OEDIPUS, RUNAWAY PLANES, AND THE VIOLENCE OF THE SCAPEGOAT: A
BURKEAN ANALYSIS OF CATHARSIS IN THE RHETORIC OF TRAGEDY

by

Nathalie M. Kuroiwa-Lewis

_____

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
WITH A MAJOR IN RHETORIC, COMPOSITION AND THE
TEACHING OF ENGLISH

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2007

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Nathalie Kuroiwa-Lewis entitled "Oedipus, Runaway Planes, and the Violence of the Scapegoat: A Burkean Analysis of Catharsis in the Rhetoric of Tragedy" and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____ Date: May 7, 2007
Roxanne Mountford

_____ Date: May 7, 2007
Amy Kimme Hea

_____ Date: May 7, 2007
Ken McAllister

_____ Date: May 7, 2007
Robert Ivie

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

_____ Date: May 7, 2007
Dissertation Director: Roxanne Mountford

STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at the University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this dissertation are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the copyright holder.

SIGNED: Nathalie Kuroiwa-Lewis

DEDICATION

I owe a heartfelt thanks to many people. I wish to thank Tilly Warnock, who five years ago helped to prompt my thinking about catharsis and the scapegoat principle. I wish to thank Roxanne Mountford, my Chair, who with great care and dedication, has wisely guided me throughout this process. I wish to thank the members of my committee, Amy Kimme Hea, Ken McAllister, and Robert Ivie for their painstaking and thoughtful advice on my writing and conceptual framework. I also thank profusely the Marshall Foundation, which has supported me generously throughout this year and is the reason for this dissertation's final completion.

My gratitude also extends to my mother, Marie Marcoux Lewis, my husband Hiroomi and my daughter Camille. I also owe debts to my friends, Erica Reynolds Clayton, Audrey Tinkham, Bo Wang, Karen Peirce, Leigh Jones, and Bryan Meadows who in some way or other have inspired the birth of this dissertation. I wish to thank my friends, co-workers and students in both the Czech Republic and Japan. I wish to thank my friends, Sylvie and Ilisabette in Quebec for their constant support. Last of all, I thank you, Kenneth Burke!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS *CONTINUED*

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I develop a theory of rhetorical catharsis and apply this theory primarily to George W. Bush's rhetoric of the War on Terror in Iraq. Because Greek tragedy provides rich psychological insight to how people respond to pain in times of national trauma, I draw my theory of rhetorical catharsis from Greek tragedy to explain how victimage and the scapegoating of the Other occurs in language. Contrary to the standard Aristotelian perspective of catharsis as the "purging of pity and fear" that brings relief and resolution to an audience, I turn to Kenneth Burke's claim that catharsis is tied to the scapegoating process and argue that catharsis is the purging and projection of one's trauma to a victim who serves as the sacrificial vessel for one's pain. I thus redefine catharsis as the purging of trauma that plays a key role in catharsis and leads to the victimage and scapegoating of the Other in language and public life.

To explore how rhetorical catharsis functions in language use, I analyze the concept of a rhetorical catharsis through literature, presidential rhetoric, and print media and show how catharsis operates in the rhetoric of war, particularly that of President Bush's war on terror in Iraq. In addition to Kenneth Burke, I draw on scholars such as Rene Girard, Deborah Willis, Terry Eagleton, Robert Ivie, Allen Carter, Robert McChesney, and Bartholomew Sparrow, among many others. I argue that communities experiencing tragedy use language to name people and entire nations as the scapegoat for their ills.

Underscoring my theory of rhetorical catharsis is the notion that trauma is mimetic and displays the propensity to reproduce and amplify itself. As such, what makes catharsis problematic is the fact that a single act of violence ensues in numerous and amplified acts of like-minded violence leading to a contagion of violence in public discourse. By understanding how language makes possible the victimage and scapegoating of vasts groups of people and even entire nations in times of national trauma, I offer ways of speaking about trauma that may help redirect the violent impulse of catharsis. I call for a reframing of the public discourse that would move the country away from a tragic frame towards war and vicarious redemption in Iraq, to a more pragmatist, self-reflexive, and socially responsible mode of speaking and acting.

pathei pathos

CHAPTER 1: CATHARSIS AND THE SCAPEGOAT PRINCIPLE

9/11 and Catharsis: What Happened

On the morning of 9/11, strange and brutal images of national tragedy played on television for all the world to see. Television and hand-held video-cameras showed an airplane flying low and bashing in the North Tower of the World Trade Center at approximately 8:46 a.m. Seventeen minutes later, a second plane crashed into the South Tower. Great fumes of smoke exploded from the towers, and some people, desperate for an exit, were seen jumping out of the towers' windows to their deaths. At 10:05 a.m., the South Tower collapsed, and at 10:28 the North Tower followed (attack 1). When the towers fell, cameras showed mushroom clouds of ash unleashed through the streets and people drenched in the white ash, running from the rubble looming behind them. These images, which were played and replayed throughout the world, became firmly rooted in the American psyche and were instrumental in shaping the American response to 9/11.

In just days following the attacks, the United States underwent profound changes and prepared for retaliation. The Bush administration went from describing the attacks as "deliberate and deadly" and "evil" to framing them as an "act of war" and "terrorism," and declared a "War on Terror." The administration then targeted Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network, and on October 7th, 2001, the United States launched a military campaign in Afghanistan. Two years later, the Bush White House claimed Saddam Hussein harbored weapons of mass destruction, which threatened national security, and amid international disapproval, the United States preemptively invaded Iraq on March 20th, 2003.

In many ways, the US response to the attacks of 9/11 is exemplary of how people and nations respond to pain in the aftermath of national tragedy and points to a key concern in tragedy that critics and scholars have wrestled with since the classical period of Ancient Greece—catharsis. Catharsis, is first defined by Aristotle in the *Poetics* as the "purgation of pity and fear," that is, the arousal and release of emotions an audience experiences when it is witness to tragic events leading to a protagonist's downfall. In both the *Rhetoric* and *On Poetics*, Aristotle argues that pity is what we feel for those whose suffering is "undeserved" and fear is the pain we feel when we can imagine the suffering of those who are like ourselves. The fact that Aristotle contends the audience is "purged" of ill emotions suggests a medicinal view of catharsis, where the audience is somehow healed from the painful effects of pity and fear, and thus finds closure from the tragedy. This definition of catharsis is problematic because it fails to account for the destructive potential of catharsis and its impact on the audience.

Like the tragedies one reads about in fiction, the injustice of the tragedies of 9/11 was keenly felt by its audiences. When the planes crashed into the World Trade Center Twin Towers, many who watched the attacks on T.V. that morning felt the injustice of the attacks and the pity and fear of that injustice on two primary levels. The first injustice was felt for the victims of the plane attacks; pity for the people of the hijacked planes, who unbeknownst to them had become a live sacrifice on a suicide mission heading for the World Trade Center Twin Towers. And pity for the people trapped in the burning towers and for those who fell from them because there was no other way out. Along with pity, many viewers of the attacks also felt fear—fear for what other random unknowns

lay in store for the nation that morning, as they imagined future attacks happening instead to them.

The second injustice was felt for the symbolism of the towers themselves. The World Trade Center, which was an international symbol of commerce for the United States represented the destruction of a global superpower. In another sense, the destruction of the World Trade Center symbolized the destruction of a powerful symbol permeating national life—the symbol of what it means to be American and dream the American dream. The notion that in the United States, Americans live in a land of opportunity and are free to follow and work for their dreams and thus are free to do and be what they want to be is firmly embedded in the American psyche. Viewers who watched the collapse of the towers thus were in effect watching the demise of a giant. Americans watching these images of the towers' collapse, felt pity for this giant that had fallen—and thus pity for the death of an era and an American way of life, and fear for who or what would succeed it.

What followed afterwards— the US decision to wage a "War on Terror" by invading Afghanistan and later Iraq—was reflective of the pity and fear the nation felt for the people who died on 9/11 and the need to purge these emotions. The US response was in many respects similar to that of the tragic protagonist one reads about in the dramas of Sophocles, Aeschylus, or Euripides who reacts to his tragic situation by retaliating and in this way reflects the problem of revenge and excessive violence so pervasive in tragedy.

This dissertation focuses on the notion of catharsis in relation to the rhetoric of the War on Terror and revolves around the following questions: In times of national tragedy,

how and why does catharsis impact the rhetoric of war and how is such rhetoric distinct from other rhetorics of war? In the current War on Terror, how is language reflective of catharsis? How is language used to manufacture fantasies of the enemy and persuade the public to go to war? How do people respond to pain in times of trauma? In this sense, this dissertation is based on the belief that what we do and do not know about trauma affects how we see ourselves and other nations, which in turn affects how we implement policies at home and abroad. This dissertation is an attempt to intervene in the ways we think, talk, and respond to pain in times of national tragedy. An awareness of how nations behave in times of national tragedy fosters a more critical sense of agency for the public at large. This sense of agency is in keeping with the democratic notion of government for the people and by the people where the people are informed and active members of a community who can choose whether or not to go to war, and thus have a real say in the kinds of policies we implement at home and abroad. I will argue that Kenneth Burke's dramatistic theory of language offers us alternative ways for rethinking tragedy, catharsis, and their relationship to the scapegoat mechanism, and in this way provides the point of departure for this dissertation. It is from this theory that all else follows.

The Problem with the Aristotelian Theory of Catharsis

Catharsis, derived from the Greek word "katharsis," meaning cleansing or purging and "kathairein," to cleanse and purge, and from "katharos," "clean, pure, of uncertain origin" (Barnhart 151), is a term whose roots go back to Aristotle's discussion of the doctrine in fourth century BC. In his treatise on the *Poetics*, Aristotle upholds the story of Oedipus who unknowingly kills his father and marries his mother as the ideal model of

the tragic play. When Oedipus discovers his wife is his mother and that he has killed his father, and gouges his eyes in order to blind himself, it is here that Aristotle claims catharsis occurs in the audience and cryptically defines catharsis as the "purgation of pity and fear." Such an understanding of catharsis suggests that the audience is positively relieved of its ill emotions as it bears witness to the protagonist's self-destructive and heinous response to his tragic situation.

Aristotle's definition of tragic catharsis is widely disputed today by critics, many of whom interpret the doctrine from a poetic perspective based on the homoeopathic, ethical, and intellectual schools of thought. It is these early interpretations of catharsis which dominate the discussion on the doctrine today, and help to perpetuate the sense that catharsis is a healing of ill emotions that the audience experiences when it bears witness to the tragic moment of the play. Proponents of German literary critic, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's work in the eighteenth century assert a moral view of catharsis which implies the virtuous experiencing of pity and fear (Srivastava 104 105), while followers of Jacob Bernays' nineteenth century discovery of homoeopathic theory argue that catharsis works therapeutically by purging the audience of excess emotions of pity and fear (Janko 346). And disciples of Leon Golden's twentieth century work in clarification theory, view catharsis as an intellectual experience lending moments of clarity or insight to the emotions of pity and fear (Sifakis 101). These three leading interpretations are a strictly poetic account of catharsis, stressing the audience's positive experience of the emotions along with the sense that the audience has somehow "changed" and been "made better" from the tragic action itself.

Thus far, no scholar, except for Kenneth Burke has reconsidered the poetic interpretation of catharsis from a rhetorical perspective. Burke's definition of catharsis as "purgation by imitation of victimage" (Language 186) leaves room for a radical reexamination of the doctrine. Among Burke scholars who have studied his theory of catharsis, Donald Jennermann argues that Burke goes "beyond the formalists who would locate catharsis as internal" (40) and thus strongly suggests social implications for catharsis going beyond literature to the world at large. Adnan Abdulla echoes this view, arguing that what Burke has done is "contributed to the development of catharsis, changing it from merely a phenomenon that is associated with tragedy to a phenomenon that embraces literature, the society, and culture, by making catharsis primarily a 'symbol-governed' aspect of a literary work" (62-63) Despite Burke's contribution, scholars today generally base their discussion of catharsis on the three leading poetic interpretations of catharsis, leaving little room for interpretations that waver from the homoeopathic, ethical and intellectual perspectives on the doctrine. As a result, standard definitions of the doctrine emphasize the audience's purging of emotions as a positive outlet, and thus center on literature as their main focus. G.R.F. Ferrari defines catharsis along these lines, arguing that "[p]ity and fear are the emotions on which Aristotle focuses because they are the emotions engaged by the tightening-towards-release of literary suspense. And the pleasure of catharsis is the pleasure of that release" (Aristotle's 181). According to Ferrari, catharsis is the audience's building and release of suspense derived from the tragic incidents of the plot. Martha Nussbaum asserts that "all along the meaning 'clearing up' and 'clarification' will be appropriate and central ones for

katharsis, even in medicinal and ritual contexts" (fragility 390). She argues further that

for Aristotle, "clarification" is what "takes place *through* emotional responses" and that

although the emotions have the potential to deceive, "they can also, […] give us access to

a truer and deeper level of ourselves, to values and commitments that have been

concealed beneath defensive ambition or rationalization" (390). Adnan Abdulla asserts a

similar view stating that "catharsis […] points to the function of art where the audience's

emotions are excited, and such emotions lead to intellectual understanding; in other

words, the cathartic experience presupposes the harmony, and not the dichotomy, of

emotions and cognition" (*Catharsis* 119). Abdulla relegates catharsis to the aesthetic or

poetic realm and focuses mainly on the cognitive and harmonious aspects of catharsis.

These definitions of catharsis reveal a consensus among scholars on the efficacy of an

Aristotelian interpretation of catharsis.

The Violence of Catharsis: Oedipus and Hecuba

The poetic interpretation of catharsis is one that dismisses the violent impact of

catharsis on the protagonist and his audience, and for this reason never really addresses

the question of violence surrounding the doctrine. Sophocles' story of the King of Thebes

who unknowingly kills his father and marries his mother is upheld by Aristotle in the

Poetics as the ideal model of the tragic play. It is here Aristotle argues that tragic

catharsis occurs when the incidental or structural features of the tragic play lead the

spectator to experience pity, fear and their purgation (V1:6-26).

The shortcomings of this poetic and idealist view of catharsis is that it neglects the

distinct nature of the protagonist's reaction to the tragic situation and the questions of

ethics that inevitably arise. The Oedipus who discovers he killed his father and that his

wife is his mother, and blinds himself by gouging his eyes at the end of the play, is

exemplary of the tragic protagonist whose personal truth and subsequent actions in

response to that truth are heinous to himself and those around him. In blinding himself,

Oedipus destroys the former self that killed his father and married his mother and also

destroys the self that is King of Thebes, thus becoming exile of his own city. In effect, his

blinding represents the death of a family and an empire.

Oedipus is representative of the tragic hero whose demise sets off a grisly and

horrific chain of events. At the play's conclusion, Jocasta, Oedipus' wife, commits

suicide and Oedipus exiles himself from the throne, leaving his sons Eteocles and

Polyneices, (as we learn in *Antigonne*) to vie for the throne to their very deaths, which in

turn leads to Antigonne's death at Creon's behest. The moment when Oedipus discovers

his origins on stage is the main tragic event in the play. This event is what arouses the

protagonist's own pity and fear at his tragic situation and is what leads to the catharsis—

the release of the pity and fear in Oedipus symbolized by the blinding of his eyes. Yet the

catharsis does not end here. It is this tragic response which sets off a cycle of pity and

fear for those closest to Oedipus, whose disaster befalls them. Such a catharsis is

anything but healing. And the audience watching the play is made in turn to feel Oedipus'

endless pain.

In his play *Hecuba,* Sophocles' contemporary, Euripides presents us with a

similar example of the destructive potential of catharsis.The Queen turned slave for

whom the play is named, and who is predicted to transform into a dog after her death,

embodies the sheer brutality of catharsis, and reflects the problem of victimage in the play. When Hecuba learns that her daughter Polyxena will die for Achilles and that Polymestor, a close and trusted friend, has murdered her son, she responds by blinding Polymestor and killing his children in cold blood. Her response to her tragic situation is unbridled violence. Hecuba's discovery of her son's murder is the critical moment in the play leading to the arousal of her pity and fear, and the purging of these emotions. This release or catharsis of emotions is what gives rise to the heinous acts of violence in the play.

The impact of catharsis within the play is most always brutal, leading to not only the destruction of the protagonist, but those around him. And the catharsis that we experience as an audience watching the play is of the protagonist's grisly demise and its ethical consequences. The protagonist's unique self-destruction forces us to grapple with the problem of moral choice in the play. What then are we to make of catharsis?

My purpose here is to open the path for alternative ways of understanding how catharsis can operate, not from a poetic, but a rhetorical perspective. This dissertation will challenge current poetic and positive interpretations of catharsis. Kenneth Burke—poet, critic, philosopher, and rhetorician of the twentieth century who made it his life's work to study the language of war in order to purify war offers us a dramatistic theory of language that complicates the Aristotelian notion on catharsis, and for this reason Burke's views on catharsis warrant attention. Burke's argument that catharsis is tied to the scapegoat mechanism is a notion of catharsis that opens the way for alternative definitions of catharsis.

By no means, however, does Burke offer us a clean, clear and straightforward view of the doctrine or any doctrine for that matter. (Indeed Burke would be opposed to *that*.) Indeed, scholars like Wayne Booth describe Burke as a man who "will refuse to stay pinned and wriggling on anyone else's wall chart" (Critical 102), and Donald Jennermann argues that the difficulty in understanding Burke is that "[h]e aims not to discuss only one work, nor to settle centuries of critical debate, but to interpret key terms, and to formulate principles that assist his approaches to any work of imagination. He is no ideal eclecticism" (36). William Rueckert argues that Burke tends to express his theories through a convoluted aggressive style and calls Burke's writing style "the rank growth of a fecund mind" (Kenneth 5). Burke is notorious for being obscure, digressive, and in short, downright confusing. What Burke does offer us, then, are brilliant moments of lightening clarity for reinterpreting catharsis from a rhetorical standpoint, and it is for this reason much of my discussion on catharsis centers around Burke.

In this dissertation, I will revise the notion of catharsis from a rhetorical perspective and argue that contrary to the standard, poetic Aristotelian view of catharsis—the purging of pity and fear— catharsis arouses emotions far bleaker than pity and fear. The traditional notion of catharsis as a purging or purifying of ill emotions, is, I believe, a romanticized view of catharsis that idealizes how people and nations respond to pain, and implies healing. However, catharsis, seen then from a rhetorical perspective, is one that challenges the Aristotelian notion of catharsis as a positive purification or purgation of pity and fear. Catharsis, in this light, is instead the projection of trauma, and thus a transference of emotions such as grief, guilt, and anger that go beyond pity and

fear to a materialization of an— "enemy" who must be punished. Catharsis then entails

revenge and becomes the gratuitous need to transfer one's pain onto the enemy.

Burke's Dramatistic Theory of Language and The *Oresteia* as Paradigm for

Catharsis

I turn now to Burke's dramatistic theory of language which complicates current

poetic and positive accounts of catharsis based on the standard Aristotelian interpretation

of catharsis. Although Burke's views on catharsis and tragedy may be said to fall in the

poetic tradition, the essence of his theory of language originates in his dramatistic theory

of language. It is this theory of language that admits room for a rhetorical understanding

of catharsis and tragedy. In *A Grammar of Motives* Burke defines his dramatistic theory

of language as a method that "invites one to consider the matter of motives in a

perspective that, being developed from the analysis of drama, treats language and thought

primarily as modes of action" (xxii). In this sense, all language is action driven. Burke's

dramatistic view of language then allows Burke possibilities for viewing catharsis and

tragedy from both a poetic and rhetorical perspective, since both are action based.

What is striking about Burke's dramatistic theory of language, is that it is based

on a secular Christian understanding for how language works. William Rueckert argues

this, stating that:

> What [Burke] has finally done in his dramatistic theory, after many years
>
> of moving steadily in that direction, is to systematize a naturalistic,
>
> linguistically oriented, secular variant of Christianity. Burke has retained

the principal ideas of Christianity and worked out dramatistic equivalents

for them with astonishing thoroughness. (Kenneth 133)

In this context, Burke's dramatism is one informed by the story of Adam and his fall

from grace and exile from Eden, and thus reflects a concern for Christian precepts and

how these pervade and function in language, including, catharsis. What this suggests is

that although an audience may experience catharsis in a secular context, catharsis by its

very nature carries with it Christian undertones and thus implications. Rueckert makes a

convincing case for this view, stating that:

[t]he better one knows Burke the more obvious it becomes that his theory

of tragedy and catharsis, ostensibly a theory of poetics—a poetics, as he

calls it—is really a theory of human relations as a moral drama in which

the 'fall' is inevitable and the driving need purgative-redemptive. (209-

210)

For Burke, the catharsis of emotions an audience experiences in the advent of tragedy is

one that carries with it the idea of original sin and the need for redemption.

How appropriate that Aeschylus' *Oresteia* represents for him the ideal model of

the tragic play. This trilogy, which include the tragedies of *Agamemnon, Libation

Bearers*, and *Eumenides,* dramatizes the themes of retaliation and excessive violence

within the house of Atreus. In the trilogy's first tragedy, *Agamemnon,* the king and war

hero for which the play is named, sacrifices his daughter, Iphigenia, so that his ships can

sail to Troy, and in retaliation, is murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra and her lover,

Aegisthus. As a result, in *Libation Bearers,* Agamemnon's children, Electra and Orestes,

take on the brunt of the blood feud and avenge themselves of their father's murder by

killing their mother. By the play's end, Orestes is wracked with guilt over the matricide

and hounded by the furies. In *Eumenides*, Orestes, still hounded by the furies, is brought

to trial for the matricide and acquitted by Athena. Pervasive in this trilogy is the cycle of

original sin and redemption passing from one family generation to the next in the house

of Atreus. This cycle of sin and redemption is symbolized in the fall of the father when

Agamemnon sacrifices Iphigenia so that his ships can sail to Troy. The fall of

Agamemnon leads to Clytemnestra's, who murders him in atoning for her daughter's

death, which in turn leads to Agamemnon's redemption, atoned for by his children in the

form of matricide. In Agamemnon's redemption, Electra and Orestes in turn also fall

(symbolized in Orestes' madness and pursuit by the furies) and at the play's conclusion,

seek redemption in the court of Athena.

Essentially, what concerns Burke in the *Oresteia* is the cycle of victimage which

ensues from Agamemnon's murder. The cycle of revenge and bloodguilt is what Burke

calls the "problem of victimage," which he asks us to "be on guard ever, as regards the

subtleties of sacrifice, in their fundamental relationship to governance" (Rhetoric

235).This problem of victimage and sacrifice in the *Oresteia* Burke tells us:

> begins in the circularity of victimage, and ends by a promise that the
>
> circularity has been made rectilinear […]. It begins with the feudal
>
> principle that is typical of tribal justice: the rule whereby each act of
>
> vengeance in turn calls forth a retaliatory act of vengeance. How break
>
> this cycle? By the progression of his three plays, Aeschylus seems to have

said in effect that change could be contrived by a turn from feuds to law

court. (235)

Burke describes the cycle of violence where "Clytemnestra's killing of her husband

Agamemnon called forth the son Orestes' killing of her, and that in turn called forth the

son's remorseful battles with himself" (235). The moral here for Burke is that "violence

begets violence" and that although Athena's verdict at the end of the trilogy symbolizes

the play's turn from feudal to civic justice, the guilt in the play remains unresolved (236).

What this entails is potential for further victimage and thus violence. Because the

Burkean system is informed by the guilt of original sin, the need to atone for sin is done

through victimage.

Burke's emphasis on victimage in human relations reflects a cautionary attitude

towards language and ultimately catharsis in general. The human penchant to find victims

and assign guilt for one's problems to someone else is one with potentially disastrous

consequences. Burke asks:

is the problem true only of a feudal cycle, as it might seem to be, when we

thus consider it purely in the light of a turn from tribal justice to civic

justice? Or does it go on, beyond all such 'solutions,' being intrinsic to the

nature of Dominion as such, just as tragedy, the 'goat-song,' itself went

on, in the plays performed the next year? (Religion 235-36)

Burke's question suggests that the cycle of revenge and violence permeates the drama

of human relations. It is this question that reveals Burke's concerns for the problem

of victimage in society and its impact on language use.

The Rhetoricality of Catharsis

To understand how catharsis works in national life, I turn now to Burke's discussion of rhetoric. Interpreting Burke's approach to rhetoric (as with anything remotely Burkean), however, is no easy task and as such reading Burke is like traveling through a labyrinth. As Rueckert puts it, "[f]or many people Burke exists in fragments, as the originator of a few stunning ideas and the writer of sporadically brilliant applied criticism" (Kenneth xiii). Because Burke's views on language are so overtly complex and his writing style equally opaque, one must, as Rueckert contends, "attempt [ ] to purify Burke" and "hack through" his "stylistic and terminilogical underbrush" and "then map[] the main route" (5) to find one's way out. Add to this the complexity of dealing with a critic known largely for his work in literary criticism and theory, one finds Burke a formidable challenge.

Yet when one has hacked through the underbrush, one finds at the core of Burke's literary criticism, his dramatistic theory of language, which reflects an overriding concern for human conduct and its consequences. As Rueckert puts it:

> Burke's whole development is characterized by the gradual expansion of a
> literary theory and method into a larger dramatistic system and
> methodology, the very name of which derives from a literary type. (xiv)

To apply Burke's dramatistic principles to rhetoric, one must first read Burke in terms of his theory of language as symbolic action, which reflects Burke's interest in human communication in the drama of human relations. As Burke famously states in the first precept of his definition of man:

> Man is the symbol using (symbol-making, symbol mis-using) animal
> inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative) separated from his
> natural condition by instruments of his own making goaded by the spirit of
> hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order) and rotten with perfection.
> (Language 16)

Burke's discussion of rhetoric is informed by this definition of man based on a view of language as symbolic action. Burke's definition of rhetoric as "the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (Rhetoric 43) is one that centers on symbolic action as the main vehicle for persuasion. Because Burke's literary theory is primarily concerned with what language does, it is ironically this approach towards language that opens possibilities for a rhetorical understanding of language in general.

Burke opens a window for a rhetorical definition of catharsis that deviates from the standard poetic view of the doctrine when he states that because of the "infinity of possible unique responses to it" […] "catharsis in tragedy" demonstrates potential for existing "outside the field of Poetics proper" (ASM 151). In his discussion of the difference between catharsis and transcendence as concerns Emerson's essay, "Nature," Burke argues that catharsis is central to both the poetic and rhetorical spheres of language, explaining that:

> Catharsis involves fundamentally purgation by the imitation of victimage.
> If imaginative devices are found whereby members of rival factions can weep
> together, and if weeping is a surrogate of orgastic release, then a play that

produced in the audience a unitary tragic response regardless of personal

discord otherwise would be in effect a transformed variant of an original

collective orgy (such as the Dionysian rites from which Greek tragedy

developed). Here would be our paradigm for catharsis. (Language 186)

In his analogy of an audience in a tragedy to that of an audience in an orgy, to

the participants in the rites of Dionysus, Burke demonstrates how the poetic

and rhetorical are constantly in overlap because both function in unifying their

audience towards a common goal. Burke further elaborates on this, stating that "to

be 'moved' factionally is rhetorical, and to be 'moved' in the second sense, 'universally'

is poetic" (ASM 152). Similarly, he argues that "the poetic appeal of 'universal'

tragedy can implicitly embody a rhetorical function" (ASM 171). For Burke,

human beings are moved poetically when they are called to feel what is universal in

the nature of suffering and thus rhetorically when they are called to act in the wake

of that suffering.

Key to Burke's rhetorical definition of catharsis is persuasion at the civic level.

