


5-15-2018

Is It Still Impossible to Be Black and American?

Darrian Carroll
darrianr.carroll@gmail.com

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IS IT STILL IMPOSSIBLE TO BE BLACK AND AMERICAN?

By

Darrian Carroll

Bachelor of Arts -- Political Science

University of North Texas

2016

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the

Master of Arts — Communication Studies

Department of Communication Studies

Greenspun College of Urban Affairs

The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

May 2018



Thesis Approval

The Graduate College
The University of Nevada, Las Vegas

April 11, 2018

This thesis prepared by

Darrian Carroll

entitled

Is It Still Impossible to Be Black and American?

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts – Communication Studies
Department of Communication Studies

Sara VanderHaagen, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Chair

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D.
Graduate College Interim Dean

Jacob Thompson, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Donovan Conley, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Brandon Manning, Ph.D.
Graduate College Faculty Representative

Abstract

This thesis engages Bill Clinton's presidential rhetoric to investigate how liberal rhetorical practices can be used to extend and sustain the oppression of Black Americans. By adopting Du Bois' concepts of the color-line and double-consciousness this thesis examines how Bill Clinton was able to recreate the color-line in the Mason Temple speech and benefit from and recreate a world devoid of consciousness in other selected speeches from his corpus. This project takes up three separate speeches by Bill Clinton as texts. The second chapter focuses on Bill Clinton's "Remarks to the Rainbow Coalition" and "Remarks announcing the initiative" to make the argument that based on the undue authority vested in Clinton as an unmarked identity he was given the jurisdiction to sacrifice marginalized, specifically Black, populations. The third chapter builds on the conversation about authority and sacrifice by focusing on how Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech recreated the color-line by using ideographs to define what Black people should do. This thesis concludes by engaging with Du Bois' concept of double-consciousness to highlight how the debate between Forbes Hill and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell in the 1972 edition of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* reveals that in the contemporary moment rhetorical critics need to evaluate speeches not only based on their argumentative strength but also their ethical implications.

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by thanking my mother and father, Bobbie Carroll and Robert Carroll. Their guidance and nurturing before, during, and to this very moment has made this work possible. I would also like to thank my partner Hope. Her insight, brilliance, and love made our house the home in which this project would be written. I would also like to thank some scholars who though they did not contribute directly to this project, this project would not have been possible without. I would like to thank Dr. Brian Lain; Dr. Lain created and supported a debate team which I directly look back on as a stepping stone to my current academic success. I would like to thank Frank B. Wilderson and Saidiya Hartman. Wilderson's *Red White and Black* and Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection* are two works that are cited throughout this thesis and literally changed my life. I would like to thank the members of my committee. Thank you Dr. Manning for your support and interesting perspectives on Black movement building and performance theory. Thank you Dr. Conley for a generative perspective on the rhetorical public. In fact, the second chapter of this thesis is an outgrowth of an idea that started to ruminate in Dr. Conley's rhetorical theory course so you can praise him or blame him for that. Thank you Dr. Thompson for being a mentor and voice of reason while I have been at UNLV. Dr. Thompson set a great example for me to follow in as an academic. Lastly, I would like to thank my thesis adviser Dr. VanderHaagen. Dr. VanderHaagen read through all the drafts that were not good enough for everyone else to see, provided guidance and support for me as a scholar and as an academic. Dr. VanderHaggen, an amazing scholar in her own right, continues to recommend texts to me that make me think and want to become a better scholar. Throughout this process, Dr. VanderHaagen maintained a commitment to excellence which I hope to be able to honor in this work. Thank you so much Dr. VanderHaagen for being the best adviser a student could ask for!

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Chapter 1: Being Black and American in the 21st Century

In the 1990's, Bill Clinton was referred to by Toni Morrison as America's first Black president—Black not because he played the saxophone or was from the south but because he was being berated by the Beltway media for yet another scandal involving sexual misconduct.¹ Noting that Clinton was understood as Black because he was berated is important to this project because it reveals that in America Black people can at times be recognized based not on their unique qualities or self-consciousness but instead because they are treated unfairly. The ability to identify Black people based on an openness to mistreatment highlights what seems to be a continually precarious position of Black people in the United States. Bill Clinton's presidential rhetoric provides a unique opportunity to investigate the precarious position of Black people in America because, as America's "first" Black president, Bill Clinton used liberal rhetoric to sustain and stabilize the racial hierarchy in the United States through his enactment of the color-line. To illuminate Bill Clinton's racial hierarchy-sustaining rhetoric, this thesis examines multiple speeches by Bill Clinton within the overarching framework of W.E.D. Du Bois' concepts of the color-line and double-consciousness. Du Bois noted in his canonical treatise *The Souls of Black Folk*, "Herein lie buried many things which if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being black here in the dawning of the Twentieth Century. This meaning is not without interest to you, Gentle Reader; for the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line."² Du Bois described the color-line as "the relation of the darker to the

¹ Toni Morrison, The Talk of the Town, *New Yorker* October 5, 1998. Accessed June 24, 2017. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1998/10/05/comment-6543>.

² W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black folk* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1903] 2007), 31.

lighter races of men in [. . .] America.”³ This project revisits and builds on Du Bois’ perspective in order to understand the color-line as the difference in expectations and treatment experienced by Black and white people in the United States.⁴ Du Bois posits what could be considered the telos of *Souls of Black Folk*, and this project, when he states, “He [the Negro] simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.”⁵ Du Bois’ statement that Black people wished to make it possible to be both Black and American was further clarified by his statement that “one ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”⁶ Du Bois’ evaluation of the impossibility of being both Negro and American in early twentieth century discourse leads to a question: Is Du Bois’ bleak evaluation of Black life still relevant in the twenty-first century? Amid disproportionate incarceration rates and an ever-expanding wealth gap, it may seem that the problem of the twentieth century has continued to be a problem in the twenty-first.⁷

³ Du Bois, *Souls*, 39.

⁴ The word “black” is capitalized throughout the essay to express that “Black” signifies a group of people that share a common historical narrative. Throughout the thesis I translate “Negro” in an undifferentiated context into Black. I do this with two reasons in mind; first, “Negro” is an abhorrent phrase for Black people similar to another word which is not acceptable in polite conversation. Second, discussions of “Negroes” in this analysis are limited to the American context which resolves much of the possible problem with homogenization that comes with subsuming Negro under Black. See Toure, Michael Eric Dyson, *Who’s Afraid of Post-Blackness?: What It Means to Be Black Now* (New York: Free Press, 2012), ix; Frank B. Wilderson, *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-10.

⁵ Du Bois, *Souls*, 34.

⁶ Du Bois, *Souls*, 34.

⁷ Nicole Puglise, “Black Americans incarcerated five times more than white people report” *The Guardian*, June 18, 2016, accessed July 16, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jun/18/mass-incarceration-black-americans-higher-rates-disparities-report>; Justin Wolfers, David Leonhardt, Kevin Quearly, “1.5 Million Missing Black Men” *New York Times*, April 20, 2015, Accessed June 1, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/04/20/upshot/missing-black-men.html>; Valerie Wilson, William Rodger, “Black-white wage gaps expand with rising wage inequality,” *Economic Policy Institute*, September 20, 2016, Accessed July 16, 2017. <http://www.epi.org/publication/black-white-wage-gaps-expand-with-rising-wage-inequality/>.

Fortunately, Du Bois produced an analytic that can help Black folks resist the oppression of the color-line: double-consciousness. Du Bois argues that double-consciousness can be instrumental in the resolution of the color-line because those that have double-consciousness are able to recognize how the world exists but also recognize the inequality that underwrites the contemporary public. Du Bois explained,

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world, -- a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.⁸

Here, Du Bois' "double-consciousness" produces a more thoughtful and racialized perspective on what the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* refers to as an integrated representation of consciousness. *Stanford* explains this version of consciousness as something that "presents us not with isolated properties or features but with objects and events situated in an ongoing independent world."⁹ Du Bois' addition and mine thereafter troubles *Stanford's* notion to instead point toward the conclusion that I exist therefore I think. Edmund Husserl has ventured to understand consciousness as the sum of multiple phenomenological interactions.¹⁰ Husserl's perspective is illuminating for my viewpoint on consciousness because it highlights that an individual's lived reality plays a large part in determining their consciousness or description of the world. Hortense Spillers distills Husserl's concept of phenomenology into a racialized context in her consideration of how Du Bois' double-consciousness provides an opportunity to

⁸ Du Bois, *Souls*, 34.

⁹ Robert Van Gulick, "Consciousness" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2014; Immanuel Kant *Critique of Pure Reason* Trans. Norman Smith (New York: MacMillan, 1929)1-20

¹⁰ Edmund Husserl *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (Trans.) W.R. Gibson (New York: MacMillan, 1913), 1-5.

investigate how the lived reality of racialized experience produces a separate and necessary account of one's own existence.¹¹ Spillers' combines a phenomenological perspective on consciousness with a racialized perspective on the world to conclude that raced bodies are not allowed to define themselves for themselves. In an attempt to build laterally with but also add to Husserl's perspective throughout this thesis I understand consciousness as having a view of oneself that is based in one's own expectations. C.K. Doreski identifies Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk* as an instructive example of attempting to describe oneself for oneself in her account of exemplary biographies.¹² Sylvia Wynter argues that because Du Bois' concept of true self-consciousness starts from interrogating the legitimacy of the measuring tape of one's soul it can be illuminating for grasping a way of understanding oneself not based on others expectations but instead one's own expectations.¹³

Du Bois' doubling is illuminating for understanding true self-consciousness because it creates a possibility of defining oneself outside of the narrative that society attempts to force people into. For Du Bois, true self-consciousness seems to mean the capacity to be true to oneself and not have one's actions determined by another. Du Bois makes this point clear when he notes, "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others."¹⁴ Seeing oneself always through the eyes of another denies any claim to true self-consciousness because that consciousness is always already a reflection of the values and expectations of the other. Du Bois' engagement with self-consciousness is revealing for this project because it highlights that if it is still true that in America those with

¹¹ Hortense Spillers *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 376.

¹² C.K. Doreski *Writing America Black: Race Rhetoric in the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6-7.

¹³ Sylvia Wynter *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 100-110.

¹⁴ Du Bois, *Souls*, 34.

social standing like Bill Clinton, not Black people, decide the expectations and life chances of Black people it is impossible to be Black and American. Consciousness is an apt concept to engage with the possibility of being American because it highlights that the choice to be is one which historically, and maybe contemporarily, Black people have not had access to because the power to define “what is” has been vested in white people. Du Bois’ point highlights the possibility of an impossibility of being Black and American because if the American public still vests authority into unmarked identities the meaning of being Black is always defined by those unmarked identities and does not match up with the way that Black people would define themselves. Put simply, Du Bois’ point about the measuring tape of the world highlights that Black people do not get to measure themselves but are always measured by some other person’s expectations. Du Bois’ concept of double-consciousness is useful for rhetorical criticism and theory because it provides an occasion to assess the efficacy of an American public devoid of consciousness and revisit the role of the critic by reexamining the Hill-Campbell debate.

In the 114 years since the publication of Du Bois’ *The Souls of Black Folk* there have been more than a handful of situations of great significance in which the color-line and double-consciousness can be used as lenses to examine the structure of contemporary American politics. William Clinton’s “Remarks to the Convocation of God in Christ in Memphis” (1993) (hereafter, the Mason Temple speech), “Remarks to the Rainbow Coalition National Convention” (1992) (hereafter, the Rainbow Coalition speech), and “Remarks Announcing the Initiative” (1993) (hereafter, the Remarks Announcing the Initiative) stand out among other occasions because of Clinton’s ability to recreate the color-line by shaping public values so that it seemed consistent, if not necessary, that he demonize the Black community in front of the Black community.¹⁵ In

¹⁵ For contemporary support the claim that Clinton’s presidential rhetoric and actions were used to create disproportionate incarceration rates in the United States see Richter, Paul, “Clinton Hails Three Strikes’ Sentence:

the Mason Temple Speech, Bill Clinton produced a rhetoric that enacted both the hierarchy-stabilizing and role-defining features of the color-line. On November 13, 1993, Bill Clinton spoke before a convocation of over 5,000 Black ministers at the location of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s last sermon, in order to commemorate the life of King and build support for H.R. 3355, the Violent Crime and Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (hereafter, "the Crime Bill").¹⁶ Analysis of Bill Clinton's Mason Temple Speech reveals how "ideographs" can work to dictate what actions should be taken by marginalized members of the American public.¹⁷ Focusing on how Clinton's rhetorical strategies interacted with the values of the American public reveals how cultural logics devoid of consciousness sustain the contemporary racial hierarchy within American discourse.¹⁸ I use the phrase "devoid of consciousness" for two reasons. First, as chapter 2 elaborates on, because the rhetorical public is largely based on considerations produced by Jurgen Habermas and Habermas intentionally ignored consciousness I argue that the rhetorical public is devoid of consciousness. Secondly, because marginalized, specifically Black, people are denied the ability to determine themselves no one has true access to consciousness. I argue that no one has access to consciousness because to accurately describe oneself requires an accurate assessment of the things surrounding oneself and if, as this analysis argues, there are

Crime: He says federal life term proves worth of the bipartisan-backed crime bill. He urges similar support to adopt his anti-terrorism legislation. *LA Times*, August 20, 1995, accessed May 27, 2017; David Savage, Paul Richter, "Clinton to Sign Bill Preserving stiff Penalties for Crack: Drugs: It would block a move to treat powdered cocaine violations equally. Opponents see a bias, since most of those facing the tougher terms are black." *LA Time*, October 27, 1995, accessed May 27, 2017. http://articles.latimes.com/1995-10-27/news/mn-61778_1_crack-cocaine.

¹⁶ William J. Clinton, "Remarks to the Convocation of the Church of God in Christ in Memphis," November 13, 1993. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=46115>. Paragraph 4; Jehl Douglas, "Clinton Delivers Emotional Appeal on Stopping Crime," *New York Times*, November 14, 1993, accessed May 30, 2017.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/11/14/us/clinton-delivers-emotional-appeal-on-stopping-crime.html>.; Keith Miller, *Martin Luther King's Biblical Epic His Final, Great Speech* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 13-15.

¹⁷ My use of ideographs in this sentence is indebted to the work of Michael McGee, "The "ideograph": A link between rhetoric and ideology. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980):1-16.

¹⁸ Anthony Farley, "Perfecting Slavery," *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal* 36 (2005): 225-6. Farley explains that the white-over-black racial hierarchy is an outgrowth of the relationship (or lack thereof) developed between white people and Black people during enslavement.

some that are not accurately described it disrupts the ability of all others to describe themselves accurately. to emphasize that the cultural logics of the contemporary racial hierarchy vest unmarked identities with control over how to define the world which allows them to discipline Black people at the same time that they deny Black people the authority to define themselves.

This introductory chapter provides a foundation for the thesis' consideration of how Bill Clinton's rhetoric participated in and stabilized the contemporary white-over-Black hierarchy in the United States. I begin by recounting how I selected Bill Clinton as a subject of this thesis, identifying select speeches as samples from his corpus and providing a brief synopsis of the Mason Temple speech. Following the synopsis of the Mason Temple speech, I make the case that the speeches provided are representative of Bill Clinton's rhetoric by providing a brief biography of Bill Clinton. After outlining what I would consider the context and justification for studying Bill Clinton's speeches, I consider my theoretical basis for engaging with rhetorical publics theory and ideographs, and I highlight how the Hill-Campbell debate provides a rhetorical rejoinder to Du Bois' call for double-consciousness.

Selecting a Speaker

Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech is taken up as the central text for this project because of the disproportionate incarceration rate of Black people in the United States. Disproportionate incarceration rates are integral to the contemporary denial of true self-consciousness. Black people experience because the justification for incarceration is based on unmarked identities identifying Black people as criminals. Bill Clinton's speeches are uniquely important to increased mass incarceration rates of our contemporary moment because he was president during the largest uptick in mass incarceration in United States history. Further, policies passed during Clinton's presidency, the Crime Bill and the stripping of social welfare,

have been linked to producing social conditions that increase the likelihood of crime.¹⁹ Incarceration rates have been increasing since the 1980s. However, it seems that there was an amalgamation of forces in the early 1990s that have resulted in a contemporary incarceration rate which, in 2016, was five times higher for Black people than white people, according to a report from The Sentencing Project.²⁰ There is no one single cause for the striking imbalance in incarceration rates between Black people and white people. However, historical records of incarceration rates reveal that, although the incarceration rate has been steadily increasing since the 1980s, there was a notable uptick in the rate of incarceration and length of sentences in the middle of the 1990s.²¹ In order to explain this increase, some reports cite an incidence of empirically unjustified fear of being a victim of a crime in conjunction with legislation purported to curtail crime as catalysts for contemporary increased incarceration rates.²² That the fear was unjustified is important to this analysis because it seems that Clinton may have played upon that fear to create a group (criminals) that he could organize the United States population against. Kathryn Olson's analysis of effective rhetorical strategies of political apology reveals that amid national fear and the recently undefined cultural identity of a post-Cold War America there was the introduction of a violent crime and control piece of legislation to Congress.²³ Olson's point is

¹⁹ Jaya Davis, Jon Sorensen, "Disproportionate Minority Confinement of Juveniles: A National Examination of Black-White Disparity in Placements, 1997-2006," *Crime & Delinquency* 59 (1) (2013): 115-120.

²⁰ Ashley Nellis, "the Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons," The Sentencing Project, June 14, 2016. Accessed September 9, 2017. <http://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>.

²¹ Puglise, Black American's incarcerated, paragraph 1-3. Michelle Alexander, "The War on Drugs and the New Jim Crow," *Race, Poverty & the Environment* 17 (1) (2010): 75-77; Becky Pettit, *Invisible men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress* (New York: Russell Sage foundation), 1-20; Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012), 1-15.

²² Kim Mueller, "Inmates' Civil Rights Cases and the Federal courts: Insights Derived from a Field Research Project in the Eastern District of California," *Creighton Law Review* 28 (1995): 1256-8.

²³ Kathryn Olson, "Democratic Enlargement's Value Hierarchy and Rhetorical Forms: analysis of Clinton's Use of Post-Cold War Symbolic Frame to Justify Military interventions," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 34 (2) (2004): 307-10. Olson argues that post the Cold War America entered a period of an undefined national identity as it could no longer define itself in opposition to the Russian threat.

illuminating for this project because it highlights that, lacking the enemy provided by the Cold War, American politicians seemed to have shifted the focus from an external enemy (Russia) to an internal enemy (criminals). Focusing on Clinton's rhetoric provides an opportunity to examine how the sacrifice of the views and values of minority populations within the American rhetorical public produced disproportionate amounts of incarceration.

Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech stands out among other speeches engaging with crime in the 1990's because of its *kairos* and its composition. The Crime Bill was introduced to the 103rd Congress on October 26, 1993.²⁴ The Mason Temple speech, which happened on November 13, 1993, is kairotic because it was the first recorded occurrence after the Crime Bill's introduction to Congress that Bill Clinton addressed a majority Black audience on the matter of crime. There is a fair case for the idea of rhetorical exigence to instead explain why the Mason Temple speech is unique. I step away from Bitzer's understanding of exigence because analyzing Clinton's speech through the lens of *kairos* reveals that it was perfect timing for him to come to the place where King last spoke and use King's memory to make it seem like all liberal minded Americans should support the Crime Bill.²⁵ The occasion did not call for Clinton to give the speech, Clinton created the perception that the occasion called for the speech for his own benefit. Richard Vatz offers a similar critique of exigence in his consideration of how Bitzer's understanding of a rhetorical situation overlooks that each occasion is a moment of competitive

²⁴ United States House of Representatives, H.R. 3355 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Congress.gov, accessed September 9, 2017. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/3355/text>; William J. Clinton, "Remarks Announcing the initiative and an Exchange with Reporters," August 11, 1993. Online by Gerhard Peters and John Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, Accessed March 30, 2018. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=46979>; William J. Clinton, "Remarks of Governor Bill Clinton Rainbow Coalition National Convention," June 13, 1992. *Ibiblio*, Accessed March 30, 2018, <http://www.ibiblio.org/pub/academic/political-science/speeches/clinton.dir/c23.txt>.

²⁵ Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1 (1) (1968): 3-4.

persuasion.²⁶ Put differently, there is nothing about King's memorial that required Clinton to talk about crime, the speech could have ended with his statements about progress and how far American's had come. Clinton's choice to make the speech and the day about crime is not because the occasion called for it but instead because Clinton could benefit from it.²⁷ Secondly, the composition of the Mason Temple speech is unique because for more than ten minutes, or roughly a third of the speech, Clinton is appropriating the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King. Clinton's extended appropriation of King reveals that evoking certain liberal vocabularies may be effective in establishing and reestablishing the color-line.

To better understand the cultural logics that allowed Clinton to address his mostly Black audience, in the name of King, in favor of a piece of legislation that would harm the Black community, Chapter 2 engages with Clinton's "Remarks to the Rainbow Coalition" and "Remarks Announcing the Initiative." Though neither of these two speeches will get as much sustained analysis as the Mason Temple speech, examining these speeches in conjunction provides insight into Clinton's authority over sacrifice that made the Mason Temple speech possible. The "Rainbow Coalition speech" and "Remarks Announcing the Initiative" speeches highlight Clinton's authority over sacrifice because they reveal that Clinton was able to dictate to the American people essentially what it meant to be and who was an American to mobilize the in group of Americans against the outgroup—a group of, mostly Black, criminals. Further, focusing on the three speeches creates an arc of Clinton's rhetoric that begins during his presidential

²⁶ Richard Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 6 (3) (1973): 154-6; Richard Vatz, "The Mythical Status of Situational Rhetoric: Implications for Rhetorical Critics' Relevance in the Public Arena," *The Review of Communication* 9 (1) (2009): 1-3.

²⁷ For accounts of how the Crime Bill was not an effective remedy for Crime but instead an effective political tool to gain favor with citizens see: Barry Meir, "Reality and Anxiety: Crime and Fear of It," *New York Times* February 18, 1993. Accessed April 16, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/02/18/us/reality-and-anxiety-crime-and-the-fear-of-it.html>. Wendy Kaminer, "Crime and Community," *The Atlantic* May 1994, accessed April 16, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/politics/crime/kaminer1.htm>.

campaign in early 1992 and ends with his first promotion of the Crime Bill to a Black audience in late 1993. Reading the previous speeches as an arc for Clinton's rhetoric illuminates how as president Clinton was invested with authority over constructions of danger that enabled him to exclude marginalized populations from the American public.

Synopsis of Mason Temple Speech

Bill Clinton spoke at the Mason Temple Church of God in Christ on November 13, 1993 and used King and <Freedom> to produce support for the Crime Bill. Clinton began by thanking the members of the church for their hospitality. Clinton transitions from thanking his audience to a reason for his presence by stating, "I'm happy to be here. I thank you for your spirit. [. . .] I never dreamed that I would ever have a chance to come to this hallowed place where Martin Luther King gave his last sermon."²⁸ After setting the occasion as a commemoration of King, Clinton transitions from positive descriptions of the present by describing crime and violence as a roadblock that has the potential to derail the progress that has been achieved in the last thirty years. Clinton states, "What I really want to say to you today, my fellow Americans, is [. . .] I tell you, unless we do something about crime and violence and drugs that is ravaging the community, we will not be able to repair this country."²⁹ Clinton provides support for his claim about the relationship between community and violence by appropriating the name of Dr. King. Clinton begins to appropriate King by stating "if he [King] were to reappear by my side today and give us a report card on the last 25 years, what would he say? You did a good job, he would say, voting and electing people who formerly were not electable because of the color their skin."³⁰ After utilizing the voice of King to criticize his audience, Clinton then reproduces the

²⁸ William J. Clinton, "Convocation," Paragraph 6.

²⁹ Clinton, Convocation, paragraph 29.

³⁰ Clinton, Convocation, paragraph 17.

voice of King to provide foundation for his closing remarks. Clinton states, “So in this pulpit, on this day, let me ask all of you in your heart to say: We will honor the life and the work of Martin Luther King.... We will turn this around. We will give these children a future ... We will rebuild the families and the neighborhoods and the communities.”³¹ Throughout the Mason Temple speech Clinton reproduces the ideas of disappointment and progress to conceal his own performance and solidify his proposition that the Crime Bill should be supported.

