white narratives in regard to the place of African Americans.

The emigration of blacks to the Caribbean or to Africa was a common ideal among whites and some black leaders at different points in the past. This philosophy began to gain more credibility with the average Black leaders like Marcus Garvey became more influential during the 1920’s. The Jamaican born Garvey lost faith in the American system, and Robert Terrill places Garvey on a continuum of prophetic black discourse between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.¹⁶ Maintaining racial identity and creating a better life seemed in the United States so unlikely to many that an obvious solution was finding refuge elsewhere. To have emigration become such a popular ideal among African Americans is indicative of the identity that some African Americans began to construct at this point. The Federal Government’s inaction in cases of blatant violations of civil and human rights was an egregious continuation slave-owning culture. That continuation made reconciliation between blacks and whites seem so remote to many blacks, especially those who had not been able to reach the middle class, that an identity independent of whites seemed necessary.

In this vein, burgeoning movements of black separatism and nationalism represent a change in rhetoric from optimism to confrontation. The formation of the Nation of Islam around 1931 by W.D. Fard and the subsequent change in leadership in 1934 to Elijah Muhammad is a marked change in the unification of black men no longer willing

to accept amicable solutions to continued inequity. The rhetoric echoed David Walker's and John E. Bruce's previous calls to organize resistance against oppressors. It was representative of those who no longer held faith "in the efficacy of submission."¹⁷ Black separatist and Black Nationalist have likely adopted many of their positions because of differences between their own narrative identities and the realities around them. The African American community endured the failure of the United States' government to secure, in actuality, the rhetorical identity that they had set forth for African Americans in the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments. Through these laws the black man, in theory, should have been enfranchised as a citizen, and African Americans as a group would have begun constructing an identity as a citizenry. As African Americans adopted these identities and narratives they became even more dejected when hard work and industrial training left many of them impoverished and unrepresented in government despite valiant efforts. The dialogical construction of self among these African American communities was a dialogue of frustration, and a dialogue that highlighted the indifference or malevolence of whites. This is a dialogical construction that uses anger as fuel, and seeks to separate blacks from the "other" that is stifling their ability to succeed.

This heritage of refusing dialogue was inexcusably common not that long ago. Assassinations of civil rights leaders in the 1960's were a testament to the white ego present in some Southerners when it comes to readjusting the position of the self and the other. The murder of Medgar Evers in Mississippi, and the subsequent inability to convict over the course of thirty years the man who was guilty is an illustration of how hard it has been for white people to judge other whites in relation to their behavior concerning blacks. This dialectical struggle among whites in Mississippi to consider the life of a

black person equivalent to the life of a white person is an interesting way to look at the kind of struggle it has been to get the white community in the United States to reposition themselves in relation to African Americans in such a way that they are looked at as something different than a lesser other. The dialogical construction of self in the case of the first two white juries who tried Evers, murderer, all came to the conclusion despite overwhelming evidence against the shooter responsible, that his life was worth more than Evers' had been. It was not until 1994 some 31 years after Evers' death that his murderer, Byron De La Beckwith, was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

Arguably the most successful attempts to create dialogue between whites and blacks were a product of the efforts of Dr. Martin Luther King. Nonviolent protests and the willingness of whites to participate in actions like the Freedom Rides provided African Americans with a chance to be heard through voting and activism in a way that had not been previously available. This was evident in place like Montgomery, Alabama where King first rose to prominence as a leader among African Americans in the civil rights movement. The Montgomery Bus Boycott in reaction to the jailing of Rosa Parks provided a new kind of narrative for African Americans because Parks, King, and other leaders of this strategically planned action illustrated multifaceted personas that defied the notions of place regarding blacks at the time. Kirt Wilson describes Parks in this way, "The ideal that Parks, or any African American from Montgomery, could be a political activist, an integrationist, and a proper middle class Christian was incomprehensible, because in the minds of many white residents, these attributes were mutually exclusive."¹⁸ Wilson goes on to point out that in his Holt Street Address at the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott King, like those in the 1874-1875 Civil Rights Act

debate, frames desegregation in light of the foundational American documents, the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. King was one of the first nationally visible figures to force the issue of segregation on the white community through creating narrative coherency among the African American community in Montgomery with his blend of political and religious activism.

Tragically, the reason that dialogue was established as a result of King's leadership was often because of the overt refusal of white southerners to enter into dialogue with King and other black leaders. By using civil disobedience, King was able to gain the attention of many because of the violent reactions he was able to elicit from white police forces and governments like the ones in Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma. In essence dialogue only became possible after radical measures to avoid dialogue failed and made white leaders realize that their legitimacy could only be maintained if they were willing to enter into more civil discourse with African Americans.

Nevertheless, King, arguably, achieved greater levels of success in creating coherence between whites and blacks on a national level than any one before or since. King's assassination in 1968 was yet another effort to stifle and retard the dialogue that had begun to make tangible progress as African Americans began to elevate their status in many communities. The riots following King's death illustrated a new resurgence in the willingness to use violence in retaliation to violence. This sentiment had been present for quite some time; the separatism of the sixties was the culmination of years of frustration coupled with visible failures to advance through civil avenues.

In the context of an apology for slavery black separatism raises serious issues of reaching across a tradition of "hating back." The growing list of offenses and

indifference, against and toward, African Americans has led to large groups within the community that distrust whites on the basis of race. This has led to the sort of fundamental divisions in black leadership that were evident in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s and Malcolm X's approaches to securing Civil Rights. There are blacks that have given up on whites as a group entirely. Their narrative identity is saturated with the ideal of placing blame on whites and acting independently of them in order to achieve a better quality of life for themselves. Malcolm X summed up Black Nationalism and Separatism best in his speech "The Ballot or the Bullet," referring to blacks status in the United States in this way, "Second class citizenship is nothing but 20th century slavery. How you gonna tell me you're a second class citizen? They don't have second class citizenship in any other government on this earth. They just have slaves and people who are free. Well this country is a hypocrite. They try and make you think they set you free by calling you a second class citizen. No, you're nothing but a 20th century slave."¹⁹

This identity construction is important because it negates several things directly. The first is the concept of black citizenship in 1964. Malcolm X says directly that he is not giving this speech as an American. He is giving the speech as a black man who sees who will have to exercise equal rights independent of whites who see no advantage in letting him do so. He belittles those who hold esteem in nonviolent protest and trying to work through the system; the system, in his eyes, is the very thing keeping blacks from advancing. This is a negation of the validity of the American government, and he makes this clear through using figures from the American Revolution like Patrick Henry and George Washington to justify a Black Nationalist Revolution. This type of rhetoric constructs an identity that no longer tries to achieve parity as American citizen. This

identity embraces the role of the other, and seeks to make the other a more desirable or equal position through actions independent of any white person.

This is a role reversal of sorts. Malcolm X represents a group of African Americans who are not interested in interracial dialogue. The *Bullet and the Ballot*, as with most of his addresses, is a speech designed to establish an identity and a narrative through dialogue with other blacks. Black Nationalism as a philosophy takes a path that aims to hold a mutually exclusive dialogue between black people in black communities. This distrust and disdain makes a sociopolitical apology with merit and weight exceedingly difficult to craft and deliver because reconciliation is by nature a dialogical process. The question is not whether these groups of African Americans are justified in this assessment of whites. The question is how someone like Tony Hall overcomes this assessment, which for some African Americans has become a way of life. There is a dialectical tension between the identity of the African American citizen and the downtrodden black. An apology could serve to lessen the tension between these identities because it would illustrate an understanding of and a respect for both identities. An apology would embrace the identity of the African American as a citizen with the hope that the identity of the downtrodden black could be incorporated into history instead of lived as an existence.

Dialogic and Dialectic Ramifications

When confronted with vitriolic rhetoric of the past whites today face an identity crisis in admitting guilt or shame for the position of African Americans because many believe they are not responsible or complicit in the hardships of African Americans. They say or believe nothing similar to what Tillman and others like him spewed on a regular

basis, or what political radicals spout today. An apology for slavery forces a certain amount of culpability on whites in the United States who do not identify themselves as part of any racial injustice in this country. While few whites are comfortable being labeled racists, it seems that almost as few are willing to take responsibility for racial inequity. This is a continuation of the refusal to enter into dialogical construction of place between whites and blacks. There are prominent examples from the past that people do not want to be associated with, and contemporary examples that they wish to ignore as microcosms. The unwillingness to confront the past in the white narrative is effectively illustrated by the responses that Hall received in letters and on the floor of the House of Representatives from whites who are unwilling to dialogically construct their identities within the frame of an apology for slavery. Many whites carry the legacy of feeling beyond reproach. Most whites prefer conservative approaches to dealing with the racial divide. With regards to the rhetoric surrounding the 1874-1875 debate over the 1875 Civil Rights Act Wilson posits, “The prudence constructed by bill critics approached policy decisions with an emphasis on substantial relations and individual character; simultaneously it legitimized personal prejudice as an important component of social behavior.”²⁰

Narratives like this kept whites insulated from any guilt about the impoverished conditions that the majority of blacks endured. An unwillingness to address the problems of racism was maintained through the socially and legally propagated lie of white superiority that carried on for years in most places in the South. Dialogue between whites and blacks about improving the situations of blacks remained a rarity because the narrative of the white person created an “other” in reference to African Americans that

was so base many Southern whites looked on blacks as beast.²¹ Some scientist like Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein still carry that narrative through new developments in genetics that they claim show evidence of a genetically inferior underclass in books like *The Bell Curve*. There are counter-narratives formed even as these scientists produce this material. Celeste M. Condit and others argue against the dissemination of genetic racism.²² Again while European Americans generally do not hold explicitly racist views in this way there is still a feeling of denial when faced with race issues. People are affected by the past narratives of their families and their government. The shift in governmental narrative is what an apology would provide. This would be an epistemological change in governmental rhetoric that could serve as a jumping point for many of the European American narratives that have been formed over the years. This change in the government's stance toward slavery could cause many European Americans to reevaluate their own sense of place and position because it would in essence be the government leading by example. A governmental acknowledgment of complicity could elicit a similar reaction among parts of the European community it represents.

