2009

Positions of Power, Abjection and Constraint: Evaluating Discursive Attempts to Save an Other

Ruth Janet Beerman

POSITIONS OF POWER, ABJECTION AND CONSTRAINT:

EVALUATING DISCURSIVE ATTEMPTS

TO SAVE AN OTHER

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Ruth Janet Beerman

University of Northern Iowa

May 2009

ABSTRACT

Beginning from the presumption that questions of agency are important, this thesis interrogates notions of who can speak, how to speak, and what constitutes agency. Feminist rhetorical theory operates as a key avenue to evaluate negotiating positions of power and privilege when examining how to liberate oppressed groups. By utilizing feminist conceptions of the body as well as theories of performance and personae, I examine how rhetorical theory contributes to such understandings where one speaks about an other. Finally, the war in Iraq serves as a case study to illustrate my theory.

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This Study by: Ruth Janet Beerman

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has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts

March 12, 2009
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank the many people who made completing this thesis possible, including my professors, fellow students, and family.

Many thanks to my professor, advisor, and thesis chair Catherine Palczewski, for her patience, marvelous edits, and guidance in helping me to find my voice and passion within rhetorical theory. Her class on critical methods was a turning point not only for this project but also for my perspective towards the communication discipline. Thanks also to the rest of my thesis committee John Burtis and John Fritch, whose questions, comments, and discussion during my thesis defense I continue to ponder.

A master's degree would be incomplete without the influence of teachers and students. Thanks in particular to my professors Victoria DeFrancisco, Martha Reineke, and Karen Mitchell who pushed me to excel in this program. Also, thanks to my fellow graduate students, specifically Jennifer Struve, Eric Short, Kelsey Harr, and the members of my critical methods and critical perspectives on gender classes.

Thanks to my family for their thoughts, prayers, encouragement, and being my cheerleader: Marcia Beerman, Richard and Pastora Beerman, John Beerman, Paul and Carolyn Rippke, Anne Rippke, Mark Rippke, Mary Ellen Imlau, and Elaine Imlau in particular. Most importantly, a special note of thanks to my wonderful and patient husband Phil Rippke for supporting me through this process. Without his continuous belief in me and my abilities this project may not have come to fruition.

Thank you all for your help and support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Warfare evokes numerous questions concerning moral, philosophical, and political, as well as rhetorical resources or deficits. These questions may focus on the appropriateness of war in general as a solution to problem(s), the appropriateness of a specific war, the effects of a war on a particular U.S. president's public approval ratings, or how specific war rhetoric functions and operates. Interrogating such narratives and rhetoric is critical; one must move beyond cataloguing to critique. Sandra Whitworth (1994), assistant professor of political science at York University, argues that good feminist criticism goes beyond description to evaluation: "Critical/feminist accounts . . . seek not merely to document the activities of women during war . . . or women's feelings about war . . ., but the ways in which governments and the military use, and alter, prevailing discourses about gender to their own ends" (p. 26). This thesis builds upon past war scholarship to raise new questions.

Justifications for war center on constructing an enemy and typically involves saving the nation as well as otherized victims. War discourse then is a prime way to evaluate constructions of self and others in the complex relationship of subject, object, abject which implicates agency. The case of the current Iraq war enables exploring these issues. Although President George W. Bush's Iraq war has been, and continues to be, a source of controversy and criticism, none of the current scholarship explores constructions of self and other and its implications for agency. Rather, current scholarship concerns presidential motives, the war justifications, and truth of claims and

evidence used to advance the war cause, among others. Communication scholars reflect on those questions, including framing Iraq within the war on terrorism (Spielvogel, 2005), controlling what constitutes evidence to advance the need for war (Kaufmann, 2004), and the lack of evidence and its relationship to the war justifications (Billig & MacMillian, 2005; Calabrese, 2005). However, none of these adequately provide a framework or discuss the discourse in terms of women's bodies as justification for war and its implications. The lacuna emerges in scholarship concerning the Iraqi war discourse *about* bodies and its implications for agency.

Indeed, although there have been many criticisms of the Bush administration's Iraq war rhetoric, there has not been an investigation into the interrelationship between audience, persona, and agency, within both communication and feminist scholarship. Within communication, Gordon Stables (2003) notes the inattention to similar issues, "the intersection between representations of gendered violence and justification for military action remains an underdeveloped focus of rhetorical scholarship" (p. 93). Additionally, many feminists overlook war in general; Christine Sylvester (2005), professor of international relations, highlights that war is not a "hot" issue within feminist studies: "war itself is understudied in feminism at large, relative to the other transhistorical and transcultural institutions that feminism has studied, such as the family, motherhood, religion, heterosexuality and gender itself" (p. 857). Therefore, there is an excellent opportunity to develop and flesh out understandings of war rhetoric, particularly theories of audience, persona, and agency. Theory of how someone should or should not

attempt to liberate an other needs to be investigated as well as its implications for agency. How should a nation provide help without assuming superiority?

To begin to understand how agency can or cannot function within war discourse, it is important to review current scholarship regarding war and its implications. Understanding trends in war rhetoric allows one to unravel the complexities of particular wars, including the current Iraq war.

Evaluating War Themes and War Rhetoric

For the United States, its martial history entails presenting itself as fighting wars of last resort. The United States maintains that it was unwillingly drawn into the two World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The post-Cold War world remains the same, where as a nation it is provoked to action. These narratives suggest that the United States is not the aggressor in conflicts, but is instead responding to threats. Wars are often justified with references to a direct attack on the United States or its allies. For example, during the First Gulf War, President George H. W. Bush described Iraq's invasion of Kuwait as an attack on the security of the world, focusing on "the unprovoked aggression of an evil dictator against a small, defenseless neighbor [which …invoked] the tragic vision of America as a heroic savior" (Ivie, 1996, p. 173). Thus, Bush defined Hussein as a monster whom the U.S. military must defeat. Presidential war rhetoric is the primary vehicle to discuss wars with the public and serves to legitimate war decisions "for an end that has been justified" (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990, p. 101). Presidents do not seek permission for war from either Congress or the public, but instead craft their

rhetoric to justify actions already taken. Although each war is different, the rhetoric surrounding wars contains elements that bridge time.

Reviewing the Literature

First, overall war discourse is framed as muscular international relations (IR) discourse about saving an other, whereby the United States is depicted as the hero helping the suffering country/people/other from an enemy. The overall thrust of the war centers around confirming and ensuring the hero's masculinity, as George Lakoff (1991) articulates the hero/victim/villain relationship as the classic patriarchal fairy tale of just war:

> A crime is committed by the villain against an innocent victim . . . The offense occurs due to an imbalance of power and creates a moral imbalance. . . . The hero makes sacrifices; he undergoes difficulties, typically making an arduous heroic journey, sometimes across the sea to a treacherous terrain. The villain is inherently evil, perhaps even a monster, and thus reasoning with him is out of the question. The hero is left with no choice but to engage the villain in battle. The hero defeats the villain and rescues the victim. The moral balance is restored. Victory is achieved. The hero, who always acts honorably, has proved his manhood and achieved glory. The sacrifice was worthwhile. (para. 19-20)

This hero-victim, rescue and/or liberation narrative played out during World War II and Kosovo (Stables, 2003), as well as the current wars in Afghanistan (Ayotte & Husain, 2005; Cloud, 2004) and Iraq (Takacs, 2005). In this way, war is not simply about saving victims but also about reaffirming a masculine, powerful state identity. Rather than the state being an abstract concept, as international relations lecturer Jill Steans (1998) powerfully argues, states contain identities: "The state is conceived of as a purposive individual who has a particularly masculinized identity. . . . The state is . . . viewed as more than defined territory or set of institutions. The state has an *identity*" (p. 48). This

masculine state identity sustains the need to identify victims to save to make itself feel powerful, and fits within traditional realist IR theory, which asserts states act in their own interest to enhance their power and security.

Building from this muscular identity about saving an other necessitates the second theme: violence must be occurring to demand a heroic U.S. response; indeed, otherized and victimized bodies sell war. Additionally, recent military action is framed towards humanitarian efforts, such as humanitarian intervention or concerns rather than political, economic, or military ones. For example, the Kosovo war was described as being "fought not for selfish reasons of realpolitik, but as part of a newfound respect for humanitarian concerns" (Stables, 2003, p. 92). Indeed, linking humanitarianism with gendered violence resonates better than other rationale. As Gordon Stables (2003) argues, "Kosovo demonstrates that representations of gendered violence, as part of broader humanitarian rubric, possess greater saliency than other nascent post-cold war rhetorical hybrids" (p. 107).

More specifically, these particularized bodies are mostly women and children which "are presented as battlegrounds in which the theatre of war . . . is played out" (Chetty, 2004, p. 38). In the case of Afghanistan, First Lady Laura Bush argued for the necessity of action due to the horrible violence done to Afghan women. This message is clearly stated in her November 2001 radio address:

> I'm delivering this week's radio address to kick off a world-wide effort to focus on the brutality against women and children by the al-Qaida terrorist network and the regime it supports in Afghanistan, the Taliban. That regime is now in retreat across much of the country, and the people of Afghanistan—especially women— are rejoicing ... The brutal oppression of women is a central goal of the terrorists.

Long before the current war began, the Taliban and its terrorist allies were making the lives of children and women in Afghanistan miserable. (para. 1)

In this way, Mrs. Bush outlines the horrors the Taliban (the identified U.S. enemy) committed on Afghan women and children (the victims) as justification for action. Indeed, she argues that action in Afghanistan is critical because "in Afghanistan we see the world the terrorists would like to impose on the rest of us" (2001, para. 3); therefore, "[a]ll of us have an obligation to speak out" (para. 4). Thus, violence done to otherized bodies justifies intervention, as "the presentation of women's and children's suffering is clearly meant to elicit sympathy and empathy for the suffering of war victims and to highlight the evils of war" (Chetty, 2004, p. 39). In fact, Stables (2003) argues gendered violence is a salient war justification "when revenge for those actions reinforces a general desire for military action" (p. 95). Indeed, when linking women's suffering with humanitarian causes, it demonstrates why an external power, such as the United States, is necessary.

However, the mere fact the violence is occurring is not enough by itself to demand a response; the third theme of war rhetoric argues that the violence must be escalating to prove the need for current action. Arguing that the level of violence intensified allows the United States to avoid criticism of inaction towards the violence that has already occurred; "amplifying violence allows it to be recognized as a unique entity, one that necessitates dramatic solutions" (Stables, 2003, p. 99). The uniqueness of violence also can extend to the number of violent acts. One act by itself is not a crisis, but multiple acts which are intensifying necessitate a response. Stables (2003) notes, "specific acts of gendered violence cannot, by themselves, offer a significant justification

for international action. . . . [War justifications] function by enhancing some dimension of the violence into a form that can be recognized as substantial" (p. 101). Overall, escalation of violence creates the call for action.

Violence escalation also demonstrates why the country itself cannot handle the situation, as the violence has spun out of control, which necessitates outside intervention. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), post-colonial critic and philosopher, argues that imperialist rhetoric is frequently caught up in discourse of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (p. 296). In this way, the United States frequently presents itself as savior of women from violence as humanitarian effort, which then creates those women into objects of the imperialist project: "Imperialism's images as the establisher of the good society is marked by the espousal of the women as object of protection from her own kind" (Spivak, 1988, p. 299). This imperialist logic also continues the muscular IR discourse of rescuing or protecting an other; "according to the logic of the protection scenario, women, like the penetrable, feminized territory of the nation-state, must be protected from the predatory advances of some real or imagined enemy" (Stabile & Kumar, 2005, p.770). For example, in the case of Afghanistan, women's oppression is one of the main justifications for U.S. military action. Kevin J. Ayotte and Mary E. Husain (2005), communication scholars, clearly articulate how women's oppression identified both the Taliban as the enemy and the United States as rescuer:

> The representation of women's oppression was employed partly to demonize the Taliban . . . [the] representation [of Afghan women] only as passive victims played a crucial role in justifying the particular forms of military action taken, even after the fact. Because the U.S. discourses about Afghan women suggested that they could not "save" themselves, "liberation" has to come from the outside. (p. 123)

In this way, a history of violence as well as escalating violence demonstrates why outside

help is needed and also why the United States is compelled to intervene.

However, occasions arise when violence does not occur "over there," but occurs

on U.S. soil. From this emerges the fourth theme, violence is done *to* the United States

rather than the United States being the instigator. In the immediate wake of the

September 11 attacks, President Bush addressed the nation on September 20, 2001, and

identified the new war declared on America:

> On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our
> country. Americans have known wars—but for the past 136 years, they have
> been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have
> known the casualties of war—but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful
> morning. Americans have known surprise attacks—but never before on
> thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day—and night
> fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack. (p. 1347)

In this way, Bush articulates the viewpoint where the United States responds to military

action as well as being attacked in the new war of terror. Externalizing guilt permeates

much of post 9-11 rhetoric, whereby President George W. Bush places all the blame on

the terrorists which declared war on the United States (see Bostdorff, 2003).

Finally, the multiple ways in which violence is framed occur within a limited or

reduced historical view. The nature of violence is framed within a current political

moment to justify a particular response. Roland Bleiker (2003), professor of international

relations, notes, "Complex political and ethical issues need to be simplified so that

appropriate political and military action can be taken in a short time-span" (n.p.).

Whether or not the political response meets the historical context is irrelevant; instead,

complex issues are condensed into simplified actions.

Analyzing the Implications

From these five themes of war rhetoric emerge three important implications: ignoring systemic and root causes of violence or long term suffering, speaking for others, and a constructed lack of agency or subjectivity for those suffering. Understanding the implications of war discourse is crucial in applying such concepts to particular wars, and each will be explored in turn.

First, a condensed or simplified view ignores a long range view, both in terms of what events lead up to the war and what may need to occur after military actions cease. Instead, war is merely seen as an event, a military conquest. As Chris Cuomo (1996), associate professor of philosophy and women's studies, notes, such rationale identifies war as a particularized event, ignoring the myriad of ways in which war occurs: "The spatial metaphors used to refer to war as a separate, bounded sphere indicate assumptions that war is a realm of human activity vastly removed from normal life" (p. 30). Viewing war events as part of the official military operations separates military battles from the everydayness of war, such as the effects of sanctions and violence during times of "peace" and reconstruction. War and peace are seen in opposite, bipolar extremes. Even with the seemingly never-ending war on terrorism, President George W. Bush (2001) declares that the war is an attack upon the American way of life: "these terrorists kill not merely to end lives but to disrupt and end a way of life" (p. 1348). In this way, the war of terror is a disruption of the peaceful way of life for the United States and its principles. Bush reminds citizens to live their lives, "to uphold the values of America and remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles, and our first

responsibility is to live by them" (2001, p. 1350). In this way, American values and freedom as normal, as peace stand in stark contrast to death, terrorists and the war of terror.

The split between war and peace eliminates periods of transition, which include fighting, reconstruction, or nation-building. This interim period does not fit neatly into demarcated "beginnings" and "endings" because it defies the notions of what constitutes "war." A case in point is Iraq. While the official combat time for Operation Iraqi Freedom was March 19, 2003, to May 1, 2003, fighting continued (and continues) after May 1, 2003. Indeed, much of the fighting escalated, even after the end of the July 2004 transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqi people. Policymakers have ignored much of the violence after July 2004 as they previously ignored many of the effects of sanctions upon the Iraqi population. Limiting the scope of what is determined "war" means that violence occurring outside such boundaries can be overlooked.

Additionally, limiting historical perspective can ignore root causes of violence. For example, in the case of Afghanistan, women's oppression was linked to the burqa which "legitimized U.S. military intervention under the rubric of 'liberation' at the same time that it masked the root causes of structural violence in Afghanistan" (Ayotte & Husain, 2005, p. 113). The narrative leaves out the various indicators such as poverty, ethnic differences, not to mention the large diversity of what the veil means within the Muslim community. Arguing against women's oppression is easier. However, simply removing the veil will not address structural, cultural, or political issues which helped create the situation in the first place. Such a reductionistic logic merely treats one aspect

of many, and when the rhetoric claims to "liberate" another, such a condensed view many times may do nothing or make the problem worse.

Second, as the United States constructs itself as responding to threats to save an other, it grafts a specific identity onto that other. In this way, such rhetoric speaks for others, assuming that the United States knows what the others think/feel/need/want. When responding to violence, the United States then acts in its own self interest in the name of helping others. Carol A. Stabile and Deepa Kumar (2005), professors of journalism and media, note: "As long as women are not permitted to speak for themselves, they provide the perfect grounds for an elaborate ventriloquist act, in which they serve as the passive vehicle for the representation of US interests" (p. 778). Such a move is dangerous for it presupposes that United States intimately knows what is best for others without asking them.

Finally, speaking for others ties into the most problematic implication, foreclosing agency or subjectivity for those who have been silenced. Muscular discourse which looks to rescue victimized bodies because the violence done to those bodies escalated does not ask those it wants to rescue what should happen. Ratna Kapur (2002), professor of law and Director of the Centre for Feminist Legal Research in India, powerfully argues that current IR discourse utilizes the lens of violence, which identifies Third World women as victims and denies agency. She writes, "the representation of the Third Word woman as thoroughly disempowered, brutalized, and victimized . . . recreates the imperialist move that views the native subject as different and civilizationally backward" (n.p.). Focusing only on violence sees others as victims instead of having the ability to

be subjects and agents in their own right. This argument does not deny that violence exists but instead argues the need to interrogate the ways in which depictions of violence are deployed.

For example, one of the dominant reasons to intervene in Afghanistan were that Afghani women were victimized and in need of liberation from Afghani men. Such a view denies Afghani women subjectivity while simultaneously reinscribing them solely within violence: "representations of the women of Afghanistan as gendered slaves in need of 'saving' by the West constitute epistemic violence, the construction of a violent knowledge of the third-world Other that erases women as *subjects* in international relations" (Ayotte & Husain, 2005, p. 113). Stabile and Kumar (2005) concur, arguing that "the discourse of protection . . . denied women any agency in the decision-making processes" (p. 770). Using violence to determine the need for action denies the ability for those victimized to speak for themselves.

The implied logic is that violence requires action. Utilizing a logic of violence, however, does not allow those victimized to speak and instead presupposes what should be done, using a narrow perspective of the situation. Adhis Chetty (2004) succinctly demonstrates, "the dominant image that women and children lack the ability to rebel, resist and shape their own history persists . . . and [is] reflective of a discourse of silent, agentless women suspended in a historical, social and economic vacuum" (p. 39). Indeed, only using a lens of victimized bodies denies other articulations of identity and instead essentializes the people it aims to protect and save: "the victim subject . . . is a subject that cannot accommodate a multi-layered experience" (Kapur, 2002, n.p.).

Therefore, using victim status forecloses any other articulation of identity, including that of an agent of action.

Ultimately, using muscular discourse about saving an other does not create a coalitional politics with those identified as "saved." Instead, it recreates exclusions and prevents those cast as victims from ever becoming agents. Kapur (2002) stresses the implications of centering discourse on victimization:

> In the international arena, the victim subject, in the context of the primary focus on violence against women, creates an exclusionary category built on racist perceptions and stereotypes of Third World women. This category is disempowering and does not translate into an emancipatory politics. It produces the fiction of a universal sisterhood, bonded in its experience of victimization and violence. There is no space in this construction for difference or for the articulation of a subject that is empowered. Indeed, the victim subject collapses easily into Victorian/colonial assumptions of women as weak, vulnerable, and helpless. It also feeds into conservative, right-wing agendas for women, which are protectionist rather than liberating. (n.p.)