Examining Clinton’s historical background and rhetoric reveals why Clinton was able to efficaciously appropriate the voice of King at Mason Temple. William Jefferson Blythe III was born as a result of the relationship between William Jefferson Blythe II and Virginia Kelley. Although Virginia Kelley and William Blythe Sr. were married, Clinton’s father, William Blythe Sr. died in a car accident three months before William Blythe III was born. William (Bill) Clinton grew up referring to Roger Clinton as “‘Daddy,’ but Roger Clinton never legally adopted Bill and rarely spent time with him.”³² Historical accounts of the relationship between Roger and Virginia consistently note Roger as at best a person that “had had several drinks by the time Billy saw him” to at worst an alcoholic that physically abused his wife.³³ Clinton eventually attended Hot Springs High School from 1960-64. After graduating high school Clinton attended Georgetown University and received a Rhodes Scholarship to attend Oxford University. After college, Clinton’s political career began when he was a law professor at the University of Arkansas.³⁴

³¹ Clinton, “Remarks to the Convocation,” paragraph 39.

³² David Maraniss, *First in His class: A Biography of Bill Clinton* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 32.

³³ Maraniss provides the more ambivalent of the two considerations noting Roger Clinton as a man that drank often. See Maraniss, *First in his class*, 32. Nigel Hamilton provides the more direct account of Roger Clinton as a drunk. See Nigel Hamilton, *Bill Clinton Mastering the Presidency* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), xii-5. For an extended account of Hamilton’s position on Roger Clinton see Nigel Hamilton, *Bill Clinton: An American Journey Great Expectations* (New York: Random House, 2003), 62

³⁴ Maraniss, *First in His Class*, 32-50.

Bill Clinton's political career was marked by success and failures, not least of which is the Crime Bill, which continues to follow him. Bill Clinton's first race for Arkansas congressional office ended in a defeat by incumbent Republican John Paul Hammerschmidt. Clinton was elected Attorney General of Arkansas in 1976. Two years later, Clinton was elected governor. Clinton spent the next 10 years of his life winning and losing the seat of governor in Arkansas. Clinton won his first presidential election in 1992 and won reelection in 1996. During Clinton's first term he gave the Mason Temple speech. In the nearly twenty years since leaving office, Clinton has remained relevant to American politics. Recently, Clinton has been criticized for his involvement in passing and implementing the Crime Bill, which he promoted in the Mason Temple speech. The criticisms became so significant that when his wife, Hillary Clinton, ran for president in 2016, the 1994 crime bill was a topic of discussion.³⁵ There is clearly much more that could be said about Bill Clinton (he does have multiple book-length biographies), but this brief synopsis of Clinton's life is meant to provide a rudimentary foundation for some understanding of who Bill Clinton was and is. With an account of Clinton's chronological history in mind, it is best to turn towards how the Mason Temple speech reflects Clinton's rhetorical habits.

The Mason Temple speech is uniquely representative of Bill Clinton's presidential rhetoric. The Mason Temple speech is unique because there is no other speech within Clinton's first term as president that matches it in its distinctive combination of its kairos, audience and subject matter. The Mason Temple speech is representative of Clinton's rhetoric because it aligns

³⁵Meaghan Keneally, "What's Inside the Controversial 1994 Crime Bill That's Plaguing Hilary Clinton on the Campaign Trail," *ABC News* April 11, 2016. Accessed April 2, 2018, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/inside-controversial-1994-crime-bill-plaguing-clinton-campaign/story?id=38313757>; Chauncey Devega, "Racist Then, racist now: The real story of Bill Clinton's crime bill," *Salon* April 16, 2016. https://www.salon.com/2016/04/16/racist_then_racist_now_the_real_story_of_bill Clintons_crime_bill/.

with the perception of multiple rhetorical scholars of how Bill Clinton was able to invent ethos and sympathy for himself. On the second point, previous rhetorical scholarship such as that by Herbert Simons and Shawn Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles highlights that Clinton was able to create sympathy for himself by pushing blame onto circumstances and manipulating accounts of history.³⁶ Clinton reflects these same habits in the Mason Temple speech by creating a nostalgic version of King to do his bidding. John Murphy has highlighted that Clinton was able to invent ethos for himself in the Mason Temple speech by building a connection with his audience based on a relationship to King.³⁷ In chapter three, I build laterally in relation to Murphy's view by highlighting that Clinton may have instead hidden behind King to conceal his own performance to garner support for the Crime Bill. As Clinton used KING to manipulate the expectations of his audience, another theme of presidential rhetoric that coincides with the Mason Temple speech is the ability of presidents to manipulate the expectations and values of the American public.³⁸ Particularly, Colleen Shogan in her analysis of empathy highlights how presidents use calls for empathy and connection to alter the public's perception of a given crisis.³⁹ In the Mason Temple speech, Clinton leans on the audience's empathetic connection with King to justify his assertion that to produce the right kind of <Freedom> members of the

³⁶ Herbert Simons, "A Dilemma-Centered Analysis of Clinton's August 17th Apologia: Implications for Rhetorical Theory and Method," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86 (4) (2000): 438-45. Shawn Parry-Giles, Trevor Parry Giles, "Collective Memory, Political Nostalgia, and the Rhetorical Presidency: Bill Clinton's Commemoration of the march on Washington, August 28, 1998." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86 (4) (2000):415-20.

³⁷ John Murphy, "Inventing authority: Bill Clinton, Martin Luther King Jr., and the orchestration of rhetorical traditions," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1) (1997): 71-80.

³⁸ Here I use KING to signify that Martin Luther King Jr. was used as an ideograph. I move away from the common <> ideographic notation to convey the difference in using a person as an ideograph. A more sustained consideration of this choice is undertaken in chapter 3.

³⁹ Colleen Shogan, "The Contemporary Presidency: the Political utility of Empathy in Presidential Leadership" *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 39 (4) 444-50; John Murphy, "To Form a More Perfect Union: Bill Clinton and the Art of Deliberation," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8 (2005): 663-70.

audience should support the Crime Bill. To better articulate how this thesis will relate to the how and why of Bill Clinton's rhetorical practices it is instructive to turn to the critical perspectives.

Rhetorical Publics

Reading the Mason Temple speech against the backdrop of Clinton's Rainbow Coalition speech and original announcement of the Crime Bill demonstrates how Clinton's rhetoric was vested with an undue authority that allowed him to sacrifice the views and lives of marginalized populations. Throughout this thesis, I build on McGee's consideration of the people to understand a public as a mythically created yet discursively material confederation of individuals to investigate how Clinton used his authority to exclude Black people from the American public. Analyzing Clinton's rhetoric in the context of the American public is instructive because it reveals the danger in reifying the authority of unmarked identities to determine the good of what McGee calls "the people."⁴⁰ Danielle Allen provides an illuminating description of "the people" when she states, "'the people,' [. . .] makes this body imaginable, it also invents customs and practices of citizenly interaction that accord with that explanation."⁴¹ When Allen references the body in this sentence she is gesturing toward the body politic, or in another sense, using it as a synonym for public. Allen and McGee's perspectives highlight that the public is a rhetorically/discursively constructed group which exists under the pressure of a set of "citizenly" practices. Chapter two of this thesis expands upon McGee and Allen's perspectives by problematizing how the investment of authority to define what is good for "the people" can be

⁴⁰To explicate the fictive nature of the "people" it is useful to review McGee's argument for that fictive nature. Michael McGee, "In Search of 'The People': A rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 61 (1975): 238. "Describing an alternative conception of "the people" in rhetoric demands first and understanding of A. F. Pollard's observation that "the people" is so indeterminate an expression that its use, let alone its abuse, obscures almost all political discussions." A.F. Pollard, *The Evolution of Parliament* (London: Longmans, Green, 1934), 343.

⁴¹ Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown V. Board of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 238.

and often is used to legitimize the sacrifice of marginalized populations. The relationship between the “people” and “values” has bearing on whether it is still impossible to be Black and American because, in the sense that people create values, those same values are mobilized to define who counts as a person. Allen’s perspective illuminates this project’s consideration of the color-line because the color-line draws our attention to how those in power (unmarked identities) are allowed to dictate the appropriate actions and sacrifices or “citizenly practices” that are required to be a member of “the people.” To further clarify how this thesis engages with “the people” and the values that create those people it is instructive to place this work in the larger conversation of rhetorical publics theory.

My intervention into publics’ theory interrogates the universal authority provided to unmarked identities within the public in order to foreground the consequences of racially differentiated forms of sacrifice within the American public. I agree with and extend Warner’s analysis in *Publics and Counterpublics*, where he argues that the assumption of universalism that underwrites the creation of publics is a façade and instead that publics are centered on privileged unmarked identities such as white, male, and heterosexual. Warner notes, “The bourgeois public sphere is a frame of reference in which it is supposed that all particularities have the same status as mere particularity. But the ability to establish that frame of reference is a feature of some particularities.”⁴² Warner enumerates what he intends by “some particularities” and what I refer to as “unmarked identities” by stating, “The bourgeois public sphere has been structured from the outset by a logic of abstraction that provides a privilege for unmarked identities: the male, the

⁴² Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: MIT Press, 2002). 166. I begin with Warner’s consideration of the public because it lays the foundation for understanding the public as an organization based on discursive exchange and not norms. I also choose not to start with Habermas because chapter 2 attempts to disrupt the hegemonic reproduction of Habermas’ perspective on what constitutes a bourgeois public sphere.

white, the middle class, the normal.”⁴³ Warner’s consideration highlights that publics are not created equally and that a higher or “unmarked” position within a social hierarchy bestows upon certain people more ability to shape and construct the public. Livingston, along with other rhetorical scholars, has largely agreed with Warner’s idea that certain identities have more power than others when it comes to shaping the public sphere. More contemporary examples, Regina Duthley and Alan Gross’ work for example, differ from Warner’s position in that they have focused on the ability of marginalized groups to create their own publics.⁴⁴ Another strain of more contemporary accounts of the rhetorical public focuses on how the boundaries of the public are established. In this vein, Randall argues that the boundaries or constraints on citizenship are reproduced and revealed through the enactment of power.⁴⁵ I translate Randall’s point about physical violence into power to reflect that instrumental violence can take the form of violent expectation production to highlight how the disciplining of Black people’s actions can cause emotional, physical, and mental suffering. Randall’s engagement with the rhetorical utility of instrumental violence (power) highlights that physical sacrifices can be instrumental to establishing a public, which links back to Allen’s consideration of sacrifice as an inherent component of democratic citizenship.

⁴³Warner, *Publics*, 167.

⁴⁴ A relevant distinction between Warner’s concept and other scholars’ perspectives is that other scholars privilege the idea that minority or marginalized populations create new ways of connecting, not just copy the ways of the dominant group Granville Ganter, “Book Review: Michael Warner *Publics and Counterpublics*” *St John’s University humanities* 1 (1) (2003): paragraph 3. Alexander Livingston, “Avoiding Deliberative Democracy? Micropolitics, Manipulation, and the Public Sphere,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 45 (3) (2012): 269; Regina Duthely, “Black Feminist Hip-Hop Rhetorics and the Digital Public Sphere,” *Changing English* 24 (2) (2017): 202-7; Alan Gross, “Presence as Argument in the Public Sphere,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35 (2) (2005):5-12; Lisbeth Lipari, “Queering The Public Sphere, Liberalism and the Rhetoric of Rights,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 38 (2002):170-4.

⁴⁵ David Randall, “The Rhetoric of Violence, the Public Sphere, and the Second Amendment,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 49 (2) (2016): 126-35. In this section Randall adopts Habermas’ consideration of power to make the case that Rhetorical violence can push and shape publics and people within publics. Further, when Randall defines power he makes it synonymous with instrumental violence. Jurgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice*. Trans. John Viertel. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 253-6.

Allen's account of sacrifice connects Clinton's Mason Temple speech and Du Bois' concept of the color-line. Allen states, "As citizens struggle over political questions, they will necessarily come to understand how political choices affect social experience. The site of sacrifice is between the social world—of custom and of mental, physical, and economic harm from other citizens and the political world of institutions and practices for the sake of which one wants to master that harm."⁴⁶ Allen's point reveals that for a public or "people" to exist it requires the sacrifice of members either of or outside of the "people." I build on and differ from Allen's conception of sacrifice, and public's research more broadly, by contesting the idea that sacrifice is inherently universal. Allen implicitly depicts the form of sacrifice experienced by members of the public as universal when she says, "No democratic citizen, adult or child, escapes the necessity of losing."⁴⁷ Allen's statement implies a universal and undifferentiated form of sacrifice because of her use of the universal negative "no" in conjunction with the noun "democratic citizen." The universal negative in conjunction with a noun implies universality because for the statement to be true it means that all things described by the noun must experience in Allen's case "losing." I agree with Allen that sacrifice is inevitable, however I disagree with Allen's framing of undifferentiated sacrifice. A differentiated concept of sacrifice highlights the continued relevance of the color-line because it illuminates that certain people (specifically Black people) are called upon to sacrifice more than others as a requirement for their introduction into the public. Considering the color-line as a form of sacrifice with different conditions connects Du Bois' idea of the color-line to Clinton's Mason Temple speech by making it clear that Clinton was able to reproduce the color-line by demanding that Black "citizens" sacrifice their lives for the larger American population.

⁴⁶ Allen, *Strangers*, 29.

⁴⁷ Allen *Strangers*, 28.

Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech and the other selected speeches from his corpus show the continual pervasiveness of the color-line and thus illuminate the unique form of sacrifice demanded from Black Americans in their role as what Allen called "democratic citizen[s]." Clinton reveals the differences in sacrifice in the American public by offering Black Americans provisional acceptance into the category of "American" at the cost of supporting the Crime Bill. Barret highlights that in the 1990s advocacy for the values of increased policing and stricter crime penalties were often used to control the perceptions and actions of members of the Black community.⁴⁸ The controlling function of depictions of Black crime is important to this project because it highlights that by describing certain neighborhoods as crime ridden, politicians like Bill Clinton were able to confirm their own hypothesis by justifying increased policing efforts in such areas.

Further, the disproportionate incarceration rates for Black and white Americans highlights that Black people are called upon more often to sacrifice their lives and freedom for the maintenance of institutional stability. Linscott provides a preliminary answer to why Black Americans are called upon to sacrifice not just their position on pieces of legislation but also their livelihood for acceptance into democratic citizenship. Linscott theorizes that the identity of "Black American" is at best an oxymoron. Through an analysis of #Black Lives Matter, Linscott concludes that the American public is built upon the exclusion of Black people.⁴⁹ Linscott

⁴⁸ Lindon Barret, *Blackness and Value: Seeing Double* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 94-131; Vincent Hutching, Nicholas Valentino, "The centrality of Race in American Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 398. Vincent and Valentino argue that news coverage of the 1990's showed disproportionate numbers of Black perpetrators. Further, Vincent and Valentino argue that such racial priming can increase support for stricter crime legislation and gestate anti-black sentiment. For a brief account of their supporting material see Robert Entman, "blacks in the news: television, modern racism and cultural change," *Journ. Q.* 69 (1992): 345-61; Travis Dixon, Daniel Linz, "Overrepresentation and Underrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos as Lawbreakers on Television News," *Journal of Communication* 50 (2) (2000): 131-40.

⁴⁹ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 209-240; 299-334; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, white masks*. (Trans.) Richard Philcox. (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 50-70. Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century America*

borrowed from Christina Sharpe to argue that the exclusion of Black people from the American public enables a wanton disregard for their lives.⁵⁰ In other words, Linscott argues that Black expulsion from the public reveals that “All Lives (Don’t) Matter.”⁵¹

The exclusion of Black folks from the American public also negatively affects the public as a whole. As Entman’s analysis reveals, media representations in the 1990’s allowed politicians to create fictitious depictions of life within the United States that were then taken as justifications for policies that often disproportionately negatively affected the poor and marginalized. In his book, *Democracy Without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics*, Entman argues that the exclusion of certain identities from American politics undercuts the efficacy of the political system for all.⁵² Thinking through each of the previous arguments in conjunction in the thesis reveals that Bill Clinton’s Mason Temple speech undercut the efficacy of democratic government in America by promoting the exclusion of the Black population. Reading Clinton’s speech emphasizes the importance of the color-line as an analytic to examine the contemporary American public because Clinton produced the values of increased policing and responsibility, which have been and are used to justify the exclusion of Black people from the twenty-first century American public. Clinton’s speech also emphasizes the relevance of double-consciousness because it highlights that assessing not only the argumentative strategies of a speaker but also the ethical implications of the speech is instrumental in realizing that calling upon Black Americans to support the Crime Bill implies a set of values that sustain and extend the American racial hierarchy. To further engage in how Clinton was able to reproduce the color-

(New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 79-125; Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 11.

⁵⁰ Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 17.

⁵¹ Charles Linscott, “All Lives (Don’t) Matter: the Internet Meets Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism,” *Black Camera* 8 (2) (2017): 104.

⁵² Robert Entman, *Democracy Without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 1-30.

line and stabilize the contemporary white-over-Black hierarchy it is best to zoom in on the rhetorical strategies at play in the Mason Temple speech specifically.

Ideographs

An ideographic examination of Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech reveals how Clinton used KING and <Freedom> as ideographs to reproduce the color-line by increasing mass incarceration in the United States. Michael Calvin McGee outlines that ideographs are social constructs that have become imbued with certain meaning.⁵³ McGee concretizes this point when he states, "Though words only (and not claims) such terms as 'property,' 'religion,' 'right of privacy,' 'freedom of speech,' 'rule of law,' and 'liberty' are more pregnant than propositions ever could be. They are the basic structural elements, the building blocks of ideology. Thus they may be thought of as 'ideographs,' for, like Chinese symbols, they signify and 'contain' a unique ideological commitment."⁵⁴ McGee articulates how ideographs can strengthen systems of hierarchy: "The end product of the state's insistence on some degree of conformity in behavior and belief, I suggest, is a rhetoric of control, a system of persuasion presumed to be effective on the whole community."⁵⁵ McGee's point about conformity of behavior as an outgrowth of a rhetoric of control is instructive for this analysis because it highlights that discursive standards can discipline people's actions. The ability to discipline actions provides foundation for the argument that, because of the color-line and the set of expectations that accompany it, Black people are denied true self-consciousness based on the social imposition of being forced to perform to meet the expectations of the other.

⁵³ McGee, ideograph, 16.

⁵⁴ McGee, Ideograph, 6-7.

⁵⁵ McGee, ideograph, 6.

In the Mason Temple speech, Bill Clinton used <Freedom> and KING as ideographs.⁵⁶ Bill Clinton used the <Freedom> ideograph to denounce his audience and build support for the Crime Bill. Clinton states, “That is not the freedom, the freedom to die before you're a teenager is not what Martin Luther King lived and died for.” Clinton employs <Freedom> as an ideograph by calling upon the public’s shared meaning of <Freedom> to imply which actions should be taken. Analyzing the usage of <Freedom> in Clinton’s Mason Temple speech highlights that freedom simultaneously gestures toward past tribulations (a disequilibrium in which there is a lack of freedom) at the same time that it promotes disciplined understandings of what creates freedom in the future. Cloud notes that it is auspicious that Democrats chose to deploy <Freedom> rather than <equality>.⁵⁷ Cloud’s entanglement is further emboldened by Condit and Lucaites analysis that considers how <equality> is used by Anglo-Americans to produce forms of unity. A possible explanation for Cloud and Lucaites and Condit’s conundrum is that <Freedom> may have a deeper historical relevance to Clinton’s, majority Black, Mason Temple audience and allows Clinton and other users of liberal rhetoric to reinforce the importance of responsibility because freedom must be protected by the individual.⁵⁸ As the previous excerpt from the Mason Temple speech reveals, even when employing the ideograph of freedom, Clinton relies upon the ethos and authority of King to provide support.

Bill Clinton also utilized Martin Luther King Jr. as an ideograph to signify that support for the Crime Bill would be an enactment of liberal political unity that “Americans” should support. McGee highlights that ideographs are the terms and vocabularies that produce political

⁵⁶I choose to capitalize the <Freedom> ideograph to reflect that it is Freedom as a noun or proper name for a position within American society; in some way to say that people possess <Freedom>.

⁵⁷ Cloud Family values, 407.

⁵⁸ Celeste Condit, John Lucaites, *Crafting Equality: America’s Anglo-African Word* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 217-25.

unity and separation: “Insofar as usages both unite and separate human beings, it seems reasonable to suggest that the functions of uniting and separating would be represented by specific vocabularies, [...] such vocabularies would consist of ideographs.”⁵⁹ In the Mason Temple speech, Clinton calls upon the name of Dr. King to unify and separate his public.

How would we explain it to Martin Luther King if he showed up today [. . .] Yes, without regard to race, if you work hard and play by the rules, you can get into a service academy or a good college [. . .] How could we explain that we gave people the freedom to succeed, and we created conditions in which millions abuse that freedom to destroy the things that make life worth living and life itself? We cannot.⁶⁰

Chapter three expands upon this point by revealing that throughout the Mason Temple speech Clinton repeatedly calls upon KING to be the “building block” upon which a shared future and past can be constructed. Another reason that KING seems to function as an ideograph in Clinton’s speech is because Clinton’s memory of KING signifies a unique ideological commitment—specifically, a commitment to governmental policy and a belief that increased policing will help resolve the problems of the Black community. Chapter three reveals how the consistently dominant yet contingent reproduction of King’s legacy along the lines of integrationist and pro-governmental perspectives created a foundation for Clinton’s ability to compartmentalize King’s historical legacy to be synonymous with an integrationist view that uncritically accepted governmental policy.⁶¹

Clinton’s ability to compartmentalize King’s historical legacy is a sign of the strength of his authority over blackness. Some historical accounts of Clinton’s relationship with the Black

⁵⁹ McGee, ideograph, 8.

⁶⁰ Clinton, Convocation, paragraph 33.

⁶¹ Denise Bostdorff, Steven Goldzwing, “History, Collective Memory, and the Appropriation of Martin Luther King, Jr.: Reagan’s Rhetorical legacy,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35 (4) (2005): 660-8. Murphy, *Inventing Authority*, 73-81.

community note that he had an unmatched ability to engage with Black people.⁶² For example, John Murphy argues that because of Clinton's ability to perform blackness he was able to effectively give the speech in the name of Martin Luther King.⁶³ In my view, there are two plausible alternative explanations for why Bill Clinton seemed to garner the support of the Black population and perform blackness in the Mason Temple speech. First, as Paul Frymer outlines in *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America*, Black people in the United States in the early 1990's were caught in a moment of political capture in which the Republican party defined itself appositionally to their issues while Democrats rarely entertained their issues.⁶⁴ In Clinton's context, Frymer's argument could be read as Black people had no choice but to have an affinity for Clinton because quite literally in a two party system there was no other choice. Second, as Ronald Judy highlights in his consideration of Black authenticity, Clinton as a white person would have had the option to visit in blackness without making a convincing performance.⁶⁵ Judy's point about visiting in blackness is illuminating because it highlights that the power to define the stereotypes that constitute blackness within the larger American public allow an individual to make white people feel as if they are better at performing blackness. In addition to these insights which trouble the legitimacy of the claim that Clinton was well liked by Black people because he was comfortable around them, other authors have criticized the very

⁶² Dwight Brooks, James Rada, "Constructing Race in Black and Whiteness: Media Coverage of public Support for President Clinton," *Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication* (2002): 142. As proof of these viewpoints Brooks and Rada consider the work of J. Tilove (1998, September 20). Why many black back Clinton. *The Dallas Morning News* P1j and Freeman G. (1998, October 13), Why do blacks support President Clinton? Because he cares. *Ste Louis Dispatch* p. B1. Interestingly, these sources seem to be out of print now.

⁶³ Murphy, authority, 71.

⁶⁴ Paul Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition In America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 1-10.

⁶⁵ R.A.T. (Ronald) Judy. Judy describes the way that Black people in America are forced to engage in a system that takes from them authentic experiences in exchange for affective performance. In other words, Judy highlights that Black people are required to create an affective response in others as a burden of their blackness. R.A.T. Judy, "On the Question of Nigga Authenticity," *boundary 2* (21) (1994): 225-30.

notion of “honorary” blackness for its extension of racial hierarchy.⁶⁶ Dwight Brooks and James Rada in their assessment of the media coverage of Bill Clinton conclude that perspectives that argue that Clinton was able to better perform blackness than other presidents are counter-productive because they assume static notions of blackness (playing the saxophone, for example) and reify whiteness as the norm.⁶⁷ Brooks and Rada argue that these perspectives reify whiteness as norm because they erase that white people also play the saxophone and live in poor communities to make it seem as if only Black people take part in those activities.⁶⁸ Chapter 3 focuses on how Clinton’s authority can be counter-productive for Black people in the context of how that same authority was used to promote the Crime Bill.

