Creating Conditions for War:
A Generic Analysis of Bush's War Rhetoric

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[V]oice or no voice, the people can always be brought to do the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.

-Herman Goering[1]

Introduction

On March 19, 2003 US military forces, aided by forces from the United Kingdom and others included in the "coalition of the willing," launched an invasion of Iraq. Many months of preparation led up to the attack, preparations both military and rhetorical. The precise reasons and stated goals in attacking Iraq shifted and blurred over the months leading up to and in the fifteen months since the start of what the White House dubbed "Operation Iraqi Freedom," and during the ensuing occupation of that country. George W. Bush made two speeches to mark the start of the war.[2] The first, given on March 17th, 2003, was billed as an ultimatum, presumably giving Saddam Hussein a final opportunity to quit his country to avoid the war. The second, two days later on March 19th, served as the formal announcement that the war had begun.

These two speeches are analyzed here as examples of war rhetoric, more specifically, US presidential war rhetoric. Though more than one year has passed since the start of the fighting, this is hardly sufficient time to

gain an adequate historical perspective from which to view these events. The arguments put forth by the Bush Administration in favor of war were largely based on information which often times only the White House had privy to, and hence it could release what it wanted to support its claims, while with holding other information that would weaken its position. The danger of this kind of abuse is inherent in the constitutional structure of the US federal government, which puts the president in control of foreign policy. James Madison warned that there was the potential for abuse in foreign policy because

> information can be concealed or disclosed, or disclosed in such parts and at such times as will best suit particular views; and because the body of the people are less capable of judging, and are more under the influence of prejudices.[3]

The ongoing nature of the conflict, the dearth of accurate, impartial information concerning events, assessments and the decision making process which led to this war (exacerbated now by this being a presidential election year) present obstacles to getting a full picture of the situation which brought Iraq and the international community to the state of affairs they faced as of mid-2004. Thus, interpretations of situational exigencies important for understanding these two rhetorical acts must remain somewhat tentative. This is especially important in view of the generic approach which this analysis takes in examining these speeches.

Such reservations arising from the incompleteness of or inaccessibility to information concerning the rhetorical situation does not preclude analysis of these two speeches. On the contrary, examination of the speech texts may provide insight into how the Bush Administration viewed the situation such that it left the US no alternative but to attack Iraq, or, at the very least, give us a partial understanding of how the rhetor wanted his

audience to comprehend the situation. From that understanding an attempt can be made to re-contextualize the speeches in view of the identifiable situational exigencies. In many respects it is the situation as presented in the speeches themselves that is central to explicating the speeches. It is in the situation as presented by Bush that the conditions necessitating the use of military force are laid out and argued. From a rhetorical perspective this "situation within" is central to understanding these messages, and much of this situation seems itself to have been in part a rhetorical creation in the months leading up to the war.

This analysis will begin with a discussion of the generic approach in general, war rhetoric, and, presidential war rhetoric in particular. This is followed by a discussion of aspects of the situation, focusing in particular on elements important in understanding the broader context in which the speeches were given. The discussion of the rhetorical situation is followed by an analysis of the texts in their particulars, relating these to descriptive elements of presidential war rhetoric discussed below. The final section assesses the usefulness of the generic approaches used and evaluates the speeches based on criteria suggested by both generic precedents, by the particular situation in which the speeches were given, and the situation as it was created through the speeches and discourses surrounding them.

Generic Criticism

The choice of a generic approach through which to examine these two speeches was based on three related considerations: 1) the general conception that a body of discourse referred to as "war rhetoric" exists; 2) the importance of the rhetorical situation in examining war rhetoric, since the occasions of speeches falling within this classification essentially mark the shift from symbolic attempts at persuasion to the use of physical force; and 3) closely linked to #2, the importance of situation in generic analyses, demonstrated pragmatically through what previous research done on

presidential war rhetoric offers. Such research can provide useful ideas for navigating similar discourses. While each of these considerations comes with some reservations, the aim is not to fit the speeches to a theoretical model, but to ask what insights the approach can provide. Ultimately, the usefulness of any critical method is a measure of its explanatory utility when applied to a discourse or body of discourse.

One can approach genre and criticism as a means of further developing 'genre' within the field of rhetorical theory, by identifying and clarifying genre or refining methodology, or, with discourses that appear to belong to generally accepted genres, such as apologia and eulogies, generic criticism can be used as a starting point, with past critical work serving as a guide. The latter was the impetus for applying a generic perspective to Bush's two war speeches of March 17 and 19, 2003.

Put differently, the use of generic critical method here is not intended to reconfirm a genre of 'war rhetoric;' if the approach used here is to contribute anything to rhetorical theory (in the broader sense of improving our understanding of human symbol using through close examination of discourse), then it should be reflected in how well it explicates the rhetorical acts to which it is applied. While I would argue for the usefulness of a generic approach with certain discourses, I also share Conley's skepticism that such an approach faces the problem that "it de-contextualizes as it classifies, deflecting attention away from the particular actuality of a work over to the class or category of which it is said to be a member."[4]

On the other hand, to examine any kind of work critically one must first assume that it can be treated as a particular kind of thing; else one would not know how to stand in relation to it. Although any single classification is bound to deflect attention from some of a given work's distinctive characteristics, there is

no reason why the work cannot be classified in multiple ways.[5] Thus a given discourse may be viewed from a number of different generic perspectives. Bush's post-9/11 rhetoric has been examined from at least two differing generic perspectives to date.[6] While these studies may be susceptible to Conley's admonition of not seeing the forest for the trees, both studies nevertheless offer unique insights into different aspects of Bush's discourse.