The focus on victims and victimization overwhelms any feminist potential; identifying a woman as a victim in need of saving forecloses any other identity besides that of victim. Therefore, when the United States frames its war or interventionist policies as part of a pro-woman cause, it does not advance a feminist agenda but is instead part of *colonial feminism*. Leila Ahmed (1992), professor of women's studies and Near Eastern studies, articulates the concept of colonial feminism as "feminism as used against other cultures in the service of colonialism" (p. 151). In this way, policies are presented as a feminist initiative but are merely neo-colonial: the policies further the goals of the Western powers. A primary way that colonial feminism is deployed is through rhetoric, as it "can be easily substantiated by reference to the conduct and rhetoric of the colonizers" (Ahmed, 1992, p. 152). A case in point is the war in Afghanistan (see Cloud, 2004; also

Ayotte & Husain, 2005; Stabile & Kumar, 2005). In this way, the rhetoric of feminism is co-opted and redeployed against the cultures and peoples it claims to help, fixing them within the status of "victim."

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis develops a feminist theory of rhetorical persona and agency. I use the George W. Bush administration's rhetoric concerning the current Iraq war as a case study to illuminate my theory. Specifically, I ask the following questions: (1) How can feminist theory and rhetorical theory be expanded to evaluate discourse speaking about women's bodies? (2) What does such an expanded theory say about using such discourse to attempt liberation for women; is it agency? (3) What do the specifics of the Bush administration's Iraq war rhetoric say about this theory of agency, and how do they illustrate my contribution to theory?

In order to look at these questions, the thesis is organized in the following six chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the topic of war rhetoric, evaluating major themes and implications. Chapter 2 develops a heuristic vocabulary of feminist rhetoric and builds a foundation for asking new questions in feminist rhetorical scholarship. Chapter 3 develops rhetorical theory by utilizing theories of the body, performance, and personae. Chapter 4 takes up questions of agency and Chapter 5 then applies the heuristic vocabularies of the previous four chapters to the specifics of the Bush administration's Iraq war rhetoric. Finally, Chapter 6 describes my conclusions and implications for future research.

CHAPTER 2

FEMINIST COMMUNICATION THEORY

Within the field of communication, feminist scholarship does exist; however,

much of feminist communication theory is not developed with a rhetorical focus. Rather,

a majority of scholarship looks to feminist critics whose work can contribute to

communication. For example, three major works of feminist communication theory

include Foss, Foss, and Griffin's (1999) *Feminist Rhetorical Theories*, Rakow and

Wackwitz's (2004a) *Feminist Communication Theory: Selections in Context*, and

Kroløkke and Sørensen's (2006) *Gender Communication Theories and Analyses: From

Silence to Performance*. Each of these texts describes feminist theories or critics which

are useful to communication, but does not situate them within a communication and/or

rhetorical focus. Foss, Foss, and Griffin (1999) provide texts of authors such as bell

hooks, Mary Daly, and Paula Gunn Allen as examples of how one can change rhetorical

theory, rather than re-evaluating theory in light of those texts. There is not a sustained

rhetorical focus to evaluating communication and feminism as most of these examples

come from scholars outside of the communication discipline, even with the inclusion of

Cheris Kramarae and Sally Miller Gearhart. Additionally, it relies on "an essentialist

conception that women's ways of communicating are somehow distinctive and

preferable" (Campbell, 2001, p. 12). Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) go a step further by

identifying key concepts to feminist theory such as difference, voice, and representation

but again fall short by using similar texts as Foss, Foss, and Griffin as examples of their

theory. Finally, Kroløkke and Sørensen (2006) describe various approaches to feminist

theory, such as standpoint theory, performance, and conversation analysis, among others. Again, these approaches are not situated within a rhetorical focus, and are more descriptive of possibilities of types of scholarship. This is not to say that these texts are useless; indeed, they are important groundwork for theorizing. The point is simply that they do not focus explicitly on *both* rhetoric and feminist theory.

Within rhetorical scholarship, much of the feminist work focuses on women as speakers, agents or victims of oppression; as Michaela D. E. Meyer (2007) notes, "feminist contributions to rhetoric tend to align with two major methodological approaches—the 'writing women in' to rhetorical cannons approach and the 'challenging rhetorical standards' approach" (p. 2). However, these theories do not explicitly or adequately describe a relationship between persona and agency. For example, many times these approaches ignore people in positions of power speaking for or about oppressed groups; "we have relatively few analyses of dominant political discourses and those that we do tend to study the rhetoric of female candidates . . . or the discourse about female political figures" (Dow & Condit, 2005, p. 466).

Additionally, within feminist scholarship outside of communication there exists a large discussion concerning speaking for others and who may or may not speak for/with/about/in solidarity with others. These discussions do not draw upon relevant communication literature concerning audience and persona, and how utilizing such theories could explain power relationships, such as Philip Wander's (1984) Third Persona.

Many communication scholars describe feminist theorists' positions as starting points for future theories, to use feminist theories to add to communication theories (see Campbell 2001; Meyer, 2007). It is time to incorporate those theories into something more usable for communication, with both a communication and feminist focus. This thesis is one of many places to begin this (hopefully) ongoing process and discussion(s). This chapter argues for feminist rhetorical criticism by first analyzing the current approaches to feminist communication and feminist rhetorical criticism and their advancements and limitations, evaluates how to frame discussions concerning others and articulates my own approach to feminist rhetorical scholarship.

<u>Evaluating the Field of Feminist Scholarship in Communication</u>

Recently, communication scholars have evaluated the state of the art of feminist communication scholarship across the entire field of communication and within rhetoric in particular. Bonnie J. Dow and Celeste M. Condit's (2005) review analyzed all of the scholarship regarding feminist communication, which they defined as having a "perspective that ultimately is orientated toward the achievement of 'gender justice,' a goal that takes into account the ways that gender already intersects with race, ethnicity, sexuality and class" (p. 449). They argue that most of feminist rhetorical studies centers around women's discourse, which concurs with Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's (2001) and Michaela D. E. Meyer's (2007) arguments. Thus, a majority of feminist scholarship in rhetoric centers on recovering women's texts and new theories concerning those texts.

For example, some of the most prominent work is Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's (1973) "The rhetoric of women's liberation: An oxymoron" and her more extensive work

(1989) *Man Cannot Speak for Her* (Vols. 1 & 2). Campbell argues that unique categories

of rhetoric apply to women. Campbell (1973) identifies key characteristics of women's

rhetoric as "affective proofs and personal testimony, participation and dialogue, self-

revelation and self-criticism, the goal of autonomous decision making through self-

persuasion, and the strategic use of techniques for 'violating the reality structure'" (p.

83), including pieces on taboo subjects such as orgasms or role reversals. Campbell's

(1973, 1989) argument is that women have not had an "official" rhetorical history since

they have been told to keep silent and thus part of her work is to recover and analyze

women's speech.

Bonnie J. Dow and Mari Boor Tonn (1993) build on Campbell's ideas and argue

that feminine rhetorical style utilizes personal experience such as "personal anecdotes,

concrete examples, and brief narratives" (p. 289) and is also "grounded in the

characteristics of women's social roles, central of which is that of nurturer in their

primary relationships" (p. 296). Such a perspective draws upon essentialized notions of

femininity and ties sex with gender. Not all women are nurturers in their primary

relationships or use personal experience within their rhetoric. Also, by linking feminine

rhetorical style to women, this discounts men that embody these characteristics.

Additionally, the intersections of identities besides sex and/or gender color

women and men's experiences. Campbell (1999) acknowledges that her 1973 oxymoron

piece essentializes her own experience as representative of all women: "As a white

feminist, I focused attention on the rhetoric and the activists that spoke to my condition,

ignoring those whose ethnicities and concerns were different" (p. 142), which she would

change if writing the essay today. Dow (1995) also recognizes that the women's

practices and experiences she and Tonn used for their 1993 work are "usually the

practices of white, middle-class women" (p. 109).

Therefore, although it is important to evaluate women's rhetoric, feminist

rhetorical theory needs to move beyond a primary focus on women's speech, to see that

both women *and* men are gendered beings who are both actors and acted upon by societal

forces. Indeed, men are constrained by notions of masculinity and gender; "men are not

born; they are made. And men make themselves, actively constructing their masculinities

within a social and historical context" (Kimmel & Messner, 2001, p. xv).

One example of expanding rhetorical theory is the re-examination of feminine

style as situating it within power and moving beyond sex linked determinants. Dow

(1995) argues that both she and Campbell recognize feminine style is not just for women:

"feminine style is not exclusive to women. We both discuss feminine style as a strategic

approach for some female rhetors, not as an *innate* characteristic" (p. 108). Instead, the

strategies used in feminine style concern power, and she emphasizes "the *interaction of*

powerless and gender in constituting feminine style" (p. 109). Building on this idea, Sara

Hayden (1999) demonstrates that Jeanette Rankin's suffrage rhetoric used feminine style

when addressing a group of men and more traditional forms of argumentation when

addressing her peers. She concludes that feminine style "is a form of public address

appropriate for those who seek to petition a more powerful audience" (p. 89).

Additionally, Blankenship and Robson (1995) argue that feminine style can be used by

men, and examine how feminine style is used in political discourse, such as then

President William Clinton using the personal experience of his mom to show the need for health care reform (p. 359; see also Jamieson, 1988).

However, critics need to be wary of putting both *men* and *women* into all encompassing group identities. A unified conception of *woman* as a category is problematic, and has been criticized by numerous self-identified Third World feminists, primarily Chandra Talpade Mohanty. In her 2003 work, *Feminism Without Borders*, Mohanty identifies problems with the use of *woman* as a category. First, women are not a homogenous category, but instead are a diverse group of individuals, with various differences among them. A second related problem is that looking at women from this perspective denies the intersectionality of identities, essentializing and homogenizing what it means to be a woman. Lastly, it presumes that women are victims of oppression and casts them within "object status" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 23).

Seeing women as a unified group assumes that all women are somehow "socially constituted as a homogenous group identified *prior to* [italics added] the process of analysis" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 22). Although never explicitly stated, using *women* for analysis creates the focus on white, Western women. Mohanty's critique applies to the status quo logic of war rhetoric as outlined in Chapter 1. Masculine IR does use woman as a category for analysis, centering the debate on First World heroes against Third World victims. Such criticism demonstrates the need for a different line of questioning and analysis.

Therefore, questions should not be "what about the women" in terms of rhetoric and/or communication, but instead to situate criticism within specific, historical contexts.

When placing gender in the center of analysis, the implicit assumption is that "the categories of race and class have to be invisible for gender to be visible" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 107), making gender analysis an *exclusive* analysis. Such reductionist logic attempts to unify women together on the sameness of oppression, recreating women as victims:

> Women are characterized as a singular group on the basis of shared oppression. What binds women together is a sociological notion of the "sameness" of their oppression. . . . This results in an assumption of women as an always already constituted group, one that has been labeled powerless, exploited, sexually harassed, and so on. (Mohanty, 2003, pp. 22-3)

Although all women suffer under patriarchy, how each woman experiences patriarchy is different, depending on a range of factors and social locations, such as economics, class, race, nationality, age, sexual orientation, and patriarchy may not be the greatest source of oppression. Even though Mohanty focuses on use of *women* as a category, her criticism also applies to the use of *men* as a category, as men are diverse as well.

Additionally, as Kapur (2002) effectively argues, focusing on the victim subject reinforces the idea that those victimized cannot ever help themselves, creating cycles of domination. She writes:

> Women in the Third World are portrayed as victims of their culture, which reinforces stereotyped and racist representations of that culture and privileges the culture of the West. In the end, the focus on the victim subject reinforces the depiction of women in the Third World as perpetually marginalized and underprivileged. (n.p.)

Not only does focusing on oppression and violence ignore the differences that exist within groups (Mohanty's criticism), but it also serves to continue post-colonial domination whereby Third World women are always helpless victims devoid of any agency to make their own situation any better.

Complicating the Question(s)

These criticisms demonstrate that feminism or criticism cannot simply describe something called *women's experiences* or a single theory for all women. Thus, struggles exist between looking at individual women's perspectives and creating a more overarching, universalizing feminist perspective, or global theory/theories. Even though I know that a universalizing theory will not account for the complexities of women, I long for it all the same. This desire demonstrates the need to both identify the differences between women as well as the struggle to find appropriate ways of finding universality in the particular, where "an analysis of culture, ideology and socioeconomic conditions necessarily has to be situated" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 20). How then can feminist theory mix difference and commonality?

Perhaps this is the wrong question altogether. This line of questioning presumes that there is *one* solution, a way to reform the system *all at once*, which is necessarily reductive. However, a feminist goal should not identify how women are the same and then identify a singular solution. Attempting to know those seen as an other (in my case, non-Western, people of color) in one's own terms only remakes them into our (again, Western) image, which is imperialist colonialist discourse (see Mohanty, 2003; Lugones & Spelman, 2000). The category of *woman* boils down all the differences into a sameness, a oneness, that is false.

Why then I do continue to long for an overarching feminist theory? Partly, the answer is simple: having a world where women are the same or similar makes the solution(s) to the problem(s) easier. However, a singular definition is problematic,

demonstrating the need to complicate the question(s) to ask. By complicating the question(s), the solution is also necessarily complicated, and the problems also are multiplied and reduced. Calling into question the idea of *feminist theory* and/or *womanhood*, I understand that crafting a feminist theory is not simple—many differences exist.

Thus, questions should include the following: negotiating positions of power, evaluating intersections of identities, and exploring the relationships between personae to move beyond just gender or women as unmarked category and instead look at intersections of identities. Examples include: How do people in positions of power constitute, constrain or challenge systems of oppression (thus looking at how power operates)? How do the actions of such people impact oppressed groups, and what implications does this have for the oppressed's agency? What does it mean to speak about oppressed people from a position of power?

Who Can Speak, and About What? Looking at Speaking and Agency

To begin to answer these questions one needs to take into account who can speak. Key questions then become: How does a feminist rhetorical critic take into account difference, agency, and create good representations? How does s/he speak for, to, about, or in solidarity with others? The question of who can speak for whom has been discussed and debated in various ways, particularly since Linda Martín Alcoff's (1995) essay. Some argue that one should not speak for others or claim to know exactly what those unlike the speaker think/feel/experience. Various answers exist to the question of what to

do in these situations. Using Alcoff's (1995) notions as a starting point, this section discusses in what ways it is appropriate to speak.

For Alcoff (1995), when it is appropriate to speak involves evaluating the effects of one's discourse by answering the question: "Will it enable the empowerment of oppressed peoples?" (p. 116). Her effects test does not address every situation, and potentially silences critics or activists for fear of being wrong or oppressing others. Although in some cases silence may be appropriate, forced silence due to fear of criticism is not productive, and Alcoff (1995) acknowledges that a retreat from speaking can produce "no responsibility whatsoever" (p. 107). This dilemma between appropriation and responsibility does not deny the problems of speaking for others, but rather emphasizes that a critical balance between silence and speaking is needed in order to allow speaking with the oppressed.

Alcoff's solution assumes that one can know the effects of one's discourse on oppressed peoples. But how can one determine such effects? And if one's discourse helps one group of oppressed people, but not another, what should one do? Be silent? The complication of competing others/oppressed peoples forces the speaker or theorist to choose between two or more competing groups.

Take, for example, the situation of storing nuclear waste. Many Native American tribes vehemently oppose waste storage on their lands; however, the leaders of the Goshute tribe of Utah are petitioning to have storage on their lands. Some anti-nuclear and environmental activists have denounced the Goshutes' claims, saying that they should never have nuclear waste on their land, for various reasons, including U.S. history

towards Native Americans and Indian Country (Johnson, 2005). In this way, these activists agree with other Native Americans in opposition to the Goshutes.

This example demonstrates the conflict of competing oppressed peoples, while also calling into question Alcoff's (1995) effects standard. Even within the Goshute tribe, differences exist. The tribal leaders, primarily Leon Bear, argue for the waste disposal, saying, "Exploit me . . . If your business had a chance to make money . . . wouldn't you take it? That is what this United States is all about. Opportunity" (qtd. in Egan, 2002, p. 1A). However, Bear's cousin, Sammy Blackbear is opposed to the waste, arguing: "We don't want the waste. We want to save who we are. We want to save what's left . . . We have an obligation not to be messed up by greed" (qtd. in Egan, 2002, p. 1A). Therefore, internal divisions exist within the Goshute tribe, making a larger, universal claim of whether the Goshutes do or do not want waste problematic. How can one determine who is or is not legitimate to speak for this Native American tribe? Alcoff's focus on the effects of one's discourse, discursive actions, and actions with regard to speaking for others simply sidesteps important issues of choosing who is (more) legitimate or authentic.

Those individuals who do not want to make determinations of legitimacy and authenticity in order to meet Alcoff's test will ultimately be silenced and committed to doing nothing. Thus, a new theoretical test is needed. Although Alcoff (1995) deliberately conflates speaking for others and speaking about others (p. 100), useful distinctions exist between the two. This idea draws on Brian R. McGee's (1998) work, where he defines various types of speaking: "Speaking *to* an other requires the immediate

or mediated presence of that other to the message . . . Speaking *with* the other might imply a direct, dialectical interchange between interlocutors" (p. 215). He continues that speaking about the other is distinct as well, and can also be emancipatory: "Speaking about the other, when coupled with a constantly self-questioning ethic in criticism and political advocacy, should not pose the grave threat that many perceive to exist in the act of speaking for others" (p. 217). Thus, according to McGee, when someone speaks, several options arise: speaking to, speaking for, and speaking about (which are not necessarily mutually exclusive).

However, some feminist critics are skeptical even about speaking about others. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004c) argue that the solution to a lack of representation is only to allow individuals to speak for themselves:

> The solution still lies in self-representation . . . but it needs to be considered differently—not as the addition of spokespeople for new groups let into the political club . . . but, rather, as the ability of each of the citizens to represent themselves *and themselves only.* (p. 179)

Such a solution falls into the same trap as Alcoff's alternative—silence about horrors going on in the world. Scholars need to be able to speak about others; individuals will always talk about others, and such rhetoric may not always be empowering for individuals. McGee's (1998) argument demonstrates the need to speak about issues by using W.E.B. Du Bois as an example. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) demeaned several groups of people—African Americans, Catholics and Jews. When Du Bois responded to such rhetoric, he spoke about the KKK's hatred of all those groups to make a point—that their rhetoric is both unacceptable and damaging. Rakow and Wackwitz's solution would deny Du Bois's criticism since he was not a member of all groups and could not

speak about all the issues. Ultimately, the complications concerning speaking are complex, but having the ability to speak about others is critical. Silence about problems does not help oppressed peoples; instead, silence continues status quo power relations. Thus, one needs to be able to speak about issues.

