Hannah Arendt and the Art of the 2008 Canadian Apology for Indian Residential Schools

Neil Alexander Montgomery

Department of Political Science

McGill University, Montreal

May 2019

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts in Political Science

Contents

Abstract

In recent decades, political apologies have emerged as a primary method of reconciliation in circumstances of gross historical injustice. In settler-colonial contexts, political apologies have been increasingly given by settler states to Indigenous peoples. This thesis concerns the 2008 apology, given by then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper, to survivors of the Canadian Indian Residential Schools system. First, I challenge the extent to which political apologies can be understood via speech act theory. Second, I posit an alternative methodology of interpreting political speech, based on the philosophy of Hannah Arendt. I demonstrate the extent to which an Arendtian approach to the political apology, which stresses the creative act of public interpretation, avails a power to disclose and constitute a political world. In the Canadian context, this reveals the potential for the political apology to foster postcolonial reconciliation through an encounter with settler-colonialism as a structural injustice.

Au cours des dernières décennies, les excuses politiques sont devenues la principale méthode de réconciliation dans des circonstances d'injustice historique flagrante. Dans les contextes de colonie de peuplement, les États colonisateurs ont de plus en plus présenté des excuses politiques aux peuples autochtones. Cette thèse concerne les excuses présentées en 2008 par le Premier ministre de l'époque, Stephen Harper, aux survivants du système des pensionnats indiens canadiens. Premièrement, je conteste la mesure dans laquelle les excuses politiques peuvent être comprises via la théorie des actes de langage. Deuxièmement, je propose une méthodologie alternative pour interpréter le discours politique, basée sur la philosophie de Hannah Arendt. Je montre à quel point une approche Arendtienne des excuses politiques, qui met l'accent sur l'acte créatif de l'interprétation publique, exploite un pouvoir de divulgation et constitue un monde politique. Dans le contexte canadien, cela révèle le potentiel des excuses politiques de favoriser la réconciliation postcoloniale par le biais d'une rencontre avec le colonialisme de peuplement en tant qu'injustice structurelle.

Acknowledgements

Introduction: Settler-colonialism and Indigenous worldhood

Despite persistent calls for reparation, recognition, and reconciliation in face of the enduring injustice faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada, the contemporary climate in Canadian-Indigenous politics is one of pessimism. To sample a concept from the late cultural theorist Mark Fisher, Canada suffers from what I wish to call settler-colonial realism.[1] By realism, I mean the intuition that "it's easier to imagine the end of the world" than the end of Canada as a settler colony.[2]

A consideration of the history of Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples, however, reveals that this may be nothing more than the intuition of a "settler common sense," or how my affective intuitions have become "imbued with a sensation of everyday certainty" from the stability of my position within settlement.[3] Indigenous peoples in Canada may not have this stability; rather, they may be afflicted by its opposite, having already experienced the cataclysmic event of colonization. For Indigenous peoples of the Americas, the end of the world may have already occurred. In this essay, I take up the task of what it might mean to respond to such an event, where a conception of world is irrevocably broken by centuries of violence and simultaneously covered over by the structures of a dominant settler society. I strive to show how political apologies can be utilized in such a context to re-constitute a political world as such.

This thesis concerns the 2008 apology, given by then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper, to survivors of the Canadian Indian Residential Schools (IRS) system. It further discusses the effects of political apologies more generally. As acts of *political* speech, this thesis argues that

---

[1] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2009).

[2] In Fisher's use, "it's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism," Fisher, 1.

[3] Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), xv.

the political apology belongs to a unique class of speech acts. Due to the context of their utterance—the political world itself—political apologies actualize a form of meaningfulness which is distinct from that of the speech of average-everyday communication.

By addressing the 2008 apology, I attempt to approach the question of what political apologies can accomplish in light of settler-colonial realism. One such event is the 2008 apology: while heralded in the popular media as "a turning point in the history of relations between natives and other Canadians,"[4] by 2016 its promise had diminished. Even official voices doubted the apology's efficacy. As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission notes: "the promise of reconciliation, which seemed so imminent back in 2008 when the Prime Minister, on behalf of all Canadians, apologized to Survivors, has faded."[5]

While I agree that the 2008 apology failed to yield a tangible and discrete outcome for Indigenous peoples, in this thesis I argue that the apology nonetheless helps contribute to a project of postcolonial world-constitution.

The argument is structured as follows: Section 1 discusses theoretical attempts to technologize the political apology via speech act theory, and in doing so to posit it as a tool to be mastered. I suggest the limits of such an approach, and turn towards an artistic conception of the political apology, drawn from Hannah Arendt's writings on political speech. Section 2 articulates an Arendtian apology, which stresses the act of plural interpretation rather than ideal intent, which serves to disclose and constitute political world. Section 3 provides a reading of the 2008 Harper apology along both of these lines; I suggest that in the Canadian settler-colonial context,

---

[4] J. O'Neill and T. Dalrymple, "'New Dawn' in Race Relations; Harper to Canadians," *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 12, 2008.

[5] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Reconciliation* (Ottawa: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 3.

the Arendtian approach better articulates the political apology's potential to effect transformative

change at the level of political world.

1. Apology as speech act

This section explores the political apology from the perspective of the philosophy of language. It

describes Austin's approach to speech act theory as found in *How to Do Things with Words*,

which stresses the criteria of circumstance, intent, and seriousness for the uncovering of stable

meaning. I demonstrate the extent to which the political science literature relies upon this

Austinian account. To conclude, I offer limitations for the use of these criteria in political cases.

In particular, I argue that to interpret the apology as fulfilling one ideal intention is a flawed way

of approaching political speech.

1.1 Austin and speech act theory

In *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin takes up the task of how language might change the

world itself. In doing so, he makes the now commonplace distinction between the analysis of

speech acts at the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary levels. For Austin, locutionary

analysis involves 'what is said'—the actual words and sentences of the utterance, which involve

meaning. Meanwhile, illocutionary analysis involves the intent of the speaker—what Austin

refers to as *illocutionary force*. Likewise, perlocutionary analysis involves *force*, but *force* as the

achievement of effect on the hearer. This is how Austin makes sense of the *how* of

communication. For example, to warn is to have illocutionary force, while to persuade is to have

perlocutionary force.[6] Thus, initially we could say that locutionary utterances necessitate the

---

[6] J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J.O. Urmso and Marina Sbisa, Second (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 116–17.

analysis of speech but not speakers, while both illocutionary and perlocutionary utterances require the analysis of speakers.

Austin posits three aspects of stability from which to analyze the meaning of said force: circumstance, intent, and seriousness. First, in terms of the actual act of the speech act, speech acts do not come off simply "by uttering words," but by uttering words (or actions as a substitute for words) under appropriate circumstances.[7] For a successful speech act, one must offer the right words, but also in the right circumstances. To use an example from Austin, to name a ship requires not just the uttering of the words 'I name thee...,' but a host of pragmatic conditions. This gives credence to the argument that a political apology must be interpreted as a function of its context. This context thus includes both the "ceremony" of the apology's immediate performance,[8] and the broader context provided by the "apology politics" of reparation and reconciliation.[9]

Such an analysis of the 2008 apology's felicity conditions would offer important insights into its meaning. For instance, the apology's immediate spatial context—the Canadian House of Commons—suggests its official nature as an act of government. Were the apology given in a less decorous environment, its chances of success would likely lessen. It might even cease to be an apology if the location became absurd. Similarly, the personal context of the utterance—the fact that it was given by Prime Minister Stephen Harper—lends the text a particular force. As offered by the head of Canadian government, the apology bears with it a normative force that, unlike if it had been offered by a different member of government, indicates its political salience. Likewise, the apology's historical context—the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, particularly its

---

[7] Austin, 8.

[8] Sanderijn Cels, "Interpreting Political Apologies: The Neglected Role of Performance," *Political Psychology* 36, no. 3 (2015): 351–60, https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12092.

[9] See Melissa Nobles, *The Politics of Official Apologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

1998 *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*, the 2007 Indian Residential Schools

Settlement Agreement, and the 2008-16 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada—

situates the apology as an important event in an on-going reconciliation process. If the apology

was uttered as a random act of government, its perlocutionary force would likely be greatly

diminished.

Second, in terms of the effect of the speech act, the speaker must have requisite

"thoughts, feelings, or intentions."[10] Lacking these, speech acts are not void, but are still

unhappy.[11] Notably, thoughts, feelings, and intentions are intimately bound up with the desired

effect of the perlocutionary act. One does not happily bet when one does not "intend to pay."[12]

This explains the focus in the literature on the sincere or genuine quality of political apologies.[13]

As one commentator on the 2008 apology notes, "in its immediate aftermath it appeared that

many, if not most, observers felt that Harper's apology was a *genuine* and necessary 'first step'

on the long road to forgiveness and reconciliation."[14] Because the political apology does not deal

with *only* "feelings and attitudes," however, there has been disagreement over the extent to

which sincerity is a valid metric, particularly in political cases.[15]

The extent to which context and intent are able to determine the success of an utterance,

however, relies upon the stability of the mode in which it is uttered. For this reason, Austin is not

concerned with the "parasitic" use of language as used "by an actor on the stage, or if introduced

---

[10] Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 39.
[11] Austin, 39.
[12] Austin, 40.
[13] For the foundational case of sincerity, see Nicholas Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); For a focus on genuine apologies see Janna Thompson, "Apology, Justice, and Respect," in *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past*, ed. Mark Gibney et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 31–44.
[14] Glen S Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 105, emphasis added.
[15] Alice MacLachlan, "REVIEW: The State of 'Sorry': Official Apologies and Their Absence," *Journal of Human Rights* 9, no. 3 (2010): 376, https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2010.502085.

in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy."[16] This is because in such parasitic modes, the conditions of average-everyday meaning are violated.[17] Instead, Austin is concerned with speech acts as *serious*. Seriousness allows for the apology's intent to succeed in its perlocutionary force—to influence the audience of the apology. This is because, as Searle later notes, meaning requires recognition to take place between the hearer, the speaker, and the speaker's intent, all grounded on the "rules" of a speech community.[18] In other words, speech act theory requires that "normal input and output conditions" be maintained for meaning to be possible in the first place, and to persist.[19] Like Austin, "this condition excludes *both* impediments to communication such as deafness and also parasitic forms of communication such as telling jokes or acting in a play."[20] The serious approach to political apologies thus allows for their consideration from a scientific or technical point of view. If political apologies are stable, this allows for the analysis of their enduring features of success, or in Austin's language, their ideal felicity conditions.

1.2 A Political Science of speech acts

Inspired by a broadly Austinian methodology towards political acts of speech as speech acts, the vast majority of the political science literature on political apologies embraces the premises of speech act theory. In this way, the overriding paradigm is to view the political apology as a serious speech act—as being "issued in ordinary circumstances."[21] The establishment of the proper means of the political apology through an understanding of its felicity conditions has thus

---

[16] Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 21.
[17] "The normal conditions of reference may be suspended, or no attempt made at a standard perlocutionary act, no attempt to make you do anything, as Walt Whitman does not seriously incite the eagle of liberty to soar." Austin, 104.
[18] John R. Searle, *Speech Acts : An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (London : Cambridge University Press, 1969), 45.
[19] Searle, 57.
[20] Searle, 57.
[21] Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 21.

been noted as the "dominant approach" to the political apology,[22] wherein scholarly debate

focuses on the specific conditions under which an apology must take place for it to be

successful.[23] Similarly, the dominant approach to the establishment of the proper ends of the

political apology takes on the assumptions of requisite intent. In settler-colonial contexts,

political apologies are posited as ways to achieve reconciliation, usually conceived of as the

establishment of a new relationship between settler governments and Indigenous peoples, and

primarily understood in terms of recognition.[24] The political apology has thus been theorized as

normative and ideal, in the sense of relating the possibility of success to a set of defining and

abstract felicity conditions.

As Alice MacLachlan has commented, "several authors have sought to employ these

norms to describe the perfect or ideal apology, as a standard for evaluating admittedly imperfect

(and often very bad) practices of both personal and political apologising."[25] Much of the

scholarship on the political apology thus rests on two primary assumptions: that "a coherent,

---

[22] Cels, "Interpreting Political Apologies: The Neglected Role of Performance." Here Cels offers a useful literature review.

[23] See, for example, Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation*; Girma Negash, *Apologia Politica: States and Their Apologies by Proxy* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006); Nick Smith, "The Categorical Apology," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 36, no. 4 (2005): 473–96, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9833.2005.00289.x; Nick Smith, *I Was Wrong: The Meanings of Apologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Thompson, "Apology, Justice, and Respect"; Craig W Blatz, Karina Schumann, and Michael Ross, "Government Apologies for Historical Injustices," *Political Psychology* 30, no. 2 (2009): 219–41; Danielle Celermajer, *The Sins of the Nation and the Ritual of Apologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[24] For example, Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation*; Ruti G. Teitel, "The Transitional Apology," in *Taking Wrongs Seriously: Apologies and Reconciliation*, ed. E. Barkan and A. Karn (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 101–14; Pablo de Greiff, "The Role of Apologies in National Reconciliation Processes: On Making Trustworthy Institutions Trusted," in *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past*, ed. Mark Gibney et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 120–36; Kora Andrieu, "'Sorry for the Genocide': How Public Apologies Can Help Promote National Reconciliation," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38, no. 1 (August 9, 2009): 3–23, https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829809336257; Lynne Tirrell, "Apologizing for Atrocity: Rwanda and Recognition," in *Justice, Responsibility and Reconciliation in the Wake of Conflict*, ed. Alice Maclachlan and C. Allen Speight (New York, 2013), 159–82; Melissa Williams, "Introduction: On the Use and Abuse of Recognition in Politics," in *Recognition versus Self-Determination: Dilemmas of Emancipatory Politics*, ed. Glen S Coulthard, Avigail Eisenberg, and Jeremy Weber (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 3–20.

[25] Alice MacLachlan, "Beyond the Ideal Apology," in *On the Uses and Abuses of Political Apologies*, ed. Mihaela Mihai (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 13.

singular model of the ideal or best apology" is possible; and that the political apology is little different than an interpersonal apology.[26] Furthermore, while the above two assumptions are generally discussed in detail, that the political apology must be theorized in terms of success is often taken as an unquestioned norm. That this is so is due to the assumptions regarding perlocutionary force taken up, usually without sufficient discussion, from Austin.

Numerous authors have relied on such premises. From the perspective of political psychology, Blatz, Schumann, and Ross have put forward what they deem a theory of the "comprehensive" apology based on the psychological impact of government apologies for historical injustices.[27] Building on previous research into interpersonal apologies, Blatz et al. move away from MacLachlan's latter assumption while reinforcing the former. They do so as they suggest that the main difference between interpersonal and political apologies is that the vast majority of interpersonal apologies are "non-comprehensive," rather than "comprehensive."[28] Blatz et al. thus offer ten elements of a "comprehensive" apology. Through experimental analysis, they suggest that the elimination of some elements, most notably financial compensation, would negatively impact the effectiveness of the apology.[29] Further analysis leads them to the conclusion that while the comprehensive elements are important for an effective political apology, the most important measure of effectiveness is whether the offered elements of the apology match the demanded elements of the victimized group.[30] As Blatz et al. note, "perhaps the best advice to ordinary people and government leaders is: Apologize and do it as effusively as conditions permit."[31]

---

[26] MacLachlan, 13.
[27] Blatz, Schumann, and Ross, "Government Apologies for Historical Injustices."
[28] Ibid., 221.
[29] Ibid., 232.
[30] Ibid., 232-236.
[31] Ibid., 237.

