

Making More of the Middle Ground
Desmond Tutu and the *Ethos*
of the South African Truth and
Reconciliation Commission

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Whatever role others might play, it is Tutu who is the compass. He guides us in several ways, the most important of which is language. It is he who finds language for what is happening.¹

- South African journalist Antjie Krog

Introduction

In 1948 the National Party (NP) won a majority of seats in the South African Parliament and made racial segregation legal in the country through the institutionalization of apartheid. In the following decades, the government maintained this system through additional legislation and, when necessary, physical violence. As liberation groups such as the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the more militant Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) gained momentum in the 1960s, the NP-led government banned these groups and imprisoned their leaders, including ANC member Nelson Mandela. The next thirty years were violent: the clash between liberation groups and the government resulted in a series of human rights violations, including “massacres, killings, torture, lengthy imprisonment of activists, and severe economic and social discrimination against [South Africa’s] majority nonwhite population.”²

Then, in the early 1990s, with growing international support, the liberation movement was able to force a political and military stalemate, which led to the democratic election of Nelson Mandela in 1994.



PAN African Newswire

After Mandela’s election, many people in the country saw a need to address injustices committed during the apartheid era. To do so, the South African Parliament formed a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The commission’s mandated aims were, broadly speaking, to “uncover as much as possible of the truth about past gross violations of human rights” and to “help lead the nation away from a deeply divided past to a future founded on the recognition of human rights and democracy.”³ To accomplish these aims, the commission held public hearings, awarded individual amnesty to some of the perpetrators of human rights violations, and assisted in the process of providing reparations to victims of these violations. From December 1995 to October 1998, the commission collected 21,000 written and oral testimonies, conducted 2,000 public hearing interviews, and received over 7,000 applications for amnesty.⁴ In 1998, they released a five-volume final report to President Mandela.

Even before its inception, the commission was politically controversial, and—because the commission’s effectiveness depended on support from across the political spectrum—there was a need to select a leader who could reach a large audience. President Mandela chose Archbishop Desmond Tutu to chair the commission. Tutu had been a prominent voice in the anti-apartheid movement, and, as a speaker, he was skilled at identifying with his audience. He was also—to quote his biographer, John Allen—an “international icon,” who, having won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his efforts in South Africa, was able to generate international support for the commission.⁵



Benny Gool

As the commission carried out its mandate, many commentators noted that Tutu was highly influential in defining the institutional identity of the commission and, thus, was shaping what the truth and reconciliation process looked like in South Africa. These commentators tended to emphasize two talking points: when discussing Tutu's role in shaping the commission's institutional identity, they typically focused on either his religious identity or the fact that he cried during the commission's public hearings. Presentations at a conference in New Delhi on transitional justice attested to the reliance on these talking points. No fewer than four presenters described the TRC process by referring to Tutu's tears, his religious affiliations, or both. South African judge and author Albie Sachs began his paper by noting, "Judges do not cry. Archbishop Tutu cried."⁶ He went on to characterize the South African TRC not as "a court of law in the sense of an austere institution making formalized findings" but as "an intensely human and personalized body, there to hear, in an appropriately dignified setting, what people had been through."⁷ Two other presenters at the New Delhi conference—Yadh Ben Achour and

Avishai Margalit—noted how Tutu's religious identity shaped the TRC process. Ben Achour claimed that the TRC process "bore a strong resemblance to the act of repentance; it was perhaps no accident that it was priest, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who presided over the commission."⁸ And Margalit made similar remarks: "Tutu indeed conferred a religious meaning on the act of reconciliation as an act of atonement, which requires an explicit confession of sins as a necessary condition for restoring the original relation between man and God."⁹ A fourth presenter, Rustom Bharucha, called attention both to Tutu's tears and to his religious identity. He said, "[T]he 'extravagant drama' of the TRC...was played out in a wide range of registers, at levels of pain and trauma that would be hard to imagine. Witnesses periodically broke down, and unlike judges in court, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the commission's chairperson, was seen weeping openly during the sessions, as well as praying, lighting candles, and bursting into song."¹⁰



Given the number of commentators who point to Tutu's emotional displays at the hearings and/or his identity as an internationally-renowned religious leader, I do not want to suggest that Tutu did not influence the commission in these ways; he did.¹¹ But I do think the emphasis on these two commonplaces has overshadowed other significant aspects of Tutu's rhetorical activity.¹² To bring these features of Tutu's rhetorical activity into relief, this article explores how Tutu positions the South African TRC—i.e., how he constructs the institutional *ethos* of the commission—in the "Foreword by Chairperson" of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*.¹³ Although Tutu was probably not the sole author of the Foreword, I've chosen this text because it brings together many of Tutu's stock remarks about the TRC, which he repeated in speeches and in his book *No Future Without Forgiveness* to present a defense of the commission's work.¹⁴ This analysis of the Foreword reveals that Tutu uses three different kinds of middle ground arguments to construct the commission's institutional *ethos* in ways that aim to appeal to multiple South African audiences simultaneously.¹⁵ I argue, more specifically, that Desmond Tutu positions the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a moderate course of action in order to appeal both to those demanding justice and to those demanding amnesty for human rights

violations, as an impartial body in order to appeal to members of both the ANC and the NP, and as a representative body in order to appeal to a variety of groups in South Africa. Doing so establishes three distinct middle grounds for the commission to occupy: a mean between two “extreme” approaches to transitional justice, a medium for dialogue between oppositional parties, and a position characterized by its multiplicity of positions—a multiplex.

These claims complicate commentators’ conceptions of Tutu’s role in shaping the TRC process. More importantly, they highlight constructions of *ethos* that rhetors may employ to address the competing demands of politically diverse audiences. Insofar as Tutu’s comments offer rhetorical models for promoting compromise, negotiation, and unity in diversity, this article is relevant for those working in international conflict zones and, in particular, for countries and communities considering truth commissions to redress past injustices. Moreover, given the deep divisions between the major political parties in the United States (as well as election campaigns that only appear to be exacerbating these divisions), Tutu’s rhetorical moves in the Foreword are also timely for U.S. audiences. That is, they offer a model not just for societies transitioning to democracies but also for democracies in which political discourse often appeals to the polarization of positions, to division as opposed to consensus.