War rhetoric. As an expression it is a common enough classification referring to speeches given at times of war. I am not convinced it represents a single genre, though it serves its purpose well enough in organizing anthologies. Clearly, however, what constitutes "war rhetoric" seems largely based on the situations which give rise to speeches falling under that heading. Speeches during times of war certainly do seem to share some commonalities, among others, identification and characterization of the "enemy," justification for resorting to the use of such drastic measures, and a tendency to emphasize oppositional absolutes, light/dark, good/evil, etc. The events that led to the war, the stage the war is in, and the situation on the ground along with other factors are all going to influence a rhetor's goals in any given discourse. In the classical typology war was considered a subject of deliberative rhetoric. To war or not to war, and Bush had chosen the former, certainly deals with deliberative matters, but "also involves epideictic appeals because presidents perform the role of war leader in their discourse, blaming the enemy and praising national precepts that argue that war is the only honorable course of action."[7] In Bush's speeches, this blaming (Saddam Hussein) and praising (Americans and American values) figure prominently in the justification of the war. As this suggests, to approach "war rhetoric" as genre, it is necessary first to clarify what a generic approach represents and how that then serves as a focus for the analysis.

Campbell and Jamieson place emphasis on situational factors in determining generic classification. "In discourses that form a genre, similar substantive and stylistic strategies are used to encompass situations perceived as similar by the responding rhetors. A genre is a group of acts unified by a constellation of forms that recurs in each of its members."[8] In terms of political rhetoric, Simons and Aghazarian also argue for the importance of situation in looking at genre. Prototypical rhetors, like politicians "are far more constrained by situational factors than are poets, novelists, and the like. [For politicians] what counts is responding . . . to the demands of the immediate situation . . . ."[9] While the various forms and strategies identified with specific genres may appear variously in other discourses, it is in the fusion of elements, the "constellations of recognizable forms bound together by an internal dynamic"[10] which in turn "are linked to purposes, . . . to perform certain functions, to accomplish certain ends in certain kinds of situations"[11] that allows the critic to posit generic similarity.

Two studies have concluded that presidential war rhetoric represents a distinct genre.[12] In the Campbell and Jamieson study, the authors note that the provisions of the US Constitution (Articles 1 and 2), giving Congress the power to declare war and making the president the Commander in Chief of the military resulted in a "rhetorical genre justifying military action by the executive."[13] Their review of presidential war speeches revealed five key characteristics:

1) every element in it proclaims that the momentous decision to use force is deliberate, the product of thoughtful consideration

2) forceful intervention is justified through a narrative from which argumentative claims are made

3) the audience is exhorted to unanimity of purpose and total commitment

4）the rhetoric not only justifies the use of force but also seeks to
legitimate presidential assumption of the extraordinary powers
of the commander in chief

5）strategic misrepresentations play an unusually significant role[14]

In so far as presidential war rhetoric is discourse justifying "the introduction of United States armed forces into hostilities, or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances,"[15] a central focus will be on the justification and legitimacy of going to war.

Robert Ivie's study examined speeches from seven different wars, with all speeches given near the time that military resources were committed.[16] The purpose of the study was to "ascertain the Presidential vocabulary of war motives" by analysis using a Burkean perspective.[17] Through his analysis Ivie identified a hierarchy motives containing "rights" at the pinnacle as a primary god-term for purpose, and "law" and "democracy" as secondary god-terms for agency.

> Only through the agency of law and democracy can rights such as
> 'freedom' be made secure . . . . 'Peace' is portrayed as a guiding
> purpose attainable only after the realization of other god-terms.
> War is not represented positively but considered a necessary and
> legitimate agency when other, more desirable, methods such as
> diplomacy have failed.[18]

This vocabulary of motives has been used to justify war in situations that presidents consistently perceive as moral crises, with whatever territorial or economic damage done interpreted in terms of these rights. The adversaries are likewise presented in opposite terms, making use of devil-agencies such as "lawlessness," "aggression," "tyranny"--terms which place the enemy in an antithetical position to the United States, thus threatening its "sacred rights." These motives figure prominently in Bush's

war rhetoric, as does the tendency Ivie notes for war discourse to view scenic imperatives (e.g. the need to defend oneself) as secondary to agent. "In each case, the inability of the enemy to subordinate scenic imperatives to purpose is perceived as a threat to the supremacy of American ideals."[19]

The situation at the time of Bush's speeches has parallels to the situations from which the discourses analyzed in the above studies were drawn. However, in order to better understand the particulars of these two speeches, to better understand exigencies perceived as arising from that situation, and to put the discourses in broader perspective, certain aspects of the circumstances leading up to this war need to be examined.

The Rhetorical Situation

Like the speeches examined by Ivie, Bush's two speeches came more-or-less at the onset of the war (with special characteristics to be treated more below). The March 17 speech in particular most clearly follows the general patterns identified above and would seem to lend itself to generic analysis. There are, however, other situational considerations that give these speeches a distinction which differentiates them from such touchstone wartime speeches of leaders like those mentioned above or of wartime leaders like Winston Churchill. There were a number of aspects of the situation that are important for putting these speeches in a broader perspective. Perhaps foremost was extensive use of public relations strategies by the administration to promote the war on Iraq. While this was not new, it was significant in degree, and, combined with the effects of the 9/11 attacks, seems to have been highly effective. A second consideration, though perhaps only tangentially important for examining the speeches themselves, was the policy change which has come to be known as the Bush doctrine, which declares for the United States the right to attack on the premise of preemption. The former is significant in terms of understanding the domestic support for the war, the latter for

understanding more fully international opposition. The Bush doctrine was a central premise on which justification for the war rested. This, along with other elements of the situation and events leading up to the speeches, and the situation as presented through the speeches, are important for gaining a broader understanding of the discourse.