Burke argues that catharsis happens "when any group is made consubstantial by joint

participation in a single symbolic act" (ASM 151). Such a view of catharsis demonstrates

how catharsis can operate in public life when citizens are persuaded to support

government on key policy issues. At the heart of Burke's focus on catharsis in public life

is a recognition of the double impact of language use when language employed in

national life affects our relations with the global community at large. What this

demonstrates is Burke's general unease or guardedness for the moral choices people

make in language and the consequences of those choices in civil society. This unease for language and thus catharsis in national life revolves around a secular Christian approach to language which further complicates his discussion on the ethics of language use in the public domain.

Burke's interest in the notions of sin and redemption in language revolves around his theory of victimage, which Rueckert defines as "a mode of purification" (Kenneth 146). Rueckert asserts that for Burke there are two kinds of victimage: those that "move[…] in the direction of either of its two extreme manifestations: victimage of others (homicide) and victimage of ourselves (suicide)" (146). Rueckert explains "victimage contains the idea of the sacrificial redeemer, the redemption by vicarious atonement which completes the cycle" (157). In this sense, victimage, as a kind of purification, entails a purgative-redemptive enactment of that ultimate of sacrificial dramas—the Christian drama of Jesus of Nazareth, with the crucifixion as its main focus, which for many Christians represents man's fall from grace and God's attempt to redeem that fall. In this drama of human relations, what we have here essentially is Jesus as a surrogate figure who symbolically carries the sins of his community and then sacrifices himself for the good of the community so that its members can be cleansed and thus saved from their sins.

Tragic Catharsis and the Language of the Scapegoat

Underlying this view of the surrogate whose sacrifice represents the purification of the general community, is the modern day notion of the scapegoat largely informed by both Rene Girard and Kenneth Burke's discussion of the scapegoat. In his book, *I see*

Satan fall like lightning, Girard draws on a biblical understanding of the scapegoat in

Leviticus where the scapegoat is perceived to be an "innocent" victim included in the

rites of atonement. This approach towards the scapegoat strongly suggests that the

scapegoat is an "innocent" object of sacrifice. Girard points to this view of the scapegoat

in Lev. 16:21 (154) as he describes the atonement ceremony:

> the ritual consisted of driving into the wilderness a goat on which all the
>
> sins of Israel had been laid. The high priest placed his hands on the head
>
> of the goat, and this act was supposed to transfer onto the animal
>
> everything likely to poison relations between members of the community.
>
> The effectiveness of the ritual was the idea that the sins were expelled
>
> with the goat and then the community was rid of them. (154-155)

Girard's argument that the scapegoat fulfilled a curative function, unburdening the

community of its sins illustrates a modern day approach towards the scapegoat similar to

Kenneth Burke's view of the scapegoat. However, contrary to Girard's implied focus on

the scapegoat's innocence, Burke sees the scapegoat as embodying more than one kind of

victimage. In Burke's analysis of the scapegoat in his unpublished manuscript, *A*

Symbolic of Motives, he points to four kinds of victims. As he describes it:

> (1) There is the victim chosen because he is most blameless. The typical
>
>   sacrifice calls, in some respect or other, for a victim "without
>
>   blemish," though the tests of such purity may be of a quite esoteric
>
>   nature. But obviously, the Christ-principle of victimage illustrates this
>
>   type to perfection. Here would be included any person 'too good for

this world.' Its crude theatrical variant, shading into melodrama, is the rough exterior, with heart of gold, sacrificed, or voluntarily sacrificing the self, as one step in the audience's cleansing through tears. (2) There is the victim chosen because most blamable, the villainous victim (the principle recently illustrated to perfection in the Hitlerite version of the Jew as vessel of all Germany's disorders). (3) There is the ideal 'Aristotelian' victim, a 'good' person with one tragic flaw. (4) There are the 'supernumerary' victims, expendable for the good of the plot as a whole, but sacrificed incidentally, somewhat like an 'innocent bystander' who gets killed by accident. (218-219)

Although Burke defines the scapegoat according to four victim types, much of his life's work on the scapegoat demonstrates an overriding concern with the blamable victim type. In *A Grammar of Motives,* Burke calls attention to the symbolic nature of the blamable victim type who is defined as the evil enemy and seen as the symbolic root cause for the social ills of a community, stating, "[h]ere we are concerned rather with the kind of scapegoat seen in the Hitlerite cult of Anti-Semitism. Here the scapegoat is the 'essence' of evil, the *principle* of the discord felt by those who are to be purified by the sacrifice" (407). In this sense, the scapegoat represents a perfected form of evil and is seen as evil in and of itself.

Equally significant, Burke emphasizes the vicarious dimension of the scapegoat, arguing that the blameable scapegoat functions as a symbolic surrogate; primarily as a "vessel of vicarious atonement" (GM 407). In *The Philosophy of Literary Form,* Burke

makes the case for the vicarious qualities of the scapegoat and asserts that the scapegoat is the object which represents the community's conflicts and acts as a medium for the purification of the community. Burke contends that such a scapegoat is "'representative'" acting as the "'vessel' of certain unwanted evils, the sacrificial animal upon whose back the burden of these evils is ritualistically loaded. He becomes 'charismatic.'" (PLF 39-40). The scapegoat thus, acting as a substitute for a community's ills, takes the blame for those ills and must be sacrificed to purify the community of its wrongs. This vicarious relationship between the scapegoat and its community Burke tells us, is a process made up of three phases moving from merger to division and back to merger. According to Burke, this process entails:

> (1) an original state of merger, in that the iniquities are shared by both the iniquitous and their chosen vessel; (2) a principle of division, in that the elements shared in common are being ritualistically alienated; (3) a new principle of merger, this time in the unification of those whose purified identity is defined in dialectical opposition to the sacrificial offering. (406)

For Burke, these three phases of the scapegoat process are analogous to the trajectory of guilt, purification, and redemption in the drama of human relations where tragedy ensues in a community's guilt and the attempt to purify guilt through victimage of the scapegoat leading to the redemption of the general community.

Merger and God-Fearing Retribution

It is in the "original state of merger" of Burke's paradigm that we see calls for unification against the International terrorist in the aftermath of the attacks of 9/11. This

unification is one based on the theme of tragic victimage, which places exclusive identification with the suffering of the people who died on 9/11 and subsequently, the need for the United States to strike out in the form of excessive and surreal retribution against the terrorists.

Shortly after the attacks, the nation it seemed, prepared for extreme retribution. Calls for revenge and excessive violence dominated the Bush White House and much of the US mainstream media coverage on the attacks. On the evening of September 11th, in his address to the nation, President George W. Bush invoked the language of war, stating that, "[t]oday, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack" and that "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them" (2). And in an eerie foreshadowing of what was to come, the President stated that "America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world and we stand together to win the war against terrorism" (2).

In the week following the attacks of 9/11, major television networks, national newspapers and magazines reiterated the Bush administration's language of war. Rather than naming the attacks of Sept. 11, "criminal" or "terrorist" acts perpetrated by a number of isolated individuals, the majority of the mainstream media chose to name the event an "act" of war as they headed their stories under frames such as "America under Attack," "Second Pearl Harbor" "America's New War" and "America Strikes Back." Even editorials of allegedly "liberal" newspapers such as the *New York Times*

focused on the country's vulnerability to terrorism and framed the attacks as an "act of war," calling for the US to respond in kind. The day after 9/11, Maureen Dowd asserted that "on a gorgeous blue fall day, terrorism had turned into war" ("Grave Silence") and Anthony Lewis called for the attackers to be "found and destroyed" and stated that "the United Nations must demand that all countries deny shelter to terrorists and help to crush them. Governments that reject that demand will be targets for military action" ("A Different World"). In his September 12 column, William Safire invoked the WWII frame, describing 9/11 as "another date that will live in infamy" and claimed that "America is at war and this time our land is one of the battlegrounds" ("New Day of Infamy"). And Thomas Friedman, who was most supportive of war, responded to the 9/11 attacks by comparing the attacks to a "third World War" arguing, "Does my country really understand that this is World War III?" and that "if this attack was the Pearl Harbor of World War III, it means there is a long, long war ahead." It seemed that only days following the attacks, politicians and journalists alike were eager in framing the attacks as an "act of war" that called for bloody and god-fearing retribution.

Purification by Dissociation: Themes of Good vs. Evil

To be purified from one's ills, Burke tells us, means we must first separate ourselves from the scapegoat. Such "purification by dissociation" (Philosophy 202) is done through language that draws boundaries under the aegis of an unseemly moral clarity where the force of good vs. evil rule the world. It is with such clarity, we must choose a side—that of the good which prevails over the evil. In his address to a joint session of Congress and the American people on Sept. 20th, 2001, President Bush

dismissed the very complex reasons behind the 9/11 attacks by portraying the United States as the innocent victim of fanatic Islamic terrorists, thus fostering the image of a benign state under fundamentalist siege. Such a storyline simplistically portrays the world as a contest between good and evil in the guise of American freedom vs. Islamic terrorist. The President enacts this storyline, stating:

> Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber—a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms—our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other. (3)

By focusing on "freedom" as the reason for why the United States was attacked, the President deflects key questions surrounding the United States' controversial role as a world power while emphasizing the Post Cold War image of the United States as benign state in a world of "freedom vs. terror." The scapegoat thus acts as the vessel for which we vicariously load our pity and fears, becoming the convenient cure-all when we attack it.

Cleansing Iraq

According to Burke's paradigm, once the surrogate is divorced and thus purified from the community, a new identity from within the community is formed. Key to this rhetorical transformation is the promise of redemption operating under the aegis of a new world order. In the first Presidential debates between Bush and Kerry, President Bush emphasized the theme of freedom as a new global order by casting himself (and thus the United States) in the image of liberator who will save Iraq from the evil dictatorship of

Saddam Hussein by bringing freedom and democracy to the region. The President

reiterates this message in statements such as "the biggest disaster that could happen is

that we not succeed in Iraq. We will succeed. We've got a plan to do so. And the main

reason we'll succeed is because the Iraqis want to be free" (6). And that "when Iraq is

free, America will be more secure" (7). This message of "freedom" is essentially

redemptive and as such, draws on the secular Christian view of original sin (illustrated in

the rebellion of angels and later in Adam's fall to temptation). The concept of original

sin—the fall—for Burke, is best exemplified in the story of the crucifixion of Jesus. The

notion that Jesus suffered at the cross so that the human race could be cleansed of its sins

is a key theme in the Burkean drama of human relations. The cleansing of the Christ

figure is what makes Christ for Burke, the "perfect victim" (Rhetoric 90). Cleansing as

part of the scapegoat ritual is what Burke contends is:

> ideas and images for at least three major elements: unclean, clean,
>
> cleansing, cleanser (personal or impersonal), cleansed. Nor does the
>
> cleansing process go simply from unclean to cleansed, since the cleanser
>
> in some way takes over the uncleanliness, which must in turn be disposed
>
> of. (On Catharsis 367)

To become clean then entails the public's symbolic burdening and expiation of sins to the

Other, where both the public and the Other are magically redeemed.

Bush's Redemption of American Freedom

Under the utopic aegis of Bush's calls for freedom is a cleansing of the Other

steeped in the violence of the scapegoat ritual. Rueckert explains:

one gets clean through mortification or victimage of some kind, or the

clean person may be used as sacrificial victim; cleansing is got by

purgation (catharsis) or mortification; the cleanser may be either a

sacrificial victim or various acts of mortification; the cleansed is the

redeemed person. (Kenneth 209)

The President's rhetoric of "freedom" is essentially one of redemption that positions the

US as surrogate figure for the sins of the Middle East. Freedom, as such, operates under a

Burkean rubric of human relations where cleansing and thus victimage is a driving force

of the scapegoat paradigm. What makes this rhetoric of freedom so appealing is its vision

of a global utopia based on the ideals of freedom and democracy in Iraq and thus the

Middle East.

Freedom as an ideology draws on an American post Enlightenment concept of

freedom, which Anthony Burke argues derives from "powerful metanarratives of US

exceptionalism and destiny and overarching Western concepts of enlightenment,

sovereignty, historical progress, reason of state and secular modernity" (315). The

concept of freedom as a new world order entails a hegemonic sense of the US role

abroad, along with the United States purported Western values for civil liberties,

separation of church and state, and democratically elected governments. The President

outlines this sense of freedom when he tells the American public:

A free Iraq will be an ally in the war on terror, and that's essential. A free

Iraq will set a powerful example in the part of the world that is desperate

for freedom. A free Iraq will help secure Israel. A free Iraq will enforce

the hopes and aspirations of the reformers in places like Iran. A free Iraq is

essential for the security of this country. (10)

The Middle East, in this sense, with its emphasis on pre-modernism, theocratic states, and

tightly regulated economies, represents all that the West, and thus the United States is

not, becoming the surrogate for what we fear—non-freedom, and hence the President's

mantra that they "hate us for our freedoms." In a Post Cold War world where the fall of

the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 symbolized the end of the

Communist threat, the US desire to define itself against the Other is reflected in the guise

of the new devil-the Middle Eastern terrorist. The United States as "leader of the free

world" identifies itself so, precisely because it has redeemed the Cold War threat of the

Communist with that of the Middle Eastern terrorist whose transgressions against the

modern world must be redeemed.

In this dissertation, I argue that in times of national tragedy, catharsis is the fertile

breeding place of the scapegoat. Burke's vision of how terms such as victimage,

purification and most importantly, redemption function in language helps to shed light on

national narratives of "freedom" as they function in public discourse. What concerns

Burke most about these terms is the tendency they reveal for human beings to scapegoat

one another in language. As Allen Carter explains, underlying Burke's study of language

as symbolic action, lies an anxiety for:

the process of victimage, *whereby those who feel guilty or inferior or mortal*

heap their sense of sin or weakness or vulnerability on someone or something

else, drive that chosen one from their circle, *and then feel renewed.* When

alphabets are tossed into the air, they are likely to land in the pattern of the

scapegoat—and there to do more evil than good. (109)

It is the penchant for words "to do more evil than good" that is the driving force for

Burke's interest in the rhetoric of war and thus his quest of ad bellum purificandum.

Coping with Catharsis in Public Life: Questions to Consider

A man of the Cold War and nuclear age, Burke understood the human drive in

language to perfect evil and move towards an end of the line thinking by demonizing the

Other to the point of obliteration. He warns us:

Today we must doubly fear the cyclical compulsions of empire, as two

mighty world orders, each homicidally armed to the point of suicide,

confront each other. As with dominion always, each is much beset with

anxiety. And in keeping with the 'curative' role of victimage, each is

apparently in acute need of blaming all its many troubles on the other. The

situation becomes still more urgent, since it offers special opportunities for

those persons who have a special vested interest in maintaining as much

international ill-will as possible (particularly those who profit by the funds

spent on defense, and those who are in the business of political

inquisition). So, two vast, unwieldy opponents are to each other like

specters, each wanting to feel certain that, if but the other were eliminated,

all governmental discord (all the Disorder that goes with Order) would be

ended. (Rhetoric 236)

What Burke saw in the Cold War— its penchant for victimage and desire to make the Other obsolete—disturbed him profoundly.

It is not that Burke sees catharsis in public life as an absolute evil, but as a reality in human communication that needs to be mediated. Rather than argue for a purely negative or positive construct of catharsis, Burke concerns himself instead with the realm of human action, by raising serious questions for how catharsis in language functions. Burke discusses how katharma and pharmakos are synonymous with scapegoat and medicine. He states:

> A synonym for *katharma* was *pharmakos*: poisoner, sorcerer, magician; one who is sacrificied or executed as an atonement or purification for others; a scapegoat. It is related to *pharmakon*: drug, remedy, medicine, enchanted potion, philter, charm, spell, incantation, enchantment, poison. (cited in Eddy 59).

Here, Burke's analogy of catharsis to medicine differs drastically from the Aristotelian perspective. Burke recognizes the potential for medicine, like any drug if misused to do harm and it is this possibility that preoccupies much of his work and leads him to consider the ethical questions surrounding catharsis in public life.

When it comes to questions of coping with victimage in catharsis, Burke offers us a clear counter to victimage through his comic approach towards language. According to Burke, it is the comic perspective that can offer us a good alternative for dealing with the tragic frame, which in its ultimate form moves towards the victimage and inevitable eradication of the Other in public life (Kastely 312). Because the comic perspective calls

for a more open and expansive vocabulary which can adapt to various people and rhetorical situations, it can function as an antidote for the human penchant to victimize oneself and others in language. As William Rueckert has written, Burke's comic perspective teaches us how to use language in that:

> [m]any of the modifiers for *comic* are terms that stress the need for a *wider* frame, a need to *broaden* one's terminology, a need for a *well-rounded* frame, one that is an *amplifying* device rather than a diminishing or reductive one; there is a need for a perspective that includes an awareness of *ambivalence* and *irony*, that promotes the ability to see double, to use and recognize metaphor, to see around corners, to take multiple approaches. In other words, the comic perspective must acknowledge that life—reality—is not static but is always in process and that we must adopt a frame that accounts for the true complexity of the human situation and resists the mind's compulsion to reduce this complexity to an oversimplified, orderly set of terms. (Encounters 119)

In order to improve human communication, and therefore the human condition, Rueckert's insight reveals how Burke encourages us to think and speak in a more nuanced and abounding vocabulary.

In accordance with the Burkean system, to deny that victimage exists as action in society is to close the door altogether to coping with it. In many ways, this dissertation is about the War on Terror, but it is not only about that. My concern lies mainly in the sheer powers of language—how language is used to manufacture fantasies of the enemy and scapegoat vasts groups of people in times of national trauma. In times of national trauma,

does catharsis in fact bring clarity to our problems, and with clarity, thoughtful and rational course of actions? Or does it cloud our judgment and subsequent plans of action? Thus far, I have argued for a rhetorical definition of catharsis that challenges the Aristotelian interpretation of the doctrine. I have argued that catharsis, as such, serves as a vehicle for victimizing the Other in public discourse. In the following chapters, we will see the many faces of catharsis. We will see how in times of national tragedy, catharsis serves as a catalyst for an us vs. them mindset that leads to the language of war. We will see how catharsis bolsters national identity by demonizing an Abject Other in language. We will see how catharsis is used to frame public opinion and discourage dissent about the enemy. We will see how this catharsis leads us more often than not, down darker roads of violence, injustice, and tragedy.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One: Catharsis and the Scapegoat Principle

Chapter One lays the theoretical framework of my dissertation. In this chapter, I develop a theory of rhetorical catharsis and argue for how catharsis operates in national life, particularly in the rhetoric of the War on Terror. The standard Aristotelian notion of catharsis as the "purging of pity and fear" is an approach towards catharsis that I challenge in this chapter. To do this, I analyze formidable influences on current thinking towards catharsis from the early work of scholars such as Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Jacob Bernays in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, along with the more recent work of scholars, Leon Golden, and G.R.F. Ferrari, Adnan Abdulla, and Martha Nussbaum. I question and challenge the Aristotelian assumptions of their views on catharsis. Rather

than view catharsis as a purging of emotions that brings relief to an audience, which reflects an Aristotelian approach towards the doctrine, I turn to Kenneth Burke's argument that catharsis is tied to the scapegoat process. By drawing on Burke's claim that catharsis is the "purgation by imitation of victimage" (Language 186) and that catharsis occurs "when any group is made consubstantial by joint participation in a single symbolic act" (Symbolic 151), I make a case for the public and persuasive nature of catharsis and argue that victimage in language use is central to catharsis, often leading to the scapegoating of the Other in public life. In this way, I apply my rhetorical definition of catharsis to America's rhetorical response to 9/11 and analyze President Bush's rhetoric of the War on Terror in Iraq.

Chapter Two: The Violence of Catharsis—Trauma and the Revenge Cycle in Greek Tragedy

Chapter Two uses Greek tragedy as a platform for studying the cathartic impact of trauma in war. Because Greek tragedy reflects the language of trauma in varying degrees, I believe it can shed light on the dynamics of trauma in the current US war in Iraq and it is for this reason Greek tragedy play an important part of my project. In this chapter, I analyze Euripides' plays, *Orestes* and *Electra* to show how a rhetorical catharsis operates in literature. It is here I merge trauma theory and the notion of the scapegoat and argue for how trauma leads to the scapegoating of the Other in the characters of these plays. I argue that the trauma of the Trojan War—represented in Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon and thus overthrow of the social order, is what leads to the trauma of the play's protagonists, Electra and Orestes, and help fuel the cycle of violence and

retaliation in these plays. As I argue this, I turn to Deborah Willis, Bonnie Green, and

Kleber, Figley and Gerson's scholarship on trauma, along with Rene Girard and Kenneth

Burke discussion of the scapegoat. Essentially, I define catharsis as the purging and

projection of one's trauma to a victim who serves as the sacrificial vessel for one's pain.

Underscoring my theory of rhetorical catharsis is the notion that trauma is mimetic and

displays the propensity to reproduce and amplify itself. I argue that the wheel of

violence—the tendency for a single act of violence to yield to numerous and amplified

acts of violence, leading to a contagion of violence as represented in Greek tragedy

reflects the problem of catharsis in civic life.

Chapter Three: The Freedom Crusade in Bush's Drama of Redemption

Chapter three examines the rhetoric of freedom in President Bush's War on Terror

as I conduct a critical discourse analysis of many of the President's key speeches such as

his Sept.11, 2001, Oct. 7th, 2001, and Jan. 19th, 2005 Second Inaugural Address on the

War on Terror. Pervasive in Bush's speeches are the terms "freedom" and "democracy,"

which he evokes to justify US intervention abroad, making war possible in Iraq. I argue

that Bush's message of freedom is based on an American post enlightenment concept of

freedom which derives from the narrative struggle against the evil Other in the Cold War.

As I argue this, I trace briefly the history of freedom in Presidential rhetoric and turn to

key scholars such as Anthony Burke, Walter McDougall, Enrest Tuveson and Robert

Ivie. For my analysis of President Bush's war speeches, I employ Kenneth Burke's

guilt/purification/redemption paradigm and assert that the President's rhetoric of

"freedom" invokes a redemption drama based on the Judaeo Christian view of man's fall

from grace and subsequent need to atone for sin where Iraq is made symbolic sacrifice

for the Middle East. I argue that the tragedy of 9/11 symbolized America's fall. In many

ways, this fall ensued in America's guilt for the fact that the attacks happened and were

not prevented. The President's rhetoric of freedom enacts a rhetoric of purification where

America is redeemed for the tragedy of 9/11 through the promise of freedom to Iraq.

Chapter Four: Media and the Manufacturing of the Right Wing Narrative

Chapter four encapsulates in varying degrees the cathartic and religious aspects of

the U.S. war on terror. In this chapter, I argue that the U.S. media present the public with

a streamlined and sanitized perspective on the war that sanctions the official line. To

argue this, I draw on the work of thinkers such as Robert McChesney, Herman and

Chomsky, Bartholomew Sparrow, and Gary Kamiya. Among these scholars, Kamiya's

argument that journalists, in the aftermath of 9/11 felt pressured to write on the War on

Terror from an "appropriate" and convention perspective that functioned in rallying

support for the war will serve as a point of departure for my thesis. I argue that media

pressure to tell the news according to the standardization of an "imagined center" is

greatest in times of tragedy, leading to the reification, reproduction, and recycling of a

government perspective on war. The effect of the mainstream media's pressure to cover

the news from a standardized, "imagined center" is that much of the mainstream news

acquires an entrenched, streamlined, and absolutist narrative of the war that became

difficult to challenge. In this context, I assert that what we see and hear on the news is the

media's powerful terministic screening of the war which serves in scapegoating large

groups of people as "enemy" in the call to war. To make this argument, I examine

Christopher Dickey and Evan Thomas' article "How We Helped Create Saddam and Can

We Fix Iraq After He's Gone," for the September 23, 2002 issue of *Newsweek*, Judith

Miller and Michael Gordon's story titled, "U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-

Bomb Parts" for the September 8, 2002 issue of the *New York Times*, and the *CBS*

documentary titled, "Flashpoint: Kimberly Dozier and the Army's Fourth ID—A Story of

Bravery, Recover, and Lives Forever Changed," aired on May 29, 2007. I assert that the

US media's war coverage serves in reproducing and recycling much of the Bush

administration's language of war, and in effect, help in rallying consensus for war.

Chapter Five: Towards a Constructive Catharsis in Public Discourse

Chapter five argues for an alternative rhetoric to counter the problem of catharsis

in national life. In this chapter, I draw on Kenneth Burke's theory of the comic corrective

and call for identification based on the comic perspective and argue that Burke's

corrective offers a way of re-imagining tragedy as something other, and thwarting what

he calls "the end of the line" impulse of tragedy to scapegoat the Other in national

discourse. I turn to Michael Moore's use of dramatic irony as a counter to the problem of

"naïve verbal realism" in discourse and assert that Moore's tricksterly critique of the

President helps move the country away from a tragic frame towards war and vicarious

redemption in Iraq, to a more pragmatist, self-reflexive, and socially responsible mode of

speaking and acting.

CHAPTER 2: THE VIOLENCE OF CATHARSIS—TRAUMA AND THE REVENGE CYCLE IN GREEK TRAGEDY

The Victimage and Scapegoating of Oedipus

Since Aristotle first turned to *Oedipus Rex* as the model tragedy and defined tragic catharsis as the "purging of pity and fear," literary critics have commonly viewed catharsis as the purging of an audience's ill emotions, which brings relief, providing a positive outlet for the emotions of an audience. The image of Oedipus gouging his eyes when he has tragically learned that he is his father's killer, and mother's incestuous lover, has commonly been lauded by the academy as symbolic of the catharsis that occurs in the play. The very act of Oedipus' blinding, critics argue, heals the audience of its pent-up and ill emotions, and brings a sense of resolution to Oedipus' personal tragedy in the play. One approach that typifies this view of catharsis is Zahid Murad's claim that in tragedy:

> [o]nce the sins and crimes [of the protagonist] had been washed away, the vengeful goddess appeased-restoration followed giving the audience a cathartic relief. Their pent up emotions finding a proper outlet in the enactment of the sacrifice and the moral order having been restored to its original harmony and concord, there followed a sense of relief and satisfaction. (99)

Here, Murad demonstrates an Aristotelian reading of tragedy and contends that catharsis results in the audience's positive release of emotions and is reflective of the healing of

the social order that occurs in the play. This reading of catharsis strongly suggests that catharsis is medicinal and thus a constructive life force in tragedy.

A consequence of this approach towards catharsis is to analyze tragedies such as *Oedipus* from the perspective that too easily accepts the sacrifice of the protagonist without challenging the ideological, cultural, or political factors leading to the protagonist's horrendous demise. Such a perspective overlooks the notion of language as action and its ethical implications in the play. It is a perspective, in short, more closely in line with the world view and prescribed values of the persecutor and not the victim. For example, literary critics who analyze Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* often concentrate on the fact that Oedipus killed his father and married his mother and argue that the act of parricide in the play symbolizes a man's primitive jealousy towards his father and deep seated desire to have sexual relations with his mother (Psych 16). But what of the fact that Oedipus' father, King Laius, in order to avoid the prophecy that foretold of the parricide and incestuous marriage, intends to kill his newborn son? What of the fact that both Oedipus' father and mother Jocasta tortuously mark their baby for sacrifice by puncturing his ankles together and then abandon him in the mountains with the full intent of leaving him there to die? What of the act of filicide and all that it represents?

What does this act of a baby's abandonment suggest about the complex nature of pride and power relations within the family and state? What does it suggest about the social contract between parent and child that has been breached? What does it suggest about the social duties that members of a community owe to each other? Even more

importantly, what do we make of the violent hand that Oedipus Rex has been dealt with in general in the play?