With regard to African American narratives there is a propensity among blacks and whites to separate black narratives between rifts within the African American community. While there are certainly different assessments of what needs to be done among the members of the African American community, Mark Lawrence McPhail warns that defining African Americans in opposition to one another damages coherence. McPhail says, "It is precisely because African Americans respond differently to the common experience of racial oppression that the underlying coherence of Black protest

and politics is often obscured, and complementary strategies of resistance are defined in opposition to one another.”²³ The actions of African Americans may not look the same from Frederick Douglass to Henry Highland Garnett or from Martin Luther King to Malcolm X, but the end game for African Americans advocating different methodologies to secure their rights is essentially the same. Divergent narratives can be brought closer together through dialogues. An apology could conceivably initiate conversations between different sections of the African American community that could lead to greater coherence among them.

The dialogical process that is being initiated through an apology is difficult given the number of people who are in defensive positions because of the historical events of which there are too many to list that are incorporated into the narratives of Americans. However, there is hope in dialogue because all thought “is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others’ thought,” and some struggles take longer than others.²⁴ Hall has the right ideal with his apology because it perpetuates the struggle if nothing else. Given the theoretical propositions concerning apology and the necessary reversal of power which takes place when a group asks for forgiveness it seems that repeated and persistent attempts to enter into conciliatory dialogue might illustrate the kind of in definition of the self on the part of whites that many blacks would have to see in order to believe an apology was contrite and appropriate. By entering into substantive dialogue with African Americans in regards to their identities and sense of place as American citizens there could be redefinition of terms for blacks and whites. This process will have to be initiated through a government action like Hall’s apology because dialogical processes that have been started by African Americans have been unfairly

approached so many times that many African Americans are no longer willing to initiate such a dialogue in good faith. Many white Americans are also unable to initiate such dialogues because they feel that they are assigning guilt to themselves. This creates stagnation in the dialogue between the races, and this in turn makes change more difficult because it is a de facto reification of current racial positions.

McPhail believes, “The commitment to racial essentialism which implicates both African Americans and European Americans in the perpetuation of diverse cultural antagonism must be called into question if the rhetoric and politics of Blackness are to move beyond the complicitous reification of Whiteness.” I believe that assigning blame to either side in such a fashion can be dangerous because it inspires defense, rather than motivation to initiate dialogue between the parties. A governmental apology is a way in a representative leader, such as Hall, may take it upon his or herself to start dialogue between African Americans and European Americans without blaming one side or the other for the current state of affairs. There remains a fine line between initiating meaningful dialogue and alienating people who believe they are being blamed for a deed from which they are far removed. A governmental apology can place blame upon the government itself, which essentially spreads the blame over the entire population without naming anyone specifically. This may seem counter-intuitive, but the net-effect is attempting to promote dialogue that removes such ardent adherence to “other” based communications between the races. Neither whites nor African Americans are willing to accept the blame for the current state of race relations, so it would seem that it is the government’s responsibility to intervene for the good of its people.

CHAPTER FOUR

Living Systems: A Look at Improved Organizational Health through an Apology for Slavery

Organizationally speaking, a living system is a self-producing entity constructed through the interaction of its parts.¹ The United States creates and organizes itself through the interaction of its government with its people and its environment. An organization's self-production and organization of its parts are "discursively" maintained "in the social domain of language."² An organization is maintained through the reproduction of itself in these discursive processes. This discursive process of self organization is often referred to as autopoiesis. Autopoiesis is the self narrative of an entity which creates its identity. "Viewed through the lens of autopoiesis, organizational communication is the means by which a socially embedded discourse community maintains its identity; the means by which its individual constituents understand the world and themselves...-dialogically and dialectically- through the use of language."³ This is a supplementary approach to changing the narrative identity of the United States that couples with the dialectical approach to interpreting history and race narratives used in the last chapter.

In living systems theories there are classifications of first, second, and third order systems, as they correlate to levels of complexity of an organization. Typically a firstlevel organism is considered to be a single cell organism, second level is multi-cellular, such a person, and the third level is an organization.⁴ For the purpose of this discussion there will be a shift in this assessment of levels. This shift is necessary because this approach attempts to look at the United States as third level organism. A person will

be the first level, a state the second, and the nation the third. Each one of these entities is a system, but the first two are subsystems within the third, which will be the focus of the living systems discussion. “Systems at higher levels are suprasystems of their lower level component systems.”⁵ The United States will be looked at as a suprasystem in these terms. That means that the following assumptions are in play. First, a person can be part of many networks and social organizations that are subsystems; for example they could be a member of a university or a corporation, a Texan, and ultimately a citizen of the United States. There are narrative identities created at each level. This discussion places a primacy on the identity of an American citizen above the other identities. This is because in order to gain interest convergence a shared identity would likely be the most productive in bringing whites and blacks together. In Wilson’s rejoinder to Hatch, he discusses the reasoning behind *Brown v. the Board of Education* and the South African TRC in terms of interest convergence. In both cases Wilson is able to point to gains that the white community received in the process of empowering blacks. In order for an apology to be made, “the empowered majority would have to prefer the risks inherent in reconciliation to the less desirable consequences of alternatives.”⁶ It is necessary to show how an apology would help Americans, an identity shared by both whites and blacks.

Second this approach assumes that the United States creates and reproduces a collective narrative for its people. In other words the identity of an American is a valid identification for the people being discussed in the formation and implementation of an apology. Our writing of histories has failed to recognize slavery in a way that has denied the acceptance of the collective narrative by many African Americans. A greater recognition of slavery through a government apology serves to improve that narrative

because all too often “mainstream historians portrayed slavery as a minor event in southern history.”⁷ Part of the reconciliation process will deal with enfranchising those citizens who believe that their identity as a citizen is invalid. As McPhail points out the arguments of Black Nationalists like Malcolm X should not be looked at as independent of other rhetoric by African Americans seeking equal rights. One must be careful when making distinctions between African American responses to oppression because they are still protesting the same social ills.⁸ To separate the causes of African Americans is to take away the coherency of the African American narratives, and it further subverts the process of reconciliation. An apology must be directed to those who subscribe to the political process that it is embedded in, as well as those who do not. The living systems theory’s systemic approach dictates that all parties be integrated because the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.⁹

Thirdly it posits that the United States must recognize itself as a living system that can reproduce and revise its identity through discursive activity that leads to action and social change. There have been a multitude of Civil Rights laws and concessions designed to change the situation of African Americans. Those laws have not created race parity because the behavior of the government toward African Americans has not changed to the degree that African Americans are looked at as anything other than citizens; they remain a group of disadvantaged citizens. But for change to happen, “The perpetrator must change its behavior toward the victim,”¹⁰ and it has been pointed out repeatedly that the American government has not amended its behavior to the degree that is necessary. There must be recognition of slavery on the part of the United States government that is radically different from its past descriptions of the practice, so radical

that it begins to change the entire way slavery is addressed by American citizens. At present there is an absence of atonement for slavery on the part of the American government that reflects very poorly on its people.

The question of how the United States must address the question of race inequity as a result of slavery must be answered. First there must be a distinction as to whether the affliction is intrinsic or extrinsic. Slavery in this case was the legacy of British imperialism, but it was internalized as an institution when there was no prohibition of it in the Constitution. It is the legacy of this intrinsic problem, and not an environmental condition that is retarding the progress of the United States as a system. As McPhail argues, “The defense of White privilege and the denial of African American calls for social, economic, and racial equality that have characterized the European-American communication and character since the end of the Civil Rights movement seems to suggest a resistance to reality so deep as to be pathological.”¹¹ In other words these elements of white America and the national government that have denied African American calls for help exhibit signs that are characteristic of a pathological mental illness. Miller and Miller note that, “A pathological (abnormal, unhealthy, maladjusted, or inefficient) state in any living system is one in which, for a significant period, either one or more of its critical variables remain beyond the normal steady-state range, or excessively costly adjustment processes must be used to avoid this.”¹² African Americans make up approximately 13% of the population according to the Census Bureau, which means that somewhere around 36 million people are, to a large extent, operating as critical variables beyond normal conditions. The normal condition in this case is

represented by the status quo for white Americans who do not face the same kinds of discrimination as African Americans.