Within Alcoff and Rakow and Wackwitz's worlds, a large possibility exists that someone should absolutely *never* speak for someone. For Alcoff (1995), the only time to speak is after "analyz[ing] the *probable or actual effects of the words on the discursive and material context*" (p. 113). Such a standard is difficult as "we cannot always determine in advance whether it will indeed happen, whether the act of speaking out will have done justice to the other" (Elam, 1995, p. 234). Thus, if someone does not evaluate the context of the situation and know with certainty that the speaking will help oppressed peoples, he/she should not speak; this standard also leaves unanswered the question of competing oppressed groups. For Rakow and Wackwitz (2004a), the only one appropriate to speak about one's struggles is that individual and no one else. Both these approaches place large limitations on those with power to be able to speak, by either understanding all potential implications of discourse or silence.

As we are language using creatures, we cannot abandon language, and thus, some speaking is needed. I return to my earlier question: how should (or should not) one speak for, to, about, or in solidarity with others? In regards to speaking *for* others, I agree with Alcoff (1995)'s conclusions that speaking for others is problematic. Speaking *to* others should be done where the other is able to exist within an exchange of ideas, as a conversation. McGee's (1998) solution of speaking *about* others allows those concerned

with social justice to speak out about both issues and others which they align themselves

politically and/or ethically, even if one is not a member of the oppressed community.

Finally, with regards to speaking *in solidarity with* others, such speaking is distinct from

other types of speaking including speaking about. Speaking in solidarity with others

arises when an oppressed group develops a position which then someone outside the

community agrees with and speaks in support of that issue or position. Such speaking

does require speaking about issues and others, but the key distinction lies where the

oppressed group has previously spoken on the issue and the outsider then supports the

oppressed's rhetoric.

Ultimately, McGee's (1998) alternative prompts the speaker or theorist to

question his/her ethics, motives, and actions in order to determine whether it is speaking

for versus about or in solidarity with others. Those concerned with how to speak should

evaluate the ethical and political consequences of speaking as well as whether or not the

advocacy presented is consistent with the group(s) being discussed. Returning to the case

of the Goshutes, claiming one speaks for Native Americans' position on storing nuclear

waste can further reinscribe power relations of who can and cannot speak. Thus, one

must recognize that even the possibility of speaking about or in solidarity with involves

power relations. The question then turns to how to negotiate those different claims. It

remains the task of individuals to decide on what political grounds to ally themselves.

For those concerned with tribal self-determination, they would need to ally themselves

with Bear and his supporters to have waste storage. For those concerned with the

environment and negative impacts of U.S. Federal Government policies in Indian

Country, they would need to ally themselves with Blackbear and his protestors of waste storage. Choosing a side within the Goshute tribe will exclude one side; thus, the responsibility lies with the individual to make her/his choice on common political goals rather than oppression.

When trying to be politically conscious and avoid taking the place of others, one can speak about them or speak in solidarity with them—but always allow room for those discussed to make their own claims. No one is perfect. If, however, individuals are conscious that the political choices they make when choosing to speak with and about some others might foreclose other possibilities, it will allow for more conscientious communication, as well as more alliances between groups of individuals.

Creating a Feminist Community

Working from the understanding that a position of difference is needed, how then can people coalesce? Community, the bonding together of various people, is a driving force for most of humanity. These communities can be physical or geographic, such as those within a nation-state, or they can be ideological, consisting of similar ideas. The notion of a "community of scholars" plays into this idea of community, implying shared collective ideas. Many social movements search for a homeland or community in which they can fit; feminism is no different. This section uses Mohanty's (2003) and hooks's (2000) notion of community to develop a description of a global feminist community.

Mohanty (2003) argues for "an 'imagined community' of Third World oppositional struggles" (p. 46). Instead of creating a community out of nothing, she instead argues for individual alignment with these struggles, which can include white

women as well. Theorizing ways in which to have a broad feminist community where differences are accepted and nourished is a good place to begin.

For Mohanty's community, it is clear that building a theoretical and actual community is a difficult but important task. The imagined community is essential because it highlights the political nature for alignment, instead of "biological or cultural bases for alliance" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 46). However, as she notes, the way(s) in which individuals are politicized often are related to individual locations and histories. Thus, the implication for her argument concerning community appears circular: feminists are to bond over political ideas, but the ways in which individuals know the political is through cultural and historical experiences. How then can feminists escape this circular paradox between politics and experience?

Despite the appearance of a paradox, the imagined community is not a contradiction. Rather than using common oppression or history to rally around, the goal instead should be based instead on common political ideas. Although political ideas are indeed filtered through one's individual culture and history, political goals can push individuals forward, looking to the future of the community. Focusing on culture or history to the exclusion of ideology over-emphasizes past oppressions.

For example, bell hooks (2000) powerfully argues that many second-wave feminists used oppression as a means to bond which "meant that women had to conceive of themselves as 'victims' in order to feel that feminist movement was relevant to their lives" (p. 45). Crafting themselves and other women as victims situated women as oppressed others without the agency to act. Additionally, using a victim approach

enabled white feminists to insulate their critiques to problems with men, instead of being self-reflective. As hooks (2000) notes, "Identifying as 'victims,' they [white women liberationists] could abdicate responsibility for their role in the maintenance and perpetuation of sexism, racism, and classism, which they did by insisting that only men were the enemy. They did not acknowledge and confront the enemy within" (p. 46). In this way, white second-wave feminists over-emphasized their negative sexist experiences over everything else while also denying the ways in which they participated in systems of oppression. Instead, hooks's (2000) alternative is to unite with common goals: "Rather than bond on the basis of shared victimization or in response to a false sense of a common enemy, we can bond on the basis of our political commitment to a feminist movement that aims to end sexist oppression" (p. 47).

Bonding with common goals allows for political ideology and theory to unite a community, allowing for multiple different communities to coalesce. Mohanty (2003) argues race, gender, class do not solely determine a community; rather "it is the way that we think about race, class, and gender—the political links we choose to make among and between struggles" (p. 46). Thus, political ideology and theory includes or excludes one from the community, not one's identity. Mohanty continues by saying that "potentially, women of all colors (including white women) can align themselves with and participate in these imagined communities" (p. 46).

Therefore, both Mohanty (2003) and hooks (2000) argue for feminist community centered around common political ideas. Now the issue becomes, how does a Western white woman like myself interact with such a community: how do I fit? Mohanty does

not say that I am part of the community, but that I can align and participate with it. The space for Western white women then is different from Third World women: I cannot speak as, or for, a Third World woman. Additionally, silence is not an option since it functions to exempt oneself from "working through the complex historical relations between and among structures of domination and oppression" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 93). But if I cannot speak as a Third World women, and if I cannot merely listen to what Third World women tell me, then how should I react with, to, even within Mohanty's community?

My understanding of Mohanty and hooks's concepts of community is this: I, as a Western white woman, can stand in solidarity with other women if I believe in their political cause even if I do not share the same skin color, geography, or history. Standing in solidarity means educating myself and others around me about feminist struggles worldwide, and speaking responsibly about those struggles. Being responsible for educating oneself fits within Kapur's (2002) alternative to the problems of victim subject: "Researchers, scholars, and women's rights activists must take responsibility for understanding and informing themselves about the complexity of debates that surround issues of women's rights in the postcolonial world" (n.p.).

Additionally, I must be open to criticism from those with whom I speak in solidarity and make changes when appropriate. Although the feminist community can include much of women worldwide, this does not mean that all the particulars are the same—I must speak in specifics, instead of universalizing or generalizing claims. And even as I align myself with feminists worldwide, their story is not the only side or point

of view within their culture, country, or place of origin. In this way, as I align myself with some, I may deflect my (or other's) attention from oppositional viewpoints. Thus, I have only one part of the picture, and must act accordingly.

By doing these things, I recognize my own part of the feminist community. This part will likely change depending on the situation and my own identity and social location(s), but the recognition of how I fit is important. For if I can fit within such a community, so too can other Western feminists (if they so choose). The goal for feminisms should not be sameness, but recognition of the similarities of transnational, cross-cultural struggles, and how as feminists we can learn from each other, using what theory is appropriate to enact change.

Writing as a Western Woman about Global Feminist Issues

How do Western feminists who are concerned about global women's issues write or theorize about women who are not like them/us/me? This is important, because although many times there is discussion about the need to acknowledge and appreciate differences among women, there is the assumption that "women are still very much the same" (Sabbagh, 1996, p. xxiii). Suhan Sabbagh's (1996) alternative to this assumption is to listen to the "Other" (p. xxiv), but given that women are not a monolith, but are instead products of race, ethnicity, class, country of origin, religion, sexual orientation, and many more identity ingredients, differences within particular cultures and regions exist. What are ways that I can engage with the Other if there are multiple others? Do feminist politics need a dividing line in the sand? If so, how can that line (or lines) be determined?

Theories which strive for social justice, such as feminism(s), need to place an emphasis on the individual's responsibility to reconcile the places where things fit and where things do not. An example of this critical self-examination is Minnie Bruce Pratt's (1984) essay on identity. She closes with the idea that her journey is "not an easy reconciliation, but one that may come when I continue to struggle with myself and the world I was born in" (p. 57). Throughout the essay, the reader gains an intimate look into the dawning and rising consciousness of a woman born into white privilege. Pratt keeps looking for a home to return to, and what she ultimately discovers is that she has to work to create a more inclusive home, where she can fit. This points to the idea that instead of a stable unified self, notions of *self* are politically and culturally constructed: "If the self, rather than producing personal stories, is (at least partially) produced by them, then that which is 'personal' belongs also to the space of the cultural . . . as socio-political production" (Hantzis, 1998, p. 204). Locating and examining the complex web of our intersecting identities allows us to challenge notions of power. Throughout this thesis, I too have attempted to reconcile my own yearnings and place them within a more global setting.

Rather than using a simplified or narrow approach to these issues, a more comprehensive view is needed: "A deeper and more rigorous kind of contextual analysis is essential to protect against simple, unreflective, and naïve strategies that invariably harm more than help those who are victims of rights violations" (Kapur, 2002, n.p.). Therefore, when I write about global women's issues, I need to do several things including: situating myself within the culture from which I am writing, situating women

within the culture about which I am writing (including differences among them), and always remembering to be self-reflexive before, during, and after writing. A way to check myself is to read literature from the point of view of women about whom I am writing—and to look at multiple experiences of those women. If there is no literature available, then the need to be precise with my writing is even more important. Ultimately, I may be mistaken, but it is incumbent on me to minimize my mistakes.

My goal as a feminist critic and activist then is to re-examine how *woman* as a category is crafted in my own thoughts, and whether or not such ideas are applicable broadly to all women. In this way, global feminist ethics include accountability for one's views, recognition of the diversity of women, and using commonalities to achieve solidarity. In the places where women do not fit, new theories need to arise to address such concerns, and feminists, like myself, should be open to the possibility of new changes.

<div align="center">Combining Feminist Theory with Rhetorical Theory</div>

Ultimately, the goal of critical theory and feminist rhetorical theory needs to identify ways to create positive change and social justice: "feminist communication theory ought to . . . help us understand the conditions of our lives, to help us name our experiences and make them stories for the telling, to give us strategies for achieving justice" (Rakow & Wackwitz, 2004b, p. vii). Analyzing women's rhetoric is important; however, approaches that simply add women and stir or analyze women's differences from men is insufficient. Feminist rhetorical scholars need to use a gendered analysis informed by both communication and feminist perspectives. Feminist theories

demonstrate the need to use an intersectional approach, analyzing sexism, racism, classism, sexual orientation and identity characterizations (see Crenshaw, 1989). Rhetorical theories describing personae illustrate the inclusions and exclusions of audiences (Black, 1970; Cloud, 1999; Morris, 2002; Wander 1984). Speakers thus create audiences within existing sexed/gendered identities; persona is not just about who is intended or excluded but also about the particular *characterizations* of said audiences. They operate within heteronormative racist patriarchy and thus color the crafting of audience through language choice. Utilizing feminist theories with rhetorical theories creates a greater whole and new understandings can emerge. To that end, the next chapter evaluates feminist theories of the body and rhetorical theories of persona to craft greater understandings.

CHAPTER 3

RHETORICAL THEORY: PEFORMANCE AND PERSONA

Moving from the premise that a more situated, comprehensive rhetorical theory of agency is needed, this chapter utilizes performance theory as well as analyses of persona to develop a more nuanced heuristic vocabulary. Theories of performance and the body compliment personae theory as such theories describe the forces surrounding rhetors which, in turn, produce the individual persona. Performance, the body, and persona all serve to constrain, compliment, and enable individual and institutional agency; this chapter delineates the ways that occurs.

Understanding the Body Through Performance

The notion of performance is a contested term, with multiple definitions. Some look at particular texts such as plays whereas others look at everyday life such as storytelling or daily rituals (Conquergood, 1991; Hamera, 2006; Jones, 2003; Park-Fuller, 2003; Spry, 2003). In order to flesh out what performance entails within the realm of political discourse, I first define how I am using the notion of performance, and then discuss how the theories of Judith Butler, Dwight Conquergood, and Gay Gibson Cima are particularly useful in understanding both the presence and absence of Iraqi bodies within President George W. Bush's Iraq war rhetoric.

I am interested in performance within political discourse, and specifically within the United States Federal Government, as embodied and enacted by the president. The question then becomes: can performance operate within the political, and if so, how? First, it is clear that performance and politics do coexist. Within the 2006 *SAGE*

Handbook of Performance Studies, Judith Hamera and Dwight Conquergood argue that performance is political, as "politics and performance are intimately linked historically, conceptually, and pragmatically" (p. 419). For example, political rituals, such as presidential inaugural addresses, are performances: they call into being particularized concepts of community, citizenship, and the polis. Similarly, Gay Gibson Cima (2006) argues that performance always involves history as "writing about performance is, of necessity, writing about events, behaviors, and gestures that have escaped into the past" (p. 106). Thus, it is clear that performance operates within institutionalized politics.

Second, moving from the fact that performance exists within politics, how can one analyze it? Hamera and Conquergood (2006), quoting Diana Taylor, offer the idea that performance is both an "object/process of analysis" and a "methodological lens that enables scholars to analyze events *as* performance" (p. 420). This thesis is primarily concerned with the latter, as a way of analyzing presidential rhetoric as a performance of ideology and identity. This goal is in line with key questions that performance scholars have asked, including questions concerning "performance in/as the deployment of institutional power" (Hamera & Conquergood, 2006, p. 420) which evaluates the production of others within institutions. The particular politics of performance questions include "what is the relationship between performance and power" and "how does performance reproduce, enable, sustain, challenge, subvert, critique, and naturalize ideology" (Conquergood, 1991, p. 190). These sorts of questions help to establish the type of performance theory that is important to presence and absence of the body within discourse.

Judith Butler's Performativity and the Body

In developing an understanding and heuristic vocabulary of how the body operates, Judith Butler's notion of performativity is most useful. The groundwork for Butler's theory of gender as performance is developed throughout *Bodies that Matter* (1993). Her understanding of how gender operates differs from that of most of her contemporaries. For Butler (1993), gender is performative, and gender performativity is "not a singular 'act'" but is instead "always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms" (p. 12). Thus, bodies are produced as they reiterate norms and as others reiterate norms about those bodies. Some have taken this theory to be analogous to a theater performance. Individuals choose gender roles the way actors select costumes from closets: both are acts of individual choice. However, Butler (1993) fundamentally rejects this position, as she argues that such a position does not describe gender and is too hopeful: "Such a willful and instrumental subject, one who decides *on* its gender, is clearly not its gender from the start and fails to realize that its existence is already decided *by* its gender" (p. x). Thus, gender is not something that human subjects decide to perform. Instead, gender already is constituted by and constituting of the very nature of human subjects given that "the performance of a gender is also compelled by norms that I do not choose" (Butler, 2004a, p. 345). Individuals do not have agency to choose their particular performances, but instead are compelled by various social factors and norms to internalize those ideas/norms until they seem natural and hence normalized.

Butler's understanding of how identity practices operate is important, for it provides an essential way to understand how individuals perform the body. Indeed, she

argues that there is no body prior to discourse—prior to being called or interpellated,

"there is no subject prior to its construction" (Butler, 1993, p. 124). Thus, interpellation

creates a subject; a performance of self is always being called into being. This process

begins with birth, as the doctor pronounces a baby as either a boy or a girl, and thus calls

the infant into being. It is this process of naming through which "the girl is 'girled,'

brought into the domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender"

(Butler, 1993, p. 7). Discursive construction of the body does not deny material bodily

substance, but rather demonstrates the forces which mediate said bodies. Understanding

how bodies are constructed enables criticism and transformation. Margrit Shildrick and

Janet Price (1999) powerfully argue:

> To say the body is a discursive construction is not to deny a substantial corpus,
> but to insist that our apprehension of it, our understanding of it, is necessarily
> mediated by the *con*texts in which we speak. . . . It is then the forms of
> materialisation of the body, rather than the material itself, which is the concern of
> a feminism that must ask always what purpose and whose interests do particular
> constructions serve. . . . If the body is not a determinate given, then the political
> and social structures that take it as such are equally open to transformation. (pp.
> 7-8)

Therefore, bodily constructions are performances of being which are in processes of

reiteration as well as flux and transformation.

Similarly, Conquergood's (1991) argument is that identity acts more "like a

performance in process than a postulate, premise or originary principle" (p. 185). His

position is similar to Butler's, as he argues that ethnographic writings do not exist within

a vacuum, but instead serve to constitute the self: such "writings are not innocent

descriptions through which the other is transparently revealed"; no, "they are constituted"

(Conquergood, 1991, p. 191). In this way, the body does not exist merely through a

biological process of conception; instead, it is born out of the very social practices and norms which mold it into being—language. Thus, understandings of how a body comes into being require not only a study of an individual's performance, but more importantly of an other's interpellation of that body that brings it into a particular being.

Bodily interpellation occurs through discourse. Bodily acts are secured through the discursive citationality of particular acts, where one references previous ideas of "proper" behavior (just as scholars use in-text citations to demonstrate acceptable knowledge, so too does identity use citations of previous actions to legitimate bodily actions). In the case of girls and boys, the performance of gender occurs through numerous citations, whereby the citational practice calls upon an established authority. These citations occur both on the individual level as people cite gender as they themselves do gender as well on an institutional level where institutions use citations to construct others' gendered identity.

However, this process of interpellation does not merely end with naming; the very notion of sex "is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time" (Butler, 1993, p. 1), demonstrating the active role of performativity. For example, to maintain the two-sex dualism, doctors assign intersexed infants to one sex and perform surgery to create the desired sex, resulting in the forced construction of male *or* female but not both. Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000), professor of biology and gender studies who writes extensively regarding intersexuality, powerfully argues, "modern surgical techniques help maintain the two-sex system. Today, children who are born 'either/or—neither/both'—a fairly common phenomenon—usually disappear from view because doctors 'correct'

them right away with surgery" (p. 31). People may argue that they do not perform gender (or construct others' genders) because gender has just "always been that way." However, when they do so, they only demonstrate that gendered practices have become so normalized that they appear natural as a result of their repeated citations. Bodies and discourse co-exist, as "discourses do actually live in bodies. . . . bodies in fact carry discourses as part of their own lifeblood" (Butler qtd. in Meijer & Prins, 1998, n.p.). Therefore, discourse matters not only because it creates ideologies and worldviews, but also because it constitutes and creates the self.