The work of Janna Thompson similarly seeks the ideal conditions of political apology. Thompson's ideal theory begins with the conclusion reached experimentally by Blatz et al., that of the necessity of endorsement by the victim group to an effective, and in Thompson's language, "genuine," political apology.[32] For Thompson, the notions of effectiveness, genuineness, and idealness are intimately connected. Although she does not utilize this specific language, one could characterize her approach as follows: for an apology to be effective, it must be genuine; for an apology to be genuine, it must fulfill ideal criteria. Thompson posits four main criteria of an ideal political apology: endorsement by victims, endorsement by the group responsible for the wrong-doing, the inclusion of the injustice in the community's official history, and the professed commitment to avoid like wrongs in the future.[33] While she notes that this is specifically for an apology to Indigenous peoples, she suggests that the theory is generalizable.[34]

The idealist approach to political apologies is not merely, however, the domain of Austinians. Despite the efforts of Nick Smith to distance himself from speech act theory through an embrace of Wittgenstein, his work is perhaps the paradigmatic example of an idealized approach to the political apology.[35] Smith's main theoretical contribution has been what he deems a theory of the "categorical apology." In constituting such a theory, Smith believes that he differentiates himself from the assumptions of speech act theory. For Smith, speech act theory is merely after the technical work of definitions and categorization: first, one must do the work of conceptual analysis to come up with the necessary and sufficient conditions of the type 'political apology'. This is the act of definition. Next, one must do the work of categorization of tokens;

---

[32] Thompson, "Apology, Justice, and Respect."
[33] Thompson, 42–43.
[34] Thompson, 43.
[35] Smith, "The Categorical Apology"; Smith, *I Was Wrong: The Meanings of Apologies*.

this is the sort of real-world application of Ordinary Language envisioned by Austin: the phenomenon in question must be stratified.

To Smith, this dual work of definition-categorization is overly technical, and, at the risk of overstating Smith's account, perhaps not proper philosophy. Smith is not interested in this sort of work inspired by Austin and Searle, the discussion of which he sees as having "migrated into the field of linguistics."[36] In contradistinction to this approach, Smith likens his theory of "loose constellation of interrelated meanings" to Wittgenstein's "family resemblances."[37] From this perspective, instead of the ideal meanings of linguistic utterances, Smith is concerned with what he posits as the "categorical apology," an approach which seeks to uncover the "social meaning" of the apology, rather than its ideal definition or semantic composition.[38] Smith's focus is on the "value" of the apology "within our lives" rather than its definition as such.[39]

Despite this, Smith manifests quite clearly a methodological commitment to the positing of the act of speech on a scale of success. This is, to my mind, the hallmark of the technical or idealistic approach to speech: the ability to categorize speech as either 'successful' or 'unsuccessful', and in Smith's case, the positing of a gradation of 'success' commensurate with a gradation of 'meaning'. For Smith, the more meaning conveyed, the more successful the apology. While Smith's approach to meaning may be more plural than that of Thompson as he situates it within actually-existing communities rather than an ideal sphere, his reliance on a theory of normative conditions embraces a similar framework. What this discussion of Smith further suggests is that speech act theory is not the sole methodology which places political

---

[36] Smith, *I Was Wrong: The Meanings of Apologies*, 8. It is unclear whether Smith sees this trend as having migrated from Anglo-American philosophy of language to the social sciences more broadly.
[37] Smith, 12, 20.
[38] Smith, 18.
[39] Smith, 21.

speech on a spectrum between 'successful' and 'unsuccessful'. For this reason, Smith does not distance himself from the Austinian approach, in that to posit speech as successful or unsuccessful requires an understanding of ideal conditions of successful speech.[40]

1.3 The limits of a serious apology

But is language necessarily serious in these ways? Could language not be, instead, *unserious*, "where we play and—make up the rules as we go along[,]" and "where we alter them—as we go along[?]"[41] For our purposes, does not a serious approach to political language restrict political action to a sort of technical craft? Perhaps the most famous critique of Austin along these lines is provided by Jacques Derrida in his essay "Signature Event Context."[42] Derrida's critique is illustrative, in that to consider speech as 'serious' is to constrain its potential to elicit a multiplicity of meanings.[43] In our case, this is to limit the extent to which the political apology can lead to novelty in politics.[44] When interpolated to the political realm, speech act theory thus suggests boundaries only within which the public can create meaning for themselves out of their encounter with political objects. This further inhibits the ability for such encounters to constitute radically different worlds. For the Arendtian approach I endorse below, this constrains the political freedom found in the act of the political apology.[45]

---

[40] Wittgenstein's theory of social meaning, then, holds only in the loosest sense. The main contribution of the late Wittgenstein is that speech, even speech that is 'socially meaningful', is always liable to disruption and change. See James Tully, *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume I, Democracy and Civic Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[41] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Third (Oxford: Basil Blackwood, 1984), para. 83.

[42] Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Limited Inc.*, trans. Samuel Weber (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 1–23; For an Anglo-American critique along Derridean lines, see Donald Davidson, "Locating Literary Language," in *Truth, Language, and History: Philosophyical Essays Volume 5* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 167–82; Donald Davidson, "James Joyce and Humpty Dumpty," in *Truth, Language, and History: Philosophyical Essays Volume 5* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 143–58.

[43] For Derrida, this multiplicity grounds the 'undecidability' of all writing.

[44] For Arendt, 'natality'.

[45] For a discussion of deconstruction as political, see David Bates, "Crisis Between the Wars: Derrida and the Origins of Undecidability," *Representations* 90, no. 1 (2005): 6–7.

The main Austinian premise that Derrida wishes to challenge regards the univocality of writing.[46] For Derrida, it is problematic to view writing as the communication of a singular "semantic message" that is merely extended by technology.[47] Such a view of writing as the extension of meaning assumes "the unity of wholeness and meaning," and therefore that change in meaning occurs by accident.[48] Such an approach is not limited to Austin—for Derrida, it is "*the* system of interpretation" of "the history of philosophy."[49] Condillac is indicative of this view: that writing is a passive tool, and therefore through articulation, it does not affect its structure or contents.[50] Writing, in the classical interpretation, is therefore a means of representation of an "ideal content (meaning)" for those presently absent.[51]

The considered examples, in their attempts to uncover the ideal apology, all seem to rest on what Derrida calls the Austinian premise of a "total context" for the political apology.[52] This concerns both the general technical explication of felicity conditions and the particular element of the intention of the speaker.[53] As they do so, they, as much as Austin's theory of performative utterances, fall back into a univocal theory of communication, where all communication is total and complete.[54] In other words, "no residue . . . escapes the present totalization" of the conscious intention of speaker or hearer.[55] Speech act theory therefore necessitates the possibility "of absolutely meaningful speech."[56] Risk of failure, then, is presented as an avoidable, and thus

---

[46] Here and elsewhere, writing refers not to the written word as such, but all linguistic functioning.
[47] Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 3.
[48] Derrida, 3.
[49] Derrida, 3, Emphasis in original.
[50] Derrida, 4.
[51] Derrida, 6.
[52] Derrida, 14.
[53] Derrida, 14.
[54] Derrida, 14.
[55] Derrida, 14.
[56] Derrida, 15.

non-illustrative, aspect of speech.[57] Because Austin does not account for the structural necessity

of infelicity, however, and of the obsolescence of a success/failure criterion of speech, Austin re-

inscribes the communicative value/force distinction he wishes to escape.[58] Because the iterability

of speech structures its possibility, the merely explicitly citable utterance—the poetic, the

dramatic, the non-serious—is indicative of the general condition of all language: its différance.[59]

This does not mean that intention is not at all relevant. Rather, Derrida's point is that intention

"will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance."[60]

     For Derrida, then, the political apology can never be absolutely or ideally meaningful.

This is because all present apologies are conditioned by all those absent apologies, however

distant spatially or temporally. This means that all apologies are, in a sense, failures; they are

never able realize any distinct meaning. But this also means that apologies are accessible as

meaningful in a multiplicity of ways, in a multiplicity of contexts, by a multiplicity of agents; all

apologies are, in a sense, successes. In political cases, this means that the apology is only

constrained by the imaginations of those who engage with it.[61]

     In the realm of political philosophy, the importance of the serious character of politics is

not an uncommon position. Concerns over the danger that the sophist poses to the political

community have informed Western political thought since Plato. Such a perspective can be

found, in perhaps its most rigorous articulation, in Habermas' theory of communicative action.

Habermas grounds his project upon a theory of the relationship between knowledge and

communication in which meaningful communication necessitates the end of 'coming to

---

[57] Derrida, 15.
[58] Derrida, 15.
[59] Derrida, 17.
[60] Derrida, 18.
[61] Imagination, moreover, is in a constant process of renewal.

consensus'. Habermas' project relies on the premise that "an interaction can succeed only if those involved arrive at a consensus among themselves."[62] But a turn to Wittgenstein's theory of family resemblances casts doubt on whether this is the case, or whether it should be. As Rüdiger Bubner notes, "the rich spectrum of human communication should not be reduced to a single model of a scientific system of exact statements."[63] As such, "there is just as little justification, however, for considering every actual use of language to be based on one model of intersubjective recognition … Not with every sentence that we speak do we imply the 'general and unforced consensus.'"[64] As explored above, the graphematic character of language prevents this. To do so would be to cover over the fact that while rationality is certainly "inalienable" to knowledge, that rationality does not share the same relationship with *praxis*, which resists the totalizing grasp of theory.[65]

A turn to Arendt makes the political salience of this Derridean critique apparent. In Arendtian language, a univocal approach to political speech would be to destroy the remainder—that which cannot be grasped by technical means—that ensures natality in a world. As Arendt notes, "while the strength of the production process is entirely absorbed in and exhausted by the end product, the strength of the action process is never exhausted in a single deed but, on the contrary, can grow while its consequences multiply; what endures in the realm of human affairs are these processes, and their endurance is as unlimited, as independent of the perishability of material and the mortality of men as the endurance of humanity itself."[66]

---

[62] Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: "Reason and the Rationalization of Society,"* trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 106.

[63] Rüdiger Bubner, "Habermas's Concept of Critical Theory," in *Habermas: Critical Debates*, ed. John B. Thompson and David Held (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), 52.

[64] Bubner, 52.

[65] Bubner, 56.

[66] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Second (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 233.

In other words, attempts to grasp the political apology scientifically, as a technical phenomenon, cover over additional effects of the apology which are not easily stratified via a success/failure calculation. As MacLachlan notes, "most apologies perform multiple functions."[67] One of the most significant contributions of Arendt's political thought is her effort to break apart connections between the political and the ideal. For Arendt, in as much as the world of action (most often as linguistic utterance) is public, it is not the realm of ideality. Rather, it is the realm of performance and experience, which necessitates interpretive flux rather than essential stability. By putting oneself in front of one's community as a performer before an audience, through the act of the political apology one is judged by the community. This does not, however, entail a univocal judgement; it is the plurality of judgment which ensures the basis of the political. For Arendt, then, social meaning is produced by the power of the coming-together of citizens in public.[68] This suggests that the political apology should not be likened to a technical craft, but an artistic performance. As Arendt notes, "The performing arts, on the contrary, have indeed a strong affinity with politics. Performing artists … need an audience to show their virtuosity, just as acting men need the presence of others before whom they can appear; both need a publicly organized space for their 'work,' and both depend upon others for the performance itself. Such a space of appearances is not to be taken for granted wherever men live together in a community."[69] Political speech therefore becomes meaningful through intersubjective performance and judgement, and not as interpersonal recognition.

---

[67] MacLachlan, "REVIEW: The State of 'Sorry': Official Apologies and Their Absence," 376.
[68] For what I interpret as an Arendtian approach to the "power" of apology, see Celermajer, *The Sins of the Nation and the Ritual of Apologies*.
[69] Hannah Arendt, "What Is Freedom?," in *Between Past and Future* (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), 154.

1.4 Conclusion

In Section 1, I have argued that to consider the political apology via speech act theory is to constrain its potential as a political object. Because speech act theory stresses the uncovering of an ideal meaning behind a text, whether through an exploration of authorial intent or the text's context, when utilized in political cases it transforms politics into a technical, or scientific, craft. This functions to limit the ways in which citizens can engage with political objects and the multiplicity of meanings they might produce out of such contact. This further constrains the potential for political acts of speech, and in our case political apologies, to foster change, to be explored below.

2. Apology as action

This section describes an approach to the political apology from the philosophy of Hannah Arendt. I build on Arendt's understanding of politics in *The Human Condition*, which grounds meaning in the plural act of interpretation. I argue that Arendt's theory surpasses the limitations of the Austinian approach, and conclude by articulating the role of affect in an apology's disclosive function.

2.1 Arendt and the art of political speech

One of the main concerns arising out of the literature on political apologies is thus the exact effect of apologies in reconciliation initiatives. It is not immediately clear if a verbal utterance of one public official, even in our case a Prime Minister, can effect a *transformative* change in circumstances of gross injustice. Moreover, it is not apparent that such public speech would be desired by either Indigenous or settler populations, given the risks of rhetoric and sophistry masquerading as genuine political engagement. This leads to the question that if political

apologies cannot lead to discrete, predictable effects for either Indigenous or settler populations, as in the Austinian framework, why would they be endorsed? What could it mean for the art of the apology to effect transformation? The intractability of these questions have given rise to a general skepticism in terms of the ability of apologies to effect meaningful change in settler-colonial contexts.

That various authors share skepticism towards the political apology does not, however, mean that they are skeptical for the same reasons. Jeff Spinner-Halev, for instance, rejects the transformational potential of the political apology outright. As Spinner-Halev notes, "It is hard to see how apologies would be so transformative. Apology advocates often write as if apologies will cause a culture shift among the members of a political community, but culture shifts, or large changes in a community's normative framework, take time—many years, and sometimes decades."[70] Corntassel and Holder, meanwhile, suggest the capacity for political apologies to be transformative, if and only if such apologies move away from state priorities and towards "meaningful forms of restitution and group compensation."[71] While opposed, both views are skeptical of the apology's transformational potential.

I believe that both sorts of skepticism are, however, misplaced. While sympathetic to Spinner-Halev's argument, his outright skepticism is limited as it disconnects exceptional acts of politics, as *res publica*, from politics as such. It does so because it neglects the extent to which exceptional acts of political speech constitute a political world. By reading the political apology's transformational potential as merely an effect of its content, Corntassel and Holder's view is also limited to the extent to which it leads to a notion that the apology can be perfected to

---

[70] Jeff Spinner-Halev, *Enduring Injustice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 90.
[71] Jeff Corntassel and Cindy Holder, "Who's Sorry Now? Government Apologies, Truth Commissions, and Indigenous Self-Determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala, and Peru," *Human Rights Review* 9, no. 4 (2008): 486, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12142-008-0065-3.

actualize transformation, and that its product would therefore be readily measured. As will be argued, perfectibility is antithetical to the apology's world-constituting function.

The point I wish to stress is that the 'product' of the political apology is found at the level of world itself, and not 'in the world'. The political apology's transformational potential is best characterized, then, as a mode of world-constitution via world-disclosure. Nikolas Kompridis explains world-disclosure as operating at two different levels: that of "first-order disclosure" and that of "second-order disclosure."[72] In the former, world-disclosure serves to disclose "an already interpreted, symbolically structured world;" in the latter, "the disclosure of new horizons of meaning as to the disclosure of previously hidden or unthematized dimensions of meaning."[73] This second mode of world-disclosure is essential to world-constitution—it is, in Kompridis' words, "a meaning-creative process capable of making, unmaking and remaking worlds."[74] Moreover, as Kompridis notes, it is not always possible to distinguish clearly between these two levels. The disclosure of the always-already is intimately bound to the articulation of new possibilities. Similarly, new possibilities are intimately bound to the articulation of the always-already.[75]

This does not mean, however, that all speech uttered in what we would normally consider political situations discloses a political world. Thus, not *all* political apologies are transformational. This is because not all speech uttered in contemporary politics is genuinely political. Arendt explains this through her understanding of the relational character of genuine

---

[72] Nikolas Kompridis, "On World Disclosure: Heidegger, Habermas and Dewey," *Thesis Eleven* 37, no. 1 (1994): 29, https://doi.org/10.1177/072551369403700104.
[73] Kompridis, 29.
[74] Kompridis, 29.
[75] See also Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006). Here Kompridis further fleshes out a conception of disclosure as the basis of Critical Theory, in contradistinction to the dominant Habermasian approach.

political speech.[76] While political speech begins with the individual speaker for Arendt, and therein serves to disclose the "who" of the individual speaker, this is not the disclosure of a "lonely" identity, which Arendt associates with "mere talk," as in when speech is utilized in a means-end calculus.[77] Here, the connection to Heidegger is explicit: for Heidegger, idle talk refers to the interpreting and understanding of average-everyday Dasein as being-in-the-world.[78] Idle talk allow for communication, in that "we have *the same thing* in view, because it is in *the same* averageness that we have a common understanding of what is said,"[79] but this is superficial, in that it leaves Dasein "cut off" from "genuine" relationships with the world, each other, and being-in itself.[80]

Rather, truly political speech is genuine in that it discloses the "who" of the speaker in "human togetherness," "where people are *with* others and neither for nor against them."[81] This human togetherness thus incorporates varied individual interests, without which there would be no content to political speech, but come together as "*inter-est,* which lies between people and therefore can relate them together."[82] Political apologies are thus genuine when they disclose the world in which the speaker acts *as intersubjective*. In settler-colonial contexts, this amounts to an important connection between settler and Indigenous populations. Even if settler and Indigenous worlds are distinct, this does not prevent either change in our disparate worlds via encounter, or the constitution of new, postcolonial worlds. The graphematic character of speech, or the fact that meaning changes upon interpretation, then, *allows* for such worldly change.