The race divide in the United States must be looked at as a pathological illness that destroys the health of the nation. Until now it has been treated like a viral illness, which is to say only the symptoms have been treated. While racism may not be something that can be completely eradicated, it would seem that it could be marginalized through constant attacks on its validity and foundations. Such persistent efforts would be constituted in the discursive processes that initiate the dialogical redefining of race in the United States. An apology could contribute to that end if it was constructed and delivered properly. Tony Hall's apology proposals and his apology in Benin initiated dialogue, and further apology proposals would do at least that much. Making practical amends will not be easy. "All adjustment processes are carried out at some cost to systems in time, money, or other resources."¹³ This is an adjustment process that seeks to overcome over 140 years of sustained illness, and such transitions are not made easily. As Miller and Miller note, "A living system characteristically attempts to cope with any pathology by using local subsystem adjustment processes first. Only when these fail do other parts of the system become involved. If the entire system cannot deal with problem using the means available to it, higher level systems may become involved."¹⁴

In this case the highest level system that can attack the pathogen is the federal government. The suprasystem must intervene when the subsystems fail or are unable to stabilize and fix a problem. Slavery was allowed under federal law, and African Americans were dispersed throughout the Union. This means that while state and local governments can take steps that assist in making practical amends, it remains the

responsibility of the federal government to make an apology. Acknowledgement, as Tavuchis and Lazare point out, is a key factor to initiating reconciliation. There must be a federal acknowledgement of the cause of the illness in order for treatment to begin. Reconciliation is often described as a healing process, so this continuation of the metaphor is natural. An apology would be, in essence, a diagnosis; it would be a shift in governmental autopoiesis. In recognizing slavery in a way that is unique to past narratives produced by the government the narrative identity of the government concerning slavery changes. This may not immediately change race relations in a practical sense, but the constant reproduction and reorganization through a new autopoiesis stands to change future interpretations of what slavery has meant to Americans.

In this arena the primary discursive maintenance takes place through law making, and the subsequent enforcement of the law. As Brooks holds, “Governmental resources are an indispensable resource in any complete solution,” and they must be utilized in new ways because even “civil rights laws and policies... help to fuel the race problem” in some ways.¹⁵ These resources include the rhetoric of politicians and other leaders who produce the laws. “The higher the degree of consistency between systemically produced descriptions and individually produced descriptions,” note Graham and McKenna, “the more likely it is that a particular discourse community will maintain an ongoing identity within society.”¹⁶ This living systems approach tries to create Mark Lawrence McPhail’s principle of coherency between different levels of government and the individuals within those jurisdictions. Consistency in the narrative identities at each level, if those identities are positive, creates a stronger and more productive narrative that enfranchises the

members of the living system. An apology would be a “clarification of the historical record”¹⁷ that is necessary for consistency and coherency between African Americans and white Americans. An apology would recognize the “epistemological complicity” that has been present in the United States, and seek to start a different and more coherent cycle identity production.¹⁸ The identity must be revised and then a coherent identity that elevates African Americans can be established and maintained through consistent autopoiesis that emphasizes the enfranchisement of African Americans. Hall’s apology proposals, particularly the second, provide examples of transformative leadership in the white community that seeks to transcend the reproduction of narratives that disadvantage African Americans.

Interest Convergence and the Possibilities of Participatory Democracy as a Living System

This pathologizing of the race divide in the United States raises some very interesting questions. It illustrates that the United States as a living system is challenged because it has failed to properly integrate all of its citizenry. It also suggests that this failure is not the result of any action or inaction on the part of African Americans. If there is no problem with African Americans as a group, but a disadvantage facing them because of years of denied social, economic, and educational growth, then there needs to be a step past essentializing, and a step toward the affirmation of African Americans as equal citizens. This would be a move toward the establishment of “cultural pluralism without hierarchy.”¹⁹ By taking steps to appreciate pluralism there would occur an epistemological shift in the need to learn from and appreciate each culture as it is. This means that the government would be addressing the conditions surrounding African

Americans through an apology. This would represent a considerable shift in the autopoiesis of the federal government, which traditionally has granted rights and left it to African Americans to try to secure those rights. Such an approach would also recognize that “no amount of self-help alone” will overcome the injustices done against the African American community over hundreds of years.²⁰ This is the intervention of the suprasystem; it allows for the government to step in and assist African Americans in penance for its mistreatment of them over the years.

If the African American community were openly embraced by the government, it could be a vital step in reconciling blacks and whites. This shift in autopoiesis in regard to the acknowledgment of slavery is a vital part in any change. This is a matter of gaining trust in order to provide efficacy to a section of the population that some scholars believe is in the midst of an identity crisis because of the American government’s refusal to properly address slavery historically and politically.²¹ The government must revise its approach to slavery in order to gain the trust of African Americans. It can do this by “constructing a new lexicon of activism, and language,” which “embraces a vision of democratic pluralism.”²² The federal government can achieve this, in part, by instituting a new point of linguistic and legal reference through an apology that addresses African Americans in a way that the American government has not done before. That is in a mode of deference, humility, and shame for its inability to incorporate such a critical part of its citizenry. Cornel West speaks of this kind of move towards true acceptance of multiculturalism as a “politics of convergence.” This concept is grounded in a strong faith in “the potential of democratic institutions.”²³ The hope being put forth here is that the American government is a system in which it is beneficial for as many people as possible

to prosper. This politics of convergence parallels the principles of living systems in that they both seek to enfranchise the all parts of an organization or system that hold value in order to add value to the entity itself. This is exactly the kind of alignment that Kirt Wilson believed would be necessary for reconciliation in the United States. The incorporation of African Americans into the American citizenry through the more rigid applications of the laws that have been passed in regards to Civil Rights (13th, 14th, 15th amendments, Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, etc...) is imperative. There are “revolutionary possibilities”²⁴ within political convergence because it provides coherence. Through this there is the greatest amount of human capital and resources working together in the United States, which in turn would lead to an improved sense of organizational health.

However, an apology alone will not cure all of these ills. From a living systems approach there would have to be a treatment that accompanied the final proper diagnosis. As it stands a shift in autopoiesis only represents the diagnosis of an illness. This is comparable to a patient being misdiagnosed by several doctors and finally getting the correct opinion. While this will undoubtedly help the patient there is still much to do in curing the patient’s of the malady. This is where the ideal of practical amends surfaces as a step toward the treatment of the race divide. Some sort of reparation will be necessary to truly treat the problems that America faces. This is not to say that the government can buy a cure to racism and discrimination. However, as I noted at the beginning of the chapter living systems theory recognizes a need for some sort of expenditure of capital to be made in the curing of an illness.

Where do Tony Hall’s Apology Proposals Fit into the Living Systems Theory?

Given all of the information about Living Systems Theory the next step is to see where Hall's apology proposals fit into this equation. The Benin apology is not included in this assessment because it is not a piece of legislation and does not fit into the primary discursive means that Living Systems Theory privileges. Had it been an address to Congress or the American people it could be more heavily weighed as a means of contrition, but it stands as a personal address heard by a select few. Hall's first proposal, "That this Congress apologizes to African-Americans whose ancestors suffered as slaves under the Constitution and laws of the United States until 1865." Is a fine beginning, but does not implement any accompanying actions that would serve to elevate African Americans to a status above their current place. In short there are no practical amends. Hall's 2000 Congressional proposal is going to be the focus here because it constitutes the best model or starting point for future attempts and proposals to secure a sociopolitical apology for slavery. This examination will look at the systemic nature of Hall's apology, its effectiveness in terms of improving organizational health, and its ability to shift the autopoiesis of the United States in such a way that promotes an elevated status for African Americans.

To achieve these aims, the following questions have to be examined in the terms of Hall's apology. First does Hall's apology represent a change in autopoiesis? This can be answered with a resounding yes. Consider, for example, the following passages from the preface,

Acknowledging the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies, and for other purposes.

Whereas approximately 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States and the 13 American colonies in the period 1619 through 1865;

Whereas slavery was a grave injustice that caused and continues to cause African-Americans to suffer enormous damages and losses, both material and intangible, including the loss of human dignity and liberty, the frustration of careers and professional lives, and the long-term loss of income and opportunity;”

Whereas slavery in the United States denied African-Americans the fruits of their own labor and was an immoral and inhumane deprivation of life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, citizenship rights, and cultural heritage;

This represents a tremendous shift in the level of description that most pieces of legislation or a Congressional address made by a congressperson has put forth. Hall labels slavery directly as an evil that is the result of the actions of the United States. There is no sidestepping of blame. Hall chose to build on the acknowledgment that was present in his first proposal in 1997, and to create an explicit governmental narrative that actively denounces slavery. In this proposal Hall makes a step forward in the autopoiesis of the United States government. Even though his proposal did not pass, the Congressional Record shows a member of the House of Representatives loudly speaking against the past actions of the government in regard to slavery. This level of acknowledgment is a new development in the government narratives, as can be pointed out through the Eurocentric depictions of slavery in history books and educational systems.²⁵ This a step forward in producing a narrative that is coherent and conciliatory.