Magda Macaskill

Defining Institutional *Ethos*

Ethos is typically translated from Greek into English as “character”; however, many scholars have noted that this translation does not do justice to the term’s etymology.¹⁶ Both Michael Hyde and S. Michael Halloran highlight that the ancient Greeks frequently used the term to refer to a “dwelling place” or “habitual gathering place.”¹⁷ Nedra Reynolds, too, calls attention to similar uses of the term: citing Arthur Miller’s work, she notes that, in addition to “character,” the Greek roots of *ethos* are “habit” and “custom.”¹⁸ The singular form of the term, she continues, referred to “an accustomed place,” while the plural often referred to one’s “haunts or abodes.”¹⁹ The recovery of these etymological facets of the term prompts Reynolds to note that *ethos* “encompasses the individual agent as well as the location or position from which that person speaks or writes.”²⁰ She elaborates on this notion further in an article coauthored with Susan Jarratt. They write that it “is precisely the concept of *ethos* in rhetoric that theorizes the positionality in rhetoric.”²¹ Later in the article they add that “*ethos* is the admission of a standpoint, with the understanding that other standpoints exist and that they change over time.”²²

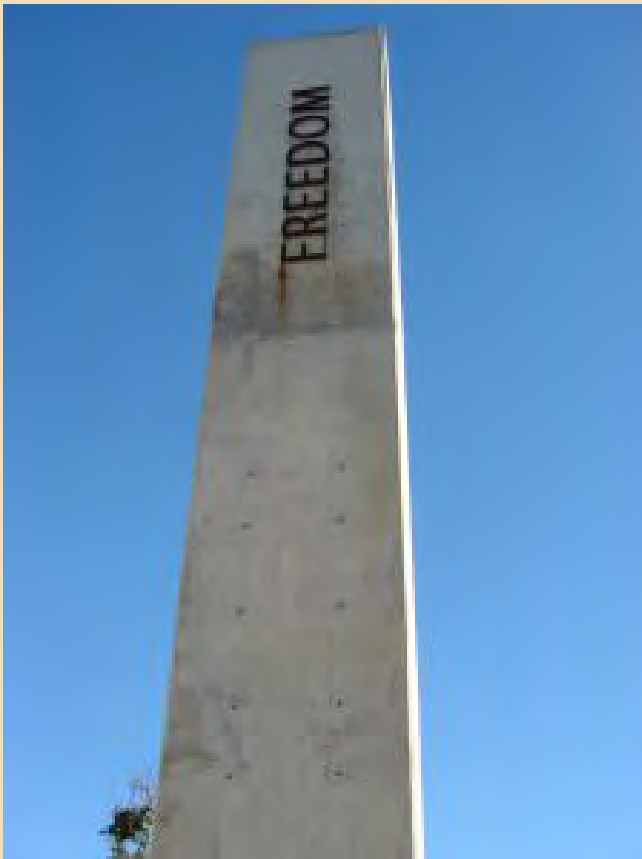


Conceptualizing *ethos* in terms of one's standpoint or positionality brings into relief the connections between constructions of *ethos* and middle ground arguments. Middle ground arguments typically involve describing a sought-after course of action as a way of mediating between two opposing courses of action, which are framed as extremes. According to James Jasinski's entry on "Argument" in his *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*, such arguments function rhetorically through an act of comparison: the middle term is compared with the extremes, and, in the process, value is added to the middle term. When speakers and writers attempt to add value to things, their judgments are warranted by the criteria they use, either implicitly or explicitly, to make the judgments; and, in the case of middle ground arguments, the criteria warranting the positive evaluation of the middle term are implied in the extremes. That is, the extremes demonstrate, through negative and polarized examples, what it means for something to be of value. When set in contrast to extreme (and, therefore, often less aesthetic, less feasible, etc.) examples, the middle term is rendered more aesthetic, more feasible, etc. That said, the rhetorical effect of middle ground arguments is not *simply* evaluation; it also involves the establishment of a position or standpoint. Put another way, these arguments not only create a *middle* but also a *ground* or *grounding*. As rhetors fashion the middle ground, they build a platform for themselves—i.e., a place from which to stand—that frequently establishes them as practical, moderate, reasonable, sensible. Middle ground arguments are, in short, a way of constructing *ethos*, of positioning oneself.



The *ethos* that is constructed need not, however, be restricted to a solitary rhetor. Perhaps because of *ethos's* frequent associations with character, it is typical to use the term in relation to an individual or, as Reynolds puts it, an "individual agent." But as George Cheney notes throughout his book *Rhetoric in an Organizational Society: Managing Multiple Identities*, this emphasis elides the abundance of rhetorical activity issued by the corporate voices of organizations: companies, societies, firms, groups, associations, businesses, etc.²³ Organizations—or "system[s] of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons"—are, according to Cheney, "fundamentally rhetorical in nature" insofar as they are constituted in and through discourse.²⁴ For Cheney, the antithesis of this statement is also often true: "[M]uch of contemporary rhetoric is organizational in that many of the messages which individuals 'hear' are from 'corporate' or collective sources. Today individuals do much of their speaking to one another through the auspices of corporate or organizational 'persons.'"²⁵ Thus an organization, like an individual, can use middle ground arguments to establish standpoints or positions for itself: it can construct an institutional *ethos*.

Furthermore, an individual's *ethos* and the institutional *ethos* of the organization of which the individual is a part are often mutually constitutive of one another: an organization's *ethos* contributes to the *ethos* of an individual within the organization, and the *ethos* of an individual member contributes to the *ethos* of the organization. This point is particularly evident when the person in question is, like Tutu, the organization's leader or spokesperson and, thus, represents the public face of the institution. Prominent individuals such as these shape institutional *ethos* in at least three ways: they bring their antecedent credibility with them to the institution, they manage the institution behind the scenes and shape its *ethos* from within, and they construct the institution's *ethos* in and through public discourse uttered on behalf of the institution.²⁶ Tutu certainly contributed to the institutional *ethos* of the commission in all three ways; however, the primary purpose of this article is to focus on Tutu's public discourse, on how he constructs the commission's institutional *ethos* in and through his comments about the commission in the "Chairperson's Foreword."²⁷ To explore this in greater detail, I consider how Tutu, as the chairperson of the TRC, positions the commission in relation to various South African audiences. I reveal that he uses a variety of techniques—such as word choice and dissociation, arrangement, and concepts of representation—to construct middle ground arguments that help to establish the commission's institutional *ethos*.



Appeals to Moderation: The Middle as Mean

One of the main middle ground arguments that Tutu weaves throughout the pages of the Foreword is that the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's policy for dealing with the perpetrators of gross human rights violations was a mean between two extreme courses of action. The policy—which he refers to as a “third way” in his book *No Future Without Forgiveness*—granted individual amnesty to perpetrators for their politically motivated crimes, provided that they were willing to fully disclose their involvement in human rights violations.²⁸ To make his case for the propriety of the individual amnesty approach, Tutu begins not by articulating the policy's particular merits but by introducing two alternative approaches for dealing with perpetrators: trials and blanket amnesty.