While the focus here is on events immediately preceding the start of the war, the desire in some circles to topple the Iraqi regime had existed since the first Gulf War in 1991. The sanctions on Iraq in place since August 1990 continued, as did the US and British enforcement of the no-fly zones over the northern and southern parts of Iraq. The bombing of Iraq by British and American forces in 1998 led to the expulsion of the UN inspection teams and subsequently made intelligence gathering difficult. Yet this does not appear to have been in and of itself a significant impetus for groups wanting to topple the regime. In 1997 a conservative think tank/lobby group was formed, called the Project for a New American Century (PNAC). One of its goals was to promote "regime change" in Iraq. They lobbied for passage of the Iraqi Liberation Act, which was passed in 1998, budgeting 97 million dollars for Iraqi opposition groups, and making "regime change" official US policy.[20] This group also sent a letter to George W. Bush nine days after the 9/11 attacks urging him to attack Iraq. Significant here is less this particular group per se, but rather their stated goal—regime change—and not weapons of mass destruction—though this would quickly shift to a focus on WMD in 2002. Rampton and Stauber note that the pro-war groups largely relied on a media relations company called Benador Associates, which served as a booking agent for experts on the Middle East, and the people they represented received extensive media coverage, appearing on news programs, in interviews, and writing op-eds and articles for magazines and newspapers.[21] The use of mass media and public relations campaigns to sell the war in Iraq was multifaceted and far reaching.[22]

The Bush Administration also made it own efforts at promoting a war with Iraq. In February 2002 the *New York Times* revealed that the Pentagon was setting up what was called the Office of Strategic Influence to coordinate an aggressive media campaign aimed at foreign media and the Internet, but also included covert operations.[23] A senior Pentagon official described it as having "a broad mission ranging from 'black' campaigns that use disinformation and other covert activities to 'white' public affairs that rely on truthful news releases."[24] The report in the *New York Times* led to a public outcry and the office was closed within a week. Though closed, this case illustrates the importance the Administration placed on garnering support for a war on Iraq. As a measure of how effective the media campaign was a Pew Research Center poll conducted in October 2002 found that 66% of respondents thought that Saddam Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks and 79% thought that Iraq possessed or was close to possessing nuclear weapons.[25]

In order to justify and explain why the US had no alternative but to attack Iraq required Bush to convince his audience that the threat posed by Iraq was both eminent and, if not worsening, persistently dangerous. This part of the war message was not new, but had been blanketing the US public for several months leading up to the invasion. This was not always done with respect to Iraq in isolation, but in the broader terms of the war on terrorism. The earliest and perhaps most noted public expression of this came in the State of the Union message in January 2002, with its reference to North Korea, Iran, and Iraq and an "axis of evil:"

> States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists,

giving them the means to match their hatred. . . . And all nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security.

We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.[26]

In this and numerous speeches and statements throughout 2002 and early 2003 Bush made references to presumed "intelligence" providing evidence of Iraq's likely possession or capability to produce WMD. These included citing IAEA reports saying Iraq was six months from producing weapons, Iraq's purchase of tubes for enriching uranium, claims that Iraq had unmanned aircraft capable of carrying WMD to the US, and in his 2003 State of the Union address, the claim based on British intelligence that Iraq had attempted to buy yellow cake uranium from Africa. Bush himself admitted the last claim to be false, while others were contradicted by IAEA officials: e.g., the aluminum pipes were the wrong size for enriching uranium; reports relied on old information from defectors who had not been in Iraq for several years, or were simply distortions with no basis in fact.[27]

The horror of the 9/11 attacks seems most certainly to have laid the psychological foundations in the American audience to be receptive to this pre-war message identifying Iraq among others as potential future targets. The elusiveness of Osama Bin Laden and failure to capture him and most of the top leadership of al Qaeda may have left a continuing desire for closure. The trauma of witnessing the attacks was described by George Lakoff:

The people who did this got into my brain, even three thousand miles away. All those symbols [the Twin Towers] were connected to more of my identity than I could have realized. To make sense of this, my brain had to change. And change it did, painfully. Day and night. By day, the consequences flooded my mind; by night, the images had me breathing heavily, nightmares keeping me awake. These symbols lived in the emotional centers of my brain. As their meanings changed, I felt emotional pain.

It was not just me. It was everyone in this country, and many in other countries. The assassins managed not only to kill thousands of people but to reach in and change the brains of people all over America.[28]

Though Lakoff himself opposed the war, the impact of the trauma associated with the 9/11 attacks on the American public may well have paralleled that evident in the general support for the war among media organizations. In the twelve weeks leading up to the attack, the *Washington Post* ran 39 articles in favor of the war and only twelve opposed. When the war began, it was the FOX television network, the most pro-war, that won the ratings contest.[29]

The 9/11 attacks provided visual testimony that the US was under threat, and rhetoric which frequently referred to the attackers as evil all contributed to the public mood in the period leading up the invasion. The media amplified the public responses, and also down played opposition to the war, as they had even during the war in Afghanistan. This may partly have been media bias, but also seems to partly have resulted from a perception by news executives that "anti-war sentiments might make viewers change channels."[30] This combined with the clarity of right and wrong, either being with us or against us, emanating from the Bush Administration and others in the US: "Look at that destruction, that massive, senseless, cruel loss of human life, then I ask you to look into your hearts and see there is no room for neutrality on the issue of terrorism.

You are either with civilization or with terrorists."[31] This attitude toward the 9/11 attacks was important in view of the link the Bush Administrative attempted to create between Hussein and those attacks.

Albeit indirectly, Bush's rhetorical strategy leading up to the two war speeches took the 9/11 attacks as the precipitating act, buttressed through the war in Afghanistan, a PR campaign to link Iraq to 9/11, to brand Iraq as a threat, and thus create a psychological exigency in the minds of the American audience to gain support for attacking Iraq without provocation, the backing of the UN, any reliable proof of the alleged links between 9/11 and Iraq, or clear evidence that Iraq was a threat to the US. While Bush never blamed Iraq for the attacks of 9/11, the rhetoric on the "war on terror" intermingled with warnings about WMD and Iraq would have encouraged people to associate them together, as being part of the threat America then faced. At the very least it would seem to have laid the groundwork for acceptance of the policy change that would be seen as diminishing the role of the United Nations in guiding international relations.

The Bush doctrine claiming the right to attack other nations with out provocation seemed less important for the US audience than it was for those countries that opposed the war (and most certainly those countries concerned that they might be next on the list). As citizens of the most militarily powerful country in the world, who had in fact been attacked, arguments about damaging the legitimacy of the United Nations would not likely have had much impact. In his speech of the March 17, Bush goes so far as to criticize the UN for failing in its duty, suggesting that Bush presumed his audience would agree with his disparagement of that institution, and at the same time insinuating that US actions were in fulfillment of "duty."