The second important question to answer is does the apology seek to change the way African Americans are treated within society? This is where steps toward reconciliation can happen. For the apology to be substantive within the bounds of a living systems approach it must change not only past depictions of American slavery, but also consider the lingering effects of slavery on the United States as an organization. The

narrative that is being crafted must aim to bring African Americans farther into the folds of participatory democracy if the United States as an organization is going to realize the benefits of an apology for slavery. The following passage is helpful,

Whereas, although the achievements of African-Americans in overcoming the evils of slavery stand as a source of tremendous inspiration, the successes of slaves and their descendants do not overwrite the failure of the Nation to grant all Americans their birthright of equality and the civil rights that safeguard freedom;

Whereas an apology is an important and necessary step in the process of racial reconciliation, because a sincere apology accompanied by an attempt at real restitution is an important healing interaction;

Whereas a genuine apology may restore damaged relationships, whether they are between 2 people or between groups of people;

Whereas African-American art, history, and culture reflects experiences of slavery and freedom, and continued struggles for full recognition of citizenship and treatment with human dignity, and there is inadequate presentation, preservation, and recognition of the contributions of African-Americans within American society;

Whereas there is a great need for building institutions and monuments to promote cultural understanding of African-American heritage and further enhance racial harmony;

This is a recognition of the accomplishments of African Americans during and after slavery, and it represents an appreciation for African American culture. Hall is framing the bill he is about to propose, where he will specifically call for practical amends. In the task at hand though, it would be hard to say that Hall has elevated the status of blacks in today's political climate. He has recognized the efforts and the trials of blacks in regard to slavery, but he does not specifically address the African American community's continuing status as de facto second class citizens.²⁶ An apology for slavery would have to directly address the members of the African American community that feel like they are not a part of the political process in the United States. It is fair to suggest

that an apology for slavery must recognize and accept how angry many of the intended recipients must feel. This preface would have been more effective from the standpoint of gaining support among the disenfranchised had it spoken to them directly, rather than speaking about them. Hall seems appropriately contrite, but a further recognition of the position of African Americans and their viewpoints regarding the government's inactions seems necessary. If this group is to be welcomed into the citizenry in a way that will make it worth while for them to put trust and effort into the reconciliation process, the apology needs to be a plea; it cannot be a statement of facts or events.

From a living systems perspective this is a failure to fully diagnose the illness. There has to be such empathy in this apology that blacks will actually trust that whites feel that their resentment and anger has been justified. Only through such an explicit recognition can these feelings be overcome. A living systems approach posits the belief that each part of the system is necessary for the whole to function at an optimal level. Committing to incorporating African Americans into the political system has to be a paramount objective in the crafting of an apology. This is where political convergence becomes important. Hall must preface this apology in such a way that not only blacks, but whites see the benefits in making life better for blacks. Interest convergence must be made clear, whether it be for moral or monetary gains, the passage of a congressional apology will rest heavily upon the speaker's ability to convince the masses that this is best for everyone. The most difficult group to convince in this scenario may not be African Americans. The path of most resistance likely lay in the hegemonic mindset of the Eurocentric point of view. The angry letters that Hall and newspaper editorial boards received in the aftermath of his proposals were largely from whites who felt offended by

the process of recognizing slavery in such a way. Any apology proposal is going to face opposition from people of all demographics, apart from the difficulty of convincing African Americans that the government means what it is saying this time.

This is where the pathology argument is so useful. It shifts racism and the exclusion of blacks not onto the shoulders of blacks or whites, so much as it directs the treatment of the problem toward the actual evil itself. This is a process of treatment, rather than a process of blame. After all, people are not blamed for an illness in most cases; they are treated for it. Complicity can be fought if people do not think that they are being blamed for wronging another person. This involves highlighting the plight of African Americans in such a way that there is an emergence of empathy from other communities, namely those with Eurocentric points of view. This view is again well complimented by the philosophy of Cornel West, who focuses on the metaphysical aspects of healing racism through Christian precepts of love, faith, and hope. This is referred to by other scholars in terms of a “sacred epistemology.”²⁷ As noted in the first chapter it would be difficult for a politician, such as Hall, to openly embrace Christianity on the floor of the House, though Hall was an open and vocal Christian who did not shy away from his faith. However, espousing Christian values and universal moral virtues like faith, love, and hope would likely be welcomed. In an atmosphere normally filled with protocol and dry delivery, an appeal to morality rather than legality could pay off in large dividends. It could be seen as “emotional symbolism” as Newt Gingrich has already labeled Hall’s attempts, however it could provide a basis for understanding and acceptance among communities both black and white. As Brooks, Lazare, and Tavuchis all note throughout their works, apologies are often a matter of morality, and restoring the

character of one part and the self worth of the other. This is an important part of crafting an apology for slavery.

The bill itself does take another step toward practical amends with specific calls for action,

Whereas it is proper and timely for the Congress to recognize June 19, 1865, the historic day when the last group of slaves were informed of their freedom, to acknowledge the historic significance of the abolition of slavery, to express deep regret to African-Americans, and to support reconciliation efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That--

(1) the Congress--

(A) acknowledges the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies;

(B) apologizes to African-Americans on behalf of the people of the United States, for the wrongs committed against their ancestors who suffered as slaves;

(C) expresses condemnation of and repudiates the gross and wanton excesses perpetrated against African-Americans while the institution of slavery existed;

(D) recognizes the Nation's need to redress these events;

(E) commends efforts of reconciliation initiated by organizations and individuals concerned about civil rights and civil liberties and calls for a national initiative of reconciliation among the races; and

(F) expresses commitment to rectify misdeeds of slavery done in the past and to discourage the occurrence of human rights violations in the future

This is essentially what Hall framed in the first part of his introduction being introduced as a matter of law. There are a few noteworthy additions though. The commendation of the efforts of those who promote reconciliation is an interesting inclusion. However, there is no mention of what that commendation would be, or how it would be manifested into practice other than in a national initiative for racial reconciliation. The problem with this is that there would have to be more specific

denotation of what exactly an initiative would constitute because there are multitudes of congressional initiatives that are never funded or put into practice in any meaningful way. The second thing to note is an expressed commitment toward rectifying the misdeeds of slavery, and to discourage future violations of human rights. This is a troublesome point as well because it offers no specificity. Rectifying the misdeeds of slavery is admirable, and should be the hope of an apology, but there should be another statement here guaranteeing rectification by a specific date. There are no federal statutes added ensuring penalties for future human rights violations or crimes against African Americans. Some of this is addressed in the second section, however it seems that the actions toward mending the offenses should not be separated from the addressing of the offenses because it separates items that could be cut out of a bill later. There has to be a hard and fast connection of the practical amends to the acknowledgement portion of the apology. They cannot be put in different sections. These are the practical amends Hall suggests:

(2) it is the sense of the Congress that--

(A) a commission should be established--

(i) to examine the institution of slavery, subsequent racial and economic discrimination against African-Americans as a matter of law and as a matter of fact, and the impact of slavery and such discrimination on living African-Americans;

(ii) to issue a standardized, historical curriculum for use in public schools on the institution of slavery in the United States; and

(iii) to explore the possibility of establishing a scholarship and research fund; and

(B) a National museum and memorial should be established regarding slavery as it relates to the history of the United States, and other significant African-American history.

From a living systems approach to Hall's apology proposal this is a bright spot

because it commits to visible and practical symbols that represent a change in

autopoiesis. However, it only commits to setting up a commission that will look at the matters such as changes in the language of the law, school texts, and potentially offering scholarships that would actively reorganize the system. This is eerily similar to the commission that President Clinton set up that did little more than conduct some town hall style meetings, and in the end did nothing to change the way African Americans are treated in this country. If a commission were to report that they did not want certain changes that Hall had envisioned, then problems would arise in fulfilling the practical amends. Instead of convincing people that America was ready for a change in race relations, it would be just another failure in which the American government delivered nothing more than empty rhetorical gestures.

With that being said, were the commission to report back and endorse Hall's proposal in full with adequate budgetary spending the effects in terms of living system might unfold in this way. The first point is the most nebulous because it seems to hint at reparations without committing to any sort of action. The effect on living African Americans is evident. They have been denied the opportunity to elevate their status in the United States and overcome the stereotypes that they have been saddled with despite valiant efforts by countless activists. This is evident in Census data in as much as African Americans incur poverty at higher rates, own homes at lower rates, and receive degrees from institutions of higher learning at lower rates.²⁸ These are all things of which Hall is aware. Establishing a commission seems to be antithetical to swift progress after justice has been delayed for such a long time. The language that becomes important is making this a matter of law because this incorporates all of those pieces of information into the primary governmental discursive process. However, incorporating all of this as a matter

of law seems to be very loose terminology. This does not guarantee the shift in narrative of the organization that would be requisite for improved organizational health.

In the long term Hall's second point stands to have the most effect from a living systems approach. The changing of curriculum in public schools is the kind of epistemological shift that stands to make a difference in the long term. This treats the pathological illness of racism at the root. If children are taught in such a way that it alters their perceptions of race from an early age then there can be meaningful changes in the way each part of the system interacts with the other. This is of course a slow, long term change that would likely take years to institute through changing textbooks and curriculum, and then finally teaching children the new material. This is all necessary, and should be retained in any future attempts to secure an apology. As noted earlier, Brooks suggests that traditional historical texts concerning slavery do not place the kind of emphasis on the atrociousness of the institution, given the social principles upon which this country was founded. The future of the country's race problem is highly dependent upon the pedagogical approaches taken to combat the pathological afflictions spurred by slavery.

The third subpoint is an extension of the second because it offers the possibility of federal funding at higher levels of learning that could be cultivated through the changing of curriculum at lower levels. This would be a strong statement to the African American community if it were funded properly. While scholarship funds regarding race are already in place, a federally funded program that emphasized the elevation of African Americans through higher education would stand to make a large difference in the way blacks are perceived in the United States, as more African Americans became more economically

affluent. This is a systemic process in which a more educated African Americans simply equates to more educated Americans. This means that more Americans will have the means to provide for themselves at higher levels, and a strong economy is good for all citizens of the United States.