Hill-Campbell debate

The debate between Forbes Hill and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell highlights why it is useful to reconsider Du Bois’ concept of double-consciousness from a rhetorical perspective. The Hill-Campbell debate was a series of publications in the 1972-3 iterations of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*.⁶⁹ The debate fundamentally engages the question of the role of rhetorical critics in assessing political actors’ speeches. Fifty years after Nixon’s speech on Vietnamization and forty years after the actual debate between Hill and Campbell, this thesis aims to adopt the debate as a guide to support the conclusion that Clinton’s speech calls for two evaluations. First, there needs

⁶⁶ Shannon Houston, “On Bill Clinton and Why Black America Must Do Away with the ‘Honorary Black’ Myth,” *Paste* April 8, 2016. Accessed April 17, 2018. <https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/04/on-bill-clinton-and-why-black-america-must-do-away.html>.

⁶⁷ Brooks, Rada, “Constructing Race,” 146.

⁶⁸ Toni Morrison herself highlights that is not what she meant when she called him the first Black president. Ta-Nehsi Coates, “It was No Compliment to Call Bill Clinton’ The First Black President,” *The Atlantic* August 27, 2015. Accessed April 17, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/notes/2015/08/toni-morrison-wasnt-giving-bill-clinton-a-compliment/402517/>.

⁶⁹ Forbes Hill, “Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form—the President’s Message of November 3, 1969,” *Quarterly Journal of speech* 58 (4) (1972): 373-387. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form- Rejoinder,” *Quarterly Journal of speech* 58 (4) (1972): 451-4. Forbes Hill, “Reply to professor Campbell,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (4) (1972): 454-60.

to be an evaluation of the speech as effective, as it did get Clinton what Clinton wanted. But equally so, there is a need for the speech to be evaluated ethically, for its complicity and participation within a system that would produce sacrifice or suffering for members of the Black community. The more nuanced account that the Hill-Campbell debate calls for reveals that the Mason Temple speech should be evaluated as good in form but also destructive in content.

The concluding chapter of this thesis produces a meta-criticism of the Hill-Campbell debate to argue that Hill's perspective represents the first consciousness, whereas Campbell's perspective represents the second or doubled consciousness and that rhetorical criticism and theory needs both. Hill's strong argument for progressing as if all things were equal is important because it provides a way of evaluating the world not based on semantics but instead empirical data. In my view, Campbell's perspective offers the possibility and requires the doubling in the sense that it calls for us as critics to recognize that the words do not exist in a vacuum and all things are never equal. The Hill-Campbell debate helps to tie this project together because it fundamentally asks us as rhetorical critics to return to whether the ethical implications of a speech should be considered when evaluating a speech.

Conclusion

Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech and selected other speeches from his corpus are a set of rhetorical occasions worthy of further investigation because they provide an opportunity to examine the relationship between the lighter and darker races in 2018. The overarching questions which the larger thesis illuminates are: What gave Bill Clinton the authority to sacrifice the views and lives of Black people? What does Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech reveal about race relations in contemporary American society? In the twenty-first century, is it still impossible to be Black and American? To provide preliminary insight on these questions, this first chapter

focused on developing an account of Bill Clinton's biography, rhetorical themes, and the Mason Temple speech to lay the foundation for the investigations in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Chapter Outline

Chapter two focuses on two speeches from Clinton's corpus to support the claim that, as a white male president, Bill Clinton was vested with an undue authority to sacrifice the views and lives of marginalized populations. Further, in response to how reproductions of the rhetorical public that build upon Habermas attempt to obscure consciousness, the second chapter highlights how, taking Du Bois' double-consciousness as an example, bringing consciousness into rhetorical theory would help to problematize the power of unmarked identities to sacrifice marginalized populations. The second chapter focuses on where Clinton got his authority and what it allowed him to do.

The third chapter engages in an ideographic rhetorical criticism of Clinton's use of <Freedom> and KING in order to investigate how the contemporary rhetorical public allowed for the literal sacrifice of Black people. Focusing on Clinton's usage of KING reveals how Clinton was able to obfuscate his own performance by producing a nostalgic memory of King that fit his needs. Further, the third chapter highlights that Clinton used <Freedom> to dictate which actions his audience should take in order to honor the life and work of KING. Chapter three also reveals how Clinton's ability to define the actions of his audience highlights the continual pervasiveness of the role-defining and hierarchy-stabilizing functions of the color-line because he was able to dictate that his audience support the Crime Bill—a piece of legislation

that would stabilize and expand the incarceration of Black people. Analyzing both KING and <Freedom> as ideographs in the Mason Temple speech reveals that Clinton was able obfuscate his own performance and dictate that his audience support the Crime Bill.

Chapter four concludes by recounting the major themes of this analysis and highlighting ways that Du Bois' double-consciousness can be instructive for rhetorical criticism and theory. Particularly, chapter four offers a meta-criticism of the scholarly debate between Forbes Hill and Karyln Kohrs Campbell. Reviving the Hill-Campbell debate illuminates this project's relationship to Murphy's evaluation because it highlights that there needs to be an evaluation of the speech as effective, as it did get Clinton what Clinton wanted; but also, that there needs to be an evaluation of the speech that examines its complicity and participation in sacrificing members of the Black community.

Chapter 2: Authority and Sacrifice: Bill Clinton’s Rainbow Coalition Speech, Race, and the Rhetorical Public.

On August 11, 1993, President Bill Clinton declared, “Crime has been used as a way to divide Americans with rhetoric. [. . .] I thank the Republican Members of Congress who are here today—it is time to use crime as a way to unite Americans through action.”¹ Clinton’s “Remarks Announcing the Initiative and an Exchange with Reporters,” exemplifies how he was vested with the undue authority to unify the American public based on the sacrifice of marginalized identities. This chapter examines the concepts of authority and sacrifice to demonstrate how Bill Clinton had the authority to give a speech where he sacrificed the views and lives of Black people by asking his audience to support the Crime Bill. The first section of this chapter considers the basis for authority in the rhetorical public. The second section considers how that authority was deployed rhetorically to enact the sacrifice of Black Americans. Finally, this chapter concludes by considering what Bill Clinton’s authority to sacrifice Black Americans reveals about being Black and American in the twenty first century. Authority and sacrifice illuminate Clinton’s enactment of the color-line in the Mason Temple speech because the authority bestowed onto Clinton by the structure of the American public allowed him to dictate the problem as crime and the solution as increased policing for the Black community.²

¹William J. Clinton, “Remarks Announcing the initiative and an Exchange with Reporters,” August 11, 1993. Online by Gerhard Peters and John Woolley, *The American Presidency Project* Accessed March 30, 2018, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=46979>. Paragraph 5.

² For contemporary accounts that highlight that legislation supported by Bill Clinton sustained and exacerbated the disproportionate incarceration of Black Americans see Richter, Paul, “Clinton Hails Three Strikes’ Sentence: Crime: He says federal life term proves worth of the bipartisan-backed crime bill. He urges similar support to adopt his anti-terrorism legislation. *LA Times*, August 20, 1995, accessed May 27, 2017; David Savage, Paul Richter, “Clinton to Sign Bill Preserving stiff Penalties for Crack: Drugs: It would block a move to treat powdered cocaine violations equally. Opponents see a bias, since most of those facing the tougher terms are black.” *LA Time*, October 27, 1995, accessed May 27, 2017. http://articles.latimes.com/1995-10-27/news/mn-61778_1_crack-cocaine. The word “black” is capitalized throughout the essay to express that “Black” signifies a group of people that share a common

Throughout this chapter I understand the rhetorical “public,” borrowing from Bitzer’s article engaging public communication, as a group of individuals called to respond to a similar exigence. By removing the requirement of conversation or symbolic exchange, my definition of the public leaves space to highlight that Black people may be within the American “public” but not be able to participate in the public as “American.”³ This understanding of the public helps to recognize the mythic nature of the public because it emphasizes that for Black people participation is often projected onto them but not actualized. Focusing on authority as it presents itself in Clinton’s “Remarks to the Rainbow Coalition National Convention” speech reveals how Clinton, as a presidential candidate, was vested with provisional access to the role of communicator-in-chief and gained undue authority to articulate the problems and solutions for marginalized groups.⁴ The Rainbow Coalition speech is an especially generative text because of the audience. In the Rainbow Coalition speech, Clinton speaks to an ethnically and racially-diverse audience denouncing the words of Sister Souljah and dictated what is best about the Rainbow Coalition. Clinton’s ability to dictate the “best things” about the Rainbow Coalition convention and who it does and does not honor highlights his undue authority to define the problems and solutions for marginalized identities. Considering Clinton’s authority is instructive

historical narrative. Toure, Michael Eric Dyson, *Who’s Afraid of Post-Blackness?: What It Means to Be Black Now* (New York: Free Press, 2012), ix; Frank B. Wilderson, *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-10.

³ Lloyd Bitzer, “Rhetorical public communication,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 4 (4) (1987): 425. For more stringent definitions of the public see Thomas Goodnight, “Public Discourse,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 4 (4) (1987): 429; Thomas Goodnight, “The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument: A Speculative Inquiry into the Art of Public Deliberation,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 48 (2012): 198-200.

⁴ For example, see Richard Ellis, *Speaking to the People: The Rhetorical Presidency in Historical Perspective* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Shawn Parry-Giles, Trevor Parry Giles, “Collective Memory, Political Nostalgia, and the Rhetorical Presidency: Bill Clinton’s Commemoration of the march on Washington, August 28, 1998.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86 (4) (2000): 419; Mary Stuckey, *The President as Interpreter-in-Chief* (Chatham: Chatham House Publishers, 1991), 5-21; Mary Stuckey, Frederick Antczak, “The Rhetorical Presidency: Deepening Vision, Widening Exchange,” *Communication Yearbook* 21 (1998): 405-15; Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).5-15. William J. Clinton, “Remarks of Governor Bill Clinton Rainbow Coalition National Convention,” June 13, 1992. *Ibiblio*, Accessed March 30, 2018, <http://www.ibiblio.org/pub/academic/political-science/speeches/clinton.dir/c23.txt>.

for rhetorical theory because it illuminates how the continual conceptualization of the public sphere as one based on the exchange of reason devoid of consciousness stabilizes and sustains violent hierarchy.⁵ Clinton's speeches exemplify a public built on reason devoid of consciousness because Clinton's authority to arbitrate reason (determine what is for the good of "the people") is what allowed him dictate what was "best" about the Rainbow Coalition and what "rights" members of the United States public had. As discussed in chapter one, I understand consciousness as a view of oneself not determined by another. Du Bois lamented that, in his time, this sort of existential consciousness was foreclosed to Black people because of the imposition of white authority and control over both the actions and perceptions of Black people. Investigating Clinton's use of sacrifice is rhetorically productive because it illuminates how the American public sphere is built on sacrifice. Furthermore, an examination of the rhetorical construction of white male authority and Black sacrifice in Clinton's discourse provides contemporary evidence of Du Bois' claim that it is impossible to be Black and American.

The rhetorical public placed Clinton in a position of authority to sacrifice the views and lives of marginalized, specifically Black, populations in the United States. In the following section, I focus on Habermas's excitement at the divergence between reason and consciousness to reveal the basis of Clinton's undue authority. I choose to focus on Habermas' perspective because his emphasis on the divergence between rationality and consciousness has been fundamental to rhetorical understandings of the contemporary American public.⁶ For example, Christian Lundberg in his consideration of how psychoanalysis can be illuminating for

⁵ For the basis for understanding the rhetorical public sphere as based on reason see Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Trans.) Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987 [1981]), 1; Max Weber, *Economy and Society: an outline of Interpretive Sociology* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968) 1-20. For a critique of that perspective see W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black folk* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1903] 2007), 31.

⁶ An example of a rhetorical perspective that largely unquestioningly adopts Habermas' conception of the public sphere is Kendall Phillips, "A rhetoric of controversy," *Western Journal of Communication* 63 (4) (1999): 488-500.

understanding the public begins from the assumption of linguistic psychoanalysis that meaning is not stable but instead fluid.⁷ Lundberg's beginning at a lack of stable meaning is an example of being devoid of consciousness because it deemphasizes the material reality that gives rise the need for language in favor of an assumption that rationality will lead toward deciphering signs. Linda Flower also produces the rhetorical public devoid of consciousness in her application of Habermas' public sphere to an intercultural perspective.⁸ After investigating the rhetorical roots of authority this essay moves on to describe how the sacrifice of marginalized identities, as exemplified by Clinton's "Remarks Announcing the Initiative," can serve as a unifying ritual for the American public. This essay concludes by reflecting on what Clinton's authority to sacrifice reveals about the contemporary American public.

Authority in the American Rhetorical Public

Considerations that adopt Habermas' concept of the public sphere have been built in opposition to consciousness because the ability to control reason has been touted as a justification to look past individual consciousness as a requirement for meaningful engagement with the public.⁹ Gerad Hauser and Amy Grim published *Rhetorical Democracy: Discursive Practices of Civic Engagement* in which they also argue that analyzing arguments absent some a priori framing could be useful for the future of rhetorical democracy.¹⁰ Hauser and Grim's reproduction of Habermas is significant as their work has been cited nearly 100 times and

⁷ Christian Lundberg *Lacan in Public: Psychoanalysis and the Science of Rhetoric* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 1-10.

⁸ Linda Flower, "Talking across Difference: Intercultural Rhetoric and the Search for Situated Knowledge," *College Composition and Communication* 55 (1) (2003): 38-45.

⁹ John Rawls *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1971), 453-62.

¹⁰ Gerad Hauser, Amy Grim, *Rhetorical Democracy: Discursive Practices of Civic Engagement: Selected papers from the 2002 conference of the Rhetoric Society of America* (Mahway; Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004), 8-11.

fundamental to the works of other rhetorical critics such as Linda Flower and Stephen Hartnett.¹¹ Alongside Hauser and Grim, Sommerfeldt in his article about social capital hails the Habermasian model of the public sphere built upon exchange and publicity as generative to creating civil society.¹² Rhys Williams, predating the aforementioned engagements, almost prophetically, exclaimed that the critiques of the Habermasian public sphere based on a lack of access were overstated and that instead Habermas' model should be reproduced as a way for marginalized groups to gain cultural resources to engage in democratic practices.¹³ Multiple feminist scholars of the public sphere have highlighted that the development of public theory based on the assumed universality of reason creates inherent biases that decrease the accessibility and efficacy of American democratic discourse.¹⁴ Warner in *Publics and Counterpublics* addresses the inequality in defining and participating in the American public when he notes that the public sphere is a frame of reference structured by the privilege vested in unmarked

¹¹ My argument about their citation count comes from a google scholar search of their book which reflects 89 citations. Among those citations are the works of Linda Flower and Stephen Hartnett. Linda Flower *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Public engagement* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008) 1-5; Stephen Hartnett, "Communication, Social Justice, and Joyful Commitment," *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (1) (2010): 68-73. Google Scholar, "Rhetorical Democracy: Discursive Practices of Civic Engagement, citations" accessed April 16, 2018.

https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C29&q=Rhetorical+Democracy%3A+Discursive+Practices+of+Civic+Engagemen&btnG=.

¹² Erich Sommerfeldt, "The civility of social capital: Public relations in the public sphere, civil society, and democracy," *Public Relations Review* 39 (4) (2013): 280-5.

¹³ Rhys Williams, "Constructing the Public Good: Social Movements and Cultural Resources," *Social Problems* 42 (1) (1995):133-5.

¹⁴ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 193-204; Cindy Griffin, "The Essentialist Roots of the Public Sphere: A Feminist Critique," *Western Journal of Communication* 60 (1) (1996): 24-30; Sonja Foss, Cindy Griffin, "Beyond persuasion: A proposal for an invitational rhetoric," *Communication Monographs* 62 (1995): 1-10; Lisa Gring-Pemle, "Writing themselves into consciousness: Creating a rhetorical bridge between the public and private spheres," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84 (1) (1998): 41-50; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Femininity and Feminism: To Be or Not to Be a Woman," *Communication Quarterly* 31 (1983): 103-5; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Men Cannot Speak for Her* 2 vols (New York: Praeger, 1989), 1-10; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59 (1973): 75-85; Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 109-20; Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 1-15.

identities.¹⁵ Feminist rhetorical theorists and Warner's argument that certain particularities (white, male) are granted more authority in defining the "frame of reference" for the American public is instructive for this analysis because they highlight that those vested with the power to define the "frame of reference" possess an authority to determine who is included and what the concerns are in the American public.

Though Habermas seemed to be delighted with divergence between consciousness and rationality the dominance of his perspective has created a cycle in which marginalized perspectives are marginalized perpetually.¹⁶ Habermas states, "Mead (1863-1931) and Durkheim (1858-1917) belong, like Weber (1864-1920), to the generation of founding fathers of modern sociology. Both developed basic concepts in which Weber's theory of rationalization may be taken up again and freed from the aporias of the philosophy of consciousness."¹⁷ I take issue with two underlying assumptions of Habermas' point. First, by explicitly naming Mead, Durkheim and Weber, Habermas actively erases the fact that W.E.B. Du Bois was a sociologist of the time which highlights that something may be able to be added to Habermas' and his followers' analysis by overturning that mistake. Secondly, Habermas' note that rationalization had been "freed" from consciousness highlights the overarching point that the universal reason that underwrites the public sphere is derived in opposition to consciousness. My critique of

¹⁵ Warner, *Publics*, 166-7.

¹⁶ For an account of those dancing on the grave of consciousness see Jurgen Habermas, Thomas Burger (trans) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 1-20; John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Denver: Swallow, 1954), 1-20; John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Cosimo Classics, 2008), 1-20; Richard Rorty, "The Contingency of Language" (3-22) In *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5. For an account of the dangerousness of the presumed universality of Western rationality see Lewis Gordon, *Bad faith and antiblack racism* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1995), 1-20; Lewis Gordon, *What Fanon Said: A Philosophical Introduction to His Life and Thought (Just Ideas)* (Fordham University Press, 2015), 1-20; Gordon explains that in the United States disciplines have come together based on a scripto-centric grand narrative of Western rationality that forecloses consideration of questions outside of that rational paradigm such as why in a society of supposedly equal rights there is still economic and social disparity.

¹⁷ Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action 2*, 1.

Habermas steps away from previous rhetorical research in two important ways. First, it seems that the most influential criticisms of Habermas have questioned the representativeness of the public sphere Habermas outlines in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.¹⁸ I am not as much interested in whether Habermas' bourgeois public reflects a contemporary public but instead how dangerous Habermas' standards for recognition as a member of the public can be. Chantal Mouffe proposes a similar criticism of Habermas whilst making her case for a pluralistic democracy.¹⁹ However, I attempt to step beyond Mouffe and the agonistic paradigm to advance an argument that questions how the standards of recognition in the public sphere obscure conversations that can meaningfully consider racial difference.²⁰

The presumption that all humans can participate equally in the American public based on reasonable self-interest is leveraged by those with unmarked identities to justify white men having first and last say concerning what is for the good of "the people."²¹ Jane Mansbridge explained how this presumption can negatively affect women: "the very capacity to identify with others can be easily manipulated to the disadvantage of women [. . .] The transformation of 'I

¹⁸ Craig Calhoun, "The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Toward a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101 (4) (2002): 869-80; Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* (25/26) (1990): 56-80.

¹⁹ Chantal Mouffe, "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism," *Social Research* 66 (3) (1999): 745-50.

²⁰ Craig Calhoun edits a wonderful anthology on Habermas and the public sphere in which many prominent authors submit well researched considerations of the public sphere. Noticeably missing from this standard setting work is a sustained consideration of race. (Ed.) Craig Calhoun *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992); It is interesting that in Chantal Mouffe's rejoinder to Habermas with Ernesto Laclau racialized perspectives are missing as a fundamental question. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985). Daniel Brouwer and Robert Asen edit an anthology that attempts to engage with this question. However, there seems to only be a brief engagement with how a racialized perspective may change one's view on the public. Further, the only chapter that engages with race seems more concerned with press than the structure of the public. (Eds.) Robert Asen and Daniel Brouwer *Counterpublics and the State* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001); for the account on that engages with race see Catherine Squires, "The Black Press and the State: Attracting Unwanted (?) Attention" In (Eds.) Robert Asen and Daniel Brouwer *Counterpublics and the State* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 111-37.

²¹ In this sentence I use "the people" following Micheal Calvin McGee to convey that it is a confederation of individuals whom have different interests but because of the universality of some perspectives those interests are made to seem unified. Micheal Calvin McGee, "Power to the <People>," *Review and Criticism* (December) (1987): 433-4; Michael McGee, "In Search of 'The People': a rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (1975): 341-50.

into ‘we’ brought about through political deliberation can easily mask subtle forms of control.”²² Mansbridge’s feminist perspective highlights that white men are allowed to define what is good for the people because, as the ultimate unmarked identity (a position gained through the oppression, enslavement and colonization of other identities), they are imbued with the power to define what the interests of the nation are and how each citizen should consider their own personal interests in relationship to the interests of the nation.²³ Bill Clinton exemplified a supercharged form of the power granted to white men in the American public, as a presidential nominee, in his speech to the Rainbow Coalition.

In the Rainbow Coalition speech, Clinton uses the authority vested in him by the American public to constitute what his audience should do and excommunicate those that produce unaccommodating perspectives. Clinton states, “We should honor and encourage work, invest in our people, rebuild our communities. We should reward those who play by the rules and do the reverse for those who don’t.”²⁴ Clinton’s demand that those that “play by the rules” be rewarded and those that don’t receive “the reverse” is an instructive example because closer inspection reveals that Clinton possessed the power to define what it meant to “play by the rules.” Clinton’s ability to define what it means to “play by the rules” is an outgrowth of the American public’s step away from consciousness because the presumed inherent universality of “the rules” is based on the universal reasoning that produced those rules. Problematizing the faux universal basis of Clinton’s authority is important because it produces a second sight or double-

²² Jane Mansbridge, “Feminism and Democracy,” *The American Prospect* (1) (1990): 127.

²³ Herbert Simons, “A Dilemma-Centered Analysis of Clinton’s August 17th Apologia: Implications for Rhetorical Theory and Method,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86 (4) (2000): 438-45; John Murphy, “To Form a More Perfect Union: Bill Clinton and the Art of Deliberation,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 8 (2005): 656-9. Stuckey, *Interpreter in Chief*, 1-5. Griffin, *Feminist critique*, 1-10.

²⁴ Clinton, “Rainbow Coalition,” paragraph 30.

take aware of the fact that, in a very real sense, playing by the rules means doing what those in positions of disproportionate power want.

In the Rainbow Coalition speech, Clinton uses the authority vested in him by the American public to dictate what was best about his racially and ethnically diverse audience and to excommunicate those that produced perspectives unaccommodating to his position. Examining the Rainbow Coalition speech demonstrates how Clinton, a white man running for president, came to a convention devised to help think through inter-cultural interactions and used that opportunity to dictate the values of and define participation in that group. In other words, the Rainbow Coalition speech is intriguing because it reveals that unmarked identities are vested with the power to go before minorities and define for them who they are and what is best about them.

Clinton exemplifies the danger of an American public constituted oppositionally to consciousness through his call for the ex-communication of Sister Souljah in his Rainbow Coalition speech.²⁵ Clinton's Rainbow Coalition speech took place on June 13, 1992 and reports of the time noted that Clinton stunned members of the Coalition with his remarks.²⁶ Further, reports of the time and the contemporary moment note Clinton's posturing in the Rainbow Coalition speech as an example of him "acting tough" to prove he would not, and the Democratic

²⁵ For definitions of excommunication see Raymie Mckerrow, "Antimasonic rhetoric: The strategy of excommunication," *Communication Quarterly* 37 (4) (1989): 276-80; Seth Lee, "'To the Glory of God and Profit of the Commonwealth: William Turner' Rhetoric of Exile and English National Identity," *Reformation* 19 (2) (2014): 136-40; Nan Goodman, *Banished common law and the rhetoric of social exclusion in early New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 1-20.