In his book, *The Scapegoat*, Rene Girard points to medieval French poet, Guillaume De Machaut's poem, *Judgment of the King of Navarre* as illustrative of the problem of collective violence in society. The poem, which describes the horrific events of the bubonic plague in fourteenth century France is disconcerting on many levels. Machaut, Girard tells us, blames the Jews for the deaths of those afflicted by the plague as he describes the massacres of Jews that occurred at the hands of angry villagers. Machaut calls the Jews "false, treacherous, and contemptible swine" and accuses them of "poison[ing] several rivers and fountains that had been clear and pure so that many lost their lives; for whoever used them died suddenly." And in an chilling moment, Machaut claims that God "[h]e who sits on high and sees far, who governs and provides for everything, did not want this treachery to remain hidden; he revealed it and made it so generally known that they lost their lives and possessions" (2). In the midst of the plague, Machaut targets the Jews as guilty and in effect, insinuates their slaughter is divinely ordained. In his chapter, "Mimesis and Violence" of *The Girard Reader*, Girard argues that the scapegoat process is largely unconscious and that its perpetrators believe themselves to be the victims of a subversive enemy. Like Machaut's poem, Rene Girard argues that the tragedy of Oedipus Rex myth:

> does not tell us Oedipus is a mimetic scapegoat. Far from disproving my
> theory, this silence confirms it as long as it is surrounded by the telltale
> signs of scapegoating as, indeed, it is. The myth reflects the standpoint of

the scapegoaters, who really believe their victim to be responsible

for the plague in their midst, and they connect that responsibility

with anti-natural acts, horrendous transgressions that signify the

total destruction of the social order. All the themes of the story

suggest we must be dealing with the type of delusion that has

always surrounded and still surrounds victimage

by mobs on the rampage. (15)

Oedipus, like the Jews of Machaut's poem, is thus the epidemy of the ultimate of scapegoats—ruefully abandoned, villainized, and horrifically sacrificed by the gods at the end of the play.

Oedipus as scapegoat brings up the age old question on the destructive nature of the scapegoat process as concerns the ostracized Other in civic life. The scapegoat process, understood in the modern day sense as a community's handing over of guilt to a victim whose symbolic sacrifice serves in purifying the community of its wrongs and restoring order to society is a concept due in large part to the work of scholars such as Rene Girard and Kenneth Burke. According to Girard, mimesis plays a key role in the scapegoat process. Human beings fight over objects, not because they wish to attain objects in and of themselves, but because of desire—it is the desire of the Other that is the object of contestation and imitation. Hence, desire is mimetic; reproduced in others and therefore imitated through rivalry for the Other's desire. One way to deflect conflict among rivals, and come to peace, Girard tells us, is through the targeting of a scapegoat. For Burke, language invokes the drama of redemption in the scapegoat process, leading

to the vicarious victimage of the Other. By slaying the scapegoat who functions as the symbolic vessel for our sins, we atone for our sins, restoring order, and with order bringing redemption to society.

While Girard sees the scapegoat process motivated by "mimetic rivalry"—the notion that human beings, by nature, compete and emulate desire for a given object or goal through conflict and violence and the symbolic sacrifice of scapegoats, Burke views the scapegoat process from an ethical-moral perspective; fueled by the need for guilt, purification, and redemption in human relations. The distinction is in the fact that as Allen Carter puts it, "Burke emphasizes such resources of symbolism as antithesis and substitution, Girard emphasizes repetition" (Kenneth 21).

My aim in this chapter is not to counter or refute the contributions that Girard and Burke make to the theory of the scapegoat in language and society, but to offer another way of seeing the scapegoat—one that reveals how the scapegoat functions in rhetorical catharsis. At the core of Burke and Girard's work is the foundational recognition that in times of social upheaval where the potential for inward violence is great, members of a community tend to pass over their own guilt and ills to a scapegoat in order to purify themselves of blame, and quell the threat of potential violence from one member to another, leading to a renewed sense of social unity and harmony. Yet what both Burke and Girard do not fully consider in their theory of the scapegoat is the role of trauma in the scapegoat process.

In this chapter, I will argue for a theory of rhetorical catharsis that takes into account how trauma functions in the scapegoat process. Burke's definition of catharsis as

the "tragic imitation of victimage" (On Catharsis 352) as well as his suggestions that the violence of catharsis is vicarious, that as he puts it, "closely related to this cult of victimage implicit in the very nature of drama there is the act of vicarage, of substitution. The purgative effect of drama seems to require vicarious victimage" (Catharsis 118). This view of catharsis paves the way for a radical re-understanding of the doctrine in terms of victimage and the trauma that comes hand in hand with victimage. Furthermore, Burke's claim that catharsis occurs "when any group is made consubstantial by joint participation in a single symbolic act" (ASM 151) demonstrates the collective and public nature of catharsis as a persuasive action.

By looking at catharsis as persuasive action; in terms of what it does to the protagonist on stage as well as its wider audience—how catharsis attempts to persuade people to think, feel, and most importantly act in given ways, I argue that catharsis is rhetorical. Because I believe Greek tragedy is useful for understanding the psychological dynamics underlying rhetorical catharsis in times of national trauma, I use examples from the Greek tragedy of Euripides. Essentially, I assert that catharsis is the purging and projection of one's trauma to a victim who serves as the sacrificial vessel for one's pain. Underscoring my theory of rhetorical catharsis is the notion that trauma is mimetic and displays the propensity to reproduce and amplify itself. I assert that in tragedy, an event of calamitous proportions result in the trauma of its chief protagonists, which in turn gives way to multiple and amplified acts of trauma for the characters on the stage.

What makes catharsis problematic is the fact that trauma is its main progenitor and as a result, the release of emotions an audience experiences is amplified, doubly

mirroring the experience of the initial trauma itself. Catharsis, as such, may be compared to a tidal wave of damaging emotions where a single act of violence ensues in numerous and amplified acts of like-minded violence.

My inspiration for understanding how trauma in catharsis works in literature, stems from my study of Deborah Willis' brilliant essay, "The gnawing vulture": Revenge, Trauma theory and *Titus Andronicus.*" In her essay, Willis employs trauma theory as a means of critiquing Shakespeare's play. She argues that current theorists of trauma who "[l]ike Shakespeare" demonstrate that "trauma does not stop with the individual victim; rather, family members and others close to the victim experience a form of secondary trauma." Willis also contends that trauma theorists "have called attention to the disturbing ways in which victims can become perpetrators as they attempt to cope with profound threats to self-concept and with overwhelming emotion" (3). Willis' reading of *Titus* is such that she contends, "the play invites us to see how characters of both sexes turn to revenge in the aftermath of trauma to find relief from terrible pain" (3). Key to Willis' thesis is the notion that the victims of trauma become its chief perpetrators. As Willis demonstrates from her reading of *Titus*, "revengers enact increasingly over-the-top spectacles of violence, 'getting even' with enemies by outdoing them. What is done to contain trauma reproduces trauma for others" (3). In this context, Willis' discussion on how trauma functions in Shakespeare offers a salient approach to reading Euripides.

The Violent Impulse of Trauma and its Ethical Implications

To further understand how trauma functions in rhetorical catharsis, I turn now to current

scholarship on trauma. One key aspect of trauma that scholars such as Bonnie Green

point to, for example, is that trauma may be passed down across generations. In her

chapter, "Traumatic Stress and its Consequences," Green argues that "traumatic

stressors" are "harm, injury, and encounters with death, either by having one's own life

threatened, or by experiencing the death of others" (18). Green also claims that

"traumatic stressors" may be handed over from one generation to another within a family:

> as, for example, when family members recount events that occurred in the
>
> adult generation, behave in certain ways toward their offspring due to their
>
> own traumatic experiences, develop certain emotional styles that influence
>
> their children, or transmit conscious or unconscious values, fantasies, and
>
> beliefs. (21-22)

In their introduction to part III of their book *Beyond Trauma,* Rolf Kleber, Charles Figley

and Berthold Gersons contend that trauma, by its very nature is excessive and therefore

disruptive to one's sense of selfhood and worldview. They contend that what

distinguishes trauma from other disorders is that, "traumatic stress signifies an exceeding

of the existing boundaries and limits" where the:

> victim is confronted with a drastic disruption of her or his assumptions and
>
> expectations. Existing norms and values are not applicable anymore. They
>
> are not as certain as one thought they were. The person's belief in the
>
> goodwill of other people and in the benevolence of the world is shattered.

An aggressor abuses another individual. Property is lost. The victim

doubts and wonders whether he or she can still believe in what he or she

trusted before. His or her basic values are at stake, and there is a

fundamental breach of confidence. What is the sense of this all? Why are

people behaving this brutally and inhumanly?" (233)

According to Kleber, Figley, and Berthold, trauma survivors and their researchers and

counselors must also learn to cope with the ethical questions that trauma poses.

A key aspect of trauma that often goes unnoticed is the victim's need for revenge

and to get back at the perpetrator for the pain they have caused the victim. In his book,

War and the Soul, Edward Tick writes on the need for revenge which comes with trauma.

He describes the psychology behind revenge arguing that:

revenge, [...], is one expression of how war can transform love--in this

case into passionate hatred. How fierce and personal, how reflexive and

universal, how connected to lust is the desire for revenge! (123).

The hatred which is part of revenge also yields to the potential for unending retaliatory

violence. As he states, "such hatred may lead to a killing wrath that loses all sense of

boundaries and may result in atrocities" (90). In his book, *From Melos to My Lai*

Lawrence Tritle calls revenge a form of "payback" that reflects the need for revenge for

individuals suffering trauma. Tritle points to Gustav Hasford's book, *The Short-Timers*

which was later translated into the movie *Full Metal Jacket*, directed by Stanley Kubrick.

In *Full Metal Jacket*, "Animal Mother" describes payback in Vietnam, stating that:

> You think we waste gooks for *free*dom? Don't kid yourself; this is
>
> slaughter. … Yeah, you better believe we zap zipperheads. They waste our
>
> bros and we cut them a big piece of payback. And payback is a
>
> motherfucker" (132).

According to Tritle, Animal Mother's admission reflects how "[p]ayback is simply

revenge" which acts in further "induc[ing] payback in an unending cycle of violence"

(132).

Revenge thus plays a formidable role in trauma and in fomenting collective

violence and is central to the scapegoat process. As Bonnie Green, Mathew Friedman,

and Joop de Jung, the editors of *Trauma Interventions in War and Peace* argue, "[t]he

impulse to violence is self-sustaining. Yesterday's victims are today's perpetrators, and

today's victims are tomorrow's perpetrators" (73). Most importantly, they claim the:

> widespread experience of violence assures a large reservoir of pent-up
>
> resentment and anger, waiting to erupt into violence should it be triggered. It is
>
> likely that the latent reserve of violent energy is larger at given points of history
>
> than at other times, and particular settings may favor more or less violence.
>
> What is not clear is whether, left untriggered, the change diminishes over time
>
> or whether it remains ever ready to erupt if not continually, controlled and
>
> regulated. (74)

In this context, trauma raises serious ethical questions about the very real possibility for

communities and entire nations which have been victimized in the past, to emulate like-

minded acts of violence on an explosive scale, perpetuating a wheel of violence and

retaliation on both local and global fronts.

Tragedy's Civic Concern for Sacrifice and Trauma in Discourse

Tragedy, taken from "tragos" and "oide" meaning "goat song" (Barn 157) can in

many ways be said to be the spectacle of sacrifice and trauma on the stage. Because

tragedy centers on the sacrifice of the protagonist—the scapegoat— as its main action,

the problem of victimage has often been its underlying ethical concern. Sacrifice, as the

central metaphor for victimage in tragedy, and thus the scapegoat process, can be seen in

the symbolic killing of the protagonist on stage, along with the killing of animals such as

bulls, ox, or goats which played a prominent role in the theatre at the Dionysus festival

(Pizatto 24). As Mark Pizatto attests, sacrifice was a vehicle in which:

> By staging violence through the human drama onstage, as well as the
>
> animal bloodshed behind it, the Greeks also returned to the cannibal
>
> origins of animal sacrifice in the myths and cults of Dionysus: figuratively
>
> tearing apart and eating the character represented by the character onstage.
>
> (22)

Sacrifice, as a symbolic re-enactment of the ritualized dismemberment and ingesting of

the protagonist on stage reveals a moral preoccupation with transgression and

punishment. According to Murad, the purpose of sacrifice in Greek tragedy was to atone

for one's ills where:

> [a] deviation from or violation of the 'Norm' was a mortal sin and invited the
>
> wrath of the goodess [sic] 'Nemesis.' One mode of appeasement was sacrifice,

the shedding of blood, whereby the protagonist by laying down his life, washed

away the sins of the society, whose moral order had been disturbed and violated.

Retribution thus was necessary for Restoration of the Norm. (99)

The fact that tragedies at the festival of Dionysus were performed in Athens, the polis,

and that tragedies often focused on the ethical questions of sacrifice and appeasement is

testimony to its civic function.

In this capacity, tragedy's preoccupation with sacrifice and atonement owes its

origins to the Greek preoccupation for an ethical, or "right" way of living. In tragedy, this

concern for an ethical way of acting in the world is especially evident and reflects what

Martha Nussbaum argues is the Greek poets' "recognition of the ethical importance of

contingency, a deep sense of the problem of conflicting obligations, and a recognition of

the ethical significance of passions" (Love's 14). Much of Nussbaum's argument on

tragedy's civic function rests on the claim that before Plato, philosophy and literature

were inseparable means of dealing with "namely, how human beings should live"

(Love's 15) and that the Greeks turned to drama, not for purposes of escape or partial

entertainment, but "instead, to engage in a communal process of inquiry, reflection, and

feeling with respect to important civic and personal ends" (Love's 15), and that because

tragedies were performed during the city's religious and civic festivals, the audience

recognized that their values were being questioned on the stage. Nussbaum contends that

going to the theatre, in fact marked a "way of life" that implied "reflection and public

debate about ethical and civic matters" (16) and so a "feeling and critical reflection" (16).

Jean-Pierre Vernant, in his chapter "Myth and Tragedy" asserts that the tragic protagonist

"ceases to be regarded, as he was in Pindar, as a model and becomes instead an object of debate. He is brought before the public as a subject at issue. Through the debate that the drama sets up, it is the very status of man that becomes the problem" (Essays 34).

It is my contention that this notion of Greek tragedy as a forum for civic reflection and debate belies a deeper concern for the problem of sacrifice in language use. Kenneth Burke's claim that "tragedy as a civic ceremony would involve specifically civic motives" (Poetics 53), and his contention that catharsis in tragedy "would result from the easing of specific civic tensions" (A Symbolic 152) hints to tragedy's unique capacity to interrogate civic life. Central to Burke's discussion of tragedy's civic function is his claim that the tragic protagonists' "personalizing of conflict" on the stage represented "corresponding civic or social disorders" (A Symbolic 153) which spoke to key social issues of the day. In this respect, tragedy functioned as a means of critiquing Greek society and the problem of sacrifice on the stage.

We see tragedy's concern for sacrifice and its capacity for social critique implicit in the plays of Euripides, especially, who Kenneth Burke argues that unlike his predecessors—Aeschylus and the like, did not revel in the "civic order" but focused instead on "the mounting disorders of Athenian society [which] made for a tendency towards an eruption of the factional" (A Symbolic 154-55). The fact that Euripides staged his play, *The Trojan Women*, a tragedy about the rape and enslavement of the women of Troy in 415, during the horrific besiegement of Melos which had resulted in the wholesale slaughter of all adult males of the island and the slavery of its women and children (Cartledge 31) is testament to tragedy's unique capacity for self-criticism in that

Euripides' Athenian audience was called to critically reflect on its own complicity and participation in the slaughter and slavery of Melos as represented in this play.

When Victims Turn Persecutors in *Electra*

In his play, *Electra,* which tells the story of revenge and bloodguilt in the House of Atreus as it effects the younger generation of Orestes and Electra who vow to avenge the death of their murdered father by killing their mother and her "paramour," Euripides confronts his audience with the problem of the scapegoat in tragedy by focusing on the ethical implications of the matricide. Contrary to Aeschylus, who David Raeburn argues, "presents the murder of Clytemnestra as exemplifying the tragic dilemmas of retaliatory justice" in Euripides' interpretation of her murder, the matricide "is more unequivocally condemned" (149). In this light, Euripides' depiction of the play's protagonists, Electra and Orestes is highly critical. As Emily Vermeule writes, the play's "main offense is in the characters" (390) and that although the play may incur our sympathies with Electra and Orestes, it also succeeds in subverting it through the protagonists' sheer "display of wanton brutality" (392). Vermeule notes that what frustrates our sympathies in part is that, for example, "Electra's initial suffering explains but does not excuse her subsequent viciousness." She also contends that "the victims have been alienated by their cruelty, vanity, and sordid private lives, which their flickering kindness does not sufficiently relieve." And that for the play's audience, "[t]here is no focus of sympathy left, only a pervasive bad taste which leads to disgust with all forms of violence" (393). The "viciousness" of Electra that Vermeule points to, along with the "cruelty" of many of the

play's characters, reflects in large part the nature of the scapegoating process in the rhetorical catharsis of the play.

To understand how rhetorical catharsis functions in Euripides' *Electra,* one must first realize the significance of the context of the Trojan war. It is the Trojan war which is at the root cause of the problem of trauma and the need to purge trauma and restore order through the search for scapegoats in the play. The overthrow of Agamemnon's rule, and thus the social order is a violation keenly felt by Electra and Orestes and is what leads to their feelings of betrayal, abandonment, and humiliation and attempts to purge themselves of these emotions in the play. In the play's opening scene we learn that years have passed since Agamemnon's murder by his wife and lover, Aegisthus. Electra and her brother Orestes have literally been kicked out from the house of Atreus, and estranged from their mother and made refugees of Aegisthus's "occupation." In addition, Aegisthus has arranged Electra's marriage to a peasant in order to prevent her bearing progeny that may threaten his rule. As her husband, a peasant explains:

> Wherefore Aegisthus devised this scheme; on Agamemnon's son who had
>
> escaped his realm by flight he set a price to be paid to any one who should slay
>
> him, while he gave Electra to me in marriage, whose ancestors were citizens of
>
> Mycenae. It is not *that* I blame myself for; my family was noble enough, though
>
> certainly impoverished, and so my good birth suffers. By making for her this
>
> weak alliance he thought he would have little to fear. For if some man of high
>
> position had married her, he might have revived the vengeance for

Agamemnon's murder, which now is sleeping; in which case Aegisthus would

have paid the penalty. (Coleridge 67-68)

What is striking in this passage is the great lengths that Aegisthus will go to rid himself

of Agamemnon's children and the fact that Clytemnestra, their mother, goes along with

him. Aegisthus' brutal response—his attempt to kill Orestes and force Electra to marry a

peasant, along with Clytemnestra's endorsement of his actions sets the groundwork for

the unprecedented acts of violence and revenge in the search for scapegoats in the play.

Essentially, Aegisthus' actions towards Electra and Orestes reflects the state of

mind of a guilty man—a man who knows he has come to power through illegitimate

means, violating the social order and who jealously attempts to guard his power.

Aegisthus' actions also reflects the state of mind of a man fearful for his life—one who

understands that his murder of a father and king will result in his childrens' desire to

avenge him, atoning for the destruction of the social order.

It is worth noting that Electra's tragic situation is that she *is* a victim of war in the

play and is thus made to suffer the trauma of war that comes with the destruction of the

social order. Aegisthus, who in killing her father, has seized the throne, is now ruler of

Argos and behaves as her captor. Not only does he banish Electra from her home, and

ostracize her from her community, but he publicly humiliates her, forcing her to marry

beneath her rank. Electra's mother, Clytemnestra, is seen as complicit in Aegisthus'

treatment of Electra because it is she who helped Aegisthus kill Agamemnon in the first

place, and then married him. Her alliance to Aegisthus, represents to Electra, nothing

better than a silent approval of his actions against her. What Euripides calls attention to

here is the fact that Electra's trauma is mimetic, constantly in danger of reproducing itself and infecting other characters in the play.

Electra's war trauma is amplified by the fact that not only is she deeply humiliated by her exile and fall in social status, but that she feels abandoned by her mother as well. It is this trauma that fuels her need to purge her trauma through revenge and leads to the acts of heinous violence against the scapegoats of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra in the play. When we are first introduced to Electra, she responds to her tragic situation by appealing to the gods to witness her public humiliation. She exclaims:

> O sable night, nurse of the golden stars! beneath thy pall I go to fetch
>
> water from the brook with my pitcher poised upon my head, not indeed
>
> because I am forced to this necessity, but that to the gods I may display the
>
> affronts Aegisthus puts upon me, and to the wide firmament pour out my
>
> lamentation for my sire. For my own mother, the baleful daughter of
>
> Tyndareus hath cast me forth from her house to gratify her lord; for since
>
> she hath borne other children to Aegisthus she puts me and Orestes on one
>
> side at home. (68)

Electra's banishment and fall in social stature is seen as an insult to her very person. So great is this insult, that Electra appeals to the gods to bear witness to her ordeal; she is dejected and poor, her father, a King has been murdered, and her mother has abandoned her. Her public humiliation is complete. By calling on the gods to witness her pain, Electra's desire for revenge or payback is doubled over, along with the will to atone for the social order through extreme and unmitigated violence.

Central to the scapegoat process, is the victim turned persecutor's need to nourish hatred for the scapegoat. In order for Electra to target Clytemnestra and Aegisthus as the surrogate victims for her pain, she must continually feed the enmity she feel towards them. Her feelings of loss and suffering, in short, her trauma over the loss of Agamemnon must constantly be revived as well as the memory of his murder itself. The initial tragic event which brought on the trauma must be memorialized. Electra thus declares that:

> [m]y lamentation for my sire, my doleful chant, my dirge of death, for thee, my father in thy grave, which day by day I do rehearse, rending my skin with my nails, and smiting on my shaven head in mourning for thy death. Woe, woe! rend the cheek; like a swan with clear loud note beside the brimming river calling to its parent dear that lies a-dying in the meshes of the crafty net, so I bewale thee, my hapless sire. (70)

Grief here is ritually enacted and violently so, reflecting the excessive nature of Electra's emotional pain. So too is the vivid memory of the murder, which is replayed in grotesque detail when as Electra recalls, "After that last fatal bath of thine laid out most piteously in death. Oh! the horror of that axe which hacked thee so cruelly, my sire!" (70). The need to ritualize her pain and relive the initial tragic event—her father's murder is what makes violent retaliation against the scapegoat possible, marking a key phase of the scapegoat process.

It is crucial to note that the first victim to be scapegoated in the play is Aegisthus, and it is this initial sacrifice which results in the purging of pain and feelings of self-

gratification in the play. Upon learning from the messenger that Orestes has killed

Aegisthus, Electra responds by crying:

> O light of day! O bright careering sun! O earth! and night erewhile my
>
> only day; now may I open my eyes in freedom, for Aegisthus is dead, my
>
> father's murderer. Come friends, let me bring out whate'er my house
>
> contains to deck his head and wreath with crowns my conquering
>
> brother's brow. (92)

Overjoyed at the thought of Aegisthus dead, Electra wishes to celebrate, rewarding

Orestes by dressing him "to deck his head" as well as "wreath" him "with crowns. " It is

as if Orestes through the act of killing Aegisthus, purifies Aegithus' wrong to his father

and Electra vicariously achieves purification through her brother, restoring albeit briefly

the social order that was once violated.

A key aspect of catharsis is the amplification of power reversals that takes place

in that the victim turned persecutor now doubly brings themselves "up" by bringing the

Other "down."As Orestes brings Aegisthus' corpse to Electra, he tells her, do with it what

"I am bringing thee, his corpse, which if thou wilt, expose for beasts to rend, or set it

upon a stake for birds, the children of the air, to prey upon; for now is he thy slave, once

called thy lord and master" (93). Electra, now in the position of persecutor, reprimands

the corpse, telling it, "I never ceased, as each day dawned, to rehearse the story I would

tell thee to thy face, if ever I were freed from my old terrors; and now I am; so I will pay

thee back with the abuse I fain had uttered to thee when alive" (93-94) and proceeds to

air her grievances against it. Here, the once helpless, silent victim—Electra, is given

voice, and Aegisthus, her former persecutor, now made the surrogate victim, is effectively silenced and rendered powerless as she lists her charges against him. It is significant to note that Aegisthus can't answer her allegations and therefore Electra wins and dominates her former captor. Part of the gratification that comes with symbolic sacrifice of the Other, is that Electra, the victim is placed in the position of victor who is made to win unanimously over her former captor, Aegisthus, bringing a sense of resolution (albeit briefly) to the disorder in the play.

Yet if at first the symbolic slaying of the Other appears healing, whetting the appetite for further acts of violence and seemingly relieving the victims of their emotional pain, the gratification that comes with the scapegoating process is short lived, once the protagonists of the play are made to understand the full consequences of their actions. Aegisthus' initial slaying can be said to arouse the appetite for a second sacrifice in the play—that of Clytemnestra, the mother. However, it is this killing in particular, which results in Electra and Orestes acute regret, and serves only in overtopping their trauma with another. In the aftermath of killing their mother, Orestes exclaims, "behold this foul deed of blood, these two corpses lying here that I have slain in vengeance for my sufferings," to which Electra responds, "[t]ears are all too weak for this, brother; and I am the guilty cause. Ah, woe is me! How hot my fury burned against the mother that bare me!" (101) It is as if the "foul deed of blood" Orestes speaks of—the act of sacrificing the scapegoat—is traumatic in and of itself. In this context, the victim turned persecutor who reaps revenge on the scapegoat inevitably suffers the ethical consequences of his actions.

In this context, Euripides calls attention to the problem of excessive violence in the scapegoat process. If at first Electra and Orestes appeared to be "freed" and vindicated by Aegisthus' slaying, they are now imprisoned by the heinous nature of their second sacrifice—that of Clytemnestra's, their mother's. In the aftermath of the matricide, Orestes and Electra come to understand its full implications. Orestes laments "To what city can I go henceforth? what friend, what man of any piety will bear the sight of a mother's murderer like me?" And when Electra cries "Ah me! alas! and whither can I go? What share have I henceforth in dance or marriage rite? What husband will accept me as his bride?" (101) Orestes' response is to tell his sister "Again thy fancy changes with the wind; for now thou thinkest aright, though not so formerly" (101). Ironically, Electra's remorse—what Orestes calls her "fancy chang[ing] with the wind"—is what Orestes points to as the source of the problem in the play; the excessive nature of Electra's trauma, which was key in instigating the heinous acts of violence represented in the scapegoating of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.

Yet it is not enough that Electra and Orestes are made to recognize the sheer monstrous depravity of their sacrifice, the nature of the scapegoat process in the play is such that they must relive the "bloody deed" down to its most heinous details. In this case, the victim turned persecutor becomes victim again. As Orestes describes his mother, he asks Electra, "Oh! didst thou see how the poor victim threw open her robe and showed her bosom as I smote her, sinking on her knees, poor wretch?" He laments, "Ah yes! she laid her hand upon my chin, and cried aloud, 'My child, I entreat thee!' and she clung about my neck, so that I let fall the sword." Electra then tells her brother, "Yet

'twas I that urged thee on, yea, and likewise grasped the steel. Oh! I have done an awful

deed" (102). By replaying the scene of the matricide, Electra and Orestes experience the

emotional pain of their crime anew and are doubly punished for it; as they reenact the

scene, they undergo the matricide once more. Euripides depiction of the scapegoat

process is cynical at best. Instead of bringing relief to its victims, the scapegoat only

serves in overtopping the victim's trauma with another far greater.