Point B is an interesting ideal. There would certainly be merits to a national museum that focused on black history, as evidenced by the fact that one is already in the works. There are so many museums and monuments in Washington that it seems almost profane that there is not already something dedicated to African Americans. One point to notice here is that Hall does not specify that the museum be in Washington. It seems that it would be most significant were it in the capital. This would provide for the most amount of exposure to the largest amount of people to the way that slavery should be remembered. The Holocaust Museum in D.C. could be an appropriate model to follow as far as the mood and tone that should be set in such a place. The Anne Frank Museum in the Netherlands would also provide some degree of instruction on how a museum like this should be set up and operated. This would be the kind of shift in autopoiesis that would mean something to anyone who visited it. If the museum were anywhere else it would detract from the significance of its establishment.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Couple More Practical Examples: Virginia's "Unanimous" Apology, Georgia's Preliminary Discussions and Brown University's Practical Amends

The Virginia state legislature recently passed an apology for slavery. The debate over the proposed apology featured some of the same rhetoric that was seen when Hall made his proposals. Delegates debated the importance of an apology, and how it would effect the citizens of Virginia. "It is meant to be a resolution that is part of a healing process, a process that still needs to take place even today in 2007," said one sponsor, Delegate A. Donald McEachin.¹ McEachin acknowledged that there were no slaves or slave holders remaining but continued, "Virginia is alive and well, and Virginia was built on the backs of slaves, and Virginia's economy boomed because of slavery, and it is Virginia that ought to apologize." McEachin wisely places the blame for slavery on the Commonwealth of Virginia, rather than any of its citizens in particular. As I mentioned in the living systems approach, the amount of resistance to an apology can be lessened by this kind of framing.

However, Republican Delegate Frank D. Hargrove responded to the proposal with this question, "Are we going to force the Jews to apologize for killing Christ?" Hargrove believed the apology to be an unnecessary gesture and added that African Americans should, "get over it" because "By golly we are living in 2007." Hargrove's was the only vocal opposition to the bill on record. However, his protest and the way in which he protested spoke volumes. He was forced to reconsider his position on the matter to some degree, but McEachin's proposal was not passed without some softening. The

controversy surrounding this bill is interesting considering that it passed unanimously in the Virginia state legislature. Delegate Hargrove did not change his mind so easily with regard to an apology. In fact USA Today reported that Hargrove voted for the revised measure only because it expressed regret, “without apologizing for anything.”² Hargrove was able to vote for a measure that expressed “profound regret” because it did not actually represent an apology in his mind. This is interesting because if there are colleagues of Hargrove’s who agree with him, but were less vocal in the matter, what does this apology mean? These are the kinds of mixed messages that make an apology for slavery a difficult thing to craft, debate, and pass. It is hard to take seriously the vote of someone who not long before the passage of the bill was telling African Americans that they needed “to get over it (slavery).” Hargrove’s objections and posturing would seem to take some of the sincerity out of the apology, even if he was the only outspoken opponent. However, considering that the wording of McEachin’s first proposal was changed to accommodate the objections of Hargrove it would be fair to conjecture that there may have been others who had to be compromised with behind closed doors. The arguments made by Condit et al and Wilson about how shifts in position to reach compromise undermine civil rights acts are applicable here.³ Their points are evident in this Virginia measure that promotes some aspects of unhealthy compromise, allowing figures like Hargrove to express regret without apologizing.

Interestingly, some of the controversy surrounding the bill had to do with issuing an apology to Native Americans, as well. Hargrove stated this in his initial objections to the bill. Rhetorically this seems like a poor choice. An apology is due to Native Americans, however it seems like that should be done in a gesture that is independent of

an apology for slavery. The oppression faced by both groups is abhorrent, and they should both be addressed in order to develop better race relations and intercultural understanding. However, one issue should not be conflated with the other. Slavery was an institution that was unconnected to the decimation of the Native American population, and the subsequent theft of their lands. The actions no doubt stem from the same Eurocentric ego that Frederick Douglass associated with the “master class,” but each oppressed or offended group cannot be addressed with blanket statements or resolutions. This bundling of offended parties into one succinct piece of legislation cheapens the value of the apology to each offended party, and is representative of a Eurocentric otherizing of minority groups.

McEachin’s proposal for an apology and Hargrove’s subsequent displeasure with the proposal set off some interesting conversations on a Virginia newspaper’s message board. These responses are an interesting look into the mindset of Virginians, and could offer some proof as to the competing narratives that are present throughout the United States. Here is a sampling of some of the responses:

“What if someone said: Jews need to move on and get over the Holocaust? Can you imagine how fast Hargrove would be gone from politics. And slavery existed just 60 years before the Holocaust and for almost 400 years! We are still racist, although many of us could not stomach slavery today, we still allow something very close to it in all but name. My suspicion is that whites don't want to allow blacks to move up. It's easier to accept that we enslaved half-witted, ignorant 3/5 humans.”

“I have trouble understanding how people can first of all deny that this issue is flaring anti-black/white sentiment. Look at the fact that all of you, those for, and those against *the term you refers to people, not races* on this forum are arguing! Racism does exist, but it isn't a black/white issue, it is a black/white/yellow/brown/ and if there were purple issue. Everyone needs to drop race all together and focus on people, not groups. We are AMERICANS for God sake!”

“Let us begin at the beginning. I would like an apology from Eve (or her spokesperson) and from the serpent (or its spokesperson) for spoiling our paradise. Once I receive that, we can move on to more recent events.”

“Let me get this straight. We Virginians are supposed to apologize for something we didn't do, to a group of people who were never slaves?!? I think there are many more important issues that need working on, rather than reaching back in time and dredging up issues that were settled by Abraham Lincoln. I think it would be better to recognize the contributions made by slaves, rather than to apologize for something no one alive today was responsible for.”

“Virginia is a legal entity representing a commonwealth of people living there today. What is the harm to Virginians, if the legal entity officially repudiates its long-past behavior? (a: none) What good would be gained? Affirmation to living that the figurative entity has an historical memory, and is contrite (figuratively) to the descendants of its former slaveholders' -property-, for its having protected and upheld for human slavery for so very long. Apologies hurt no-one.”

“I'm a Southerner and descendant of a Confederate soldier. I'm not sorry that the institution of slavery once existed in the South (as it also did in all the American colonies), and I doubt that my great great grandfather was sorry either. I AM sorry that so many people ignorantly believe we were fighting the Yankee invaders in order to preserve slavery. I am also grieved that there are still people (race baiters) who are uninterested in the REAL problems facing the "African-American" community.”⁴

There were over one hundred threads on this discussion board posted over the course of several days. This is an interesting phenomenon because even those who are adamantly opposed to an apology for slavery are entering into dialogue about it. There are some who might not be swayed from their convictions in advocating or opposing an apology for slavery, but there is discussion and as a result there is a greater awareness of the competing narratives surrounding race issues in this discussion. The discursive activity on these discussion boards that are attached to newspaper articles provide an interesting way to look at the self-presentation of Americans who are dealing with an apology for slavery through very different narratives.

I believe that these individual responses can be a very valuable look into the psyche of the Virginia public, as well as the American public since some of these posts

are from people who claim to be non-residents. Each of the post included here represent the most common sentiments expressed on the newspaper's thread discussion. Just as with Tony Hall's proposals in 1997 and 2000 there are a range of responses, but these responses indicate some different points. There are many who seem to agree with an apology being proposed and passed. There are those who feel no responsibility in regard to an apology for slavery either because they have never been a part of the institution, or that there are no survivors left to whom one should apologize. This is an argument that is easily countered with complicity arguments present in Mark Lawrence McPhail's, Kirt Wilson's, and Cornel West's work, in addition to many other scholars. The argument is countered with some effectiveness on the website. Then there are the those who are completely at odds with each other because they choose to identify with narratives that create binary oppositions, such as those who identify heavily with Confederate ideology and those who are identify with black separatism. The rifts here show divisions that are indeed pathological. There are generations of narrative reification at play, which is very difficult to overcome. This is why I believe the most progressive means of action against racism is to begin the institution of a new lexicon and to begin deconstructing the stories that people have incorporated into their identities. An apology is a step in this direction.

The Virginia resolution, in spite of its mixed messages, has garnered attention elsewhere. The NAACP has asked Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue to follow Virginia's lead and issue an apology for slavery and Jim Crow. Georgia's NAACP President Edward O. Dubose suggested that "An apology will not improve education, but an apology will acknowledge that whites benefited from the slavery and the inhumane treatment of African-Americans."⁵ Georgia's government officials have offered familiar

protests. "I take the same approach to this that I have to all [requests for] apologies. I am not certain government ought to be apologizing," said House Speaker Glenn Richardson (Republican). He continued, "Nobody here was in office when slavery was practiced." The President of the Senate said that he would vote for the bill, but qualified his statement with the statement that neither he nor his family was connected with slavery, and that this "all seems a little silly." Representative Al Williams (Democrat) has said that he will continue with his crafting of a proposal for an apology that he plans to introduce in the state legislature. Governor Sonny Perdue and his office have refused to comment on their position. The Atlanta Journal Constitution reports that it this resolution would likely no pass this year because it is so late in the session, but the continuing debate in Georgia could be a source of new insight into the question of an apology for slavery.⁶

In another interesting act of contrition, Brown University has pledged to raise ten million dollars to devote toward African American scholarships and studies. The university has promised this after a commission's findings showed that Brown's early years had ties to slavery, including the use of slave labor in the construction of one of its oldest buildings. This is a different kind of apology because it is a private institution offering its own form of reparations, but these sorts of private actions could serve as supplemental means of practical amends that could serve to speed the process of reconciliation. Also, Hall's 2000 apology called for the commendation and rewarding of institutions that took such initiatives. If private institutions were rewarded for making such efforts to promote racial reconciliation, then more of them might follow Brown University's lead in this area.