Mediations of an Other Within Discourse

Moving from a discussion of performativity and interpellation, it becomes important to see how this intersects with the mediation of an other through discourse, which can be done through presence and absence. Performance theory allows a critic to examine both as manifest through discussions concerning the body. Performances within life serve to both present and erase the body: "performance at once hails live bodies into representation of the real and dissolves these bodies into metonyms . . . The body disappears under its metonymic weight" (Pollock, 2006, p. 6). The body is hailed into being but the particular body disappears as its particulars are metonymically collapsed into all other bodies.

For example, women's bodies depict the overall social body of the country at large, representing their society and culture written upon their bodies. Dana Cloud (2004) analyzed *Time* photographs of Afghanis which included images of women dressed in the burqa, representing (to the United States) the oppressive Afghani society and the

need for U.S. military intervention. In this way, the physical attribute of a piece of clothing signifies more than fashion or one individual woman; the burqa represents societal views and also becomes a signifier in the conflict between the United States and Taliban.

Western perception of the veil, a bodily practice, orients thinking towards Islamist culture and countries. Leila Ahmed (1992), director of women's studies and Near Eastern studies at University of Massachusetts, analyzes how women's bodies are linked into the social body of their culture: "the assumption that the issues of culture and women are connected . . . has trapped the struggle for women's rights with struggles over culture" (Ahmed, 1992, p. 167). This line of rationale parallels Mary Douglas's (1996) extensive work on ritual and boundaries. She argues that not only do rituals create bodily boundaries but they also define social boundaries. Perceptions of the body influence perceptions of society, as "the image of the body is used in different ways to reflect and enhance each person's experience of society" (p. xxxvi). From this, she argues that physical attributes of bodies have social consequence: "the human body is always treated as an image of society and . . . there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension" (p. 74). In this way, these otherized bodies represent the larger varied peoples of a country, as war discourse narrows differences; "national discourse may transform women's bodies into the symbolic battlefield of virtual conflicts" (Stables, 2003, p. 109). Extending on Douglas's theory, I argue that stories of a body or bodies serve to situate and create a particular community or society. Bodies are crafted by communication practices, such as

interpellation, but also the ways in which we talk *about* bodies shape bodies and the cultural social body as well. Rhetorical theory needs to expand to include looking at discourse about others and others' bodies.

Therefore, performance of body operates to both reveal and conceal aspects of identity. Lawrence J. Prelli (2006) argues that rhetoric operates as a form of display with presence and absence, revealing and concealing:

> To display is to "show forth" or "make known," which, in turn, implies its opposite—to conceal. That dynamic between revealing and concealing . . . is the core presumption behind rhetorical studies of display. . . . [which explore] how those situated resolutions conceal even as they reveal, what meanings they leave absent even as they make others present, whose interests they mute as well as whose they emphasize, what they condemn as well as celebrate, and so on. This is so regardless of whether those rhetorics are enunciated through speech, . . . depicted visually, . . . or enacted through exhibitions, demonstrations, or performances. (p. 11)

Performance of the body is linked to visual descriptions of the body, which in turn both reveal and conceal aspects of that body. As Kenneth Burke (1966) argues, terministic screens operate in language to reveal and obscure: "Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality" (p. 45). All rhetoric necessarily emphasizes certain selections which always deflect other parts, obscuring the entire picture. An objective reality or unified body does not exist; instead, what constitutes reality and bodies are mediated through selections, reflections, and deflections, what is revealed as well as obscured. Thus, it is important to understand how this presence and absence occurs. I look at this in two ways that it occurs; first, through abjection, and secondly, through the appropriation of an other.

First, identity is formed not through the acquisition of character traits, but through rites of exclusion. The dichotomous category of girl/boy demonstrates what one might call a *chucking theory of identity*. I become what I am by chucking what I am not. For example, a man knows that he is a man by ridding himself of his femaleness; the disposed qualities demonstrate to him that which he is. Put another way, subjects are constituted in relationship to someone else, and the powerful retain the good qualities and discard the so-called bad. From this chucking dynamic emerges a trio: subjects, objects, and abjects. Subjects are individuals who possess agency and the ability to act (the chucker) while objects are people who are acted upon and have limited agency. Finally, abjects are those excluded from humanity, unreal, uninhabitable, devoid of agency and exist as the discarded qualities of the subject (the chucked).

Butler (1993) articulates the notion of subject/object/abject by drawing upon Lacan's notion of mirroring, as well as on Hegel's master-slave dialectic. From Lacan she takes the idea we need someone else to mirror us in order to recognize ourselves; drawing on Hegel, she asserts that the master only knows s/he is a master when recognized as such by the slave. Butler (1993) extends their ideas by arguing that processes of exclusion create an abject, unlivable space, as the abject is necessary if the subject is to recognize itself: "This repudiation takes place through a repudiation which produces a domain of abjection, a repudiation without which the subject cannot emerge" (p. 3). Processes of abjection serve to demarcate and outline the boundaries of the subject. The subject creates its form by marking what it is not: the discarded remnants

that exist outside of this subject outline constitute the abject. In this way, the abject body is necessary for the subject to exist; it is the way for the subject to secure its own place.

Thus, as individuals perform their identity, they do so by chucking negative aspects onto an other; performance by a person is therefore tied to performance about an other. As the process of abjection presents the subject as the center; the abject is present for the subject to exist but the abject itself remains within an unlivable space. The abject is thus both present and absent; it is present for the subject to exist, but the abject is absent in its own unlivable space.

Such processes of abjection not only exist within individuals but also institutionally as abjection "does make itself known in policy and politics" (Butler qtd. in Meijer & Prins, 1998, n.p.). As individuals comprise institutions, how they interact with others reflects onto institutional practice. Thus, abjection is not simply discursive, but makes itself known materially.

For example, Butler (2004b) describes how the U.S. media does not publish obituaries for war victims caused by the United States. No obituaries exist because those lives are not deemed worthy, real, or even as life; instead, they exist as the abject. She (2004b) explains:

> If there were to be an obituary, there would have had to have been a life, a life worth noting, a life worth valuing and preserving, a life that qualifies for recognition. . . . [I]f a life is not grievable, it is not quite a life; it does not qualify as a life and is not worth a note. (p. 34)

Thus, the subject outline of the U.S. soldier implicates how those within the conflict are measured; the U.S. soldiers exist as subjects while the enemy combatants are stripped of humanity, in many ways to make it easier to commit violence to those deemed non-

human. The war casualties deemed worthy of recognition then demonstrate who are valued as subject and those who are exist outside the realm of subjectivity as the abjected remains. Abjection thus is enacted through many institutions through rites of exclusion which serve to make the subject present and the abject absent.

Second, identities also are determined by the appropriations of an other. Gay Gibson Cima (2006) analyzes how white critics of slavery discussed abolishing slavery through descriptions of the slave body. White abolitionist Elizabeth Margaret Chandler used a method of "mental metempsychosis," which is a process attempting to understand the slave body. Critics would imagine "themselves entering into slave bodies wracked with pain . . . They hoped to generate in their audiences emotions so strong that they would trigger an immediate commitment to antislavery activism" (Cima, 2006, p. 112). In this way, abolitionists argued against the abject status of the slaves, to show that "slaves were not, rightly speaking, property but rather *humans*" (Cima, 2006, p. 113). However, imagining what it is like to be another person (a slave) appropriates that person's very being and re-victimizes the slave. The abolitionists, while having good intentions, reaffirm their own subject status by creating the slaves as an abject other. Although they imagined the slaves as humans, the way in which they did creates the slaves within an unlivable space, of pain and suffering, while securing the abolitionists' position as safe subjects. By having the privilege of having to imagine the horrors of being like a slave, it casts the white abolitionists as the saviors for a victimized other:

> For white women abolitionists . . . [their performance operated] with an urge to cast slave bodies as degraded tragic victims. White speakers sought to identify themselves with the romantic tales of slaves and the horror stories of free black women facing northern prejudices, simultaneously casting those black others as

victims—and themselves, all too often, not only as fellow "slaves" to men, but also as redeemers to other women. (Cima, 2006, p. 114)

This opposition structure does not eliminate violence; rather, it repositions it so that the slave others require the white abolitionists to help them. In this way, the subjects of the white abolitionists were constituted by the very performative abjection of the black slaves. Thus, ultimately I agree with Cima's (2006) conclusion that "these strategies proved problematic" (p. 121). Therefore, performance theories are avenues to theorize abjection and bodily absence.

Constituting and Constraining Identity Through Persona

Rhetorical theory also identifies numerous ways in which rhetoric identifies, or in some cases excludes, an audience through the concept of persona, including the First (Booth, 1961), Second (Black, 1970), Third (Wander, 1984), and Fourth (Morris, 2002). Each persona pushes individuals to be particular type(s) of people, through inclusion and/or exclusion, for as Burke (1950) notes, "identification is compensatory to division" (p. 22). When a group is excluded through the Third Persona, this exclusion deems some people unacceptable whereby such exclusions create a "status of non-subjects" (Wander, 1984, p. 216), or being "unacceptable, undesirable, insignificant;" for example, someone may be "equated with disease, a 'cancer' called upon to disfigure an individual or group" (Wander, 1984, p. 209). Thus, all personae represent a form of ideological positioning in some way. This next section analyzes each persona in turn and how each has a constitutive ideological function.

Audiences Granted Subjectivity: First and Second Personae

When delivering a speech, the rhetor him/herself is the First Persona—the person presented to the audience as a result of the rhetorical choices in the text. Wayne C. Booth (1961) argues that in writing a difference exists between the actual self and the presented self: "the 'implied author' chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read; we infer him [*sic*] as an ideal, literary, created version of the real man; he is the sum of his own choices" (pp. 74-5). Thus, the rhetor decides how to present a particular image to the world, a projection of self to the world, as their implied self.

For example, President George W. Bush at the 2004 Republican National Convention presented himself both as the Republican nominee for president as well as the best candidate for the role of the next U.S. president by appealing to the already existing performance attached to his role as president. Bush (2004b) accepted the nomination and argued, "A presidential election is a contest for the future. Tonight I will tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I will lead this country in the next four years" (para. 8). Through this rhetoric and the specific policies President Bush outlined, he crafted himself as presidential, and more specifically, a continuation of his current presidency. In this way, President Bush used his previous experience as president to develop a presidential First Persona.

A rhetor conceives a text for a particular audience, known as the Second Persona—the implied or intended audience. Communication scholar Edwin Black (1970) first articulated the second persona as the intended audience, the audience "implied by a discourse, . . . its implied auditor" (p. 111). However, Black (1970) is critical of the idea

that simply by looking at rhetoric one can see how an audience would respond (such as favorable, unfavorable, or neutral) as it "does not focus on a relationship between a discourse and an actual auditor. It focuses instead on the discourse alone, and extracts from it the audience it implies" (p. 112). The Second Persona is instead formed by the First Persona and reveals the ideology of rhetor and his/her attitude towards how the audience should act. Black (1970) argues:

> In all rhetorical discourse, we can find enticements not simply to believe something, but to *be* something. We are solicited by the discourse to fulfill its brandishments with our very selves. And it is this dimension of rhetorical discourse that leads us finally to moral judgment. (p. 119)

In this way, an audience is called into being, or interpellated into a particular form, through the rhetor's discourse. The Second Persona does not exist as *the* audience, but rather is molded into particular subject status through discourse.

Abjected and Objectified: Audience as Third and Null Personae

However, there are those who are not included within "I" of the rhetor or the "you" of the audience and are instead excluded, through design or omission; they become the "it." Moving from Black's insights, Philip Wander (1984) developed the concept of the Third Persona, those who are neglected, excluded, and rejected by being neither the First nor the Second Persona; "What is negated through the Second Persona forms the silhouette of a Third Persona—the 'it' that is not present, that is objectified in a way that 'you' and 'I' are not" (1984, p. 209). This process of exclusion denies them humanity. As communication professors Paaige Turner and Patricia Ryden (2000) argue, what is being excluded does not need to be named explicitly, but can be implied or silhouetted by the surrounding discourse. Drawing upon Derrida's notion of signifiers and *differance*,

they argue that trace elements of relationships exist within rhetoric even when only one term is present. For example, the dichotomy of white/black has meaning even when one of the two is absent because of the traces of the other concept: black by itself still contains embedded notions of inferiority due to the white/black dichotomy (Turner & Ryden, 2000, pp. 87, 88). Here Turner and Ryden's analysis parallels the identity theory of chucking. Take the example of the male/female dichotomy. Even when concepts of man or woman are discussed singularly, as man is outlined by the excluded forms of femininity, traces of woman are embedded within the singular concept of man (and vice versa). Thus, a Third Persona can be unnamed but still excluded by a rhetorical act. Indeed, various personae create forms of inclusion and exclusion: in terms of identity, "the concept of persona also relies upon forms of differentiation" (Turner & Ryden, 2000, p. 90). Just as identity construction is developed by the chucking or disposing of qualities, the Third Persona is the outcast audience from the Second Persona. The qualities of the Second Persona (as subject) are denied to the Third Persona and the rejected qualities of the Second Persona are relegated to the Third Persona (as abject).

For example, Turner and Ryden (2000) analyze how then President George H. W. Bush's rhetoric supporting Clarence Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court excluded Anita Hill, even when she remained unnamed. In some cases, President Bush directly avoided speaking about Hill and instead concentrated upon Thomas. When specifically asked about Hill's testimony and whether or not she was telling the truth, Bush replied, "I believe that Judge Thomas is telling the truth all out. Yes, he is" (qtd. in Turner & Ryden, 2000, p. 92). Within this rhetoric, President Bush does not directly

attack Anita Hill; instead, by calling Clarence Thomas's testimony the truth, he by definition declares that Hill is a liar. Bush's rhetoric serves to silence Hill and "den[ies her] a place to speak" (Turner & Ryden, 2000, pp. 95-6), as well as her humanity. In this example, Hill is the Third Persona—the one who is unnamed but discussed implicitly, and this tactic demonstrated the President's ideological bent towards having Thomas appointed.

Therefore, the Third Persona, as well as the Second, serves an ideological function. Turner and Ryden (2000) argue that personae are part and parcel of ideology and serve ideological functions:

> The presentation of a specific persona serves as an argument for a particular ideological "take" on the speaker, audience, or negated audience. This forms a tautological relation: The persona (as a form of argument) becomes part of the operating ideology (chain of signification) whereby the appropriateness and validity of future arguments are judged. (p. 89)

The speaker's construction of the Second and Third Personae influences how the personae are viewed and reflects his/her political positioning; arguments call for assent not only for particularized claims, but also whom the rhetor is: "arguments seek assent not only to the claim stated but also to the claims enacted" (Lake, 1990, p. 83).

What is named is just as important as what is unnamed, for as Michel Foucault (1972) argues, "we are not free to say just anything" (p. 216). Building on the notion of silence, Dana Cloud (1999) argues "silence as a rhetorical strategy . . . points toward extradiscursive relations of power" (p. 179). From this understanding comes the null persona, whereby the speaker silences him/herself from saying certain topics. Cloud defines the null persona in relationship to processes of constraint and power:

> If the first persona is the rhetor, perhaps the phenomenon of self-silencing . . . could be referred to the constitution of oneself in the role of "null persona." The null persona refers to the self-negation of the speaker and the creation in the text of an oblique silhouette indicating what is not utterable. The crafting of a null persona might signal critics to examine extradiscursive constraints on a group's rhetorical agency. (p. 200)

In this way, the rhetor as First Persona is constrained by power relations and instead of speaking out, the rhetor self-censors. Simply put, there is no intended audience, no Second Persona for the null persona. Returning to the concept of chucking, the rhetor in this situation is the not the subject/chucker but rather is chucked, made up of the excluded parts of the dominant group. In this way, the null persona shares characteristics with the Third Persona, as the null persona nullifies his/her own position due to external constraints and is excluded.

Included Yet Excluded: Fourth and Ghost Second Personae

Expanding upon the nature of silence, Charles E. Morris III (2002) theorizes the Fourth Persona by analyzing J. Edgar Hoover's rhetoric of passing, specifically in terms of sexuality, where individuals presents themselves within the sexual norm of heterosexuality to avoid persecution from being outside the norm. Morris (2002) describes the Fourth Persona as "a collusive audience constituted by the textual wink. . . . [such] passing rhetoric must imply two ideological positions simultaneously, one that mirrors the dupes and another that implies, via the wink, an ideology of difference" (p. 220). Thus, the Fourth Persona is an audience that is aware passing is occurring, but also silent to the normative culture that someone *is* passing; in this way, "silence functions constructively as the medium of collusive exchange" (Morris, 2002, p. 220). The passing aspect of the Fourth Persona attempts to hide what is deemed socially unacceptable by

passing as a dominant group. Although Morris articulates the silence as constructive, he does not delineate for whom the silence is beneficial. Clearly, the passing involved with the Fourth Persona is beneficial for the speaker (First Persona), but does it benefit anyone else? Morris (2002) describes the Fourth Persona audience as "silent, savvy … discreet" in contrast to the Second Persona as "an audience of dupes" (p. 241). Thus, it appears that the clear benefit is for the First Persona, and the Second and Fourth Personae are stuck in a sort of limbo, either not fully understanding the situation or being trapped within a society that compels individuals to collude. Clearly, any Third Persona would be excluded from rhetoric since by definition they are excluded. Morris's Fourth Persona looks more at how a marginalized group (homosexuals) passes to fit within a dominant ideology (heterosexuality) and does not help to explain what occurs when dominant groups discuss oppressed people either directly or indirectly as the audience.

Thus, although these distinctions are useful, much of previous theorizing on persona does not account for a *you* that appears to be a Second Persona, but is not an audience the rhetoric addresses as a full subject; scholars should recognize the appearance of a false Second Persona. As I argued elsewhere (Beerman, 2006), I call this the Ghost Second Persona, "whereby the rhetor intentionally addresses a particular audience as 'you' but the actual target is not the identified audience. It is also a shadow of the Third Persona, as it does contain elements of exclusion, but the excluded audience is the very one who is identified as the audience" (p. 180). The Ghost Second Persona may appear as an aside to a particular audience, as a way to address an aspect of a complex topic. However, appearing to speak to others only masks speaking for others,

which contains the problems outlined previously by Alcoff (1995). Additionally, by appearing to pay tribute to an issue, the Ghost Second Persona instead functions as a way to stifle dissent.

A case in point which demonstrates the Ghost Second Persona is then Secretary of State Colin Powell's March 2004 International Women's Day address. Powell's speech not only addresses U.S. foreign policy regarding women, but also justifies U.S. military intervention in Iraq. He makes this clear by stating: "People wonder what we have accomplished in Iraq over the past, almost a year now. We have freed a people. We have liberated a people" (para. 4). Using a before-and-after-Saddam Hussein approach, Powell lists the litany of rights that the Iraqi people now have. The Ghost Second Persona operates when Powell takes time to deliver an important aside to the Iraqi people. When describing the previous dark horrors under Hussein to the light of the status quo, Powell appears to speak directly to the Iraqi people:

> This time last year, Saddam Hussein's republic of fear gripped Iraq. His torture chambers and the rape rooms were in full operation.
>
> Today, *we* [italics added] all know that that is no longer the case. *You* [italics added] are free. The torture chambers and the rape rooms have been shut down. In their place, as you [Iraqi Minister Berwari] noted, grassroots organizations and women's self-help centers are blossoming from Baghdad to Babylon, from Basra and beyond. And Iraq is moving toward democracy and prosperity under this new representative government that will respect the rights of all citizens. (2004, para. 7-8)

Within this particular message, Powell uses *you* in two different ways, which stand in contrast to *we*. First, when he says, "You are free," Powell directly refers to the Iraqi people whom "we" freed and liberated (para. 4). Secondly, when saying "as you noted," Powell refers to an earlier address that day by Iraqi Minister of Municipalities and Public

Works Nesreen Berwari (see Berwari, 2004). In both cases, however, this "you" exists more as an aside to bolster his overall argument. Additionally, the first "you" is not directly addressing the Iraqi people, but it is instead talking *about* Iraqi people and speak for how they feel. The people referenced by "you" are still excluded even while present—they exist as the Ghost Second Persona.