²⁶ Thomas B. Edsall, "Clinton Stuns Rainbow Coalition," *Washington Post*, June 14, 1992. Accessed April 1, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/06/14/clinton-stuns-rainbow-coalition/02d7564f-5472-4081-b6b2-2fe5b849fa60/?utm_term=.45cf2e56f647.

Party would no longer, bow to special (read as Black) interests.²⁷ Clinton states, “Finally, let’s stand up for what has always been best about the Rainbow Coalition which is people coming together across racial lines. [. . .] You had a rap singer here last night named Sister Souljah. I defend her right to express herself through music, but her comments before and after Los Angeles were filled with the kind of hatred that you do not honor today and tonight.”²⁸ When Clinton refers to Sister Souljah’s comments, he is referring to comments made by Sister Souljah stemming from her participation on a panel at the Rainbow Coalition entitled “The Youth Summit” which dealt with voter registration and ways to empower Black youth. Sister Souljah stated, “When you have young black men who are socially and economically ignored then they become casual murderers, they don’t distinguish between black and white victims.” Later that day Sister Souljah was asked by a Washington Post reporter whether those perpetuating violence in the LA riots was wise. She stated,

“Yeah it was wise, I mean, if black people kill black people every day, why not have a week and kill white people? [. . .] In other words, white people, this government, and that mayor were well aware of the fact that black people were dying every day in Los Angeles under gang violence. So if you’re a gang member and you would normally be killing somebody, why not kill a white person? Do you think that somebody thinks that white people are better, or above and beyond dying, when they would kill their own kind?”²⁹

²⁷ Gwen Ifill, “The 1992 Campaign: Democrats; Clinton Won’t Back Down in Tiff with Jackson Over a Rap Singer,” *New York Times* June 20, 1992 Accessed April 1, 2018 <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/06/20/us/1992-campaign-democrats-clinton-won-t-back-down-tiff-with-jackson-over-rap.html>. Michael Cohen, “The SoulJah Legacy,” Campaign Stops June 15, 2008, Accessed April 1, 2018.

<https://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/06/15/the-souljah-legacy/?module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=Opinion&action=keypress®ion=FixedLeft&pgtype=Blogs>. Cohen notes that the Rainbow Coalition speech ‘fundamentally changed the popular perception of the Democratic party’ from a party that bowed to special interests (read as Black) to one that did not. Paragraph 2.

²⁸ Clinton, Rainbow Coalition, paragraph 68-70.

²⁹ Shelia Rule, “The 1992 Campaign: Racial Issues; Rapper, Chided by Clinton, Calls Him a Hypocrite,” *New York Times* June 17, 1992. Accessed April 1, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/06/17/us/the-1992-campaign-racial-issues-rapper-chided-by-clinton-calls-him-a-hypocrite.html?module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=U.S.&action=keypress®ion=FixedLeft&pgtype=article>. Paragraphs 7-10.

Sister Souljah's comments reveal that she is not attempting to call for killing white people but instead implying that it would be wise for those that normally kill Black people to turn their attention to someone else.

Clinton's denunciation of Sister Souljah produces an account of what is "best" about the Rainbow Coalition and what the Coalition supports that takes on a hegemonic character within the American public.³⁰ The hegemonic character of Clinton's comments is revealed by his own assessment of how it sat with those not in his Rainbow Coalition Audience. Days after his speech amid coverage of the mixed reviews the speech received Clinton stated, "A lot of people said to me they agreed with what I said."³¹ Clinton's comment reflects the hegemonic character of his perspective because his position of authority allowed him to produce a seemingly normative definition of who is included and what the coalition is for. George Yancy offers an account of how the structure of the American public bestows such authority onto people like Bill Clinton in his consideration of the white gaze. Yancy describes the white gaze as the ability of white people to look out into the world and describe it as they see it; these descriptions then shape our shared perceptions of the world even if they do not match up with reality. This phenomenon is particularly insidious when used by white people to define "appropriate" Blackness. Yancy states, "To have one's dark body invaded by the white gaze and then to have that body returned as distorted is a powerful experience of violation. The experience presupposes an anti-Black lived context, a context within which whiteness gets reproduced and the white body as norm is reinscribed."³² Yancy's point highlights that access to normative definitions allows white people

³⁰ Here I mean hegemonic in the sense that it is often regarded as the closest to objective. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (eds.) Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Smith (London: ElecBook, 1999 [1971]), 501-5.

³¹ Rule, "Calls Him a Hypocrite," Paragraph 11.

³² George Yancy, "Whiteness and the Return of the Black Body," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 19 (4) (2005): 217; Maurice Merleau Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*; Followed by Working Notes, Ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 139.

to create constructions of Black people that do not align with reality. Yancy's point is revealing for Clinton's speech because it highlights that in defining who was included and what was best about the coalition Clinton reproduced a logic that measures what is best about the Rainbow Coalition based on whether it produces good outcomes for white people. Yancy's point also highlights that, because white people are given the authority to define what and who counts in society, when soon to be President Bill Clinton defined what was best about the Rainbow Coalition his perspective would be given more influence with the larger public than the perspectives of members of the Coalition.

Clinton's authority to define what is best about and who is included in the Rainbow Coalition is indebted to the presumption of universal reason within the public sphere because Clinton depended upon the rhetorical resource of access to normative definitions invested in him as a prospective communicator-in-chief to define what is good and bad about the Rainbow Coalition. It is important to note that Clinton does not use the word "should" or make a prescriptive claim but instead takes on the normative stance of defining what the Rainbow Coalition does and does not honor. Clinton's normative stance is an outgrowth of the presumed universality of reason in the public sphere because he is granted the authority to make normative statements based on his existence as what reason has allowed to stand as the basic frame of reference for the American public—a white male president. Clinton's willful exclusion of Sister Souljah from the American public is relevant because it reveals that, in the American public, unmarked identities are vested with the power to exclude marginalized identities from any space they see fit.

Reading Clinton's excommunication of Sister Souljah in juxtaposition with his jurisdiction over the rules clarifies the danger of a public based on the undeserved authority of

those with unmarked identities. When Clinton's statement that "we should reward those who play by the rules" is read in the context of his exclusion of Sister Souljah it reveals that those that do not play by the rules, as established by unmarked identities, are vulnerable to ex-communication from the American public. In this case, Clinton implies that Sister Souljah breaks the rules of civility and unity with her statements in support of the riots in Los Angeles. Clinton's ability to use unification of liberal community to create a precarious position for Black people in the American public highlights room for growth in rhetorical public theory because it reveals that understandings of the public sphere which turn a blind-eye to the continual reproduction of white normativity under the rubric of universal reason allow for certain identities to be elevated as the final arbiters of reasoning which invests within them the ability to exclude others from the public.

A Bond Built on Sacrifice

While the case of the Rainbow Coalition speech highlights that unmarked identities possess undue authority over the standards of the American public, analyzing Clinton's "Remarks Announcing the Initiative" reveals that the American public can be unified through sacrifice.³³ When I use sacrifice here and throughout I mean to gesture away from religious sacrifice and instead focus on socio-political sacrifice.³⁴ I chose to focus on socio-political sacrifice because it better highlights how organizations of people connected by not inherent but

³³ Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries* (Washington DC: Civitas Counterpoint, 1998), XIII. Patterson outlines that communities can be brought together through the sacrifice of community members and outsiders.

³⁴ Victor Turner, "Sacrifice as Quintessential Process: Prophylaxis or Abandonment?" *History of Religions* 16 (1977): 189-195. Susan Mirzruchi, *The Science of Sacrifice: American Literature and Modern Social Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1998), 1-10. Godfrey Ashby, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Purpose* (London: SCM Press, 1988), 15-20. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 210-15.

instead chosen custom can produce violent forms of sacrifice. In the American public, those within the public (members and non-members) are called upon to give up their wants and desires for the supposed betterment of the nation as a whole. Juliet Hooker in her analysis of Black Lives Matter has highlighted that the sacrifice based transactional model is counter-productive for minorities because they are often called upon to give up more than others.³⁵ Focusing on sacrifice is instructive for rhetorical theory because it reveals that by doing undue harm to those at the bottom of the hierarchy in the American public the public itself is sustained. In other words, in some cases, the American bond is a bond built from the blood of “Americans.”³⁶ To explicate how Clinton’s speech reveals the rhetorical power of presidents to demand sacrifice and the dangers that it poses, I first show how presidents exercise the rhetorical power to demand sacrifice and then consider what that reveals about the structuration of the American public.

Because of his position as not only an unmarked identity but also a president, Bill Clinton was able to produce a set of values for the American public that demanded socio-political sacrifice from the most vulnerable within the American public. Danielle Allen discussed the vital role of sacrifice in the American political system in her book *Talking to Strangers*, in which she observed, “Of all the rituals relevant to democracy, sacrifice is preeminent. No democratic citizen, adult or child, escapes the necessity of losing out at some point in a public decision.”³⁷ Allen’s insight highlights that American democracy, because of its presumption of universality, has the capacity to demand that each of its participants give up something for the assumed greater good of the nation. Clinton’s ability to define the greater good when read in conjunction

³⁵ Juliet Hooker, “Black Lives Matter and the Paradoxes of U.S. Black Politics: From Democratic Sacrifice to Democratic Repair,” *Political Theory* 44 (4) (2016): 448-55.

³⁶ In this sentence I use the metaphor of Blood to match up with Patterson’s analysis of how the blood rites of sacrifice create a connection between members of the group participating in the sacrifice. Patterson, *Rituals of Blood*, 175-80.

³⁷ Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 28.

with the idea that the American public can demand sacrifice leads to the conclusion that, if Clinton wanted to, he could demand the social and political sacrifice of any marginalized group within the American public.

Clinton's ability to demand sacrifice illuminates the need to consider distinctions in the severity of sacrifice. Allen's conceptualization of sacrifice seems to make no distinction between not getting the pothole outside one's house fixed and the unscrupulous redlining policies that have contributed to inequitable economic growth over the last nearly fifty years.³⁸ For example, Allen states, "Democracy puts its citizens under a strange form of psychological pressure by building them up as sovereigns and then regularly undermining each citizen's experience of sovereignty."³⁹ Allen's point highlights the danger in undifferentiated understandings of sacrifice because it presumes that all citizens are given the position of "sovereign" or control over their own fate. As a rejoinder, I argue that it is imperative to realize that for some their sovereignty is undermined and for others the very possibility of sovereignty is ripped away by their mere existence. The significance of the severity of sacrifice becomes evident in a passage from Clinton's "Remarks announcing the initiative": "Finally, if we are to take back the streets of America from the gangs and drug dealers, we must do what has not been done before: We must actually enact a crime bill. [. . .] When it comes to hardened, violent criminals, society has the right to impose the most severe penalties."⁴⁰ Clinton's ability to normatively define differing severities of sacrifice is revealed by considering his assertion that the streets need to be taken

³⁸ Robert Lattimer, "A Tale of Two Crises: America and the American Black: A Perspective," *Competition Forum* 13 (2) (2015): 223-5; Ta-Nehishi Coates, "The Case for Reparations: Two hundred fifty years of slavery, Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of sperate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole." *The Atlantic*, June 2014, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>.

³⁹ Allen, *Strangers*, 27.

⁴⁰ Clinton, "Remarks announcing initiative," paragraph 12.

back and that the society has “a right” to punish criminals with impunity.⁴¹ Clinton’s demand to “take back the streets” highlights a differentiated form of sacrifice because it means that some Americans would have to give up the streets for the betterment of the nation. Retrospectively, Clinton’s claim supports increased policing in largely minority neighborhoods because, in his view, the streets belonged to the law-abiding citizens and they could be taken back from the people that actually lived there. Clinton’s ability to divide through rhetoric signals the relevance of the color-line because it highlights that by defining what the good of the nation is and asserting that some people are not a part of that project, much like he did with Sister Souljah, Clinton is able to imply that some people, those that agree with Clinton, have more claim to the “streets” than others. Clinton’s ability to normatively define the good of the society and to imply that certain individuals within the American public have more claim to the public than others alone would be somewhat worrying, but when those abilities are combined with an ideology underwritten by white normativity that justifies the “right” of the society to punish criminals it becomes that much more menacing.

Clinton’s assertion that it is the “right” of American society to dole out the “most severe penalties” shows how contemporary understandings of the rhetorical public enable unmarked identities to sacrifice marginalized identities for their own gain. Clinton’s admonition moves segments of the American public along a hierarchy of value by implying that some people (law-abiding citizens) should receive a symbolic or material benefit from the punishment of other people (criminals).⁴² Clinton’s dictation of what is owed to his segment of society (white-law-

⁴¹ Nekima Levy-Pounds, “Par for the Course?: Exploring the Impacts of Incarceration and Marginalization on Poor Black Men in the U.S.,” *Journal of Law in Society* 14 (2013): 29-45; Kevin Mcneir, “Are We Afraid of Our Black Youth?,” *The Miami Times*, October 2012 1A, 8A.

⁴² In this sentence I use the phrase “hierarchy of value” to reflect that certain members of the American public are treated as if they have more claim or “humanness.” Alexander Wehilye produces a similar account of “not-quite human” in his work describing racialized assemblages. Alexander Wehilye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke Univeristy Press, 2014), 11.

abiding citizens) reveals a differentiated form of sacrifice because it asserts that it is a right of society to demand that some people give up more (their lives and time). Focusing on Clinton's assertion of a "right" is instructive for rhetorical public theory because it highlights how those possessing the authority of unmarked identities are allowed to determine not just what the society should do, but also what is owed to the society.

Clinton's dictation of what is owed to the American public as a "right" is further illuminated when considered as a rite.⁴³ Clinton's assertion that the American public (really a certain segment thereof) has a "right" to punish criminals reveals that there is a communal element involved in the project of punishing criminals. In some way, Clinton's point seems to be that criminals owe something to the larger American public that law-abiding members of the public should be able to cash in on. Emphasizing the communal and transactional elements of Clinton's statement reveals his assertion of a "right" as instead a rite because it highlights that, by partaking in the punishment of criminals, individuals can be offered acceptance into the larger American public.

Clinton's call for the social-political and at times physical sacrifice of criminals illuminates the capacity of the "rite" of social-political sacrifice to organize and stabilize the contemporary American public. Orlando Patterson highlights the communal aspects of sacrifice when he states, "The sacrificial ritual created not only a compact between the sacrificers and their god but a compact of fellowship among the sacrificers themselves."⁴⁴ Patterson's insight helps to draw a linkage between Clinton's project of communal unification against criminals and the project of human sacrifice. My argument here is not that the American public is always

⁴³ Patterson, *Rituals*, 175-80. Patterson considers the sacrifice of Black people at the turn of the century as a rite of passage for the larger white society. Patterson describes "rites" in this sense as communal actions that are taken to establish one's position within a given community.

⁴⁴ Patterson, *Rituals*, 183.

constituted through the sacrifice of others, but that Clinton in his speech did use sacrifice to unify the American public. Clinton offers his most summoning call for sacrifice when he says of his crime bill, “[I]t’s tough. It is fair. It will put police on the street and criminals in jail. It expands the Federal death penalty to let criminals know that if they are guilty, they will be punished. It lets law-abiding citizens know that we are working to give them the safety they deserve. It is the beginning, just the beginning but a major beginning, of a long-term strategy to make America a more law-abiding, peaceful place.”⁴⁵ Clinton’s statement reveals the unifying nature of sacrifice in the American public through its juxtaposition of “the Federal death penalty” and making the United States better for “law-abiding citizens.” Clinton’s positive evaluation of the bill’s expansion of the federal death penalty is a call for literal physical sacrifice because it implies that in order for the nation to become better some members must literally perish. Clinton’s assertion that the Bill will increase the safety that “law-abiding” citizens “deserve” reveals the danger in authority being vested in unmarked identities. Clinton’s power should be analyzed because in being allowed to determine who the law-abiding citizens are and what the laws are Clinton is given a dangerous amount of control over who lives and who dies which he can (and did) use for his own gain.⁴⁶

Reading Clinton’s project of getting tough on crime in relation to the sociological facts of the day that before Clinton’s initiatives violent crime rates were decreasing, reveals the most frightening part of the implications of undue authority to demand sacrifice.⁴⁷ The most

⁴⁵ Clinton, “Remarks announcing the initiative,” paragraph 6.

⁴⁶ Agamben highlights that state authority over violence produces a hierarchy in which the state is vested with the power to continually create “states of exception” to further legitimize the usage of violence. Giorgio Agamben *Homo sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1-20. Andrew Norris *Politics, Metaphysics, and Death: Essays on Giorgio Agamben’s Homo Sacer* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 1-5.

⁴⁷ Walter Updegrave, “As Grim Crime Scenes Fill Our Newscasts And Nightmares, But the Surprising Truth For Most People Is That . . . you’re Safer Than You Think,” *Money* (June 1994): 114. Richard LaCaup, “Lock ‘Em up! .

frightening revelation brought to bear by analyzing Clinton's authority to produce sacrifice is that IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ANYONE. Even taking into account the astronomical increase in crime rates that came with the advent of crack-cocaine in the 1980's, reports from Clinton's historical moment reflect that violent crime rates were decreasing and that increased sentencing would not help resolve the problem of crime in the communities most harshly effected.⁴⁸ Recognizing that crime rates were decreasing is instructive for analyzing Clinton's speech because it reveals that based on his undue authority Clinton was vested with the power to make up a problem and then resolve that problem by sacrificing the views and lives of marginalized, specifically Black, people. In other words, Bill Clinton was able to ride the wave of a "phantom," a socially/psychologically constructed image that does not match up with reality, of the American public which projected onto some, mostly Black, citizens a seemingly legally neutral cleansing.⁴⁹ Bill Clinton's big sham is instructive for rhetorical theory because it could have happened to any group. Clinton, because of his position as an unmarked identity, and as president at that, was imbued with the power to define what it meant to be a member of the American public and identify those whom did not fit that role. Clinton's authoritative stance was made clear early on in this analysis by focusing on how he was able to define for the American people not only what was best about the Rainbow Coalition, but also who the Rainbow Coalition did and did not honor.

. . . With Outraged Americans Saying Crime Is their No. 1 Concern, Politician are again Talking tough but Are They Talking Sense?," *Time* (February 1994): 50

⁴⁸ Lisa Bastian, "Criminal Victimization 1992: A National crime Victimization Survey Report," *U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Statistics Bulletin*, October 1993. accessed March 30, 2018, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv92.pdf>. Hsieh Ching-Chi, Pugh M.D., "Poverty, Income inequality, and Violent Crime: A Meta-analysis of Recent Aggregate Data Studies," *Criminal Justice Review* 18 (2) (1993): 182-90. Lisa Guenther, "The Productive Failure of Felon Disenfranchisement: Dilts' Punishment and Inclusion," *Political Philosophy* 19 (3) (2016): Book Review.

⁴⁹ Here my use of phantom is meant to be in line with Yancy's understanding of a phantom as a cognitively/ socially constructed image or idea of a person or situation. George Yancy, *Look, A White!: Philosophical Essays on Whiteness* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2012), 17-30.

The dangerousness of Clinton's undue authority over sacrifice was revealed by this analysis because it highlights that undue authority allowed him to demand the social-political and sometimes physical sacrifice of marginalized groups. Clinton was able to demand the literal sacrifice of the lives of criminals by asserting that to make the country safer for "law-abiding citizens" it was necessary to increase the scope of the Federal death penalty. Moreover, the most troubling realization about Clinton's approach is that at the time crime rates were decreasing. In other words, Clinton's demonization of criminals and eventual passage of legislation that would increase the size and stability of the prison industrial complex was not a response to an empirically present problem but instead a rhetorically constructed fictitious one.⁵⁰ The construction of Clinton's problem is at root rhetorical because it is based on the ability to persuade people that criminals, specifically Black criminals, were not valuable to the society and thus should have their lives and views sacrificed for the greater good. Clinton's resources were rhetorical but the implications of his speech were material. It is not that Clinton's speeches were convincing to his immediate audience, but instead that Clinton was able to enact a form of hegemonic authority that could catalyze the excommunication, exclusion, and sacrifice of, specifically Black, minorities in the American public. Contemporary understandings of the rhetorical public justify and create the conditions for Clinton's speeches because on one hand as the president he embodied the top of the hierarchy within the American public and was thus allowed to constitute the values of the American public and on another hand as an arm of the state was largely responding in line with what he perceived the values of the American public to be. Clinton's dialectical relationship with the American public is important to note because it

⁵⁰ For definitions of the Prison industrial complex and a perspective on its longstanding and destructive history see Shana Agid, Michael Bennett, Kate Drabinska, "Introduction: Teaching against the Prison Industrial Complex," *Radical Teacher* 88 (summer) (2010): 3-5. Melissa Ooten, "Tackling the PIC: Success and Challenges in Teaching the Prison-Industrial Complex," *Radical Teacher* 88 (summer) (2010): 32-40.

highlights how each statement by those that inhabit unmarked identities can and often does reflect back on the values of the American public.

Conclusion

I conclude by reflecting on how the concept of consciousness may provide some insight into how to better produce the rhetorical American public. In opposition to Habermas's excitement at the move away from consciousness toward absolute reason, I argue that it is fundamental to recognize the role of consciousness when considering the rhetorical American public. Du Bois' point about consciousness in *Souls of Black Folk* is relevant today because it highlights that there is a lived reality that ought play a role in our understanding of reason. Particularly important is Du Bois' point about the measuring tape of the world. Seeing oneself through the eyes of another denies access to true self-consciousness because it means the standards by which one's actions are measured are never true to oneself but instead determined by white society. Du Bois notes that consciousness exists as a second sight, a kind of reflexivity that allows people to realize that the way things are is not the way they have to be.⁵¹ Some public scholars seem to have grabbed onto the idea of reason as a way of universalizing and bracketing out things that they perceive would otherwise get in the way of conversations in the public sphere.⁵² My critique in this chapter follows Nancy Fraser's argument that "we should be led to entertain serious doubts about a conception of the public sphere that purports to bracket, rather than to eliminate, structural social inequalities."⁵³ The perspectives of those generally

⁵¹ Du Bois, *Souls*, 35-45. Stephen Browne "Du Bois, Double-Consciousness; and the Modern City," (75-92) In *Rhetoric and Community: Studies in Unity and Fragmentation* (Ed.) Michael Hogan (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 78. Melvin Rogers, "The People, Rhetoric, and Affect: On the Political Force of Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*," *American Political Science Review* 106 (1) (2012): 188-95.

⁵² Dewey, *The public*, 1-5; Rorty, *Contingency*, 5

⁵³ Fraser, "rethinking the public sphere," 65.

excluded from the public sphere, such as women and people of color, are the most foundational justification for consciousness because they trouble the presumed universality of reason. It is through listening to the perspectives of those that are unable to access the supposedly universally accessible form of reason that different views of the public are formed.⁵⁴ Consciousness provides the ability to recognize that crime is bad but that criminals are still people. Consciousness emphasizes the humanness in even those that a society wishes to mark as non-human because it forefronts the ability to define oneself for oneself. Defining oneself for oneself helps to recognize that criminals are people because it brings into the conversation the a-prior issues that led to someone committing a crime in the first place. Reason needs consciousness to complicate and then simplify the problems of our world—to create room to say that crime is bad but that the people that commit crimes are not only people but our people.

To support the idea that the universality of reason ought to be challenged as the basis for understanding the contemporary rhetorical public this essay examined two speeches by Bill Clinton. Examining Clinton's speech to the Rainbow Coalition revealed that the presumption of universal reason defined in opposition to consciousness underwrites a hierarchy in which certain unmarked identities take on the role of final arbiter of reason and are thus granted inequitable and undue authority in defining the boundary of the American public. Clinton made it clear that unmarked identities possess the power to exclude unaccommodating perspectives in his Rainbow Coalition speech by excommunicating Sister Souljah from the Rainbow Coalition through his assertion for them (and for the rest of the American public) that Sister Souljah is not what the

⁵⁴ Kevin Deluca, "Practicing Rhetoric Beyond the Dangerous Dream of Deliberative Democracy: Engaging a World of Violence and Public Screens," *Argumentation and Advocacy* (Winter) (2013): 230-3; Robert Asen, "Critical Engagement through Public Sphere Scholarship," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 (1) (2015): 132-40; Robert Asen, "Toward a Normative conception of difference in public deliberation," *Argumentation and Advocacy* (Winter) (1999): 115-20; Karma Chavez, "Beyond inclusion: Rethinking Rhetoric's Historical Narrative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 (1) (2015): 162-70.