Remaining Theoretical Questions

It is reasonable to say that the legacy of slavery and the institutions that followed it are of consequence to anyone in this country that is black regardless of their ancestry. This is a sign that the legacy of slavery permeates American organizational health. An interesting question has been posed several times over the course of my research on this project. Lazare asks it directly, “If the United States apologized for slavery, which African Americans, including recent immigrants from Africa, would receive the apology, or only the descendants of slaves?”⁷ One editorial that I mentioned in the first chapter bore the untactful title “Bones Can’t Accept an Apology.” This suggests that Lazare is not alone in asking this question. This question is easily answered given the type of discrimination being faced by African Americans. African Americans are discriminated against on the basis of race, and those who discriminate against them are not concerned with African American lineage in the terms that Lazare is suggesting. This is a fallacious juxtaposition of selectivity in racist practices towards African Americans. The disadvantages faced by African Americans are based on the legacy of slavery not if people are direct descendants of slaves. Recent African immigrants would face similar discrimination, and it is not as if the African continent did not feel the effects of American slavery when millions of its people were extracted from the continent against their will. This is an issue that can be answered simply by looking at racism in this instance as a matter of discrimination based on color.

One question that seems necessary to look at is one that is derived from a position proposed by Tavuchis about the nature of reconciliation after an apology. Tavuchis suggests that in the final stages of an apology the following happens, “the discursive loop

is closed by forgiveness of the offender, which symbolizes reconciliation and allows for the resumption of normal social relations.”⁸ This begs the question, what can Americans consider a normative relationship between African Americans and European Americans? The numerous historical events that I have discussed suggest that normal is what Americans should try to be moving away from when it comes to interracial relationships. An emergence of an African American middle class has increased the amount of “normal” interracial interactions, but parts of this discussion would be moot if there were ample tangible examples of harmonious interactions between blacks and whites on a regular basis.

Tavuchis suggests that in order to fully grasp the effectiveness and potential of apology, “in the ordinary and dramatic spaces of human life, a recognition, literally a reknowing of the grounds and potential of apologetic discourse, must precede its praxis.”⁹ Tavuchis’ postulation seems particularly applicable to an apology for slavery. There are spaces in the discursive process that will require a “reknowing” and recognition of narratives that have not yet taken place in the United States. There will have to be a greater understanding of moral apology on the sociopolitical level in order for Americans to develop a new lexicon and to develop a new age in race relations, as Manning Marable suggests. The United States would do well to heed this advice because even in past cases of apology such as the apologies issued to Native Americans and Japanese Americans, there were significantly smaller portions of the population being addressed and issued reparations. An apology for slavery would represent a big step in developing a model for sociopolitical apology because the race situation in the United States has so many pervasive aspects that need to be addressed. All of these have their roots in the single

institution of slavery. A successful apology that aided in reconciliation would certainly be a “reknowing” of the process of sociopolitical apologies in terms of scale and the autopoiesis of the United States.

The Media: Another Primary Discursive Tool

Another aspect to consider is that in the United States the primary discursive processes have evolved with the proliferation of technology. Hall’s apology was not only a political action; it reverberated through the media channels that serve as a primary means of identity production in the United States. The talking heads and familiar pundits are how much of the country’s population experiences the autopoiesis of the American government. This is a consideration that any future apology should take into account. The media coverage surrounding Hall’s apology proposals came in swells surrounding the two attempts, but only attained a life cycle of about two weeks in each case. The media often reports from a Eurocentric point of view,¹⁰ and as such frame events such as Hall’s apology proposals in a light that does not take into account the African American point of view. The vast majority of the news articles and editorial letters were not written by African Americans, so the actual climate for the acceptance of an apology among the public is hard to gauge. In an approach like living systems theory it would seem that such a large conduit for information exchange, as the mainstream media, would be figured heavily into the production of an apology. News cycles are important ways to gauge the *kairos* of an apology, which is an important aspect of apology according to most of the literature. The United States relies so heavily on the mainstream media that an apology for slavery would need to use the media in such a way that it acted as a sounding board

for the apology. This sounding board could then be used as yet another dialogical tool to probe what actions might serve as practical amends.

Furthermore, with the media playing such a seminal role in the identity production of Americans, it would be advantageous for anyone proposing an apology to incorporate the media into their strategies for gaining popular support for an apology proposal. Gaining public support through the media offers a way to ensure that larger portions of the population will enter into the dialogical processes that I have described throughout this paper. News and media cycles offer a way to introduce new language and narratives concerning Americans' perceptions of slavery that could ultimately lead to a more substantive debate on the congressional floor. Incorporating the media, and therefore more of the American citizenry, is also something that anyone employing a living systems approach would try to do as well. One positive example is noted by Condit and associates: "the advent of World War II made it virtually necessary for black and white Americans to work side by side on the home front, a condition that led national newspapers and magazines to recharacterize black Americans as hard-working, intelligent and able."¹¹

The utilization of the media should take place even before the apology is proposed. The case in Virginia and the responses to Tony Hall's proposals in and through the media suggest this is the best course of action. In each of these cases the media responded the introduction of an apology and then the public responded to the media attention. It would seem that if the media and public discussion of race relations began occurring prior to the formulation of an actual apology proposal it could be a primer for the political discussion, rather than a response to a preformulated proposition. This makes

sense because a politician proposing an apology could judge the timing of the situation, as well as what would need to be said to meet the climate of the times.

Conclusion: Concerning Legislating Equality

In describing a critical approach to legal scholarship as it concerns minorities Celeste Michelle Condit and her associates suggest: “By constantly critiquing the hegemonic, discursive structures or legal practices that perpetuate the dominance of specific legal institutions... CLS (critical legal scholarship) advocates conclude that they can begin to open up political spaces in which the disempowered may gain a legitimate voice.”¹² This discussion of CLS and standard legalistic interpretations via the Supreme Court’s ruling in the separate, but equal doctrine is helpful in understanding what must be done in order to create an apology with sufficient weight. Condit and her colleagues argue that while CLS is helpful in its arguments against standard legal interpretations of law and hegemonic processes it does not offer any solutions to the problems which it addresses. They suggest that the formation of a new rhetorical culture must be created in order to gain a better and more legitimate application of the law that privileges equality to a greater and more just degree.

Condit continues, “the public meanings assigned to the term ‘equality’ have varied starkly across the past two hundred years, and because the law regarding the place of ‘equality’ in American governance has exhibited the most notorious of shifts.”¹³ Just as the telling of history has changed, so have the definitions of the law. Equality as defined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution has taken a long strange trip, especially as it concerns African Americans. The term has been perverted through the institution of slavery and slavery’s legacy. As Kirt Wilson suggested what is prudent

in the application of the law concerning equality has not always been the same.¹⁴ This means that the American government has placed different values on the rights of African Americans prior to and subsequent to the abolition of slavery based on what has appeared to be the most reasonable solution at the time. Often the most reasonable solution has been the path of least resistance as it concerns those who have tried to maintain their places of privilege, namely white men who have had little to gain from granting African Americans equality under the law or by the just application of the law.¹⁵

The advantage of crafting a new rhetorical culture as Condit and her colleagues suggest is that the challenges posed to the government by critical theorists can be addressed, “without resorting to either a reductionistic dominant ideology thesis or an *ad hoc* exceptionalism.”¹⁶ I would argue that the approaches that I have advocated through the methodologies proposed in this paper offer different lenses with which to frame the problems of racism that in essence create a new rhetorical culture and suggest that a new lexicon should be utilized in dealing with the legacy of slavery. The historical materialism and dialogic approaches are meant to start the deconstruction of the dominant ideologies concerning race relations in the United States, as they have been constructed by the government. The inadequate telling of historical events has produced a myriad of narratives that will have to be addressed in any apology for slavery. After this deconstruction takes place a new lexicon can be created through the living systems approach.

It is true that as early as 1971 James Golden and Richard Rieke posed the possibility that racism in the white community as it pertains to “communicating with black men-may be more a psychiatric than a persuasive problem.”¹⁷ This is still a

relatively young concept in the context of the problem being addressed. I believe that it is necessary to take this a step farther through the living systems theory and apply the psychiatric diagnosis to the nation, as I explained in chapter four. This is because the pathologizing of one community over the other still requires the assumption of privilege. There are also psychoses that need to be addressed in both European American communities and African American communities regarding the legacy of slavery. Not only are there problems in the white community in dealing with the history of this country there are problems within the African American community, and any other ethnic community. This is because there is an organizational shortcoming on the part of Americans when it comes to dealing with the issue of race. Jean Baudrillard posits that racism “has become immanent, viral, and everyday reality.”¹⁸ This is a bleak proposition. While I do not agree with Baudrillard’s ultimate solutions to combating the problems he describes, I think that it is a necessary characterization because only through such acknowledgement of the problem can there be a greater understanding of what must be done to overcome it.