The "you" as general Iraqis does not address them for two main reasons: first, Powell was not in Iraq and many Iraqis did not have access to view his speech and second, because the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) changed the date of International Women's Day from March 8 to August 18 (Mahmoud, 2004, para. 11), Iraq was not officially celebrating the occasion. In both cases *you* is used to bolster Secretary Powell's argument and credibility to the *we*, the United States, its people, and its allies. The *you* is not part of the *we* which knows the situation in Iraq changed for the better; instead *you* and *we* are clearly distinct, for *we* represents the U.S. military and its allies which freed and liberated a people, the people which are represented by *you*. As previously discussed, a subject requires an abject to exist. In this way the Iraqis existed as victims and abjects so the U.S. could intervene to save them. Within Powell's construction, there exists a cause-effect relationship. Under Saddam Hussein, rape and torture chambers existed and the Iraqi people were Hussein's victims (para. 7). Once the United States freed and liberated the people, those horror places were shut down (para. 8). By saying, "You are free," Powell constructs the Iraqi people into the role of grateful former victim; to now be free is contrasted with the image of bondage and slavery. The phrase "you are free" is linked to reminders of previous shackles of rape rooms and

torture chambers, suggesting that all Iraqis knew that previously they were *not* free; instead the "you" as Iraqis knew they were victims. By calling on the *you* of Nesreen Berwari's earlier address, Powell builds on her speech to say that democracy blossoming in Iraq demonstrates the idea that the United States freed Iraq and gave the Iraqis freedom and agency. Such rhetoric fits within the overall theme of Powell's speech that *we* as the United States freed and liberated a people. This rhetoric does not speak to an Iraqi audience; instead, it functions to justify intervention.

Moreover, Powell begins his discussion on Iraq by answering criticism of the war and war efforts by stating, "People wonder what we have accomplished in Iraq over the past, almost a year now. We have freed a people. We have liberated a people" (para. 4). In this compact answer, *who* is we differs. The first *we* is linked to the accomplishments in Iraq during 2003 and early 2004. Such a *we* draws in multiple audiences to bridge the first persona of Collin Powell; it can be a joint mission with Iraq and the world—looking at what everyone in Iraq accomplished. However, this identification is divided by Powell's further clarification of what *we* accomplished—we freed and liberated a people. This *we* is pitted against the Iraqis who needed to be freed and liberated. Therefore, although it seems that Powell includes Iraqi efforts within their own county, his qualifiers regarding *we* deny Iraqis access to his earlier more general discussion of accomplishments.

Ultimately, the Ghost Second Persona is a way to avoid criticism that one is silent on an issue or ignoring an audience; by seeming to address an issue and an audience, it is a way to decrease dissent because those issues have now been addressed. Such a strategy

is the opposite side of the coin to Judith Butler's (2004b) argument that destroying the credibility of the dissenter stifles critical debate. Butler (2004b) argues that by calling those who have critical views treasonous, moral relativists, postmodern, and (I would argue) anti-American, "destroy[s] the credibility not of the views which are held, but of the persons who hold them (p. xix). The explicit naming of critical views as dangerous therefore relegates those individuals as abjects. However, using the Ghost Second Persona also relegates individuals into abject status, but does so by claiming the speaking subject status concerning the issue.

Thus, dissent can be quashed by saying that issues are already addressed as well as by arguing that those who perform dissent are not "real" people, or are "uninhabitable" and thus they exist as the abject (building on Butler's [2004b & 2004c] vocabulary from *Undoing Gender* as well as *Precarious Life*). Both of these tactics serve to limit who can speak about an issue. If an issue has already been addressed and its audience already seems to agree with the speaker, there is no great incentive to address such concerns. However, if someone were to criticize and dissent on the issue, they can always be identified as outside the norm, as irrational and un-American.

Additionally, the Ghost Second Persona is a way of speaking for others, instead of speaking in solidarity with or allowing individuals to speak for themselves: it assumes that the people it addresses agree with the speaker's point of view and silences them instead of letting them articulate their own thoughts and feelings—denying that group agency. Thus, both the Ghost Second Persona and Butler's (2004b & 2004c) notion of

the uninhabitable function to stifle dissent, and can work together to limit the scope of the debate at hand.

Each persona contains an ideological function. As the rhetoric one uses filters understandings of the topic, "translat[ing] them into *beliefs*" (McGee, 1975, p. 248), so too does construction of personae filter understanding of individuals by crafting subjects, objects, and abjects. For example, as the First Persona (subject) addresses his/her intended audience (object), such rhetoric constructions exclusions of groups through the Third, Fourth, and Ghost Second Personae (abject). The null persona is a unique case whereby the speaker as First Persona is abjected by her/his inability to speak due to the uninhabitable nature of her/his social position. All personae are constituted via discourse rather than existing as solidified reality.

This line of argumentation regarding constructing persona is similar to Michael C. McGee's (1975) argument that the audience does not exist as an objective reality, but is instead constituted by rhetoric; "'the people,' even though made 'real' by their own belief and behavior, are still *essentially* a mass illusion" (p. 242). Therefore, ideas about *the people* a rhetor uses are based on that rhetor's assumptions about what constitutes *the people*. As the people are called into being so, too, is the audience interpellated, and such actions exist as performative acts. Thus, an event (the rhetorical situation) and personae do not possess an intrinsic meaning, but their meaning is constructed via rhetoric.

Ultimately, no persona exists in isolation but rather personae are best understood relationally. An area of rhetorical theory regarding persona that is not sufficiently developed is the *relationship* between all personae; how do they interact? Do they limit

each other? My argument is that the Second Persona is created and crafted by the ideological view of the First Persona. The Third Persona is necessarily created in order to establish the Second Persona—it exists as the abject other to create the subject of the Second Persona. Regarding the Fourth Persona, it exists in relationship to both the Second Persona and Third Persona. The Fourth Persona is positioned as part of the Second Persona; however, the Third Persona recognizes such a pass because of their own positioning. The null persona exists out of a lack of relationality; it does not exist as First Persona precisely because there is no Second Persona, no intended audience due to the power constraints preventing speech; thus, it has more in common with the Third Persona. With the Ghost Second Persona, it functions precisely because the First Persona claims it to be the Second Persona while simultaneously excluding it, existing in the in-between space of the Second and Third Personae. Thus, all personae exist within a relationship, or lack thereof, with each other.

Within Turner and Ryden's 2000 example of President George H. W. Bush and Clarence Thomas's nomination, Anita Hill and her supporters are required to be excluded as liars to support the truth of Clarence Thomas. Bush advocated for Thomas's appointment (ideological position) and directed his statements towards the Congressional committee and public (Second Persona) to accomplish that goal. In order to accomplish this goal, Bush must deny and exclude Hill's argument and her humanity and existence— thus crafting her as the Third Persona. This example does not address null or Ghost Second Personae but still demonstrates how persona exists within relationship to each

other. Analyzing personae in conjunction with each other enables one to see the multiple facets and layers of meaning(s).

Using a relational approach to personae enables critics to see the implications of each persona on themselves and others in regards to agency. Agency itself is best understood *relationally*; as it is complex, not just constructed by social constraints or individual actions. Radha Hegde (1998), associate professor of media, culture, and communication, agrees: "Feminist work in communication should find alternative ways of thinking about gendered experience and agency in more relational terms" (p. 277). Professors of communication John L. Lucaites and Celeste M. Condit (1999) argue rhetorical theory overcomes deficits of modernist and postmodernist approaches by utilizing a contextual and relational approach to agency:

> Contemporary rhetorical theories can help to resolve the disparity between social structure and lived experience by reconstituting our understanding of agency as a function of complex speaker-audience interactions. Such a view denies neither the materiality nor the significance of the agency of speaker or audience, but it does contextualize the agency of all parties to a social interaction as bound in relationship. (p. 612)

Building on this relational approach, the next chapter analyzes agency in relationship to performance, speaking for others, and persona.

CHAPTER 4

QUESTIONS OF AGENCY

Many ideologies struggle over how to locate agency within oppressive systems. Theorists ask critical questions regarding how to overcome unjust forces of oppression of patriarchy, racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and the intersection of all these oppressions. When faced with such overwhelming interlocking systems of violence, what can one do? How can one be an agent of change, whereby s/he has the ability to make decisions, to have her/his interests heard, to act without being constrained by another—in essence, to control one's destiny? Where do we as humans begin to untangle human subjects from repression and subjugation to be their own agents of change? What should institutions such as governments do to enable agency of both their own citizens and world citizens?

There is not *one* answer to such questions of attaining agency as agency cannot be universally applied; it is both complex and multifaceted. As Caroline O. N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark (2001) note, agency is culturally and historically situated: "'Multiple realities' and the importance of place and location in the construction of identities and differences . . . determine how identity and agency (knowledge/capability) are differently constituted" (p. 5). Recognizing the complexities surrounding agency builds upon previous critiques of universal approaches such as by Mohanty (2003) and Crenshaw (1989). Therefore, many approaches to agency exist, including individual and institutional forms. For example, Butler's (1993) theories of disloyal repetitions to work weakness in gendered norms and resignification of language both focus on aspects that

individuals can do. Additionally, institutions both enable and constrain individual's

agency. Butler's (2004b & 2004c) theory of the vulnerable body compels institutions to

address agency in a new way. Instead of focusing on how others can be or are victims,

the vulnerable body compels those within positions of power and privilege to examine

how they, too, are vulnerable. This chapter first reviews Karyln Kohrs Campbell's

(2005) definitions of agency, then analyzes individual and institutional approaches, and

ultimately argues for a more expansive view of agency which builds on Butler's idea of

the vulnerable body and incorporates both freedoms to and from to build a complex view

of agency.

Defining Agency

First, it is important to unpack the complexities surrounding definitions of *agency*.

Karyln Kohrs Campbell (2005) examines agency and its implications for rhetoric. She

concludes that "rhetorical agency refers to the capacity to act, that is, to have the

competence to speak or write in a way that will be recognized or heeded by others in

one's community" (p. 3). Elaborating on her definition of agency, Campbell (2005)

articulates five characteristics of agency:

> agency (1) is communal and participatory, hence, both constituted and constrained
> by externals that are material and symbolic; (2) is "invented" by authors who are
> points of articulation; (3) emerges in artistry or craft; (4) is effected through form;
> and (5) is perverse, that is, inherently, protean, ambiguous, open to reversal. (p.
> 2)

For the most part, Campbell's characteristics are useful for understanding how to

negotiate agency in different ways and forms. Like Butler, she argues that interpellation

constitutes and constrains agency. Building on this position, Campbell (2005) argues

rhetors and authors create and invent subjects: "they are 'inventors' in the rhetorical sense, articulators who link past and present . . . In this sense, agency is invention, including the invention, however temporary, of *personae*, subject-positions, and collectivities" (p. 5). In this way, rhetors find connections between various topics and people, calling them (and themselves) into being as an act of performance, extending on McGee's (1975) notion of "the people" as invention. Such connective invention can help the audience to see how they are similar and bring people together on the issue. Additionally, the text itself can prompt a particular response. Generic rhetoric draws particular responses from the audience due to expectations of the genre, and Campbell and Jamieson (1990) demonstrate the power of presidential generic rhetoric. In this way, "texts have agency" (Campbell, 2005, p. 7). Recognizing the power that both the rhetor and text have is important to understanding complexities of agency.

Finally, Campbell concludes that agency can be mixed, taking on different forms and roles as it is "promiscuous and protean" (p. 14). Although she calls attention to the fact that agency can be "malign, divisive, and destructive" (p. 7), Campbell fails to fully develop how agency can be destructive. Illustrating her five characteristics of agency, Campbell uses the example of Sojourner Truth and the speech created by Frances Dana Gage. She concludes that Gage's text does contain "malign agency of racist stereotypes;" however, "what began as degrading dialect had and continues to have the agency to transform itself into the silenced voices of Truth's most despised sisters" (p. 14). In this way, something destructive can be turned into a positive. As Campbell eloquently analyzes how the "A'n't I a woman?" speech is a fiction by Gage, it still is based upon

historical facts. Even though the exact content is not what Truth said, Truth *did* speak, which is why Campbell concludes the fiction is ultimately useful. Additionally, Campbell argues that the text allows the silenced to speak; as Truth is a member of a black illiterate slave/former slave community; Truth speaks for her community. Even though this text is invented, it does not have someone speaking about an other; it presents a version of Truth speaking for herself. If the situation were one where someone spoke for someone outside her/his constituted community, would Campbell sanction such an approach for agency? Her theory does not address this possibility and theorists need to delve into discussions of when someone speaks about an other and that other's agency.

Throughout all five characteristics, Campbell assumes that one *can* act, centering on what a subject or First Persona can do. Subjects act and even though they are constrained, still act; the communal part of her *agency* definition expands the scope to those of the subject's community or the intended audience. However, her theory of agency does not address the abject, how one who is constrained, who is silenced, who is excluded can achieve agency; in particular, she does not address situations whereby people in positions of power claim they provide agency *to* the marginalized. Additionally, what happens when rhetors find connections through a false bridge through the Ghost Second Persona or exclude an audience with the Third Persona? Where is the agency for those groups? Theorists need to develop more complex view of agency, recognizing that when one talks about giving/providing agency/freedom *to* an other, such actions are divisive, and reflect agency back onto the giver/provider and not the receiver. Even if one's motives are good, the ultimate end is not agency for the other. Moving

from such an understanding, the next section considers individual and institutional approaches to agency to begin to flesh out the complexities of the subject-abject agency dilemma.

Individual Approaches to Agency

As previously articulated, Butler (1993, 2004a, 2004c) argues that gender is performative and reiterated through norms. Individuals are interpellated and called into being, such as pronouncing a baby a girl or a boy and the continuing gender citations throughout one's life. However, individuals can disrupt these citations. As gender must reiterate itself, within these repetitive acts "gaps and fissures are opened up as the constitutive instabilities in such constructions" (Butler, 1993, p. 10). Thus, places exist for change through the practices which constitute individuals as subjects, through repetitions "that [fail] to repeat loyally" (Butler, 1993, p. 220). Karyln Kohrs Campbell (2005) agrees, arguing that agency is learned, and through repetitions can fix or change meanings: "Agency emerges out of performances or actions that, when repeated, fix meaning through sedimentation. Agency equally emerges in performances that repeat with a difference, altering meaning" (p. 7). Individuals can then turn norms against themselves to disrupt their meaning.

As an example, Butler (1993) offers the idea of reclaiming and reconstituting language as a strategy for disloyal repetitions of norms. Examining the word *queer* and queer practices to protests AIDS, Butler argues that those who have been abjected as *queer* can redefine queer by using the citational practices that turn it on its head:

> The subject who is "queered" . . . *takes up* or *cites* that very term as the discursive basis for an opposition. This kind of citation will emerge as *theatrical* to the

extent that it *mimes and renders hyperbolic* the discursive convention that it also *reverses.* The hyperbolic gesture is crucial to the exposure of the homophobic "law" that can no longer control the terms of its own abjecting strategies. (p. 232)

By this, Butler means that discursive strategies can indeed be strategies for creating change. The destructive power of language can be inverted to become a force of positive change.

Unfortunately, in *Bodies that Matter*, Butler does not clearly articulate the exact specifics of how individuals can reclaim agency through subverting language. Although Butler (1993) says that we need to claim terms such as *women* and *queer* "in reverse" (p. 229), she does not elaborate further on what such reversibility would look like. The question of how to achieve agency *is* important; however, if the ultimate conclusion of Butler's work is to offer a theoretical alternative that cannot be grasped and practiced, then its usefulness for fighting tyranny is lost. Thus, we need to take a more critical look at Butler's description of agency in relationship to her earlier heuristic vocabulary.

Butler's theory of identity formation suggests that subjects require abjects to exist, for without the abject, no subject can be formed—there will be no dividing line and nothing to discard as refuse. If Butler is right, then how can those who are abject reclaim language? Those who are called queer (or even woman) do not stand as subjects, but they exist as excluded features of others' hegemonic identities—heterosexual (or man). I argue that the reversibility of language for which Butler calls suggests a new order. In order to embrace the abject, those who have been abjected must attain standing by "chucking" something in order to attain subject status. When reclaiming language, what does an abject discard in order to be?

For example, take the case of *cunt*. Many do not like the word and some even abhor it. *Cunt* names a sexualized, loose man-hating woman. I, however, am absolutely in love with the word *cunt* and consider myself a cunt lover. I draw inspiration from Inga Muscio's (2002) *Cunt: A Declaration of Independence* which reclaims the word *cunt* and articulates a positive cunt attitude towards women's lives. I chose to embrace this word and Muscio's ideology of cuntlovin'. Being a cunt lover pays tribute to the power of women, as well as the etymology of *cunt*. Originating from terms of respect and endearment for women, "'cunt' is related to words from India, China, Ireland, Rome and Egypt. Such words were either titles of respect for women, priestesses and witches, or derivatives of the names of various goddesses" (Muscio, 2002, p. 5). As a cunt lover, my goal is to create new body practices. I am sexual and proud. I sometimes wear a t-shirt which mirrors the book cover, with the word *cunt* written on a gerbera daisy.

My actions illuminate Butler's (1993) idea of creating gaps and fissures and Campbell's (2005) description of agency as performance that repeats with difference. My actions are a disloyal repetition of what it means to be a woman, for when wearing the t-shirt I often get strange looks, or even the absolute refusal to look at me for fear of seeing the "c-word" written so boldly between my breasts. When I wear the shirt, I affirm the power of being a strong, independent minded woman. In essence, I am attempting to "chuck" that which is negative about female gender performance—the virgin/whore dichotomy, the aggressive bitchy woman, and so on—to attain agency.

But are my cuntlovin' practices truly examples of what Butler (1993) means by reversing terms to counter their previously "*deformative* and *misappropriative* power" (p.

229)? From my discussions with people, women in particular, they are not willing to let go of the negative associations of the word *cunt* in order that a new meaning emerge. My cunt performance, even though it repeats with difference, may therefore fail Campbell's (2005) test of agency of being recognized by my community. Additionally, people's reluctance to embrace *cunt* confirms what Butler says concerning the history of discourse: one cannot merely cut off or delink a word from its historical context. She (1993) writes, "Neither power nor discourse are rendered anew at every moment; they are not as weightless as the utopics of radical resignification might imply" (p. 224). Thus, while attempting to create positive meanings for *cunt*, I am confronted by the negative associations of the word itself. It appears that positive connotations for a derogatory term are hard to put into play. The abject power of *cunt* overwhelms the subject creating power reflected in its historical etymology.