---

[76] See Dana Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Andrew Schaap, *Political Reconciliation* (London: Routledge, 2005), chap. 4.

[77] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 180.

[78] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Haper Perennial, 2008), 211 [H. 168].

[79] Heidegger, 212, [H. 168].

[80] Heidegger, 214, [H. 170].

[81] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 180. This conception of the genuine is to be contrasted to more explicity personalistic theories, as considered throughout.

[82] Arendt, 182.

Spinner-Halev is thus right in that the domain of the political apology, if it is to be transformational, is, as Arendt notes on political speech, "somewhat intangible."[83] Even if the effects of a political apology are *felt* rather than *known,* and thus have more affective rather than epistemological salience, that the political world is intangible does not mean it is not "real."[84] Likewise, it does not mean that the *effects* of the political apology, as world-constituting, are not real. As Arendt notes, "this in-between is no less real than the world of things we visibly have in common."[85] Rather, the products of political speech and action become intentionally available due their falling "into an already existing web where their immediate consequence can be felt."[86] Political apologies are thus real to the extent that they are felt in their connect to a host of orientation. The Harper apology is real to the extent to which it discloses the world of the settler colony.

Yet, while political speech and action disclose themselves in human togetherness as real or meaningful, they are nevertheless extremely complex and fraught with difficulty. Political speech, in its artistic nature, resists the worlding process described by the later Heidegger, in that they cannot be grasped as such.[87] As disclosed, artistic products endure through a process of revealing and concealing, and not outright and total access. As Arendt notes, echoing Heidegger as much as Derrida, "while the strength of the production process is entirely absorbed in and exhausted by the end product, the strength of the action process is never exhausted in a single deed but, on the contrary, can grow while its consequences multiply; what endures in the realm of human affairs are these processes, and their endurance is as unlimited, as independent of the

---

83 Arendt, 183.
84 Arendt, 183.
85 Arendt, 183.
86 Arendt, 184.
87 See Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013).

perishability of material and the morality of men as the endurance of humanity itself."[88] In other words, political speech endures in the world because the disclosive task of an hermeneutical encounter is never complete, as every encounter brings with it a change in meaning. For Arendt, this resistance to closure is due to the fact of human plurality. As Arendt notes, "it is because of this already existing web of human relationships, with its innumerable, conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its purpose."[89] Arendtian action is not instrumental, and is thus undertaken *for-the-sake-of-which*, not *in-order-to.*[90] Through political apologies, we are never actualizing an ideal purpose which stands outside action, but a human capacity. This capacity, furthermore, bears with it always the potential for transformation, which rests at the heart of reconciliation. This is because the political apology—as action, instead of work or labor—"bestow[s] a measure of permanence and durability upon the futility of mortal life and the fleeting character of human time. Action, in so far as it engages in founding and preserving political bodies, creates the conditions for remembrance, that is, history."[91] To be of a reconciled political community is thus to be a member of an intersubjective interpretive sphere.

Consequentially, political apologies are distinct from other types of products because they lack stability and durability.[92] This is because they are not tangible things: "their reality depends entirely upon human plurality, upon the constant presence of others who can see and hear and therefore testify to their existence."[93] In order to become tangible, the products of politics "must first be seen, heard, and remembered then transformed, reified as it were, into things—into sayings of poetry, the written page or the printed book, into paintings or sculpture,

---

[88] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 233.
[89] Arendt, 184.
[90] Arendt, 154.
[91] Arendt, 8–9.
[92] Arendt, 95.
[93] Arendt, 95.

into all sorts of records, documents, and monuments."[94] These artistic acts thus, as *res publica,* constitute and transform political world. While action and speech are interpreted and understood as in idle talk, they are first and foremost experienced as a genuine connection between human beings as being-in-the-world.

2.2 Affective politics beyond intent

Nevertheless, to engage in a politics of affective experience is certainly a risk. Arendt warns us that as affect disrupts, it can also "distract" from and "replace" political action.[95] Arendt's skepticism is taken: "without the proper safeguards," victim testimony may "collapse into a celebration of victimhood and shallow compassion."[96] What it might mean for political apologies to be *felt* rather than *known* is made clear by Arendt's discussion of the passions in *On Revolution* and guilt in her essay on collective responsibility, which contain Arendt's most direct criticism of political affect. In the former, Arendt argues that political affect is dangerous as it *necessarily* leads to "crime and criminality on the political scene."[97] This insight is grounded on the distinction between the place of affect and the place of action. For Arendt, affect is of the "human heart," and as such, "a place of darkness" impenetrable to others.[98] As such, when matters of the heart come into the "light" of the public sphere and become the object of political debate, they do not shake off the yoke of darkness—for political others, behind matters of the heart "ulterior motives may lurk, such as hypocrisy and deceit."[99] Thus, paradoxically to the above suggestions, it would appear that as the political apology relies upon affect, it cannot become genuinely intersubjective, and thus political.

---

[94] Arendt, 95.
[95] Sonali Chakravarti, *Sing the Rage: Listening to Anger after Mass Violence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 97–100.
[96] Chakravarti, 105.
[97] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 88.
[98] Arendt, 86.
[99] Arendt, 86.

The risk of the affective dimension of political apologies is immediately apparent. For many scholars, the political apology is dangerous *precisely because* it might actualize political conflict.[100] Catherine Lu notes, for instance, that experiences of shame and guilt, such as those produced by the Harper apology, may have either salutary or destructive outcomes.[101] First, apologies may not induce guilt or shame in the settler population; second, the settler population may feel guilt or shame for the wrong reasons; and third, feelings of guilt or shame may provoke destructive responses.[102] Thus, Lu's argument might lead one back into the necessity of felicity conditions to control the affective dimension of the political apology. But this may not be tenable if there is always a 'risk of affect', due to the plural act of interpretive judgement as espoused by the Arendtian account.

From an Arendtian perspective, however, the affective element of the apology is not politically irrelevant *as such*. Rather, it is problematic to the extent that it embraces an attempt to get to the "innermost motives" of political action, where "intrigue and calumny, treachery and hypocrisy" lurk behind every deed,[103] and the efforts of "unmasking the disguises"[104] can only "poison all human relations."[105] This is because the act of unmasking is to render a human being "politically irrelevant" in that it is not a "natural man" that enters political life, but a political *actor* who can only 'play the game' of politics from behind the cover of a mask.[106] By stripping one's mask, one strips the rights and duties of citizenship, leaving behind a bare life exposed to violence and destruction. Arendt's critique thus gives us reason to consider not only the efficacy,

---

[100] For discussion, see Thompson, "Apology, Justice, and Respect."

[101] Catherine Lu, "Shame, Guilt, and Reconciliation after War," *European Journal of Social Theory* 11, no. 3 (2008): 371–72.

[102] Lu, 373–74.

[103] Arendt, *On Revolution*, 86.

[104] Arendt, 90.

[105] Arendt, 88.

[106] Arendt, 97.

but also the dangers of a concern over a 'genuine' apology. To question the 'genuine' character of the apologizer in this way is not, as it might seem, to uncover politically relevant truths about sophistry, but to focus our shared gaze *away* from questions of intersubjective *inter-est* and towards questions of individual interest. To ask whether Stephen Harper was genuine or not is to ask a question about individual mental states which can never truly be found out and which obscures the political phenomenon at hand.

To eliminate the question of intent, however, is not to eliminate the presence of affect. Matters of the heart *do* certainly enmesh the political apology. The issue that Arendt posits is not that political action is passionate, but that speech and action are what is displayed in public, and not the matters of the heart. Therefore, Arendt's project is a critique of both a mode of *doing* politics *(praxis* as opposed to *techne)* and a method of *interpreting* politics (artistic as opposed to technical). This is one of the dangers Arendt reads in the French Revolution, as the revolutionaries transposed the question of poverty to the political realm. By grounding political legitimacy in *le peuple,* and defining this group by a "capacity to suffer," Rousseau and Sieyès as much as Robespierre elevated "compassion to the rank of the supreme political passion and of the highest political virtue."[107] While Robespierre's mode of doing politics actualized violence, this was justified only on the basis of a theoretical interpretation of politics as a technical enterprise. From an Arendtian perspective, then, we can allow affect to do the work of disclosure *as long as it does not become the object of political critique*. The political potential that the apology manifests is not the *mere* presence or absence of affect, but the possibility that affect may disclose political, and not personal, world. For these reasons, work on political apologies enters a hermeneutic relationship with its effects, as social-scientific work on the proper

---

[107] Arendt, 65.

interpretation of political apologies cannot be separated from the ethical demands of its factical articulation.[108]

2.3 Affective disclosure

In the Canadian context, the availability of an Indigenous world is in constant need of re-assertion. As Taiaiake Alfred notes, in order to solve structural domination contemporarily, "Our people cannot and will not forget this history."[109] For scholars such as Alfred, Indigenous self-determination is premised upon the very idea of an assertion of Indigenous history in relation to past (and enduring) colonial violence. At times, however, this history needs to be re-appraised, through what Alfred calls a "creative reinterpretation," to the extent that history may essentialize Indigeneity and constrain Indigenous mobilization.[110] As Burke A. Hendrix argues, various "*social* costs to Native communities" stem not only "from present injustices, but also from the way historical injustices are remembered (on both sides)."[111] But how is this world-disclosure *affective*, and how could the political apology achieve it? In short, I believe this occurs as the political apology becomes a public political object, or a "public thing," which through its dual interpretation-reification serves to *move* the public.[112]

Sarah Ahmed refers to this phenomenon as affect being "sticky:" "affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects."[113] Affect thus

---

[108] In other word, different "circumstances of justice" requires different interpretive schemes. See Colleen Murphy, *A Moral Theory of Political Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[109] Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness : An Indigenous Manifesto* (Don Mills, Ont. ; Oxford University Press, 2009), 13.

[110] Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse : Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Toronto, Ont. : Broadview Press, 2005), 87–88.

[111] Burke A. Hendrix, "Memory in Native American Land Claims," *Political Theory* 33, no. 6 (2005): 775, https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591705280658.

[112] For the general use of this concept, see Bonnie Honig, *Public Things: Democracy in Disrepair* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).

[113] Sara Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 29.

begins (with) the "intimate contact with things," in the "encounter" of an object which inspires such an affect.[114] The political apology is apt, because its affective 'values' are multiple; in the encounter of an apology, many affects occur, from the rage of injustice and the shame and guilt of exposure to the happiness of possible reconciliation. Affect can thus not be properly analyzed as a discrete object.[115] It is the intersubjective uptake of these forces that produces world, through an interpretive encounter. As the political apology produces these affective forces— shame, guilt, anger, resentment—it brings-forth the 'text' of the apology, and in doing so situates itself within, and transforms, already-existing world(s).

It achieves this because contact with an affective event (such as the apology) is an "evaluation,"—a judgement—from which the bringing-forth of value leads to the constitution of a world from many disparate parts.[116] For Ahmed, our world becomes our "bodily horizon"—a "horizon of likes," both of what we like but also "what we are like."[117] Affect thus becomes social when objects are shared, and the intersubjective nature of our shared world becomes manifest in the interactions with others.[118] Yet, as with our shared world, these objects are always-already evaluated: in order to be recognized as such, they must already be evaluated as possessing a certain affective description.[119] We therefore encounter objects in a plurality of ways, which can lead to the creation of what Ahmed calls "affect aliens": those who fall "out of

---

[114] Ahmed, 31.

[115] Writing on shame, although I believe the description is suited to any complex affect, Elspeth Probyn notes that "shame cannot be conceived of as an external object that could be dispassionately described, nor is it a purely personal feeling. Shame is subjective in the strong sense of bringing into being an entity or an idea through the specific explosion of mind, body, place, and history. Shame is the product of many forces." Elspeth Probyn, "Writing Shame," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 81.

[116] Ahmed, "Happy Objects," 31; In this manner, they are, in Husserlian language, "transcendent." See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy—First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982).

[117] Ahmed, "Happy Objects," 32.

[118] Affect is thus the combination of "the inherent and the lived experience of social structures—the biology and biography of a person." Probyn, "Writing Shame," 82.

[119] Ahmed, "Happy Objects," 41.

line with an affective community."[120] As Ahmed notes, these affect aliens are often seen as the *cause* of conflict.

To the extent that they are disruptive, affect aliens may be accused of 'poisoning the well'. For instance, negative affective responses to the 2008 apology seem to be in contradiction to the apology as an act of reconciliation. As negative affective responses might seem 'out of place' for a reconciliation effort, those who feel them are similarly displaced. If the point of the political apology is to help produce a reconciled political world, healing the relationship between Indigenous communities and the Canadian government, presumably only those who reject such a reconciliation outright would become alienated by the apology. Settler aliens may be interpreted as evidence of an ideology of Canadian chauvinism, which embraces (at some level) an unchanging eliminationist approach to Indigenous difference. Similarly, the negative affective responses of Indigenous aliens may be reduced to a fundamental and insurmountable antagonism to Canada. To be sure, this could be the case. The line between Canadian nationalism and Canadian chauvinism is just as unclear as the line between Indigenous sovereignty and a rejection of Canadian legitimacy, to say nothing of the obvious disparity in the potential to inflict violence between the two. It seems reasonable to assume that at the ideological extremes, the 2008 apology could have produced such responses.

At the same time, however, not all affect aliens of the 2008 apology should be described as enemies of reconciliation. Such a reductive view would once again rely upon the univocality of the apologetic event, as moving its audience in only one way. To the extent that the apology can only be taken up in one discrete manner, it covers over the plurality of responses and interpretations that make up the political world in which it is constituted as meaningful. To mark

---

[120] Ahmed, 37.

the apology as the work of producing only one affective response or one set of affective

responses—for instance, reconciliation as 'positive feeling' toward the political other—would

limit its potential. The expectation that the apology would only produce one set of affect fails not

only to account for the manner in which the nature of the political necessitates a plurality of

interpretive responses, but that the so-called 'negative affects' can be just as politically

productive in a reconciliation initiative.

    As Ahmed argues, these affective moments of conflict can be productive as they

contribute to world-constitution. In this role as disruptor of the normative affective community,

the affect alien becomes a contributor to "an alternative model of the social good."[121] Rather than

"refusing to put bad feelings to one side in the hope that we can 'just get along',"[122] the affect

alien disrupts and points us elsewhere, "sometimes to produce new visions of life."[123] In

situations of injustice, the affect alien discloses both the object as a source of injustice and the

world in which it gains meaning as an unjust world. In doing so, it serves simultaneously as a

phenomenal indication and impetus for political action. It furthermore escapes from a technical

mode and guides us towards an artistic *praxis*.[124] As Christina Tarnopolsky writes, shame—as an

intersubjective emotion—thus escapes the radical distinctions between self, world, and other, and

therein offers potentialities rather than closures: "in the moment when one feels the gap that

opens up between one's self and the other in the occurrent experience of shame, there is no

logical or psychological necessity that this gap be filled by making oneself over in the image of

---

[121] Ahmed, 50.
[122] Ahmed, 50.
[123] Probyn, "Writing Shame," 89.
[124] Affect thus functions as what Sedgwick calls "a kind of free radical," in that it "intensifies or alters the meaning of … almost anything." Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, *Touching Feeling : Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham : Duke University Press, 2003), 62.

the other or by making the other and the world conform to the self."[125] Disruption thus allows for

a manifestation of collective agency that is horizontal, democratic, and plural, rather than

vertical, totalitarian, and totalizing.[126] This democratic potential to open up new avenues for a

non-dominating intersubjectivity is also found in texts on other so-called 'negative' emotions.

Both anger and resentment, for instance, have been noted for their disclosive potential.[127] In

doing so, indignation and resentment can help to both evaluate and guide action.[128] As Coulthard

argues, in settler-colonial contexts where the injustice that Indigenous peoples face is interpreted

as an "incapacitating inability or unwillingness to get over the past," Indigenous "resentment" is

actually "a politicized expression of Indigenous anger and outrage directed at a structural and

symbolic violence" that permeates the settler state.[129]

It is thus in its ability to produce a plurality of responses that the potential of the political

apology is grounded. As the apology affects, it reveals the multiplicity of ways that the world of

the settler colony is structured, in a way that highlights the connections between disparate

structures, actions, agents, and discourses which are normally inaccessible. As an exceptional

affective event, the political apology makes politics meaningful to the extent that it affects.