Pathology and Reckless Acts of Violence in *Orestes*

In *Orestes*, Euripides begins his play six days after Orestes, and Electra, with the

help of their friend, Pylades have schemed and murdered their mother, Clytemnestra and

her lover, Aegisthus. Electra and Orestes are now condemned by the city to die of

stoning. What is striking is the contagion of violence and disorder that infects the play's

chief protagonists. William Arrowsmith remarks that the play's strangely chaotic feel is

what makes it a "tragedy utterly without affirmation, an image of heroic action seen as

blotched, disfigured, and sick, carried along by the machinery and slogans of heroic

action in a steady crescendo of biting irony and the rage of exposure" (186). Due to the

specter of violence that surrounds *Orestes*, one formidable challenge that the play poses

is that its chief protagonists, Electra, Orestes, and Pylades, remain largely unsympathetic

as they seek order to avenge themselves against their foes. Throughout the course of the

play, we witness Electra, Orestes, and Pylades commit reckless acts of violence,

scheming to kill Helen and hold Hermione hostage in order to avenge themselves before

the day of their execution. It is this aspect of the play that most troubles critics and makes

Orestes morally problematic to read as the tragic hero. As Arrowsmith observes, it is in:

the decision to murder Helen and take Hermione as hostage, [Orestes']
true criminal nature is revealed: murder we see now, was always in his
heart, for these actions are commanded by no god but are born of
desperation, spite, and hatred. And then, point for point, the depravity and
cowardice which move him are exposed (188).

The attempt to kill Helen and hold Hermione (an innocent) hostage is what ultimately undermines Orestes' mission of revenge and justice in the play and calls to question the protagonists' true motives. The fact that the play's protagonists will go to such and any lengths to save themselves reveals a brooding savagery that immediately undercuts what little moral license they may have had. Largely due to this increasingly bizarre turn of violence in the play, Euripides poses serious questions about the nature of the scapegoat process, along with the state of mind of its chief perpetrators.

A key concern in this play is the pathology of violence that overtakes the characters in their need to purify pain through the search for scapegoats. The consequence of Orestes' crime—the matricide—is bloodguilt, along with the cycle of the scapegoat process, symbolized in the Eumenides' need to avenge themselves of Clytemnestra's murder. It is not surprising then, that the play's introduction centers on Orestes' madness as Electra describes her brother half-mad and sickly from the pursuit of the furies. After the matricide, Electra tells us that:

my poor Orestes fell sick of a cruel wasting disease; upon his couch he lies
prostrated, and it is his mother's blood that goads him into frenzied fits; this I
say, from dread of naming those goddesses, whose terrors are chasing him

before them, --even the Eumenides. 'Tis now the sixth day since the body of his

murdered mother was committed to the cleansing fire; since then no food has

passed his lips, nor hath he washed his skin; but wrapped in his cloak he weeps

in his lucid moments, whenever the fever leaves him; otherwhiles he bounds

headlong from his couch, as a colt when it is loosed from the yolk. (111-112)

Orestes' madness thus serves as a metaphor for the entire play's erratic structure,

illustrated in the protagonists' targeting of Helen and Hermione as surrogate victims until

Apollo arrives and puts a stop to the scapegoat cycle.

Underscoring the play's preoccupation with violence and disorder, is Orestes need

to purify the ills done against his father. It is this need for purification, which when left

unappeased lead to the maniacal search for scapegoats throughout the play. We see this

especially, in Orestes' belief that Menelaus is the root cause for the violence that befalls

the house of Atreus; that Menelaus first wronged their father, Agamemnon by imploring

him to wage war in Troy in order to return Helen from Paris thus setting the wheel of

violence and retaliation in motion. The belief that Menelaus sinned against Agamemnon

and now owes a debt to Electra and Orestes pervades the play's main action. When

Orestes pleas with Menelaus to save his life and prevent his execution. He tells him,

"[g]ive me nothing of thine own, Menelaus, but repay what thou didst thyself receive

from my father." And then proceeds to make his case:

Say I am doing wrong. Well, I have a right to a little wrong-doing at thy hands

to requite that wrong, for my father Agamemnon also did wrong in gathering

the host of Hellas and going up against Illium, not that he had sinned himself,

but he was trying to find a cure for the sin and wrong-doing of thy wife. So this

is one thing thou art bound to pay me back. For he had really sold his life to

thee, a duty owed by friend to friend, toiling hard in the press of battle that so

thou mightest win thy wife again. This is what thou didst receive at Troy; make

me the same return. For one brief day exert thyself, not ten full years, on my

behalf, standing up in my defense. (130)

Menelaus' crime, we are told, is that he asked Agamemnon to wage war in Troy to

expiate Helen of her adulterous sins and thus salvage his marriage. In return, Orestes asks

Menelaus to payback his debt to Agamemnon by defending him to the council of Argos.

Menelaus' refusal to do so is what results in Orestes' desire to punish Menelaus through

the scapegoating of Helen and Hermione.

In this sense, the play calls considerable attention to Orestes' state of mind. If

Orestes' attacks on Helen and Hermione appear reckless and irrational, so too does

Orestes' bizarre use of logic to justify the matricide. When Orestes explains his actions to

his grandfather, Tyndareus, he rationalizes killing his mother purely based on biological

grounds. What is most peculiar in this speech is Orestes' emphasis on his father's

procreative role while he denies his mother's stating, "My father begat me; thy daughter

gave me birth, being the field that received the seed from another; for without a sire no

child would ever be born" (128). In this passage, Orestes depicts the father,

Agamemnon's role as the seed, and the mother (Tyndareus's daughter—as Orestes

addresses her) as the field for the seed. Implicit in Orestes's claim is that his father who

planted his "seed" in Clytemnestra's "field" made the conception possible, and not vice versa.

It is here Euripides calls attention to the problem of language use at the heart of the scapegoat process. Orestes emphasis on his father's biological role (minus that of his mother's) is reflective of a fundamentalist discourse that belies an all or nothing/either or use of language which serves in dividing the world of men and women into us vs. them. In this respect, Euripides calls attention to Orestes' binary use of language which enables him to justify the matricide by negating his own origins.

The fact that Euripides identifies the father, Agamemnon as his chief maker, thereby denying his mother's biological capacity to give birth demonstrates how according to Kenneth Burke, in *Orestes*, "[t]he woman is but a nurse for the fetus" (Poetics 204). When Orestes further explains his motive for the matricide to Tyndareus stating "I ought to stand by the author of my being rather than the woman who undertook to rear me" (128), it can be argued that Orestes' decision to kill the mother and avenge the father is a political choice based on the belief in the father that as Burke argues "men are not really descended from women" and that he was essentially, motherless as Clytemnestra "was but a nurse who, we might say, served as a mere incubator for the father's sperm" (Poetics 204). In this context, Orestes rationalizes his crime, arguing he is innocent of the matricide and did not kill his mother, as he never had a mother to begin with. Clearly, Euripides shows us here that Orestes' illogical use of language reflects a self-serving and totalizing rhetoric that bends reality in order to justify the scapegoating of the Other.

Conclusion: The Violent and Fundamentalist Legacy of Catharsis

Thus far, I have argued for a theory of how rhetorical catharsis functions in literature. I have shown how trauma plays a key role in catharsis, acting as the impetus for the scapegoat process. I have argued that catharsis is the purging and projection of trauma onto a victim who functions as the scapegoat for one's ills. My theory is grounded in the premise that sacrifice and trauma go hand in hand and are key to the scapegoat process. What Euripides' psychological portrait of *Electra* and *Orestes* reveals is that the violence of catharsis is infectious and never ending in the play; that the initial tragic event which results in the trauma of the play's characters on the stage, leads to further amplified and manifold acts of violence, giving way to a contagion of violence for the play's major protagonists.

The value in looking at catharsis from a rhetorical perspective, as opposed to an Aristotelian perspective, is that it helps us read the play's action from the standpoint of the victim, and not the perpetrator, and therefore helps us question issues disorder, sacrifice, and violence all related to language use. Particularly in the case of Euripides, the Greek emphasis on the suffering of the tragic protagonist and his kin, lends insight to the psychological dynamics of catharsis and its ties to the scapegoat process. Euripides in this respect points us in the direction of tragedy's civic function and shows us how Greek tragedy can work as a vehicle for self-criticism, voicing issues pivotal to democratic dissent and debate by forcing us to confront our own worst evils. Euripides' knowledge of the massacre at Melos and his writing of *The Women of Troy* in response to that massacre is a scathing indictment of Athenian society, and in this way is reflective of

tragedy's capacity to render judgment on the victimage and scapegoating of collective groups of people in times of war.

Nowhere is Euripides' vexation with sacrifice in language use more evident than in his play, *Women of Troy* which essentially acts as a case study for exploring how trauma operates in the scapegoat process. The tragedy of the city's humiliating defeat at the hands of the Greek army is what results in the trauma of its survivors—the Trojan women, whose trauma is amplified through further acts of tragedy foisted on them—as demonstrated in the fact that they will be made the slaves and rape victims by their Greek captors. The Trojan women, we learn throughout the course of the play, become the direct casualties of the city's collapse. This trauma is expressed through Hecuba who exclaims, "I crouch by Agamemnon's tent, a slave, dragged from my home, shorn grey hair, booty. O women of Troy, our city burns, our warriors are gone, our daughters raped" (9). Hecuba's trauma of being made a slave and rape victim of war reflects the general trauma of Troy's female survivors, and hints to the cycle of revenge and bloodguilt that Cassandra, Hecuba's daughter and virgin-prophetess predicts will befall Agamemnon and his family on his return to Greece. Cassandra, traumatized by her forced marriage to Agamemnon, curses Agamemnon and foretells his fate, stating:

> This marriage will ruin His Lordship. Agamemnon, grand admiral of Greece!
> I'll hurt him more than Helen did. I'll kill him, strip all his house Till the price
> is paid for my father and brothers dead. Cassandra, hush! Don't tell it all: Don't
> sing of knives, necks chopped, Mine and those others', Blood-feud, the mother
> dead, the dynasty destroyed. My marriage-price! (19)

In this context, the Cassandras and Hecubas of Greek tragedy help us understand that it is trauma that triggers the cycle of violence and retaliation in human relations. It is trauma that unleashes the need for victims and more victims and their bloody and god fearing sacrifice. Most importantly, it is trauma that leads to an us vs. them use of language which is so crucial to justifying the vicarious sacrifice of the Other.

Trauma as such, is what triggers the language of fundamentalism, leading to the use of binary mantras and ultimate absolutes in civic discourse. In this context, Greek tragedy shows us how people experiencing tragedy are most at risk for using words to build divisions in language. In his book, *Kenneth Burke and the Scapegoat Process,* Allen Carter contends that insecure people build their self-esteem by dismantling the self-worth of others. In sync with the mantra, "'If you are down, then I am up!'" (9) we alleviate our pain by bringing ourselves "up" and others "down" through words, as we justify our side as that of the "good," and the other as "evil" who must be defeated. Greek tragedy shows how people in their blinding pain, choose words that aggrandize and thus elevate their side, while defaming and lowering the status of the "other," legitimizing the eradication of the Other. The result is often times the widespread and unbridled violence of the scapegoat through language.

My concern for how sacrifice operates in language, leads me to Kenneth Burke, whose theory of language as an "equipment for living" lends insight to how people use words to draw lines of division, separating us from them. As Carter observes, for Burke "words carry the weight of taboo. The grid of identity is ethically charged. We do not simply say, "I am this, and you are that.' Around the edges of such neutral identifications,

we imply, 'All ought to be this, and none that'"(6-7). Divisions in this sense is made

through the implications of words when they are carried to their extreme. Carter explains

further:

> [w]e want to make our party the party of good and our opposition the party of
>
> evil; we want the just to triumph over the unjust, as we define these terms. The
>
> process inclines toward melodrama, a genre that mimics our crudest thoughts
>
> and rawest emotions. We may even color these polarities in religious shades to
>
> assure ourselves that the gods are on our side and that the other side is driven by
>
> devilry. (7)

In times of trauma, especially, when the desire to purge and inflict our pain on the Other

is greatest, we hone language to such perfection, we cast ourselves in larger than life

mythic scripts, making gods of ourselves, and devils of our enemies. It is with words we

strategize ourselves in the roles of hero, victim, and villain and with words we justify our

actions under the banner of gods and devils.

In this chapter, we have studied how trauma is a key component of rhetorical

catharsis. We have seen how catharsis is the purging and projection of one's trauma

through the symbolic sacrifice of the victim on stage. We have seen how catharsis lends

itself to the fundamentalist use of language and leads to the scapegoating of the Other in

civic life.

In chapter three, we will see how see how the trauma of 9/11 is an ever present

force motivating President Bush's rhetoric of war in Iraq. We will see how the President

attempts to purge the nation of its pain through the language of "freedom" serves in dividing the world into West and East, and into freedom fighters vs. terrorists. We will see how the President's use of freedom belies a fundamentalist turn of language, justifying US military intervention abroad through an American mission to spread freedom, saving the world from the evils of the Middle Eastern terrorist. We will see how the President's mission of freedom invokes a drama of redemption in which the American people are called to purge their trauma through the symbolic sacrifice of the Middle Eastern terrorist. Above all, we will see how the President's rhetoric of freedom is an attempt to absolve the nation for its guilt for the fact that the tragedy of 9/11 happened and was not prevented!

CHAPTER 3: THE FREEDOM CRUSADE IN BUSH'S DRAMA OF REDEMPTION

The Problem of Hubris in Catharsis

Greek tragedy in many ways represents the human quest to create order and perfection through language. For the Greeks, such a quest reflected the fundamental weakness of the tragic protagonist they called hubris or "overweening pride" and was linked to the destructive potential of catharsis in tragedy. I begin with *The Bacchae* which illustrates how catharsis can function in tragic drama.

In *The Bacchae* Euripides tells the tragic story of Pentheus, the King of Thebes. Pentheus is an arrogant ruler blinded by a need for order, and deeply vexed by the chaos in his city that arises when the women of Thebes abandon the city to worship Dionysus, the god of wine, and become his followers. A tyrant by nature, Pentheus refuses to recognize Dionysus' divinity, threatening instead to destroy him and his cult of Bachante worshipers, including his mother, Agave. As a result, Dionysus, a spiteful god, tricks Pentheus into watching the Bacchants perform their orgiastic rites. When he is discovered, he is thus torn apart, limb from limb, by the cult of Dionysus including his own mother. At the end of the play, Agave triumphantly carries Pentheus' head on stage, boasting of having slain a lion, only to learn that she has killed her son. Pentheus is thus brutally murdered and Dionysus vindicated through his brutal death.

What here are we to make of catharsis; what are we to surmise from the scapegoating and victimage of Pentheus? What are we to make of Dionysus' cruel brand of justice and subsequent rise to power? What Pentheus' fall and Dionysus' ascent

illustrate is the search for order and the human need to violate order, which motivates the cycle of guilt, purification, and redemption in human relations and leads to the scapegoat so pervasive in tragedy.

In this sense, *The Bacchae* is Euripides' analysis of catharsis in language when words are used to create order from disorder and separate us from them as one names the Greek from the foreigner, the savage from the civilized, and the terror from the ordered and so scapegoat the Other as enemy to redeem one's place in the cosmic order. Ultimately, the play is a scathing critique on the negative impact of catharsis on the drama of human relations.

It is no wonder Pentheus' quest to clamp down on disorder in Thebes is all to no avail. Greek tragedy warns us of our fallibility as human beings and just how susceptible we are to language use. The tragic protagonist who brings about his downfall is the victim of his own use of language. The King who chooses to not only reject a God, but to insult him, reveals the tunnel vision of a man obsessed with keeping order and punishing only those who disagree with him. In this way, Pentheus sees the world as either black or white, with no in betweens. It is this naïve belief in his own supremacy, along with the fear of the Other, which leads him to misunderstand the power of Dionysus and the fact that Gods, as well as mortals, crave order. When Dionysus, a god, is not only spurned but humiliated by a mortal, his only recourse is to purify his situation and redeem his status as a god through the symbolic sacrifice of Pentheus. Ultimately, it is Pentheus' blinding hubris and refusal to respect Dionysus and his cult of followers that does him in, leading to his bloody demise at the hands of his own mother.

In this sense, what *The Bacchae* reminds us of is that the violence rooted in the obsession for order and the hubris that comes with order, is not unique to Greek tragedy alone. Catharsis, as it functions in Greek tragedy, plays also a key role in public discourse. In many ways, George W. Bush's declaration of a "war on terror" in Iraq, and his later statement in his 2004 State of the Union address that "America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our country" is indicative of how hubris in language, more often than not, leads to the search for the scapegoat in public life.

This hubris that now infects the rhetoric of national tragedy stems from what Robert Ivie alludes to in *Democracy and America's War on Terror* as the "present day of righteous fervor"(1) now in the rhetoric of the US war on terror. The hubris Ivie points to is the US tendency in foreign policy to view the world as a cosmic struggle of good versus evil, where the US must vanquish evil. Ivie argues:

> [T]his policy lends itself to a cyclical drama of transgression, travail, and triumph, [that] has traumatized the nation from the beginning of the American century. Under the sign of great tragedy and in the image of heroic struggle, a beleaguered nation once again has been called upon by its president to defeat the horror of chaos and to secure the future of civilization, this time against the specter of global terrorism. (1)

The view of the United States as a beacon of freedom and democracy in the world, and thus on the side of good against evil permeates much of the Bush administration's tragic frame of war in response to 9/11.

Underlying the Bush administration's framing of the war on terrorism is the view of the United States as an exceptional nation—chosen by God to spread freedom throughout the globe and thus save the world through the symbolic sacrifice of the Middle Eastern terrorist. In line with this vision of nationhood, the President promised to purify Iraq of Saddam Hussein and thus transform Iraq into a utopia of freedom when he stated in his December 2003 Press Conference:

> I believe, firmly believe—and you've heard me say this a lot, and I say it a lot because I truly believe it—that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every person, every man and woman who lives in this world. That's what I believe. And the arrest of Saddam Hussein changed the equation in Iraq. Justice was being delivered to a man who defied that gift from the Almighty to the people of Iraq.

In the language of the Bush administration, "freedom" becomes a unique way of speaking and thinking about the world in general and who we are in this world, our relations with other nations, and so on. This view of freedom reveals a binary outlook on the world where some global problems are seen as either the result of good or evil, therefore compelling the nation to fight without question for the side of the "good." Most telling in the President's remark on freedom is his equating of Saddam Hussein's overthrow to the victory of freedom in Iraq. And at heart in this analogy is the principle of vicarious redemption at work in the President's call to war.

In this chapter, I will argue that the President's rhetoric of freedom in Iraq reflects America's need to vicariously redeem itself for the tragedy that happened and was not

prevented on 9/11. To make this argument, I turn to Burke's theory of the god term and

Richard Weaver's critique of the charismatic vessel. I employ Burke's theory of

redemption as a lens for understanding how the Bush administration invokes its mission

of freedom to the Middle East as I analyze mainly the President's Sept. 11, 2001 address

to the nation; Oct. 7, 2001 address; and Jan. 19th, 2005 Second Inaugural Address. I assert

that Bush's freedom draws its primary appeal from a post-modern and distinctly

American view of Freedom's possibility in the Middle East. Freedom as such is the

promise of redemption for a Middle East that has failed to live up to Western ideals of

freedom and democracy. Although Afghanistan, like Iraq, is a target in Bush's war on

terror, and symbolizes the first stage of a Burkean drama of redemption, it remains a

minor focus in this chapter as most of the "War on Terror" is now being fought in Iraq. It

is for this reason I will concentrate mainly on Bush's drama of redemption as it is played

out in arguments for the unprovoked invasion on Iraq.

Ultimately, I argue that Bush's peculiar use of "freedom" in the War on Terror

functions as a vehicle for the god cause and thus serves as a religious calling to persuade

the American people to war and is symbolized in society's search for scapegoats. By

invoking "freedom" to our side, we essentially invoke God "to our side." As Jim Wallis,

evangelical preacher, theologian, and critic of the Bush administration argues, Bush's use

of religious language:

> is not only bad foreign policy or presumptuous foreign policy—. . . it's
>
> idolatrous foreign policy to claim God's purpose for that mission. And in
>
> the language that Mr. Bush has used, he does this again and again and

again. Our role, and his role as president, this is acclaiming a righteous

[decree] that Pax Americana is God's foreign policy. This is a very

unsettling thing. (8)

However, Bush's use of language to re-order the world signals that the human drama of

catharsis is in play. This chapter is an attempt to explore the scapegoat mechanism at

work in Bush's battle for freedom, and thus pave the way for a new understanding for

how catharsis functions in public discourse.

The Charismatic Power of Bush's Freedom

After the attacks on 9/11, President Bush promised a new Eden in the Middle East

stating, "[W]e can be safe and secure, if we stay on the offense against terrorists and if

we spread freedom and liberty around the world" (3) and that "I believe God wants

everyone to be free, that's what I believe. And that's part of my foreign policy" ( ). In

many respects, this statement reflects the rhetoric of a post-Cold war order where in the

words of Anthony Burke, Bush's freedom is a freedom vastly '"unhindered."' Bush's

freedom is what he calls "freedom unbound, unleashed, and unaccountable, even if also

paradoxically driven by fear of one day encountering its own limits and foundering there"

(317). It is this freedom that is inherently tragic at its core and ironically serves as the

curative medicine for a nation in mourning.

The peculiar persuasive nature of "freedom" can best be understood in terms of

what Kenneth Burke and Richard Weaver call charismatic terms. What is problematic

about such terms is the aura of power and authority about them. By their nature,

charismatic terms appeal powerfully to nationalistic values, and therefore, when they are

invoked, they are usually accepted at face value. In his book *A Rhetoric of Motives*,

Burke contends that the charismatic vessel is born when an object or person becomes

symbolic "of some 'absolute' substance." Once transformed, the vessel, "thus magically

endowed […,] transcends his nature as an individual, becoming instead the image of the

idea he stands for" (277). Because one becomes a symbol of a "hierarchic principle,"

terms like freedom function as **"the charismatic vessel of a social motive which the lover,**

or communicant, would court roundabout**"** (277). In this way, the charismatic vessel is

"'ordained' with the properties of an absolute order" (278), and worshipped "for the

ordination that she stands for" (278). The charismatic vessel is worshipped- for what she

represents, and not in fact for what she is.

This notion of the charismatic vessel is also prevalent in Richard Weaver's theory

of charismatic terms. According to Weaver, what distinguishes charismatic terms from

other terms is that they "have a power which is not derived, but which is in some

mysterious way given" and they "seem to have broken loose somehow and to operate

independently of referential connections" and "are rhetorical by common consent, or by

'charisma.'"

Importantly, Richard Weaver calls "freedom" "one of the principal charismatic

terms of our age" whose primary power lies in the fact that "[t]he greatest sacrifices that

contemporary man is called upon to make are demanded in the name of 'freedom.'"

(228). The powers of "freedom" are such that it "remains an ultimate term, for which

people are asked to yield up their first-born" (228).The President's claims that "we're a

nation of liberators" and that "freedom is on the march" exemplifies how freedom is key

in persuading the American public to go to war in Iraq. Underlying this use of freedom

lies the sacrificial motive. The purpose of ultimate terms like "freedom" is not to invite

dialogue, but to stave off debate, in favor of endorsement because to appear even mildly

critical of such terms is to risk being perceived as a rejecting of "freedom" altogether.

This is what makes terms like freedom problematic, because they overwhelmingly call us

to sacrifice, while discouraging forms of inquiry that lead to dissenting points of view.

Bush's Messianic Quest for Freedom

Much has been written on the impact of President George W. Bush's religious

faith in his foreign policy on Iraq, particularly after 9/11. The President, like many before

him, espouses a rhetoric of freedom informed by faith and the sense of Christian mission.

As Jim Wallis has written, with the advent of Sept. 11, "the self-help Methodist [George

W. Bush] slowly became a messianic Calvinist, promoting the American mission to 'rid

the world of evil.'" (139). He asserts that Bush's use of God in his right wing,

nationalistic politics makes for a "bad theology" (149). Along these same lines, David

Domke argues that "[t]he Bush administration's worldview is one grounded in religious

fundamentalism—that is, it emphasizes absolutes, authority and tradition, and a divine

hand in history and upon the United States." He asserts that this outlook "is disastrous for

a democratic political system, for it mandates an ideological shift away from open

discussion, publicly responsive leadership, and humility, toward authoritarianism,

publicly unmindful leadership and arrogance" (5). Ultimately, what these critics argue is

that Bush's rhetoric of war belies a sense of mission based on the American quest for

manifest destiny—the belief that the US is sanctioned by God to spread freedom and

democracy across the globe. This mission fuels the nationalistic drive to redeem America's superpower status in the wake of 9/11.

In this sense, Bush's mission of freedom draws on a fundamentalist worldview of order that is primarily concerned with asserting US military might abroad. In his book *Whose Freedom?,* George Lakoff argues that one's concept of God is pivotal to informing one's political outlook on the world. A large part of his theory rests on the distinction he makes between Progressive Christians and Fundamentalist Christians. According to Lakoff, Progressive Christians turn to Jesus Christ as their role-model and "see God as a nurturant parent, offering unconditional love and grace" (177) while fundamentalist Christians, on the other hand, see God as a strict father. This view of God is based on an Old Testament view of God and the strict father ideology which upholds what Lakoff argues "is a strict good-evil divide in the world, where God is good and Satan is evil. God is the ultimate and absolute moral authority who issues commandments specifying what is right and wrong, and morality is obedience to these commandments. Going to heaven is the reward for obedience; going to hell is the punishment for disobedience" (183). In this way, the fundamentalist ideology of Bush's freedom is one that remains radically different from the freedom that America's forefathers envisioned in the early days of the republic.

"Freedom" in the early days of the republic was informed by the US belief in its Exceptionalism—the sense that the US, as the first democracy in the New World, was apart and special from the Old World and thus a model of freedom for other nations to emulate. In 1630 Governor John Winthrop first stated this view, asking the Pilgrims at

Arbella, "to Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are upon us" (qtd in McDougall 17). And Tom Paine was to write 146 years later that "we have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world all over again" (qtd in McDougall 19). This belief in the US power to start the world anew and serve as an example of freedom and democracy, however, was confined to the domestic sphere, and was not part of US foreign policy.

As far as the US was concerned, only if its independence from Europe was threatened, would the US turn this mission outward and intervene in other nation's affairs. As Walter McDougall, author of *Promised Land, Crusader State* has argued, the US wished to behave as a republic, in service of "the people's interests and not those of some dynasty" (37). It is not that the US rejected war altogether or embraced pacifist aims, but that it was firmly set in defending the national interest from home if it could (36-37). According to McDougall, America's desire to defend itself as a republic and remain independent from Europe meant that "American Exceptionalism as our founders conceived it was defined by what America *was*, at home. Foreign policy existed to defend, not define what America was" (37). Thus, in general, as long as the US did not perceive its interests as a republic threatened, the US cared little for exporting its mission of freedom abroad, and concentrated its efforts instead on being the example of freedom to the world.

Yet in 1898, at the close of the nineteenth century, and in the midst of the Spanish American war, this example of US freedom in the new world shifted. As he spoke to the

Senate in 1898, Albert J. Beveridge declared that God had "made us master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigned" and that "He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the redemption of the world" (qtd Tuveson vii). Beveridge's notion of the United States as "chosen nation" is what Ernest Lee Tuveson argues entails the concept of '"the redeemer nation"' which he defines as the idea of "[c]hosen race, chosen nation; millennial-utopian destiny for mankind; a continuing war between good (progress) and evil (reaction) in which the United States is to play a starring role as world redeemer" (vii-viii). According to Tuveson, the concept of the "chosen nation" is one that "must be religious in origin" (viii). Though the door was now open for American messianism, the US as a nation remained hesitant to assert its mission of freedom in the world.

In this context, the ideology of Bush's freedom today is borne from what Anthony Burke argues is the "profound sense of America's unbounded power, potential and right […] deeply etched into the American polity" (319). In her discussion of Baritz' views on the development of America's emerging sense of mission in foreign policy, Denise Bostdorff argues that the merging of the nation's sense of manifest destiny and mission is the driving force for why:

> Americans today think of themselves as unique, blessed by God, possessed of high ideals, and destined to succeed. In addition, they consider it their special responsibility to spread freedom around the globe through active means and, in this way, to serve as a model of morality for the rest of the world. (186)

Bostdorff's contention here that American identity is based on a sense of American uniqueness, and destiny, and belief in a US mission to spread freedom in the world helps shed light on how President Bush's use of "freedom" functions in invoking nationally sacred values and therefore acts as a powerful call to war.