Rainbow Coalition honors. After focusing on the Rainbow Coalition speech to establish that contemporary understandings of the rhetorical public bestow upon unmarked identities a dangerous and undue authority this essay moved on to Clinton's "Remarks Announcing the Initiative." Focusing on Clinton's "Remarks" revealed that Clinton was allowed to make up an enemy and then vanquish that enemy. Recognizing that Clinton's enemy was a phantom, in one sense because not all criminals are as morally depraved as Clinton described them, and in another sense because crime rates at the time were going down in some areas, revealed the most frightening and justifying reason for this study: it could have been anyone. I argue that what Clinton did to, mostly Black, criminals at the end of the twentieth century could have happened to anyone because his authority as arbiter of reason allowed him to define what was good for the state and what was not, and as Gramsci prophesized, that power was misused to increase the stability of conservative American forces.⁵⁵ In other words, the contemporary structuring of the American public allows unmarked identities like Clinton to define any other group as the problem and thus demand their sacrifice. The previous revelations provide insight into the values of the American public and the precarious position of Black people within the American public.

Interrogating Clinton's speeches reveals that the values of the American public are at times in line with the suppression rather than empowerment of marginalized perspectives. Sister Souljah's excommunication exemplifies the suppression of dissent in the contemporary American public because it reveals that those privileged to embody unmarked identities are often rewarded for defining what the nation stands for by whom it stands against. It is important to

⁵⁵ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 508. "If every State tends to create and maintain a certain type of civilisation and of citizen (and hence of collective life and of individual relations), and to eliminate certain customs and attitudes and to disseminate others, then the Law will be its instrument for this purpose (together with the school system, and other institutions and activities). It must be developed so that it is suitable for such a purpose—so that it is maximally effective"

interrogate the American public rhetorically because the exigence for each speech comes from the American people themselves.⁵⁶ In other words, as rhetorical scholars have concluded, Clinton was motivated to give speeches that he thought would improve his standing with the American people.⁵⁷ When this is considered in the context of Clinton's production of perspectives that are dangerous for Black Americans it reveals that it was not just Clinton that wanted to sacrifice Black lives, but in some real sense, the nation. The reciprocal relationship between Clinton as president and the American public is worth noting because those that wield the power bestowed upon them by the American public have the authority to demand the sacrifice of any group that they see fit.⁵⁸ What is in some ways more concerning is that it seems that for some reason certain groups, particularly Black people, are often called to be those that sacrifice more than others for the good of the American public.

Based on the previous analysis of the structure of the rhetorical American public, 100 years after Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, it seems that it is still impossible to be Black and American. Analysis of Clinton's speeches reveals that it is impossible to be Black and American because Black people are never allowed to access consciousness and be American. Black people are denied access to true self-consciousness because unmarked identities define what is "best" about them and what they do and do not "honor." Put simply, it is impossible to be Black and

⁵⁶ Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1 (1) (1968): 1-5. Bitzer describes the exigence as the call for or reason that a speaker speaks. In other words, the exigence is the reason for the speech.

⁵⁷ Ellen Gold, "Political Apologia: The Ritual of Self-Defense" *Communication Monographs* 45 (1978): 306-10; Ronald Lee, Shawn Spano, "Technical discourse in Defense of Public Virtue: Ronald Reagan's explanation of the Iran/Contra Affair," *Political Communication* Vol 13 (1996):116; Lisa Villadsen, "Speaking on Behalf of Others: Rhetorical Agency and Epideictic Functions in Official Apologies," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38 (1) (2008): 25-30.

⁵⁸ VanderHaagen describes the agential spiral as a frame for the repetitive yet progressive process in which a series of agents or groups of agents both interpret and act in response to the past. Here I attempt to adapt that same repetitive yet progressive tendency to the American public, to argue that Clinton's acts simultaneously created and were created by the perceived values of the American public. Sara VanderHaagen, "The 'Agential Spiral' Reading Public Memory Through Paul Ricoeur," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 46 (2) (2013): 182-5; Andreea Deciu Ritivoi *Paul Ricoeur: Tradition and Innovation in Rhetorical Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 49-52.

American because unmarked identities (white, male) get to define what it means to be Black and what it means to be American. Clinton exemplifies this issue throughout his speeches by “moving the goal post” on what it means to be an American in such a way that in each occasion Black people are demanded to sacrifice their perspectives and lives.⁵⁹ Chapter three produces the most sustained account of how Clinton does this rhetorically by highlighting how Clinton’s ability to define the actions and perspectives of his audience allowed him to strongly imply that they ought support the Crime Bill. The exclusion of Black people from the American public, both in the political and rhetorical senses, is important to understand because it illuminates at least two ailments for American democracy. First, as the suppression of Black people could just as easily be pushed onto any marginalized group, it reveals a threat to democratic engagement.⁶⁰ Second, and to this author more and most importantly, it screams to Black citizens that our lives and perspectives do not matter.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Christine Harris, “Whiteness as property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106 (8) (1993): 1707-30; Kimberle Crenshaw-Williams, “Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law,” *Harvard Law Review*, 101 (7), (1988): 1331-50. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012), 1-15; Jaya Davis, Jon Sorensen, “Disproportionate Minority Confinement of Juveniles: A National Examination of Black-White Disparity in Placements, 1997-2006,” *Crime & Delinquency* 59 (1) (2013): 115-120; Becky Pettit, *Invisible Men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress* (New York: Russell Sage foundation), 1-20.

⁶⁰ Robert Entman, *Democracy Without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 1-30; Andrew Dilts, *Punishment and inclusion: Race, Membership, and the Limits of American Liberalism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 1-20; Steven Raphael, “Anatomy of ‘The anatomy of Racial inequality,’” *Journal of Economic Literature* 40 (4) (2002): 1202-10.

⁶¹ For accounts that highlight that ignoring the suffering of Black people screams that our lives don’t matter see: Lindon Barret, *Blackness and Value: Seeing Double* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 94-131; Vincent Hutching, Nicholas Valentino, “The Centrality of Race in American Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 398; Robert Entman, “blacks in the news: television, modern racism and cultural change,” *Journ. Q.* 69 (1992): 345-61; Travis Dixon, Daniel Linz, “Overrepresentation and Underrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos as Lawbreakers on Television News,” *Journal of Communication* 50 (2) (2000): 131-40; Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 209-240; 299-334; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White masks.* trans. Richard Philcox.(New York: Grove Press, 2008), 50-70. Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 79-125; Charles Linscott, “All Lives (Don’t) Matter: the Internet Meets Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism,” *Black Camera* 8 (2) (2017): 104; Harvey Young, “The Black Body as Souvenir in American Lynching,” *Theatre Journal* 57 (4) (Black Performance) (2005): 639-45.

Chapter 3: Bill Clinton's Mason Temple Speech: Ideographs and the Color-Line in the 21st Century.

In a November 1, 1967 press release for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Martin Luther King Jr., said, ““We’ve got to find a method that will disrupt our cities if necessary, create the crisis that will force the nation to look at the situation, dramatize it, and yet at the same time not destroy life or property We’ve got to make it known that until our problem is solved, America may have many, many days, but they will be full of trouble. There will be no rest, there will be no tranquility in this country until the nation comes to terms with our problem.””¹ King’s remarks reflect how racism “our problem” continued to plague the Black community and in his view made it impossible for true tranquility to exist within the borders of the United States. Bill Clinton, in his Remarks to the Mason Temple Convocation of God in Christ on November 13, 1993, said, “My fellow Americans, he [King] would say, I fought to stop white people from being so filled with hate that they would wreak violence on black people. I did not fight for the right of black people to murder other black people with reckless abandon.””² Reading King’s quote in juxtaposition with Clinton’s highlights the discontinuity between King’s actual ideas—as expressed in the 1967 press release—and the dominant image of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. promoted in contemporary American society—captured by Clinton’s remarks.³ Moreover, King’s prophecy that the United States will be troubled and have

¹ Quoted in David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1986), 580.

² William J. Clinton, “Remarks to the Convocation of the Church of God in Christ in Memphis,” November 13, 1993. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. Accessed March 30, 2018, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=46115>. Paragraph 18.

³ Michael Eric Dyson, *I May Not Get There With You; The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Free Press, 2000), 5. Dyson describes the situation as a willful cultural amnesia in which the complicated memory of King is actively erased to make way for the institutionally productive sanitized memory.

no tranquility until it comes to terms with “our problem” seems to be coming true in the twenty-first century; amid disproportionate incarceration rates for Black and white Americans and an income gap more cavernous than the 1960’s it seems that King’s “problem” is here to stay.

When thinking through what King could have meant by “our problem” it seems reasonable to conclude it is not all too different from what W.E.B. Du Bois referred to in *The Souls of Black Folk* as the color-line. Du Bois describes the color-line as a set of expectations that demarcates the difference between Black and white people in the United States. Du Bois called the color-line “the problem of the Twentieth century.”⁴ Building on Du Bois, in my view, the color-line should be understood as a meandering set of social standards that clearly demarcate the difference between white and Black people in America. I refer to the color-line as meandering because it emphasizes an understanding of the color-line that highlights the ambivalent and insidious nature in which the color-line produces a form of oppression that demarcates roles for both Black and white Americans at the same time that it stabilizes the violence experienced by Black Americans. The ambivalent nature of the color-line makes it especially useful for analyzing Clinton’s use of KING to promote discontinuity in the name of unity because it highlights that Black people are expected to perform for Clinton even if those performances look like supporting a piece of legislation that would assist in the incarceration of millions of Black people. Focusing on the complexity of the oppression produced by the color-line is productive because it highlights how even liberal rhetorical acts can be stabilizing for the contemporary American racial hierarchy.

⁴ W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1903] 2007), 31. Du Bois describes the color-line as a metaphorical line that represents the continual social inequality between Black and White people in the United States.

Reading Du Bois' and King's points in concert reveals that King's "problem" and Du Bois' "problem" seem to be reflections of a trans-historical hierarchy in which Black Americans are exploited for the betterment or comfort of white Americans.⁵ This chapter demonstrates how Bill Clinton participated in and sustained the project of Black exploitation in his speech at Mason Temple by rhetorically weaponizing the memory of Dr. King to help achieve his goal of passing H.R. 3355, the Violent Crime and Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (the Crime Bill). Focusing on Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech reveals how using KING and <Freedom> as ideographs allowed Clinton to instantiate the color-line and conceal his own rhetorical performance. In using these ideographs, Clinton asks the Black community to support a piece of legislation that reports of the time suspected would exacerbate disproportionate incarceration rates while producing a speech that was heralded at the time as "memorable" and "remarkable for its passion."⁶ As my work on <Freedom> will follow a more conventional format for an ideographic study I have adopted the <> format. In the case of Martin Luther King Jr. as an ideograph, I have taken the ideographic version of King as KING and references to the person Martin Luther King Jr. as King. My deviation from the <> notation is an attempt to align more with the "false consciousness" component that McGee highlights in the seminal 1980 essay on ideographs. Scholars have used <> to demarcate a transition away from false consciousness and towards more emphasis on ideographs as an outgrowth of the discourse within society not an

⁵ Charles Linscott, "All Lives (Don't) Matter: the Internet Meets Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism," *Black Camera* 8 (2) (2017): 104. Linscott adapts the language of "trans-historical" to capture that the problem of racial hierarchy is one that persists in a manner that is largely unabated by time. Anthony Farley, "Perfecting Slavery," *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal* 36 (2005): 225-6.

⁶ My use of ideographs in this sentence is indebted to the work of Michael McGee, "The "ideograph": A link between rhetoric and ideology. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980):1-16. Further, a reading of the history of ideographs seems to highlight that the <> notation was used to set off that the ideographs were not simply words but more than that. See John Lucaites *Flexibility and consistency in eighteenth century Anglo-Whiggism: A case study of the rhetorical dimensions of legitimacy*. (Diss, University of Iowa, 1984). 48 note 71.

organizing principle of that discourse.⁷ Considering how Clinton's speech reproduces the color-line provides insight into how seemingly liberal rhetorical acts can be used as a basis for reproducing conservative goals like building support for the Crime Bill.⁸ Further, analysis of Clinton's speech reveals that in order to build that support, Clinton needed to willfully forget, and in some ways actively erase, King's memory to obfuscate his own performance. To develop these arguments, this chapter will proceed as follows. First, I provide context for Clinton's Mason Temple speech by focusing on how Clinton's previous engagements with citizens enabled him to employ the benevolent yet demanding tone of the Mason Temple speech. Second, I offer a brief synopsis of the Mason Temple speech. Third, I perform an ideographic rhetorical analysis of Clinton's Mason Temple speech by focusing on the ideographs <Freedom> and KING. Finally, this chapter concludes by reflecting on how even liberal rhetorical acts can reproduce the color-line and what Clinton's ability to manipulate King's memory for the maintenance of institutional control reveals about the precarious position of Black Americans in the twenty-first century.

Examining Clinton's early political career demonstrates that his benevolent yet demanding tone in the Mason Temple speech grew out of Clinton's experience asking constituents for resources.⁹ Analysis of Clinton's political career reveals a disregard for social

⁷ Celeste Condit, "Democracy and civil rights: The universalizing influence of public argumentation," *Communication Monographs* 54 (1) (1987): 3; John Lucaites, Celeste Condit, "Reconstructing <equality>: Culturetypal and counter-cultural Rhetorics in the martyred black vision," *Communication Monographs* 57 (1) (1990):7-10.

⁸ For contemporaneous accounts that highlighted the possibility that the crime bill could increase incarceration for Black Americans see Richter, Paul, "Clinton Hails Three Strikes' Sentence: Crime: He says federal life term proves worth of the bipartisan-backed crime bill. He urges similar support to adopt his anti-terrorism legislation. *LA Times*, August 20, 1995, accessed May 27, 2017; David Savage, Paul Richter, "Clinton to Sign Bill Preserving stiff Penalties for Crack: Drugs: It would block a move to treat powdered cocaine violations equally. Opponents see a bias, since most of those facing the tougher terms are black." *LA Time*, October 27, 1995, accessed May 27, 2017. http://articles.latimes.com/1995-10-27/news/mn-61778_1_crack-cocaine.

⁹ This sentence aims to convey that William Jefferson Clinton was born William Jefferson Blythe. For reference to Clinton's last name as Blythe see Michael Takiff, *A Complicated Man: The Life of Bill Clinton as Told by Those Who Know Him* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 5-15.; Jerrold Post, *The Psychological Assessment of*

circumstances, such as impoverishment and racialized positionality, would allow him to ask for his audience's support in the Mason Temple speech. Clinton's political career officially began when, on February 24, 1974, for the first time, Clinton announced that he would be running for public office. In recounting Clinton's actions during the fund-raising process for his first congressional race, campaign staff member Ann Henry remarked, "He never set about trying to make [money]—I mean, it was just policy and enacting it and raising campaign funding."¹⁰

Clinton's tone in the Mason Temple speech is foreshadowed by Clinton's fundraising for his first campaign. As another Clinton staffer recalled, "He can raise money like nobody's business. He could go into poverty-stricken areas of Arkansas and come back with more campaign checks than anybody [. . .] He would literally go door to door, coffeeshop to coffeeshop."¹¹ These examples illustrate Clinton's tenacity in asking people for money, regardless of the hardship that would be caused by their giving money.

Clinton's fundraising experiences provided him with the rhetorical tools that he used to demand Black people's support for the Crime Bill. In the Mason Temple speech, Clinton asks his audience for their full support and specifies that the support should come in the form of honoring "the work of Martin Luther King" and "the meaning of our church" by supporting a piece of legislation that reports of the time predicted would have negative consequences for the Black community. Clinton's manipulation of King's memory creates an ethos that functions as a rhetorical resource that allowed Clinton to effectively deliver a commemorative speech that also has a clear deliberative goal.¹² Clinton's staffer recalled that Clinton could "go into poverty-

Political Leaders: with Profiles of Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 278-90.

¹⁰ Hamilton, *Great expectations*, 284.

¹¹ Hamilton, *Great expectations*, 284.

¹² Previous rhetorical scholarship points out that a fundamental component of effective commemorative speaking is the ethos or standing of the speaker. Celeste Condit, "The functions of Epideictic: The Boston Massacre Orations as Exemplar," *Communication Quarterly* 33 (4) (1985): 284-90. Doi: 10.1080/01463378509369608; Christopher

stricken areas” and come back with more “checks” than anybody. Taken at face value the staffer’s comments would seem like a wonderful compliment especially for a career politician. Interpreted differently, and read in the context of the Mason Temple speech, the staffer’s point highlights that Clinton had an ability to get or take the most from those with the least. Clinton’s fundraising in “poverty-stricken” Arkansas demonstrates how he could have applied the same benevolent tenacity to the project of asking the Black community to support a piece of legislation that would hurt the Black community.

A brief synopsis of the Mason Temple speech reveals how Bill Clinton utilized KING and <Freedom> as ideographs to persuade his mostly Black audience that they should be in support of the Crime Bill. The Mason Temple speech began just before noon on November 13, 1993. Recordings of the speech indicate that the speech was roughly thirty minutes in length, for ten minutes or roughly one-third of the speech Clinton appropriated the name of King to make his point. Clinton delivered his speech to a mostly Black audience of nearly 5,000 ministers. Clinton began his speech by thanking the members of the church administration for their hospitality. Clinton then expressed his feelings about being with the assembly, saying, “Last year I was elected President of this great country. I never dreamed that I would ever have a chance to come to this hallowed place where Martin Luther King gave his last sermon.”¹³ Clinton’s emphasis on the location and its relationship to King highlights that KING plays an important role because the speech is given where King last spoke.¹⁴

Kelley, Bryan Marshall, Deanna Watts, “Assessing the Rhetorical Side of Presidential Signing Statements,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 43 (2) (2013): 277-80; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Kathleen Jamieson, *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in words* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1-15. Robert Levin, *Bill Clinton: The Inside Story* (New York: S.P.I. Books, 1992), 11; R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., *Boy Clinton The Political Biography* (Washington D.C.: Regenery Publishing Inc, 1996), 80-90.

¹³ William J. Clinton, “Convocation,” Paragraph 6.

¹⁴ For accounts of location playing a role in the effectiveness of presidential addresses see Vanessa Beasley, “Speaking at Selma Presidential Commemoration and Bill Clinton’s Problem of Invention” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 44 (2) (2014). 270-74.; Allison Prash in her analysis of Reagan’s D-Day anniversary address notes that

After drawing attention to his location, Clinton attempted to create a connection between himself and his audience by describing how much he had already done for people like them. Specifically, Clinton discussed his efforts to bring African Americans into his administration, saying, “Thirteen percent of all my Presidential appointments are African-Americans, and there are five African-Americans in the Cabinet of the United States, 2 ½ times as many as have ever served in the history of this great land.”¹⁵ By calling upon the statistics of his presidential appointments and comparing them to previous moments in history, Clinton framed his presidency as one in which racial progress is happening. Clinton moves on from establishing his narrative of progress to describing what he thinks stands in the way of progress toward a successful future.

Clinton transitioned from positive descriptions of the present and future to describing crime and violence as a community-wide roadblock that he asserts has the potential to derail the progress that has been achieved in the last thirty years. Clinton introduced the problem by stating, “What I really want to say to you today, my fellow Americans, is [. . .] I tell you, unless we do something about crime and violence and drugs that is ravaging the community, we will not be able to repair this country.”¹⁶ Clinton followed up his claim about the relationship between community and violence by appropriating the name of Dr. King to support his claims.¹⁷

Throughout the Mason Temple speech, Bill Clinton invoked King’s name six times to achieve his own goal of gaining support for the crime bill. Clinton begins to appropriate King by

highlighting the scene can be an effective mechanism for increasing the ethos and efficacy of presidential addresses. Allison Prasch, “Reagan at Pointe Du Hoc: Deictic Epideictic and the Persuasive Power of ‘Bringing Before the Eyes,’” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 18 (2) (2015): 247-50.

¹⁵ Clinton, “Convocation,” paragraph 7.

¹⁶ Clinton, “Convocation,” paragraph 29.

¹⁷ Clinton, “Remarks to the Convocation,” paragraph 18-19; Paul Wright, “Federal Crime Bill Passes,” *Prison Legal news*, December 15, 1994. Accessed May 27, 2017. <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/1994/dec/15/federal-crime-bill-passes/>

stating “if he [King] were to reappear by my side today and give us a report card on the last 25 years, what would he say? You did a good job, he would say, voting and electing people who formerly were not electable because of the color their skin.”¹⁸ Clinton does not only appropriate King’s opinion to validate his positive accounts of the current day but also employs King’s opinion as a mechanism to confirm the problems that he believes are facing the country. Clinton states,

he [King] would say, I did not live and die to see the American family destroyed. [. . .] I fought for people to have the right to work but not have to have whole communities and people abandoned. This is not what I lived and died for. My fellow Americans, he would say, I fought to stop white people from being so filled with hate that they would wreak violence on black people. I did not fight for the right of black people to murder other black people with reckless abandon.¹⁹

Here Clinton appropriates the memory of Dr. King to implicitly criticize his audience for their complicity with gun violence in their communities.²⁰ Clinton then reproduces the voice of King to provide foundation for his closing remarks. During his closing remarks, Clinton appropriates the ideas of King to further emphasize that the audience should support the crime bill. Clinton states,

How would we explain it to Martin Luther King [...] How could we explain that we gave people the freedom to succeed, and we created conditions in which millions abuse that freedom to destroy the things that make life worth living and life itself?... And so I say to you today, my fellow Americans, you gave me this job, and we’re making progress on the things you hired me to do. But unless we deal with the ravages of crime and drugs and violence...none of the things we seek to do will ever take us where we need to go.²¹

¹⁸ Clinton, Convocation, paragraph 17.

¹⁹ Clinton, Convocation, paragraph 18.

²⁰ Denise Bostdorff, Steven Goldzwing, “History, Collective Memory, and the Appropriation of Martin Luther King, Jr.: Reagan’s Rhetorical legacy,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35 (4) (2005): 661.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552723>

²¹ Clinton, “Remarks to the Convocation,” paragraph 37-38.

Clinton invokes the idea of explaining to Dr. King the failures of the current society to highlight that there is a problem and it must be changed. Clinton summons the memory of Dr. King one more time to conclude his speech. Clinton states, “So in this pulpit, on this day, let me ask all of you in your heart to say: We will honor the life and the work of Martin Luther King.... We will turn this around. We will give these children a future ... We will rebuild the families and the neighborhoods and the communities.”²²

KING and <Freedom>

In the Mason Temple speech, Clinton uses the ideographs of KING and <Freedom>, respectively, to obfuscate his own performance and to define what actions audience members should take. Examining his strategies of using these ideographs illuminates how in order to build support for the Crime Bill Clinton reproduced the “problem” of the color-line. Michael Calvin McGee outlines that ideographs are social constructs that have become imbued with certain ideological meaning larger than their definition and capable of providing meaning for other words.²³ McGee concretized that ideographs could be used to establish meaning when he outlined that ideographs are the building blocks of society, and thus contain a certain ideological commitment.²⁴ Although it seems Clinton evoked King’s name as an ideograph, there is one tenet of ideographs that King meets only loosely. Throughout his piece, McGee considers ideographs as abstract pieces of language which have been imbued with a stable meaning and thus utilized to underwrite other public opinions. However, King is not a piece of abstract language but instead a person who lived. Recognizing that King’s memory could be manipulated to serve as an

²² Clinton, “Remarks to the Convocation,” paragraph 39.

²³ McGee, ideograph, 16.

²⁴ McGee, Ideograph, 6-7. It is worth noting that in this context when McGee uses the term “pregnant” he means to convey “full” or imbued with.

ideograph highlights that authority over the definition and meaning of Black people has the capacity to produce violence onto them post-mortem because even their memory can be revived and turned against what they lived for. In other words, the inhumanity of violence and discrimination that Black people face makes their memory susceptible to being used as nothing more than a building block for the ideology of white normativity. As the “building blocks of ideology,” ideographs provide an instructive perspective on Clinton’s speech because Clinton uses <Freedom> and KING to construct his larger argument that Black people should support the Crime Bill. Moreover, Clinton’s rhetoric seems to reflect the controlling function of ideographs; McGee describes how ideographs can be used for controlling populations when he states “the end product of the state’s insistence on some degree of conformity in behavior and belief, I suggest, is a rhetoric of control, a system of persuasion presumed to be effective on the whole community.”²⁵ McGee’s point highlights the rhetoric in the Mason Temple speech because Clinton uses <Freedom> to enact a rhetoric of control which presumes “to be effective on the whole community” although reports of the time noted that the end would not be “effective” for the Black community.