2.4 Conclusion

Section 2 has thus argued for an interpretive approach which grounds a political apology's

meaningfulness in its ability to disclose an intersubjective world. That this world is disclosed

affectively means that the political apology's product is intangible; this intangibility, however,

---

[125] Christina H. Tarnopolsky, *Prudes, Perverts, and Tyrants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 161.
[126] Tarnopolsky, 150-1,170-1.
[127] Sonali Chakravarti, for instances, argues that anger is a central element to victim testimony in contexts of transitional justice, where anger's potential to reveal and inspire makes it full of "political possibility:" Chakravarti, *Sing the Rage: Listening to Anger after Mass Violence*, 105.
[128] Mihaela Mihai, *Negative Emotions and Transitional Justice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 67–70.
[129] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 109.

lends it the flexibility to respond to the plurality of the political realm. This allows the apology to constitute meaning in a variety of political circumstances.

3.0 The Harper apology and justice

This section puts forward two interpretations of the 2008 Harper apology. The first reads the apology as an Austinian speech act, the second as a moment of Arendtian action. I suggest that the former demonstrates the value of the apology as a remedy to interactional injustice, which, while useful, is incongruous with the structural nature of the injustice of settler-colonialism. The latter succeeds to the extent that it responds to the nature of justice demanded in Canada as a settler colony, and provides resources from which a post-colonial world can be built.[130]

3.1 Justice between speech acts and action

In his opening remarks, prior to the official transcribed text of the apology, Harper makes the following comment:

> Mr. Speaker, before I begin officially, let me just take a moment to acknowledge the role of certain colleagues here in the House of Commons here in today's events, although the responsibility for the apology is ultimately mine alone . . . there are several of my colleagues who do deserve the credit.[131]

Harper goes on to credit specific colleagues, including the House Opposition Leader, and then recites the rest of the apology.[132] What is the importance of this brief (some might say off-hand) comment? It is important because I believe it illuminates the ambiguity of political speech, as

---

[130] Here and below, I use 'resource' hesitantly. As with Arendtian 'products' of political action, political resources should not be interpreted as ready-made material.
[131] "2008 Federal Apology to Residential School Survivors," APTN News, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQjnbK6d3oQ.
[132] See Appendix.

highlighted in the contrast found in the discussion above between the Austinian stress on an ideal meaning and the Arendtian focus on the plural act of interpretation.[133]

In this case, the ambiguity concerns *who*, exactly, is speaking. On the one hand, it is Stephen Harper the individual person that speaks. As Harper says, the responsibility for the apology is "mine alone." This is reinforced by the fact that Harper is the only one to actually utter the apology in speech. Furthermore, the setting and tone of the apology is personalized. Harper's tone is calm and personable, an apparent contrast to the emotional vacuity normally present in Harper's public performances; his audience, a host of residential school survivors, are seated closely to him in the House. These factors come together to give us a picture of the apology as personal.

On the other hand, however, the apology is clearly *not* personal, as found in the literal text. It is not Stephen Harper who speaks, but "Prime Minister Harper." It could be that Harper himself is included in the 'we' that "recognize[s] that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country." However, it is also "the government" which "now recognizes" the harm and violence of the schools, and the "absence" of the apology as an "impediment to healing and reconciliation." As such it is "the Government of Canada" which "sincerely apologizes and asks forgiveness." Furthermore, it is only "on behalf of the Government of Canada *and all Canadians*" that Prime Minister Harper apologizes, not himself.[134] It is not an 'I' that apologizes, but a 'We': "Nous le regrettons / We are sorry / Nimitataynan / Niminchinowesamin / Mamiattugut."

---

[133] In highlighting this position of ambiguity, I hope to stress the potential for a discursive methodology, as inspired by Derrida and Arendt, to prefigure political freedom. In this sense, hermeneutical concerns are never distant from practical ones.

[134] Emphasis added.

It seems apparent that both of these readings are reasonable. It is the Prime Minister's

role to act as a personal representative of both the Canadian government and the Canadian

people. Both the citizenry and their government gain their political force through their material

manifestation in our elected representatives. To add one more interpretation to the famous

dictum 'the personal is political'—the political only becomes manifest in its personal

articulation. The problem is not the extent to which the political becomes manifest in the

personal, but the extent to which critical analysis fails to link this personal manifestation *back* to

the political structures from which it came. In this way, both of these readings are limited to the

extent to which they prioritize the personal or agential qualities of the apology over its structural

conditions.

An example of this approach is the focus on recognition as the 'product' or 'political

good' of the political apology. Along this view, the apology may be seen as a symbolic exchange

between intentional agents. This idea is by no means new: in Tavuchis' foundational text, he

comments on the apology as a "social exchange."[135] Yet, the apology is "curious," as while

forgiveness is offered from one side, the apology is "asymmetrical" as on the other, it

"constitutes both the medium of exchange and the symbolic quid pro quo for, as it were,

'compensation.'"[136] This is, however, less curious if we view *recognition* as the specific good

that the apology offers.[137] In being other-regarding, the apology may be understood as an

"*offering* to the wronged party . . . acknowledging the wrong done to the other person, restoring

---

[135] As Tavuchis notes, the apology is circumscribed "in English, at least" in the language of transaction: "we commonly say that one 'owes,' 'gives,' 'offers,' ... implying thereby that something almost tangible is being bartered." Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation*, 33.
[136] Tavuchis, 33.
[137] Lynne Tirrell, for instance, suggests a framework of the apology as "other-regarding." Tirrell, "Apologizing for Atrocity: Rwanda and Recognition," 172.

recognition of the other through that acknowledgment."[138] Moreover, this is a recognition

conceived in terms of respect, in order "to rebuild the victim's status as a person."[139]

Here we see the focus on the intentional aspects of the apology, as persons, not structures,

are capable of recognition. This in turn displaces the apology from a traditional liberal-juridical

approach to justice.[140] The commensurability of the apology as a method of recognition is clear

when one compares the theoretical foundations of the politics of recognition to the literal

language of the apology itself. Charles Taylor, for instance, describes the politics of recognition

as follows:

> The thesis [of the politics of recognition] is that our identity is partly shaped by
> recognition or its absence, often by the *mis*recognition of others, and so a person or group
> of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them
> mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves.
> Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression,
> imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.[141]

For Taylor, recognition is bound up with the democratic principle of dignity, which situates

egalitarianism as the primary ideational construct behind recognition in contemporary

democracies.[142] Thus, it seems that for Taylor, and therein the politics of recognition, the

political apology may serve as a fundamental means through which justice in settler-colonial

societies could, and should, be accomplished. As Harper in his role as a political actor apologizes

to Indigenous peoples both past and present, he seemingly seeks to restore the human dignity of

Indigenous peoples. As an apology may be seen as an act between moral agents, the apology of

---

[138] Tirrell, 172.
[139] Tirrell, 172.
[140] As Spinner-Halev argues, the apology, isolated from a larger reparative schema, "lies outside" such a liberal
framework because it concerns neither redistribution nor rights. Spinner-Halev, *Enduring Injustice*, 87.
[141] Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, 1997, 25,
https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020654.
[142] Taylor, 27.

Harper, and through Harper, the government of Canada and the nation of Canada, serves the

important task of reasserting Indigenous peoples, both individually and collectively, as

individuals and collectivities *deserving* of Taylor's dignity. The Harper apology thus seems to

present a humanizing counter-narrative to the 'kill the Indian in the child' narrative of the project

of Indian Residential Schools. In this way, the subjectivity of Indigenous peoples may be re-

constituted.

The language of the politics of recognition is manifest in the Harper apology. Perhaps the

most evocative passage of the apology expresses this:

> To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and
> communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly
> remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. We now
> recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and
> traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities[sic], and we apologize for
> having done this. We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we
> undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the
> seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now
> recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were
> inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you
> suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect
> your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.[143]

First, Harper stipulates the government of Canada as the apologizing agent, and thus as an agent

with the burden (and capacity) of moral blameworthiness. Harper then situates the morally

blameworthy party—the government of Canada—in an explicitly moral relationship with

Indigenous peoples. Thus, Harper's apology not only recognizes the acts of the government of

Canada as blameworthy, but does so by recognizing Indigenous people as proper subjects of

moral concern. Through the recognition of the "rich and vibrant cultures" of Indigenous peoples,

---

[143] Stephen Harper, "Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools," 2008, accessed
March 8, 2019, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649. See Appendix.

the apology serves to create an alternative discourse around which to understand the Indigenous subject.

What I wish to suggest, however, is that as this reading stresses the agential and personal aspects of the residential schools and the apology as an official response to them, it obscures the wrongs of the schools themselves and obfuscates their connection to the contemporary injustice faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada. This is furthermore only made possible by an Austinian focus on intent, circumstance, and seriousness. The focus on intent is clear: the apology is made meaningful only so much as the speaking agent truly wills it. Recognition too, is a matter of a 'true' will. If Harper did not appear to 'mean it'—if the performance of the apology failed to demonstrate Harper's unambiguous desire for reconciliation—recognition would not have taken place. Similarly, the apology only has force when it is undertaken in the proper circumstances. This explains the 'ceremony' of the Harper apology, as it was addressed directly to residential school survivors, just like any other interpersonal apology. Likewise, the apology has its desired effect only when it is serious. This criteria is similarly manifest in Harper's individual performance, the apology's ceremony, and the overall 'official' nature of the event. No one could mistake the apology for an act of play.

But just as art may not succeed when it merely perfects a technical production of the artist's vision, or convinces its audience, so too is this interpretive approach to the apology limited.[144] Counterintuitively, considered together, what these efforts demonstrate is the extent to

---

[144] While outside the scope of this thesis, I thus situate my interpretive scheme as roughly anti-intentionalist, without embracing the possibility of ideal context. See Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977); Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 49–55; For the foundational Anglo-American text, from which I distance myself, see W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," *The Sewanee Review* 54, no. 3 (1946): 468–88; While he rejects the anti-intentionalist label, it

which the apologizing agent (who- or what-ever that might be) sought, through the performance

of the political apology, to *distance* itself from the residential schools, rather than to offer a

genuine accounting of them. It did so primarily as it differentiated the agent that formed,

endorsed, and operated the residential schools from the agent which was now apologizing. The

idea that a grand ethico-ontological transformation has taken place, and there is now a new—

perhaps post-colonial—Canadian state,[145] is precisely how the contemporary settler state shirks

its responsibility for enduring structural injustice. In other words, it does not matter if Harper

and/as the government of Canada 'meant it' or if the audience narrowly 'believed it'. For the

apology to be truly genuine, and thus useful for Indigenous peoples, it has to be able to manifest

the schools as a product of the structures of the settler colony as such.

The problem with the interpretive approach which posits the apology as interpersonal

recognition is that this may be incommensurate with the injustice of both the residential schools

and contemporary settler-colonialism. On the one hand, the *exact* injustice the 2008 apology

addresses is the existence and operation of the Canadian Indian Residential School system. From

this perspective, the apology is clearly an instance of historical injustice.[146] This is

commensurate with the apology: from the 1870s, the schools committed 'wrongs' under their

mandate as federal government; the peoples subject to these wrongs have passed, but their

descendants live on. It is important to note, however, that an important aspect of the apology was

its contemporary focus, in that survivors of the schools were present at the apology and were its

---

seems to me that the "value-maximizing" theory of Davies shares many of the Arendtian premises, see Stephen Davies, *Philosophical Perspectives on Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), particularly ch. 12 and 13.

[145] To stress the temporal distinction, as opposed to postcolonial, which in the general theoretical usage stresses continuity.

[146] A concept Duncan Ivison defines as "those harms or wrongs committed by individuals, groups, or institutions against other individuals and groups who are now dead, but whose descendants live today." Duncan Ivison, "Historical Injustice," *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, no. September 2017 (2008): 3, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548439.003.0028.

core addressee, and were a central element of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.[147] It is important to note how the framework of historical injustice frames the Harper apology and the responsibility of the Canadian state. According to the apology, wrongs were committed by the Canadian state in the past via the residential schools; while victims of these schools may live on, and the legacies of the schools may continue, the injustice is essentially over as an event: there has been an ethical transformation in the settler state.

The first thing to note about this framing of the apology is how it focuses on specific individuated entities and their (self-determined) actions. The apology concerns two such main entities: first, the historical "federal government," and second, "Aboriginal children" and Indigenous communities. Second, the 'wrong' of the residential schools is presented as the 'wrongs' that occurred between these parties: "emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children." As a result, the injustice of residential schools is characterized as what Iris Marion Young calls "wrongs of individual interaction."[148] In turn, conceiving of the injustice of residential schools as wrongs of individual rational interaction directly informs the way in which the apology was connected to reparations paid to the survivors of the residential schools. This exactly mirrors the contemporary apology, as the apologizing ex-colonial agent addresses the wronged Indigenous victim.

As the survivor testimonies attest to, it is clear that wrongs of individual interaction took place in residential schools. For example, the use of soap to 'wash out' the mouth of a child speaking an Indigenous language, the beating of children to promote European social norms, and

---

[147] As Harper notes, "It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors that have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered. It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strength of their cultures. Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the Government of Canada."
[148] Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 46.

the sexual abuse of a vulnerable population, to say nothing of the various wrongs of neglect such as gross hunger and widespread sickness, are obviously interactional wrongs: they require the violation of a norm of reciprocity of agent 'x' by agent 'y'.[149] From this perspective, restitutive justice appears commensurate with the nature of the injustice, and all that remains is the calculation of the perceived damages in relation to the wrongs suffered. It is also clear that the contemporary Canadian state does not continue to commit the majority of these wrongs.

At the same time, however, even these cases are not clearly *just* interactional. While putting soap in a child's mouth or beating school children may be interactional wrongs, once they are connected to their use as an instrument of cultural assimilation, it is less clear that an interactional approach can account for the entire nature of the injustice. Rather, perhaps the most important aspects of the injustice escape the grasp of liberal-technicality. The interactional approach does not indicate why these wrongs were sanctioned by the Canadian state or why Indigenous children were at risk of these abuses in the first place.

As Catherine Lu notes, the tendency towards a duality found in the interactional approach to colonial injustice as the violation of colonized by colonizer serves to mistake the particular manifestations of colonial injustice with colonialism's more fundamental nature as a structural injustice.[150] Indeed, the focus on the interactional injustices found within residential schools—a central element of the Harper apology—covers over the structural injustice of the schools themselves. In opposition to interactional wrongs, Young defines structural injustice as follows:

> When social processes put large groups of persons under systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities, at the same time that these processes enable others to dominate or to have a wide range of opportunities for

---

[149] For a comprehensive review of these abuses, see Ward Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004).
[150] Catherine Lu, *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 115.

developing and exercising capacities available to them. Structural injustice is a kind of moral wrong distinct from the wrongful action of an individual agent or the repressive policies of a state. Structural injustice occurs as a consequence of many individuals and institutions acting to pursue their particular goals and interests, for the most part within the limits of accepted rules and norms.[151]

A structural account of the wrong of residential schools thus allows us to appreciate the multifaceted dimension of the injustice found therein. From a structural approach, we can further understand how the wrongs of residential schools were "*structured*, through or by organized social groups, and *structural*, mediated and conditioned by social structures and processes in which many participate."[152] A close reading of the Harper apology suggests the applicability of the structural approach to injustice:

> Two primary objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child". Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.[153]

Here, we can see two main structural injustices at play. The first is the structured injustice of assimilation. It is structured primarily due to its spatial stratification of the settler colony. The dual relocation/assimilation policy of Indian Residential Schools—the taking of the Indigenous child away from their *habitus* and their forcible insertion into the *habitus* of the settler colony— grounds the entirety of the settler colonial project.[154] This is particularly egregious in the context of Indigenous societies, where unlike in the European model of property as an object to be

---

[151] Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, 52.
[152] Lu, *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics*, 118.
[153] Stephen Harper, "Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools."
[154] Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999).

owned, for Indigenous peoples, "where they are *is* who they are."[155] As a tool of settler-colonialism, the schools prescribe: "have our settler world, but lose your Indigenous soul."[156] Therefore, "invasion" in the settler-colonial project becomes a *structure* for Wolfe, not an *event*: "in its positive aspect, elimination is an organizing principle of settler-colonial society rather than a one-off (and superseded) occurrence."[157]

As it concerns the apology, however, what is important is that this structure of dispossession—the Canadian settler-state—remains in place, *despite pretenses towards its transformation*.[158] Through this organizing principle, elimination structures the settler colony in a way that allows for the appropriation of Indigenous land and therein the ground of Indigenous existence, while simultaneously shirking individual responsibility. As Wolfe notes, the replacement of killing by assimilation in the schools reinforces this logic, as it allows for the preservation of a "rule of law" mentality central to the ideological functioning of the settler state.[159] Thus, the structural injustice approach allows us to posit the schools as an injustice which supersedes the interactional wrongs found within them, which while important, are contingent on the existence of the settler state as such.