The failure of the UN for which Bush condemns that organization,

was a failure of not agreeing to go along with the Bush doctrine. This doctrine, however, can be seen as turning the notion of state sovereignty, a founding principle of the United Nations, on its head. Dodge argues the Bush doctrine post 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq "represent the heaviest blow to date against state sovereignty in the developing world."[32] This represents

> an attempt to return to the pre-Woodrow Wilson international system, where the right to sovereignty has to be earned. The question haunting the Bush doctrine is what to do with those states that will not—or more problematically cannot—earn their sovereignty in the ways demanded by the United States.[33]

This reversion to pre-Wilsonian thinking is clearly indicated in the National Security Council review issued in September 2002:

> For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack. Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of preemption on the existence of an imminent threat—most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack. We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries.[34]

The changes in the Bush Administration's policy toward Iraq were not, nor, given the immediate circumstances at the beginning of the war, should they have been expected to carry much argumentative force. They were very much a constituent part of the broader view of the situation internationally (particularly in countries opposed to the war), and, coupled with the shifting reasons for the war coming from the White House, and the apparent increasing desire over time on the part of the Administration

to re-involve the United Nations without any repudiation of the doctrine of preemption, might have left some people suspicious that the US was trying to have its cake and eat it too.

While in the several months leading up to the attack, Bush spent considerable rhetorical energy attempting to link Iraq to the 9/11 attacks, these links were not then nor have they yet to date been proven. Despite Bush's rather explicit suggestions in the speech texts, the central argument, justifying the war, clearly identified the war as a preemptive action to counter an immediate or looming threat. The appeals to fear, which carry the most weight of the emotional proofs, may well have encouraged many in the US audience, at the juncture at which these speeches were made, to forget the central characteristic of the Administration's Policy that was primarily responsible for the failure of the diplomatic process at the United Nations. This was a preemptive war, an attack on a country based on the premise that it might at some future date present a threat to the US. While the US audience may have been largely indifferent to this aspect of the policy that was now about to be enforced on the ground and in the skies above Iraq, it was an important element contributing to the international opposition to the war.

The Speeches or March 17 and 19, 2003

On the White House home page for the speech of March 17 was a color graphic of the Iraqi flag next to a map indicating the city of Baghdad overlaid in large font capital letters "IRAQ." To the right of this, in smaller caps was the headline "DENIAL AND DECEPTION." The speech of March 19 was headlined with the name the Pentagon assigned to the war: "OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM." The first headline indicated an important theme in the characterization of the Iraqi regime, in opposition to the second, the benevolence which serves as the guiding principle of the invasion, to give to the Iraqi people that which Americans value so highly,

their freedom.

Though the speeches were separated by two days, the first prior to the start of military action, the second announcing it had begun, they are best viewed as a set of discourses representing Bush's war rhetoric at the onset of the Iraqi war. The generic analysis will clearly demonstrate this linkage, but the situation at the time also seemed to require that the speech(es) be broken up this way. The most immediate reason for doing so was to allow the UN weapons inspectors and other foreign nationals time to leave Iraq, but also, to give fair warning to the international community of US intentions. While billed in the press as an ultimatum, it was largely a win-win proposition for the US If Hussein and his family left, the US led coalition may have been able to occupy Iraq peacefully and claim victory. If he didn't, the coalition could fight a campaign there was never any doubt they would win, and claim victory. The particular circumstances thus dictated to a certain degree the timing of both speeches, the combined content of the speeches, nonetheless, seems typical of Presidential war rhetoric. The second speech was also dictated by the events. The war had begun, and the public needed to be informed, and the people encouraged to stay the course, and support the war effort. The analysis that follows will first examine the generic aspects of the speeches as suggested above, followed by a discussion of elements in the text which do not seem best accounted for within the generic frame.

An examination of the speeches using the characteristics of presidential war rhetoric identified by Campbell and Jamieson shows their analysis to be a fairly accurate predictor of this example of war rhetoric. The five characteristics reviewed above—deliberate decision to use force; narrative basis from which to argue justification; exhortation to unanimity of purpose; legitimacy appeal for presidential assumption of powers; strategic misrepresentations—are all evident when both speeches are viewed

together. Situational factors seem likely to have led to some of these characteristics being less pronounced than one might expect, and to the inclusion of other elements that seem to serve other purposes, and these will be treated in turn. Of these five characteristics, the first four relate to specific functions or purposes in the speeches, and should be evident in different sections of the speech. The fifth, the use of strategic misrepresentations, represents a common strategy which we can expect to see used as necessary to support the primary purposes of the speeches, to justify the use of force and gain or reinforce public support.

The first two paragraphs of the March 17 speech clearly function to proclaim that any decision to use force will have been arrived through a long and arduous process. "For more than a decade" the United States and other nations have been "patient and honorable" waiting for Iraq to fulfill its "pledge." In addition the world tried "12 years of diplomacy," passing "more than a dozen resolutions" and "sent hundreds of inspectors." After such efforts at peaceful resolution, we have reached "the final days of decision." A the end of the second paragraph, Bush states, after listing all the efforts made to resolve the situation, "Our good faith has not been returned." This serves both to conclude this section and as a transition to the narrative which contrasts "our" patient and honorable efforts, with the actions of the Iraqi regime, which serve as the basis to justify the use of force.