On the one hand, he asserts that trials such as those in Nuremberg following World War II would have been excessive for three reasons. First, given the “military stalemate” in South Africa between the major political parties, no one was “in a position to enforce so-called victor's justice” as was the case following the Second World War; second, given South Africa's limited resources, its overburdened justice system, and its citizens' fragile emotional states, criminal trials would have cost more, financially and psychologically, than the country could afford or handle; and third, given that legal standards require “proof beyond reasonable doubt,” trials would have left many of the facts obscured.²⁹ In *An African Athens*, Philippe-Joseph Salazar suggests that the reasons Tutu gives here

are part of the search for common language, as well as the creation of a new vocabulary, in a time of dissent.³⁰ While this is certainly the case, Tutu is also using these reasons to construct one of the extremes of his middle ground argument—which he reinforces by using words and phrases such as “overwhelmed,” “bloodbath,” “stretched,” “very strong,” “beyond reasonable limits,” “harrowing,” and “extensive.”³¹ He suggests that trials would have required South Africans to “devote years” to the endeavor, and he emphasizes this length of time by noting that it would have been “counterproductive” for South Africans to have had to sustain the high emotional pitch that trials exact.³² Criminal trials, he concludes, would have “rocked the boat massively and for too long.”³³



On the other hand, the blanket or national amnesty approach would have been inappropriate because it would have been inadequate: it would have ignored the past, which has the “uncanny habit of returning to haunt one,” resulting in the “further victimization of victims” and the repetition of past atrocities.³⁴ Tutu reinforces his claim about the inadequacy of blanket amnesty by referring to it as “amnesia,” a word choice that frames the policy as a kind of disorder and associates it with loss.³⁵ And he describes those who advocate blanket amnesty as doing so “glibly,” as if the policy were the product of thoughtlessness.³⁶

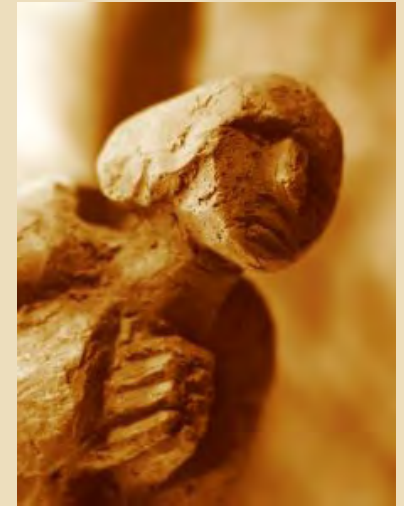
In sum, Nuremberg would have been inappropriate because its demands were excessive, while amnesia would have been inappropriate because its demands were inadequate: Nuremberg would have been too costly; amnesia, too cheap. But, Tutu then goes on to say, there was a third option—a mean between extremes—that navigated between the excessive accountability of Nuremberg and the lack of accountability of amnesia: individual amnesty.³⁷ By framing individual amnesty between two unreasonable, extreme approaches to transitional justice, Tutu presents it as a more reasonable course of action, and he simultaneously positions the commission in terms of its reasonableness.

For many South Africans, however, the individual amnesty offered by Tutu and the commission did not account for the demands of justice. Thus, to shore up his middle ground argument, Tutu uses the technique of dissociation in an attempt to redefine what counts as justice.³⁸ Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca describe dissociation as a rhetorical technique whereby rhetors split a concept into two parts and privilege one part over the other, often through the use of binaries.³⁹ In the Foreword, Tutu employs the technique to strengthen his argument—which, in dismissing the Nuremberg option, risked alienating those South Africans who demanded justice for human rights violations committed against them or their families. In a rhetorical move that he made repeatedly before, during, and after the commission’s operation, Tutu distinguishes between retributive justice and restorative justice:

We [the members of the South African TRC] have been concerned...that many consider only one aspect of justice. Certainly, [individual] amnesty cannot be viewed as justice if we think of justice only as retributive and punitive in nature. We believe, however, that there is another kind of justice – a restorative justice which is concerned not so

*much with punishment as with correcting imbalances, restoring broken relationships –with healing, harmony and reconciliation. Such justice focuses on the experience of victims; hence the importance of reparation.*⁴⁰

In this instance of dissociation, Tutu splits justice in two. And throughout the Foreword (and in his other writings), Tutu applauds justice that involves “restoration” (as well as “healing, harmony, and reconciliation”) and criticizes justice characterized by retribution. The commissioners, Tutu notes, “have been concerned” that the retributive aspect of justice has been emphasized to the exclusion of its other facets. By redefining justice in this way, Tutu establishes a standpoint for the commission—i.e., an institutional *ethos*—that involves both a rejection of Nuremberg-like trials and a commitment to justice. It’s a position characterized by moderation, through which Tutu attempts to appeal both to those demanding justice and to those demanding amnesty for human rights violations. This position is not, however, the only way that Tutu attempts to construct the commission’s *ethos* in the text.



Phillippe Ramakers

Appeals to Impartiality: The Middle as Medium

In July 1998, only three months before Tutu’s Foreword was published as part of the South African TRC’s final report, a public opinion poll showed that 83 percent of Afrikaners and 71 percent of English-speaking whites thought that the TRC was biased.⁴¹ Afrikaners and English-speaking whites were not alone: 40 percent of blacks felt that the TRC had not been fair to all sides.⁴² It is, therefore, not surprising that Tutu devotes much of the Foreword to addressing accusations that the commission was not fair. To do so, he constructs a second middle ground argument—the bulk of which appears in a section entitled, “Criticisms and Challenges.”⁴³ What is different—and rhetorically noteworthy—in this case is the form the argument takes, which relies more heavily on arrangement than on exposition. Throughout the section, Tutu responds to a series of accusations of bias leveled against the commission by members of South Africa’s two main political parties, the African National Congress and the National Party.⁴⁴ Significantly, Tutu arranges this section so that accusations of the commission’s bias toward the ANC follow accusations of bias toward the NP, which follow accusations of bias toward the ANC, and so on.