It is still within the reach of the government to begin changing the culture surrounding the rhetoric of race, and the legacy of slavery is one of the key components regarding this. The law making bodies of this country provide the primary means of discursive action, and the proliferation of the mass media has made this discussion an even more complicated and powerful process. By bringing race to the forefront of the political process there is an opportunity to craft different understandings of American history and more importantly America’s future. As Erik Doxtader points out, “Once our political society comes to the forefront we can see how this society is remade over and

over through the interaction of individuals and institutions. This is the origin of the law, as keeper of collective norms that seeks both an ideal justice and the public interest. Inevitably, tensions between these priorities provide sites for collective dissent that are key to deconstructing state power.”¹⁹ It would seem that an apology for slavery could bring collective norms and ideal justice, as Doxtader describes it, closer together and remake definitions of race that are conducive to reconciliation.

The place of deconstruction in all of this is to move beyond what Kirt Wilson refers to as the contested spaces of prudence because prudence is a component of thought which tends to reify the prominent structures, structures which have been shown to be inadequate in promoting racial reconciliation. This is not to say that laws are worthless. To the contrary laws are a necessary part of justice. While laws often serve to promote the hegemonic ideals of the time, Martin Hagglund suggests, “The ability to deconstruct the law allows us to think of justice beyond the hegemonic structures.”²⁰ What this means in the context of an apology for slavery is that the embattled place of equality in American history can be overcome through new pieces of legislation and law making. While an apology itself is not a law, it is a congressional action that is noted in the record and provides a foundational piece of rhetoric from which laws can be made. Mary Dudziak and Leti Volpp suggest that laws can be used “to seek new identities.”²¹ I would argue that an apology for slavery can be used to seek new identities and present American citizens with a greater ideal of the potential of democracy. Cornel West’s faith in democracy and the potential that it possesses as Mark Lawrence McPhail attests is inline with this. In *Race Matters*, West presents transformative ideals about race that I

believe can be sought through the introduction of new laws and resolutions which explicitly begin to remake the place of African Americans in the United States.

Representative Tony Hall's proposals for an apology for slavery in 1997 and 2000, as well as his apology in West Benin, represent a step in the right direction concerning racial reconciliation in the United States. However, as evidenced by the responses to his proposals, there are many obstacles that still stand in the way of reaching a rhetoric of true reconciliation. The apology or the expression of "profound regret" passed in Virginia is an extension of this example. The unanimous vote should have an asterisk by it at the very least considering Hargrove's vocal displeasure with the ideal of apologizing before and after the passage of the resolution. The beginning debate in Georgia offers another opportunity to look into the current state of readiness for an American apology for slavery. Some of the vocal opposition from the outset seems to be foreboding. I believe that an apology for slavery offers a chance for reconciliation. However, I share the beliefs of John B. Hatch, Mark Lawrence McPhail, Kirt Wilson, and Erik Doxtader that racial reconciliation will be an ongoing and arduous process regardless of whether a satisfactory apology is produced. Hatch's optimism on the subject is refreshing and should be applauded. I share his opinion that an apology is a step in the right direction when it comes to building a rhetorical bridge to race reconciliation. Only through a deconstruction of race relations and the history that has produced distorted narratives for American citizens with regard to race can apology realize its full potential. Through historical materialism this deconstruction can begin. Taking dialogical approaches also can begin to deconstruct the notion of place among the races, allowing for whites and blacks to begin negotiating new identities between themselves. The living

systems approach provides a new lexicon and diagnosis of racism in the United States. A view of organizational health provides the kind of rhetorical culture that I believe Condit and her colleagues are proposing establishing a new definition and application of equality without placing the blame for the current state of race relations on the shoulder of any particular group or individual. A governmental apology serves to acknowledge the problem and to assign blame to the entity that permitted the institution of slavery. The apology must go a step farther though and move to instill a sense that race relations need to progress beyond their current position in the United States. Representative Tony Hall made a valiant effort in this regard. Americans can only hope that his charge will be taken seriously, and that it will be continued in the near future.

- Any apology for slavery should include the following things:
- A full acknowledgement of slavery as a morally wrong institution. A full acknowledgement would most definitely make reference to the violations of the principles in the founding documents that were committed through the government's permitting of slavery.
- Acknowledging that slavery led to racist practices and laws that were not in the spirit of equality or participatory democracy, and that the persistence of these laws and practices still affect the African American community in the present day. Mention of specific historical events and figures would need to be included for this acknowledgement to be sufficient.
- A commitment to changing the curriculum in public schools to address slavery and racism in terms that better develops narratives of equality for future generations.

- An establishment of a research institution or grants that focused on racial reconciliation in the United States.
- Federal incentives for private institutions that implemented programs similar to the one Brown University is undertaking, or initiatives that are similarly conducted in the spirit of racial reconciliation.
- Practical Amends be offered in the form of educational and employment opportunities.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

¹At Fort Pillow Nathan Bedford Forrest led an attack on surrendering African Americans killing many indiscriminately. Conscription Acts targeted less educated members of society including blacks. Contraband camps consisted of slaves that were made to follow the Union Army and perform task of manual labor for Union Troops.

²Jerry Large, "It's About Time We Put a Face on Poverty- Without Color" *Seattle Times* Sec M Pg 1 Dec 5, 2004.

³Rep. Tony Hall. An Address to Members of a West Benin Group Discussing Slavery and Reconciliation in 2000.

⁴Ed. "Nagging Disparity Cast Shadow Over 21st Century", *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* Sec B Pg 6. Nov 18, 2006.

⁵Emmet Pierce and Lori Weisberg, "Minority Home Ownership Remains Low" *San Diego Union Tribune* Sec I Pg 3. September 24, 2006.

⁶"Fifty Years After Brown, N.J. taking a different approach to schools." *Associated Press State and Local Wire*. May, 16, 2004. A short discussion of the Abbot V. Burke case in New Jersey suggest that there is still heavy socioeconomic discrimination in school districting that leads to de-facto segregation. Mensah Dean, "Are Schools Doing Enough for Black Youths" *Philadelphia Daily News*. Dec, 12, 2006, City Council discusses correlation between poor school environments for blacks and higher murder rates among the black male population.

⁷Adam Nagourney and Richard W. Stevenson, "Bush and Kerry Mark Desegregation Where Suit Began" *New York Times*. Sec A Pg 18 May 18, 2004.

⁸Nagourney and Stevenson.

⁹"Letter to the Editor" *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* June, 19, 1997 Pg 19A

¹⁰"Letter to the Editor" *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* June, 19, 1997 Pg 19A

¹¹Ed. "Bones Can't Accept Apology" *Cleveland Plain Dealer* June 18, 1997 pg. 10B

¹²Eric Chevlen, "Apologies are Due from Tony Hall" *Cleveland Plain Dealer* July 2, 1997. pg11B

¹³Scott Shepard, "Slavery Apology Hangs Up on Money, Previous Apologies to Native Americans were followed by Reparations" *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 17, 1997. pg 9A

¹⁴Scott Montgomery, "Congress Ponders Apology for Slavery" *Atlanta Journal Constitution* June 13, 1997 pg. 12A

¹⁵Hall, Benin.

CHAPTER TWO

¹Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd, The Promise and Pitfalls of Apology. *Journal of Social Philosophy*. Vol. 33 (2002) p. 67.

²Govier and Verwoed p. 67

³Nicholas Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press (1991). Viii

⁴Tavuchis p. 35. Tavuchis is also cited in Govier and Verwoerd p.68.

⁵Tavuchis p. 46.

⁶Tavuchis p. 48.

⁷Govier and Verwoerd p. 69.

⁸Govier and Verwoerd p. 71.

⁹Govier and Verwoerd imply this and cite Martin Golding and Nicholas Tavuchis frequently in the formulation of their ideals. This philosophy is also inline with Martin Buber's I-Thou classification of communication.

¹⁰Tavuchis p.6. Tavuchis notes that there are still legal and civil ramifications for violations despite the willingness of the offended to forgive and forget. In essence laws often require some sort of official action in regards to a violation committed in order to retain the sanctity of legal action.

¹¹Aaron Lazare, *On Apology*. New York: Oxford University Press (2004) p. 75.

¹²Lazare makes note of Lincoln's second inaugural address as an adequate apology, this will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹³Tavuchis p. 89.

¹⁴Lazare p. 181.

¹⁵Goveir and Verwoerd p .73.

¹⁶Govier and Verwoerd p. 79.

¹⁷Edward L. Cleary, *The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America*. Westport: Praegar Publishers, (1997).

¹⁸REMHI, *Guatemala Never Again*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis (1999). There instances throughout the book implicating the School of the Americas as the training grounds for death squads that patrolled Guatemala.

¹⁹Martha K. Huggins, *Violence Workers: Police Torturers and Murderers Reconstruct Brazilian Atrocities* Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press (2002).