The Iraqi regime is described as using "diplomacy as a ploy to gain time and advantage," of defying Security Council resolutions, of threatening inspectors, electronically eavesdropping on them and of "systematically" deceiving them. The actions of the Iraqi regime are deceitful. The conclusion that flows from this deception is that Iraq has something to hide (for why else deceive the inspectors). The next paragraph offers unsubstantiated proof of this assertion. "Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraqi regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons every devised." Whether Bush believed this or not, we now know that the intelligence at the time did not support anything quite so conclusive. Using this strategically here, however, helps to strengthen the argument that follows, which is the primary justification for the use of force. "This regime has already used weapons of mass destruction against Iraq's neighbors and against Iraq's people." The argument obviously that if he does it to his neighbors and his own people, what would prevent him from doing it to his enemies?[35] Following this argument, Bush offers further unsubstantiated evidence and vague claims. He states that the Iraqi regime has a long history of "reckless aggression in the Middle East," and has "aided, trained, and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda." No doubt the memory of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait would still be fresh in the minds of the audience, but if this statement is intended to include Iraq's war with Iran, during which the US supported Iraq, then it would seem a rather risky choice of phrasing. But this serves as a lead in to another unsubstantiated and largely considered false claim that Iraq was helping al Qaeda. This, like the intelligence claim earlier, is used to advance the argument that Iraq is an eminent threat that puts the United States (and other countries) in danger. "The danger is clear: using chemical, biological, or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country."

This part of the speech attempting to justify the use of force relied primarily on an emotional appeal to fear, the evidence supplied intended to prove that Iraq was a dangerous threat to the US. Following a transitional paragraph reassuring his audience that this danger will be overcome, Bush shifts the focus to the legitimacy of his assumption of the powers of

Commander in Chief.

Asserting the sovereign authority of the United Stated to use force in "assuring its own national security," Bush takes ownership of that duty "by the oath I have sworn, by the oath I will keep." He switches here to rational proofs based on historical events and legal precedents, attempting to demonstrate the legitimacy of his role as Commander-in-Chief, and further strengthening the introductory claim that the decision to use force was deliberate and well considered. He notes the Congressional approval given the previous year for the use of force (hence Congress is behind him) and his belief in the mission of the United Nations. One part of that mission, he notes, is "to confront aggressive dictators, actively and early, before they can attack the innocent and destroy the peace." This latter statement, though hardly specific as to what sort of actions are implied, with its inclusion of "actively and early, before . . ." seems specifically designed to parallel the Bush doctrine of preemption. As noted earlier, this represents a perversion of the UN charter, and another example of misrepresentation of facts. Nonetheless, by following this statement with a recitation of the Resolutions passed in the 1990s, and the more recent Resolution 1441 the previous November, finding Iraq in material breach of its obligations, he lends it a certain legitimacy, and also sets up the UN to be condemned as not fulfilling its responsibilities. Throughout this Security Council process Bush pictures himself (he goes himself to the UN) and the United States as intimately involved, working "within" the Security Council.

The next section returns to the issue of why force needs to be used now and a justification for the use of force, but also includes elements that arose from the uniqueness of the situation, that in part arising from the doctrine of preemption. Bush began this section by asserting that no nation "can possibly claim that Iraq has disarmed. And it will not disarm so long

as Saddam Hussein holds power. " These statements are interesting for two reasons. First no one, except perhaps Iraq, was trying to claim that Iraq had in fact disarmed. That was the conclusion of the chief weapons inspector Hans Blix, that they could not be sure yet, and needed more time. The second part of the statement reiterated Bush's earlier claim that in fact Iraq was armed with WMD, which no one could prove either (though admittedly the Bush administration always claimed to have evidence. However, since the regime has fallen and no WMD have yet been found, one would surely have thought the Administration would have found it in its best interests now to release that evidence to prove it was right all along). This contradiction lay at the fault line of the disagreement between the US and those governments, particularly France and Germany, who were opposed to authorizing the use of force without giving the inspection regime more time.[36]

Thus in this section Bush deems it necessary to acknowledge the difference of opinion at the UN, which he does, by stating that those countries opposed "share our assessment of the danger, but not our resolve to meet it." If by this he meant that opposing countries saw Iraq as an eminent and dangerous threat, this too seems rather a misrepresentation of what was actually happening. Bush uses this disagreement to claim that the United Nations "has not lived up to its responsibilities," in effect blaming the UN for not acquiescing to the doctrine of preemption.

In the following section Bush issues the ultimatum that Saddam Hussein and his sons leave Iraq within 48 hours. As mentioned at the outset, this seemed primarily aimed at warning foreigners to leave Iraq, to warn the world of what was most likely going to happen, and to lay the symbolic ground work for the invasion. This can also be seen as one final attempt at resolving the conflict without actual fighting (though with hindsight, even if Hussein had left that seems an unlikely scenario) but

would still have resulted in occupation. This paragraph and the latter part of the previous one also include references to unnamed countries who form the "broad coalition" who are working together to "enforce the just demands of the world." The start and finish of this paragraph are rounded with contradictions. It started with an Iraq that was armed because there was no one claiming the contrary, and a coalition of nations enforcing the just demands of the world, working on their own because the UN had refused to authorize military action.

The speech shifts here in a way that at first sight does not seem to fit within the Campbell and Jamieson descriptors of presidential war rhetoric. Bush notes that his speech is being translated and broadcast to the Iraqi people and uses the next three paragraphs to address the Iraqi people directly. While much of this can be viewed as propaganda not at all unusual during times of war, urging the enemy not to resist, assuring them that the attacking armies are coming to assist and improve their situation, a closer examination of the values he recites and the antithetical descriptions of what Iraq is like now and what it will be like after it is "liberated," suggests that the American audience was also very much in mind in the drafting of this section. The coalition is coming to bring "food and medicine," to "tear down the apparatus of terror," and help build an "Iraq that is prosperous and free." These inducements are offered presumably to encourage Iraqis to not resist and to let the military forces enter the country unopposed. Such statements would also reassure the American audience that the motives for the war were benevolent. Further, ostensibly addressed as they were to the Iraqi people, these statements could be taken as indirect praise for the altruistic character and charitableness of the American people which the statements suggest. These inducements are followed by threats of punishment for those who would use weapons of mass destruction or commit war crimes, which, for the American audience,

evokes the sense of justice on which the action is being taken and at the same time restates the resolve with which the action is being taken.