More specifically, he begins by responding to the complaint that the commission favored the African National Congress and other liberation groups: “The Commission has...been harshly criticised for being loaded with so-called ‘struggle’-types, people who were pro-ANC, SACP or PAC.”⁴⁵ Then, in the next paragraph, he addresses the complaint that the commission kowtowed to former South African president P.W. Botha—an accusation that the commission favored the National Party.⁴⁶ In the following two paragraphs, Tutu takes up another accusation of ANC bias, noting, “We [the commissioners] were told that we revealed our true colours when blanket amnesty was granted to thirty-seven ANC leaders.”⁴⁷ After addressing this concern, Tutu once again reorients his perspective, responding to another of the ANC’s criticisms: here Tutu recalls that the ANC almost refused to participate in the TRC process because they claimed to be involved in a just war against the apartheid regime.⁴⁸ Following this volley is yet another, in which Tutu speaks to another accusation of the commission’s ANC bias: National Party members took issue with the fact that the TRC did not hold public hearings in the ANC camps in Angola, where gross violations of human rights were said to have taken place at the hands of the ANC.⁴⁹



Anatoli Styf

The arrangement of this section functions as a rhetorical balancing act. Accusations of the TRC's bias toward the African National Congress are not only met with a counterargument from Tutu but also, should that counterargument not persuade National Party critics sufficiently, a subsequent accusation of the commission's bias toward the National Party (and vice versa). Thus, each criticism Tutu mentions serves to abate the force of the criticism that precedes and follows it. The arrangement, moreover, functions as a kind of middle ground argument. By alternating back and forth in this manner, Tutu once again positions the commission in the middle. However, one difference between this middle ground argument and the previous one is that, in the process of refuting each of the many accusations against the commission, Tutu constructs a middle ground that is not so much a compromise between the interests of the ANC and NP as a site of political disinterestedness. The commission, in other words, is positioned as impartial—a politically neutral arbiter of past human rights violations in South Africa.

This construction of the commission's institutional *ethos* is one that Tutu goes to great lengths to reinforce, here and elsewhere in the Foreword. One way he does so is by describing the commission as transparent: "One of the unique features of the South African Commission," he writes, "has been its open and transparent nature. Similar commissions elsewhere in the world have met behind closed doors. Ours has operated in the full glare of publicity."⁵⁰ Tutu also describes the commission's final report as transparent, noting that it "provide[s] a window" to the past.⁵¹ Other, more explicit attempts to reinforce the commission's impartiality follow the back and forth criticisms. Tutu writes, "These examples should surely be sufficient to establish that we are politically independent and not biased in favour of any particular political party or group."⁵²

It would be inaccurate to say, in this case, that Tutu is positioning the commission as moderate or as a mean between extremes. The standpoint of the commission is not a site of political compromise, nor is it even a position to be adopted by Tutu's audiences. By staggering criticisms of the commission as he does and by characterizing the commission as impartial, Tutu positions the commission as a kind of mediator—a means or medium of communication—between opposing political parties who had had difficulty talking to one another. Put another way, the structure of the "Criticisms and Challenges" section attempts to represent a mediated dialogue between the ANC and the NP. Positioning the commission between the criticisms of the ANC and the NP—the "extremes" of this middle ground argument—might seem to further polarize the two groups; however, even as Tutu



Max Mitenkov



By: Kim Traynor. The statue celebrated Edinburgh's stand against the apartheid system in South Africa at the time of the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and fighting in Soweto township.

calls attention to the different viewpoints and interests of the ANC and the NP, he demonstrates an important similarity between them: the ANC and the NP share in, and are unified by, the act of criticism itself. Members of the ANC and NP alike are positioned as part of a culture of argument, in which claims and counterclaims circulate as part of a functioning, healthy society.⁵³

These observations complicate what some believe may have been one of the central achievements of the commission. These commentators have suggested that the commission was often able to diffuse the criticisms that the various political parties had for one another by redirecting the parties' criticisms onto itself.⁵⁴ However, Tutu's middle ground argument functions not only to redirect the parties' criticisms onto the commission but also as an attempt to reconstitute what criticism should look like and to unify the parties around that renewed action.

Something similar happens earlier in the Foreword as well. In the Foreword's first paragraph—the first paragraph of the South African TRC's five-volume final report—Tutu lists several violent events that have occurred in South Africa in the recent decades: the Sharpsville killings, the Soweto uprising, the Amanzimtoti Wimpy Bar bombing, the St. James' Church killings, and others.⁵⁵ After surveying these tragedies, he writes, "Our country is soaked in the blood of her children of all races and of all political persuasions."⁵⁶ This first paragraph of the Foreword offers the first of the report's many attempts to constitute South African unity—a unity crafted, somewhat paradoxically, out of the bloodshed that, in soaking the landscape, has touched all citizens. Then, in the second paragraph of the Foreword's introduction, this construction of unity is reinforced and, at the same time, radically altered along the lines of the middle ground argument in the "Criticisms and Challenges" section:

It is this contemporary history – which began in 1960 when the Sharpsville disaster took place and ended with the wonderful inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first democratically-elected President of the Republic of South Africa – it is this history with which we have had to come to terms. We could not pretend it did not happen. Everyone agrees that South Africans must deal with that history and its legacy. It is how we do this that is in question – a bone of contention throughout the life of the Commission, right up to the time when this report was being written. And I imagine we can assume that this particular point will remain controversial for a long time to come.⁵⁷

Here again, as in the Foreword's first paragraph, Tutu attempts to constitute unity. Note, though, that an important shift has taken place. Whereas in the first paragraph unity was predicated on violence, in this second paragraph unity is predicated on language; South

Africans, Tutu notes, have had to “come to terms.” With the exception of Tutu’s claim that there is agreement about the need to address the past, Tutu’s appeal to unity here is still based on shared conflict; however, it is not in sharing bloodshed but a sharing in argument—a controversy, a “bone of contention,” a “question” about how to address the past.

Erik Doxtader’s work on the rhetoric of reconciliation helps to clarify what Tutu seems to be doing here. As Doxtader has noted, calls for reconciliation often constitute a time in which opposing parties may realize that they share together in something—namely, their opposition to one another.⁵⁸ For example, in the second chapter of *With Faith in the Work of Words*—titled, “A Middle Course Between Extremes: Reconciliation as an Art of Inventing ‘Talk about Talk’”—Doxtader persuasively demonstrates that, in South Africa during the late 1980s, “political argumentation over reconciliation helped create rhetorical opponents out of enemies that were increasingly at a loss for words.”⁵⁹ Later in his book, when reflecting on the work of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, Doxtader notes that “reconciliation came to connote a willingness to ‘stand in contradiction.’”⁶⁰ Thus, without negating “adversarial discourse,” a call to reconciliation “fashions its potential in distinction to that violence, which forecloses on those history-making words that invite human beings to begin in relation.”⁶¹ Philippe-Joseph Salazar makes a similar point when discussing the commission’s report:



*Political rhetoric, public argumentation, what the Report aptly qualifies as “to address” become the togetherness of diverse and contradictory voices. Stasis, dissent—to “stand up” for your ideas—is paradoxically the means to togetherness: By affirming difference on issues and accepting that to listen to each other’s arguments is part of this process of affirmation, citizens of a rhetorical democracy celebrate both the power of dissent and the power of acceptance; in sum they celebrate their community as a rhetorical community.*⁶²

One way, then, to read Tutu’s second middle ground argument is as part of a larger, ongoing call for reconciliation and democracy, an invitation to the people of South Africa to “stand in contradiction” with one another.