Second, the structured injustice of assimilation in the schools relies on the structural injustice of an ideology of civilizational hierarchy. As Harper notes, Indigenous values were seen as "inferior and unequal;" to 'kill the Indian in the child' was not just seen as *just*, but also as an

---

[155] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 388, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240.
[156] Wolfe, 397.
[157] Wolfe, 388.
[158] As Coulthard argues, especially in settler colonies, primitive accumulation by a predatory state is never a one-off event as originally theorized by Marx, but a continual process of dispossession. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, chap. 9.
[159] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 402.

ethical imperative.[160] Moreover, this is premised upon the *ability* of the Indigenous persons and

peoples *to* conform, and thus grounds the assimilationist project. The schools were not just about

the forced conformity of Indigenous value-systems to settler-colonial ones due to mere

difference, but due to the universal superiority of the latter. Likewise, the settler-Canadian

structures of law, politics, culture, and society which are hegemonic in Canada have not

disappeared, and thus it is unlikely that contemporary structures place much value at all on

Indigenous systems of value, despite their ability to commodify Indigenous art in Canadian

museums and galleries or appropriate Indigeneity as a response to capitalist ecological crisis.

Thus, we can understand not just the residential schools as a structural injustice, but

settler-colonialism itself as a structural injustice, one which constitutes and is constituted by

notions of difference in value between associated political bodies. For Lea Ypi, this is what

makes colonialism is a "distinctive wrong."[161] What this means for Ypi is that to understood

colonialism, one must go beyond its particular historical manifestations. These are, for Ypi as for

Lu, merely contingent. As a distinctive wrong, colonialism's injustice emerges from "the

creation and upholding of a political association that denies its members equal and reciprocal

terms of cooperation."[162] Colonialism thus violates one or both of the creation of associative

norms or the principles around which such associations are structured.[163] Fundamentally, Ypi's

critique of colonialism is a relational one; from a cosmopolitan perspective, Ypi suggests that

colonialism (and thus the international system in which it operates) is morally wrong in that it

---

[160] Such logic is fundamental to the European colonial experience, settler or not; as Antony Anghie notes in his discussion of the origins of American colonization, full membership in international community has always been premised upon the conformity to European values under the guise of universality. Antony Anghie, "Francisco De Vitoria and the Colonial Origins of International Law," *Social & Legal Studies* 5, no. 3 (September 17, 1996): 332, https://doi.org/10.1177/096466399600500303.

[161] Lea Ypi, "What's Wrong with Colonialism," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 41, no. 2 (2013): 162–63, https://doi.org/10.1111/papa.12014.

[162] Ypi, 158.

[163] Ypi, 178–80.

lacks the principles of reciprocity and equality needed for just political associations.[164] This further implies the necessity of just contracts and institutions between states to maintain their status as equals.[165] The apology does little to address these questions if we understand it from the Austinian framework.

The schools are therefore a particularly apt example of how an account of structural injustice can flesh out the individual wrongs of the schools in connection to the colonial apparatus, and thus the need for an interpretive approach to the apology which highlights the importance of settler-colonial structures. In their constitution, the schools relied upon their construction by the Canadian state as the authoritative actor in Canada. Only under the explicit sanction of the 'organized social group' of the Canadian state—the schools as state-policy—could the project maintain widespread legitimacy. In this way, the schools, as nation-wide disciplinary institutions, were little different than general public education initiatives. What makes the schools an injustice, then, was not necessarily their contingent wrongs, but the fact that the schools were imposed without respect to Indigenous authority. In the language of Ypi, the association created between Canadian and Indigenous peoples via the schools involved the construction of an association without equality or reciprocity. In every respect, the schools were asymmetrical: they were created *for* Indigenous children *by* the Canadian state; they relied on the lack of power in Indigenous communities, both internally in respect to their ability to self-determine, and externally in respect to legal equality before the Canadian state; and they required the legal hegemony of the Canadian state in respect to domestic and international law. Furthermore, only within these legal and political structures could the ideological work of structural injustice unfold and reinforce itself. As the schools further disrupted Indigenous

---

[164] Ypi, 174.
[165] Ypi, 175.

practices of self-governance, and therefore instigated crises of Indigenous authority, the

necessity of the schools as a civilizational mission was justified by the very crises it helped

produce.

The 2008 apology thus fails to the extent to which it covers over the fact that the

contemporary settler state is not transformed, but perseveres, due to the fundamental lack of

change in the same structural conditions which allowed for the existence of the residential

schools. At the same time, however paradoxically, it reveals just these conditions. This

interpretive play between covering over and uncovering is what makes the political apology an

interpretive *art* rather than a technical science, and which justifies an Arendtian rather than an

Austinian reading.

3.2 Settler-colonialism and the needs of the political apology

If the structural approach is accurate, however, this raises several problems for the idea

that the event of injustice is somehow ended, and what this means for an apology to be effective

as a political art. I argue that the production of world, as through the political apology, responds

commensurately to the current climate in settler-colonial Canada of enduring structural injustice.

First, because the injustice of the schools were both structural and interactional, despite

their closure thus the end of interactional injustices found within them, do the structural

conditions which enabled the schools to operate persist? This is clearly the case when one looks

at even a cursory view of contemporary Canadian society, from RCAP onwards.[166] Volume four

of the 1996 RCAP in particular demonstrates the persistence of structural injustice from the

---

[166] See Canada, Georges Erasmus, and René Dussault, "Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Volume Four, Perspectives and Realities" (Ottawa, 1996). I stress the importance that these are documents of the settler state, and thus self-disclosive, despite the Indigenous perspectives they might capture. The point is that even in official documents, the nature of settlement is disclosed.

perspectives of Indigenous women, elders, youth, the Métis, those of the North, and those in urban centers. Each provide ample evidence of the continuity of the structural conditions which de-world Indigenous peoples. RCAP stresses the enduring gendered effects of the top-down imposition of patriarchal governance through the Indian Act;[167] the marginalized place of Indigenous elders and Indigenous knowledge due to non-Aboriginal ignorance and the isolation of Indigenous elders from sites of Canadian epistemic authority;[168] the alienation, whether through "denial or suppression," of Indigenous youth from their cultural past;[169] the lack of nation-to-nation recognition paid to the Métis;[170] the "paradox" in the North between Aboriginal influence internally while lacking external control;[171] and the smothering of a hegemonic, and often racist, settler culture within urban centers.[172] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission further demonstrates the extent to which the residential schools exasperated these conditions, leading to the contemporary crises in child welfare[173] and education,[174] cultural erosion[175] acting in concert with poor health outcomes,[176] all grounded by a judicial system which "denies Aboriginal people the safety and opportunities that most Canadians take for granted."[177]

If the apology is for a structural injustice, and many of these structures persevere, how appropriate is the apology? As Spinner-Halev notes, the idea that an apology should come before the end of the injustice at stake in the apology seems nonsensical. In what he calls the "persistence paradox," Spinner-Halev argues that because we cannot be sure of the

---

[167] Canada, Erasmus, and Dussault, 23–55.
[168] Canada, Erasmus, and Dussault, 110–33.
[169] Canada, Erasmus, and Dussault, 145–81.
[170] Canada, Erasmus, and Dussault, 186–93.
[171] Canada, Erasmus, and Dussault, 264–360.
[172] Canada, Erasmus, and Dussault, 386–99.
[173] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The Legacy--Volume 5* (Ottawa: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 11–60.
[174] Canada, 61–102.
[175] Canada, 103–38.
[176] Canada, 139–84.
[177] Canada, 186; 185–276.

transformational potential of apologies for enduring injustices, it is best that they occur towards the end of a reconciliation process, rather than at its start of in its midst.[178] This is due to the "asymmetry" between the apology as an event or a moment of time, and the enduring injustice as a continuing structure. The main danger for Spinner-Halev is thus that if an apology occurs and it is not transformative, the potential of the apology may be lost.

I believe Spinner-Halev is right to critique the idea that an apology can, or should be relied upon, to enact a full enough transformation that is sufficient to, in the words of Danielle Celermajer,[179] initiate a shift in our "normative frameworks" *or* to produce the sort of technical structural change. The main problem with Spinner-Halev's critique, however, is how he conceptualizes the connection between the apology as an event and transformation as a process. This is most apparent when Spinner-Halev notes that, if given before some form of societal transformation occurs, the apology "may simply be a false promise."[180] I believe what he means by this is that, as mentioned above, if the apology turns out not to be transformational, then it is false, and thus useless.

That the apology can be false in this matter is, I think, incorrect. In fact, I believe this view only makes sense if accompanied by the liberal-interactional approach to injustice which Spinner-Halev seeks to dissociate from the purview of the political apology. Melissa Nobles, for instance, interprets the political apology this way. In what Nobles calls her "membership theory of political apology," she argues that political apologies serve to "reshape the meanings and terms of national membership."[181] National membership, meanwhile, comes to describe three dimensions of political community, as the legal status as a citizen informs affective attachment

---

[178] Spinner-Halev, *Enduring Injustice*, 91–93.
[179] Celermajer, *The Sins of the Nation and the Ritual of Apologies*.
[180] Spinner-Halev, *Enduring Injustice*, 91.
[181] Nobles, *The Politics of Official Apologies*, 36.

to the exercise of political rights. Through analysis of political apologies in Canada, New

Zealand, Australia, and the United States, Nobles comes to the conclusion that while apologies

have had some success in altering political negotiations in Canada due primarily to elite support

of apology politics as part of a general reconciliation effort, apologies have had limited effects on

either basic political structures or legal status.[182] In fact, Nobles notes that "not surprisingly,

apologies have had *no effect* on the legal status of citizenship. Aboriginal support of a notion of

asymmetrical citizenship presumes that they maintain their existing status as legal citizens of

their respective states."[183]

It is not apparent, however, that such an end would be necessarily desirable in the

Canadian context. Nancy Fraser provides a useful analytical distinction when she contrasts

"affirmative" to "transformative" political projects: "By affirmative remedies for injustice I

mean remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without

disturbing the underlying framework that generates them. By transformative remedies, in

contrast, I mean remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the

underlying generative framework. The nub of the contrast is end-state outcomes versus the

processes that produce them."[184] If the goal is merely an affirmative approach to legal status, the

apology may just amount to nothing more than an assimilationist project under a progressive

guise. As Alfred notes, the fundamental challenge for Indigenous peoples is not having access

within the Canadian juridical system, which has continually failed to support the rights of

Indigenous peoples, but in the ability of Indigenous peoples to challenge the very basis of

Canadian juridical sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands. For Alfred, it is a "myth"

---

[182] Nobles, 37–38, 135.
[183] Nobles, 135, Emphasis added.
[184] Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistrubtion or Recognition?: A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (London: Verso, 2003), 82.

"that Indigenous peoples can find justice within the colonial legal system."[185] What is at issue is not whether the operations of Canadian judicial institutions are just or not, but the status of their claims to universal legitimacy, in relation to Indigenous peoples, as such. For Alfred, the contemporary Canadian legal structure *is* colonial, and as such, "attempting to decolonize without addressing the structural imperatives of the colonial system itself is clearly futile."[186] Because of the Canadian state's "insistence on dominion and its exclusionary notion of sovereignty," "any notion of nationhood or self-government rooted in state institutions and framed within the context of state sovereignty can never satisfy the imperatives of Native American political traditions."[187]

Therefore, while Nobles' conclusion is somewhat odd when considered in relation to a focus on Indigenous self-determination, her theory helps to raise useful questions. In particular, if her conclusions are the case, this begs the question what a transformational effect on the legal status of citizenship would look like. Presumably, a change to the 'existing status as legal citizens' indicates some sort of foundational structural change. But, from our discussion above, we have concluded that it is misdirected to assume that the political apology is capable of such a tangible effect. Yet, we need not abandon Nobles' work, but merely return to the question of what exactly it means to alter the "meaning" of national membership. Instead of assuming that the effect of the political apology is to be manifest in the political or legal structure of the apologizing society, the effects of the political apology should be found at the ideational level of political action. In other words, while the apology cannot be expected to fabricate structural change, it can, understood as action, produce the conditions necessary for structural change. In

---

[185] Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness : An Indigenous Manifesto*, 107.
[186] Alfred, 94.
[187] Alfred, 96.

this manner, the political apology can be seen as an effective approach to claims of structural injustice.

One theory of how such ideational conditions relate to structural injustice has been posited as an approach to "structural dignity." Lu defines structural dignity as a condition under which agents "are adequately enabled to participate in the social/political struggle over what constitutes a just and nonalienating social structure."[188] Such an approach is particularly apt to capture the relationship between settler states and Indigenous peoples, because it does not overdetermine the content of dignity like the structural injustice approach is wont to do in settler contexts. White Paper liberalism is an exemplary case of an approach to structural injustice which nevertheless fails to account for the structural dignity of Indigenous peoples.[189] In seeking to incorporate Indigenous rights claims within the Canadian state apparatus, White Paper liberalism can provide a certain brand of justice to Indigenous peoples, yet a justice which is fundamentally opposed to the dignity of Indigenous peoples premised upon their political freedom.

To pursue structural dignity, however, requires ideational resources. The political apology contributes to this project of structural dignity through world-disclosure, by being first a resource of reflection, and second a resource of constitution. With regards to the former, settler-coloniality has been theorized as a condition of metaphorical blindness. As Alfred notes, "most Native people do not see any need for a massive reorientation of the relationship between themselves and the state. This is symptomatic of the colonial mentality."[190] Alfred's point is two-

---

[188] Lu, *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics*, 200.
[189] Lu, 201–2; Dale Turner, *This Is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 12–37; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 4–5.
[190] Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness : An Indigenous Manifesto*, 95.

fold: that disalienation requires both a "reorientation" between Indigenous peoples and the

Canadian state and that this reorientation be "massive." It requires a reorientation because, as has

been noted above, the nature of the injustices faced by contemporary Indigenous peoples in

Canada cannot be grasped by the status quo of the liberal-judicial approach. It requires this

reorientation to be massive because of the extent to which coloniality has infused the

contemporary settler/Canadian order. To solve them, these facts of the contemporary Indigenous

existence in the settler state must be made visible, they must be disclosed. Alfred recommends a

process of self-reflection to make visible "the degree to which co-optation has affected our

thought processes."[191] While Alfred's "Indigenous manifesto" is written for Indigenous

perspectives, this insight has value for a settler population largely ignorant of the extent to which

settler institutions serve to dominate contemporary Indigenous interests.

Self-reflection is further linked to freedom, as "freeing ourselves from co-optation comes

down to acknowledging the unbalanced power dynamic that we exist within … and to holding

ourselves apart from the institutions and people that actually constitute colonialism."[192] This is,

in essence, a freedom of constitution. The making-public and the destruction of the colonial

mentality is only useful if an alternative Indigenous *Weltanschauung* can take its place. The lack

of such a possibility characterizes an alienated condition. Yet it is only when this lack has been

revealed as a lack, and not just an inability to live up to ideals of settler normativity, that such a

project can be pursued. As Alfred notes, this is a problem of authenticity: "the crisis we face is

one of the mind: a lack of conscience and consciousness … The underlying cause of that

suffering is alienation—separation from our heritage and from ourselves."[193] As such, the

---

[191] Alfred, 103.
[192] Alfred, 103.
[193] Alfred, 12.

solution to alienation can never found in the "material conditions" of colonialism, but in the "attempted psychological and cultural assassination inflicted upon our people as a whole."[194]

To be useful for Indigenous peoples, then, the political apology must avail some sort of exceptional power, in the sense that it must articulate a vision of Indigenous existence not captured by the Canadian state. To some extent, the political apology does this by going outward from the state, or at least parallel to it. As it recognizes Indigenous peoples as self-determining discrete political entities, the argument could be made that the Harper apology grants normative force to a conception of international right that goes beyond an exclusive focus on nation states, and points us towards a conception of global justice.[195] Further, it articulates a vision of the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous peoples and settler populations that constitutes Canadian federalism. As Tully argues, this vision is as necessary to Canadian legality as it is to the recognition of Indigenous rights, as Canadian founding rests upon the legal recognition afforded to European settlers by "equal yet prior nations" already inhabiting Canada.[196] The recognition afforded to Canada by Indigenous peoples in the treaty relationship can be legally valid *only if* Indigenous nations are considered to be self-governing, and thus on equal status vis-à-vis international law.[197] The Harper apology could thus be seen as granting normative force to the exceptional legal status of Indigenous nations. While such an account does not create the sort of structural change as a Supreme Court ruling, the willingness to grant discursive legitimacy to Indigenous nations prior to the Canadian state does constitute what Rainer Forst calls a

---

[194] Alfred, 13.
[195] See Young, *Responsibility for Justice*; Catherine Lu, "Decolonizing Borders, Self-Determination, and Global Justice," in *Empire, Race and Global Justice*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 251–72.
[196] Tully, *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume I, Democracy and Civic Freedom*, 234.
[197] Tully, 229–35.