The next five paragraphs more clearly illustrate the characteristics of exhortation. Bush reassures his audience that everything has been done to avoid war (we are justified) and that all that needs to be done to win it will be. He warns of the possibility of sacrifice, and the need to apply "the full force and might" of the military, against Saddam Hussein, who may "remain a deadly foe until the end." These statements exhort the public to mentally brace themselves for the hardships that the war may bring. Bush warns that Hussein and terrorist groups may try to strike at the US, but that is all the more reason he must be removed. He assures the public that the government has made the necessary preparations against such attacks, and offers concrete specifics as evidence─more Coast Guard Patrols, expelling individuals with ties to Iraqi intelligence services, and additional security at airports. He warns that Iraqi strikes in the US would be an attempt to "weaken our morale with fear." Such exhortation is offered to harden the resolve of the audience, and toward the end of this section reminds them that though Americans are a peaceful people "we're not a fragile people, and we will not be intimidated by thugs and killers." This latter statement serves to reassure his audience that they would prevail.

The final five paragraphs of the March 17 speech serve as a summary statement of the central arguments used to justify the war. Though he still refers to Saddam Hussein, Bush generalizes his statements to encompass the broader war on terror; the emphasis remains that the threat is real and immediate. He evokes images of horror by referring to evil men plotting "chemical, biological and nuclear terror," hence requiring us to act now. He reinforces that immediacy with the statement that "responding to such enemies only after they have struck first is not self-defense, it is suicide." This again is defense of preemption through which the audience can infer

that Saddam Hussein has the capability to strike. He reiterates that the US acts not out of self-interest but to "enforce the demands of the world" and to "advance liberty and peace." He closes this speech with an appeal to peace, liberty, and freedom, as the way to overcome "hatred and violence."

The speech on 19 March, less than a third the length of the March 17 speech, served primarily the function of announcing that military action had begun. It does so by retouching upon the themes emphasized two days earlier. The military operations are intended to "disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world form grave danger." Later sections of speech seem to function as a continuation, albeit with considerably more solemnity, of the exhortative section of the March 17 speech.

Prior to that part of the speech, in the second paragraph, Bush outlines the progress of the war. Though the attack had only been underway for a short period of time, this paragraph reads more like a war progress report given to update the people at certain intervals. It serves here to remind the audience of what is involved, and to emphasize that the United States is not fighting alone (here a specific number, 35, is given as the number of countries supporting the war), and also demonstrate his control of the situation as Commander-in-Chief.

The war update is followed by exhortation addressed to the soldiers fighting in Iraq, to their families, and to the general public. The soldiers are reminded of the magnanimity of their mission, praised for their bravery, and reminded that what they are fighting for is a noble cause— to bring stability and freedom to the Iraqi people. Bush offers solace to the families who have members fighting in Iraq, assuring them that millions of Americans are praying with them. The solemnity of this section and the reminder near the end of the speech that "Our nation enters this conflict reluctantly," serves to reinforce the March 17 message that the decision to resort to force was not made lightly. This is followed by restating the

central reason he used to justify the war, because Iraq is "an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder." To add emotional punch WMD have been transformed into WMM, and an explicit reference to the 9/11 attacks through analogy is included: "We will meet that threat now with our Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard and Marines, so that we do not have to meet it later with armies of fire fighters and police and doctors on the streets of our cities." This short paragraph economically and effectively restated the argument for justification of the war and included by allusion the connection between al Qaeda and Iraq.

He closes this speech, as he did on 17 March, assuring his audience that the US would prevail in defending "our freedom" and bring "freedom to others." While the primary case justifying the war had been made on 17 March, this speech, in addition to formally announcing the start of the attack, reiterated the main arguments and gave encouragement to the soldiers, their families and by extension to the American public in general.

Robert Ivies descriptions of presidential motives for war echoed throughout the discussion of generic characteristics analyzed above. The similarities in terms of the use of "rights" as god-terms for purpose, the use of secondary god-terms for agency, and the use of oppositional terms to characterize the adversary are all clearly evident in these two speeches.

As in the speeches Ivie analyzed, Bush also uses "rights" as his chief god-term. The name of the military action itself, "Operation Iraqi Freedom," made this abundantly clear. "Freedom" is paired with "liberty" and they recur several times in both speeches, especially pronounced near the ends of the speeches. The United States is threatened by weapons of mass destruction (a threat to freedom), against which the "Free nations have a duty to defend." The purpose of the war is not only to defend our freedom and liberty but bring freedom and liberty to the Iraqi people.

As secondary god-terms representing the agency through which

freedom and liberty are achieved, Ivie found a pattern of repetition in the use of "law" and "democracy." In Bush's speeches the terms are given prominence (through the use of the negative in referring to Saddam's regime as an "outlaw" regime), but are expressed both through the argument for going to war and the stated purposes of the war. The primary rational argument justifying the use of force was Iraq's failure to abide by UN Security Council Resolutions (failure to abide by the 'law'). The attack was precipitated by the need to enforce the law, to bring the Iraqi regime into compliance. Likewise, while not using the term "democracy" per se, one of the stated goals of the war was to "restore control of that country to" the Iraqi people. The avoidance or the term "democracy" may have been a conscious choice based on not wanting to appear to be imposing the Western democratic model on a predominantly Muslim country. "Control of the country" by its own people serves as a pretty accurate description of democracy.

Another characteristic Ivie identified was the use of devil-agency terms to place the enemy in an antithetical oppositional position. This was also clearly evident in these speeches. The coalition forces were bearing "the duty" and sharing "the honor" for the common defense, against an enemy who "has no regard for conventions of war or rules of morality." (I.e. he doesn't play by the rules, as above). Saddam Hussein represents an "outlaw regime that threatens the peace" while the coalition does the "work of peace" to bring "freedom to others" (i.e. through aerial bombardment, ground assault, and occupation). Our "peaceful efforts" are matched by his "reckless aggression" and this war, fought to defeat "a "tyrant" and the "lawless men," "evil men" who rule with him, with their "apparatus of terror," will be replaced. In its place will be built (constructive) an Iraqi that is "prosperous and free."