Hierarchy and Disorder in Burke's Redemption Drama

As such, the charismatic power of Bush's rhetoric of freedom can best be understood through Burke's theory of redemption, in which humans attempt to purify themselves and atone for guilt in the symbolic sacrifice of the scapegoat. This drama draws on the theological concept of redemption that is based on the human desire to be delivered from sin and achieve communion with God through atonement. (Kenneth 133).

According to Burke, hierarchy plays a key role in the drama of redemption because hierarchy reflects people's desire for social order in the universe. Burke defines hierarchy as "the motive of the socio-political order, made possible and necessary by social differentiations and stratifications due to the division of labor and to corresponding distinctions in the possession of property" (Rhetoric Religion 41). Hierarchy in this sense represents the socio-economic division of society into graded classes that are up or down in the social order. Burke also views hierarchy on a biological and individual level and claims that the "hierarchic principle itself is inevitable in systematic thought" (Rhetoric Motives 141). Hierarchy in this sense entails the human ability to classify and conceptualize ideas moving from lower to higher trains of thought. Hierarchy then represents the socio-political order of a community and is basic to the human condition and thus fulfills a human need for order in general.

For Burke, hierarchy is inextricably bound up in guilt and is the reason people are born into guilt. This reality is what Burke calls "categorical guilt." Categorical guilt, according to Burke, is not the result of one's actions, but of what station in the hierarchy one is born into. Those up in the ladder feel guilty for their station and those who are down feel guilty for being down (Language 15).

At the same time, the drive to transgress order is a fact of human nature that cannot be avoided and leads to guilt of another kind. In *The Rhetoric of Religion*, Burke argues that guilt is the driving force in the drama of redemption. He states, "Order leads to Guilt (for who can keep commandments!), Guilt needs redemption (for who would not be cleansed!), Redemption needs Redeemer (which is to say a Victim!) (45). Because the breach against order brings with it guilt of sin, the guilty ask atonement for their sins, which can only be got by the scapegoat.

Burke argues that the "negative"— rules that govern social behavior, and thus help maintain the social order, also leads to guilt within the hierarchy because humans will inevitably either fall or fail to rise in the ladder. In his chapter on "Social Order Considered as a Drama of Redemption through Victimage," Hugh Duncan argues:

> [g]uilt arises out of *negation* of the principles of social order, and their expression in hierarchy. We believe we should be identifying with such a principle, but we are not. Our sin is a sin of disobedience.

This notion of Burkean guilt is what Duncan argues occurs during "moments of profound social disrelationship" (Communication 121).

According to the Burkean drama of redemption, the desire for social order is what binds the community together. When disorder threatens to invade the community, humans inevitably feel guilty and attempt to purify guilt through the symbolic sacrifice of the enemy as scapegoat. It is in this case that questions of power and legitimacy are most at stake. As Duncan observes:

> [W]hen the principle of disorder is embodied in a 'perfect enemy,' that is, an enemy like the 'Prince of Darkness,' as the devil was called, we do not feel guilt when we punish, torture, and kill him. For in doing this we destroy, not only another human being, but a *principle* of disorder whose continued existence and power threaten the life of our society. (Symbols 138)

In this way, the enemy functions as a vehicle for expiating both guilt and disorder from the community, restoring order to its members.

Victimage as Inevitable

For Burke, victimage is an integral part of the redemption drama because it is tied to the fall, which for Burke symbolizes man's guilt over his demise and so the notion of the scapegoat. Burke makes a case for this when he argues that "the 'fall' and the 'redemption' are but parts of the same cycle, with each implying the other" (RR 218). Burke reiterates this view when he argues that "the idea of original sin in turn tautologically implies the idea of redemption by a perfect scapegoat" (242). As he states, "Is victimage (redemption by vicarious atonement) equally intrinsic to the idea of guilt? The bible, viewed either logologically or theologically, seems to be saying that it is"

(219). Thus for Burke, redemption is a reality that occurs at both the religious and secular level and can best be understood in terms of victimage where the need to purify guilt inevitably leads to the search for the scapegoat in society.

Most important in Burke's theory of redemption is Burke's notion of vicarious redemption, which carries serious implications for how the scapegoating of the Other works in discourse and public life. Burke argues:

> In the idea of redemption there is implicit the idea of a personal redeemer. Or, if you think of redemption as a condition or situation a "scene"), then you may extract the same implication by thinking of a redeemer as an instrument, or agency for bringing about the condition. And this step, you will note, automatically includes the idea of a substitution: the possibility that one character may be redeemed through the act or agency of another. (176)

One way that the fallen are redeemed for their sins is through what Burke calls the "payment" for sin.

Redemption can be paid for through the sacrifice of the Abject Other. Burke strongly hints to this when he contends that

> Money introduces the principle of redemption. That is, money will give them the idea of redemption by payment, which is to say, by substitution. For it would be a matter of substitution, if a man paid off an obligation by money whereas otherwise he might have been required to suffer actual physical torment.

Burke explains further that "substitution by monetary symbolism is but a special case of symbolic substitution in general" (294). For Burke symbolic substitution is vicarious by "impl[ying] that one person can suffer for another, as 'payment' for the other's guilt" (295). This notion of symbolic substitution suggests the human need for scapegoats as a means of expiating guilt.

The Rhetoric of Tragic Victimage: Freedom vs. Tyranny

To understand the scapegoat mechanism at work in Bush's use of the concept of freedom, I turn now to Bush's war rhetoric. According to Burke, social order plays a key role in the drama of redemption, and it is the violation of social order that leads to guilt and sets the cycle of the scapegoat in motion. Shortly after the attacks, President Bush invoked the drama of redemption and absolved the nation of guilt for the lack of US security that allowed the events of 9/11 to take place by framing the United States as a tragic victim whose freedom had been maimed. This narrative emphasized the suffering of the United States and called for collective retaliation against the terrorists in order to ensure freedom's victory.

The logical motif built in the Bush's rhetoric is such that we are called to focus only on the tragedy that took place. This construction served to deflect attention away from the fact that the attacks happened on US soil and were not prevented to the tragic event itself—the symbolic destruction of the World Trade Center. The President's framing of the WTC represents what Hugh Duncan calls the "Guilt feelings lead to a search for communication with those who can absolve us of our guilt. The first step in this is the symbolization of guilt in some form which makes possible confrontation of our

guilt. Until some form is supplied there can be no public communication over guilt "
(Symbols 138) to purge the community's sense of disorder.

At 9:30 that morning, Bush declared, "Today we've had a national tragedy. Two
airplanes have crashed into the World Trade Center in an apparent terrorist attack on our
country." Calling the events of 9/11 a "national tragedy" was to have profound effects on
the sense of American identity. Essentially, by calling the attacks a "national tragedy,"
the President identified the suffering and death of the victims of the plane attacks with the
suffering of the country and in this way elevated the United States to the status of tragic
victim. Later that same day, in his televised September 11, 2001 address to the nation,
Bush reassured the country of emergency measures put in place to protect Americans
from terrorism. He begins his speech by invoking the image of the US as tragic victim.
He states: "Good evening. Today our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom
came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts." In these remarks, the
term "freedom" is used as an ultimate term that one is called to accept for its face value
and is thus a charismatic term. Terms such as "deliberate," "deadly," and "terrorist acts,"
are employed juxtapositionally to freedom and are thus strategic devil terms that must
also be accepted at face value. In this context, Bush symbolically aligns freedom with the
American people, and evil with the Middle Eastern terrorist. The President then
reinforces this frame stating that, "A great people has been moved to defend a great
nation." This statement brought a dignity and grand bearing to the suffering of the
American people and emphasized the sense of America's violation.
At the speech's conclusion, Bush invokes freedom as a god term, claiming that,

This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our

resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before,

and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day. Yet we

go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.

Thank you. Good night, and God bless America.

Here, freedom becomes the metaphor for the American people. Because the American

people have been attacked, now all freedom and democracy in the world has been

attacked. What the President's logic implies is that it is now the task for Americans to

engage in a battle of good versus evil. Underlying this message is a call to faith because

freedom is assumed to mean the same thing for all Americans and most significantly is

assumed to be "good."

In keeping with the narrative of national redemption, Bush invoked the notion of

Americans as "the chosen people" by focusing on the image of the US as leader of the

free world, as he declared, "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest

beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from

shining." In this statement, it is here the President appeals to the belief in US

Exceptionalism—the sense that the US is a "city on a hill"—a leading example of

freedom throughout the world and symbolically makes the American people stand for

freedom.

Most challenging for the Bush administration was how it would address the

question for why terrorists targeted the US on 9/11. The reason Bush offers for why we

were attacked here—because the US is a "beacon for freedom"--reflects a cultural

construction of the conflict. This construction is framed as a war between freedom fighters versus terrorists, and thus was a key argument that would later tie Iraq to the attacks. In this way, Bush absolved the nation of guilt as he interpreted the attacks as a cultural conflict between the East and West. The effect of the Bush administration's framing of the terrorists as, in the words of Richard Jackson, "one-dimensional hate-filled anti-modernists" (56) is in my view, a means of metaphorically constructing the terrorist as a devil term.

In his speech at Fort Bragg, (June 28/05), Bush invokes the terrorist as devil term by framing them as radical fundamentalists hostile to Western values. He states, "The terrorists who attacked us and the terrorists we face, murder in the name of a totalitarian ideology that hates freedom, rejects tolerance and despises all dissent [sic]." Here the President symbolically aligns the terrorists responsible for 9/11 with Iraq so that both are made equally guilty of the same crime. He then asserts, "Their aim is to remake the Middle East in their own grim image of tyranny and oppression by toppling governments, by driving us out of the region and by exporting terror." This reading of the terrorists categorizes all terrorists as naturally expansionistic and freedom hating. This construction of the terrorists strongly suggests that it is only the terrorists (not the Iraqi people) who want the United States out of Iraq and thus serves in dismissing the complexity of Iraqi feelings over US intervention.

In a national press conference in March 2003, Bush reiterates the construction of terrorists as devils. The flip side of this view implies the United States was attacked because of its goodness. He asserts:

> [I]t's hard to envision more terror on America than September the 11th, 2001. We did nothing to provoke that terrorist attack. It came upon us because there's an enemy which hates America. They hate what we stand for. We love freedom and we're not changing. And, therefore, so long as there's a terrorist network like al Qaeda, and others willing to fund them, finance them, equip them—we're at war.

What the President does here is use freedom as "the reason" for why we were attacked. As Richard Jackson contends the President's rationale for the 9/11 attacks "fixes the notion that America was attacked for its virtuous qualities rather than its policy choices" (54). In this way the President interprets 9/11 as a cultural conflict between Western freedom and Eastern terrorism and essentially sidesteps any hint of US responsibility for the attacks (54 55).

Choosing Sides: "Either You're With Us or You're Against us"

This construction of terrorist as devil reflects a good versus evil outlook on the world and identifies the US, along with its allies, as the party of good. Through this argument, President Bush vicariously redeemed the US of guilt for 9/11 by assigning guilt to the Middle Eastern terrorist and making it clear we had to choose sides.

In this sense, Bush's freedom mission becomes part of a crusade against evil, inevitably drawing lines of division between us and them. In his Oct. 7, 2001 address to

the nation, the President declared air strikes against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in

Afghanistan and reassured Americans that the government was taking precautions against

terrorism. Here Bush invokes freedom as the god cause where the good are duty bound

to fight and eliminate evil at all costs. He states, "The United States of America is an

enemy of those who aid terrorists," and then asserts "as we have learned, so suddenly and

so tragically, there can be no peace in a world of sudden terror." It is here that the

President's divisive view of the world takes on a crusading edge epitomized in the evil of

the "terrorists," and their "terror," juxtaposed to the "United States of America" that is

the "enemy" of those "who aid terrorists." These binaries draw a clear line between those

on the side of evil and those on the side of good, suggesting that the United States—the

side of good—fight without question against evil.

In this respect, Bush's mission of freedom takes on a god given mandate. Bush

asserts this vision of freedom, stating, "In the face of today's new threat, the only way to

pursue peace is to pursue those who threaten it," and "we did not ask for this mission, but

we will fulfill it. The name of today's military operation is Enduring Freedom." He then

declares, "We defend not only our precious freedoms, but also the freedom of people

everywhere to live and raise their children free from fear" ("Presidential Address" 2). In

this statement, freedom is portrayed as everlasting and universal and there is a sense that

freedom is divinely sanctioned—handed down to the American people from God. It is

this god-given mandate based on the rhetoric of good and evil that Richard Jackson

argues "is a divine calling to bring God's justice to bear" (67) and leans towards a

messianic outlook on the world where the US is the world's sole redeemer.

Spreading American Freedom in the Middle East

Nowhere is Bush's fundamentalist vision of freedom more explicitly articulated than in his Second Inaugural Address, which occurred on January 19th, 2005. In this address, the President redeems the US for its failure to prevent 9/11 by promising freedom and democracy to a pre-modern, fallen Middle East.

Bush begins the inaugural by invoking freedom as a god term of the post-enlightenment and indirectly alludes to Iraq as surrogate for the sins of a pre-modern, radical Middle East, as he states, "There is only one force of history that can break the reign of hatred and resentment, and expose the pretensions of tyrants, and reward the hopes of the decent and tolerant, and that is the force of human freedom." Freedom in this sense becomes the metaphor of salvation for a world immersed in sin. What makes this metaphorical construction of freedom so appealing is its underlying vision of a global utopia in the Middle East. At its core, this vision of freedom is the West's secularized, post-modern equivalent of Christian atonement where Iraq serves as the surrogate for a Middle East that rebels against freedom. Freedom here is the antithesis of the medieval, autocratic mindset. As Anthony Burke claims:

> freedom is something *the East lacks*, and it will be achieved not by the
> agency of its own people, or the upwelling of some genuinely universal
> human aspiration, but by the particular application of American pressure
> and force. (333)

This construction of American freedom is one imposed from without, under the guise of modernity and the assumption that nations are historically propelled towards freedom and that the United States is the one to lead them.

Implicit in this post-enlightenment concept of freedom is the US perception of itself as the first democratic experiment in the New World and thus an example of freedom for the world to emulate. This quintessentially American view of freedom rings of the freedom Martin Luther King, Jr. sought when he persuaded Americans to reject their nation's segregationist policies, stating that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." President Bush asserts this ideology of freedom when he declares, "[W]e are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world." Yet underscoring Bush's "hope" for freedom is a freedom drastically different from the freedom and the redemption drama that Martin Luther King envisioned during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. It is instead a militant Christian view of freedom that asserts the belief that it is the United States' moral duty to export its freedom abroad, at the point of a gun. Going to war is thus justified by what some say is a unique American quest—the moral imperative to take up the American experiment and spread freedom in the Middle East.

This ideology of freedom is reflective of a New World Order that draws on the tensions of the Cold War, substituting terrorism for communism, and freedom for capitalism. The President asserts this ideology when he declares, "So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and

institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in the world." As William Galston contends, this statement in particular reveals how "President Bush picked up a rhetorical battle standard of freedom first carried by Woodrow Wilson and later lofted by Cold War liberals and Ronald Reagan" (2). This revived standard of freedom portrays the US as freedom fighter that will liberate Iraq from its evil oppressor, bringing freedom and democracy to the region.

The American need to fight evil and spread freedom throughout the world is thus reflective of the Burkean drama of redemption where the sins of the world are purified in the symbolic rebirth of freedom. Critics of the President such as Jim Wallis contend that Bush's mission of freedom is a "religiously inspired 'mission'" (139) and in his chapter, "American Crusades," Mel Gurtov writes that "such a powerful sense of destiny seems born of the conviction that God is on America's side […]. For America represents not only material progress but moral purity—civilization itself" (6). The President emphasizes this sense of "moral purity" when he states, "Americans move forward in every generation by reaffirming all that is good and true that came before—ideals of justice and conduct that are the same yesterday, today, and forever." The notion here that Americans are on the side of good is a powerful appeal to the sense that Americans are called to do God's bidding and an example of what Benedict Anderson calls the "imagined political community." According to this theory, members of disparate communities unite and become nations when they are brought together by values they believe to share in common.

In this respect, President Bush unites the nation by constructing freedom as a uniquely American value when he asks:

> Did our generation advance the cause of freedom? And did our character
>
> bring credit to that cause? These questions that judge us also unite us,
>
> because Americans of every party and background, Americans by choice
>
> and by birth, are bound to one another in the cause of freedom.

This appeal to freedom as an American value taps into powerful beliefs of US Exceptionalism, and inevitably portrays the world as a cosmic struggle of good versus evil, of freedom fighters versus terrorists. The President enacts this picture of the world, asserting that "the great objective of ending tyranny is the concentrated work of generations. The difficulty of the task is no excuse for avoiding it. America's influence is not unlimited, but fortunately for the oppressed, America's influence is considerable, and we will use it considerably in freedom's cause." The President's narrative here frames the US as the enlightened champion of freedom, inevitably winning over tyranny.

Conclusion: Bush's Fundamentalist Quest for Order

Most insightful in Bush's battle on terror is how freedom becomes the promise of redemption—a pill of purification for the soul of a humiliated America on 9/11. The quest to export freedom abroad and thus purify the Middle East of its tyranny is justified through the Bush administration's focus on 9/11 as national tragedy. It was this focus in particular that made it possible for the President to speak in the language of good and evil and so to frame the war as a battle between forces of freedom and tyranny. For who would choose tyranny over freedom? This discursive construction of the war is what

Richard Jackson argues made the war in Iraq "almost impossible to resist" and is such it "forces the listener either to simply accept it as an inherently and axiomatic good war, or to take what appears to be an absurd stance which says that pursuing justice and fulfilling one's historic responsibility is wrong" (152). The power of freedom in Bush's battle is that it is a redemptive rhetoric that draws on deep-seated notions of American exceptionalism that inform how many Americans imagine freedom working within the US and in the global community. The crux here, however, is that freedom in the rhetoric of Bush's battle works on the basis of an imagined identification of what American freedom means from a Christian fundamentalist perspective.

The problem with this perspective is what some point to as the negative impact of fundamentalist language in political discourse. For example, Elaine Pagels argues that while "[W]e do need the language of good and evil to talk about what certain events mean […] [but] to use it to characterize whole blocks of people, groups of countries, shuts down political discourse" (conference 6). Even more troubling, although "[r]eligious language can be unifying [it] can also be enormously divisive and dangerous. If there is an axis of evil, that obviously places him [Bush] in the axis of good, and also means that anyone who disagrees with the policies he is advocating is placed on the other side" (Goodstein 4). In this light, Bush's rhetoric of freedom, like that of Dionysus and Pentheus, asserts an either 'you're with us or against us' attitude towards the world and is all too emblematic of what Kenneth Burke argues is at the heart of the human condition—the drive to be "rotten with perfection" (LSA 16). In this sense, the rhetoric of Dionysus and Pentheus symbolize the mindset of the fundamentalist. As

Terry Eagleton argues, "The fundamentalist, whether Texan or Taliban, is the flipside of

the nihilist: both parties believe that nothing has meaning or value unless it is founded on

cast-iron first principles. It is just that the fundamentalist believes in such principles,

whereas the nihilist does not" (26). The rhetoric of the fundamentalist and the nihilist,

like the rhetoric of Pentheus and Dionysus, serves only to feed the cemented position of

the Other as both see the world in black or white and refuse to listen to opposing points of

view.

In his explication of the play, Terry Eagleton argues that the lesson to be learned from

The Bacchae is that

> [Pentheus is a] pharisaical prig, a man whose panic-stricken reaction to
>
> cultural otherness is 'Clap it in chains'. This pig-headedness catalyses
>
> violence rather than constrains it. Pentheus is an exponent of state
>
> terrorism, ready to mobilize an entire army against a band of unarmed
>
> women. He is an ethnocentric bigot, who on being informed that the cult
>
> of Dionysus is common in the East, sniffs "No doubt. Their moral
>
> standards fall far below ours" (6).

Pentheus' blinding arrogance towards the other is what does him in at the play's bitter

end. In this light, Bush's promise to bring freedom to Iraq displays the same arrogant

cultural attitudes about the East that may yet prove to be his own undoing.

CHAPTER 4: MEDIA AND THE MANUFACTURING OF THE RIGHT WING NARRATIVE

Iraq's Bloody Fall: How did we get here?

In his Nobel Lecture of 1987, Russian born American poet, Joseph Brodsky once remarked that "in a real tragedy, it is not the hero who perishes; it is the chorus" (8 Dec. 1987). In many ways, Brodsky's statement serves as a warning for the times we live in today—post 9/11—when the catharsis of the audience watching the tragedy leads to the demise of not only the tragic protagonist, but of the entire media chorus which falls down with him. Such could be said of the tragedy of much of the American mainstream media's failure to seriously question the President's case for going to war, presenting the public instead with a right wing centrist narrative that helped rally support for the war. From the dubious footage of Iraqis cheering at the toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue on the major network news shows of *ABC, NBC,* and *CBS,* to Judith Miller's WMD stories based on claims from the now discredited Iraqi exile, Ahmed Chalabi for the *New York Times*, to the June 15, 2005 lead editorial of the *Washington Post* which trivialized incriminating evidence of the Bush White House in the Downing Street Memo, much of the mainstream news fell time and time again as they framed a politically acceptable and sympathetic narrative on the war.

In this dissertation, I draw on Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's premise in their book, *The Manufacturing of Consent* that the US national media often cover the news from a perspective that endorses the vested interests and foreign policies of the US

government, and in this way serves in shaping public opinion and debate on key policy issues. In this light, Herman and Chomsky develop a theory called the propaganda model to explain how and why the US mass media ideologically frame the news to favor government policy.

In his book, *Democracy and America's War on Terror*, Robert Ivie discusses the implications of Noam Chomsky's propaganda model, and argues that Chomsky's model reveals how American democracy asserts a " system of thought control" through which the "news-media machine automatically censors itself and dutifully serves the interests of political elites consistent with an 'internalized sense of political correctness'"(189). I turn to Ivie's reading of Chomsky's propaganda model here because Ivie's interpretation calls attention to the formative role that political correctness plays in determining what journalists choose to include or exclude in their coverage of the daily news.

Like Chomsky and Ivie, Gary Kamiya makes a similar observation on this point. In his article for the *Salon* titled, "Iraq: Why the Media failed," Kamiya writes that the invisible and unspoken rules of social decorum often set the stage for what makes news. As Kamiya puts it, there is a:

> subtle, internalized, often unconscious way the media conforms and defers to certain sacrosanct values and ideals" and that journalists abide by "a whole set of sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit codes that govern what it feels it can say" (1).

He claims that journalists of the mainstream media, which he describes as "centrist" were motivated by socially "appropriate" norms of conduct (2). Kamiya contends that in their

coverage of the war, the mainstream mass media functioned as an "info-nanny,"

conforming to an "imagined national center" or what he calls an "imagined American

center" in their coverage of the War on Terror (2).

By drawing on Chomsky, Herman, Ivie, and Kamiya, I assert that in the aftermath of

9/11, elite news pressure towards standardization of an "imagined center" led many

journalists to reify, reproduce, and recycle a centrist right wing narrative of the War on

Terror. The mainstream media's tendency to operate within the perimeters of acceptable

narrative demonstrates how catharsis functions in the news media, often leading to the

standardization and dissemination of an authoritative narrative favorable to state policy in

times of national crisis.

So how did so many journalists of the mainstream elite get taken in by a centrist

right wing narrative? What happened? Generally speaking, in the mainstream media's

framing of the war story, what is included and excluded in the narrative? And how and

why is the storyline maintained? And what does this centrist narrative reveal about how

the process of catharsis functions within the structure of the US news media in times of

national tragedy? In order to even attempt to answer these questions, it is important to

understand first the profound effect the terrorist attacks of 9/11 had on the nation.

When national and local television showed images of commercial planes crashing

into the World Trade Center that day, I remember feeling something like a flood of pity,

fear, rage, and helplessness unleash inside me, unraveling and spinning out of control.

And I was not alone. The mood in the nation was dire. The shock and taboo of death

filled the air. The day after the attacks, Senator John McCain spoke to the Senate stating

that the attacks on 9/11 "were not just crimes" but "were acts of war" and that "we should take pride and unyielding resolve from the knowledge that we were attacked because we are good" and called on the divine, asking God to "bless us in this trial, comfort us, strengthen our resolve, and make our justice as terrible and certain as his" (McCain Senate 12 Sept 2001). Within a week of the attacks, the front pages of newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and *Chicago-Tribune* screamed headlines titled "U.S. Attacked," "Act of War" and "US Readies for War." Magazines, such as *US News and World Report*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* held captions reading "Under Siege," "One Nation, Indivisible," and "God Bless America" on their covers. In her column for the *National Review*, titled, "This is War," Ann Coulter responded to the event by writing that "[w]e should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren't punctilious about locating and pursuing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That's war. And this is war" (1). When the host, Bill Maher of *ABC*'s "Politically Incorrect" show disagreed with the Bush administration's description of the hijackers as "cowards," and was later dropped from the air by *ABC*, Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesperson told Americans on national television that Maher's remark was a "terrible thing to say" and "there are reminders to all Americans that they need to watch what they say, watch what they do, and this is not a time for remarks like that; there never is" (Tapper 1). Months later, just weeks leading up to the US invasion of Iraq, Bill O'Reilly stated on national television (Hart 4) that "Once the war against Saddam Hussein begins, we expect every American to support our military, and if you can't do that, just shut up. Americans, and indeed our

foreign allies who actively work against our military once the war is underway, will be considered enemies of the state by me" (Hart 4).

Yet there were some journalists who did attempt to break through the fire wall of politically correct and censorious media coverage though it must be noted that even their best efforts and expertise could not weather the tunnel like vision of acceptable opinion that inundated the media like a black hole.

Shortly after the US invasion in Iraq, Peter Arnett, in an interview on Iraqi t.v., gave an account of the war in Iraq that fell squarely at odds with the majority of US mainstream coverage of the war, stating that "[t]he first war plan has failed because of Iraqi resistance" and that "American war planners misjudged the determination of the Iraqi forces" (Peter 1). Arnett was then fired by *MSNBC*, *NBC*, and *National Geographic* for his statements (Arnett 1). When journalists such as Dan Guthrie of the *Oregon Daily Courier* and Tom Gutting of the *Texas City Sun* addressed the President's response to 9/11, and were critical of the President, their newspapers fired them, and then apologized to readers (Donovan 1). Gary Kamiya also writes about the "explosive" nature of his decision to write in a piece for the *Salon* that "Heretical as it is to say, the terror attacks proved that it is possible to overreact—more specifically, to react foolishly—to an attack that left 3,000 dead" (2), which came to the attention of his editor who questioned him about his statement (3). These examples point to how forms of institutional censorship as well as self-censorship amid editors and journalists led to a centrist right wing story line in favor of war that made challenging the Bush administration's case for war difficult.

In this chapter, I will concentrate on the US mainstream news coverage of the War on Terror in Iraq. I will refer to the mainstream news as mass-media news which includes major national magazines, newspapers, news programs, and internet sites reaching the widest available audiences of the public sphere. Although the terrain of what is considered mainstream news is changing due to the Internet, and many Americans today receive their news from a vast array of sources which are found on the internet, I will limit my focus of the mainstream news to print and t.v. news of the war in Iraq as I conduct a critical discourse analysis of Christopher Dickey and Evan Thomas' article "How We Helped Create Saddam and Can We Fix Iraq After He's Gone," for the September 23, 2002 issue of *Newsweek*, Judith Miller and Michael Gordon's story titled, "U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts" for the September 8, 2002 issue of the *New York Times*, and the *CBS* documentary titled, "Flashpoint: Kimberly Dozier and the Army's Fourth ID—A Story of Bravery, Recover, and Lives Forever Changed," aired on May 29, 2007.