Faced with the difficulty of reclaiming the word *cunt*, questions arise: can one person change an association of a derogatory word? How many people are needed? How many times does an individual need to do disloyal repetitions before a term can enter a new citational practice? How can an abject be transformed at all when other subjects need it to exist? As gender is created through stylized repetitions, it might be undone through reversing those norms into new stylized repetitions or citations. However, it seems one isolated person cannot make an absolute and complete difference but merely personal. In fact, individual acts of subversion can have potentially dangerous results.

Take the case of Venus Xtravaganza from Jennie Livingston's (1991) film *Paris is Burning*. The documentary depicts drag balls in New York City where African American and Latino drag queens compete in beauty contests, as well as documenting the lives of ball participants. Butler (1993) illustrates how these performances are citational practices of gendered norms. Part of the competition is to be recognized as "real," as a woman. Butler (1993) articulates how realness, then, is an aspired quality:

> It is a standard that is used to judge any given performance within the established categories [of the ball]. And yet what determines the effect of realness is the ability to compel belief, to produce the naturalized effect. This effect is itself the result of an embodiment of norms, a reiteration of norms . . . (p. 129)

Thus, one of the desired goals for participants is to be seen as real, as a "natural" woman. Venus aspires to be seen as a "natural" woman; for her, this is particularly important as she is a preoperative transsexual—that is, one whose gender identity and physical genitalia do not correlate. For Venus, this means that although she has the physical genitalia of a male, her gender identity is female/feminine, creating a mismatch which she ultimately wants to correct by having sex reassignment surgery. Venus offers the pleasure of her company and body to male clientele in order to make a living and save money for the surgery. Appallingly, she is murdered when a male client discovers that she has a penis. Most likely, he feels that Venus has "deceived" him and therefore is justified in mutilating and killing her. For all her attempts at realness, the very reason that her client kills her is to fix her within her abject status, thereby ensuring his own heterosexuality. The price for his subjectivity is her life.

The tragic example of Venus gives me pause. Because the subject requires the abject in order to know that it is a subject, how can words or identities ever be reclaimed

or resignified? Again, I return to my previous query, when reclaiming or resignifying language, what does one refuse? Does the abject chuck back the negative stereotypes onto the "chucker"/subject? If so, what are the implications for the abject who refuses particular stereotypes, and what are the implications for throwing them at persons whose own subject status has depended on their power to deploy these stereotypes? It seems that actions that would throw stereotypes back in the faces of those who have deployed them merely recreate the subject/abject dichotomy.

Within my own example of *cunt*, this reversibility may take place. For instance, Muscio (2002) identifies three attitudes towards *cunt*: cuntlove, cuntfear, and cunthatred (pp. 98, 109, 160). From these three standpoints, three types of people emerge: cuntlovers, cuntfearers, and cunthaters (although Muscio does not explicitly use these labels, it is a logical outgrowth of her three cunt-ist attitudes). Clearly, the last two types are negative, as she identifies cuntfear and cunthatred as hateful towards women (in Butler's terminology, cuntfears or haters are the chuckers/subjects). The new category of cuntlovers may heap back onto Muscio and other cuntlovers the negative associations of *cunt* claimed by its fearers/haters.

Therefore, working weakness within the norm can be individually empowering, as I have found strength in my own cunt actions. However, these individual acts may or may not spill over into society to have a broad influence. Additionally, resignification of language can be used for a variety of purposes, and by itself is insufficient for political change: "resignification alone is not a politics, is not sufficient for a politics, is not enough. . . . Appropriation can be used by the Right and the Left, and there are not

necessary salutary ethical consequences for 'appropriation' " (Butler, 2004c, p. 223). As

institutions both constrain and enable individuals, theories of agency also must focus on

changing institutions.

<div align="center">The Vulnerable Body as an Institutional Response</div>

One way to change institutions is to change the orientation of institutions towards

violence through Butler's concept of the vulnerable body. The ultimate goal of her

theory is to find "collective means . . . to protect bodily vulnerability without precisely

eradicating it" (Butler, 2004c, p. 231). The questions which orient her thinking are first,

"what makes for a grievable life?" (2004c, p. 18), and second, "what [do] humans require

in order to maintain and produce the conditions of their own livability" (2004c, p. 226).

These are not idle questions. By asking whose lives are grievable, Butler is asking about

the conditions which enable some to be grieved and others to be forgotten or erased;

some are considered subjects whereas others are dismissed as abjects. She (2004b)

argues,

> Some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of
> grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which
> kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary
> conceptions of who is normatively human: what counts as a livable life and a
> grievable death? (pp. xiv-xv)

Those who are not grievable are not considered subjects; thus, a politics of the vulnerable

body recognizes all as subjects and counters dehumanization.

The process of seeing some human lives as grievable and others as negligible

creates subjects and abjects—the very means of dehumanization. Dehumanization,

recognizing some people as less than, creates those who do not qualify as "life": "Certain

humans are recognized as less than human, and that form of qualified recognition does not lead to a livable life" (Butler, 2004c, p. 2). Thus, just as there are norms which call us into gendered being (the process of "girling" and "boying" that Butler describes in *Bodies that Matter*), there are norms which constitute us as human. Seeking examples of those who fall outside of the category of human, Butler discusses how those who are transgendered, transsexual, and homosexual exist outside the domain of human. They are not recognized as having the rights of a human. Furthermore, when someone is forced outside the human, violence can be done to them. After all, they are not considered "real":

> Certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanized . . . This . . . then gives rise to a physical violence that in some sense delivers the message of dehumanization which is already at work in this culture. (Butler, 2004c, p. 25)

In this sense, those who are considered abject are not considered "human", and there is no need to provide humane treatment for the abjects/non-humans, providing little to no protection from violence by subjects/humans. Butler's new, more complex view of abjection, of not being human, helps to further explain why Venus from *Paris is Burning* is killed. As a trans person, she is not considered to be within the two-sex/gender dimorphism—thus, she is not human, and unfortunately she is killed for not being recognized as such.

However, although some norms dehumanize and render some human subjects unintelligible (or consign them to the realm of the uninhabitable, to use language from *Bodies that Matter*), Butler offers hope in the form of the notion the *vulnerable body*. Just as we are all constituted gendered beings, we are all constituted as vulnerable bodies:

"we are constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies; we are constituted as fields of desire and physical vulnerability, at once publicly assertive and vulnerable" (Butler, 2004c, p. 18). Not only are we physically vulnerable, but also we are all socially vulnerable. All humanity shares this vulnerability, as we all depend upon each other. Just as the other holds us in the mirror (drawing from Lacan), so too does our life literally and politically depend upon others.

Therefore, we have three choices: (1) we can embrace vulnerability which allows us to see linkages to those who are considered outside of the human, outside of the grievable as every person is vulnerable, (2) we can attempt to overcome our vulnerability by pretending it does not exist, or (3) we can engage in acts that seek to diminish our vulnerability (such as the war on terror). Butler favors the first option, as the second and third may lead to violence. After all, securing one's position can do violence to another who does not fit what is considered human, as we saw with Venus. Feigning invulnerability squanders a valuable political opportunity: "The attempt to foreclose that vulnerability, to banish it . . . is surely also to eradicate one of the most important resources from which we must take our bearings and find our way" (Butler, 2004c, p. 23). By embracing our vulnerability, of accepting that we are divided beings who can never secure wholeness, we allow for more productive lives.

Butler (2004c) focuses on institutions and how they can enact this new vulnerable body ethic: "changing the institutions by which humanly viable choice is established and maintained is a prerequisite for the exercise of self-determination. In this sense, individual agency is bound up with social critique and social transformation" (p. 7).

Thus, institutions and their policies can help to create positive conditions for viable human life. For example, Butler (2004c) describes her work on the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission in San Francisco: They "respond to immediate acts of violence against sexual minorities . . . including transgender and intersexed individuals as well as persons with HIV or AIDS . . . especially when that violence [is] not redressed in any way by local police or government" (p. 34). The tipping point for social change then hinges on having a critical idea that can be implemented by a body, such as the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

Butler's theory of the vulnerable body reorients ourselves to the idea that we are vulnerable, both physically and politically, and argues to enact that awareness through institutions. Additionally, Butler's newer theory focuses more on what those in power and privilege can do than the disloyal repetition of resignification. Although I enjoy reclaiming the power of *cunt*, I do not see many heterosexual white men participating in that project. However, I do see the possibility of broad coalitions forming around the idea of the vulnerable body, as the framework for an international antiviolence campaign. Regardless of whether or not a white Euro American heterosexual male has been threatened with violence, they could be violated, and thus, they can band together with other people who have been more traditionally at risk of physical violence. For such men, this does require embracing, rather than chucking, vulnerability. Ultimately, such a move requires a new consciousness or understanding of masculinity, but is possible through the idea of the vulnerable body. Recognizing that all are vulnerable provides equal footing for all regards of their place within the world.

However, Butler's theory still has some difficulties to work out, including applying it to the abject. How do we apply this theory to those who are seen as totally outside of the human, the abject other? How does it bring everyone into the fold of humanity? Let's take one example of Gender Identity Disorder (GID). The American Psychiatric Association (2000) outlines the following criteria for the disorder:

> a strong and persistent cross-gender identification . . . persistent discomfort with his or her sex and sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex . . . the disturbance is not concurrent with a physical intersex condition . . . [and] the disturbance causes significant distress or impairment. (pp. 259-260)

The GID diagnosis has been hailed by some as productive whereas others see it as destructive. On one hand, advocates for the diagnosis contend GID is valuable as it allows trans individuals to transition from one sex to another; with the diagnosis, medical insurance companies help to cover the cost. On the other hand, critics argue that it pathologizes trans people, calling them "ill, sick, wrong, out of order, abnormal" (Butler, 2004c, p. 76). In writing about GID, Butler powerfully argues that at the same time GID pathologizes individuals, it also allows them economic resources for surgical reassignment. How would a theory of the vulnerable body allow us to overcome this paradox? Would it simply say that in a society driven towards perfection, we are all dissatisfied with our bodies and thus all of us should have insurance companies cover any cosmetic surgery (and just eliminate the GID)? Does this more universalizing approach erase the meaningful differences between humans? If there were limited economic resources, would it be better to offer sex-reassignment than a breast enlargement or reduction? How do we make these practical choices?

Butler could respond to my questions by citing the forward edge of her theorizing. She argues against the cookie-cutter approach to theory, and instead argues that theory is full of unknowns: "[T]o assume responsibility for a future is not to know its direction fully in advance, since the future, especially the future with and for others, requires a certain openness and unknowingness" (2004c, p. 226). However, I long for more specific guidance on applications of her theory all the same. I do not want a cookie-cutter approach, but wish that Butler would more directly apply her theory of vulnerable bodies to the case studies she includes within *Undoing Gender*: sex reassignment, GID, and marriage. For example, with the case of GID, she states, "we must be undone in order to do ourselves" (2004c, p. 100). Again, what does she mean? I understand how norms can be used in violent ways; that is clear in both *Bodies that Matter* as well as *Undoing Gender*. My struggle is how to create positive change, and to use norms to disable violent norms.

Perhaps Butler cannot provide clear cut answers because the nature of norms is always to be potentially two-sided, having both enabling and disabling features (which would align Butler with Foucault who says that power can be both productive and destructive). It seems that the theory of vulnerable bodies says just that: norms are never exclusively constructive or destructive, but they all have the *potential* to be positive, negative, or both. The way in which we deal with our vulnerability determines whether the outcome will be good, bad, or ugly. As we are all divided beings, we cannot ever truly be whole. It seems, then, that Butler has a new way of looking at Lacanian and Hegelian notions of being which underlie her theorizing: instead of continuously trying to

recapture a united self, we should accept (at least on some level) that we are divided beings, and we share that in common with all people. The struggle then becomes to live in a good way with others, as through the vulnerable body.

However, simply recognizing the vulnerability of all humanity is not enough, as it centers on negative outcomes—violence. Agency must also include both positive and negative freedoms, as well as creating and sustaining conditions for those freedoms to be upheld. Positive freedoms are *freedoms to* such as the freedom to vote, to control one's reproductive choices, and so on. By contrast, negative freedoms are *freedoms from*, such as freedom from violence such as rape, police brutality, torture and other bodily harms. Negative freedoms are a by-product of the logic of muscular IR and Lakoff's (1991) hero-victim logic of protection; when violence occurs, there is the need for someone to stop it and protect the victims. By contrast, positive freedoms eliminate (or at least minimize) the need for a hero by concentrating on constructive actions that all can participate.

However, many times agency is framed solely within negative freedom because it is easier to identify violence being done to victims, as opposed to structural changes that positive freedoms may require. Rosalind P. Petchesky (2005), professor of political science at Hunter College and Graduate Centre of City University of New York, notes:

> Negative rights—proclamations against the catalogue of horrors—always win broader sympathy than the affirmative ones. This is in part because protections against abuses and violence are easily associated with stereotypical images of women and girls as fragile victims . . . On another level, the affirmative rights of freedoms to, capacity and entitlement usually assume sizable commitments of material and human resources; if carried out fully, they would require radical structural changes involving curtailment of market hegemony and privatisation in favour of greater emphasis on social responsibility and solidarity. (p. 304)

Therefore, freedoms from horrors continue victim status, and policies of empowerment must move beyond simply preventing horrors to ensuring freedoms to actions. Thus, both positive and negative freedoms are essential in terms of politics of agency. Butler's (2004b & 2004c) theory of vulnerable bodies articulates how all are vulnerable to violence, and serves as a prerequisite for positive freedoms to emerge. If we are all subject to violence, then we are all on the same plane—the vulnerable body redefines what it means to be a subject by looking at how we can all be abjected. If we can all be violated, then we all need to have protections for all types of rights. Thus, agency can be found by combining the theory of vulnerable bodies with attention to both positive and negative freedoms.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATING BUSH'S IRAQ RHETORIC

Moving from this more complex notion of agency, I apply it the George W. Bush administration's rhetoric concerning the second Iraq war. First, I summarize the events leading up to and during the war. Then, I note caution regarding feminist IR literature. Finally, I apply notions of performance, speaking for others, and persona to specific Bush rhetoric and evaluate their implications for agency.

Brief History of the Iraq War

After the first Gulf War, a system of United Nations (UN) sanctions and weapons inspections were established in order to deter, check, and contain potential Iraqi aggression. However, President George W. Bush argued that the twelve years of sanctions and UN resolutions between 1991 and 2003 failed, and thus allowed Saddam Hussein to gain weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which made him a direct threat to the United States. This line of argument fits into Bush's (2002) overall National Security Strategy of the United States, whereby the potential acquisition of WMD is made equivalent to an act of war:

> Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination. The United States will not allow these efforts to succeed. We will build defenses against ballistic missiles and other means of delivery. We will cooperate with other nations to deny, contain, and curtail our enemies' efforts to acquire dangerous technologies. And, as a matter of common sense and self-defense, *America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed* [italics added]. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. So we must be prepared to defeat our enemies' plans, using the best intelligence and proceeding with deliberation. (p. 4)

Given the National Security Strategy, the Bush administration did not need to prove the actual existence of WMD, but merely the desire to acquire or the potential acquisition of weapons by a hostile power in order to justify a pre-emptive war of defense.

Concentrating on providing evidence of a nefarious and dangerous Hussein, Bush briefed the nation on the situation on March 17, 2003, when he gave Hussein an ultimatum to leave the country within 48 hours or face military conflict. Bush's (2003f) evidence justifying potential military invasion was based on military intelligence that "leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. This regime has already used weapons of mass destruction against Iraq's neighbors and against Iraq's people" (p. 338). Additionally, Bush linked Iraq to the September 11 attacks, arguing that Iraq could supply WMD to terrorists:

> [Hussein's] regime has a history of reckless aggression in the Middle East. It has a deep hatred of America and our friends. And it has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda. . . . [U]sing chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country, or any other. (pp. 338-9)

By linking Hussein with Al-Qaeda, Bush bolstered his argument about an imminent terrorist acquisition of nuclear weapons, with the intention to use such weapons.

The president needed to provide evidence of a specific threat because the public support for military action had dropped, while opposition to a war had risen. This is evidenced by a Pew Research Center for the People & the Press survey conducted the week before the President's speech:

> In the United States, support for military action in Iraq dropped over the past two months, from 68% in January to 59% in the days leading up to the president's

March 17 speech on Iraq (March 13-16). Opposition to military action rose five points over the same period (from 25% in January to 30% today). (2003a, p. 6)

Thus, the decision to go to war countered both the fluctuating public opinion and the gathering weapons threat that existed in Iraq.

When Hussein refused to comply with Bush's ultimatum to leave Iraq, Bush deployed combat troops on March 19, 2003. Then, after only two months of active combat, President Bush declared "mission accomplished" and the end of major combat operations on May 1, 2003, although military troops remained actively deployed. After May 2003, the American public began to question the need for further military deployment in Iraq. According to a Pew Research Center survey on October 21, 2003, support for the war fell over the summer of 2003, with less than one in five believing that things in Iraq "are going very well" (p. 2). This feeling continued throughout the following months, with only a short boost with the December capture of Hussein. Even with Hussein's capture and detention, the U.S. public remained concerned about the rising casualties in the war reconstruction efforts, and a sizeable portion of the population surveyed (44%) felt the president did not have an adequate plan for a successful conclusion (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2003c, pp. 1-2).

From January to April 2004, the public continued to question the effectiveness of the Bush administration in Iraq. A comprehensive Pew Research Center survey released on April 5, 2004, documented the negative public attitude towards Iraq:

> Just four-in-ten approve of the way Bush is handling the situation in Iraq, his lowest rating ever and down from 59% in January . . . And by a wide margin (57% to 32%) the public does not think he has a clear plan for bringing the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion. . . . Just 50% of Americans favor

keeping troops in Iraq until a stable government is established there, while 44% support bringing the troops home as soon as possible. (p. 1)

Clearly, the Bush administration needed to defend its position on Iraq as the President was increasingly lacking credibility on the subject of Iraq.

This thesis utilizes speeches from the buildup to the war, the beginning stages of military invasion, as well as the 2004 Republican National Convention as most of the war justifications regarding the Iraqi people are fleshed out during this timeframe. The goal is not a rhetorical analysis of all Bush administration's rhetoric regarding Iraq and its war justifications; rather, it is to show how particular rhetoric demonstrates the themes outlined in the previous chapters.

Words of Caution

Any discussion of international relations or war, even from a feminist point of view, needs to be careful of its language and assumptions, so that it does not fall into the trap of colonial feminism, victimhood, or false universality. For example, feminist criticisms of IR traditionally focus on women in primarily two lights: either as female activists or female victims which casts judgment on those whom do not fit within particularized feminist notions based upon a Westernized version of feminism. Drawing on Chandra Talpade Mohanty's (2003) critique of anthropology, my parallel criticism of IR lies in the fact that women are not in an either/or position, as is implied within the feminist IR focus, but instead women are a heterogeneous group, compromised of women from the left, right, middle, feminists and non-feminists alike, as well as diverse in race, class, ethnicity, and country of origin.

From the late 1970s through the mid 1990s, feminist scholars have fought an uphill battle to prove the fact that women are important in international relations, and that IR is, indeed, "a *gendered* discourse" (Steans, 1998, p. 46). Many of the early classic feminist IR texts, including Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (1990), Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland's edited volume *Gender and International Relations* (1991), and Ann J. Tickner's *Gender in International Relations* (1992) all stress that the categories of women and gender need to be included in foreign policy and IR. Enloe, Grant and Newland, and Tickner all stress the fact that high politics issues, such as security, war, and the military, also have implications for and on women.