²⁰Mark Lawrence McPhail and David A. Frank. Barrack Obama's Address to the 2004 Democratic National Convention: Trauma, Compromise, Consilience, and the (Im)possibility of Racial Reconciliation. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*. 8 (2005) p.581.

²¹Mark Lawrence McPhail. From Complicity to Coherency. *Western Journal of Communications*. 62 (1998).

²²Mark Lawrence McPhail. Dessentializing Difference: Tranformative Difference in Contemporary Black Thought. *Howard Journal of Communications*. Vol. 13 (2002).

²³McPhail, Dessentializing 77.

²⁴McPhail, Deesentializing 78.

²⁵McPhail, Deesentializing 78

²⁶John Hatch. Reconciliation: Building a Bridge from Race Relations to Coherence in the Rhetoric of Race Relations. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6 (2003) p. 745.

²⁷Hatch, Reconciliation p.738

²⁸Hatch, Reconciliation. p.745.

²⁹Kirt Wilson. Is There Any Interest in Reconciliation? *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 7 (2004) p. 370.

³⁰Eric Doxtader. The Potential of Reconciliation's Beginning: A Reply. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7 (2004) p.381.

³¹John B. Hatch, The Hope of Reconciliation: Continuing the Conversation. *Rhetoric Public Affairs*, 9 (2006) p.261.

³²Hatch The Hope . . . p.265.

³³Hatch The Hope . . . p.269.

³⁴Hatch The Hope . . . p.272.

³⁵John B. Hatch, Beyond Apologia: Racial Reconciliation and Apologies for Slavery. *Western Journal of Communication*, 70 (2006).

³⁶Hatch, Beyond . . . p.203.

CHAPTER THREE

¹Mikhail Bakhtin. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press (1986) p. 94.

²Lazare p. 81. He contends that Lincoln's act was sufficiently contrite; later he states that he still feels shame for the way blacks have been treated in this country. The contradictory message may suggest that Lazare is only speaking to Lincoln's own apology for slavery, but this still contends that Lincoln had this in mind when delivering his Second Inaugural.

³Colonization attempts were disastrous and left many blacks dead or indigent and stuck in the Caribbean with no assets or recourse for the injustices committed by the contractors who were supposed to aid in emigration.

⁴Stephen Oates. *With Malice Toward None*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial (1994). All text from Lincoln's Second Inaugural is taken from this book.

⁵Richard Wormster. *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crowe*. New York, NY: St Martins Press (2003) p.11.

⁶Kirt Wilson. "The Contested Space of Prudence in the 1874-1875 Civil Rights Debate" *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. Vol 84. No. 2. (1998) p. 133.

⁷Wilson. "The Contested . . ." p. 135.

⁸Wilson. "The Contested . . ." p138.

⁹Wilson. "The Contested . . ." p.139.

¹⁰Wilson. "The Contested . . ." p.144.

¹¹Philip Foner and Robert James Branham. *Lift Every Voice: African American Oratory from 1787-1900*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press (1998). p.698.

¹²Bakhtin p.7.

¹³Bakhtin p.7.

¹⁴Foner and Branham, ed. p. 877.

¹⁵Wormster, p.107.

¹⁶David Terrill. *Malcolm X: Inventing Radical Judgment*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press (2004). p.71.

¹⁷Foner and Branham, ed. p.707 This is quote from Bruce speaking on October 5, 1889. Walker printed Walker's Appeal (1829), which called slaves to rebel and secure their own freedom. Both men are justifying violence as a means of self-defense since African Americans are being violently oppressed and kept from the paramount rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

¹⁸Kirt Wilson. "Interpreting the Discursive Field of the Montgomery Bus Boycott: Martin Luther King's Holt Street Address." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*. Vol 8 No 2 (2005). p. 301.

¹⁹<http://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/malcolmxballotorbullet.htm>

²⁰Wilson. "The Contested . . ." p. 144.

²¹Wormster. In many scientific journals white scientists studied the inferiority of blacks as a matter of fact, and compared blacks to animals. The progression of this has continued into the present with books like the *Bell Curve*.

²²Celeste M. Condit et al. "Culture's Role in Shaping Perceptions of Genetic Discrimination and Racism."

²³McPhail. *Transformative . . .* p. 81.

²⁴Bakhtin p.92.

CHAPTER FOUR

¹Maturana and Varela. *Autopoiesis and Cognition, The Realization of Living*. Dordrecht and Reidel (1980).

²Philip Graham and Bernard McKenna. A Theoretical and Analytical Synthesis of the Autopoiesis and Sociolinguistic Study of Organisational Communication. *Social Semiotics*, Vol. 10 No. 1 (2000).

³Graham and McKenna p. 51.

⁴Graham and McKenna. p.47.

⁵Miller and Miller, "Greater than the sum of its parts." *Behavioral Science*. Vol. 37 Issue 1

⁶Wilson, Is there . . . p. 374.

⁷Roy L. Brooks. *Atonement and Forgiveness: A New Model for Black Reparations*. Berkeley: University of California Press (2004). p. 149.

⁸McPhail. "Transformative . . ."

⁹Miller and Miller. In a three part series title "The Sum is Greater than the Parts" Miller and Miller chronicle through extensive charts the theory of non-summativity it relates to Living Systems.

¹⁰Brooks. *Atonement...* p. 144.

¹¹Mark Lawrence McPhail, "Revisiting the Rhetoric of Racism" *Rhetorical Review* Vol. 20, No. 1&2 (2000). p. 45.

¹²Miller and Miller.

¹³Miller and Miller.

¹⁴Miller and Miller.

¹⁵Roy L. Brooks. *Rethinking the American Race Problem*. Berkeley: University of California Press (1990) p. 2.

¹⁶Graham and McKenna. p.49.

¹⁷Brooks. *Atonement* . . .p.148.

¹⁸McPhail. *Transformative* . . . p.85

¹⁹Molefe Kefe Asante. The African as an American. *Diogenes*, No. 184 Vol. 46/4 (1998). p.47. This is a recurring theme in all of Asante's literature concerning the principles of Afrocentricity and is documented in the work of McPhail, as well.

²⁰Brooks. *Rethinking* . . . p. 150.

²¹Asante, The African... This is a recurring theme in Asante's literature, see also "Intellectual Dislocation: Applying Afrocentricity to Narratives of Identity. *Howard Journal of Communications*. 13:97-110 (2002).

²²Manning Marable. *Beyond Black and White: Transforming African American Politics*. London: Verso. (1995) p.221.

²³Mark Lawrence McPhail. "Of Hope and Faith and Love: Rhetorical Coherence in Cornel West's Politics of Convergence. *Qualitative Inquiry*. Vol. 8 No. 4. (2002) p.458.

²⁴McPhail. *Cornel* . . . p.460.

²⁵Brooks. *Atonement*...

²⁶Malcolm X, *The Ballot*...

²⁷McPhail, *Cornel*. p. 460.

²⁸<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/race/black/ppl-186/tab7.txt>

CHAPTER FIVE

¹http://www.dailyprogress.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=CDP/MGArticle/CDP_BasicArticle&cid=1149192673260&c=MGArticle&rrpg=3#rrForm

²Wendy Koch. "Va. Moves to Apologize for Slavery" USA Today February 1, 2007.

³Wilson argues that the space of prudence in the Civil Rights Act 1875 resulted in ambiguous and softened language that allowed for separate but equal. Condit et al argue that legal conservatism has led to unfair compromises, especially in the case of the separate, but equal doctrine.

⁴http://www.dailyprogress.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=CDP/MGArticle/CDP_BasicArticle&cid=1149192673260&c=MGArticle&rrpg=3#rrForm

All of the threads used are taken from the discussion board that was associated with this article. There were over 100 post over several days.

⁵Ernie Suggs, "NAACP Seeks State Apology for Slavery," Atlanta Journal Constitution. March 8, 2007.

⁶Jeremy Redmon and James Salzer, "House Speaker Rebuffs Call for Apology." Atlanta Journal Constitution March 9, 2007.

⁷Lazare, p. 41.

⁸Tavuchis, p. 121.

⁹Tavuchis, p. 124.

¹⁰John G. Oetzel and Stella Ting-Toomey, ed. *The Sage Handbook of Communication*. London: Sage Publishing (2006). p.579.

¹¹Condit et al. p. 334.

¹²Celeste Michelle Condit, et al. "The Rhetorical Boundaries of the Law: A Consideration of the Rhetorical Culture of Legal Practice and the Case of the Separate, but Equal Doctrine," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. Vol. 82 (1996). p. 326.

¹³Condit et al p. 329.

¹⁴Wilson, "The Contested . . ."

¹⁵Wilson, "Is there . . ."

¹⁶Condit et al p.329.

¹⁷James Golden and Richard Rieke. *The Rhetoric of Black Americans*. Columbus, OH: Merrill. 1971.

¹⁸Jean Baudrillard. *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on the Extreme Phenomena*. London: Verso (1993).

¹⁹Erik Doxtader. "Characters in the Middle of Public Life: Consensus, Dissent, and Ethos." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. (2000).

²⁰Martin Hagglund. "The Necessity of Discrimination: Disjoining Derrida and Levinas." *Diacritics*. Vol 34 Issue 1 (2004).

²¹Mary Dudziak and Leti Volpp. "Introduction Legal Borderlands: Law and the Construction of American Borders." *American Quarterly*. Vol 57 Issue 3 (2005). p593-610.

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