Because journalists of the mainstream media receive the most prominent coverage within the mass media and it is their perspective that is most seen and heard by the majority of the American public, I will focus the bulk of my analysis on their coverage of the war.

How the Bush Administration Undermines Journalism as a Fourth Estate

The media as an institution performs a powerful civic role in society. In a democracy, its job is not merely to report the news, but to tell the truth to the public. In this vein, Robert McChesney, argues that the media's democratic duty is to serve society

by acting as a civil guardian for the general public. He asserts that "society needs journalism to perform three main duties: to act as a rigorous watchdog of the powerful and those who wish to be powerful; to ferret out truth from lies; and to present a wide range of informed positions on key issues" (57). These three duties all touch on the media's ideal role as a "fourth estate"—the notion that the media's function is to serve the public interest by acting as a check on government or as University of Arizona Professor, Jacqueline Sharkey contends, to act as "observers of the political system" (11).

This perception of the media's role in civic society dates back to Thomas Carlyle who in his book *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* in 1841 credits Edmund Burke with coining the term. Carlyle contends "…does not…the parliamentary debate go on…in a far more comprehensive way, out of Parliament altogether? [Edmund] Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important than they all" (228). The fourth estate for Carlyle, rests on the notion that journalists and the work they do is integral to maintaining the public debate and thus, plays a key role in functioning democracies.

For many, the media's role as a fourth estate is thought in terms of the popular image of the media as watchdog, that is, the media as defender and guardian of the public interest, best remembered during the Vietnam era of the 60's when journalists wrote stories that challenged the government's version of events during Vietnam war and Watergate. The media's coverage of the 1968 Viet Cong Tet offensive, in particular, etched the minds of the American public with devastating images of the North Viet Cong overwhelming American forces, along with the South Vietnamese, and revealed a

drastically different account of the war than that lauded by the Johnson administration (Sparrow 1) and helped change American public opinion and debate on the war, leading to Lyndon Johnson's withdrawal for reelection in 1968. As well, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*'s disclosure of the Watergate break-in and the subsequent 1971 coverage of the Pentagon Papers shocked many Americans by painting a grim picture of a President ready to lie, burgle, and wiretap to maintain power in the White House, and led to the Watergate investigations in 1972, resulting in the humiliating defeat and resignation of Richard Nixon. These examples speak to the power of the media in its ability to change the tide of opinion and public policy in society (Sparrow 1).

Because the media in its fourth estate role is seen ideally as an institution independent of the government and thus capable of acting as a check and balance to government, with the end goal of defending the public from the tyranny of officials elected in positions of power, the media is seen as crucial to maintaining a democratic system of governance.

Yet this view of the press and of democracy in general, is challenged under the current administration's perceptions of the press and its role in the public domain. As journalist, Ken Auletta of the *New Yorker* puts it, the President's account of the media's function in civil society is in direct conflict from its fourth estate ideal. Ken Auletta describes an encounter between a reporter and the President at an August barbecue in 2004:

> A reporter said to him: Mr. President, is it really true you don't read the press or watch us on television? And he said no. And the reporter then

said: Well, how do you then know, Mr. President, what the public is

thinking? And Bush, without missing a beat said: You're making a

powerful assumption, young man. You're assuming that you represent the

public. I don't accept that. That's his attitude. And when you ask the Bush

people to explain that attitude, what they say is: We don't accept that you

have a check and balance function. We think that you're in the game of

'Gotcha.' Oh, you're interested in headlines, and you're interested in

conflict. You're not interested in having a serious discussion and,

exploring things, so why should we talk to you. (Media NPR, 1)

In Auletta's telling description of the President's conversation with a reporter, the irony

in Bush's statement of "why should we talk to you?" is that the President in effect, is

curtailing contact and denying access to journalists who would fulfill their watchdog

image of keeping the public informed while acting as a check on the government in favor

of journalists instead who remain compliant and uncritically supportive of government

action and therefore derelict in their function as guardians of the public interest.

Terministic Screening of What Makes News and What Doesn't

The media's coverage of the news reflects a powerful way of seeing that sets the

perimeters for public debate and thus the national discourse. Why, for example, was the

mere possibility that the US invaded South Vietnam an unimaginable concept for

mainstream levels of the media during the Vietnam war, and thus was an issue that went

virtually undiscussed? In *The Manufacturing of Consent,* Herman and Chomsky address

this very question. They argue that during the Vietnam war, the media encouraged

intervention, by setting the perimeters for debate and therefore framing the debate on the war according to government perspective on the war. As a result, "detectable questioning of the righteousness of the American cause in Vietnam, or of the necessity to proceed to full-scale 'intervention'" was not part of the debate. Instead, Herman and Chomsky claim that the debate on Vietnam was largely consigned to "questions of tactics and costs [...], and further discussion in the mainstream media was largely limited to these narrow issues" (172). The debate then centered on the premise that US intervention in Vietnam was legitimate and any questioning of American legitimacy for going to war was excluded from the debate (252).

Kenneth Burke's theory of terministic screens –that the terms we use reveal biased ways of seeing, sheds light on how the media's coverage of the war reflects a biased way of seeing that informs the public's own terministic screen; what the public sees and believes about the war. Because journalists of the mainstream media discussed Vietnam using terms such as "tragedy" or "blunder," much of the American public came to see Vietnam in this way, and most importantly, debate the war in such terms. In his book, *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke argues that the terms we employ impact how we see ourselves and how others see us. As he puts it:

> [W]e must use terministic screens, since we can't say anything without the use of terms; whatever terms we use, they necessarily constitute a corresponding kind of screen; and any such screen necessarily directs the attention to one field rather than another (50).

The terms we use thus direct our observations so we focus on particular features of reality, more than others. Burke argues further that the terms we use reflect a given 'selection of reality' which is also a 'deflection of reality' (45) and that "[e]ven if any given terminology is a reflection of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a selection of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a deflection of reality" (45). The notion that language is "selection as deflection" reveals the strategic use of language where certain realities are discounted so that others may be counted. George Lakoff calls this strategic use of language, "framing" and contends that "[f]raming is about getting language that fits your worldview. It is not just language. The ideas are primary—and the language carries those ideas, evokes those ideas" (4). Illustrative of framing in language use is how terms such as "occupation" or "invasion," or "aggression" and so forth, are largely missing from the language of the mainstream media's coverage on the War in Iraq. In an interview with Chris Mathews, Jim Lehrer discusses the government's role in setting the tone to the media coverage on the war. He asserts that journalists were largely silent in describing the war as an "occupation" "[b]ecause […] the word 'occupation' was never mentioned in the run up to the war. Washington talked about the war as a war of liberation, not a war of occupation" (Bill 3). In this context, Lehrer suggests that journalists largely defer to the vocabulary of politicians for the framing of controversial issues or policies and so cover stories from the ideological perspective of White House insiders.

Journalistic deference to government language that Lehrer alludes to here represents a larger problem at work within the structure of journalism and news writing.

According to Susan Moeller, when it comes to covering key controversial issues, journalists often follow traditional models of reporting, such as the "classic inverted pyramid" structure of news gathering and reporting, which requires reporters to organize and write their stories according to the voices of the most prominent people in power. (Moeller 13). In the mainstream media's coverage of the War on Terror, the tendency for journalists to abide by a "classic inverted pyramid" structure of news writing, often results in what Susan Moeller calls "stenographic reporting" (interview 2); that is, the tendency of the press to report squarely on the facts and opinions of people in power with little or no investigation of the context behind the assertions of those in power. According to Moeller, the negative consequences of "stenographic reporting" is that it results in a "he said/she said" depiction of the news that allows little room for journalists to investigate the truthfulness of the statements they are reporting.

In the coverage of the War on Terror, journalists' tendency to abide by the "classic inverted pyramid" model of news writing and report stenographically on the Bush administration's reasons for going to war, results in the media's constant repetition of the President's language of war. By constantly repeating and disseminating the President's case for war, much of the news came to acquire a radical right wing narrative that increasingly gathered momentum and helped to set the perimeters for a radical right wing narrative on the war.

A central factor that helped motivate a right wing centrist narrative of the war is through journalists' privileging of "official" sources, such as White House sources who agreed with the President's position on the war which often resulted in a politically

correct and congenial story line that reflected a right wing centrist position on American foreign policy in the Middle East.

In this context, when it came to covering the Bush administration's claims that Saddam Hussein harbored WMD, sources that disagreed with this view were often minimized or trivialized and filtered out of the mainstream coverage of the war. In this way, many journalists ignored signs of a WMD debate from within the Bush administration, effectively hiding any hint of the WMD controversy from within the Bush administration and the scientific community and presented the public instead with the notion that Saddam harbored WMD and posed a threat to the United States.

An example of such coverage is illustrated in Judith Miller's controversial reporting for the *New York Times*. In his article, "Now They Tell Us," Michael Massing points to Judith Miller's almost exclusive focus on official sources as emblematic of how in general "[i]n the period before the war, US journalists were far too reliant on sources sympathetic to the administration. Those with dissenting views—and there were more than a few—were shut out. Reflecting this, the coverage was highly deferential to the White House" (Now 2-3). Essentially, journalists' reliance on official sources, and the deference that came with those sources served as a pass for the US invasion of Iraq, despite the fact that the President's claims for going to war—Saddam's WMD and Iraq's ties to 9/11 and al-queda could not be substantiated with hard evidence.

In Miller's September 8, 2002 story titled "U.S. says Hussein intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts," co-written with Michael Gordon, both Miller and Gordon demonstrate an over-reliance on White House sources and in this way help amplify the government's

case against Saddam Hussein by incriminating him of WMD. They begin their article by

stating that "Iraq has stepped up its quest for nuclear weapons and has embarked on a

worldwide hunt for materials to make an atomic bomb, Bush administration officials said

today" (A 1). They assert that "in the last 14 months, Iraq has sought to buy thousands of

specially designed aluminum tubes, which American officials believe were intended as

components of centrifuges to enrich aluminum." They also note that the appearance of

the tubes "had persuaded American intelligence experts that they were meant for Iraq's

nuclear program." In a telling moment, Miller and Gordon also write that:

"Administration officials also assert that the acquisition of nuclear arms might embolden

Mr. Hussein and increase the chances that he might use chemical or biological weapons."

What is significant in these statements, is Miller and Gordon's exclusive reliance on the

Bush administration for information on Saddam Hussein, along with the unquestioned

assumption that Saddam harbors nuclear capability and intends to use nuclear weapons

against the United States.

Although at times Miller and Gordon acknowledge sources that disagree with this

view, they minimize or trivialize these sources by prioritizing the Bush administration's

framing of Saddam Hussein as a national security threat. For example, Miller and Gordon

note that "[t]aken in its totality, the critics insist that the intelligence suggests there is no

rush to take military action." They then state that:

> The Central Intelligence Agency still says it would take Iraq five to seven
>
> years to make a nuclear weapon if it must produce its own supply of
>
> highly enriched uranium for a bomb, an administration official said.

American intelligence officials believe that Iraq could assemble a nuclear device in a year or somewhat less if it obtained the nuclear material for a bomb on the black market. But they say there are no signs that Iraq has acquired such a supply.

Here, instead of probing further into views that challenge the Bush administration's framing of Iraq as a viable nuclear threat, Miller and Gordon reaffirm the administration's construction of Saddam as a security threat. They write that:

Still, Mr. Hussein's dogged insistence on pursuing his nuclear ambitions, along with what defectors described in interviews as Iraq's push to improve and expand Baghdad's chemical and biological arsenals, have brought Iraq and the United States to the brink of war.

Miller and Gordon then proceed to chronicle Iraq's attempts to procure WMD, bolstering the administration's charges against him as they downplay critics of the President writing:

Those skeptical about the urgency of the threat say Iraq's procurement efforts illustrate how dependent Baghdad is on foreign assistance and the difficulties it is encountering in trying to develop nuclear weapons. But administration hard-liners say that the attempted purchases confirm Mr. Hussein's persistent determination to acquire nuclear weapons and that export controls can slow but not stop that effort.

Both Miller and Gordon then deliberate into great detail on Iraq's history of using chemical weapons in warfare.

By exclusively concentrating on the perspective of White House insiders, Miller and Gordon essentialize Saddam as enemy to such a degree, that any evidence remotely linking him to nuclear and biological weapons deems him guilty of harboring WMD with intent to use them against the United States.

Saddam Hussein as Surrogate for America's Fear of 9/11

Another way that much of the mainstream media helped to write a right wing centrist right wing narrative on the War on Terror that became fixed in the public discourse and therefore difficult to challenge was through the focus on Saddam Hussein as enemy of the United States.

In this context, much of the mainstream media's focus on Saddam as enemy can be understood in terms of Kenneth Burke's theory of unification as outlined in *The Philosophy of Literary Form.* In this book, Burke analyzes Hitler's political strategies for unifying Germany and contends that unification involved the fuhrer's use of a "[*p]rojection* device." Burke defines the projection device as :

> [t]he 'curative' process that comes with the ability to hand over one's ills to a scapegoat, thereby getting purification by dissociation. This was especially medicinal, since the sense of frustration leads to a self-questioning. Hence if one can hand over his infirmities to a vessel, or 'cause,' outside the self, one can battle an external enemy instead of battling an enemy within" (202-203).

In this context, the targeting of Saddam as enemy in the public discourse can be seen as a purification by dissociation where the community via the media projects its feelings of trauma and insecurity over the attacks of 9/11 to a blameable enemy.

An example of such coverage can be found in Christopher Dickey and Evan Thomas' cover story titled "How We Helped Create Saddam And Can We Fix Iraq After He's Gone?" for *Newsweek* in its September 23, 2002 issue. In their chronological overview of US/Iraqi relations, Dickey and Thomas construct a one dimensional view of Saddam Hussein as dictator, strongly making a case for his removal by US forces. Saddam is described as a "murderous thug," "tomorrow's mortal threat," a "Butcher of Baghdad," "the Devil," and a "psychopath" (36).

This one-dimensional framing of the enemy is what Burke warns against in his analysis of Hitler's use of Jews as the "'international' devil" who were made to symbolize the root cause of Germany's economic and social problems. As Burke notes in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, "[o]nce Hitler had thus essentialized his enemy, all 'proof' henceforth is automatic" (194). According to Burke, it is the framing of the Other as enemy that automatically results in evidence against him.

The conventional wisdom that Saddam has not only WMD capabilities, but demonstrates an intent to use them against the United States is a notion that pervades the article and functions in inducing fear of future terrorist attacks in the audience. Dickey and Thomas contend:

> As the Bush administration prepares to oust Saddam, one way or another, senior administration officials are very worried that Saddam will try to use

his WMD arsenal. Intelligence experts have warned that Saddam may be "flushing" his small, easy-to-conceal biological agents, trying to get them out of the country before an American invasion. A vial of bugs or toxins that could kill thousands could fit in a suitcase—or a diplomatic pouch. There are any number of grim end-game scenarios. Saddam could try blackmail, threatening to unleash smallpox or some other grotesque virus in an American city if U.S. forces invaded. Or, like a cornered dog, he could lash out in a final spasm of violence, raining chemical weapons down on U.S. troops, handing out his bioweapons to terrorists" (41).

By constructing Saddam Hussein as a viable threat and appealing to its audience's feelings of fear and helplessness over the 9/11 attacks, Dickey and Thomas construct a narrative that prioritizes Saddam as a national threat.

This narrative which emphasized Saddam Hussein as a national threat, was particularly difficult for journalists to challenge because Saddam Hussein came to symbolize the public's fears and anxieties over the terrorist attacks of 9/11, along with their desire for security. In this respect, Saddam as Evil Other served in unifying the nation towards a common goal—the prevention of future attacks through his eradication. In this respect, challenging the media's framing of Saddam Hussein meant challenging the public's conceptions of terrorism and ultimately probing into larger questions of US foreign policy for the cause behind 9/11.

Identification based on Memorialization of American Victimage

Another way that journalists of the mainstream elite collaborated with the centrist right wing narrative was through the memorialization of American casualties in Iraq that helped foster an almost exclusive identification with American victimage.

From a Burkean perspective, identification is a key component of persuasive discourse and is what motivates human beings to think, feel, and act in given ways. In his book *A Rhetoric of Motives* Burke argues that identification is the cornerstone of the human condition and that identification occurs when people share the same interests or at least are "persuaded to believe so" (20). Burke asserts that identification entails "ambiguities of substance" (21) where human beings are united together while being unique and separate from one another. A key term for Burke here is consubstantiality. As Burke puts it, "[i]n being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another" (21). In this context, Burke contends that "[t]o identify A with B is to make A 'consubstantial' with B" (21).

According to Burke because every human being is distinctly unique and separate from one another, people want to identify and come together and therefore "identification is compensatory to division" (22). An example of how identification for American victimage is induced via the memorialization of American casualties can be seen in a *CBS* documentary titled "Flashpoint: Kimberly Dozier and the Army's Fourth ID—A Story of Bravery Recovery and Lives Forever Changed" anchored by Katie Couric. In

this documentary, Couric tells the story of *CBS* Journalist, Kimberly Dozier who was wounded from a car bomb that killed her accompanying crew—soundman James Brolan and cameraman Paul Douglas as they were covering a story on American soldiers fighting in Iraq.

A key aspect of the document's centrist narrative is that it presents the audience with a strictly Americanist perspective on war as Couric, the narrator, neither explores the issue of Iraqi civilian casualties or questions reasons for the US decision to wage a war in Iraq, effectively diverting viewers' attention way from foreign policy concerns. Couric's coverage centers instead on the deaths of American soldiers in Iraq and its impact on American families. In the first segment of the presentation, Dozier's war injuries play a central role in inducing identification on a national level and thereby framing a narrative of war based on US victimage. Couric and Dozier are filmed walking in the Arlington National Cemetary. Couric begins her interview by telling Dozier, "As someone who covered war for *CBS* Kimberly, this must be especially moving for you." Dozier responds by telling Couric, "For me, when I look at the tombstones I think about..when you're in Baghdad every hour you hear explosions across the city and you know that many of them are hitting American troops and this is where many of them end up […]." In this scene, Couric and Dozier direct their viewers' attention to the deaths of US soldiers, and in this way construct US soldiers as tragic victims of war. By emphasizing the deaths of American soldiers in Iraq, the program appeals to its audience's feelings of sympathy and identification with American suffering and loss of life. The preoccupation for American casualties is further reinforced through Dozier's

retelling and remembrance of the tragic event—the car bomb—that resulted in her

injuries and in the deaths of her colleagues.

This identification is further reinforced in the conversation between Couric and

Dozier:

> C: "Paul Douglas and James Brolan, your camera crew died that day.
>
> When you hear those two names, what do you immediately think of?"
>
> D: "Why are they gone? Why am I here? The sacrifices [sic] were made
>
> that day the team I lost the soldier who was killed…his translator..it
>
> reminds me that this keeps happening."
>
> C: One bomb does have a huge ripple effect.
>
> D: And that was one small bomb. You think how many lives day after day
>
> after day are torn apart..you think how many sacrifices are being made. I
>
> thought I understood that. I didn't really understand it until I lived through
>
> it.
>
> C: Usually cover stories like this and in this case, Kimberly, you became
>
> part of the story D: We set out that day to tell the story of the fourth
>
> infantry division patrol. We're still telling their story. I'm just living it
>
> with them.

Here the memorialization of Dozier's tragedy functions in identifying Dozier's victimage

with that of US soldiers and in effect, making Dozier's experience of the war

consubstantial with the experience of US soldiers. In this context, the documentary's

right of center narrative presents us with a view of the war uniquely sympathetic to US victimage.

In a later segment of the documentary chronicling Dozier's recuperation at a Maryland hospital, Couric interviews Dozier:

> C: I just wondered if you wake up incredulous that you have gone through all that you've gone through?
>
> D: For the first six, seven months, whenever I'd wake up, it would all come back. What had happened, why I was there. How far I had to go before I could get back to normal, back to where I was. And the people I'd lost. The people we all had lost that day.

In this instance, the "we" in Dozier's memorialization of tragedy serves in making Dozier's pain this time, not only consubstantial with that of American soldiers, but consubstantial with the pain of the American public, elevating victimage on a national level.

The Corporatization of Public Opinion

Contrary to the notion of the news media as an integral part of democratic society, which serves in defending the public interest and acting as the watchdog for the average citizen, the compliance of the mainstream media can be understood in terms of its increasing corporate nature.

In his book, *The Problem of the Media*, Robert McChesney condemns what he sees is the corruption of "media policy making" in the US and compares the corporatization of the media to the mafia in *The Godfather II* and points to a scene in the

movie where mafia members meet in Havana to bid for their slice of a pre-Communist

Cuba as the character of Hyman Roth symbolically "doles out" Cuba by giving the

mafia's head members slices of his Birthday cake. McChesney concludes from this scene

that "the gangsters fight among themselves to get the biggest slice of Cuba" and that

"they agree that they alone should own Cuba. So it is with media policy making in the

United States. Massive corporate lobbies duke it out with each other for the largest share

of the cake, but it is their cake" (48). McChesney's example, which on its face might first

seem comically arresting is in actuality, a disturbing parody of our state of affairs

today—the gangster like relationship between the FCC and media conglomerate that

ensures the majority of the nation's news is owned by a small and elite pool of media

giants.

Mark Crispin points to the tendency for the media conglomerates to merge and

grow in size, as they insidiously make their way into American homes. As he describes it,

the situation has become such that:

> the media cartel that keeps us fully entertained and permanently half
>
> informed is always growing here and shriveling there, with certain of its
>
> members bulking up while others slowly fall apart or get digested whole.
>
> But while the players tend to come and go—always with a few
>
> exceptions—the overall Leviathan itself keeps getting bigger, louder,
>
> brighter, forever taking up more time and space, in every street, in
>
> countless homes, in every head. (1)

According to Crispin, the sheer size of the corporate media, stifles competition by subsuming it, leaving the public with a more standardized and monolithic quality of programming, which ultimately poses a threat to public discourse.

The lack of program diversity is largely due to the shrinking number of corporations that own media outlets, revealing a market where the hands of only a few media giants dominate the news. As Ben Bagdikian, predicts in his book, *The Media Monopoly,* media ownership reflects a disturbing trend toward concentrated media ownership. According to Bagdikian, in 1984, 50 corporations owned much of the media. From 1984-1987, the number of corporations owning the media sank from 50 to 26 and in 1990, the number of firms sank to 23 and then fell below 20 in 1993 (xiii). Not surprisingly, today corporate ownership of the media belongs to "the big 5." Media giants such as The Walt Disney Co., GE, Murdoch's New Corp, Time Warner, and Viacom and Bertelsmann own a substantial number of media outlets, and are swaying enormous control on public opinion and debate. Bagdikian's thesis points to the alarming trend that with today's larger, fewer, and more powerful corporations now owning the news, the media market has become the monopoly of a handful of giants.

One of the factors that has succeeded in bringing a significant concentration of media outlets into the hands of still fewer corporations is the emergence of the FCC Telecommunications Act of 1996. The FCC is in large part responsible for the increasing monolithic ownership of media outlets. Although the FCC states that "the goal of this new law is to let anyone enter any communication business—to let any communication business compete in any market against any other" (tele 1) and the 1996 act itself claims

to "promote competition and reduce regulation in order to secure lower prices and higher quality services for American telecommunications consumers," not just anyone is allowed to compete in the market. What the FCC has effectively done is to deregulate the market in order to advantage larger corporations. The result is that smaller businesses are unable to compete at an equal playing field with larger media corporations and are consequently bought out.

In his book *fighting for Air*, Eric Klinenberg points to the downfall of an African American radio station, WRDS, owned by a local businessman, Robert Short as symptomatic of this problem. Klinenberg cites Robert Short's testimony at a media ownership hearing to a US Senate committee as he describes the challenges facing small businesses nation-wide. As Short argued, "'WRDS is a victim of the 1996 Telecommunications Act…It was not my desire to sell WRDS when we did. We sold because… Clear Channel was able to exercise market power with advertisers in a manner with which we were unable to compete'" (61). In many ways, Short's case is typical of the negative impact of 1996 FCC deregulations on small businesses where they are increasingly being bought out to larger and fewer corporate giants.

Prior to the 1996 act, in radio communications, for example, a single company could not own more than 40 stations before the 1996 act. After the 1996 act, giant conglomerates were allowed monopoly licenses, enabling them to own an increasing number of outlets, and today we are faced with a situation where a firm like Clear Channel owns more than 1,200 radio stations today (McChesney 20). Clear Channel which owns over 10% of the nation's stations dominates nearly half of the radio market

share in smaller cities and has an audience of roughly 100 million people—approximately

75% of the American public (Brock 307).

Concentrated media ownership of the radio market is such that giant

conglomerates virtually monopolize all of radio today. In a study of media ownership in

radio done by the Future of Music Coalition in 2003, the coalition uncovered the fact that

nation-wide, ten parent companies own and control radio, and at the local level, media

ownership is even more concentrated with only four firms in control of approximately a

third of radio, Smaller radio markets experience the most consolidation (Toomey 29).

This example of radio consolidation is reflective of the problem facing various

media today at the local and national level. Inevitably, the large concentration of media

outlets in the hands of a few media conglomerates results in an increasingly streamlined

and less diverse coverage of the news which allows for fewer independent voices to be

heard. This streamlining of the news is what Klinenberg describes as the "onslaught of

cookie-cutter content" (15) invading American homes with its sterile, pre-formatted, and

repetitious view of the world daily events. This "one size fits-all" business model of the

news often serves in acting against the public interest in favor of the corporate interest

which takes its lead from the government.

As Ben Bagdikian attests, corporate media pose a serious threat to democracy as

we know it, in that "they suffer from built-in biases that protect corporate power and

consequently weaken the public's ability to understand forces that create the American

scene" (xvii). The public's right to be informed is a right that is endangered under the

increasingly monopolistic practices of corporate media.

Despite the trend toward media consolidation, there is still possibility to reverse the trend and reform our current system. There is a glimmering light in the darkening road ahead. The consequences of the FCC telecommunications act of 1996 is hotly contested today and a growing movement for media reform are clamoring to radically limit the number of outlets large conglomerates can own. Increased regulation of the market would allow a greater number of news organizations to compete, as well as encourage diversity and variety when it comes to the telling of the news (Sparrow 184-185). As McChesney attests in his chapter "The Emerging Struggle for a Free Press" when the FCC decided to move towards further deregulating its rules on ownership in 2003, the public vehemently opposed it and the Senate voted on reversing the FCC deregulation.

Towards a Journalism of Dissent

In this chapter, I have argued that much of the mainstream media today operates under increasingly monolithic cultural and economic constraints which results in the coverage of the news from a standardized "imagined center." This pressure to tell the news from a centrist perspective favorable to the government presents formidable challenges to the press' function as a fourth estate. Although journalists are often limited by economic, political, and cultural factors in their telling of the news, their central purpose remains the same—to function in their ideal capacity as a watchdog and investigate issues and policies of social import and inform the public of their findings so as to defend the public interest. Often this implies that journalists ask people in positions of power questions they don't want to be asked and take risks in their quest for a story.

Their function, thus is to behave independently of people in power. As contributing editor

of the *Columbia Journalism Review,* Douglas McCollam argues, the role of journalists is

to challenge those in power and that "this stance puts journalists directly in the crosshairs

of any ruling cadre, which is just where they should be." What McCollam calls for is "an

active suspicion of concentrated financial and political influence and those who stand to

benefit from it, not the promotion of any particular ideology, cause, or agenda" (27). In

this sense, McCollam argues for an oppositional media that embodies the watchdog

function of journalism.