McGee’s argument that ideographs can exercise a rhetoric of control has given rise to contemporary rhetorical scholarship that interrogates how ideographs have been used to control subordinate populations.²⁶ Condit argues that ideographic media representations of abortion rhetoric work to discipline individual citizens’ perceptions on the legitimacy of abortions.²⁷ Dana Cloud emphasizes the political salience of ideographs in her analysis of how <family values>

²⁵ McGee, ideograph, 6.

²⁶ Catherine Langford, “On Making <Person>S: ideographs of Legal <Person>Hood,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 52 (2015): 126; Fernando Delgado “The Rhetoric of Fidel Castro: Ideographs in the Service of Revolutionaries,” *Howard Journal of Communication* 10 (1) (1999):2; Fernando Delgado, “Chicano Movement rhetoric: An ideographic interpretation,” *Communication Quarterly* 43 (4) (1995): 446.

²⁷ Celeste Condit, *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric: Communicating Social Change*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

functioned in the 1992 presidential debates to scapegoat Black men and poor Americans for the social ills of the United States.²⁸ Cloud's analysis is foundational to this project because it provides a nuanced historical account of how Clinton used ideographs throughout his political career. My interjection differs from Cloud's, however, because whereas Cloud was concerned with how ideographs were used to scapegoat Black men, this analysis works to understand how Clinton used ideographs to create roles for Black people that maintained the color-line. Another instructive example of ideographic research is Potter's consideration of how the ideograph <Illegal(s)> was utilized by United States anti-immigration organizations to demonize undocumented immigrants. Potter highlights that the vulnerable position of being undocumented makes certain immigrants uniquely open to the agency denying manipulations of their image. Potter's analysis illuminates that, because ideographs are the "building blocks of ideology" and dominant groups possess an inequitable amount of control over of those "blocks," marginalized groups like the Black Americans addressed in the Mason Temple speech are at a uniquely high risk of being sacrificed for the smooth reproduction of American hierarchy.²⁹

Examination of Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech reveals that his use of <Freedom> was productive for taking freedom from Black Americans. In the Mason Temple speech, Clinton used <Freedom> to establish what actions his audience members should take. In his history of the concept of freedom in the Western world, sociologist Orlando Patterson argues that "freedom was generated from the experience of slavery."³⁰ Patterson's claim reminds us that freedom for some can come at the expense of others. Patterson's quote reflects the telos of this project's

²⁸ Dana Cloud, "The rhetoric of <family values>: Scapegoating, utopia, and the privatization of social responsibility," *Western Journal of Communication* 62 (4) (1999): 405-10.

²⁹ McGee, Ideographs, 6. Jennifer Potter, "Brown Skinned Outlaws: An Ideographic Analysis of 'Illegal(s)'," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 7 (2) (2014): 228-45.

³⁰ Orlando Patterson, *Freedom Volume 1: Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* (USA: Basic Books, 1991), xiii.

engagement with <Freedom> because Bill Clinton utilized <Freedom> to establish a set of norms for American society that reproduce the color-line.³¹ Further, because the tenets that make freedom legible within the American consciousness were generated from the lack of freedom experienced by Black people during slavery, those caught in the after-life of enslavement may be more susceptible to rhetorical ploys that employ <Freedom>. The lack of freedom within freedom manifests itself materially when considering the vote, although the Voting Rights Act supposedly guaranteed that Black people would be able to participate in electing officials the contemporary moment reveals that Black people are disproportionately excluded from electing officials.³² <Freedom> is a rhetorically productive ideograph with which to analyze Clinton's speech because it highlights that Black people's different relationship to <Freedom> played a role in the effectiveness of Clinton's speech.³³

Black people, as a consequence of living in the after-life of slavery, have a different relationship to <Freedom> than their white counterparts.³⁴ <Freedom> concurrently gestures

³¹ Michelle Alexander, "The War on Drugs and the New Jim Crow," *Race, Poverty & the Environment* 17 (1) (2010): 75-77. Becky Pettit, *Invisible men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress* (New York: Russell Sage foundation), 1-20. Jaya Davis, Jon Sorensen, "Disproportionate Minority Confinement of Juveniles: A National Examination of Black-White Disparity in Placements, 1997-2006," *Crime & Delinquency* 59 (1) (2013): 115-120. Michelle Alexander, *The new Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012), 1-15.

³² Christine Harris, "Whiteness as property," *Harvard Law Review* 106 (8) (1993): 1707-30; Kimberle Crenshaw-Williams, "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law," *Harvard law Review*, 101 (7), (1988): 1331-50.

³³ Multiple rhetorical scholars have recounted how Freedom is used by members of the American establishment to herd and manipulate the American public. For accounts of how Freedom has been more an less effective with certain audiences see; Kevin Coe provides the most comprehensive engagement with Presidential uses of Freedom I have encountered. Kevin Coe, "The Language of Freedom in the American Presidency, 1933-2006," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 37 (3) (2007): 375-9. Kelly, through an analysis of the American Indian youth movement's response to President Johnson's War on Poverty, highlights how subordinate populations can produce and maintain different definitions of freedom as a catalyst for larger political movements. Casey Kelly, "'We Are Not Free': The Meaning of <Freedom> in American Indian Resistance to President Johnson's War on Poverty," *Communication Quarterly* 62 (4) (2014): 455-6. Klumpp emphasizes that freedom plays a constitutive function in creating publics. Further, Klumpp notes that ones ability to enact freedom is directly defined by ones position within any given publics social hierarchy. James Klumpp, "Freedom and Responsibility In Constructing Public Life: Toward a Revised Ethic of Discourse," *Argumentation* 11 (1997): 113-5.

³⁴ Henry Louis Gates, *Call and Response Key Debates in African American Studies* eds. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Jennifer Burton (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 1-15. Marcus Garvey, "Address to the Second UNIA

towards past tribulations (a moment in time in which there is a lack of freedom) while promoting a very narrow description of what is required to create freedom in the future. <Freedom> may have been a more useful ideograph for Clinton than other ideographs like <equality> because it provides a utopian view of the future at the same time that it places an onus, or responsibility, on those in the present to work to achieve that future.³⁵ <Freedom> implies a utopian future by asserting that there can be a future in which the decisions people make are not made by another but instead are their own. Throughout the Mason Temple speech, Clinton rhetorically uses this utopia to underwrite his claims that Black people should support the Crime Bill. The connection between <Freedom> and personal responsibility illuminates why Clinton may have chosen to use <Freedom> as opposed to <equality> because it highlights that <Freedom> allows those that invoke the ideograph to imply the actions that are required to maintain that freedom. In other words, <equality> depends on inherent natural rights, whereas <Freedom> must be enacted. Clinton in the Mason Temple speech makes use of the pliability of <Freedom> by using it as a screen to define supporting the Crime Bill as an action that should be taken.

In his speech at Mason Temple, Bill Clinton used <Freedom> thirteen times, nine of which in conjunction with KING, as a rhetorical tool to dictate that <Freedom> meant supporting the Crime Bill. Clinton's speech organization highlights that Clinton always keeps KING around to certify his assessment of what actions should be taken. There are two instances in the Mason

Convention (1921),” In *Call and Response Key Debates in African American Studies* eds. Henry, L. Gates, and Jennifer, Burton (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2011), 280-282. Garvey and Gates both argue that Black Americans because of their position as Black people have a unique longing for freedom. Specifically, Garvey notes that the freedom of Black Americans is inherently tied to the collective struggle for social and political equality. My use of “After-life of slavery” is indebted to the work of Saidiya Hartman. Hartman argues that slavery did not end with the emancipation proclamation and instead the progeny of the enslaved continue to face material hardships based on their relationship to the process of enslavement. Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 79-125.

³⁵ For an account of the ideographic usage of equality see Celeste Condit, John Lucaites, *Crafting equality: America's Anglo-African word* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 217-25.

Temple speech which are especially illuminating for understanding how Clinton used <Freedom> to determine his audience's actions. Clinton utilized <Freedom> in the middle of his Mason Temple speech to implicitly shame the Black community for rampant gun violence and to justify supporting the increased policing offered by the Crime Bill. Clinton states, "I fought for freedom, he [King] would say, but not for the freedom of people to kill each other with reckless abandon, not for the freedom of children to have children and the fathers of the children to walk away from them and abandon them as if they don't amount to anything."³⁶ Clinton's statement reproduces the fatherless household tropes that at the time had already been roundly criticized. Hortense Spillers offers insight into why Clinton's reproduction of the fatherless household trope is dangerous in her criticism of the Moynihan report when she states, "'the 'Report' maintains, and it is, surprisingly, the fault of the Daughter, or the female line. [. . .] displacing the Name and the Law of the Father to the territory of the Mother and Daughter, [. . .] In other words, in the historic outline of dominance, the respective subject-positions of 'female' and 'male' adhere to no symbolic integrity."³⁷ Spillers offers insight into how such tropes can be utilized to define the position of Black people in America when she notes that such reproductions exclude Black people from the American symbolic. In other words, Clinton's assertions that fathers walked away from children "as if they don't amount to anything" naturalizes their exclusion so that the government could treat them "as if they don't amount to anything."³⁸ Clinton's assertion in the

³⁶ Clinton, Convocation, paragraph 18.

³⁷ Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby Papa's Maybe An American Grammar Book" *Diacritics* 17 (2) (1987): 66

³⁸ Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby," 66. Daniel Moynihan's report on the efficacy of the Black family. Daniel Moynihan, "The Moynihan Report" [The Negro Family, The Case for National Action. Washington D.C. U.S. Department of Labor, 1965]. The larger context of Spillers' statement, though not warranting of production in the text of the essay is worth noting to add to the understanding of her argument. "the 'Report' maintains, and it is, surprisingly, the fault of the Daughter, or the female line. This stunning reversal of the castration thematic, displacing the Name and the Law of the Father to the territory of the Mother and Daughter, becomes an aspect of the African-American female's misnaming. We attempt to undo this misnaming in order to reclaim the relationship between Fathers and Daughters within this social matrix for a quite different structure of cultural fictions. For Daughters and Fathers are here made to manifest the very same rhetorical symptoms of absence and denial, to

voice of King highlights the ideographic function of <Freedom> in the Mason Temple speech because it illuminates that Clinton never defines what <Freedom> is but instead only describes what it is not. By defining <Freedom> by what it is not, in the voice of King, Clinton uses <Freedom> to stabilize the contemporary American racial hierarchy by fabricating two ideas: first, that the only thing going on in the Black community was crime, and second, that the only legitimate response to crime was increased policing. Moreover, investigating Clinton's use of <Freedom> in the previous passage is illuminating because it reveals that Clinton is able to enact the stabilizing function of color-line by defining and denouncing the problems of the Black community. Clinton rearticulates the color-line through his insistence that it is not the "freedom of children to have children" and "fathers of the children to walk away" because Clinton's reproduction of the young parent and fatherless child narrative obscures the complexity of Black familial relationships at the same time that it serves as a justification, even if it is not a compelling one to his direct audience, for increased surveillance and control over the Black community. Clinton's rearticulation of the color-line only exacerbates "the problem" because, simultaneously, he is able to draw on a stereotypical depiction of the Black community in the form of his references to "children" having "children" and "fathers" walking "away" at the same time that he uses that description as a justification for the immediate passage of the Crime Bill. Throughout Clinton's above quote it seems that, at least tangentially, his rhetorical effectiveness is dependent upon the audience's admiration for King.

Bill Clinton used <Freedom> in conjunction with KING to define <Freedom>, use KING as a building block of ideology, and assert that Black people already had <Freedom>.³⁹ In an

embody the double and contrastive agencies of a prescribed internecine degradation, 'Sapphire' enacts her 'Old Man' in drag just as her 'old Man' becomes 'Sapphire' in outrageous caricature. In other words, in the historic outline of dominance, the respective subject-positions of 'female' and 'male' adhere to no symbolic integrity." (66).

³⁹ Clinton, Convocation, paragraph 16.

instance of this second strategy, Clinton states, “The freedom to do that kind of thing is not what Martin Luther King lived and died for, not what people gathered in this hallowed church for the night before he was assassinated in April of 1968. If you had told anybody who was here in that church on that night that we would abuse our freedom in that way, they would have found it hard to believe.” The first intriguing component of Clinton’s quote is his assertion about what freedom “is not.” Clinton’s negative definition of <Freedom> is rhetorically productive because it allows him to imply that to achieve freedom one must take actions to stop the problems of crime and drugs. A second intriguing element of Clinton’s quote is its seamless usage of KING to underwrite Clinton’s assertion of what <Freedom> is not. Clinton’s use of KING to underwrite <Freedom> is especially interesting because it highlights how building blocks of ideology can be mobilized to control the actions of marginalized communities. Clinton’s assertion presumes that what King lived and died for can be defined in opposition to the problems Clinton believes are “ravaging” the Black community. Finally, what is maybe most intriguing about Clinton’s remark is the last line where he states “if you told anybody [. . .] we would abuse our freedom in that way.” Clinton’s statement subtly presupposes that some level of <Freedom> has been achieved. By asserting that people were abusing their <Freedom> Clinton is able to make the argument that firstly those people have <Freedom> and secondly that there is some need of change in action.

Reading each of the previous three points in concert is illuminating because it reveals that Clinton by starting with what “freedom” “is not” and leaning on KING was able to assert that Black Americans were abusing their <Freedom>. Clinton’s assertion enacts both the role-defining and hierarchy-stabilizing functions of the color-line because it brackets out questions of whether Black people have <Freedom> and in its place asserts that to truly enact <Freedom>

Black people should support a piece of legislation that intended to take people's <Freedom> by increasing incarceration. Underwriting all of Clinton's claims about <Freedom> is a nostalgic, institutionally productive memory of Dr. King. King's memory undergirds Clinton's use of <Freedom> because each invocation of <Freedom> relies upon what "he [King] would say" to establish what <Freedom> "is not" to create a situation in which it seemed that honoring the memory of the "church" required that the members of the convocation support the Crime Bill.

King's transformation into an overworked martyr highlights that the contested and desecrated memory of King has been utilized by both liberal and conservative American forces to reproduce institutional stability often at the cost of King's legacy and the Black community.⁴⁰ Michael Dyson considers how King has been used for both liberal and conservative forces when he states "BEFORE HIS BODY WAS EVEN LAID TO REST, Martin Luther King, Jr., had slipped into the long night of myth. He quickly became the most overworked martyr since Abraham Lincoln."⁴¹ As an overworked martyr King was called upon by both liberal and conservative American forces for the service of institutional stability. For example, Reagan and Clinton have called upon the memory of King to underwrite policies in support of repealing affirmative action and increasing policing of the Black community, respectively.⁴² Further, and in some way more disturbingly, the institutionally supported version of King's memory has not only been used to affirm policies but also to delegitimize Black activist movements. As Dyson notes,

Using King in this way harms our nation's racial memory. Indeed, it feeds the national amnesia on which we desperately depend to deny the troubles we face, troubles that grow

⁴⁰ Kevin Bruyneel, "The King's Body: The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial and the Politics of Collective Memory," *History & Memory*, 26 (1) (2014): 75-80.

⁴¹ Michael Dyson, *April 4, 1968: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Death and How it Changed America* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 145. Emphasis in original.

⁴² Bostdorff and Goldzwig, Reagan's rhetorical Legacy, 661-70. Livia Gershon, Ronald Reagan and the Rewriting of Martin Luther King's Legacy, *J-Stor Daily* January 18, 2016. Accessed April 2, 2018, <https://daily.jstor.org/ronald-reagan-martin-luther-king/>.

from our unwillingness to tell the truth about where we have come from and where we are headed. If we can employ King's words to whitewash our blood-stained racial history—use him to make it seem that racial progress though painful, was natural, even unavoidable—then we can defeat efforts to extend King's work. We can even make his authentic heirs appear alien to King's moral vision. This is the perverse genius of making King the patron saint of the movement to destroy affirmative action. In these circles, King is portrayed as a color-blind loyalist at all costs. Perhaps the most tragic price paid for viewing King in this manner is that racial justice is trumped under the baleful banner of "true equality."⁴³

Dyson's point highlights that those interested in maintaining the American racial hierarchy exploit King's significance as a Black civil rights leader in order to define what the Black community should do. Those interested in maintaining the status quo seem to lean on the moral authority provided by King to justify political objectives no matter how terribly out of context or disconnected from King's legacy. The legacy of Dr. King functions as an ideograph in Clinton's Mason Temple speech insofar as it underwrites an ideological commitment toward white normativity through the short-term enactment of increased policing.⁴⁴ Clinton deploys KING as a building block through which he can justify his conclusions and obscure his own performance. Clinton is able to hide, and avoid being accountable for, his own criticisms of the Black community by placing them under the veil of what KING would say.

Clinton used KING in the Mason Temple speech to obfuscate his own performance and create a nostalgically constituted memory of King that would underwrite his argument that the audience members' understanding of <Freedom> should lead them to support the Crime Bill.⁴⁵ Focusing on how Clinton used KING to create a nostalgic memory of King is instructive because

⁴³ Dyson, *May not get there with you*, 3.

⁴⁴ George Yancy, "Whiteness and the Return of the Black Body," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 19 (4) (2005): 217. Yancy explains white normativity as the phenomena of social standards being based first and always around white view-points.

⁴⁵ My use of nostalgia in this sentence is indebted to the work of Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles. Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles outline that a rhetoric of nostalgia creates a self-serving recollection of the past toward the end of achieving future gains. Shawn Parry-Giles, Trevor Parry Giles, "Collective Memory, Political Nostalgia, and the Rhetorical Presidency: Bill Clinton's Commemoration of the March on Washington, August 28, 1998." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 86 (4) (2000): 419

it reveals that building blocks of ideology can be used as shields to obfuscate a rhetor's performance. Clinton obfuscated his own performance by using KING early in his speech when he stated, "I never dreamed that I would ever have a chance to come to this hallowed place where Martin Luther King gave his last sermon, I ask you to think today about the purpose for which I ran."⁴⁶ By highlighting the location as the place of King's last sermon, Clinton makes it seem like the purpose of his speech is in the direction of the "purpose" for which King spoke so many years ago. By using KING, Clinton conceals the real purpose (building support for the Crime Bill) and instead makes it seem as if the purpose of the speech is to commemorate King. Clinton's disguising of his real "purpose" through his use of KING highlights how he obfuscated his own performance because by making it seem like the "purpose" of the Mason Temple speech was the same as the purpose of King's last sermon Clinton disappears himself under the guise that whatever he says is in line with what KING would have wanted.

In a more explicit example of this disappearing act, Clinton crafted a nostalgic version of KING to define <Freedom> in a way that required the audience to support the Crime Bill. Clinton creates a nostalgic version of King when he says, "he [King] would say [. . .] I fought for freedom, he would say, but not for the freedom of people to kill each other [. . .] not for the freedom of children to have children [. . .] I fought for people to have the right to work but not to have whole communities and people abandoned. This is not what I lived and died for."⁴⁷ Clinton's animation of King which turns him into KING is nostalgic because it plays upon certain parts of King's memory at the cost of others.⁴⁸ Clinton's nostalgic version of KING plays

⁴⁶ Clinton, Convocation, paragraph 3.

⁴⁷ Clinton, Convocation, paragraph 18.

⁴⁸ Stacy Lyn Day, "The Rhetoric of Nostalgia: Reconstruction of Landscape, Community, and Race in the United States South" (Ph.D Diss, University of Arizona, 2009), 96-132; Veronica Della Dora, "The rhetoric of nostalgia: postcolonial Alexandria between uncanny memories and global geographies" *Cultural Geographies* 13 (2006): 207-38.

upon an affective investment in the hegemonic/nostalgic/dominant version of King at the cost of giving appropriate credit to King's less popular views. While it is not wholly off base to say that Martin Luther King would not be a fan of people killing other people unnecessarily or children growing up without fathers, Clinton's reproduction makes it seem as if those are the only things with which KING would be concerned. In making it seem like King would only be interested in crime and violence in the Black community, Clinton practices what Svetlana Boym might refer to as forgetting.⁴⁹ Forgetting is an important concept for analyzing Clinton's rhetoric because it captures that Clinton purposefully erased portions of King's memory in order to gain support for the Crime Bill. The force with which Clinton states, "This is not what I [King] lived and died for" is a moment of cultural amnesia or willful forgetting because it actively erases that, on some level, it is what King died for -- for people, Black people especially, to be able to live their lives the way they wished.⁵⁰ Clinton's ability to actively erase portions of King's memory connects this chapter to chapter two because Clinton relied upon the authority bestowed upon him by the American public to erase or sacrifice portions of King's memory. Moreover, Clinton's manipulation of King's memory to manufacture a KING that would be in support of the Crime Bill produced a constitutive effect that would allow Clinton to obfuscate his performance and define <Freedom>.⁵¹

⁴⁹ For accounts of how those in positions of authority can produce institutional narratives which actively incorporate and erase portions of empirical history see: Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 19-33.; Houston Baker, *Critical Memory: Public spheres, African American Writing, and Black Fathers and Sons in America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 1-20.; Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 5-9.

⁵⁰ Juliet Rogers, "Nostalgia for a Reconciled Future," *Griffith Law Review* 20 (2) (2011): 255-65. DOI: 10.1080/10383441.2011.10854698; August Durham, "U, (New) Black (?) Maybe: Nostalgia and Amnesia in *Dope*," *Black Camera* 8 (2) (2017): 166-171.

⁵¹ In this sentence I use constitutive to highlight that Clinton created a version of King that he wanted and needed the audience to accept as King. Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the 'Peuple Quebecois'" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 133-150. Accessed May 3, 2017. doi: 10.180/00335638709383799., 144-50.

Clinton was able to performatively disappear by creating a nostalgic version of King and then using that constituted image to define <Freedom> as a way of implying that to receive and maintain <Freedom> members of the audience should support the Crime Bill. Clinton states

We need this crime bill now. We ought to give it to the American people for Christmas. [. . .] How would we explain to him [King] all these kids getting killed and killing each other? [. . .] How could we explain that we gave people the freedom to succeed, and we created conditions in which millions abuse that freedom [. . .] But unless we deal with the ravages of crime and drugs and violence [. . .] none of the other things we seek to do will ever take us where we need to go. So in this pulpit, on this day, let me ask all of you in your heart to say: We will honor the life and work of Martin Luther King. We will honor the meaning of our church.⁵²

Clinton uses his constituted KING as a shield to guard his criticisms of the Black community and enact the stabilizing function of the color-line. Clinton disappears because by posing the question of “How would we explain to him [King]” Clinton creates the perception that it is not his denunciation of the audience that should be motivating, but instead that current conditions would be a disappointment to KING. By placing his statements in relationship to explaining them to KING, Clinton disappears because it is no longer his own criticism that the audience should be worried about but instead the criticism of their great leader King. Clinton’s performative shielding enacts the stabilizing function of the color-line because Clinton uses KING to make the case that King would only be concerned with the problems of the Black community and not at all interested in racially discriminatory policies, like three-strikes laws and minimum sentences for non-violent offenders (both provisions either instituted or bolstered by the Crime Bill). Clinton’s active forgetting allowed him to use KING as a constructed rhetorical image to organize and mobilize his audience in support of the Crime Bill.⁵³

⁵² Clinton, Convocation, paragraphs 33-37.