Appeals to Multiplicity: The Middle as Multiplex

As I have already shown, Tutu’s Foreword positions the South African TRC between calls for Nuremberg and calls for amnesia, between criticisms from the ANC and criticisms from the NP. In addition to these constructions of the commission’s institutional *ethos*, Tutu attempts to establish a third position for the commission throughout the pages of the Foreword: through the logic of representation, the commission is positioned in the midst of the people of South Africa and, simultaneously, the people of South Africa are positioned as dwelling together in the commission’s midst.

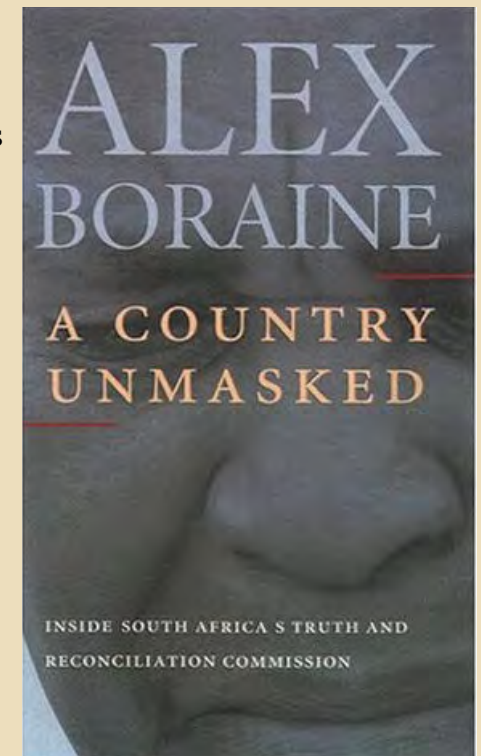
It is useful at this point to recount how commissioners were selected to serve on the commission. In July of 1995, the South African Parliament signed the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, the bill to formally establish the TRC.⁶³ According to the Act, the commission's composition was ultimately to be decided upon by then-President Nelson Mandela and his cabinet. However, in order to narrow down the applicant pool, the president first formed a selection committee, comprised of a chair, four individuals affiliated with different political parties (the Inkatha Freedom Party, the National Party, and Freedom Front, and the African National Congress), and four individuals affiliated with various non-governmental organizations.⁶⁴ This selection committee solicited nominations for commissioners. Then the committee invited a selected group of these individuals to participate in public hearings—a process which reduced the field to twenty-five names.⁶⁵ These twenty-five names were submitted to Mandela. After making his selections, Mandela then asked Desmond Tutu to chair the commission and Alex Boraine to serve as his deputy chairperson.⁶⁶ Mandela's selections were the subject of controversy, largely due to the fact that there were only two Afrikaners on the commission.⁶⁷ As a result, many Afrikaners felt that the majority of the commission was comprised of “‘struggle’ people or English-speaking liberals.”⁶⁸



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To address these accusations, advocates of the TRC frequently described the commission in terms of its representivity. For instance, in his book *A Country Unmasked*, TRC deputy chairperson Alex Boraine notes the following about the commission's composition: “Among the seventeen commissioners there were seven women, ten men, seven Africans, two ‘coloureds’, two Indians, and six whites. It was, therefore, a fairly representative group that had been appointed by President Mandela.”⁶⁹ Tutu makes similar remarks in the Foreword, and it is in his discussion of the selection process and the commission's composition that the first traces of the third middle ground argument emerge. He writes:

The Commission has...been harshly criticized for being loaded with so-called ‘struggle’-types...We want to say categorically we did not choose ourselves, nor did we put our own names forward. We were nominated in a process open to anyone – whatever their political affiliation or lack of it. We were interviewed in public sessions by a panel on which all the political parties were represented. Moreover, when the President made his choice from a short list, it was in consultation with his Cabinet of National Unity, which included the ANC, the IFP and the National Party. No one, as far as we know, objected publicly at the time to those who were so appointed. Indeed, many of us were chosen precisely because of our role in opposing apartheid – which is how we established our credibility and demonstrated our integrity. I am myself, even today, not a card-



*carrying member of any political party. I believe, on the other hand, that some of my colleagues may have been chosen precisely because of their party affiliation, to ensure broad representivity.*⁷⁰

This passage appears in the “Criticisms and Challenges” section of the Foreword and, like much of the section, is intended to indicate that the commission was fair. However, unlike much of the section, fairness in this instance is not predicated upon the notion that the commissioners were unbiased; in fact, the opposite is the case. Here Tutu emphasizes that commissioners have political commitments: they have views on apartheid, and many were chosen “precisely because of their party affiliation.” What positions the commission as fair in this instance is a series of claims predicated on the commission’s “broad representivity”: the selection process involved a nomination process “open to anyone”; it consisted of interviews in which “all the political parties were represented”; it was made in consultation with the Cabinet of National Unity (which, by definition, was comprised of members of all parties); and it was not initially criticized by any of South Africa’s parties.

Tutu reinforces the notion of the commission’s representivity later in the Foreword. In a rhetorical move that contains echoes of the Christian doctrine of atonement, Tutu suggests that, through the truth commission process, the members of the commission have taken the effects of apartheid upon themselves. He writes, “We [commissioners] have borne a heavy burden as we have taken onto ourselves the anguish, the awfulness, and the sheer evil of it all.”⁷¹ Following this statement is a graphic, and rhetorically forceful, passage:

The [commission’s] interpreters have...had the trauma of not just hearing or reading about the atrocities, but have had to speak in the first person as either a victim or the perpetrator,
They undressed me and opened a drawer and shoved my breast into the drawer which they then slammed shut on my nipple! [or] I drugged his coffee, then I shot him in the head. Then I burned his body. Whilst we were doing this, watching his body burn, we were enjoying a braai [a barbecue] on the other side.