The media's hesitancy to question the statements of key government officials on

war is what journalist and author of *The Eagle's Shadow,* Mark Hertsgaard calls a "false

patriotism." He argues that:

> It is not our role to revere or applaud the government or the military. Our
>
> role is to inform the public and thereby serve the country" and that "the
>
> government is not the country, and so when you see reporters talking
>
> about 'we' and essentially following the good-guy script, they are […]
>
> betraying the real principles of journalism and American democracy.
>
> ("Television War 7)

If one believes in the premise that democracy depends on journalism's role as a fourth

estate—by providing alternative points of view and that is analytical and reasonably

critical of key issues surrounding war, as a society we can encourage journalists to seek

out narratives outside of the "imagined center." Instead of minimizing, dismissing or

even punishing stories which dissent from the official line, it is my hope that as a society

we can assert a more united front in supporting reporters who explore the oft neglected questions and issues about the war. Newspapers such as the *Oregon Daily Courier* and the *Texas City Sun* (which allegedly fired columnists Dan Guthrie and Tom Gutting for criticizing the President, and then apologized to readers) are classic examples of how the news media, often out of perceived economic constraints, cave in to an imagined public pressure based on a centrist perspective, which in reality may or may not be there. Lastly, by addressing the problem of "false patriotism" in the coverage of the mainstream media, I wish to show the dangers of the culture of conformity that occurs when the media informs the public of war from a nationalistic point of view while remaining hesitant of criticizing or even questioning government policy on the war. The result of such a culture can only be the misinformation and thus misleading of the American public based on a one media/one track vision of the war.

CHAPTER 5: TOWARDS A CONSTRUCTIVE CATHARSIS IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE

9/11: How the Bush Administration Orchestrated our Emotions

This dissertation is based on the assumption that how we perceive tragedy matters. More importantly, how we speak about tragedy and name tragedy matters. How we choose to construct our narratives and act in response to tragedy matters. There is a choice. And that choice first begins with language and the narratives we tell. In her book, *The Presidency and the Rhetoric of Foreign Crisis,* Denise Bostdorff writes that "foreign crisis are not objective, independent entities, but are instead linguistic constructions" (205). In the wake of 9/11, the way President Bush chose to speak about the 9/11 attacks, setting the frame for a centrist right wing narrative would have a direct bearing on American foreign policy, opening the door to US military action in the Middle East. In days following 9/11, the Bush administration moved swiftly to name the attacks an "act of war" and threatened any nations who might resist the United States' efforts to mount a military response. In his September 20, 2001 "Address to a Joint Session of Congress," the President targeted Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan, telling the American public and the International community that "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (Bush Address 20 Sept 2001).

In this dissertation I have argued for a rhetorical theory of catharsis that explains how people and nations respond to pain in times of tragedy. My theory of rhetorical catharsis, which I define as the purgation and projection of trauma onto a victim who serves as the sacrificial vessel for our ills, reveals how catharsis is inextricably tied to the

scapegoat process. The human impulse to inflict pain and damage on others through language is what motivates my own quest to improve the drama of human relations and to be what Robert Ivie calls the "thoroughly rhetorical critic" who is the "productive scholar who enriches the social imaginary for the purpose of enhancing human relations" (Productive 1). It is my hope that by learning how rhetorical catharsis operates in language use, we can rethink the frames we use to speak about tragedy and the trauma that comes with tragedy, and harness the tragic impulse of catharsis, redirecting it to more comic ends so as to prevent further tragedies from happening. This is my aim.

In this chapter, I will argue for an alternative rhetoric to counter the problem of rhetorical catharsis in national life. I draw on Kenneth Burke's theory of the comic corrective and identification. I assert that Burke's corrective offers a way of re-imagining tragedy as something other, and thwarting what he calls "the end of the line" impulse of tragedy to scapegoat the Other in public discourse. Through the comic corrective, I argue for a revision of the center-right narrative on the War on Terror which would move the country away from a tragic frame towards war and vicarious redemption in Iraq, to a more pragmatist, self-reflexive, and ultimately socially responsible mode of speaking and acting in the world.

By turning to Burke's theory of identification, I argue that identification based on shared interests with the Other can help us see human beings, events and issues in a more complex and sympathetic light. Rather than communicate through what Burke contends are moments of "bad identification" (Attitudes 267), which he argues occurs when people identify with "the reigning symbols of authority" that are hostile to their well-being, I

draw on Burke's concept of "identification of interests" (Rhetoric Motives 46) and argue

that identification based on the revision of what constitutes a viable interest for the public

good can help facilitate a richer, more diverse way of communicating with the Other.

My perspective on catharsis stems from my own experience as a French American

growing up as a child in the United States during the school year, and in Quebec during

the summers and from my experience teaching and living overseas in the Czech Republic

and Japan. These experiences helped me to see the world from a different cultural

perspective and broadened my understanding of how both small and large nations

respond to pain in times of national trauma.

How Language Works in Times of Tragedy

Living in the Czech Republic, a country that had experienced a storm of political

bloodletting in the wake of Hitler's invasion of the Sudetenland in 1938 and the March

takeover of Prague in 1939, as well as the later Communist coup d'etat of 1948 and

Soviet invasion and occupation of the Czech republic in 1968, was an experience that

opened my eyes to the deeply tragic nature of the history of Eastern Europe and

explained the feelings of intense hatred many Czechs felt for both Russia and Germany.

This hatred, I quickly came to understand, was rooted in the Czech peoples' trauma of

having lived under Nazi and Communist rule.

After my experience living and teaching English in the Czech Republic, I moved

to Japan and taught English for the *JET* program, and it was here that I witnessed the

yearly angst of Japanese high school teachers during the annual entrance ceremonies as

many struggled with the Board of Education with issues such as whether or not to salute

Japan's national flag, the hinomaru and sing the national anthem called the kimigayo.

This debate, I witnessed, reflected largely the ambivalence many Japanese felt towards

their nation's history in Asia, especially in China and Korea, as well as Japan's own

uneasy history and alliance with the US. When I came back from Japan in the summer of

2001, and soon experienced like the rest of the nation the shock and horror and terror

over the attacks of 9/11, my perspective on what had happened to us that day and why

was irrevocably marked by my experience living in the Czech Republic and in Japan, and

in having seen the world from the Czech and Japanese perspective. Later Chalmers

Johnson's book *Blowback* opened my eyes in ways, I believe now looking back, would

not have been possible had I not been living in Eastern Europe and in Asia. Johnson's

contention is that starting in 1937, the Japanese invasion of China, particularly in the

North of China (presumably Nanking), had resulted in the barbaric treatment of the

Chinese of such horrifying proportion that the invasion, in effect, worked to spur Chinese

support for the Communist party (xiii). Johnson's claim made absolute sense to me and

helped prompt my thinking about rhetorical catharsis, about how people and nations who

have experienced great harm often respond to pain in kind by choosing sides—regimes or

ideologies—that ensure the radical and absolute destruction of the Other.

My theory of rhetorical catharsis is a pragmatic attempt to explain how language

works in times of national tragedy. By understanding how catharsis is inextricably tied to

the scapegoat process, I hope to shed light on how tragedy and the trauma that comes

with tragedy impacts people and public policy. My theory is dark indeed. Yet beneath

the darkness lies the small, shining possibility of hope. It is my belief that if we revisit

our understanding of catharsis from the perspective of the scapegoat process, we will do greater good to our planet, which day by day suffers from the increasing carnage of war that is the result of catharsis. The history of human wars is, in effect, the history of rhetorical catharsis in action.

The Problem of Fundamentalism in Bush's Rhetoric of War

But before I discuss how we can mitigate the impetus towards violence which is so prevalent in catharsis, I must first point to the role that the language of terror and hyperbole, that is, the role that fundamentalist language plays in inciting the victimage and collective violence against the Other. In this regard, President Bush, a self-proclaimed born-again Christian who converted to Methodism and renounced alcohol at the age of 40 (Wallis 139) and was once overheard by Ken Herman of the *Houston Post* telling his mother in 1993 that "there is no place in heaven for anyone who does not accept Jesus Christ as a personal savior" (frontline), is a walking testament to the pernicious effects of mixing fundamentalism with politics as he invokes God to his side and thus on the side of the nation and frames the narrative of the war from a Manichean perspective of good versus evil.

In this regard, the President's rhetoric of war presents us with a formidable problem. In his book, *Bush at War*, Bob Woodward describes a private conversation in which the President told him that he hated Kim Jong II (Bush 340). According to Woodward Bush stated, "It is visceral. Maybe it's my religion, maybe it's my—but I feel passionate about this" and that he was told "we don't need to move too fast, because the financial burdens on people will be so immense if we try to—if this guy were to topple.

Who would take care of—I just don't buy that. Either you believe in freedom, and want

to—and worry about the human condition, or you don't." Bush then added, "And I feel

that way about the people of Iraq" (Bush 340).

Bush's statement here is representative of the problem of rhetorical catharsis in

action. In his conversation with Woodward, the President divides the world into us vs.

them; those who believe in freedom and those who don't, and demonstrates a binary view

of the world that incites military intervention against "them," regardless of the political or

economic costs. Post 9/11, such a world view opens the door to a contagion of violence

and retaliation in foreign policy where it is not enough to purify and invade one country

in the name of "freedom," one must go looking for surrogate victims elsewhere.

In many ways, the Bush administration's narrative of freedom versus tyranny and

calls for extreme retaliation worked in silencing alternative viewpoints outside of the war

frame and reflects what David Domke argues is a "political fundamentalism" based on

the use of "language and communication approaches that were structurally grounded in a

conservative religious outlook but were political in content and application" (6). It is this

fundamentalism—its emphasis on binaries, absolute authority, and fear of the Other—

that set the perimeters for the War on Terror, discouraging dissent through an "us vs.

them" mindset that quickly relegated any disagreeing voices as un-American and

therefore out of the mainstream.

The problem with the President's fundamentalist language is that it is a deeply

tragic language that belies an either/or, all or nothing approach towards life, reducing

many of the world's most complicated questions down to the simplest of terms and

invoking an exaggerated fear of the Other. It is a mentality based on a hubris of empire and therefore stripped of humility. In the week following 9/11, the Bush administration responded to the attacks of 9/11 in the language of surreal and excessive retribution. From the White House, the President told the public that "people have declared war on America and they have made a terrible mistake" and that "[m]y administration has a job to do and we're going to do it. We will rid the world of evil-doers" (Perez-Rimas 1). Secretary of State Colin Powell said that Afghanistan would have to hand over Osama bin Laden, arguing that "[t]hey will have to make their choice whether they want to be on the receiving end of the full wrath of the United States and others, or whether they want to get rid of this curse that they have within their country." He then added, "[y]ou either respond and rip them up, help us rip them up, get rid of them, or you will suffer consequences" (Perez-Rimas 3). By labeling the terrorists as "evil-doers" and threatening to "rip" and "rid" the world of them, both the President and Powell invoked a language of tragedy drawing on a right wing fundamentalist narrative that asserts a violence that takes on a life of its own. Such violence reflects an "end of the line" thinking that moves towards the absolute and excessive destruction of the scapegoat.

The Comic Corrective As Antidote to Tragedy

Now, where do we go from here? How do we cope with the problem of rhetorical catharsis in language? How do we redirect the violent impulse of catharsis towards more peaceful and constructive means of alleviating national pain? How do we break free from the cycle of violence and retaliation that is so pervasive in language use? How do we revise the Bush administration's current authoritarian narrative of war?

Burke's concern for the cycle of victimage in public life reveals an overwhelming concern for the problem of tragedy and scapegoating in language use. It is for this reason much of my work draws on Kenneth Burke and his theory of the comic corrective, which offers us a way of rethinking our own language use and our complicit participation in entrenched and absolutist narratives that stifle possibilities for improving communication.

As many of Burke's critics have noted, Burke's entire philosophy of life and views towards language use are largely reflected in his theory of the comic corrective. John McGowan writes of Burke that "[h]e places his faith instead in transformation—that the comic metamorphosis he most devoutly wishes would render the tragedy of war into the comedy of a peace that has plenty of verbal sparring, parody, satire, wit, and debate" (44). James Kastely observes that Burke demonstrates a great anxiety over how conflict is dealt with in the tragic frame. As he puts it:

> Burke does not see the clash of perspectives as necessarily benign, or
> productive, but as always threatening to move to a point at which there
> will be a violent intervention to bring an order to the conflicting
> perspectives. He hopes for the muddle, always recognizing the dangers of
> an emerging efficiency of explanation. It is the ever-presence of tragedy
> that makes comedy an imperative for Burke. (312)

For Burke, the tendency of tragedy to purify order in ultimate terms through the symbolic sacrifice of the scapegoat poses serious existential problems. For if violence and victimage lay in the wake of tragedy, what hope is there for the human race? According to Burke, hope lies in the comic frame where people might learn to speak and frame

conflict in less final and absolute language. The comic frame warns us against

perfectionist storylines that reduce many of life's problems to "us vs. them" narratives

and urges us to turn to more skeptical, inquisitive, and responsible ways of speaking and

framing our problems.

In many ways, Burke's interest in the comic corrective stems from Burke's own

anxiety about the stories we tell and people's inability to resolve conflict peacefully.

Instead of using vocabulary that expresses reality in stark white and black, either/or

terms, the comic frame cautions us against totalizing discourses of any kind (166) and

teaches us to better deal with "ambivalence" in language. As Burke puts it,

"ambivalence" is what:

> avoids the dangers of euphemism that go with the more heroic frames of
>
> epic and tragedy. And therefore it avoids the antithetical dangers of
>
> cynical debunking, that paralyze social relationships by discovering too
>
> constantly the purely materialistic ingredients in human effort. The comic
>
> frame is charitable, but at the same time it is not gullible. (Attitudes 106-
>
> 107)

For Burke, the ultimate goal of the comic corrective is to "enable people *to be observers*

of themselves, while acting. Its ultimate would not be passiveness, but maximum

consciousness. One would "transcend" himself by noting his own foibles" (171).

According to Burke, the comic corrective teaches us to see human beings as "*necessarily*

mistaken" and not "vicious" (Attitudes 41). While the tragic frame teaches us that human

weakness is an evil to be expulsed from the social body through the scapegoat, the comic

frame asks us to see human beings as flawed, but not intrinsically evil, and therefore teaches us to respond to people and situations in less drastic and more measured ways.

As opposed to the totalizing discourse of tragedy, which inevitably leads to the downfall of the protagonist, comedy calls for humility in language and therefore gives us the possibility for revising our mistakes and improving our situation and relations with others.

The hope that the comic corrective provides lies in its lesson of humility. As Rueckert writes, according to Burke, comedy teaches us:

> that every insight contains its own blindness, and so works against arrogance and pride, against believing that one is always right and has the right to be right and impose it on others. Comedy teaches humility (we are all sometimes mistaken, foolish, wrong, wrongheaded) because in realizing our errors (and correcting them) and in being able to laugh at ourselves we realize that we are not better than everyone else, but just like everyone else in some ways. Comedy promotes integrative, socializing knowledge. Why is comedy so civilized? Well, for one thing, people do not kill and victimize each other or commit suicide in comedies, as they do in tragedies; people are not punished in comedy but corrected by dialogue and dialectic. (Encounters 117-118)

In comedy, the positive aspect of being flawed or weak is that we have the possibility to revise our errors and turn things around, whereas the tragic frame leaves the protagonist no such option because he is seen as irretrievably fallen.

The Trickster as Social Critic: Michael Moore's Response to Bush

One way that the comic perspective allows us to correct ourselves is through the image of the trickster, who in many cultures functions as a sacred figure in myth or folklore, upsetting social norms and creating havoc for those around him. The trickster, as a buffoon known for his dual and subversive nature, is emblematic of the comic principle and an important figure in voicing dissent and healing public discourse from the scapegoating tendencies of the tragic frame. Because he speaks in a language antithetical to the tragic frame, the trickster offers an alternative voice and helps sharpen the understanding of people by upsetting social norms and forcing society to face its undesirable ills. In this context, the trickster functions as a social critic whose task it is to question people in positions of power (encyc ix-xv). It is this function in particular that I contend is most conducive to interrupting the tendency of scapegoating in language. In his book *Trickster Makes this World*, Hyde Lewis describes the trickster's skill in exposing to light what is hidden from the public eye. He calls the trickster a "boundary-crosser" who lives at the periphery of society. He is the great disrupter, dismantler, disobeyer of convention whom Hyde claims is "the creative idiot" and as such "the wise fool." His wily talent lies in his ability to make things happen. Hyde explains,"[w]here someone's sense of honorable behavior has left him unable to act, [a] trickster will appear to suggest an amoral action, something right/wrong that will get life going again" (7). The trickster as "boundary-crosser" is also one who at times can, as Hyde contends, "create[] a boundary, or bring[] to the surface a distinction previously hidden from sight"

(7). The trickster's ability to bypass the unstated and unspoken rules of the mainstream make him uniquely qualified to critique his society and thus a crucial voice of dissent.

One way that the trickster employs language to critique his society is through use of dramatic irony, which entails the audience's cognizant understanding of the discrepancy between a speaker's words or actions that the speaker is unaware of. Dramatic irony as such works as an antidote to the problem that Burke calls "naïve verbal realism," (Language 5) that is, the tendency for people to take words literally, instead of taking word in their actual context, which is central to irony.

According to Barry Brummett, the dramatic irony of comedy exposes the hypocrisy of people by showing an audience the inconsistencies between what people say they do, versus what they really do. As he puts it, dramatic irony occurs when:

> audience members are placed in a position where they see behind the façade of the sins and errors that bedevil the fool. Comedy strips away the 'mystifications' in which people hide their guilt, for instance, by showing a pompous judge sneaking a quick and guilty drink in chambers between sessions. It shows that people's announced ends and their actual means are never consonant with each other. (Burkean 219-220).

Seeing the discrepancies between words and actions helps eliminate the problem of naïve verbal realism, which occurs, as Burke writes, when "linguistic usage itself can be confused with a state of nature" (Language 421), and people misunderstand the meaning of words and therefore misunderstand reality.

In current American culture, Michael Moore provides us with one such example of tricksterly dissent as he uses dramatic irony as a vehicle for self-criticism. His comic criticism of the Bush White House and its War on Terror helps bring to the surface the disconnect between people's words and actions (especially the Bush administration's), and therefore works to counter the problem of naïve verbal realism in public discourse.

In his movie *fahrenheit 9/11*, which won Best Picture at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival, Moore shows footage that reveals discrepancies in how the Bush administration represents itself and the war in Iraq. Scenes such as eggs being thrown at the President's limousine during his inauguration, or of Congress refusing to inquire into allegations of fraud of the black vote in Florida's 2000 election, or of Moore's interview about the bin Laden family with a retired FBI agent, Jack Cloonan, all function to bring to the surface many of the most obvious inconsistencies of the Bush White House. Because these inconsistencies remained virtually invisible in the mainstream media's coverage of the White House and the war, to a large extent, they did not enter the public debate on the war. As *MSNBC* political analyst Bill Press told Howard Kurtz, "I think one of the strengths of the movie is that Moore shows some video that I have never seen before. I think most Americans haven't" (CNN Reliable). Moore's ability to show his audiences controversial footage rarely seen by the American public reflects a use of dramatic irony that acts in exposing key contradictions of the Bush White House, therefore subverting the Bush administration's representation of itself and the war in Iraq.

In a 2004 interview with Bill O'Reilly, Moore invokes this use of dramatic irony as he attacks the fact that the US went to war based on false pretenses, and makes this an

issue of debate, thereby confronting the American public with the problem of naïve

verbal realism. In his interview, Moore claims that Bush lied to the nation over Iraq's

harboring of WMD, whereas O'Reilly argues that Bush simply acted on false

information:

> M: Oh, he lied to the nation, Bill, I can't think of a worse thing to do for a
>
> president to lie to a country to take them to war, I mean, I don't know a
>
> worse—

O: It wasn't a lie.

M: He did not tell the truth, what do you call that?

O: I call that bad information, acting on bad information—not a lie.

M: A seven year old can get away with that—

O: Alright, your turn to ask me a question—

M: 'Mom and Dad it was just bad information'—

O: I'm not going to get you to admit it wasn't a lie, go ahead

M: It was a lie, and now, which leads us to my question (Drudge 2)

In this context, Moore uses dramatic irony to show the disconnect between the Bush

administration's words and actions. He attacks the President's claims of WMD and calls

it a lie, whereas O'Reilly interprets it as "acting on bad information." These two opposing

views work in forcing the audience to consider the fact that the nation was taken to war

based on false pretenses. When Moore compares the President's defense of his actions to

a seven year old blaming his bad behavior on "bad information," he makes O'Reilly

appear to be the dupe of naïve verbal realism, taking too seriously the words of the

Bush's administration, whose rhetoric doesn't match up to its actions.

Later in the interview, when Moore asks O'Reilly why he thinks American

soldiers were killed in Iraq, Moore forces his audience to confront the contradictions in

O'Reilly's answer as he first claims the US invaded Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from

power and then reverts to the argument of WMD:

M: Over 900 of our brave soldiers dead. What do you say to their parents?

O: What do I say to their parents? I say what every patriotic American would

say. We are proud of your sons and daughters. They answered the call their

country gave them. We respect them and we feel terrible that they were killed

M: And, but what were they killed for?

O: They were removing a brutal dictator who himself killed hundreds of

thousands of people.

M: Um, but that was not the reason that was given to them to go to war, to

remove a brutal dictator

O: Well we're back to the weapons of mass destruction.

M: But that was the reason

O: The weapons of mass destruction

M: That we were told we were under some sort of imminent threat

O: That's right

M: And there was no threat, was there?

O: It was a mistake

M: Oh, just a mistake, and that's what you tell all the parents with a deceased

child, 'We're sorry.' I don't think that is good enough. (2)

The fact that Moore forces O'Reilly to admit that the government's reasons for going to

war—based on WMD that weren't there—was a "mistake" resulting in the deaths of over

900 soldiers, raises questions about government culpability for the deaths of American

soldiers in Iraq and reveals a moral disconnect between the government and the public.

In a similar rhetorical move, Moore asks O'Reilly if he would be willing to send his own

children to war in Iraq:

M: Are you against that? Stopping this war?

O: No, we cannot leave Iraq right now, we have to—

M: So you would sacrifice your child to secure Fallujah? I want to hear you say

that.

O: I would sacrifice myself—

M: Your child—Its Bush sending the children there.

O: I would sacrifice myself.

M: You and I don't go to war, because we're too old—

O: Because if we back down, there will be more deaths and you know it.

M: Say 'I Bill O'Reilly would sacrifice my child to secure Fallujah"

O: I'm not going to say what you say, you're a, that's ridiculous

M: You don't believe that. Why should Bush sacrifice the children of people

across America for this? (3)

Here Moore turns the tables on O'Reilly and exposes the irrationality of O'Reilly's

defense of war. O'Reilly's inability to admit he would sacrifice his own child

demonstrates an inconsistency in his defense of war, forcing the audience to confront

larger questions regarding the legitimacy of the war in general.

Moore's use of dramatic irony to expose illogical inconsistencies in O'Reilly's

defense of war help to undercut the Bush administration's case for going to war by

forcing the American public to confront the incongruity between the government's

representation of the war and the reality of the war itself. In this sense, Moore's use of

black humor as a comic corrective serves in questioning the absolutist framing of the war

and making the invisible visible and forcing society to confront the problem of naïve

verbal realism in discourse.

Towards a Complex Identification Based on the Comic Corrective

In Chapter Two, I explore rhetorical catharsis in literary tragedies. In this

section, I turn once again to literature to explore moments in which the scapegoat process

was critiqued in the course of the tragedy. I begin with the example of the fool in

Shakespeare's *King Lear* whose skeptical and wily identification with the King

represents the comic response to tragedy and serves in providing at least in part, a way of

overcoming the simplification of motive. The play's action begins when the King of

Britain decides to partition his kingdom among his three daughters, Goneril, Regan and

Cordelia. As part of the contract, the King asks his daughters for their proclamations of

love and becomes furious when Cordelia refuses, and as a result, ousts her from the

kingdom. When Kent, Lear's faithful servant, defends Cordelia and asks the King to

recant, he too is banished from court, only to reappear disguised as Caius**,** a poor man, seeking work in the King's court.

We are soon after introduced to the fool who functions as the voice of dissent in the play. It is the fool's complex identification with Lear, which allows him to question and scrutinize Lear's decision to divide his estate between Goneril and Regan and to banish Cordelia from his kingdom. When Lear is tricked by Kent into hiring him for his services, the fool enters the scene:

> Fool. Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb. *Offering Kent his cap.*
>
> Lear. How now, my pretty knave! How dost thou?
>
> Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.
>
> Kent. Why, fool?
>
> Fool. Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour. Nay, and thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou' lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow hath banished two on's daughters, and done the third a blessing against his will—if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. [To Lear] How now, nuncle? Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters! (Bloom 80).

It is the fool's very difference, which enables him to identify outside of the familiar and effectively communicate with Lear. Essentially, the fool belittles Lear for so blindly reducing Cordelia's motives and scapegoating her in the play. In this scene, the fool pinpoints what's at the heart of the problem in the play—Lear's judgment as King—his reckless decision to throw away his kingdom so to speak, placing himself at the financial

and emotional mercy of his daughters, Goneril and Regan while thwarting his most prized of all relations with his daughter, Cordelia. The fool in this way speaks reason and common sense to Lear's rash political decision.

The fool's status as fool enables him to speak frankly, performing his civic duty to the court. It is important to note that throughout the play, it is the fool who scathingly rebukes the king with his biting humor. It is the fool who constantly reminds the King of his mistakes, attacking the very weakness of his character. The fool thus is the only character in the play unafraid to speak the truth to his King (with the exception of Kent) and he is unpunished for it.

Not only then does the fool serve the King by telling him the truth, but he also serves him as he attempts to teach Lear how to use language for political survival and identify with people, situations, and ideas in more critical and temperate ways. As the fool tells him:

> Have more than thou showest,
>
> Speak less than thou knowest,
>
> Lend less than thou owest,
>
> Ride more than thou goest,
>
> Learn more than thou trowest,
>
> Set less than thou throwest;
>
> Leave thy drink and thy whore,
>
> And keep in-a-door,
>
> And thou shalt have more

Than two tens to a score (81).

Here the fool cautions the King against assuming an all or nothing mindset, advising instead, restraint and moderation. His suggestions to Lear are essentially, prescriptive correctives aimed in helping the King measure himself both in his use of language and in his identification with others. As the fool shrewdly sees, the flaw in Lear's character stems from his absolutist use of language, and it is this use of language the fool attempts to mediate. As Harold Bloom writes Lear is "[o]utrageously hyperbolical" and "always demands more love than can be given (within the limitations of the human), and so he scarcely can speak without crossing into the realms of the unsayable" (24). Lear's penchant for the absolute, his all-consuming tendencies in both his speech and actions are what the fool reprimands.

At the same time that the fool rebukes the King for his hyperbole, he acts as a check to the King's alter ego, meeting hubris with humility. After Lear angrily quarrels with Goneril who insists he curtail the number of knights at his service, Lear comes to the painful realization that he has mistreated Cordelia. Lear tells the fool, "I did her wrong"— to which the fool banters:

> Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?
>
> Lear. No
>
> Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.
>
> Lear. Why?
>
> Fool. Why, to put's head in, not to give it away to his daughters and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature—So kind a father!—Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more

than seven is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

Lear. To take't again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy

time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise. (89-90).

The fool's humility is expressed in the fact that the fool is well aware of Lear's weakness

as King—his tendency to do himself in through language, and yet the fool continues to

accept Lear. The fool sees Lear's reasoning as flawed, but not evil, and persists in

confronting him with his ill use of language. It is significant to note, however, that

despite the fool's constant criticism of the King, he embraces and accepts him as he is.