"justification narrative," and thus may factor in future legal reasoning.[198] Similar reasons ground the potential for the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), despite its non-binding nature. These discursive texts may thus represent an ideational resource from which Indigenous peoples can re-articulate themselves in the contemporary moment.

To be sure, the Harper apology does not always live up to this reading. The language of the 'failure' of the Canadian state to protect Indigenous peoples, for instance, gives credence to a reading of the apology as a continuation of an assimilationist civilizing mission akin to the 'White Man's Burden'. Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks* provides the most thorough discussion of this possibility, in that for Coulthard, contemporary efforts to recognize Indigenous peoples by the Canadian state amount to nothing more than colonialism under an ethical guise.[199]

That this might be so, however, does not mean that the former reading is not also valid. As noted in the first section, what matter is less that we find an ideal meaning of the text, but rather explore the plurality of valid textual interpretations. From this perspective, then, it matters more if projects endorsed by Indigenous peoples can find in the apology useful resources from which to articulate their struggle for justice.

3.3 A worldly reconciliation

Possibly the most explicit inquiry into the development of the political resource of language in times of crisis is Paolo Virno's Arendtian *When the Word Becomes Flesh.* Virno opens his project with a very Arendtian polemic: "instead of lazily opining on the political uses of speech,

---

[198] Rainer Forst, "On the Concept of a Justification Narrative," *Normativity and Power : Analyzing Social Orders of Justification*, 2017, 55–68.

[199] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*.

we need to focus on the intrinsically political nature of language."[200] One of the major pillars of the political nature of language is what Virno refers to as the "absolute performative."[201] In contradistinction to "what we say," the absolute performative describes "*the fact of speaking*, the decision to break the silence, the act of enunciating as such, the speaker's exposure to the eyes of others."[202] Irrespective of what is said, the absolute performative "allows the speaker to manifest herself, it literally makes her visible."[203] In doing so, "it does not reflect a certain state of the world, but configures an event."[204] As such, the absolute performative avoids the risks of Austin's infelicities: "ineffectiveness can't touch it. If I say "I speak" (or one of its implicit equivalents), the action of speaking is always realized."[205] In its capacity as an absolute performative, the political apology can thus never be 'mere words'. But what sort of event does it actualize?

For Virno, the event that the absolute performative configures is ethical, as it actualizes anthropogenesis.[206] It does so by "making ourselves visible as 'bearers' of the linguistic faculty … either [to] reintroduce or confirm the 'transcendental unit' of the I that for a moment appeared compromised or impaired."[207] The absolute performative, and therein the fact of any speech, is thus useful in times of crisis,[208] or "every time our lived experience is forced to retrace the essential steps of our becoming human."[209]

---

[200] Paolo Virno, *When the Word Becomes Flesh: Language and Human Nature*, trans. Giuseppina Mecchia (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2015), 41.
[201] Virno, 43–90.
[202] Virno, 43.
[203] Virno, 46.
[204] Virno, 48.
[205] Virno, 57.
[206] Virno, 78.
[207] Virno, 61.
[208] Virno, 86.
[209] Virno, 60.

The fact of political speech and action is thus desirable at times when what is necessary is not the constitution of a political, cultural, or social model, but the constitution of human subjects and peoples as such. This is aided by what Virno refers to as the creation of "pseudo-habitats" — products of action—which, like Arendt's political world, serve as a remedy for the homelessness of the human condition.[210] For Virno, the need for this dual world- and subject-constitution occurs during "violent transformative pressures" —political, social, economic, and cultural crises—which explains the coincidence between what Virno calls "natural history" (the actualization of inherently human faculty of speech) and "the history of a state of exception" (what we might call "world-historical" moments).[211]

Virno's insight into the political nature of speech is useful because it demonstrates a remedy to settler-colonialism as the exploitation of the very center of the Indigenous world via the dispossession of their land. For Coulthard, the relationship of reciprocity to the land held by many Indigenous peoples informed notions of "sharing, egalitarianism, respecting the freedom and autonomy of both individuals and groups, and recognizing the obligations that one has not only to other people, but to the natural world as a whole."[212] Therefore, the dispossession of Indigenous land is not just the appropriation of a political good, but the destruction of a "mode of life" that grounds Indigenous culture.[213] When Indigenous peoples lose access to their land, they also lose access to their world. What is alienated through settler-colonialism is thus what Coulthard calls "grounded normativity" —the ethical framework which situates "place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge" as the ground of the Indigenous worldview.[214]

---

[210] Virno, 201–2.
[211] Virno, 202.
[212] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 63–64.
[213] Coulthard, 65.
[214] Coulthard, 60.

Vine Deloria, Jr.—an important source for Coulthard—describes Indigenous experience of land "as having the highest possible meaning, … [as] all their statements are made with this reference point in mind."[215] Because Indigenous philosophies are concerned primarily with place, and not time as in the European tradition, extraordinary events—moments which are "observed or experienced by a community" and "given together in an event" —can preserve *through* time, as carried in collective memory, unlike in the Western tradition.[216] For these events to occur, however, they require the land so necessary to Indigenous conceptions of place. In Arendtian language, for narrativity to ground the political existence of Indigenous peoples as it does for the settler state, more focus on the existing material aspect of land is necessary.

The Indigenous angle thus offers us an interesting critique of Arendt. If Arendt's space of appearance actualizes wherever political action takes place, it seems as if Arendtian politics is thoroughly 'ungrounded'. If Indigenous politics *requires* such grounding for political freedom, presumably some form of politics is required before such a politics of speech and action can become meaningful for Indigenous peoples.

At the same time, however, Arendt seems to offer us a productive avenue for understanding place-based struggle in the context of a settler colony. One of the major limitations of an Indigenous conception of place-based struggle is that in contemporary Canada, in many if not most cases, Indigenous peoples do not have the sort of access to the land of their ancestors that is necessary to engage in land-based practices. Even Coulthard and Alfred's Nations—the Dené of the Northwest Territories and the Mohawk of Kahnawá:ke, respectively— suffer from this problem, despite the fact that they maintain a level of territorial continuity surpassing many cases in Canada. As Coulthard himself notes, one of the major challenges of

---

[215] Vine. Deloria, *God Is Red : A Native View of Religion.* (New York : Fulcrum Pub, 2003), 61.
[216] Deloria, 70–71.

contemporary Indigenous emancipation is how to articulate Indigenous sovereignty in the city.[217]

Arendt allows us to think about a conception of space which can supersede the limitations of

materiality. The solution, I believe, is to pursue both of these projects. Indigenous peoples can

simultaneously pursue a politics of liberation in relation to material land in order to fabricate a

material place for themselves in the world, while engaging in the dynamic creation of world

found in political speech and action.

The political apology is particularly useful in an intermediate state between an alienated

condition and the direct confrontation of the settler state in two major ways. First, the political

apology as a call to Indigenous peoples by the settler state offers a ground for world- and

subject-constitution. The main way this works is through courage, and its relation to a political

reading of forgiveness. Second, this courageous confrontation serves to instigate micro-crises,

which may further the project of Indigenous freedom.

The political apology may be understood as a "call" in that it requires an initiation. As

Tavuchis notes, "the social processes that generate the sequence cannot be activated until there is

a call: the attribution and nomination of an offense that can be negotiated not by an account or

appeal to reason(s), but only through the faculty of forgiving."[218] This insight leads Tavuchis into

a discussion of the "discourse" of the apology: what makes or constitutes an offense such that it

is "apologizable."[219] In another way, however, the apology does not just *require* a call for its

articulation—rather, the apology *is*, structurally, a call.

---

[217] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 173–76.

[218] Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation*, 20.

[219] Tavuchis, 20–21; other scholars have also described the apology in this way: Nobles, for instance, notes how most apologies involving Indigenous peoples are "asked for," whether or not they are actually given; see Nobles, *The Politics of Official Apologies*, 7.

In the case of the 2008 apology, the apology is a call *by* Harper *to* Indigenous people *for* forgiveness and reconciliation. Understood as a call, the apology may serve to re-orient power relations between the settler state and Indigenous peoples, as "inversions."[220] As a call, the apology is also a *request*, indicating that the shoe is now on the other foot. In their ability to respond to the call, Indigenous peoples have been granted a form of discursive power.

That this power has been granted, and granted by a powerful state, however, raises questions over its efficacy. In Patchen Markell's critique of Hegelian recognition, for instance, he notes that while recognition requires mutual recognition, such mutuality is not present when the state is the 'master' in the dialectic.[221] While the political apology might grant moral power to Indigenous peoples, this power fails to adequately confront the material power of the Canadian state. The asymmetry between the state as master and the individual/subject group as slave parallels Frantz Fanon's earlier postcolonial critique of Hegel: that the recognition of the master in a colonial setting does not guarantee emancipatory praxis, but fosters a psychological complex of dependency and inferiority.[222] More in line with our case, this critique has been applied to the Canadian settler-colonial context.[223] According to these theorists, by adopting the subject-position of slave/victim in relation to the Canadian state, Indigenous peoples limit their capacity for self-determination. Rather than seeking reconciliation out of the alleviation of tension with the Canadian state, some scholars have suggested that the pursuit of such tension may produce more just reconciliatory outcomes.[224] From this perspective, as the political

---

[220] Ruti G. Teitel, *Transitional Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 84.
[221] Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).
[222] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004).
[223] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*; Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (Tucson: Arizona University Press, 2013).
[224] Robert Meister, *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

apology re-asserts the position of Indigenous peoples as victims, it necessarily limits their political freedom.

A limitation of this critique concerning the asymmetrical nature of the call of the political apology, however, is that it overstates the extent to which the political apology requires such a conciliatory response. This is primarily due to the extent to which forgiveness (and reconciliation) is psychologized, and thus considered as a moral and personal, rather than political, phenomenon. This perspective is seen in the literature on both forgiveness and reconciliation, as within the former, forgiveness may necessitate the elimination of the sorts of desires, beliefs, and mental states associated with resentment,[225] the preservation and instigation of which can prevent the constitution of a reconciled political community.[226] This sort of perspective informs even the Derridean approach to a democracy-to-come of Andrieu, which rejects the sort of blueprint idealization critiqued above.[227]

Such perspectives are flawed to the extent to which they require the central offense to be manageable at the level of the individual. This is the case with the majority of the personal wrongs we face, where the interactional injustice not does amount to a structure under which one is wronged. With the case of enduring structural injustice, however, as in the case of Indigenous peoples in Canada, the offense is not so easily managed. Moreover, to manage political concerns at the level of individuals is to always risk Arendtian violence. Here the management of individual mental states could serve to shift the burden of reconciliation to the victims.[228] To take such a perspective would indicate that somehow the real object preventing contemporary just

---

[225] Charles Griswold, *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[226] Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Image, 2000).

[227] Andrieu, "'Sorry for the Genocide': How Public Apologies Can Help Promote National Reconciliation."

[228] Ernesto Verdeja, *Unchopping a Tree: Reconciliation in the Aftermath of Political Violence* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 16.

relations is the mental state of the victim, regardless of circumstances of injustice they face. Lu asks us to imagine a "superior" community that suffers no "lasting damage or hold negative attitudes toward those responsible" —with Lu, I argue that such a community says nothing about political justice and reconciliation.[229] This does not require us to abandon the notion of forgiveness, however, but to consider it in a political, rather than moral, light. Such a perspective further allows a consideration of the political value of so-called negative emotions.

For Arendt, forgiveness is essential to the practice of politics. While the labour of the *animal laborans* provides biological sustenance, and the work of *homo faber* secures this sustenance in a durable world, only the faculties of speech and action bring meaningfulness to the human condition.[230] As noted, meaningfulness is, due to its ground in action, incredibly fragile. Due to its irreversible and unpredictable nature, the vicissitudes of action leave the human being in a condition of existential angst. The faculty of forgiveness, together with the faculty of promise-making, serve to remedy this condition. As forgiveness remedies irreversibility, so does promise-making remedy unpredictability. Irreversibility is a problem because of the potential for politics to constrain future action. It is reasonable to assume that in cases of gross injustice such as colonialism, the sheer scale of the injustice dominates any sort of attempt to derive new values from political engagement. As Arendt notes, "without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover."[231] Unpredictability is a problem because we can never truly control the effects of political action. This is why promising is necessary, as "without being bound to the fulfilment of promises, we would never

---

[229] Lu, *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics*, 186–87.
[230] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 236.
[231] Arendt, 237.

be able to keep our identities."[232] Stable political identities are necessary in that political engagement cannot be effective if every instance of action requires the wholesale reconstitution of the political narratives which form the basis of genuine relationships with our political comrades. As Alasdair MacIntyre notes on the Heroic communities which inform Arendt's conception of politics, to be of a political community is to be of a social order, and "without such a place in the social order, a man would not only be incapable of receiving recognition and response from others; not only would others not know, but he would not himself know who he was."[233] Such a politics would escape from the dangers of overdetermination, but would suffer from meaninglessness. This is the distinction between a politics of "kinsmen and friends" which requires the plurality of others and the apolitical existence of the lonely individual.[234] Forgiveness is thus intersubjective for Arendt, but it is not interpersonal. As Arendt notes, "both faculties, therefore, depend on plurality, on the presence and acting of others, for no one can forgive himself and no one can feel bound by a promise made only to himself."[235] Forgiveness and promise-making is not given to individuated others, but to the general multiplicity of others that makes up the political sphere.

3.4 The courage to be seen

In order to engage in this 'risk of affect' as in the political apology, then, requires the courage of Arendtian forgiveness as the willingness to perform politics. A re-articulation of Dale Turner's concept of "word warriors," Taiaiake Alfred's "Ethics of Courage," and Glen Sean Coulthard's project of Indigenous resistance exemplifies how courage, as it is manifest in the political apology, is particularly useful in a settler-colonial context of world-alienation. While differing in

---

[232] Arendt, 237.
[233] Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue : A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, Ind. : University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 123–24.
[234] MacIntyre, 124.
[235] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 237.

important ways, each theorizes a useful practice of Indigenous courage in relation to Arendt's Aristotelian conception.

First, as mentioned above, an important element for Alfred's project of disalienation is the re-engagement with Indigenous ways of being-in-the-world. Thus, while Alfred stresses the importance of exceptional acts of defiance such as the Oka Crisis, it is also important that Indigenous peoples re-articulate *continually* their existence as *Indigenous* political subjects. In this way, the habituation of the continual can connect to the power of the exceptional, as when Coulthard argues that a bottom-up strategy of political-economy can eventually pose challenges to the dominating practices of "market fundamentalism" that rule the practices of the settler state.[236] Just as the dominating forms of settler-colonial state legitimacy requires "psychological and social conditioning" of Indigenous peoples, so too does both a resistance effort to those same forces and a re-imagined Indigenous future.[237] Similarly, while the work of Turner's "word warriors" shy away from radical conflict, as scholars, bureaucrats, administrators, and others become informed by Indigenous perspectives and re-articulate the wisdom of Indigenous philosophers to, the reform and re-orientation of settler-state institutions becomes possible.[238] Thus, while Turner provides the most sustained theory of habituation, all three theorists embody the centrality of everyday perseverance to the project of Indigenous emancipation. As Alfred notes, however, we need not look at liberal normativity as a political straitjacket which sets the terms for any and every political decision. Instead, "the injustices we live with are a matter of choices and behaviours committed within a worldview defined by a mental framework of Euroamerican arrogance and self-justifying political ideologies set in opposition to Onkwehonwe

---

[236] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 173.
[237] Alfred, *Wasáse : Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, 56.
[238] Turner, *This Is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy*, 88–93.

peoples and our worldviews."[239] Possible solutions exist, then, at the level of individual

interaction.