The chief of the section that typed the transcripts of the hearings told me:

*As you type, you don’t know you are crying until you feel and see the tears falling on your hands.*⁷²

The first bit of italicized font here is actually comprised of two brief excerpts taken from the commission’s public hearings, one of which comes from the testimony of a victim of human rights violations and one of which comes from the testimony of a perpetrator. But Tutu’s transcription of these testimonies is not meant to highlight the experiences of either victim or perpetrator; rather, these testimonies are recounted to demonstrate that members





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of the commission have themselves been forced to identify with the positions of the witnesses, both victims and perpetrators alike. They have had to “speak in the first person as either a victim or perpetrator,” and they have suffered trauma as a result. Reinforcing this notion is the way that these paragraphs are presented on the page. In terms of page layout, the comments are indented and italicized in the same fashion. Tutu thereby gives the same weight to what the transcriber said and what the victim and perpetrator said; both count as testimony. The implication here is that commissioners themselves have participated in the atrocities of apartheid. In the next paragraph, he writes, “Some of us [commissioners] have already experienced something of a post traumatic stress and have become more and more aware of just how deeply wounded we have all been; how wounded and broken we all are. Apartheid has affected us at a very deep level, more than we ever suspected.”⁷³ Commissioners are, according to Tutu, “wounded healers.”⁷⁴

To these constructions of representivity, Tutu adds another, noting, “We in the Commission have been a microcosm of our society, reflecting its alienation, suspicions and lack of trust in one another. Our earlier Commission meetings were very difficult and filled with tension.”⁷⁵ The commission, in other words, is also representative of the people of South Africa in terms of the kinds of relationships and interactions between its members, which were not, Tutu suggests, initially characterized by reconciliation and forgiveness but by alienation and distrust.

Tutu’s repeated attempts to position the commission in terms of its representivity functions as another kind of middle ground argument. Here, the middle ground is once again the commission itself; however, unlike the other standpoints that Tutu constructs in the Foreword, this one is neither a compromise between two extreme positions, nor is it a rejection of partisan positions. Rather, the middle is a multiplex: a position where a multiplicity of positions are brought into contact with one another and held in productive tension. In “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak highlights that the term “representation” has two meanings that should be distinguished from one another: it can mean either “‘speaking for,’ as in politics” (*vertreten*) or “‘re-presentation,’ as in art or philosophy” (*darstellen*).⁷⁶ In Tutu’s third middle ground argument, both notions of representation are in play. Commissioners themselves are representatives in the sense that they each *speak for* various South African constituencies, and the commission itself is a *re-presentation* of the South African society as a whole.⁷⁷ Thus, on the one hand, Tutu situates the South African people in the midst of the commission; as representatives, each commissioner stands in for a different group of South Africans. On the other hand, Tutu situates the commission in the midst of the South African people; the commission is that meeting place where a part of the South African population gathers and stands in (and together) for the whole.



The institutional *ethos* that Tutu constructs for the commission here is an attempt to establish the grounds for future reconciliation among South Africans.⁷⁸

As I have shown, in demonstrating that the commission is representative of the people of South Africa, Tutu describes commissioners' political diversity and their distrust of one another. But significantly, Tutu does not leave the commission in this place. After noting that the commission was a microcosm that reflected the "alienation, suspicions and lack of trust" of South Africans, Tutu says, "God has been good in helping us [commissioners] to grow closer together."⁷⁹ In doing so, Tutu suggests that the commission itself might serve as a model of unity for South Africans.⁸⁰ He writes, "Perhaps we [commissioners] are a sign of hope that, if people from often hostile backgrounds could grow closer together as we have done, then there is hope for South Africa, that we can become united."⁸¹ It is because commissioners are both representative of South Africans in their differences and different from South Africans in their unity that Tutu can claim that the commission has enabled South Africans to move forward: "Like our Constitution," he writes, "the Commission has helped in laying 'the secure foundation for the people of South Africa to transcend the divisions and strife of the past.'"⁸²

Conclusion

Not surprisingly, when the commission's final report was released, many of the initial reactions to its contents were negative. Thabo Mbeki, then-leader of the ANC, described the report as "wrong and misguided," while the National Party called it "an expensive disaster" and "fatally flawed and divisive."⁸³ Former South African President F.W. de Klerk said, "I fear the TRC report has left our communities more divided than at any time since the inauguration of the government of national unity [in 1994]."⁸⁴ Some media sources were much more positive. The morning after the presentation ceremony, the South African *Sunday Times* proclaimed, "It is the duty, as Tutu has so eloquently put it, of every South African, of every institution in civil society, of every church, to ensure that we do not repeat the past. We must now ensure that the commission's report, with all its flaws, becomes part of our popular memory."⁸⁵ David Berford, long-time foreign correspondent for the *Mail and Guardian*, claimed that the report was "the most important political testament to emerge from South Africa."⁸⁶ And historian T.H.R. Davenport, writing about the initial reception of the report, records that "its even-handedness was widely accepted" among South Africans.⁸⁷



Whether or not these individuals are correct in their assessments of the report, their comments may not affect the report's public reception very much. As many scholars have noted, the report has simply not been accessible to the majority of South Africans. As Madeleine Fullard and Nicky Rousseau note, "The fate of most truth commission reports is retirement to libraries, limited bookshops, and study by academics," and the final report of the South African TRC has not yet proved to be an exception to this rule.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, more than a decade after the report's publication, Tutu's middle ground arguments continue to be relevant and timely, not only for South Africans but also for those in the United States looking for rhetorical models to move beyond the deep divisions that characterize our politics. Political discourse in the U.S. relies heavily on polarized positions, in which *ethos* is built by contrasting

oneself with the other, by creating or reinforcing dichotomies and then embracing one of the sides. Even when legislative compromise happens, the political discourse leading up to it still often involves the construction of polarized positions. The discourse surrounding the health care reform law—which had overwhelming support from Democrats and no support from Republicans in the House and Senate—is emblematic of such positioning, both before and after the law’s passage in March of 2010. Given the verbal combat between the parties since planning for the legislation began in earnest in early 2009, it is little wonder that the law is often talked about as evidence of the country’s deep ideological divisions. Furthermore, with a possible Supreme Court ruling in June on the constitutionality of the law’s requirement that Americans purchase insurance or be fined, it is likely that this oppositional discourse will continue through the 2012 election, making it one of the defining features of the discursive fabric of the Obama presidency.