Conclusion

As stated early in this paper, the purpose of this study was not so much to supply proof that in fact a particular genre exists but to assess the usefulness of applying a generic perspective to speeches which, because of the situations from which they arise, seemed to recommend themselves to generic treatment. The work done by Campbell and Jamieson, and Robert Ivie specifically on presidential war rhetoric provided very specific descriptions of what could in fact be considered a sub-genre of the larger class of discourse loosely referred to as "war rhetoric." As discussed earlier, I am not entirely convinced that such a genre exits, though the characterization is heard frequently enough. It seems, however, largely based on the characteristics of the situations which give rise to such speeches, namely, wars. The nature of war and its various ups and down, defeats and victories, suggest that situational variables would be great to the point of making it very difficult to identify the "constellation of forms, functions and situation" and the internal dynamic which links discourses together in what might be proposed as a genre of war rhetoric.

The use of Campbell and Jamieson's descriptions of presidential war rhetoric proved a useful approach to examining Bush's two speeches. Likewise, Ivie's catalogue of presidential motives for war helped reveal the similarities that presidential wartime rhetoric exhibits, particularly when focused narrowly on speeches at the start of a conflict. As Campbell and Jamieson note, genres arise and are closely linked to the situational contexts which give rise to them. Likewise, Jamieson also reminds us that "rhetorical acts are born into a symbolic/rhetorical context as well as into an historical/political milieu . . . ."[37] The use of a generic approach can thus also give insight as shifts in generic patterns may suggest changes in the situational (perceived or otherwise) exigencies affected by changes in the political or cultural milieu.

In Bush's speeches, the situation is given a central position. This was both in terms of the narrative Bush relates to create a justificatory basis to argue the need for military action, but also, in terms of the broader situation and events leading up to the war. This situation, best revealed through the terms by which it is presented in the speeches and through the messages leading up to the speeches, referred to earlier as the "situation within," helps to clarify how the war could be supported by so many people in the US. While many people outside the US saw the situation in different terms, the situation as described by the Bush Administration in the months leading up to and in the two speeches was frequently echoed in the mainstream press. This is not to say that there was no opposition to the war, but that it was, if not silenced, then largely sidelined by the profusion of pro-war messages put before the public, helping to create a critical mass moving in the direction of action against Iraq.

Edward W. Said uses the concept of "narrathemes" to discuss the state of mainstream media messages and the subsequent picture they helped to create of "America" during the Iraq crisis. Narathemes are views that "structure, package and control discussion, despite the appearance of variety and diversity." With regard to the United States he notes four that seem pertinent to the crisis in Iraq: 1)the view that there is a collective "we," a national identity represented by our leaders, acting in "our" interests, seen as self-defensive and innocent; 2) the irrelevance of history, and the inadmissibility of historical linkages such as past US policy of arming Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden; 3) The conviction that any opposition is anti-American, based on jealousy about "our" freedom, democracy and wealth, or else based on foreign nastiness (as with French opposition to the war); 4) the view of the US role in foreign countries as being that of honest broker, impartial and well-intentioned.[38] Said uses these narathemes to discuss the distorted view that the US media present to

themselves about themselves, and how they also subvert understanding of international politics and US policy toward Iraq in particular. This also helps to explain the strong support the Bush administration received for the war. These larger narathemes were also part of the "situation" presented by the Bush Administration and echoed in the US mass media. They were invoked in treating a range of issues, discussions which largely accepted that Iraq was a threat and part of the evil opposed to American values. In this latter respect the epideictic functions of praise and blame are also evident. Saddam Hussein was guilty of being a threat and was evil. The US and the coalition of the willing are good and fighting the honorable fight for justice to protect freedom and liberty. In this sense, the argument for war is here reiterated largely to support the claim that the time for action has come.

In using a generic approach to examine these speeches, emphasis was placed on descriptive aspects of the speeches suggested by past research, and on the close connection such elements have to the situation in which the discourse was created. By examining the situation and including the events and messages leading up to the start of the war reveals that the groundwork for creating the conditions requiring war had started even before the 9/11 attacks. The 9/11 attacks and the subsequent treatment of the "War on Terror" and events and developments in Iraq, may have created the emotional conditions in the US public to make them more receptive to the war messages of March 17th and 19th. It is difficult not to suspect that the overwhelmingly pro-war messages coming from the US media played a large role in creating the perceptual environment that made war seem necessary.

A generic approach, like any, focuses on certain qualities of the discourses at the expense of others. My explicit purpose here was to see what a generic analysis would reveal about these speeches, chosen because

of the central place that situation takes in any such analysis, and the commitment to go to war, to attack another country, requires a perception of the situation that leaves no other alternative (this would contradict with the values the US purportedly fought to protect). While noticing some variation with the descriptions given by Campbell and Jamieson, and Ivie, due to situational factors, the focus on generic description tended to down play other important factors like style, speaker ethos, and other elements. Generic analysis by no means precludes an examination of these other particulars of a discourse, and other analyses of Bush's rhetoric have highlighted other aspects.[39] The generic approach did, however, help to focus attention on the characteristics of presidential war messages, and on the situational factors from which they arise. In the case of Bush's war speeches, these situational factors, the conditions that made war necessary, often seemed to be rhetorical creations in and of themselves.

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[1] Conversation with Nuremberg psychologist Gustav Gilbert, on getting people to fight a war when no one ever wants to. Quoted in Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of mass deception: the uses of propaganda in Bush's war on Iraq* (London: Robinson, 2003), 110-111.

[2] These and the other Bush speeches referred to in the text are available on the White House home page at <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

[3] In Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1990), 119.

[4] Thomas Conley, "The Linnaean Blues: Thoughts on the Generic Approach," in Herbert W. Simons and Aram A. Aghazarian eds, *Form, Genre, and the Study of Political Discourse* (Columbia, SC: University of Columbia Press, 1986), 59.