In order to further develop how women fit into IR, a common argument developed throughout these texts and most mainstream feminist IR scholarship: the notion of women (and gender) as a category of inquiry and analysis. This initially countered the notion of a political actor as male, by demonstrating the absence of female: "The realist conception of the state as actor has been built upon the supposedly unproblematic figure of 'sovereign man'. . . . These same concepts and categories employed by realism make necessary the exclusion of women" (Steans, 1998, p. 46). The typical response to such claims by realists argued that their silence meant nothing, that silence was not deliberate. However, as feminist scholars rightly pointed out, silence is indeed active, for "the construction of assumptions around gender is produced as much by what *is not* said as what *is* said" (Whitworth, 1994, p. 75). Thus, the field of international relations is posited by oppositional relationships: man/woman,

inclusion/exclusion, inside/outside, discussion/silence. Ann J. Tickner (1992) extends the binary relationships of IR into political understandings of gender differentiation:

> Framed in its own set of binary distinctions, the discipline of international relations assumes similarly hierarchical relationships when it posits an anarchic world "outside" to be defended against . . . In political discourse, this becomes translated into stereotypical notions about those who inhabit the outside. Like women, foreigners are frequently portrayed as "the other": nonwhites and tropical countries are often depicted as irrational, emotional, and unstable, characteristics that are also attributed to women. The construction of this discourse and the way in which we are taught to think about international politics closely parallel the way in which we are socialized into understanding gender difference. (pp. 8-9)

Therefore, according to Tickner, just as women, nonwhites, and tropical countries are on the outskirts of IR, so too is gender. Steans's (1998), Tickner's (1992), and others' arguments demonstrate the need for consideration of women/gender in and within IR.

However, a unified conception of women as a category is problematic, as illustrated by Mohanty (2003). Mohanty identifies problems with the use of *woman* as a category as it is not representative of *all* women. Although well intentioned, feminist IR scholars' silence on what constitutes the group of *women* is damaging to their analysis. Just as Whitworth (1994) states, silence on a subject reveals as much, if not more, than what is stated. Tickner (1992) falls into this trap when she attempts to discuss the inside/outside distinctions within IR, unintentionally creating an exclusionary inside/outside of the category woman: "Like women, foreigners are frequently portrayed as 'the other': nonwhites and tropical countries are often depicted as irrational, emotional, and unstable, characteristics that are also attributed to women" (p. 9). This sets women in opposition to foreigners/nonwhites/tropical countries; therefore, this subtle distinction obscures the fact that such identities overlap, particularly in terms of international

relations. Instead, this view assumes that as a category, women are white and non-foreign (to the United States or West presumably). However, as many women in the world are non-white and non-Western, this categorization essentializes and homogenizes what it means to be a woman, by positioning Western women as women and non-Western women as other. Mohanty (2003) describes this process, whereby these two groups are compared against one another:

> By contrasting the representation of women in the Third World with what I referred to earlier as Western feminisms' self-presentation in the same context, we see how Western feminists alone become the true "subjects" of this counterhistory. Third World women, in contrast, never rise above the debilitating generality of their "object" status. (p. 39)

Thus, instead of removing all women from object status and viewing them instead as subjects and actors of foreign policy, only Western women are agents in their own right. This reflects an ethnocentric, racist, and hegemonic notion, and places agency solely with Western women. Feminist critics need to be wary of repositioning themselves solely as agents, as it denies non-Western women agency.

Analyzing Iraq Rhetoric

Moving from this understanding, realist war rhetoric still often contains examples of otherization and victimization. Building on Butler, Cima, and Conquergood's theories of performance, we see abjection and bodily absence within President Bush's Iraq war rhetoric, ultimately restricting Iraqi people's agency. Throughout Bush's discourse and the discourse of his administration about Iraqis, the Iraqis are positioned as victims in need of help—creating the U.S. Federal Government as the savior, the subject. Discourse acts performatively, bringing people into being. By creating the category of helpless

people, President Bush uses a gaze of communicative paternalism. In this way, administrative rhetoric demonstrates both Butler's notions of abjection as well as Cima's understanding of the performative construction of savior/victims. Although Cima's analysis describes a literal visualization of being the other (which President Bush does not do), Bush's rhetoric still fits within Cima's theoretical framework because he paints a picture of what it means to be an Iraqi in contrast to his own subject position, thereby providing an imaginative discursive distinction. This section analyzes three key areas which limit Iraqi agency: speaking for the Iraqi people, processes of objection and abjection, and Ghost Second Persona. Each is examined in turn to show the varied ways agency is limited.

Speaking for Others

I have identified three main approaches to evaluating who can speak: Alcoff's (1995) test involves if the discourse will empower oppressed people; Rakow and Wackwitz's (2004c) argument that the oppressed should only speak and represent themselves; and finally, McGee's (1998) approach advocates critical reflection when speaking with or about an other since representations are inevitable. Using President Bush's Iraq war rhetoric as rhetorical texts, I examine how each approach functions.

First, Alcoff argues that speaking for others is appropriate if the outcome will empower oppressed people. At the beginning of official military operations, President Bush describes freedom on the march to the Iraqi people, saying, "They [U.S. troops] bring security to our country, and, at the same time, bring freedom to the Iraqi people" (2003q, p. 441). At the 2004 Republican National Convention, freedom's journey

culminates: "The terrorists are fighting freedom with all their cunning and cruelty because freedom is their greatest fear and they should be afraid, because *freedom is on the march* [italics added]" (para. 51). In this way, freedom is personified as an agent who is involved in the military fight in Iraq. Freedom acts on its own, as it is "spreading south to north" (Bush, 2003m, p. 418), "taking root" (Bush, 2005, p. 483), as well as permeating the entire country: "Village by village, city by city, liberation is coming" (Bush, 2003l, p. 414). Additionally, Bush argues for celebration of the situation in Iraq post invasion: "As people throughout Iraq celebrate the *arrival* of freedom, America celebrates with them [italics added]" (2003p, p. 436).

On the surface, it appears that becoming free would empower Iraqis; however, as the rhetoric is couched as something occurring *to* Iraq, it limits their agency because they cannot free themselves but instead are victims in need of assistance. As freedom operates by itself, spreading, marching, arriving in the country of Iraq, victory lies not within the newly freed people, but whomever was the catalyst for freedom's occurrence—i.e. the United States and coalition forces. Ultimately, Alcoff's test fails to consider that when someone speaks *about* an other it can be disempowering, as evidenced by Bush's descriptions of freedom occurring *to* the Iraqi people.

Secondly, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004c) advocate that oppressed people should only speak for themselves. President Bush frequently uses stories of Iraqi people, some told by themselves and some transmitted through various channels. However, all the stories ultimately are Iraqi stories of violence and gratitude which position the Iraqis as abject victims in need of help from the United States.

Using stories from the frontline of combat, President Bush describes Iraqi citizens who are grateful for U.S. military presence: "A man in one Iraqi village said this to one of our soldiers: 'I want my freedom, [*sic*] I don't want food or water. I just want my freedom.' America hears that man" (2003k, p. 406); as well as "one of the Iraqi men who took a sledgehammer to the pedestal of the giant statue of Saddam had this to say: 'I'm 49, but I never lived a single day. Only now will I start living' " (2003p, p. 435). In these stories, the Iraqi men tell U.S. soldiers thank you for their efforts. Just as Cima described how abolitionists identified themselves as the good people who saved the black slaves, so too are the white U.S. soldiers here to save the brown Iraqis, who are fundamentally grateful for such help. However, several problems exist with using these stories as justification for U.S actions. There is little, if any, way to determine the authenticity of these stories, as these are unnamed men meant to represent the Iraqi masses, and go through many channels (Iraqi man to possible translator to U.S. soldier to third party to President Bush to audience). Additionally, these stories are told to the U.S. soldiers, and those Iraqis are much more likely to be sympathetic to U.S. troops.

Similarly, President Bush repeatedly tells a story about seven Iraqi businessmen who had their right hands amputated by orders from Saddam Hussein. In discussing their visit to the U.S. to get new prosthetic hands and subsequent trip to the White House, he describes one man's gratitude for the United States removing Hussein:

> The Oval Office door opens up and in walks seven men from Iraq, all of whom had had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. They had been to Houston, Texas, where a newscaster had . . . [flown] them to Houston to get new hands. . . . The guy takes a Sharpie. He holds the pen, and he writes "God Bless America" in Arabic. . . . He said, "Thank God for America." He said, "You're my liberator." I said, "No, I want you to walk out and look in the camera, and I want you to

thank the moms and dads of our service people and the taxpayers of America for liberating you and making you free." (2004a, p. 1656)

This story is one of the lack of Iraqis' power over Hussein, and thus the need for outside intervention and liberation. These men are not physically fighting against the Saddam regime, but instead are using assisted prosthetic hands to silently write praises for U.S. action. Emphasizing the cutting off of their hands identifies Hussein with outdated barbaric practices, crafting him as the villain. Bush's recounting of the story not only demonstrates the power that Hussein had in Iraq, but also his own power, through the presidency and the United States, to change the course of events. While it may seem just a simple story, it demonstrated the power of the U.S. to use its force to help men who have lost an important part of their body and of their masculinity.

The most notable Iraqi to speak for her/himself is Iraqi-American Zainab al-Suwaij, the Executive Director of the American Islamic Congress (AIC), at the 2004 Republican National Convention. Born in southern Iraq, she was one of very few women who participated in the 1991 uprising against Hussein. After the failure to overthrow the regime, al-Suwaij moved to the United States, raised her family, and taught Arabic at Yale University (Cassidy, 2003, p. A11). After the attacks of September 11, she organized the AIC with the goals of "building interfaith and interethnic understanding," encouraging Muslim Americans to "take the lead in building tolerance and fostering a respect for human rights and social justice," and to demonstrate that Islamic individuals are a "moderate and peace-loving people" (American Islamic Congress, n.d., n.p.). She has been an outspoken critic of the Hussein government, and has repeatedly called for the United States to intervene to liberate the Iraqi people. In an editorial to the *Wall Street*

Journal on September 11, 2002, she wrote: "In 1991, the U.S. made a promise to the people of Iraq about Saddam Hussein. Over a decade later, America has yet to make good on its word" (para. 2). Thus, her calls for the United States to do something about the situation in Iraq made her an appropriate speaker for the RNC.

Her speech paints a very specific picture of a woman justifying help from another country. Appearing in hijab, she tells her story of how she witnessed Hussein's horrors. The wearing of the hijab serves as a visual reminder of what the veil has typically come to represent in the West (oppression), as well as linking Iraq back to Afghanistan and the war on terror. More specifically, she identified Hussein's particular horrors as "a murderer who used every weapon in his arsenal against us—from tanks to torture chambers to poison gas" (2004, para. 5). Indeed, "the last 3 decades" have been a raging war by "Saddam against his own people" (2004, para. 6, 7). By pointing at herself, she reminds the audience that she was a potential target, and that Hussein was against people just like her. By loosely identifying events such as the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds, the audience is reminded that Hussein did, at least at one time, possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The implicit conclusion from these horrors is the fact that Hussein would not hesitate to use WMD again; after all, he used it against his own people.

After the description of these horrific events, al-Suwaij then professes her gratitude to President Bush and the armed forces of the United States, saying "America, under the strong, compassionate leadership of President Bush, has given Iraqis the most precious gift any nation has ever given another—the gift of democracy and the freedom

to determine its own future" (2004, para. 10). However, these depictions do not "save" the women or children from their current state, but instead again continue to mask the violence that they face. Although Hussein is out of power, it is difficult to see whether or not the people are better off, and the story within the convention does not address this question. Although al-Suwaij provided evidence that the Iraqi people are better off now with the gifts of democracy and freedom, these are asserted gifts. The current situation does not allow "the Iraqi people" to make their own choices.

Additionally, it is difficult to discern to what degree she represents how the Iraqi people felt about the war: she does not have plans to permanently return to Iraq; she did not work for the cause of Iraqis in the interim between the wars; she has had limited contact with post-war Iraq, and instead "plans to return to her quiet American existence after giving what assistance she can" (Schifferes, 2003, para. 28). Thus, her credibility to be a speaker on behalf of all Iraqi people is questionable. The Bush administration's choice of al-Suwaij for the 2004 Republican National Convention probably had more to do with the fact that she supported regime change by the United States than her ability to speak directly to the situation at hand. Overall, the administration's use of her as a symbol for all Iraq does not take into account the numerous different opinions of the war, both within the U.S. and Iraq (see Featherstone, 2004; Mahmoud, 2004; Organisation for Women's Freedom in Iraq, 2004; Riverbend, 2004; Soueif, 2004; Thobani, 2003).

None of my analysis is meant to suggest that these particular Iraqis are not better off post-Hussein; in many ways, they can be better off. However, my point is that when these stories are upheld as representative of a unified position of the Iraqi people

speaking with one voice to support for U.S. military intervention, that such a move is problematic. Ayotte and Husain (2005) argue for recognition that such stories of the oppressed are filtered through a dominant lens:

> The key is to maintain a constantly reflexive skepticism toward the adequacy of our own (U.S.) representations of the "plight" of third-world women. . . . Even if their accounts could be unproblematically interpreted as immediate and generalizable reflections of reality, that discourse has already been edited, prompted by certain lines of questioning, i.e., mediated. This is not to suggest that the women's stories are false, but rather that even their indigenous narratives are inflected by their representation in an inevitably Western discourse. (p. 116)

Utilizing these stories as the sole story silences any Iraqi who dissents from Bush's viewpoint; this demonstrates the difficulty in listening to oppressed groups as there are always competing points of view. Additionally, these stories always identify Iraqis as the abject, as the stories are always about violence and oppression, which limits their agency.

Finally, McGee (1998) argues that one cannot avoid speaking for others, as one must speak about issues. One solution is to speak in solidarity with oppressed groups. President Bush did use stories from Iraq and Iraqis to endorse the war effort; however, he also argued that they silently cried out for intervention because of Hussein's horrors, inferring that they both needed and asked for help without actually speaking.

Bush paints a picture of Hussein gripping the Iraqi people by the throat, squashing any speech: "Slowly but surely, the grip of terror around the throats of the Iraqi people is being loosened" (2003h, p. 383); after Hussein's statue fell in Baghdad, "I don't think I'll ever forget . . . seeing the jubilation on the faces of ordinary Iraqis as they realized that the grip of fear that had them by the throat had been released—the first signs of freedom" (2003o, p. 427); and finally that the "grip I used to describe that Saddam had around the

throats of the Iraqi people are [*sic*] loosening. I can't tell you if all 10 fingers are off the throat, but finger by finger, it's coming off" (2003m, p. 418). And, when questioned about Iraqi demonstrations against U.S. efforts, Bush responds by framing the issue around Hussein's regime: "when people are free, they can express their opinions. You know, they [Iraqis] couldn't express their opinions before we came; now they can" (2003r, p. 456).

Because of Hussein's power to prevent free speech, the President argues the United States is answering a silent call for help, as they "plead in silence for their liberty" (2004b, para. 54), and that "we [America] hear all Iraqis who yearn for liberty" (2003k, p. 406). He tells U.S. troops at the MacDill Air Force base that they are answering a call for help: "The Army Special Forces define their mission in a motto: 'To Liberate the Oppressed.' . . . *We are answering that call* [italics added]. We have no ambition in Iraq except the liberation of its people" (2003g, p. 381). After years of torture, Bush (2003v) describes a victimization mentality and psychology which prevented them from speaking: the Iraqis "have been subjugated for years and years and years. . . . you can imagine the psychology of a country . . . under Saddam. Slowly but surely, people are now beginning to develop the habits necessary for a free society to emerge" (p. 1100).

Throughout such rhetoric, Bush denies the Iraqis agency by speaking for them; he claims that he knows what they want because they were silenced and could not speak. In this case, it is impossible to know whether or not Bush speaks in solidarity with the Iraqi people simply because he argues they cannot speak. In these ways, Bush positions the United States as the one in a position of power against helpless Iraqis, which both

objectifies and abjectifies. This next section further elaborates further on specific rhetoric which contains these exclusions.

Processes of Objection and Abjection

Objection occurs in two main ways: first, where Bush positions U.S. as savior/subject, Saddam Hussein as villain/object, and the Iraqi people victims/abjects; and second, contrasting the "liberating" troops (subjects) to the Iraqi people in need (objects). Abjection occurs where Bush depicts Iraqis as suffering bodies in need rather than people; they exist as the dehumanized uninhabitable. Bush outlines himself through the process of abjection; although such processes do not have an immediate effect on the other, the created and outlined subject then acts on others as determined by its subject status relative to the abject status of the other. The following examples fix the Iraqi people either as object or abject other in relationship to United States as subject; ultimately, such rhetorical moves do not empower the Iraqi people, but continue the status quo power structure and domination. Each is further discussed in turn.

First, the objection begins by looking at the players in the Iraq war: the relation of Iraqi people to the United States where Iraq is a victim of Saddam Hussein. Bush positions Hussein as the villain who dehumanizes and abjectifies the Iraqi people:

> The people of Iraq are not our enemies. The true enemy of the Iraqi people [is] Saddam Hussein . . . [who] regards the Iraqi people as human shields, entirely expendable when their suffering serves his purposes. America views the Iraqi people as human beings who have suffered long enough under this tyrant. (2003c, p. 184)

In this way, Bush lays blame on Hussein for victimizing the Iraqi people, and argues the United States does see the Iraqis as human beings. Indeed, Bush argues the United States

values the Iraqi people whereas Hussein does not: "Unlike Saddam Hussein, we believe

the Iraqi people are deserving and capable of human liberty" (2003f, p. 340); and "Their

lives and their freedom matter little to Saddam Hussein, but Iraqi lives and freedom

matter greatly to us" (2003d, p. 248). However, by vilifying Hussein, it does not place

Iraqis as subjects; rather, by stating that the U.S. values Iraqis, it places the United States

at the center, as the subject against the object of Iraq.

This is further evidenced by Bush rhetoric which contrasts Hussein's efforts to the

U.S. military operation: "The contrast could not be greater between the honorable

conduct of our forces and the criminal acts of the enemy. Every Iraqi atrocity has

confirmed the justice and the urgency of our cause" (2003i, p. 389). More specifically,

Bush (2003d) argues:

> In combat, Saddam's thugs shield themselves with women and children. They
> have killed Iraqi citizens who welcome coalition troops. They force other Iraqis
> into battle by threatening to torture or kill their families. They've executed
> prisoners of war. They've waged attacks under the white flag of truce. They
> concealed combat forces in civilian neighborhoods and schools and hospitals and
> mosques.
>
> In this way, the Iraqi regime is doing—is terrorizing its own citizens, doing every
> possible to maximize Iraqi civilian causalities, and then to exploit the deaths
> they've caused for propaganda. . . .
>
> *In stark contrast* [italics added], the citizens of Iraq are coming to know what kind
> of people we have sent to liberate them. American forces and our allies are
> treating innocent civilians with kindness and showing proper respect to soldiers
> who surrender. Many Americans have seen the picture of Marine Lance Corporal
> Marcco Ware carrying a wounded Iraqi soldier on his shoulders to safety for
> medical treatment. That's the picture of strength and goodness of the U.S.
> Marines. That is a picture of America. (p. 406)

In this scenario, the Iraqis face two different pictures from military forces in their

country: first, Hussein's military as "thugs" use Iraqis as human shields, torture and kill

their own citizens, and execute prisoners; secondly, the U.S. military respects both Iraqi civilians and military, and helps the Iraqi wounded. By using this "stark contrast," Bush again positions Hussein and his backers as the objects against which the United States works, and again the Iraqi people cannot act themselves and remain objectified to fix the subject status of the U.S. forces of liberation.