At various points throughout the last four years, there have been calls for a more civil discourse: Representative Wilson’s accusation of President Obama’s deceit about the health care legislation and the shootings in Tucson both prompted national conversations about the need to transcend polarized positionality. But such calls have not translated into significantly different ways of constructing *ethos*, perhaps because of the focus on the *need* for civil discourse but little emphasis on *what* such civil discourse might look like.

While the divisions between South African political parties in the 1990s are different than the divisions between United States political parties today, I do think that Tutu’s rhetorical approach highlights possibilities for moving beyond discourse that involves more appeals to division than consensus. What Tutu’s arguments point towards is the pursuit of a more robust repertoire of ways to establish the middle ground. We need more models that hold up compromise as a praiseworthy position and give us rhetorical tools for getting there. Tutu’s approach does not discount the fact that division is a necessary component of political discourse. (In fact, Tutu’s second middle ground argument, in which he positions the truth commission as a medium for communication between oppositional groups, helps to constitute a space for such division and disagreements to exist. The third middle ground argument, likewise, allows for and celebrates difference.) Rather, his arguments suggest that, despite our divisions and because of the value of our differences, we should not retreat to entrenched and polarized positions.



Moderate mean. Impartial medium. Representative multiplex.

This article's exploration of these three constructions of the commission's institutional *ethos* showcases ways that Tutu influenced the truth and reconciliation process that go beyond his tears or his cassock. These three standpoints, while different from one another in significant ways, serve a similar end: they lend credibility to the commission. Even more significant is the fact that, through them, Tutu explores what moderate action might look like in South Africa, builds identification between oppositional groups around their acts of criticism, and establishes a model of unity for all South Africans. In short, Tutu makes much of middle, using it to help lay the groundwork for a new society and a new kind of politics, in which the promises of peace might be fulfilled.



Endnotes

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¹ Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000), 201.

² Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 41.

³ South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, vol. 1. (New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 1999), 48.

⁴ Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*, 42-43.

⁵ John Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace: The Authorized Biography of Archbishop Desmond Tutu* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 371.

⁶ Albie Sachs, "Different Kinds of Truth: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission." In *Experiments with Truth : Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation : Documenta 11_Platform 2*, edited by Okwui Enwezor (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 49.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Yadh Ben Achour, "The Order of Truth and the Order of Society." In *Experiments with Truth : Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation : Documenta 11_Platform 2*, edited by Okwui Enwezor (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 132.

⁹ Avishai Margalit, "Is Truth the Road to Reconciliation?" In *Experiments with Truth : Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation : Documenta 11_Platform 2*, edited by Okwui Enwezor (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 63.

¹⁰ Rustom Bharucha, "Between Truth and Reconciliation." In *Experiments with Truth : Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation : Documenta 11_Platform 2*, edited by Okwui Enwezor (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 371-372.

¹¹ These points have been taken up by others as well. See, for example, Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 3rd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 275; Daniel Philpott, "Beyond Politics as Usual: Is Reconciliation Compatible with Liberalism?" In *The Politics of Past Evil*, edited by Daniel Philpott (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 31-32; and Piet Meiring, "The Baruti versus the Lawyers: The Role of Religion in the TRC Process." In *Looking Back, Reaching Forward*, edited by Charles Villa-Vicencio and Wilhelm Verwoerd (Capetown: University of Cape Town Press, 2000), 124.

¹² Two studies that construct more nuanced accounts of Tutu's rhetorical activity are the following: Philippe-Joseph Salazar, *An African Athens: Rhetoric and the Shaping of Democracy in South Africa* (Mahwah, New Jersey: L. Erlbaum, 2002); and

Erik Doxtader, "Making Rhetorical History in a Time of Transition: The Occasion, Constitution, and Representation of South African Reconciliation," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4, no. 2 (2001): 223-260. Salazar's work, which I cite at various points throughout this article, demonstrates how Tutu's oratory helped establish the groundwork for nation-building in South Africa (2-16). Doxtader's work notes how Tutu's theology of *ubuntu* shaped his views about reconciliation (228). More importantly for my purposes, it highlights remarks that Tutu made when he spoke with other commissioners for the first time (248-249). Doxtader notes, "Tutu...claimed that the integrity of the reconciliation process depended on how well the TRC could cultivate its reputation" (249). Tutu was, in other words, aware of the importance of establishing the commission's institutional *ethos*, and my article attempts to show some of the ways he constructed that institutional *ethos* through his comments about the commission.

¹³ Desmond Tutu, "Foreword by Chairperson." In *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, vol. 1 (New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 1999), 1-23.

¹⁴ Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

¹⁵ The middle ground as I describe it in this article is distinct from what Erik Doxtader refers to as the "middle voice" in "Making Rhetorical History," 227. Doxtader contends that the mode of reconciliation's expression is a middle voice, "speech that performs the very concept that it endeavors to explain." While this notion—which explores the intersections of the performative and expository functions of language—was certainly central to the rhetorical activity surrounding the South African political transition, my primary purpose here is to consider how Tutu structured his defense of the South African TRC so as to position it in relation to various South African audiences, i.e., to fashion an *ethos* for the commission.

¹⁶ See S. Michael Halloran, "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or If Not His Somebody Else's," *Rhetoric Review* 1, no. 1 (1982): 58-63; Nedra Reynolds, "Ethos as Location: New Sites for Understanding Discursive Authority," *Rhetoric Review* 11, no. 2 (1993): 325-338; Susan Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds, "The Splitting Image: Contemporary Feminisms and the Ethics of *Ethos*" In *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*, edited by James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin (Dallas, Tex.: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994), 37-64; and Robert Con Davis and David S. Gross, "Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and the *Ethos* of the Subaltern." In *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*, edited by James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin (Dallas, Tex.: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994), 65-90.

¹⁷ Michael J. Hyde, *The Ethos of Rhetoric* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), xiii; Halloran, "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos," 60.

¹⁸ Reynolds, "Ethos as Location," 327.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 328.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 326.

²¹ Jarratt and Reynolds, "The Splitting Image," 47.

²² *Ibid.*, 53.

²³ George Cheney, *Rhetoric in an Organizational Society: Managing Multiple Identities* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

²⁴ Cheney, *Rhetoric*, 3, ix.

²⁵ Cheney, *Rhetoric*, ix.

²⁶ *Ibid.* All organizations have both internal and external commitments—commitments that may conflict and thus

require complex rhetorical maneuvering on the part of the organization's members. In negotiating these commitments, members of an organization construct institutional *ethos* both from within their organization and in public. George Cheney's case study provides a detailed account of this negotiation at work, insofar as he describes how the authors of the U.S. Catholic bishops' 1983 letter *The Challenge of Peace* "acted in a very real sense as 'managers' of their identities...both inside and outside of the Roman Catholic Church." However, his organizational analysis, which explores how a group of individuals "balanced" a variety of commitments both within and outside of their organization, is only possible when one has access to the inner rhetorical workings of an organization (as Cheney does, in part, through interviews that he conducted with bishops and archbishops in the Roman Catholic Church). My article focuses on Tutu's *public* constructions of institutional *ethos*.