The political apology aids in this project to the extent to which it can serve as a resource

of understanding for Indigenous peoples and their allies. Central to Arendt's phenomenological

framing of plurality as the basis of political meaning is that each political actor brings with them

their own perspective, and it is this multiplicity of perspectives which fills in the meaningfulness

of events of political action. But individual perspectives do not exist as ascriptive properties,

informing all future efforts at understanding and interpretation in an unchanging manner. Rather,

individual perspectives which inform all of our individual decisions are negotiated in a context of

a political world of events. For Arendt, this political world is the world of action and speech

made into the stories and narratives of our intersubjective existence. Thus, even if one is

engaging traditional Indigenous practices far away from the politics of the settler-colonial state,

one is nevertheless informed by the practices of this state. This is the discursive power that the

Canadian state maintains as a function of their hegemonic status in relation to Indigenous

peoples in Canada.[240] Harper's apology thus informs, to a certain extent, all post-apology

practices, even if they are efforts to "turn away" from the state.[241] That these discourses are

hegemonic does not, however, mean that they are necessarily harmful. By informing everyday

politics with a post-apology lens, the apology serves as a narrative from which to challenge

notions of settler-state legitimacy due to its connection with the colonial project; similarly, in

giving credence to the culture of Indigenous peoples, the apology may function as a way to

---

[239] Alfred, *Wasáse : Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, 109.
[240] See Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 47.
[241] See Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

challenge racialized biases which determine much of the everyday violence faced by Indigenous persons.

Second, this sort of project is only possible when Indigenous peoples push the limits of the status quo. As Alfred argues, "words can, in fact, be powerful shocks to the system and are capable of causing people to rethink their identity and their place within colonialism. But if they are powerful enough to cause crises in the contradictory consciousness of the colonized individual, the words must be dangerous and must push people outside the bounds of their comfort zone and beyond acceptability."[242] Coulthard shares this vision of a 'dangerous' Indigenous politics which seeks "to *prefigure* radical alternatives to the structural and subjective dimensions of colonial power" not only through a *rejection* of settler-colonial apparatuses of domination but also a *reassertion* of Indigeneity in a context which seeks only to de-fang its radical nature.[243] While Turner's reformist doctrine has been criticized in that while word warriors may infiltrate settler spaces with Indigenous discourses, in institutional settings settler discourses both "enjoy hegemonic status vis-a-vis Indigenous discourses" and are "also backed by and hopelessly entwined with the economic, political, and military might of the state itself,"[244] I believe this critique is over-stated. While Turner does not approach the radicalness of Alfred or Coulthard, his word warriors are still engaged in projects which seek to challenge the bounds of the norms of the settler colony.[245] In this way, he might move away from a combative Aristotelian conception of courage, but still endorse its dangerous aspects.[246]

---

[242] Alfred, *Wasáse : Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, 57.
[243] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 18.
[244] Coulthard, 47.
[245] See Turner, *This Is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy*, 90–92.
[246] See, for this less radical form, Nicholas. Tampio, *Kantian Courage: Advancing the Enlightenment in Contemporary Political Theory* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

As a public exposure, Harper's apology is both as a narrative 'shock' to the colonial system and as an opportunity for the reassertion of Indigenous existence. It accomplishes the former by challenging commonly held narratives about Canada, the place of Indigenous peoples in Canada's history, and the contemporary relationship between the two. In contrast to Harper's later remarks that Canada has "no history of colonialism"[247] or to conceptions of Canada as the 'peace-keeping nation', Harper's 2008 apology asserts Canada as a blameworthy actor, and one complicit in gross injustice. There are, however, limits to the 'shock' of the apology from the side of Harper. At the time of the apology, 71 percent of those aware of it agreed with the need to apologize.[248] Presumably, if they agreed with it, then they were already knowledgeable about the abuses of Canada and the IRS. Furthermore, those that were most immediately impacted by the Schools were among those least likely to expect significant changes following the apology.[249] Thus, if there was a 'shock' of the Harper apology, it is likely to have had little impact. I believe this undersells, however, the extent to which the apology may serve as a sort of micro-crisis which might, to use Coulthard's phrase, prefigure further radical action. It does so by opening up a political space for the voices of Indigenous peoples. These voices need not be commensurate with the reconciliatory tone of the apology. Following the Harper apology, numerous op-eds were published, by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, which sought to challenge the discourse both of Harper and of a plurality responses to it.[250] While one commenter was "dismayed by the things that were blatantly absent," such as the consideration of Indigenous

[247] Aaron Wherry, "What He Was Talking about When He Talked about Colonialism," *Maclean's*, October 1, 2009, https://www.macleans.ca/uncategorized/what-he-was-talking-about-when-he-talked-about-colonialism/.
[248] O. El Akkad, "School-Abuse Apology Widely Backed," *Globe and Mail*, June 14, 2008, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/school-abuse-apology-widely-backed/article1056238/.
[249] Amy Bombay, Kimberly Matheson, and Hymie Anismas, "Expectations Among Aboriginal Peoples in Canada Regarding the Potential Impacts of a Government Apology," *Political Psychology* 34, no. 3 (2013): 443–60, https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.l.
[250] See, for example, Lynda Gray, "Why Silence Greeted Stephen Harper's Residential-School Apology," *The Georgia Straight*, June 12, 2008.

spiritual means of healing,[251] another was so "proud that the Canadian government finally admitted its wrongdoing" that they were "overcome with tears,"[252] and yet another saw the apology as "an opportunity for all Canadians to face up to this disastrous policy and its devastating consequences."[253] Furthermore, it is likely that the Harper apology instigated numerous conversations which did not reach the national public arena, but were nevertheless moments of Arendtian politics, and thus of political freedom. These conversations might have been held in relative obscurity to the national state of a Prime Minister, but they were still moments of coming-together in speech, and thus constituted political power. Grassroots movements may thus utilize the discourse of hegemonic actors to act in resistance. Even if that reaction is a 'turning-away' or a silence, this is still a revelatory action made possible by the political apology.

Third, this sort of dangerous practice requires practical wisdom, as the dynamic sites of contestation in contemporary settler colonies resist an easy blueprint for technical mastery, yet require "*strategic* engagements with the colonial state."[254] The relationship between a technical approach and a strategic one follows Arendt's differentiation of a politics of *techne* and one of *praxis*. In the former, political programs can be formulated as tools, which can be easily (or at least possibly) managed in a top-down manner. The Canadian context in particular resists such a characterization, primarily for demographic reasons. One of the primary facts of Indigeneity in contemporary Canada is that it resists ready-made characterizations. One of the main struggles between the government of Canada and Indigenous peoples is the legitimacy to ascribe

---

[251] Gray.

[252] Evelyn Myrie, "Harper's Apology a Positive Beginning," *Hamilton Spectator*, June 18, 2008.

[253] "Why the Apology Matters to Us All," *Toronto Star*, June 11, 2008.

[254] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 179, Emphasis added.

Indigenous status to individuals.[255] This is not surprising—one of the main pillars of modern

sovereignty is just this sort of legitimacy, in terms of defining an in-group. As such, the power of

the settler state to define who is or is not Indigenous was (and remains to be) a central method of

domination.[256] The discussion of what it means to be Indigenous, moreover, must take account of

the landscape of difference that characterizes the over 600 recognized Indigenous nations of

Canada. While organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations might be able to gather

together disparate Indigenous voices,[257] this rarely results in the sort of univocal entity required

of a politics of *techne*. *Phronesis* is thus required to build these sorts of networks of difference,

and for these networks to maintain their plurality, through public speech and deliberation.

As political action, the political apology resists the sort of ready-made characterizations

which might attempt to co-opt it. As speech, the apology begets interpretation and response.

Thus, while the apology was approached as a sort of ideal moment of reconciliation by the

Canadian government, it also led to a variety of official responses by various Indigenous

organizations, Nations, and individuals.[258] The efforts of these multiple actors coming together to

interpret and respond to the apology, and to disclose and constitute the unique meaningfulness of

the apology, indicate the extent to which the apology went beyond 'ordinary' technical politics.

As an extraordinary event, the apology *required* just the sort of discursive response for it to

become meaningful. This sort of dynamic response, moreover, aids in the process of a non-

---

[255] Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness : An Indigenous Manifesto*, conclusion.

[256] See Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), chap. 1.

[257] See Stephen Cornell, "Justice as Position, Justice as Practice: Indigenous Governance at the Boundary," in *Indigenous Justice: New Tools, Approaches, and Spaces*, 2018, 11–26, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137008695.0026.

[258] Neil Funk-Unrau, "Indigenous Residential School Renegotiation of Social Relations," in *On the Uses and Abuses of Political Apologies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 45–46.

hierarchical organization. Through the process of reading and writing for and with another, a community can be constituted through what Tully calls "the agonistic freedom of citizens."[259]

Fourth, the courageous actions of Turner's word warriors, Coulthard's resisters, and Alfred's non-violent militants must always be noble. This is not a moral judgement—Arendtian political action is always, to some extent, 'beyond good and evil.'[260] To be noble is an existential, and not a moral, category. To disclose oneself in the *agon* is to "come into my own by competing, measuring myself with others. Honor is the public recognition for this particular being who I am."[261] Nobility thus becomes a descriptive characteristic of any and all action that is asserted and recognized in public. Through the courage to enter the public realm, nobility brings with it stability and meaningfulness. It is only through entering the public realm that individual and collective identities can come to be known through disclosure. It is therefore through political *praxis* that Indigeneity can come to be known and further actualized as a political identity. The Harper apology is thus noble in its existence as a political product which can be repeated, cited, and discussed following its initial articulation. As it becomes associated with a variety of graphemes, the apology brings meaning to its surrounding world. As the apology is asserted and recognized in the public realm, it serves to disclose the multiplicity of its world to all those who encounter it.

Fifth, combat is a necessity of courageous politics. As Alfred articulates in his vision of courage as a "non-violent militancy" that echoes both Aristotle and Arendt: "remaining firm in the face of fear, doing what is necessary for what is right, yet not allowing negative thoughts and

---

[259] Tully, *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume I, Democracy and Civic Freedom*, 135–59.

[260] For criticism of Arendt on these grounds, see Martin Jay, "Hannah Arendt's Political Existentialism," in *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration From Germany to America.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 237–56.

[261] Cited in John Douglas Macready, "Hannah Arendt and the Political Meaning of Human Dignity," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 47, no. 4 (2016): 411.

emotions to control us."[262] This is displayed most readily in situations of crisis, where

Indigenous peoples directly confront the colonial state or its agents. As Alfred notes, during

moments such as the Oka Crisis of 1990, "crisis solidarity" emerges, which offers the potential

for radical challenges to dominant structures.[263] This sort of radical solidarity, moreover, has

been shown to challenge dominating structures of settler-colonial society. As Coulthard

demonstrates, a succession of land-based confrontations throughout the 1980s which peaked in

the Oka Crisis led directly to the establishment of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

in 1991, published in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* in 1996.[264]

While imperfect, the commission did endorse a number of radically pro-Indigenous positions,

including recommendations to endorse more comprehensive Aboriginal claims to self-

government, to implement further land and resource access, and a reformulation of various

institutional relationships between the Canadian state and Indigenous peoples towards mutual

authority.[265]

Taken together, what these moments of discursive response to the apology indicate is that

"apology politics" is accomplished not by the closure of political struggle, but in its agonistic

manifestation in the public realm. It does so in its ability to escape from what Tully refers to as

"monological" recognition, which occurs when "handed down to the members from on high …

rather than passing through the democratic will-formation of those who are subject to them" and

a "finality-orientation", in which recognition assumes "that there are definitive and final

solutions to struggles over recognition in theory and practice."[266] As such, apology politics leads

us away from both an idealistic vision of reconciliation which posits social harmony as the ideal

---

[262] Alfred, *Wasáse : Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, 55.
[263] Alfred, *Wasáse : Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*.
[264] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 118–19.
[265] Coulthard, 119.
[266] Tully, *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume I, Democracy and Civic Freedom*, 301.

end for a return to a utopian community without schism, and what Meister calls the "melodrama" of a narrative of closure, in which beneficiaries of injustice take advantage of a "version of the truth" of reconciliation found in the few and conflate it with "a moral victory for victims generally."[267] Instead, apology politics may allow the beneficiaries of injustice to again "fear" the revolutionary victim of colonial injustice.[268] It is only through the embrace of this fear in the risk of political action that, through courageous acts, former victims might re-assert themselves as agents of political freedom.

This reading of the apology thus turns us towards an agonistic theory of reconciliation, which sees value not in the accomplishment of closure of politics, but in the very acts of politics. It is in the bringing-together of settlers and Indigenous peoples that the apology succeeds, even if this bringing-together is, or appears, antagonistic. Such an approach relies on the distinction between the moral and the political community, the former relying on the violence of exclusion in its assertion of univocity, and the latter upon world as the plurality of dynamic contestation.[269] Arendtian apology politics is therefore neither restorative or reparative in that to be restored or repaired suggests a static state of being that *praxis* resists.

That apology politics resists a sort of finality-orientation of a remedied community does not, however, mean that it closes off the possibility of authentic community. It merely requires a re-orientation of the way we think about what it means to be of a political realm, whether as an actor or an audience.

Recall that for Arendt, the world-disclosive function of political action discloses who one is, but this is not an atomistic I, but an intersubjective identity. Through world-disclosure, one is

---

[267] Meister, *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights*, 69.
[268] Meister, 70.
[269] See Schaap, *Political Reconciliation*, 8–14.

judged *as someone* by the plurality of the political realm. Action is thus two-fold—the actor must assert, but the audience must also recognize. Conceived in this way, Arendtian agonism which is oriented outwards towards the political products of action brings with it a meaning to political community that more inward-looking conceptions seem to lack.

Consider, for instance, the philosophy of social unity that grounds Tutu's theory of reconciliation. Tutu characterizes South Africa's reconciliation as a "third way," distinct from both "the extreme of Nuremberg" and a "blanket amnesty or national amnesia."[270] Such an approach combined legal amnesty for "full disclosure" of the individual crimes of apartheid.[271] For Tutu, this exemplified the Nguni concept of *ubuntu*, a concept he sees throughout the "African *Weltsanschauung*," meaning something like social harmony, which Tutu posits as the "greatest good" of the human being.[272] Like Arendtian politics, *ubuntu* stresses human intersubjectivity: it means "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours."[273] But, in contradistinction to Arendt, this is an intersubjectivity that is paradoxically internal to the subject. In particular, Tutu associates *ubuntu* with individual mental states; one has *ubuntu* when one "does not feel threatened," "has proper self-assurance," and avoids "anger, resentment, lust for revenge, [and] even success through aggressive competitiveness."[274] In doing so, Tutu personalizes, individualizes, and moralizes reconciliation. By reducing reconciliation to personal mental states, Tutu abstracts away from the enduring structural injustices which demanded reconciliation in the first place; in doing so, he reduces reconciliation to the wrongs of individuals. Furthermore, as it is individuated, the nature of reconciliation is shifted, and

---

[270] Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 30.
[271] Tutu, 30.
[272] Tutu, 31.
[273] Tutu, 31.
[274] Tutu, 31.

becomes a moral imperative: to the abuser, *ubuntu* demands that they must feel their wrongs, and to the abused, that they must let go of their abuse.