[5] Herbert W. Simons and Aram A. Aghazarian, "Introduction," in Herbert W. Simons and Aram A. Aghazarian eds, *Form, Genre, and the Study of Political Discourse* (Columbia, SC: University of Columbia Press, 1986), 11.

[6] Given the emphasis Bush places on his evangelical faith, it is not surprising that both these studies draw on religious genres to examine his discourse. Denise Bostdorff, "George W. Bush's Post-September 11 Rhetoric of Covenant Renewal: Upholding the Faith of the Greatest Generation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 89 (2003); Joshua Gunn, "The Rhetoric of Exorcism: George W. Bush and the Return of Political Demonology," *Western Journal of Communication*, 68, 1 (Winter 2004),1-23.

[7] Denise Bostdorff, 67-68.

[8] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "Introduction to Form and Genre," in Bernard L. Brock, Robert L. Scott, and James W. Chesebro eds., Methods of Rhetorical Criticism (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980[1972]), 335.

[9] Herbert W. Simons and Aram A. Aghazarian, "Introduction," in Herbert W. Simons and Aram A. Aghazarian eds, *Form, Genre, and the Study of Political Discourse* (Columbia, SC: University of Columbia Press, 1986), 13.

[10] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "Introduction to Form and Genre, 336.

[11] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words*, 104.

[12] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words*, Chpt 6; Robert L. Ivie, "Presidential Motives for war," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 60 (1974), 337-345. The former study focuses specifically on explicating various genres of presidential discourse. The Ivie study, on the other hand, is more concerned with the internal dynamic of presidential war messages, which he examines by using a Burkean approach to identifying recurring patterns of motives in war speeches spanning 150 years of history and seven major wars. The Campbell and Jamieson analysis provides an overview of the situational exigencies and recurring formulaic pattern of presidential war rhetoric, while Ivie's work more clearly identifies the internal motive driving the discourses.

[13] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words*, 102.

[14] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words*, 105.

[15] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words*, 101.

[16] The speeches examined were those of James Madison in 1812, James Polk in1842, William McKinley in 1898, Woodrow Wilson in 1917, Franklin Roosevelt on December 8 and 11, 1941, his fireside chat of December 9, 1941, and his radio address of December 15, 1941, Harry Truman's radio and television addresses on 19, 1950, and Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam speech on April 7, 1965. Robert L. Ivie, 339-340.

[17] Robert L. Ivie, 339. The discussion that follows is taken from 339-341.

[18] Robert L. Ivie, 340-341.

[19] Robert L. Ivie, 343.

[20] This organization is discussed in Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, 47-48. The authors note that Paul Wolfowitz, Donald H. Rumsfield's deputy as Secretary of Defense, was a founding member.

[21] Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, 56-59.

[22] Aspects of this are detailed in Elizabeth Bumiller, "Bush Aides Set Strategy to Sell Policy on Iraq," *New York Times* (7 Sept. 2002), A1; and Tim Reid, "America Plans PR Blitz on Saddam," *Times*, (UK) (17 Sept. 2002) <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3-418110,00.html>.

[23] James Dao and Eric Schmidt, "A Nation Challenged: Hearts and Minds; Pentagon Readies Efforts to Sway Sentiment Abroad," *New Yorks Times*, (19 Feb, 2002), A;1,6

[24] Quoted in Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, 67.

[25] Reported in Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, 78-79.

[26] George W. Bush, "State of the Union Message," (29 January 2002).

[27] These and many more are detailed and documented in Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, 70-100. Other examples of administrations officials offering similar claims are reviewed in Tom S. Purdum and the Staff of the New York Times, *A Time of Our Choosing: America's War in Iraq*, 55-59.

[28] "Metaphors of Terror," (16 September 2001), at <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/News/ 911lakof.html> (20 January 2004).

[29] The data on the Washington Post and FOX TV's ratings are from Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, 168. FOX was the only of the major networks to headline their news on the war as "Operation Iraqi Freedom," the official Pentagon name for the invasion. This was subtitled "The War on Terror." Other media outlets not as obviously supportive—CNN used "War in Iraq, ABC used "War with Iraq, and CBS used "America at War. The only major broadcaster to even suggest the aggressive nature of the war was NBC's cable financial news service, which used "Target Iraq."

[30] Jason Salzman, "Why TV News Ignores War's Opponents," (29 Dec. 2001), <http://www.cpusa.org/article/articleprint/327> (26 March 2004).

[31] Speech by Rudolph Guiliani, Mayor of New York to the U.N. General Assembly, 1 Oct. 2001. In "11 Sept. 2001; the response," *House of Commons Research Paper 01/72*, (3 Oct. 2001) <http://www.parliment.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2001/rp01-072.pdf> (9 March 2004).

[32] Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: the failure of nation building and a history denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), xv-xvi.

[33] Dodge, xvi. His discussion here, while focusing on the invasion of Iraq, also encompasses the international economic system promoted by the US, in particular policies emanating from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

[34] National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* Sect. V, (17 September 2002), at < http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss5.html> (10 march 2004).

[35] One has to suspect that Bush's speech writers assumed the audience would not see the irony in this. The neighbors of course referring to Iran during the Iraq-Iran war, the latter of course also belonging to the axis of evil.

[36] At the UN Security Council Meeting on 20 January 2003, Germany's Foreign Minister, Joschka Fisher (Germany had a rotating seat since the 1st) brought up the subject of Iraq by stating that Baghdad was complying with all relevant resolutions and that inspection should be given more time. After the meeting Dominique Galouseau de Villepin, France's Foreign Minster said at a press conference "We believe that nothing today justifies envisaging military action." This seems to indicate a disagreement even over Bush's claim that Iraq was in violation of resolutions. Discussed in Todd S. Purdum, 66.

[37] Quoted in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words*, 332.

[38] Edward W. Said, "The alternative United States," *Le Monde Diplomatique,* (2 March, 2003), 2.

[39] Denise Bostdorff, "George W. Bush's Post-September 11 Rhetoric of Covenant Renewal; Joshua Gunn, "The Rhetoric of Exorcism."