⁵³ Ideographic communication research has focused on how images or new media can be used as ideographs or convey particular ideological commitments. In this instance, King is somewhat different because it is not a literal picture of King but instead the meaning of King’s legacy or a mental image that is the motivating text. Nathaniel Cordova, “In his image and likeness: The Puerto Rican Jibaro as political icon,” *Centro Journal* 17 (2) (2005): 171-

Clinton's enactment of the expectation-defining capacity of the color-line highlights his mobilization and organization of his audience through the use of KING. Clinton used KING to define <Freedom> and build support for the Crime Bill. Clinton uses KING to define <Freedom> by stating "How would we explain to him [King]" and then following up that statement with the idea that people had been given <Freedom> and were abusing their <Freedom>. Clinton's definition of <Freedom> hinges on his constituted image of KING because it is in thinking about how to explain to KING the current situation that members of the audience, seemingly, were supposed to regard their current actions as the wrong kind of <Freedom>. Clinton's denouncement of the Black community under the authority of KING reveals itself as rhetorically productive towards his overarching goal of building support for the Crime Bill when he enumerates the intent of his speech. Clinton highlights what seems to be his intent by stating, "We need this Crime Bill [. . .] Unless we deal with the ravages of crime [. . .] none of the things we seek to do will ever take us where we need to go." Clinton's intent seems to be highlighted in this section because of his use of "unless." By using "unless" to demarcate the change that is most needed, Clinton seems to highlight that the most important thing is not explaining to King or enacting better <Freedom> but stopping crime by supporting the Crime Bill. Although the promotions of the Crime Bill are subtly interwoven within Clinton's speech, to make those demands actionable he continually relies on the namesake of KING. Clinton's final remark that "We will honor the life and work of Martin Luther King" highlights the importance of KING to the Mason Temple speech because it implies that in order to "honor" the life of Martin Luther King people need to be in support of the Crime Bill.

5. Dana Cloud, "To veil the threat of terror": Afghan women and the <clash of civilizations> in the imagery of the U.S. war on terrorism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (3) (2004): 285-90.

The 21st Century Color-Line

Investigating Bill Clinton's Mason Temple speech revealed how ideographs can be utilized to sustain King's "problem", the color-line. Clinton utilized the desecrated memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to obfuscate his own performance and underwrite the logic of supporting the Crime Bill. John Murphy in his evaluation of the Mason Temple speech noted that Clinton was able to "borrow" authority from King.⁵⁴ However, I argue that Clinton did not simply borrow King's authority but went beyond that to manipulate and desecrate King's memory in a way that is counterproductive toward resolving King's "problem." Clinton's use of KING is regrettable because it obfuscates the complexity of a great man's life but also because it deemphasizes the very relevant systemic factors that compound the problems facing the Black community. Throughout the Mason Temple speech, Clinton calls for his audience to imagine explaining to Dr. King the downtrodden state of their communities exemplified by fatherless households and Black on Black violence. Not once does Clinton mention the red-lining policies, cuts to funding for after-school programs, or cuts to social welfare programs that may have contributed to the ailments of the Black community.⁵⁵ Dyson, in multiple books on King, notes that reproducing only the governmentally supportive views of King in the name of institutional stability is dangerous because it muffles the voices of those in the contemporary moment that are

⁵⁴John Murphy, "Inventing authority: Bill Clinton, Martin Luther King Jr., and the orchestration of rhetorical traditions," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1) (1997):73-80.

⁵⁵Coates offers an informative historical analysis of red-lining policies in the United States and their lingering effects on education, economic, and social life chances. Ta-Nehishi Coates, *The Case For Reparations: Two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy. Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole.* *The Atlantic* June 2014, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>. Duncan offers a historical account of how after-school extra-curricular educational programs are related to minority student achievement in places with high crime rates. Garret Duncan, *Critical race theory and method: rendering race in urban ethnographic research*, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8 (1) (2002): 85-88. Cloud, *Family Values*, 387-90.

attempting to resist and undo systemic racism in the United States.⁵⁶ Furthermore, when Clinton's Mason Temple speech is examined not simply based on the means by which it attempted to be persuasive but the ends it sought analysis of the speech becomes even more important. In my mind, it would be unfair to say that Clinton *knew* the Crime Bill would have negative effects on the Black community; however, it does seem fair to conclude that he at least should have known it might.⁵⁷ Reading King's desecrated memory in concert with the actual outcomes of the Crime Bill reveal that Clinton's speech recreated the color-line because it hurt Black people at least twice. First, Clinton's speech reproduced the role-defining function of the color-line because it relied upon an account of King that is productive for silencing the views of those that fight against systemic racism. Second, Clinton enacted the hierarchy stabilizing function of the color-line by using KING to garner support for the eventual passage of a law that would exacerbate disproportionate incarceration rates between Black and white Americans.⁵⁸ Each of the previously noted outcomes highlights Clinton's reproduction of the color-line because in both situations Black people are harmed either post-mortem or systemically to the end of soothing statistically unfounded fears about violent crime.⁵⁹

Finally, reading Clinton's one-two punch in conjunction with the puncher as a person illuminates the precariousness of Black people in the American public. As the so-called "first black president" and as a Democratic president, the leader of what is supposed to be America's progressive party, Clinton's ability to take and take from the Black community reveals the still

⁵⁶ Dyson, *True Martin Luther King*, 5-15. Dyson, *April 4*, 145-60.

⁵⁷ Richter, Clinton hails three strikes. Richter, *Savage*, Clinton Penalties for Crack.

⁵⁸ Puglise, Black Americans incarcerated. Leonhard, Querly, 1.5 Million Missing Black Men.

⁵⁹ Walter Updegrave, "As Grim Crime Scenes Fill Our Newscasts And Nightmares, But the Surprising Truth For Most People Is That . . . you're Safer Than You Think," *Money* (June 1994): 114; Richard LaCaup, "Lock 'Em up! . . . With Outraged Americans Saying Crime Is their No. 1 Concern, Politicians are again Talking tough but Are They Talking Sense?," *Time* (February 1994): 50; Leslie Phillips, "Clinton Pitch: Hardball/ 'Three Strikes' Plan Targets Repeat Felons," *USA today* January 26, 1994, 49.

prevalent trans-historical legacy of slavery.⁶⁰ Clinton did not just take money like he did from the “poverty-stricken” areas of Arkansas; Clinton used the Mason Temple speech to take the memory of a great Black leader and contribute to the taking of the future of many of our young men and women.⁶¹ Clinton’s ability to take whatever he wanted from the Black community highlights the precarious position of Black Americans in the American public because it reveals a linkage between the problems that Du Bois and King mentioned and the present. In 1903, Du Bois prophesied that the problem of the twentieth century would be the color-line; in 1967, Martin Luther King in his word and deed seemed to confirm that Du Bois’ prophecy had come true. Analyzing Clinton’s Mason Temple speech revealed that, because of his standing, Clinton was able to manipulate the perception of and harm the Black community at will. Recognizing how Clinton’s liberal rhetoric was used to harm Black people highlights that, in 2017, the United States seems overdue for a reminder of what King *did* say: “We’ve got to make it known that until our problem is solved, America may have many, many days, but they will be full of trouble. There will be no rest, there will be no tranquility in this country until the nation comes to terms with our problem.”⁶²

⁶⁰ Toni Morrison, *The Talk of the Town*, *New Yorker* October 5, 1998. Accessed June 24, 2017.

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1998/10/05/comment-6543>; Linscott, *All Lives (Don’t) Matter*, 104.

⁶¹ Kim Mueller, “Inmates’ Civil Rights Cases and the Federal courts: Insights Derived from a Field Research Project in the Eastern District of California,” *Creighton Law Review* 28 (1995): 1256-8; Davis, Sorensen, *Disproportionate Minority Confinement of Juveniles*, 115-20.

⁶² Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 580.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

In an essay on how affirmation can be used to deny the material manifestations of power, Dana Cloud argues that “critical scholars bear the obligation to explain the origins and causes of exploitation and oppression in order to better inform the fight against them.”¹ Cloud’s recommendation connects the work of this thesis with Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s argument in the Hill-Campbell debate. Specifically, Cloud’s quote provides an opportunity to reconsider the terrain-shifting debate between Hill and Campbell because it emphasizes that the duty of rhetorical scholars is to examine the way that rhetoric and communication constructs our society and thereby disrupt oppressive practices.² Chapter two and chapter three of this thesis were devoted to analyzing how the vesting of authority into unmarked identities allows them to produce communicative sacrifice and how those practices are then utilized against marginalized, specifically Black, populations to build support for pieces of legislation like the Crime Bill. In line with Campbell’s call for criticism that is not ephemeral but instead enduring, in this concluding chapter I aim to explain what Bill Clinton’s enactment of undue authority to demand sacrifice from Black people reveals about American society.³ To contribute to the ongoing conversation about race, rhetoric, and American politics this chapter reviews the debate between Forbes Hill and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell in the 1972 edition of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. Reviewing the Hill-Campbell debate highlights how double-consciousness calls for the synthesis

¹ Dana Cloud, “The Affirmative Masquerade,” *American Communication Journal* 4 (3) (2001): 4.

² Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form- Rejoinder,” *Quarterly Journal of speech* 58 (4) (1972): 451-4.

³ Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “Criticism: Ephemeral and enduring,” *Communication Education* 23 (1) (1974): 9-10.

of Hill and Campbell's perspectives. Finally, I conclude by listing areas for further research and highlighting the most important takeaways from this project.⁴

Hill-Campbell debate

The debate between Forbes Hill and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell provides insight into how rhetorical criticism and theory should approach ethics, scope, and politics. The Hill-Campbell debate asks whether rhetorical critics should consider ethical ramifications in their evaluations of discourse. In the original debate, Hill represented the view that critics ought not be overly (if at all) concerned with the ethical implications of the speech which they analyze but instead be more concerned with whether or not the speech itself used good argumentative strategies given the target audience.⁵ Although Hill was not alone in his advocacy for Aristotelian criticism in 1972, rhetorical theory and criticism in the 21st century has moved away from a purely Aristotelian perspective toward one which understands that there is an ethical or ideological system underlying each argument.⁶ Moreover, rhetorical studies seems to be headed toward aligning with Campbell's perspective that, in addition to examining the quality of the argumentation in a given speech, it is also the duty of the critic to evaluate the moral implications. Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to align myself more with Campbell's perspective by emphasizing the social and political ramifications of Clinton's speeches as artifacts of presidential rhetoric.

⁴ Forbes Hill, "Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form—the President's Message of November 3, 1969," *Quarterly Journal of speech* 58 (4) (1972): 373-5.

⁵ Hill, "Conventional Wisdom," 374-6.

⁶ For accounts that promote a strict Aristotelian reading of texts see Hill, "Conventional Wisdom," 374-5. Walter Fisher, "Rhetorical criticism as criticism," *Western Journal of Communication* 38 (2) (1974): 75-77; G.P. Mohrmann, Michael C. Leff, "Lincoln at Cooper Union: A rationale for neo-classical criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60 (4) (1974): 459-62; David Swanson, "The requirements of critical justifications," *Communication Monographs* 44 (4) (1977): 306-10. For a less than exhaustive account of critics thankfully moving us away from the purely Aristotelian framework see James Chesebro, Caroline Hamsher, "Contemporary rhetorical theory and criticism: Dimensions of the new rhetoric," *Speech Monographs* 42 (4) (1975): 311-20; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The nature of criticism in rhetorical and communicative studies," *Communication Studies* 30 (1) (1979): 4-8.

Presidential rhetoric is an instructive example for how to align ourselves as critics because presidents combine being members of the public with being leaders of the public who lead through rhetoric. In other words, because presidents are often the interpreters-in-chief it is useful to focus on how they produce ideas and ethics because what they say is given the most hegemonic position.⁷ As chapter two makes clear, the ethical value of an argument is based on the system of values which produce that ethical calculus. The dialectical relationship between presidents and the publics they address should be further interrogated because it is that relationship that allows those who possess more control over meaning to use that control to sacrifice marginalized populations. Further, because the Hill-Campbell debate was so steeped in questioning the ethical evaluations of rhetorical critics it highlighted a need to analyze the ideology or value system of the American public. In fact, Campbell's reasoning in the debate seems to have paved the path for what became ideological criticism.⁸ Ideological criticism expands the scope of rhetorical criticism because, as Wander and Crowley have pointed out, it steps beyond the text-context distinction to academically justify questions that engage with the ideology of the larger society.⁹

Although there are many positive takeaways from the ideological turn in rhetoric, it seems that the move toward ideology in combination with the groundswell of post-modernism was counterproductive for rhetorical theory and criticism. My argument here is that ideology is

⁷ Mary Stuckey, *The President as Interpreter-in-Chief* (Chatham: Chatham House Publishers, 1991), 5-21; Mary Stuckey, Frederick Antczak, "The Rhetorical Presidency: Deepening Vision, Widening Exchange," *Communication Yearbook* 21 (1998): 405-15

⁸ Philip Wander, "The ideological turn in modern criticism," *Communication Studies* 34 (1) (1983):1-5; Sharon Crowley, "Reflections on an argument that won't go away: Or, a turn of the ideological screw," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78 (4) (1992): 450-55; Lawrence Rosenfield, "Responses to Wander," *Communication Studies* 34 (2) (1983):199-20.

⁹ For an account of authors describing the text- context distinction from a rhetorical perspective see Michael Leff, Andrew Sachs, "Words the most like things: Iconicity and the rhetorical text," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (3) (1990): 252-60; Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, context, and the fragmentation of contemporary culture," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (Summer 1990): 274-80.

good for rhetoric, but post-modernism's distancing ideology and material reality is not.

Ideological criticism seems to have created a framework by which to reintroduce the material tenets of Marxism into how as critics we develop curriculums and praxis. Post-modernism however seems to have come with a rush of questioning the truths of our world that at times can be counterproductive. As an outgrowth of the popularity of adopting post-modern perspectives, it seems that many critics in the late 80's and throughout the 90's rushed to the conclusion that no overarching capital T truth meant that there could not be smaller important material truths.¹⁰

Though the relationship between ideological criticism and material reality is one worth revisiting, Raymie McKerrow's use of ideological criticism as a basis to make a case for critical rhetoric and rhetorical praxis are achievements that provide tools to orient ourselves toward better futures.¹¹ Maurice Charland provides a generative rejoinder to McKerrow's point when he outlines that although the lack of focus on materiality within ideological criticism is lamentable, the concept of rhetoric as praxis— understanding that each rhetorical act creates and recreates people's subject positions can be useful for developing material responses to the problems of our world.¹² Charland's point and mine thereafter is that rhetorical scholars and some of their favorite post-modern adopted scholars led a charge that disavowed the materiality of discourse.¹³

¹⁰ Phillip Wander, "The third persona: An ideological turn in rhetorical theory," *Central States Speech Journal* 4 (1984): 197-201; Dennis Mumby, "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Communication Studies: A Rereading of an Ongoing Debate," *Communication Theory* 7 (1) (1997): 1-10; Richard Rogers, "Overcoming the objectification of nature in constitutive theories: Toward a transhuman, materialist theory of communication," *Western Journal of Communication* 62 (3) (1998): 244-50.

¹¹ Raymie Mckerrow, "Critical rhetoric: Theory and praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56 (2) (1989): 91-100. Raymie Mckerrow, "Critical rhetoric in a postmodern world," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991):75-7.

¹² Maurice Charland, "Finding a Horizon and telos: The challenge to critical rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 71-3.

¹³ For examples of how scholarship often noted as "rhetorical" has moved away from absolute physical truths and instead toward contingent truths see Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1-20; Kent Ono, John Sloop, "Commitment to telos—a sustained critical rhetoric," *Communication Monographs* 59 (1) (1992): 48-51; Kenneth Burke, "Definition of Man," *The Hudson Review* 16 (4) (1963): 499; Kevin Deluca, "Articulation Theory: A discursive Grounding for Rhetorical Practice," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 32 (4) (1999): 334-40; Michael Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume 1: an introduction* (New York: Random House, 1980), 1-20.

The debate between Hill and Campbell gestures towards the idea that rhetorical critics and theorists should orient themselves toward politics. Cloud in her valuable article in *Western*, “The Materiality of Discourse as Oxymoron: A Challenge to Critical Rhetoric,” outlines that discursive studies that lack a strategy for changing or engaging with material structures are between useless and counterproductive.¹⁴ Cloud’s perspective highlights Campbell’s because it illuminates that “to assess the speech in terms of a ‘target audience’ is to ignore the special kind of disunity created by [Nixon’s] speech which, I believe, is a threat to the political processes of our system of government, particularly when propounded by its chief executive.”¹⁵ Further, Cloud’s point about materiality highlights Campbell’s point about the effects of presidential rhetoric because it brings into focus that the words people say, especially presidents, have significance outside of the goals of the rhetor in the way that they create and recreate the American public. Campbell’s argument about disunity and Cloud’s argument about materiality provide foundation for the idea that it is important as rhetorical critics to analyze not only the words that were used and how well a target audience is affected, but also interrogate how our social world is changed and recreated through rhetorical acts.

Campbell and Cloud thereafter create a model for rhetorical criticism in which the rhetorical critic is in some way always already politically engaged.¹⁶ Though there are a fair

¹⁴ Dana Cloud, “The materiality of discourse as oxymoron: A challenge to critical rhetoric,” *Western Journal of Communication* 58 (3) (1994): 141-5.

¹⁵ Campbell, “The Forum,” 453.

¹⁶ Peter Andersen, “Beyond criticism: The activist turn in the ideological debate,” *Western Journal of Communication* 57 (2) (1993): 247-52; Robert Asen, “Critical Engagement through Public Sphere Scholarship,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 (1) (2015): 132-37; Sandra Berkowitz, “Originality, Conversation and Reviewing Rhetorical Criticism,” *Communication Studies* 54 (3) (2003):359-61; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “Responses to wander,” *Central States Speech Journal* 34 (2) (1983): 126-7. In this section, Campbell notes that, in her view, all criticism is subjective. Sonja Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism Exploration and Practice* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2009), 393-400. Ronald Walter Greene, “Rhetoric (Dis)Appearing,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 10 (2-3) (2013): 259-62. ; Roderick Hart, Suzanne Daughton, *Modern Rhetorical Criticism* (New York: Routledge Press, 2016), 233-57.

number of smart and well-intentioned critics that argue otherwise, I agree with Campbell and Cloud that rhetorical critics ought to examine politics.¹⁷ Moreover, to add to the lot produced by Campbell and Cloud, I submit the idea that rhetorical critics must be politically engaged because, as Hannah Arendt pointed out, the line between the social and the political has vanished in our late capitalist society.¹⁸ For rhetorical critics to be politically engaged would require that they produce criticism that moves beyond looking at rhetorical acts as if they were experiments in a lab as Hill would have us do but instead begin to consider the real world implications of each speech as Campbell's position in the forum seems to advocate for.¹⁹ The blurring or erasure of the line between social and political has both an empowering and burdensome effect on rhetorical critics because it reveals that the topics which rhetoric is wedded to (great speeches, images that make us think, combinations of words that make us feel something) ought to be read in the context of the society which birthed them.²⁰ In other words, to borrow from Arendt, because the problems of the household have become the problems of the common, each subjective rhetorical evaluation carries with it some political baggage.²¹

As chapter two highlights, focusing on the political implications of rhetorical acts reveals that universality is in itself a rhetorical resource that is often used to dictate the actions of marginalized members of American society. Throughout the thesis I have used the lenses of Du

¹⁷ For an account of critics that believe the text and not its political ramifications should be the chief object of rhetorical analysis see Donald Bryant, "Rhetoric: It's functions and its scope," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 39 (4) (1953): 401-10; Stephen Lucas, "The schism in rhetorical scholarship," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 67 (1) (1981): 1-10; Stephen Lucas, "The renaissance of American public address: Text and context in rhetorical criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74 (2) (1988): 231-50; John Lucaites, "Visualizing 'the people': Individualism vs. collectivism in *let us now praise famous men*," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (3) (1997): 269-75.

¹⁸ Hannah Arendt *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1954] 1998), 20-30; Ronald Walter Greene, *Malthusian Worlds: U.S. Leadership And the Governing of The Population Crisis* (Polemics) (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 204-220. Ronald Walter Greene, "John Dewey's Eloquent Citizen: Communication, Judgment, and Postmodern Capitalism," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 39 (Winter 2003): 189-91.

¹⁹ Andersen, "the activist turn," 250-2.

²⁰ McGee, "Text and Context," 274-6.

²¹ Hannah Arendt *The Human Condition* 20-4

Bois' double-consciousness and the color-line to reveal the political ramifications of deploying such authority for the purpose of controlling citizens. Du Bois' concept of double-consciousness offers an opportunity to reconsider the primacy of universality and its rhetorical force because it reveals the existence of a counter-view to what is considered universal knowledge. By emphasizing the impossibility of being Black and American, Du Bois reveals that the universal good is not universal. Further, this thesis' critique of universality highlights the meandering nature of the color-line. The color-line is revealed to be meandering because of its ambivalence as exemplified in Clinton's ability in the Mason Temple speech to herald his administration as a moment in which racial progress was happening as a precursor for asking his audience to support a piece of legislation that would aid in increasing mass incarceration. Recognizing the meandering existence of the color-line highlights that a synthesis between Hill and Campbell's perspectives could be useful for better understanding how the American public and rhetorical theory are affected by the most insidious and oppressive forms of speech.²²

Considering Du Bois' double-consciousness gives rise to a synthesis between Hill and Campbell's perspectives because it reveals the necessity of analyzing both the logical argument tailored for the target audience and the overarching ethical framework in which a particular speech occurs. Double-consciousness draws our attention to argument and ethics because it reveals that the basis for assessing an argument is not neutral but instead indebted to a certain ideology. As Du Bois outlines, double-consciousness is a state of seeing oneself always through the eyes of the other. For one's vision to be from the perspective of the other they must first understand the perspective and expectations of the other. Hill's perspective in the Hill-Campbell debate is particularly illuminating for understanding the eyes of the other because Hill promotes

²² W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black folk* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1903] 2007), 31-4.

the idea that good rhetorical critics should attempt to evaluate a speech based on the opportunities and constraints that would have been available to the speaker. Focusing on the opportunities and constraints in a speech articulates the eyes of the other because it produces an account of what would have been appropriate if all things were equal; in other words, it produces an account of the measuring tape of the world.

Hill offers the first consciousness, the version of reality that one would engage with if all things were equal, and as a rejoinder, and in my view a necessary one, Campbell's perspective provides the opportunity for the doubling. Campbell's argument that critics must evaluate the ethical and socio-political implications of speeches is an invitation for doubling because it asks the critic to reexamine the speech not simply for how the target audience would receive the speech but how the speech may reproduce a world in which all things are not equal.

Synthesizing Hill and Campbell's perspectives is useful when rhetorically analyzing Clinton's speeches because the combination of the two perspectives draws attention to not only the construction of the speeches but also the socio-political ramifications of Clinton getting what he wanted. Hill's focus on argumentation and the target audience is especially revealing for Clinton's Mason Temple Speech. John Murphy, a well-respected and in my opinion astute critic, evaluated Clinton's Mason Temple speech as well received and noteworthy. In my view, Murphy's evaluation of the Mason Temple speech is accurate and matches up with what Hill would consider good and generative criticism. Throughout this thesis, I do not reject Murphy's well-grounded evaluation but instead try and reconsider the ideology that may have made Clinton's speech more effective at its end goal of building support for the Crime Bill. As chapter three made clear, the ideographs KING and <Freedom> were productive for Clinton because they were audience specific and allowed him to dictate what his audience should do based on

their historical connection to KING. Recognizing the tailoring of Clinton's speech is important because it reveals the insidiousness with which rhetoric can be deployed in our contemporary moment. Clinton's Mason Temple speech exemplifies the insidiousness of certain rhetorical practices because it develops a logical and tailored argument that leverages the audience's emotional connection to King to create a state sponsored version of KING created with the purpose of maintaining racial hierarchy in the United States.²³ Investigating the role of rhetoric in the reproduction and maintenance of inequality is a useful endeavor not only because it brings to light atrocities within our current world but also because it draws attention to the way that claims to partisanship can be used to obfuscate the reproduction of violence and inequality.

As scholars such as Michael Eric Dyson and David Garrow have pointed out, claims to party and political loyalty in the American public often reinforce inequitable and violent racial hierarchies.²⁴ Clinton's speeches and the Hill-Campbell debate both provide foundation for the idea that by claiming party loyalty speakers and authors are provided greater latitude to perpetuate violence onto otherized populations. Chapter two gestures toward this point in the context of Clinton and his excommunication of Sister Souljah from the Rainbow Coalition. By appealing to the liberal ethos of civility and unity, Clinton attempts to excommunicate Sister Souljah as a member of the Rainbow Coalition because he disagreed with the things she said

²³ The work done by Michael Dyson and David Garrow is particularly persuasive on this point. As chapter three notes, Dyson throughout multiple book length pieces argues that King's memory has been desecrated by both liberal and conservative forces as a tool to maintain the contemporary racial hierarchy. Michael Dyson, *April 4, 1968: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Death and How it Changed America* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 145. Michael Eric Dyson, *I May Not Get There With You; The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Free Press, 2000), 5; David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1986), 580.