²⁷ I'm indebted to my reviewers for the term "antecedent credibility."

²⁸ Tutu, *No Future*, 13; and Tutu, "Foreword," 7.

²⁹ Tutu, "Foreword," 6.

³⁰ Salazar, *An African Athens*, 82.

³¹ Tutu, "Foreword," 6.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Tutu, "Foreword," 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Tutu was not the sole author of this middle ground argument, as is demonstrated by reading Tutu's Foreword alongside Erik Doxtader's *With Faith in the Works of Words: The Beginnings of Reconciliation in South Africa, 1985-1995* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2009). Many of the moves Tutu makes in this argument were developed during discussions among members of the Multi-Party Negotiating Process (which established South Africa's interim Constitution), the participants at a conference exploring "Justice in Transition," the members of the South African Parliament, and others (230-231, 249-250). For example, according to Doxtader, during a lecture at the University of the Western Cape in 1992, scholar Kadar Asmal advocated for an approach that avoided a "Nuremberg-style trial" without ignoring the past, and Minister of Justice Omar Dullah drew on these notions during discussions in Parliament to advocate for what Johnny de Lange, one of the commission's creators, called a "model in the middle" (230-231, 249-250). This corporate authorship of the middle ground argument does not, however, detract from its force in Tutu's Foreword; if anything, it may be precisely these reiterations that help lend credibility to the claims.

³⁸ Stephen Depoe has demonstrated how Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. used the technique of dissociation in a similar way—i.e., to establish his moderate position—with regard to the Vietnam War. See Stephen Depoe, "Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s 'Middle Way Out of Vietnam': The Limits of 'Technocratic Realism' as the Basis for Foreign Policy Dissent," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 52 (1988): 153-158.

³⁹ Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 153.

⁴⁰ Tutu, "Foreword," 9.

⁴¹ Martin Meredith, *Coming to Terms: South Africa's Search for Truth* (New York: Public Affairs, 1999), 315.

⁴² Ibid., 319.

⁴³ Tutu, "Foreword," 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8-10.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁵¹ Ibid., 2.

⁵² Ibid., 11. This is the beginning of a refrain that Tutu repeats again and again, with minor variations, as the Foreword unfolds: see Tutu, "Foreword," 13, 15.

⁵³ Ibid., 8. This is not to say that Tutu finds all criticism legitimate: he takes issue with criticism that he says was "merely political point scoring" or that was meant to "pre-emptively...discredit the Commission and hence its report," but he is also emphatic about the fact that South Africans must critique the report if it is to be of any use.

⁵⁴ Dorothy C. Shea, *The South African Truth Commission: The Politics of Reconciliation* (Washington D.C.: The United States Institute of Peace, 2000), 59.

⁵⁵ Tutu, "Foreword," 1.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Doxtader, *With Faith*, 3-4, 90.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 91.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 159.

⁶¹ Erik Doxtader, "The Potential of Reconciliation's Beginning: A Reply," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2004): 379.

⁶² Salazar, *An African Athens*, 81.

⁶³ Alex Boraine, *A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 67-71.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 71-72.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 73.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Thompson, *History of South Africa*, 277.

⁶⁸ Meredith, *Coming to Terms*, 313.

⁶⁹ Boraine, *A Country Unmasked*, 75.

⁷⁰ Tutu, "Foreword," 9.

⁷¹ Ibid., 21.

⁷² Ibid., 21-22.

⁷³ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Some examples of these tensions are recorded by Tutu's biographer in John Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace: The Authorized Biography of Archbishop Desmond Tutu* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 349.

⁷⁶ Gayarti Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, edited by Rosalind C. Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 28-29. Spivak attempts to expose the problems associated with conflating these two senses of "representation." For more on this distinction, see Mark Sanders, "Representation: Reading-Otherwise," *Interventions* 4, no. 2 (2002): 198-204.

⁷⁷ Salazar, *An African Athens*, 77-78. Salazar has commented on Tutu's own ability to represent the people of South Africa: "In the case of the *Report*, Desmond Tutu indeed acted as a plenipotentiary proxy, with the full powers granted to him by law, to speak on behalf of the constituent parts of the nation, which until then were estranged and divided, foreign to one another, torn between past and present." Tutu's ability to act in this way was, I think, grounded in the construction of the TRC's institutional *ethos* as representative.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 5-11. In addition to promoting future reconciliation, Tutu's construction of the commission's institutional *ethos* in terms of representation may also function as a means of nation building. In writing about the oratory of Desmond Tutu, Salazar notes, "Tutu's oratorical career was to undo...racial rhetoric and reshape the nation, step by step" (5). Part of the way he did so, Salazar shows, is to provide models of the nation for South Africans, be it through biblical imagery from the book of Revelation (2-3) or by using the institutions of which he was a part as exemplars (5-6). According to Salazar, for example, in Tutu's defense of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) to the Eloff Commission, he presents the SACC as a model. Salazar writes, "[T]he nation being built needs models. And until another model...emerges, the ecumenical and nonracial congregation of the SACC can serve as a step toward or an approximation of the future South African nation" (6). The truth commission likely functions in a similar way.

⁷⁹ Tutu, "Foreword," 22.

⁸⁰ Salazar, *An African Athens*, 84. Referring to the TRC translators' internalization of the witnesses' testimonies, Salazar writes, "The TRC operates like a deliberative catalyst for internalizing reconciliation and conceiving the nation as a space for peace—individual and collective." The TRC's capacity to operate in this way is, I would add, rooted in the rhetoric of representation.

⁸¹ Tutu, "Foreword," 22.

⁸² Ibid., 23.

⁸³ Thompson, *History of South Africa*, 278; Meredith, *Coming to Terms*, 306.

⁸⁴ Meredith, *Coming to Terms*, 306.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 305.

⁸⁶ Kenneth Christie, *The South African Truth Commission* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 185.

⁸⁷ T.R.H. Davenport and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 5th edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 702.

⁸⁸ Madeleine Fullard and Nicky Rousseau, "Truth Telling, Identities, and Power in South Africa and Guatemala." In *Identities in Transition: Challenges for Transitional Justice in Divided Societies*, edited by Paige Arthur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 85.