Second, when talking to the troops, President Bush centers the U.S. military against the need of the Iraqi people, again fixing subject status to the United States. Before military operations began, Bush (2003a) assures the military they will be liberators: "Should Saddam Hussein seals [*sic*] his fate by refusing to disarm, by ignoring the opinions of the world, you will be fighting not to conquer anybody but to liberate people" (p. 25). As evidence of a job well-done, the President periodically reminds the troops that they liberated Iraq, and because of them, the world can now know how subjugated the Iraqi people have been:

> [T]he world is now learning what many of you have seen. They're learning about the mass graves, thousands of people just summarily executed. They're learning about torture chambers. *Because of you* [U.S. troops; italics added], a great evil has ended. *Because of you* [italics added], the dignity of a great nation is being restored. (2003t, p. 731)

Agency here is clearly located in the U.S. troops, as the refrain "because of you" places all responsibility and credit for removing mass graves, executions, torture chambers, and evil with the military. In this way, the Iraqi people cannot claim their own agency; by calling on the numerous victimizations, they are again linked into the victim subject Kapur (2002) critiques.

Continuing to praise the military for protecting the innocent and liberating the

oppressed, Bush (2003s) aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln tells the troops mission

accomplished:

> [A]ll in this generation of our military have taken up the highest calling of
> history. You're defending your country and protecting the innocent from harm.
> And wherever you go, you carry a message of hope, a message that is ancient and
> ever new. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, "To the captives, 'come out,' and to
> those in darkness, 'be free.' " (p. 518)

Thus, the military protects those who cannot protect themselves; those bodies-in-need

again serve as the object which provides the U.S. and the military their subjectivity.

Extending on this line of thought, President Bush outlines the specific benefits for the

oppressed because of the actions of the U.S. military. At the 2004 Republican National

Convention, Bush (2004b) addresses the military services' contributions to the nation and

to Iraq:

> Our troops know the historic importance of our work. One Army Specialist wrote
> home: "We are transforming a once sick society into a hopeful place [*sic*] The
> various terrorist enemies we are facing in Iraq," he continued, "are really aiming
> at you back in the United States. This is a test of will for our country. We soldiers
> of yours are doing great and scoring victories in confronting the evil terrorists."
>
> That young man is right our men and women in uniform are doing a superb job
> for America. Tonight I want to speak to all of them and to their families: You are
> involved in a struggle of historic proportion. Because of your service and
> sacrifice, we are defeating the terrorists where they live and plan, and making
> America safer. . . . *Because of you* [italics added], the people of Iraq no longer
> fear being executed and left in mass graves. *Because of you* [italics added], the
> world is more just and will be more peaceful. We owe you our thanks, and we
> owe you something more. We will give you all the resources, all the tools, and all
> the support you need for victory. (para. 45-6)

Thus, directly because of the military, the Iraqis are free from executions, mass graves,

and terrorism. The military are the ones who have the ability to act, whereas the Iraqi

victims remain victims even after liberation. By continuing to link the Iraqi people to images of horror, violence, oppression, they remain locked into their object/victim status at the expense of the United States subjectivity.

Finally, President Bush as explicitly describes the Iraqi people as bodies in need, the Iraqi people cease to be individuals but rather exist as suffering body parts, the abject. Drawing on images of systemic violence and oppression, a "nightmare world that Saddam Hussein has chosen for them" (2003d, p. 248), in which Iraqis "have lived . . . for more than two decades" (2003j, p. 401), Bush argues that Saddam Hussein committed "three decades of victimization of the Iraqi people" (2003u, p. 825). Beyond a general discussion of oppression and victimization, Bush uses graphic specifics to describe how the Iraqi people were objectified and abjectifed by Hussein. These specifics include: "dissidents in Iraq [being] tortured, imprisoned, and sometimes [they] just disappear[ed]; their hands, feet, and tongues are cut off; their eyes are gouged out and female relatives are raped in their presence" (2003e, p. 329); "scores of mass graves containing the remains of thousands of men, women, and children and torture chambers hidden inside palaces and ministries" (2003u, p. 825), and "forced confessions are obtained, by torturing children while their parents are made to watch. . . . [O]ther methods used in the torture chambers of Iraq [include]: electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on the skin, mutilation with electric drills, cutting out tongues, and rape" (2003b, p. 115-116).

These horror images culminate at the 2004 Republican National Convention, where Hussein himself is named a weapon of mass destruction, "a monster—a walking-

talking weapon of mass destruction" (Pataki, 2004, para. 85). Hussein's actions against

innocent people of both the world community and his own people secure him as a WMD:

"Saddam Hussein, who supported global terrorism, slaughtered hundreds of thousands of

his own people, permitted horrific atrocities against women, and used weapons of mass

destruction, was himself a weapon of mass destruction" (Giuliani, 2004, para. 114).

Calling Hussein a monster and a weapon of mass destruction makes it clear that he is

stripped of his own humanity, as only someone who is utterly devoid of humanity would

do something to his own people. Although Hussein did in fact do horrible actions to his

own people and others, the point is not whether or not he committed such actions, but

whether or not they justify the U.S. military response. One wonders where this moral

outrage for Hussein's actions was when these atrocities were occurring throughout the

thirty years, and why they are only now raising to the level of presidential discourse.

This rhetoric fits into many of the themes of war rhetoric, including Lakoff's

(1991) notion of saving an other from a villain, the idea that otherized bodies sell war,

and by calling Hussein a WMD, it escalates the scale of violence, proving the need for

intervention. All of the examples focus on victim status and use a lens of violence, which

Kapur (2002) powerfully argues fixes those people into victim/abject status.

The Ghost Second Persona

Even when President Bush appears to be addressing the Iraqi people directly as

subjects, he still reinscribes them within victimhood, using only an aside to merely

appear to address them as subjects. Attempting to reassure U.S. citizens and world

leaders of the United States' good intentions, as Bush gives Hussein a 48 hour ultimatum to disarm, he also addresses the Iraqi people:

> Many Iraqis can hear me . . . and I have a message for them: If we must begin a military campaign, it will be directed against the lawless men who rule your country and not against you. As our coalition takes away their power, we will deliver the food and medicine you need. We will tear down the apparatus of terror and we will help you to build a new Iraq that is prosperous and free. In a free Iraq, there will be no more wars of aggression against your neighbors, no more poison factories, no more executions of dissidents, no more torture chambers and rape rooms. The tyrant will soon be gone. The day of your liberation is near. (2003f, p. 339)

Through this, Bush again contrasts the horrors of Hussein and victim status of Iraqis to what the U.S. will bring *to* the country. Once war commenced, Bush again reassures Iraqis of the promise of freedom: "I give this pledge to the citizens of Iraq. We're coming with a mighty force to end the reign of your oppressors. . . . And we are coming, and we will not stop. We will not relent until your country is free" (2003j, p. 401).

Most specifically, President Bush (2003n) on April 10, 2003, releases videotaped remarks to the Iraqi people about U.S. objectives in the war and for their country:

> In the new era that is coming to Iraq, your country will no longer be held captive to the will of a cruel dictator. You will be free—free to build a better life instead of building more palaces for Saddam and his sons, free to pursue economic prosperity without the hardship of economic sanction, free to travel and free to speak your mind, free to join in the political affairs of Iraq. And all the people who make up your country—Kurds, Shi'a, Turkomans, Sunnis, and others—will be free of the terrible persecution that so many have endured.
>
> The nightmare that Saddam Hussein has brought to your nation will soon be over. You are a good and gifted people, the heirs of a great civilization that contributes to all humanity. You deserve better than tyranny and corruption and torture chambers. You deserve to live as free people. And I assure every citizen of Iraq: Your nation will soon be free. (p. 424)

In each of these examples, Bush focuses on the country of Iraq and its leader: "the tyrant will soon be gone" (2003f, p. 339), "we will not relent until your country is free" (2003j, p. 401), and "your nation will soon be free" (2003n, p. 424). Each address then centers around the Iraqi head of state: Saddam Hussein and the problems arising from Hussein's rule rather than about the people of Iraq. Additionally, in the videotaped remarks, Bush's first new freedom post-Hussein country is economic freedom: no more palaces, no more economic sanctions, and instead economic prosperity. Although economic freedom would benefit (some) Iraqis, if Iraq were a more open economy with more goods and services to offer the world market, that would likely benefit the United States and other importers of Iraqi goods, such as oil. Without the burdens of building palaces and sanctions, the implied result is increased productivity of natural resources, such as oil, and other marketable goods.

Each address appears to directly address the Iraqi people but instead are statements about the need to remove Hussein for a safer world as well as the possibility of increased economic goods for the United States. Thus, instead of a direct address to the Iraqi people, it is a pretense as it really reassures critics in the United States (Hussein is bad leader and should be removed; with Hussein's removal Iraq will have a greater economy). As none of these speeches are Bush speaking in Iraq as well as the fact that they may or may not have been translated into Arabic and widely distributed to the Iraqi public, they function as a Ghost Second Persona. Bush here seems to address Iraqi concerns, but it is really most reflective of answering criticisms about invading their country.

Additionally, Bush says the Iraqis will be free and that their day of liberation is near, which uses the future tense. This tense indicates an absence of freedom in the present but the promise of a liberating force to provide their freedom and agency. Each address identifies the Iraqi people as victims and abjects in need of saving from a plethora of horrors: "brutal regime," "cruel dictator," "terrible persecution," "reign" of oppression, "poison factories," "executions," "torture chambers," and "rape rooms." The contrast of *we* and *you* again positions those explicitly victimized Iraqis against the liberating U.S. forces, recreating the subject/object/abject triangle over and over again.

Conclusions

Overall, the Bush administration's rhetoric locates power and agency within the U.S. military and U.S. Federal Government, constraining the Iraqis agency by looking them into a victimized or abjected state. With regards to speaking for others, Bush's rhetoric fails all three tests: the rhetoric does not empower oppressed people as it locates freedom occurring *to* the Iraqis; Iraqi stories are mediated and filtered through the dominant lens of the U.S. military saving the poor Iraqis to the exclusion of any other point of view; and, when speaking about the Iraqis, they are always linked in relationship to the horrors of Hussein and the benefits of a post-Hussein world. Additionally, Bush's rhetoric objectifies and abjectifies the Iraqi people. He always positions the U.S. military as the savior (subject) to protect the Iraqis (object) from Hussein. Also, his explicit descriptions of Hussein's horrors create the Iraqis as abject; they are dehumanized, without any agency to help themselves. As Bush identifies the Iraqi people with a silent cry for help, he again positions the United States subject as responding to the Iraqi people

abject. Finally, through the Ghost Second Persona, Bush appears to take into consideration Iraqi concerns; however, as the Iraqis may or may have even heard the speeches, the rhetoric functions again to reflect on the position of the United States and detract from critics of the war.

Through these discussions of Bush administration's rhetoric, theories of performance illuminate political rhetoric, such as presidential rhetoric. As Conquergood (1991) notes, it is important to be able to understand how an ethnographer should act towards his/her studied group to be able to productively do so. Within this thesis I have demonstrated that it is important to understand how performativity and abjection occur in order to be able to critique it, to hopefully enable a better future for all, including all the Iraqi citizens.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Addressing agency is a complex matter. The current scholarship on speaking for others, persona, and agency only goes so far. Scholars need to further develop how people in positions of power act to enable and constrain others' agency. Throughout President Bush's Iraq war rhetoric, his agency and subject status is never questioned or at risk; as the First Persona, he controls his own destiny. However, when speaking about or even when appearing to speak to the Iraqi people, he limits their agency, as evidenced in Chapter 5. Such rhetoric demonstrates the complex way in which one's agency can have a direct impact on someone else's. Thus, for scholars and activists concerned about others' oppression, how should one speak in solidarity with those groups? To begin such a discussion, I look at the possibility of "we" as the next area where agency and persona converge to further the understanding of how agency operates.

Is "We" Really "We"? Looking at Attempts of Inclusion

Although persona scholarship discusses the I/you/it in relationship to the audience, "we" has been left out. I argue "we" functions in many ways similar to the Ghost Second Persona, in that it creates unity but is also exclusionary. As "we" attempts to bring together the First and Second Personae under a false universal, I term this move *False Bridge Persona*, drawing from Jane Mansbridge's (1998) false universal we concept as well as Kenneth Burke's (1950) notion of identification and division.

In regards to the ability of *we* to be all-encompassing, Jane Mansbridge (1998), professor of Political Leadership and Democratic Values, argues *we* marks a false

universal and it is not inclusive of all interests: "'We' can easily represent a false universality, as 'mankind' used to do. Even if spoken and believed by the subordinate, 'we' may mask a relationship that works against the subordinate's interests" (p. 152). Thus, even if *we* is meant to be universal, its application is not always all encompassing. Additionally, Bill Readings (1992) illustrates how nation states frequently use *we* as the republican *we* whose goal is "to embody the universal will of human nature" (p. 173). Furthermore, he agrees with Mansbridge that such a universal application suppresses differences: "the homogenous 'we' is not innocent, but that is union of the 'I' and the 'you' is the domination of the sender or speaker and the suppression of the receiver or hearer" (p. 175). Using *we* to appear to speak as a member of a community masks the times when First Persona speaks for others and suppresses the audience of we. In this way, although it appears that First Persona is drawing in the audience in a way to bring unity, False Bridge Persona merely erases differences to create all views in accordance with that of the First Persona.

Thus, *we* creates both unity and division, drawing on Kenneth Burke's (1950) notion that "identification is compensatory to division. If men [*sic*] were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity" (p. 22). In this way, declaring *we* establishes unity and interpellates a group identity where one did not previously exist. And although identification creates harmony and/or union, it also creates discord and divides as it must exclude something to create unity. Thus, by creating identity *we* also must narrow individual differences into a singular, coherent

we—demonstrating the False Bridge Persona. The false universal destroys that individual's uniqueness as it is swallowed up into the identity of *we*.

For example, when Collin Powell states in his 2004 International Women's Day speech that *we* liberated Iraq and *we* all know abuses have ended, he silences any criticism over the war. He (2004) states, "People wonder what we have accomplished in Iraq over the past, almost a year now. We have freed a people. We have liberated a people" (para. 4). In this sense, the *we* obscures who is included and excluded. Powell's *we* appears universal, and during the occasion of International Women's Day, this *we* can be read with a more international focus. However, this *we* freed "a people"—in this case, the U.S. military and its allies freeing Iraqi people. Thus, *we* is set in contrast to "a people," and in such an oppositional structure, "we" cannot include the Iraqi people or those who are against the U.S. led operation. Although *we* appears universal and open for all to be included, it refers to the specific people and countries that support the Iraqi regime change. Not only did this deny agency of the Iraqis, but it put the United States as legitimate in contrast with detractors as standing against freedom and liberty. In this sense, Powell continued the divide between the war supporters and protestors, while emphasizing the governmental position of which side is right—the side of "we" the federal government.

Elaborating on the appropriateness of U.S. policy in Iraq, he argues International Women's Day is a day to celebrate by contrasting the horrors of Hussein to the brightness of the future: "This time last year, Saddam Hussein's republic of fear gripped Iraq. His torture chambers and the rape rooms were in full operation. Today, *we* [italics added] all

know that that is no longer the case. *You* [italics added] are free" (Powell, 2004, para. 7-8). Through his use of *we*, Powell appears to create unity but instead directs attention in one way rather than another—toward the United States Federal Government and its supporters and away from all who fall outside of this definition. This *we* still operates within a system of power, as it denies any alternative reading of the situation in Iraq—including the Iraqis who criticize U.S. efforts such as Houzan Mahmoud and Yanar Mohammad of Organisation for Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI). Powell proclaiming freedom did not constitute actual freedom. However, in the context of the speech, he created this reality through his discourse, hiding any evidence of a lack of freedom.

Additionally, *we* does not extend to the Iraqis as we as liberator is contrasted to the Iraqi people; Iraqis cannot be both oppressed and liberators. This *we* is then crafted as the subject against the backdrop of the Iraqis as the abject victim. And as for the *we* which knows the abuses have stopped, this *we* is ambiguous, but most likely refers to the United States, world, and Iraq who know that now the Iraqis are free. However, Powell's use of *we* here ignores and displaces some Iraqi criticisms.

Although Powell hails the new interim Iraqi constitution, not all in Iraq did. The IGC had changed the date of International Women's Day from March 8 to August 18. This change of dates was not accepted by all Iraqis, and almost one-thousand Iraqi men and women demonstrated that day against the move and against the new interim constitution in Al Fardawse square of Baghdad. Participants included members of the Worker Communist Party of Iraq, the Federation of Worker Councils and Trade Unions in Iraq, the Union of the Unemployed in Iraq, the Organisation of the Defense of

Secularism in the Iraqi Society, and OWFI (Organisation for Women's Freedom in Iraq, 2004).

Additionally, Medea Benjamin (2004), co-founder of human rights group Global Exchange and member of the women's peace group Code Pink, made her own announcement on International Women's Day after returning from a visit to Iraq: "[A]ll these issues—security, economic well-being and government representation—are much starker for Iraqis than for their U.S. counterparts. That's why, on International Women's Day, it's good to take a moment to do something positive for Iraqi women" (para. 2). Some of Benjamin's (2004) suggestions include: asking where U.S. funding for Iraqi hospitals went (as the hospitals still lacked supplies), supporting women's shelters, helping women to earn money, and calling for additional women in government. Mainly, her focus was to help "Iraqi women to have a constructive voice in their future" (para. 9). These Iraqi protests question which *we* knows that oppression is over. Even though Iraqis can acknowledge that Saddam Hussein is no longer in power, not all Iraqis agree that the new status quo makes them free. Powell's use of *we* again serves to limit agency while appearing to be more inclusive—a false bridge persona.

Further Questions

The case study in Iraq demonstrates the difficulty of crafting an appropriate response to violence in the world. President Bush and his administration ultimately perpetuate the status quo of the United States as subject to the abject Iraq, limiting agency to only the United States. The challenge then becomes to find ways to appropriately speak. Building upon these challenges to agency, I pose questions for further reflection

and query. As the cases of the Goshutes and Iraq both demonstrate the difficulty of competing groups within an oppressed people, how can one enable agency for the oppressed? Is enabling or empowering oppressed people an appropriate strategy given the difficulties in speaking for others and processes of abjection? How does the abject cease to be the abject if the subject requires it to exist? If the nature of war rhetoric with its muscular IR discourse about saving an other prevents it from escaping the victim/abject status of oppressed people, how should we discuss warfare? How can one in a position of power speak about real violence occurring against people without limiting those people's agency and ability to speak? When speaking about an other, what is appropriate? It is my hope that communication scholars will continue to explore these questions, looking at the relationship of personae to continue to develop new understandings.

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