²⁴ For an account of how party conformity or coalitional politics has been violent for Black people in the United states see Frank B. Wilderson, *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 21-30; Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 79-125; Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus : Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 11.

about white people. A similar, yet meaningfully distinct, interaction seems to have taken place in the Hill-Campbell debate. In one of her few missteps in the discussion Campbell stated, “Recognizing that anyone reading my critique of this address will know that I am politically liberal [. . .] my simple rejoinder is that anyone reading Hill’s critique will know that he is politically conservative.” I refer, with the most respect, to Campbell’s statement as a misstep for two reasons. First, and most tangibly, Hill’s rejoinder states that he is not a conservative. For example, Hill says, “When speaking to my neighbors for George McGovern (as I often have lately; Professor Campbell's inference to the contrary, I am a liberal).” So, in some sense, Campbell’s claim is factually incorrect.²⁵ Secondly, and honestly more importantly, Campbell and Clinton’s framing of homogeneity of perspectives within liberal political organizing reproduces rather than destroys violent hierarchies in the American public.

Put explicitly, and I would say this twice for the people in the back if room permitted, liberal rhetoric does not stop the reproduction of violent American hierarchies but instead reinforces them. By implying that there is a blueprint for how liberals should engage with politics, Clinton and Campbell attempted to leverage the moral high ground of the American left to support arguments for the exclusion of others. Campbell’s case is clearly much milder and may have been a case of jumping to a conclusion without data. Clinton’s case, however, demonstrates how the assumed moral high ground of being a liberal in American society can be used to justify instead of dismantle oppressive structures. Chapter three’s analysis of Clinton’s Mason Temple speech illuminates this point by highlighting how Clinton used KING as an ideograph to constitute the actions of his audience. Clinton’s use of KING is an enactment of his undue authority to substantiate a monolithic perception of liberal political engagement for the

²⁵ Hill, *The Forum*, 458.

stabilization of hierarchy because Clinton used KING to imply what his audience members should do based on their moral identification with Dr. King. Clinton's perspective is productive for the stabilization of hierarchy because, as chapter three belabors, his speech was given to support the Crime Bill. Put more explicitly, Bill Clinton used the name of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. under the auspices of liberal community building to support the continuation and expansion of the disproportionate incarceration of Black Americans.

Dana Cloud provides a further substantiating account of how liberal political organization can be used for the entrenchment of hierarchy through her consideration of how American Democrats, led at the time by Bill Clinton, used <Family Values> to scapegoat poor and specifically Black Americans as a justification for the dismantling of social welfare benefits.²⁶ Clinton's expansion of the prison-state and curtailing of social welfare benefits thereafter are relevant concerns for rhetorical critics and theorists because Clinton's political achievements were made possible by his undue authority over the tenets by which liberal groups can be organized. Chapter two illuminates the previous point by considering how the organization of the American public produces authority and sacrifice. Considering how authority is derived and sacrifice is enacted in the American public reveals that rhetorical studies is past due for the (re)introduction of consciousness.

Du Bois' concept of double-consciousness illuminates that rhetorical theory can be expanded and improved by a reintroduction of consciousness. I refer to the relationship to consciousness as a reintroduction for rhetorical theory because, as chapter two alludes to, rhetorical publics theory's reproduction of Habermas's perspective has created a rhetorical

²⁶ Dana Cloud, "The rhetoric of <family values>: Scapegoating, utopia, and the privatization of social responsibility." *Western Journal of Communication* 62 (4) (1999):405-10.

public that lacks consciousness.²⁷ I argue that historically, with, thankfully, some recent scholarship withstanding, rhetorical publics theory has been produced in opposition to consciousness.²⁸ Michael Warner's description of the American public is illuminating on this point because, as chapter two outlines, Warner argues that the American public is not built on equality but instead inequality.²⁹ The structure of the American public disallows true self-consciousness for Black Americans because it destroys their ability to define their actions for themselves but instead forces them to have their actions defined for them. In that same chapter, I attempt to sketch the basis for the inequality in the American rhetorical public by considering how authority to define the inside and the outside of the public is established. Danielle Allen's insight highlights that the rhetorical public is in some way constituted through sacrifice.³⁰ Throughout the thesis I have attempted to use double-consciousness and the color-line as analytics to highlight that Allen is correct, but that there is more to the story. The more, or addendum, that I would add to Allen's perspective is that there are differentiated forms of sacrifice which seem to be immanently perpetuated onto certain groups. Rhetorical theory's

²⁷ Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Volume 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Trans.) Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987 [1981]); Max Weber, *Economy and Society: an outline of Interpretive Sociology* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968) 1-20.

²⁸ For examples of rhetorical theory devoid of consciousness see, Ed.) Craig Calhoun *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992); Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985); (Eds.) Robert Asen and Daniel Brouwer *Counterpublics and the State* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001); Christine Harold, "The Rhetorical Function of the Abject Body: Transgressive Corporeality in 'Trainspotting,'" *JAC* 20 (4) (2000): 865-70; Joshua Gunn, Mark McPhail, "Coming Home to Roost: Jeremiah Wright, Barack Obama, and the (Re)signing of (Post) Racial Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 45 (1) (2015): 1-5; For further consideration of rhetorical scholars working toward and with consciousness see Olga Idriss Davis, "A Black woman as Rhetorical Critic: Validating Self and Violating the Space of Otherness," *Women's Studies in Communication* 21 (1) (1998): 77-80; Charles Linscott, "All Lives (Don't) Matter: the Internet Meets Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism," *Black Camera* 8 (2) (2017): 104; Cindy Griffin, "The Essentialist Roots of the Public Sphere: A Feminist Critique," *Western Journal of Communication* 60 (1) (1996): 24-30; Sonja Foss, Cindy Griffin, "Beyond persuasion: A proposal for an invitational rhetoric," *Communication Monographs* 62 (1995): 1-10; Lisa Gring-Pemble, "Writing themselves into consciousness: Creating a rhetorical bridge between the public and private spheres," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84 (1) (1998): 41-

²⁹ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: MIT Press, 2002). 166-7.

³⁰ Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown V. Board of Education* (Chicago: Chicago University press, 2004), 28.

divestment from consciousness assists in the continuation of this inequitable sacrifice because, in divesting from consciousness, rhetorical theory also divorced itself from the realization that all things are never equal. Consciousness illuminates that all things are never equal because it brings to the forefront differences in empirical reality that overarching power structures often ignore or actively erase. Consciousness allows for the improvement of rhetorical public theory by allowing critics to reveal that all things are not equal based on starting from the position that something about the world does not match up with the critic's view of how the world should be.

The oppositional relationship between consciousness and rhetorical theory ought come to an end to allow rhetorical theory to expand to better engage with the position of marginalized identities. Marginalized identities are often harmed by a lack of consciousness because their perspectives are disregarded as not fundamental to the public. The authority that allows for their perspectives to be disregarded is supported by a lack of consciousness because it is on the basis that all people are able to reason the same and that some people get to be the final arbiters of reason that perspectives are defined as more and less valuable. My point here is that embraces of Habermas's model of the public sphere have commissioned perspectives devoid of consciousness because of their privileging of universal reason. Early in chapter two I make the point that many people from the margins have come to rhetorical theory asking for its expansion in hopes that it would be able to more adequately describe how they see themselves and the world and not only produce accounts of how unmarked identities wish to see the world. For example, feminist scholars like Lisa Gring-Pemle and Cindy Griffin have argued that the rhetorical public sphere is built in opposition to femininity.³¹ Du Bois' double-consciousness

³¹ Cindy Griffin, "Essentialist Roots of the Public Sphere," *Western Journal of Communication* 60 (1) (1996): 24-30; Lisa Gring-Pemle, "Writing themselves into consciousness," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84 (1) (1998): 41-50.

offers an opportunity and blueprint for the reintroduction of consciousness to rhetoric because it emphasizes that there is a need to embrace reflexivity and reconsider the value claims of the world in relationship to one's lived reality.

Although I have attempted to provide a robust examination of Bill Clinton's rhetorical practices, throughout the project of constructing this thesis there were a litany of ideas that either for the flow of the argument, the direction of the logic, or sheer time were not able to be adequately addressed. Accordingly, in this limitations section I aim to highlight some paths for future research.

One such path, which I entertained early in the writing process but forewent for the opportunity to instead examine the rhetorical public sphere, would be the illumination of Clinton and King's rhetoric by producing a rhetorical criticism of both King's and Clinton's Mason Temple speeches. Reading King and Clinton's speeches at Mason Temple in juxtaposition may further reveal how King's historical legacy created foundation for Clinton's speech to exist. Reading King's speech against Clinton's may emphasize how many of the words and ideas of King have either been augmented for the benefit of state authority or forgotten by history. The historical memory of King is another subject that I believe could spawn useful and necessary research. Though the work of Garrow and Dyson was quite illuminating, I believe a fruitful path for further research may be an investigation into King's rhetoric post-1965.³² I isolate 1965 as the historical marker because it provides the opportunity to assess how King would have changed after the passage of the civil rights amendments during the prolonged, and ongoing, battle for social equality here in the United States. Finally, lest I give away too many of my own generative ideas, another avenue that in my view would produce interesting rhetorical work is

³² Dyson, *April 4*, 1-10. Dyson, *May not get there with you*, 1-10. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 1-10.

the examination of Bill Clinton's rhetoric in relation to Hillary Clinton's rhetoric. As Clinton's biographers have made clear, Bill and Hillary Clinton have been married all of Bill Clinton's political life.³³ Beyond being a memorable person who has held multiple public offices, Hillary Clinton also recently was the first woman to ever win the Democratic nomination for president in the United States.³⁴ Due to an overwhelming want not to drag Hillary Clinton into an important, but at times critical, conversation with which she had very little to do, I have chosen not to belabor the relationship between the rhetoric of Hillary and Bill Clinton. Future rhetorical work may take up the similarities and differences in their rhetoric, I would also recommend considering the gender implications that go along with it, to investigate why the American public was so accepting of Bill Clinton's rhetoric and so uninterested in Hillary Clinton's.

As this meandering journey toward discovery comes closer to an end, I believe it is important to briefly reflect on the points of emphasis throughout the thesis. The major argument of this thesis has been that W.E.B. Du Bois' lamentation of the twentieth century, that it was impossible to be Black and American, is still just as true today. Throughout the thesis I attempt to make this point clear by focusing on how Bill Clinton's rhetoric at the Mason Temple speech, through the recreation of the color-line, exemplifies a kind of argumentative logic that stabilizes and extends the racial hierarchy in the United States. In chapter two, I take up Clinton's "Remarks to the Rainbow Coalition National Convention" and his "Remarks Announcing the Initiative," to highlight how, as president, Bill Clinton was vested with an inequitable and undue

³³ David Maraniss, *First in His Class: a Biography of Bill Clinton* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 1-10; Nigel Hamilton, *Bill Clinton Mastering the Presidency* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 1-10; Nigel Hamilton, *Bill Clinton: An American Journey Great Expectations* (New York: Random House, 2003), 1-10.

³⁴ For accounts of Hillary Clinton's memorable past and present see Karen Blumenthal, *Hillary Rodham Clinton: a Woman Living History* (New York: Feiwel and Friends, 2016) 1-10; Cheryl Harness, *Hillary Clinton: American Woman of the World* (New York: Aladdin Books, 2016) 1-10. For accounts of Hillary Clinton's unsuccessful run as the presidential nominee for the Democratic Party see Allan Smith, Hillary Clinton loses election in monumental upset, *Business Insider* November 9, 2016, accessed April 2, 2018, <http://www.businessinsider.com/who-lost-the-election-2016-11>.

authority over meaning in the American public that allowed him to sacrifice marginalized, specifically Black, members of the public. Focusing on Clinton's material execution of sacrifice and what allowed him to perpetuate that sacrifice is significant for rhetorical theory because it highlights that even supposedly liberal rhetoric can work towards conservative ends. When I refer to liberal rhetoric as "conservative" what I mean to illuminate, similar to the perspectives of Coates and Mansbridge, is that the rhetoric used by those that are supposedly politically liberal, the avowed allies of the marginalized and downtrodden in American society, can be just as effective at maintaining inequitable hierarchies in the United States.³⁵ Chapter three provided the most concrete proof of this argument in its assessment of how in the Mason Temple speech Clinton productively used the ideographs KING and <Freedom> to dictate that the mostly Black audience should support the Crime Bill.

Du Bois' analytics were important to this project because they provided methods to diagnose and resist liberal rhetorical practices at work for conservative goals. In 1903, Du Bois theorized that the problem of the twentieth century would be the color-line. Through a thorough, and in my view astounding, analysis Du Bois charted how Black existence had been manipulated under the control of white authority and called for a change. Chapter two of this thesis investigates how the rhetorical publics' productions of authority are invested in white people and the negative effects that has had for Black people. As chapter two highlights, white people are still vested with an undue authority that allows them to sacrifice or devalue Black life. The material ramifications of this rhetorically created and sustained situation are illuminated by the

³⁵ Jane Mansbridge, "Feminism and Democracy," *The American Prospect* (1) (1990): 127; Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations: Two hundred fifty years of slavery, Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of sperate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole." *The Atlantic*, June 2014, accessed March 30, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>.

work in chapter three that focuses on the Mason Temple speech. Focusing on the Mason Temple speech reveals how Clinton, a white man, was able to take up the name and memory of one of the greatest leaders in Black history, Martin Luther King Jr., and use it not only to shame the Black population but also pressure them into supporting a piece of legislation that even reports of the time argued would disproportionately hurt Black people. Clinton's manipulation of the expectations placed upon the Black members of the American public can be productively understood as an enactment of the color-line because it reveals how liberal politicians are able to offer something that seems good (less crime and violence) but produce policies that are materially bad (the stabilization and expansion of inequitable incarceration of minority, mostly Black, citizens). Clinton's ability to manipulate KING for the ends of the state provides evidence that the problem Du Bois was talking about at the turn of the twentieth century is a problem that continues to be relevant in the twenty-first. Because Clinton's speech and the legislation thereafter was just that a piece of legislation—something that creates a law, until it is overturned it seems that Clinton's speech ought remain a part of our nation's historical memory because it recreated and sustained the color-line by setting the stage for and helping create an America in 2018 in which Black people are more likely to be incarcerated than their white counterparts. Beyond the ethical and political justifications for this interrogation, this project has been illuminating for rhetoric because it revitalizes and adds nuance to a debate that is still ongoing within the discipline. Hill may have been right to argue that critics ought analyze the effectiveness of a speech based on the resources available to the speaker. Campbell was also correct to say that beyond how well the words matched up with the available rhetorical resources, it is also important to recognize the ethical and moral commitments that are formulated by each speech, especially speeches given by presidents.

Considering the immanent and insidious nature of racial hierarchy in the United States it seems fair to inquire about what rhetorical scholars, or scholars at all for that matter, can or should do. Though I am new to this, I will attempt to provide what I view as some possible avenues toward communication that is better suited to resist oppressive structures. Lisa Flores in a terrain-shifting article for the *Review of Communication* has argued that we all should engage in racial rhetorical criticism.³⁶ Although I agree with Flores' sentiment, unless we plan to greatly expand the funding provided to the African-American studies interest group at NCA, I do not believe the best option is to flood the market with criticism that takes race as the object of its analysis. Instead, I propose that all rhetorical criticism should be more conscious of the racial implications of a speech when engaging with rhetoric. In a sense, ask yourself, if I was not a part of the in group benefited by this speech, would I have the same conclusion? Questioning the positionality of the critic is, in my view, an important method of creating better communication because it allows for a process of tearing at the way that the normalization of conservative forces happens.³⁷ Questioning the place of the critic tears away at conservative forces because it plots a path in which the questions that motivate rhetorical critics begin with a starting assumption that all criticism happens within a certain ideological framework. Being cognizant of that framework is useful for rhetorical theory and criticism because it allows for a more nuanced analysis of what counts as a rhetorical resource and what rhetorical resources may be overlooked because of the position of the critic. A second consideration, Eric King Watts' misplaced denunciation aside, is

³⁶ Lisa Flores, "Between abundance and marginalization: the imperative of racial rhetorical criticism," *Review of Communication* 16 (1) (2016): 8-12.

³⁷ When I use tearing in this sentence I mean it in the way that George Yancy describes tearing at whiteness. Yancy describes that white people will always be effected by their whiteness and thus as a prescription to the problem concludes that white people should always be tearing away at or interrogating how their whiteness may be effecting their interaction with the world. George Yancy, *Look A White!: Philosophical Essays on Whiteness* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2012), 8-15. Also see, George Yancy, "Whiteness and the Return of the Black Body," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 19 (4) (2005): 215-25.

to find value in posing the question.³⁸ A scholar whom I believe Watts has treated unfairly has proposed that there can be something learned from posing the question, even if we don't believe it is completely true, of what if the world is anti-black.³⁹ In other words, what if the world is based on the racial subjugation of Black people and that productions of racial subjugation reproduced like Bill Clinton's speeches are not aberrations but instead the system working as it was supposed to. Whether or not you believe the world is anti-black, it seems to be common knowledge at this point that race relations in 2018 are still a problem.⁴⁰ As King said in 1967, "We've got to make it known that until our problem is solved, America may have many, many days, but they will be full of trouble. There will be no rest, there will be no tranquility in this country until the nation comes to terms with our problem."⁴¹ With that said, I argue that we should work to begin and engage in conversations that question the authority of some to articulate what is good for all, because as Lupe Fiasco said, "Now we can say it ain't our fault if we never heard it. But if we know better, then we probably deserve it."⁴²

³⁸ Eric King Watts, "Critical Cosmopolitanism, Antagonism, and Social Suffering," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101 (1) (2015): 275-6. Particularly, Watts' section on Afro-Pessimism and the Black Non-Subject.

³⁹ The author I leave uncited in text, but gestured toward is Frank B. Wilderson. His work *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* is cited in every chapter of this thesis. The particular section that this sentence is referencing is pages 1-20. I have chosen not to cite Wilderson in text throughout the thesis because Watts' denunciation has seemed to prime communication studies against a theory that may be useful.

⁴⁰ For authors that may provide insight into whether or not the world is anti-black see Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* trans. Charles Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 17-25; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 97-105; Derrick Bell, *Faces At The Bottom Of The Well: The Permanence of Racism* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), Author's foreword; Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby Papa's Maybe An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17 (2) (1987): 65-70; Hortense Spillers, *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 376-400; Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 33-7; Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 1-13; Fred Moten, *Black and Blur: Critical Essays* (Durham: Duke University press, 2017) 1-5; Alexis Pauline Gumbs *Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 1-10.

⁴¹ Quoted in Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 580.

⁴² Lupe Fiasco, *Words I never Said*, Lasers, Atlantic Records, 2, 2011, Compact Disc.

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Curriculum Vitae

| darrianr.carroll@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
M.A., Communication Studies
In progress
Rhetorical concentration
Honors: academic excellence award
GPA 3.96/4

University of North Texas, Denton TX
B.A., Political Science
May, 2016
Psychology Minor
Honors: Deans list

Competitively Selected Conference presentations

Western States Communication Association 2018, Communication Theory & Research Interest group *Top Four Paper presentation*, “The (Re)turn of the flesh: A case for Black experience in Rhetorical Theory”

Western States Communication Association 2018, Rhetoric and Public Address interest group, “Dreaming of Freedom: A Rhetorical criticism of Marcus Garvey’s ‘Address to the 2nd Universal Negro Improvement Association Convention”

Eastern Communication Association 2018, Submitted and Accepted, Voices of Diversity interest group, “#Palestine2Ferguson: a bridge built with words. Enthymematic reasoning and the building of self-selected community”

Partnership for Progress on the Digital Divide 2017 “#Palestine2Ferguson: Expanding Deluca’s Public Screen for the Digital Age”

Radical Consciousness Conference 2017 “Looking Back, Moving Forward: Revisiting W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey”

Rocky Mountain Communication Association 2017 “Rhetoric is ‘all we got’: A rhetorical criticism of Chance the Rapper’s ‘All we got’”

Conference Presentations

University of Nevada Las Vegas 3 Minute thesis competition 2017, “Is it still impossible to be Black and American? Du Bois, Clinton, and Crime”

Invited Presentations

University of Nevada Las Vegas Greenspun College of Urban Affairs Graduate Research Symposium “Is it Still Impossible to Be Black and American?”

Guest Lectures

“4 speeches by Marcus Garvey” Sara VanderHaagen’s Undergraduate Black Famous Speeches class, Department of Communication Studies, University of Nevada Las Vegas, Fall 2017.

“King Day” William Belk’s Undergraduate Introduction to Communication course, Department of Communication Studies, University of Nevada Las Vegas, Fall 2017.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Part-time Summer Instructor, Las Vegas, NV

July 2017

In this role I directed one section of the Communication basic course for a 5 week session. My responsibilities in this role were akin to that of an adjunct professor.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Las Vegas, NV

August 2016 - present

I have been responsible for conducting one session per semester of the basic communication course.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Assistant Debate Coach, Las Vegas, NV

August 2016 - present

I work very closely with a small group of students to develop their abilities in argumentation and critical comprehension.

I have been responsible for organizing the logistics of conducting tournaments and responsible for the well-being of all participants.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Rebel Debate Institute Lincoln Douglass debate Lab Leader

July 2017

In this role, I was put in charge of 12 high school students. The lab was an intensive workshop that helped students develop argumentation and philosophical reasoning skills. As the leader of the lab, I was tasked with developing the schedule, lesson plan, and lectures for the students.

Washington Urban Debate League

Assistant Lab Leader, Washington, DC

July 2016

As an assistant Lab Leader, I worked with middle school and high school students to develop their skills in argumentation and critical comprehension.

In this role I also developed dynamic lesson plans catering to a younger audience.

Houston Urban Debate League

Assistant Lab Leader, Houston, TX

July 2016

As an assistant Lab Leader, I worked with middle school students to develop their skills in argumentation and critical comprehension.

In this role, I was required to develop dynamic lesson plans that cater to younger audiences.

Arizona State University, Tempe Arizona

Lab Assistant

August 2015

I Worked with college students to develop argumentative and research skills.

Univeristy Service

Host, Black Graduate Student Association Round-table discussion “Performing Blackness in the Climate of Kaepernick”

Service to the Discipline

Secretary, Western Conference Communication Association Communication and Rhetorical Theory Interest Group.

Awards

Competitive educational funding awards

Dean’s Associates’ fund award recipient	2017
Graduate and Professional Student association UNLV travel fund award recipient	2017

Academic Awards

Lambda Pi Eta inductee	2017
Graduate Research Certification (In progress)	2017-2018
Graduate academic achievement award recipient	2017
Certificate of Participation at the Inaugural Radical Consciousness Conference at UNLV	2017
Cross Examination Debate Association All American	2015
University of North Texas Deans list recipient (Fall 11) (Spring 12) (Fall 15)	2015
University of North Texas Academic Fraternity Alpha Lamba Delta member	2012

Debate Awards

Cross Examination Debate Association Final round critic	2017
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RELATED EXPERIENCE

University of Nevada Las Vegas

Scheduling Liaison, Las Vegas, NV

January 2017-present

As a member of the executive board of the Black Graduate Student Association at the University of Nevada Las Vegas I am responsible for handling logistics and helping with community outreach.

Best Buy

Salesperson, Denton Texas

August 2009- July 2016

As a salesperson at best buy I learned many of the skills I think can be applied to academic professionalism. Working at BestBuy during my academic career taught me that work ethic is always rewarded. Relationships with customer’s wants and priorities allowed me to recognize which portions of communication worked well and

which did not. As a member of the best buy family I have learned to deal with difficult customer situations and to deescalate situations as best as possible.

University of North Texas, Denton Texas

Debate team president

August 2015 - January 2016

As Debate team president I developed research skills that would allow me to excel in a Doctoral Program. Part of my responsibilities were also scheduling practice debates and meeting deadlines with debate assignments.

University MEMBERSHIPS

University of Nevada Las Vegas Lambda Pi Eta

University of Nevada Las Vegas Black Graduate Student Association

University of Nevada Las Vegas Samford Berman Debate Forum

University of North Texas Debate team

University of North Texas University Publicity Council

University of North Texas Alpha Lamba Delta

LANGUAGES

English

Academic memberships/affiliations

Eastern Communication Association 2018

Western States Communication Association 2018

Rocky Mountain Communication Association 2017