From an Arendtian perspective, to turn inwards, as does Tutu, is to enter the "dark" of the human subject. Even though public speech and action "derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position," —from human plurality—what Arendt calls the "subjectivity of privacy" cannot come to be known by a common world.[275] Private mental states are the primary object of this subjectivity in that they can only be felt by the one, and thus they can never be of a world. Such is the case in conditions of "radical isolation, where nobody can any longer agree with anybody else," as well as "under conditions of mass society," where "all people suddenly behave as though they were members of one family."[276] In such cases, individuals become "imprisoned in the subjectivity of their own singular experience," whether they perceive these as totally unique or as totally universal.[277] Totality thus results in "the end of the common world" —the end of politics itself— "when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective."[278] In embracing totality of perspective, Tutu thus undermines the intersubjectivity that grounds his account. As Arendt notes, "when we say that nobody but God can see … the nakedness of a human heart, 'nobody' includes one's own self—if only because our sense of unequivocal reality is so bound up with the presence of others that we can never be sure of anything that only we ourselves know and no one else."[279] When we make these individual mental states the object of politics, as when "Robespierre carried out the conflicts of the soul," politics is reduced to an endless "search for

---

[275] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 57.
[276] Arendt, 58.
[277] Arendt, 58.
[278] Arendt, 58.
[279] Arendt, *On Revolution*, 87.

motives" that results most readily in "crime and criminality on the political scene."[280] To "feel free" is merely "derivative" of genuine political freedom,[281] as political freedom "is not a phenomenon of the will."[282]

To turn outwards towards political objects, on the contrary, allows us to ground community not on an ascriptive identity, but on what we do. In doing so, Arendt's agonism distinguishes itself not only from finality-oriented visions of reconciliation, but also from a Schmittian politics of violence grounded on *Blut und Boden*.[283] This is also why Arendt can simultaneously embrace a phenomenology of political intersubjectivity *and* an endorsement of institutional politics. As Andreas Kalyvas notes in his formulation of Arendtian freedom as "founding," "extraordinary politics may avoid arbitrariness and violence, while remaining unfettered from causal determinations and transcendental grounds, if it is guided not by any kind of principles but by some general, clear, and stable principles."[284] This is why the political apology is not just any sort of act of speech, and why acknowledgment cannot effectively replace the apology as a political act.[285] The immanent principles of the apology—forgiveness, courage, risk—all stipulate limits, which "neither are universal and transhistorical nor local and reflective of the dominant cultural ethos of a historical community."[286] Instead, they constitute their meaningfulness dynamically, through a "widespread, informal, and extraconstitutional processes of persuasion and contestation."[287] Approaching the political apology as a *political* object—and

---

[280] Arendt, 87–88.
[281] Arendt, "What Is Freedom?," 146–47.
[282] Arendt, 151.
[283] See Anna Jurkevics, "Hannah Arendt Reads Carl Schmitt's The Nomos of the Earth: A Dialogue on Law and Geopolitics from the Margins," *European Journal of Political Theory* 16, no. 3 (2017): 345–66, https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885115572837.
[284] Andreas Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 242.
[285] Cf. Spinner-Halev, *Enduring Injustice*.
[286] Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt*, 252.
[287] Kalyvas, 252.

not the expression of an individual mental state of remorse—thus allows it to remain of the political world, and serve as an element, and not a 'pure' foundation, of community.

3.5 Conclusion

Section 3 has argued that from a premise of textual ambiguity, the 2008 Harper apology avails two main narratives regarding the relationship between the apology and justice: one, from an understanding of the apology as a personal apology, and two, from the apology as a political apology. While they are both valid, I argued that the latter serves a more pragmatic function in the context of a settler colony. This is because while interactional injustice did occur during the operation of the residential schools, due to the enduring structural consequences of the schools, a political apology is better suited to the task of constituting political world.

Conclusion

This discussion thus leads to the conclusion that there are practical and ethical demands of political science in the context of a settler colony. In particular, I have suggested that by engaging in ideal or ahistorical analysis, social-scientific work tends to cover over the hermeneutical resources available in struggles of interpretation.[288] In this way, social science *is* always-already the production of political texts. Whether social scientists recognize this will impact the ways in which theoretical work can respond to the demands of its context.

Rather than a position of ideal objectivity, I have endorsed doing the work of political theory from a place of unpredictability and ambiguity. To do so is to reveal the ways in which our familiar concepts may be complicit in the perseverance of structural injustice. To do

---

[288] See Robert Nichols, "Indigenous Peoples, Settler Colonialism, and Global Justice in Anglo-America," in *Empire, Race and Global Justice*, ed. Duncan Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 248–50, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108576307.011.

otherwise is to lose political theory's autographical aspect, and thus its ability to seek out and uncover power and domination commensurate with its practice.[289]

To consider the political apology as a political art, then, has come to mean to appreciate the ways in which political texts may become pragmatically available to their audience. The point has not, however, to embrace a naïve empiricism, but to work phenomenologically against the tendency to split political subjects and the objects of their concern. I have therefore argued for an Arendtian theory of politics which prioritizes the place of public objects within a political account of intersubjectivity.

To embrace such a theory has numerous implications for the project of reconciliation in Canada. Most importantly, it has meant that reconciliation resists a ready-made politics of technocratic proceduralism. To reconcile is not to constitute community once and for all, but to engage in a continuous and enduring task of constitution free of domination. The apology's ability to reconcile thus rests in its ability to bring us—as a reading audience—into its world.

---

[289] Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event*, 47. Here Wolfe contrasts "autography" to "ethnography".

Appendix

Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools[290]

The treatment of children in Indian Residential Schools is a sad chapter in our history.

For more than a century, Indian Residential Schools separated over 150,000 Aboriginal children from their families and communities. In the 1870's, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligation to educate Aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools. Two primary objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child". Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

One hundred and thirty-two federally-supported schools were located in every province and territory, except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Most schools were operated as "joint ventures" with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian or United Churches. The Government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes, often taken far from their communities. Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed. All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities. First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools. Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools and others never returned home.

The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language. While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities.

The legacy of Indian Residential Schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today.

It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors that have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered. It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strength of their cultures. Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the Government of Canada.

The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this Chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools system.

---

[290] Stephen Harper, "Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools."

To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.

The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden is properly ours as a Government, and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again. You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey. The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

Nous le regrettons
We are sorry
Nimitataynan
Niminchinowesamin
Mamiattugut

In moving towards healing, reconciliation and resolution of the sad legacy of Indian Residential Schools, implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement began on September 19, 2007. Years of work by survivors, communities, and Aboriginal organizations culminated in an agreement that gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership.

A cornerstone of the Settlement Agreement is the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This Commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian Residential Schools system. It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.

On behalf of the Government of Canada
The Right Honourable Stephen Harper,

Prime Minister of Canada

Bibliography

"2008 Federal Apology to Residential School Survivors." APTN News, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQjnbK6d3oQ.

Ahmed, Sara. "Happy Objects." In *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, 29–51. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

Akkad, O. El. "School-Abuse Apology Widely Backed." *Globe and Mail*, June 14, 2008. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/school-abuse-apology-widely-backed/article1056238/.

Alfred, Taiaiake. *Peace, Power, Righteousness : An Indigenous Manifesto*. Don Mills, Ont. ; Oxford University Press, 2009.

———. *Wasáse : Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*. Toronto, Ont. : Broadview Press, 2005.

Andrieu, Kora. "'Sorry for the Genocide': How Public Apologies Can Help Promote National Reconciliation." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38, no. 1 (August 9, 2009): 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829809336257.

Anghie, Antony. "Francisco De Vitoria and the Colonial Origins of International Law." *Social & Legal Studies* 5, no. 3 (September 17, 1996): 321–36. https://doi.org/10.1177/096466399600500303.

Arendt, Hannah. *On Revolution*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.

———. *The Human Condition*. Second. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

———. "What Is Freedom?" In *Between Past and Future*, 143–71. New York: The Viking Press, 1961.

Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words*. Edited by J.O. Urmso and Marina Sbisa. Second. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." In *The Rustle of Language*, translated by Richard Howard, 49–55. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

Bates, David. "Crisis Between the Wars: Derrida and the Origins of Undecidability." *Representations* 90, no. 1 (2005): 1–27.

Blatz, Craig W, Karina Schumann, and Michael Ross. "Government Apologies for Historical Injustices." *Political Psychology* 30, no. 2 (2009): 219–41.

Bombay, Amy, Kimberly Matheson, and Hymie Anismas. "Expectations Among Aboriginal Peoples in Canada Regarding the Potential Impacts of a Government Apology." *Political Psychology* 34, no. 3 (2013): 443–60. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.l.

Bubner, Rüdiger. "Habermas's Concept of Critical Theory." In *Habermas: Critical Debates*, edited by John B. Thompson and David Held, 42–56. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982.

Canada, Georges Erasmus, and René Dussault. "Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Volume Four, Perspectives and Realities." Ottawa, 1996.

Canada, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of. *Canada's Residential Schools: Reconciliation--Volume 6*. Ottawa: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016.

———. *Canada's Residential Schools: The Legacy--Volume 5*. Ottawa: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016.

Celermajer, Danielle. *The Sins of the Nation and the Ritual of Apologies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Cels, Sanderijn. "Interpreting Political Apologies: The Neglected Role of Performance." *Political Psychology* 36, no. 3 (2015): 351–60. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12092.

Chakravarti, Sonali. *Sing the Rage: Listening to Anger after Mass Violence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Churchill, Ward. *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004.

Cornell, Stephen. "Justice as Position, Justice as Practice: Indigenous Governance at the Boundary." In *Indigenous Justice: New Tools, Approaches, and Spaces*, 11–26, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137008695.0026.

Corntassel, Jeff, and Cindy Holder. "Who's Sorry Now? Government Apologies, Truth Commissions, and Indigenous Self-Determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala, and Peru." *Human Rights Review* 9, no. 4 (2008): 465–89. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12142-008-0065-3.

Coulthard, Glen S. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Davidson, Donald. "James Joyce and Humpty Dumpty." In *Truth, Language, and History: Philosophyical Essays Volume 5*, 143–58. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

———. "Locating Literary Language." In *Truth, Language, and History: Philosophyical Essays Volume 5*, 167–82. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Davies, Stephen. *Philosophical Perspectives on Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Deloria, Vine. *God Is Red : A Native View of Religion.* New York : Fulcrum Pub, 2003.

Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." In *Limited Inc.*, translated by Samuel Weber, 1–23. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

Fisher, Mark. *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2009.

Forst, Rainer. "On the Concept of a Justification Narrative." *Normativity and Power : Analyzing Social Orders of Justification*, 2017, 55–68.

Foucault, Michel. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Fraser, Nancy, and Axel Honneth. *Redistrubtion or Recognition?: A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. London: Verso, 2003.

Funk-Unrau, Neil. "Indigenous Residential School Renegotiation of Social Relations." In *On the Uses and Abuses of Political Apologies*, 138–53. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Gray, Lynda. "Why Silence Greeted Stephen Harper's Residential-School Apology." *The Georgia Straight*, June 12, 2008.

Greiff, Pablo de. "The Role of Apologies in National Reconciliation Processes: On Making Trustworthy Institutions Trusted." In *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past*, edited by Mark Gibney, Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Niklaus Steiner, 120–36. Philadelphia: University of

Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Griswold, Charles. *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Habermas, Jurgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: "Reason and the Rationalization of Society."* Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. New York: Haper Perennial, 2008.

———. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by William Lovitt. New York: Harper Perennial, 2013.

Hendrix, Burke A. "Memory in Native American Land Claims." *Political Theory* 33, no. 6 (2005): 763–85. https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591705280658.

Honig, Bonnie. *Public Things: Democracy in Disrepair*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017.

Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy—First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*. Translated by F. Kersten. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982.

Ivison, Duncan. "Historical Injustice." *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, no. September 2017 (2008): 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548439.003.0028.

Jay, Martin. "Hannah Arendt's Political Existentialism." In *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration From Germany to America.*, 237–56. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Jurkevics, Anna. "Hannah Arendt Reads Carl Schmitt's The Nomos of the Earth: A Dialogue on Law and Geopolitics from the Margins." *European Journal of Political Theory* 16, no. 3 (2017): 345–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885115572837.

Kalyvas, Andreas. *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Kompridis, Nikolas. *Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006.

———. "On World Disclosure: Heidegger, Habermas and Dewey." *Thesis Eleven* 37, no. 1 (1994): 29–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/072551369403700104.

Lu, Catherine. "Decolonizing Borders, Self-Determination, and Global Justice." In *Empire, Race and Global Justice*, edited by Duncan Bell, 251–72. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

———. *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

———. "Shame, Guilt, and Reconciliation after War." *European Journal of Social Theory* 11, no. 3 (2008): 367–83.

MacIntyre, Alasdair C. *After Virtue : A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, Ind. : University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

MacLachlan, Alice. "Beyond the Ideal Apology." In *On the Uses and Abuses of Political Apologies*, edited by Mihaela Mihai, 13–31. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

———. "REVIEW: The State of 'Sorry': Official Apologies and Their Absence." *Journal of Human Rights* 9, no. 3 (2010): 373–85. https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2010.502085.

Macready, John Douglas. "Hannah Arendt and the Political Meaning of Human Dignity." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 47, no. 4 (2016): 399–419.

Markell, Patchen. *Bound by Recognition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Meister, Robert. *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Mihai, Mihaela. *Negative Emotions and Transitional Justice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

Million, Dian. *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights*. Tucson: Arizona University Press, 2013.

Murphy, Colleen. *A Moral Theory of Political Reconciliation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Myrie, Evelyn. "Harper's Apology a Positive Beginning." *Hamilton Spectator*, June 18, 2008.

Negash, Girma. *Apologia Politica: States and Their Apologies by Proxy*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006.

Nichols, Robert. "Indigenous Peoples, Settler Colonialism, and Global Justice in Anglo-America." In *Empire, Race and Global Justice*, edited by Duncan Bell, 228–50. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108576307.011.

Nobles, Melissa. *The Politics of Official Apologies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

O'Neill, J., and T. Dalrymple. "'New Dawn' in Race Relations; Harper to Canadians." *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 12, 2008.

Probyn, Elspeth. "Writing Shame." In *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, 71–90. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Rifkin, Mark. *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Schaap, Andrew. *Political Reconciliation*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Searle, John R. *Speech Acts : An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. London : Cambridge University Press, 1969.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, and Adam Frank. *Touching Feeling : Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham : Duke University Press, 2003.

Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Smith, Nick. *I Was Wrong: The Meanings of Apologies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

———. "The Categorical Apology." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 36, no. 4 (2005): 473–96. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9833.2005.00289.x.

Spinner-Halev, Jeff. *Enduring Injustice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Stephen Harper. "Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools." 2008. Accessed March 8, 2019. https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649.

Tampio, Nicholas. *Kantian Courage: Advancing the Enlightenment in Contemporary Political Theory*.

New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.

Tarnopolsky, Christina H. *Prudes, Perverts, and Tyrants*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

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

Taylor, Charles. "The Politics of Recognition." *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, 1997, 25–73. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020654.

Teitel, Ruti G. "The Transitional Apology." In *Taking Wrongs Seriously: Apologies and Reconciliation*, edited by E. Barkan and A. Karn, 101–14. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.

———. *Transitional Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Thompson, Janna. "Apology, Justice, and Respect." In *The Age of Apology: Facing up to the Past*, edited by Mark Gibney, Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Niklaus Steiner, 31–44. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Tirrell, Lynne. "Apologizing for Atrocity: Rwanda and Recognition." In *Justice, Responsibility and Reconciliation in the Wake of Conflict*, edited by Alice Maclachlan and C. Allen Speight, 159–82. New York, 2013.

Tully, James. *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume I, Democracy and Civic Freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Turner, Dale. *This Is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

Tutu, Desmond. *No Future Without Forgiveness*. New York: Image, 2000.

Veracini, Lorenzo. *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Verdeja, Ernesto. *Unchopping a Tree: Reconciliation in the Aftermath of Political Violence*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009.

Villa, Dana. *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Virno, Paolo. *When the Word Becomes Flesh: Language and Human Nature*. Translated by Giuseppina Mecchia. South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2015.

Wherry, Aaron. "What He Was Talking about When He Talked about Colonialism." *Maclean's*, October 1, 2009. https://www.macleans.ca/uncategorized/what-he-was-talking-about-when-he-talked-about-colonialism/.

"Why the Apology Matters to Us All." *Toronto Star*, June 11, 2008.

Williams, Melissa. "Introduction: On the Use and Abuse of Recognition in Politics." In *Recognition versus Self-Determination: Dilemmas of Emancipatory Politics*, edited by Glen S Coulthard, Avigail Eisenberg, and Jeremy Weber, 3–20. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014.

Wimsatt, W.K., and M.C. Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." *The Sewanee Review* 54, no. 3 (1946): 468–88.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by G.E.M. Anscombe. Third. Oxford: Basil Blackwood, 1984.

Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387–409. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240.

———. *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event*. London: Cassell, 1999.

Young, Iris Marion. *Responsibility for Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Ypi, Lea. "What's Wrong with Colonialism." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 41, no. 2 (2013): 158–91. https://doi.org/10.1111/papa.12014.