Throughout the play, the fool maintains his relationship with Lear, whereas Goneril and

Regan have cut him off. In this context, the fool's acceptance of Lear serves as a lesson

on humility in and of itself, and functions in teaching Lear how to accept difference in

others while using language in less absolutist terms—a departure radically different from

Lear's previous treatment of Cordelia as demonstrated in Lear's unrealistic demands on

and his subsequent rejection of her. Because the fool in the play serves in confronting the

King with his mistakes, the fool serves as a corrective to the King's foolish behavior. In

this sense, the fool represents the spirit of humility, which reveals how we are all flawed, though not fallen and therefore open to revision and correction.

What we see in the fool of King Lear is a comic response to tragedy. For Lear, every instance with the fool is a lesson in using language wisely and identify with others in more critical and diverse ways. The fool who speaks the truth to the king and functions as the voice of dissent in the play, critiquing the king of his follies while embracing his person, is emblematic of the comic spirit as he attempts to teach Lear how to use language in Burkean terms as "an equipment for living" and therefore as a means of improving human communication. The fool's ability to favor dialectic over violence, to use humor over anger, and self-reflexivity instead of reckless decision-making reveals the comic means for dealing with tragedy in public discourse.

In this sense, it is my contention that Burke's theory of identification through the comic corrective offers us a potential antidote to the problem of rhetorical catharsis in language use. Catharsis, which involves a community's purging and projection of trauma in language leading to the vicarious victimage of the Other in public life, is inextricably tied to the scapegoat process. Because communities experiencing catharsis are apt to heap blame on the Other in times of national crisis, they are less prone to self-criticism and rational decision making. Identification through the comic corrective provides us with a means of intervening in the scapegoat process, so that we can confront our weaknesses and inconsistencies more honestly, darkly laughing at them as we attempt to start over again.

In this dissertation, I have set forth a theory of rhetorical catharsis to explain the impact of tragedy on language use and public policy. I have argued that catharsis is essentially the purging and projection of trauma through language leading to the scapegoating of the Other in public life. I have argued that Burke's theory of identification through the comic corrective offers a means of mediating the pernicious effects of catharsis in public discourse. I have shown that the comic perspective, through the trickster's use of dramatic irony as a form of social critique, allows an audience to see the discrepancy between a speaker's words and actions and therefore exposes illogical contradictions to the light of day. In this sense, the comic frame works as a counter to the problem of naïve verbal realism in public discourse, allowing us to better see language for what it means in the reality of the here and now.

My study of how rhetorical catharsis operates in literature, Presidential rhetoric and the news media is an attempt to explain how communities experiencing tragedy use language to name people and entire nations as the scapegoat for their ills. In literature, I have argued that trauma is a key component in the scapegoat process. Underlying my argument is the notion that trauma is mimetic. In this context, a single act of violence—the tragic event of the play—results in the trauma of the protagonist, lending itself to further acts of violence that are amplified and reproduced on the stage.

In my study of Presidential rhetoric, I have argued that in many of his speeches on Iraq, President Bush calls the nation to war by using "freedom" as a means of redeeming the nation for failing to prevent the tragedy of 9/11. In order to make this argument, I draw on Kenneth Burke's guilt/purification/redemption paradigm and assert that Bush

enacts a drama of redemption in which the nation purifies guilt and atones for guilt through the symbolic sacrifice of Iraq.

In the rhetoric of the mainstream media, I assert that after 9/11, much of the mainstream media was hesitant to question or appear critical of the Bush administration's position for war in Iraq, and therefore privileged the President's arguments on war, covering the news on war in Iraq from an "imagined center" that led to a standardization of news coverage based on the Bush administration's perspective on war in Iraq. The result was an official media story line that was legitimized and sanctioned by many at the elite levels of the media who set the tone of the coverage, and it is this storyline that became difficult for many journalists to compete against. As a consequence, many journalists participated in the reification, reproduction, and recycling of the government's case for war, and in this way helped garner public support for war in Iraq. Because I explore how rhetorical catharsis operates in the rhetoric of literature, presidential address, and the media, my research thus has implications for studies of language use in rhetoric, psychology, anthropology, political science, media and communication studies, rhetoric, literature, religious studies and cognitive linguistics.

Further Questions and Research to Consider

My ultimate concern in this dissertation is for the health and betterment of civic society. Because the aim of my research is to foster an understanding for how rhetorical catharsis functions in language use, my theory of rhetorical catharsis opens the door to research on the impact of tragedy on language and public policy. In literature, my research paves the way for studying how trauma is a key component in the scapegoat

process. In this regard, further work can be done in exploring how trauma functions in the scapegoat process in Greek literature, Shakespeare and Jacobean drama as well as modern tragic dramas. At the same time, my research in literature opens the door to how the comic corrective in literature operates as a means of redirecting catharsis and acting as a check on the ubiquitous effects of catharsis on language use.

In presidential rhetoric, my research opens the way for studying the scapegoat mechanism in Bush's rhetoric of freedom and democracy, and provides further opportunities for exploring how national leaders choose to speak and respond to pain in tragedy and thus frame the language of war. In this context, Robert Ivie who has studied the impact of metaphor on presidential rhetoric, and scholars such as Paul Chilton, Robin Lakoff, George Lakoff, who have explored the impact of metaphor on public policy, have done much in contributing to an understanding for how language shapes reality. Such work, studied alongside the genocide scholarship of Samantha Powers and Philip Gourevitch can help uncover still further the impact of metaphor and key tropes on public policy and thus lend insight into how persuasive language functions in general, particularly in wartime.

The problems in the mainstream media's war coverage on Iraq invites further research on the corporate and cultural constraints many journalists experience working within the infrastructure of the mainstream media. More specifically, journalistic pressures to tell the news from an "imagined center" that leads to the standardization of news coverage, essentially reiterating the government's position on war, is another area of fruitful study. Because trauma and tragedy often touch on issues related to nation-

building and ideology, one fascinating area in need of further exploration, for example,

concerns the International and US mainstream media coverage of key controversies such

as Falluja, the Downing Street Memo, and Abu Ghraib. Susan Moeller's project *Media

Coverage of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, which compares American and British media

coverage of WMDs, is a fine example of the kind of cross-cultural analysis that is being

done now. In addition, further research on the press' reaction to the rhetoric of the Bush

administration during Katrina as compared to the war in Iraq would be a fascinating area

of study to pursue and would help uncover a deeper understanding of the press' role as a

fourth estate. To a certain extent, Eric Boehlert's article "Katrina Jolts the Press" for

Salon touches on this question, as well as Sidney Blumenthal's book *How Bush Rules*,

yet more work can be done in this line of study.

Ultimately, my theory of rhetorical catharsis in public discourse opens up

possibilities for further research on the comic corrective as it can be applied to the

rhetoric of peace as opposed to war, in order to help redirect catharsis towards a more

constructive response to tragedy. Although Edward Appel's "The Rhetoric of Dr. Martin

Luther King Jr.:Comedy and Context in Tragic Collision," Carlson's "Gandhi and the

Comic Frame: 'Ad bellum purificandum,'" and Arnie Madsen's "The Comic Frame as a

Corrective to Bureaucratization: a Dramatistic Perspective on Argumentation" address

this issue, further work can be done in terms of exploring how the humility invoked by

the comic corrective operates in the rhetoric of national figures such as Archbishop

Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Jane Addams and

Martin Luther King, Jr.

In this dissertation, I have argued that how we speak about tragedy and the trauma that comes with tragedy matters. There are ways of speaking about the unspeakable, the unimaginable; the rockhard zone of grief, anger, and confusion that is trauma. There are ways of speaking about trauma that may help redirect the self-destructive potential of catharsis.

In this respect, my dissertation is an attempt to understand how language works in times of national tragedy, how language makes possible the victimage and scapegoating of collective groups of people and often entire nations. Instead of turning to narratives of tragedy that move towards war and the search for vicarious victims, let us move towards more comic narratives so that we can prevent the need for victimage in language and learn to better get along through our choice of words. In this respect, Burke's theory of the comic corrective offers us strategies for improving human communication in ways that would direct the country away from a tragic frame towards war and vicarious redemption in Iraq, to a more comic one. As Allen Carter observes:

> Burke hopes that we learn to take responsibility for our freedom. He
> accepts the fact that language itself furnishes many of our motives, but he
> does not resign himself to the suspicion that there is nothing to be done.
> Though we cannot break from the circle of words, we can choose our
> words more carefully. Though we cannot resist telling multidimensional
> stories, we can tell more benevolent stories. If guilt and a concomitant
> search for scapegoats, then the need to choose our surrogates more self-
> consciously. If we have to blame someone, let us start by blaming

ourselves for participating so blindly in the scapegoat process; then let us

proceed to determine crimes and punishments more humanely and more

fairly. Burke urges us to see from the vantage point of the victim, and,

though this be "one devil of a difficult task," to be guided by love rather

than by hate. (136)

Carter's insight into Burke's philosophy of language use reflects my own hope that we

can learn to use language to tell our stories in more responsible and self-critical ways and

find better strategies for coping with guilt and pain.

World renowned leaders such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela,

Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Jane Addams, and Martin Luther King Jr. are all

examples of figures in history who strove to speak responsibly about pain, who refused to

take part in the ritual of vicarious victimage so pivotal to the scapegoat by showing

restraint, humility, and even respect to their antagonists. What set these leaders apart

from many others is their general refusal to brand their foes as irreconcilably evil so as to

eliminate them. Rather than follow a tragic frame of discourse, these leaders sought

instead to use language wisely and redemptively. Perhaps we can aim to do the same.

WORKS CITED

Abdulla, Adnan. *Catharsis in Literature.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread Of Nationalism.* New York: Verso, 1983.

Aristotle. *Rhetoric and On Poetics.* Trans. W. Rhys Roberts. Pennsylvania: The Franklin Library, 1981.

Aristotle. Trans. SH Butcher. *Poetics.* Ed., Stanley Appelbaum. Dover Publications: 1997.

Arrowsmith, William. Introduction to Orestes. 186-191. *The Complete Greek Tragedies.* Vol IV. Eds., David Grene and Richard Lattimore. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1958.

Bagdikian, Ben. *The New Media Monopoly.* Boston: Beacon Press, 2004.

Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare's king lear.* New York: The Berkeley Publishing Group, 2005.

Bobbitt, David. *The Rhetoric of Redemption: Kenneth Burke's Redemption Drama and Martin Luther King, Jr's 'I have a Dream' Speech.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004.

Booth, Wayne. *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism.* U of Chicago P, 1979.

Boehlert, Eric. *Lapdogs: How the Press Rolled Over for Bush.* New York: Free Press, 2006.

Bostdorff, Denise. *The Presidency and the Rhetoric of Foreign Crisis.* Columbia: U of South Carolina Press, 1994.

Brodsky, Joseph. "Nobel Lecture." Nobel Prize.org. 8 Dec. 1987.

> http://nobelprize.org/nobel-prizes/literature/laureates/1987/brodsky-lecture-e.html

Brummett, Barry. "Burkean Comedy and Tragedy, Illustrated in Reactions to the

> Arrest of John Delorean" Central States Speech Journal, 35 (Winter 1984):

> 217-224.

Burke, Anthony. "Freedom's Freedom: American Enlightenment and

> Permanent War." Social Identities. 11.4. (July 2005). 315-343.

Burke, Kenneth. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and*

> *Method.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1966.

--. *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1969.

---. *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology.* 1961. Berkeley: U of

> California P, 1970.

---. "Catharsis—Second View." 107-131.

---. "On Catharsis, Or Resolution." *The Kenyon Review*. XX1.3. Summer 1959: 337-375.

---. *Poetics, Dramatistically Considered.*

---. *A Symbolic of Motives*.

---. *A Grammar of Motives.* 1945. Berkeley: U of California P, 1969.

---. *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose.* 1935. 3rd rev. ed., Berkeley:

> U of California P, 1954.

.---. *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action.* 1941.3rd ed., Berkeley:

> U of California P, 1973.

---. "Catharsis—Second View." *The Centennial Review of Arts and Sciences.* 5 (1961):

> 107-32.

Bush, George W. "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People."

20 Sept. 2001

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html.

---.Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People. 20 Sept.

2001.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html

---. "President Addresses Nation, Discusses Iraq War on Terror." *Whitehouse.*

28 June 2005.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/20050628-7.html.

---.Statement by the President in his Address to the Nation.

11 Sept. 2001.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911.html

---. President's Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly.

12 Sept. 2002.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html.

---. "President Bush Holds Press Conference." *Whitehouse*.

15 Dec. 2003.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/12/20031215-3.html.

---."President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat."

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html.

---."President Delivers State of the Union Address"

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20010129-11.html.

---. "President George Bush Discusses Iraq in National Press Conference." 6 March 2003.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030306-8.html.

---. "President's Remarks at the 2004 Republican National Convention."

2 Sept. 2004.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/09/20040902-2.html

 ---. "Presidential Address to the Nation" *Whitehouse*

http//www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/2001 1007-8.html.

---."State of the Union Address." *White House.*

20 Jan. 2004.

house.gov/news/releases/2004/01/20040120—7.html

---."Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation."

11 Sept. 2001.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html

Carlyle, Thomas. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History.* Notes and

Introduction by Michael K. Goldberg. Text established by Michael K.

Goldberg, Joel J. Brattin, and Mark Engel. Berkeley: U of Calif. P, 1993.

Carter, Allen. *Kenneth Burke and the Scapegoat Process.* Norman and London: U

of Oklahoma P, 1996.

Cartledge, Paul. "'Deep Plays': Theatre as process in Greek civic life." *Greek*

Tragedy: The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy. Ed. P.E. Easterling.

New York: Cambridge UP, 1997. 3-35.

Christen, A. Kimberly and Sam D. Gill. Contributing eds. *Clowns & Tricksters:*

An Encyclopedia of Tradition and Culture. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-

CLIO, Inc., 1998.

"Commission on Presidential Debates." *Debate Transcript*.

30 Sept. 2004.

http://www.debates.org/pages/trans2004a.html.

http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0109/11/bn.59.html

CNN Live On Location. "President Bush makes Case for War with Iraq."

13 Sept. 2002. *Cable News Network*.

"Peter Arnett:U.S. War Plan has 'failed'" *CNN. Com/World*.

31 March 2003.

http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/30/sprj.irq.arnett/index.html

"Bush vows to rid the world of 'evil-doers.' *CNN.com/U.S.*

16 Sept. 2001.

http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16/gen.bush.terrorism.

Coulter, Ann. *National Review Online*. "This is War."

September 13, 2001. http:www.nationalreview.com/coulter/coulter.shtml

Crispin, Mark. "What's Wrong with this Picture?"

The Nation.

www.thenation.com/doc20020107/miller. Posted Dec. 20, 2001 (Jan. 7, 2002

issue).

Dickey, Christopher and Evan Thomas. "How We Helped Create Saddam and Can

We Fix Iraq After He's Gone." *Newsweek.* 23 Sept. 2002:35-41.

Donovan, Gil. "Newspapers Fire Writers for Criticisms." *National Catholic Reporter.*

26 Oct. 2001.

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1147/is_1/_38/ai_79965737/pg-1.

Domke, David Scott. *God Willing? Political Fundamentalism in the White House,*

the 'War on Terror' and the Echoing Press. London: Pluto Press, 2004.

Douglas, Susan. "The Media Fall in Line." *The Progressive Magazine.*

Nov. 2001,

<http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Media_control_propaganda/Media_Fall_In_Line.ht

ml

Dowd, Maureen. "Grave Silence." *New York Times*. Sept. 12, 2001. Academic

Universe. Lexis-Nexis. http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe

 "Michael Moore/O'Reilly Showdown at Convention"

DrudgeReportArchives.com. Tuesday. 27 Jul 2004.

16:51:50 ET.

http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2004/07/28/20040728_004802_dnc4.

htm

Duncan, Hugh Dalziel. *Symbols in Society.* New York: Oxford UP, 1968.

---. Communication and Social Order. London: Oxford UP, 1962.

Eagleton, Terry. *Holy Terror*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

Eddy, Beth. *The Rites of Identity: The Religious Naturalism and Cultural Criticism of*

Kenneth Burke and Ralph Ellison. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2003.

---. *Three Plays of Euripides.* Trans. Paul Roche. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1974.

---. *The War Plays.* Trans. Don Taylor. London: Methuen Drama, 1990.

---. "Electra." Trans. E.P. Coleridge. *The Complete Greek Drama: All the*

    Extant Tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the Comedies

        of Aristophanes and Menander. Eds. Whitney J. Oates and

        Eugene O'Neill, Jr. Vol II. New York: Random House, 1938. 67-105.

---. *Women of Troy*. Trans. Kenneth McLeish. London: Nick Hern Books Limited, 2004.

---. "Orestes." Trans. E.P. Coleridge. *The Complete Greek Drama: All the*

    Extant Tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the Comedies

    of Aristophanes and Menander. Eds. Whitney J. Oates and Eugene O'Neill, Jr.

    Vol II. New York: Random House, 1938. 111-165.

Euripides. *The Complete Greek Drama.* "The Bacchae." Eds Whitney J. Oates

    and Eugene O'Neill, Jr. New York: Random House, 1938.

FCC Telecommunications Act of 1996. http://www.fcc.gov/telecom.html.

Ferrari, G.R.F. "Aristotle's Literary Aesthetics." *Phronesis.* 44.3 (1999). 181-198.

Friedman, Thomas. "World War III." *New York Times*. Sept. 13, 2001.

    Academic Universe. Lexis-Nexis. http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe

Fifty-Fifth Inaugural Ceremony. 20 Jan. 2005.

    http://www. whitehouse.gov/inaugural.

Fritz, Bryan Keefer and Brendan Nyhan. *All the President's Spin: George*

    W. Bush,the Media and the Truth. New York: Touchtone, 2004.

"Frontline: The Jesus Factor Interviews Jim Wallis.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jesus/interviews/wallis.html.

Galston, William. "Taking Liberty." *Washington Monthly*. 37.4. (April 2005): 36-42.

Girard, Rene. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning.* Trans. James G. Williams. Maryknoll; NY:

    Orbis Books, 2001.

Girard, Rene. *The Scapegoat.* Baltimore, Maryland. The John Hopkins UP, 1986.

---. *The Girard Reader*. Trans. Ed. James G. Williams. New York: The

    Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996.

Golden, Leon. *Aristotle on Tragic and Comic Mimesis.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.

Goodstein, Laurie. *The Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy.*

    "The Nation—A President Puts his Faith in Providence."

    <http://www.religionandsocialpolicy.org/news/article.cfm?id=388>

Gordon, Michael and Judith Miller. "US Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for

    A-Bomb Parts." *New York Times.* 8 Sept. 2002:A1

Graebner, A. Norman. "Freedom, The United States, and the World

    Environment." *Freedom in America: A 200-Year Perspective.* University Park

    & London: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1977. 185-202.

Green, Bonnie. "Traumatic Stress and its Consequences." *Trauma Intervention in*

    War and Peace: Prevention, Practice, and Policy. Eds. Bonnie Green,

    Mathew Friedman, Joop de Jong, et al. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum

    Publishers, 2003. 17-32.

Gurtov, Mel and Peter Van Ness, Eds. "American Crusades, Unilateralism,

    Past & Present."*Confronting the Bush Doctrine: Critical*

    Views from the Asia-Pacific. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 1-38.

Gutting, Tom. "United We Fall: The Risks of Marginalizing Dissent."

Silenced: International Journalists Expose Media Censorship. Ed., David

Dadge. New York: Prometheus Books, 2005. 156-172.

Hart, Peter. "O'Reilly's War." FAIR. http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1142.

Hart, Peter and Seth Ackerman. *FAIR.* "Patriotism and

Censorship." http:www.fair.org/index.php?page=1089

Herman, Edward and Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political*

Economy of the Mass Media. Pantheon Books: New York, 1988.

Hyde, Lewis. *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth and Art.* New York:

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998.

"Interview with Susan Moeller, University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College

of Journalism." *Echo Chamber Project.* Transcription. Ben Tupper.

19 July 2004. http://www.echochamberproject.com/moeller

Ivie, Robert. "Productive Criticism Then and Now." *American Communication*

Journal. 4.3, 2001: 1-5.

http://www.acjournal.org/holdings/vol14/iss3/special/ivie.htm

---. "The Rhetoric of Bush's 'War' on Evil." *Kenneth Burke*

Journal.

http://www.kbjournal.org/modules.php?name=News&File=article&sid=2"

---.Democracy and America's War on Terror. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2005.

Jackson, Richard. *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, politics, and*

counter-Terrorism. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2005.

Janko, Richard. "From Catharsis to the Aristotelian Mean." *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics.*

Ed. Amelie Rorty. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1992. 341-358.

Jennermann, Donald. "Catharsis: A Key to Kenneth Burke as a Critic for the

Humanities." *Interdisciplinary Humanities* (Fall 1995): 37-44.

---. "Kenneth Burke's Poetics of Catharsis." *Representing Kenneth Burke.* Eds. Hayden

White and Margaret Brose. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1982. 31-51.

Johnson, Chalmers. *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire.*

New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000.

Kamiya, Gary. "Iraq: Why the Media Failed." Salon.com

http://www.salon.com/opinion/kamiya/2007/04/10/media_failure/print.html

Kastely, James. College English. "Kenneth Burke's Comic Rejoinder to the Cult

of Empire." 58.3 (March, 1996): 307-326.

King, Martin Luther. "Letter from Birmingham Jail." 16 April 1963.

http://www.nobelprizes.com/nobel/peace/MLK-jail.html.

"Kimberly Dozier and the Army's Fourth ID—A Story of Bravery, Recovery, and

Lives Changed Forever." *Flashpoint*. Narr. Katie Couric. CBS.

Kleber, Rolf, Charles R. Figley and Berthold P.R. Gersons. *Beyond Trauma: Cultural*

and Societal Dynamics. New York: Plenum Press, 1995.

Klinenberg, Eric. *Fighting for Air: The Battle to Control America's Media.* New

York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.

Lakoff, George. *Don't think of an elephant: know your values and frame*

the debate: The Essential Guide for Progressives. White River Junction,

Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2004.

Lakoff, George. *Whose Freedom?: The Battle over America's Most Important*

Idea. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006.

Lewis, Anthony. "A Different World." *New York Times*. Sept. 12, 2001.

Academic Universe. Lexis-Nexis.

Massing, Michael. "Now They Tell Us." *The New York Review of Books*. 51. 3.

26 Feb. 2004.

http:www.williambowles.info/media/massing_media.html

McChesney, Robert. *The Problem of the Media:U.S. Communication Politics*

in the Twenty-First Century. NY: Monthly Review Press, 2004.

McCollam, Douglas. "The Crowded Theatre." *Columbia Journalism Review.*

July/August 2005. 24-27.

McDougall, Walter. *Promised Land, Crusader State.* New York: Houghton

Mifflin Co, 1997.

McGowan, John. "Kenneth Burke and the Comic Arts of Peace." *The*

Western humanities review. 60.1. 2006: 44-65.

Media Reform Information Center.http://www.corporations.org/media/

Mermin, Jonathan. "The Media's Independence Problem" Fall 2004. *World Policy*

Journal. XXI. 3. 1-6. http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/articles/wpj04-3/mermin.htm

Moeller, Susan. "The President, Press and Weapons of Mass Destruction."

Nieman Reports. Summer 2004. 66-68.

Murad, Zahid. "Retribution and Restoration of the Moral Order in Tragic Drama."

The Journal. Dec. 2002: 99-109.

Nussbaum, Martha. *The Fragility of Goodness.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.

On the Media. NPR. Podium Standoff.

Parry, Robert. "The Bush Rule of Journalism."

http://www.consortiumnews.com/2005/011705.html

Patterson, Thomas. "The United States: News in a Free-Market Society." *Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective*. Ed. Richard Gunther and Anthony Mughan. Cambridge UP: 2000. 241-265.

The Jesus Factor: Join the Discussion *PBS*

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jesus/talk

Perez-Rivas. "Bush vows to Rid the World of 'evil-doers.'" *CNN.com/U.S.* 16 Sept, 2001.

http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/16/gen.bush.terrorism.

Pizzato, Mark. *Theatres of Human Sacrifice: from Ancient Ritual to Screen Violence.* New York: State University of New York P, 2005.

Raeburn, David. "The Significance of Stage Properties in Euripides' "Electra." Greece & Rome, 2nd Ser., 47. 2 (Oct. 2000) p. 149-168.

"Religion & Culture: Meeting the Challenge of Pluralism. President or Preacher?"

http://www.religionandpluralism.org/ANC_transcript_President_or_Preacher.htm

Roberts, Patrick. *The Psychology of Tragic Drama*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.

Rueckert, William. *Encounters with Kenneth Burke.* Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1994.

---. Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations. Berkeley: U of Calif. P, 1963.

Safire, William. "New Day of Infamy." *New York Times*. Sept. 12, 2001. Academic

Universe. Lexis-Nexis. "http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe"

September 11 News. Com: Magazines.

http://www.september11news.com/Magazines.htm

September 11 News. Com: USA Newspaper Headlines.

http://www.september11news.com/USANewspapers.htm

Sifakis, Gregory Michael. *Aristotle on the Function of Tragic Poetry.* Crete University

     Press, 2001.

Snow, Nancy. "What the World Thinks Now." *CommonDreams.org News Center*.

     6 Dec. 2002.

http://www.commondreams.org/views 02/1206-06.htm

Solomon, Norman. "Mass Media: Aiding and Abetting Militarism" in

     Carl Boggs (ed.). *Masters of war: Militarism and blowback in the era*

     of American Empire. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Sparrow, Bartholomew H. *Uncertain Guardians:The News Media as a*

     Political Institution. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press,

     1999.

Srivastava, Krishna. *Aristotle's Doctrine of Tragic Katharsis: A Critical Study.*

     Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1982.

Tick, Edward. *War and the Soul: Healing our Nations Veterans from Post-Traumatic*

     Stress Disorder. Quest Books, 2005.

"Timeline and Images on the Morning of September 11, 2001."

September 11th News. http://www.september11news.com/AttackImages.htm

"The Chris Matthews Show." Various Times *NBC* 12 December 2006

"The Chris Matthews Show." Transcripts Weekly. 10 December 2006

> http://www.thechrismathewsshow.com/transcripts/12102006.shtml

"The Third Bush-Kerry Presidential Debate at Election Debates.com." 13 Oct. 2004.

> http://www.electiondebates.com/debate3.htm

Toomey, Jenny. "Empire of the Air" *The Nation.* Jan 13/20, 2003. 28-30.

"Transcript: Buying the War." *Bill Moyers Journal*. PBS. April 25, 2007.

http:www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/btw/transcript1.html.

Tritle, Lawrence. *From Melos to My Lai: War and Survival.* London & New

> York: Routledge, 2000.

Tuveson Ernest *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role.* Chicago:

> U of Chicago P, 1968.

Vermeule, Emily. Introduction to Electra. 390-394. *The Complete Greek Tragedies.*

> Vol IV. Eds., David Grene and Richard Lattimore. Chicago: The U of

> Chicago P, 1958.

Vernant, Jean Pierre. "Myth and Tragedy." *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*.

> Ed Amelie Oksenberg Rorty. New Jersey: Princeton UP. 33-50.

"We Were Attacked Because We Are Good:McCain." 12 Sept. 2001.

australianpolitics.com. http://www.australianpolitics.com/news/2001/01-09-12h.shtml.

Wallis, Jim. *Gods Politics: A New Vision for Faith and Politics in America.* New

> York: HarperCollins, 2005.

Weaver, Richard. *The Ethics of Rhetoric.* Chicago: Henry Regnery Co, 1953.

"Who Owns What" *CJR Columbia Journalism Review* http://www.cjr.org/tools/owners/

Willis, Deborah. "The gnawing vulture": Revenge, Trauma Theory and

    Titus Andronicus. Shakespeare Quarterly. 53.1 (2002): 21-52.

Woodward, Bob. *Bush at War*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.