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Whose Identity is it Anyway? A Study of the Media's Representation of Iraq Citizens and Their Culture

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**WHOSE IDENTITY IS IT ANYWAY? A STUDY OF
THE MEDIA'S REPRESENTATION OF IRAQ
CITIZENS AND THEIR CULTURE**

**BY
JOYCE L'HEUREUX**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
IN
COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

What happens to our perceptions when provided with an invitation by news media, specifically print media, to accept what is presented as reality? Does what we read in the news media constrict our thinking and create an acceptance of the words as they are written, a type of cultural blindness to the qualities, the humanness and individuality of other cultures? Or, do we read the words on the paper and open our lens to create a greater understanding of individuals who differ from us in values, attitudes and beliefs? The truth is the same stories which provide us with an opportunity to learn about other cultures, also invite us to forge a definition of the “other” or an “us” and “them” society.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how news articles published by the *New York Times* which (re)present Iraqi citizen’s and culture, invite American news consumers to totalize and perceive Iraqi’s and their culture as the “other.” Grounded in Stuart Hall’s work in representation of the “other,” I will specifically demonstrate how articles which discuss life in Iraq as tribal support a rhetorically constructed vision of Iraqis and their culture as primitive, irrational and violent. It examines how these articles limit the culture and individual’s identity to religious or ethnic affiliations such as Sunni, Shiite, Muslim, Kurd, and Arab and how this provokes a totalizing view and image of Iraq and Iraqis which negates individual identity.

We are at the crossroads of rhetorical constructed identities. No other time in history have the press been engaged in such an intimate relationship in a war theatre than with the events during the Iraq invasion and occupation. This new relationship

provides the opportunity for unique perspectives and perceptions and will change how historical facts are recorded. Many articles discuss intimate numbers of casualties. Often those same articles which discuss the death of a single individual identify the person who lost their life as a Sunni, Shiite, Kurd or Muslim. The person could be male, female, a child, a college student, a mother, father, or civilian yet, their identity in death is limited to tribal or religious affiliation. The individual becomes a casualty with a generic identity.

This is a study in the media's representation Iraqi citizens during the invasion and occupation of Iraq. It addresses the issues and provides evidence of the negative connotative rhetorical construction of tribal life in Iraq as published by the *New York Times*. This principle invites the consumer to totalize and develop an "us" and "them" society via a rhetorical construction of an Iraqi "other."

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I dedicate this work to the memory of Linda Palmer. Her constant support and encouragement to graduate students, her personal assistance to me, and her infectious smile will be greatly missed.

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
Table 1. Number of articles which utilize tribe, tribes, tribal or tribalism when discussing events in Iraq.	30

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Picture to yourself . . . a society which comprises all the nations of the world – English, French, German: people differing from one another in language, in beliefs, in opinions; in a word a society possessing no roots, no memories, no prejudices, no routine, no common ideas, no national character, yet with a happiness a hundred times greater than our own. . . . What is the connecting link between these so different elements? How are they welded into one people?” – Alexis de Tocqueville

INTRODUCTION

When provided with an invitation by news media, specifically print media, to accept what is presented as reality what really happens to the story? Does what we read in print media constrict our thinking and create an acceptance of the words as they are written, a type of cultural blindness to the qualities, the humanness, and individuality of other cultures? Or, do we read the words on the paper and open our lens to create a greater understanding of individuals who differ from us in values, attitudes, and beliefs? The truth is the same stories which provide us with an opportunity to learn about other cultures, also invite us to forge a definition of the “other” or an “us” and “them” society.

Alexis de Tocqueville’s thoughtful and profound words encourage each of us to contemplate the complexity of our world and the impact of an “us” and “them”

society. What often divides us and leads us to war: our lack of a common language, our roots, and our beliefs, is also that which can join us as one global society. As much as we conquer the walls that separate us from our achievements in life, we must remove the barriers that divide our global society. De Tocqueville asks us to consider that while each of us is different and unique, our essence and humanity is a commonality. It is the differences and ideologies that have the ability to provoke hostilities. War is about the division in ideologies, recognition is about our human connection. Wartime often elevates the differences in ideologies between the warring countries to a level where individual human recognition is lost. Part of this division is found in narratives, the stories written and told by the media and how that rhetoric constructs a vision of us and them.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how news articles published by the *New York Times* which (re)present Iraqi citizen's and culture, invite American news consumers to totalize and perceive Iraqi's and their culture as the "other." Grounded in Stuart Hall's work in representation of the "other," I will specifically demonstrate how articles which discuss tribal life in Iraq support a rhetorically constructed vision of Iraqis and their culture as primitive, irrational and violent. It examines how these articles limit the culture and individual's identity to religious or ethnic affiliations such as Sunni, Shiite, Muslim, Kurd, and Arab and how this provokes a totalizing view and image of Iraq and Iraqis which negates individual identity.

Through the combination of a content and close textual analysis this thesis discusses how news mediated rhetorical constructions invite readers to engage in a perceived divisive meaning of the Iraqi culture and peoples.

The challenge is for consumers to understand that the relationship between signs and perceived meaning in the development of the “other,” is in correlation to the social meaning found in the contrast of cultures. All media, whether print, visual or verbal, summons consumers from differing cultures to the possibility of current and future stereotyping of individuals. According to Barker and Galasiński (2001) Meaning is not generated independent of the sign. Signs are significant through references to one another. (p. 4). Stated otherwise, the social construction of our world is done with signs and the relationship of signs, or how events assist in our understanding of defining a sign. Herrick (2005) quotes Jacques Derrida from an early 1970’s interview when Derrida stated, “everyday language is not innocent or neutral” (p. 253). Herrick (2005) argues this thought when he states that language, “especially written language – cannot escape the built-in biases of the cultural history that produced it” (p. 253). Put simply, printed rhetoric holds the culture of which the rhetoric is a product.

It is this similar thought that Barker and Galasiński (2001) refer to when they suggests that the nature of signs is dependent upon meaning which surrounds them: other signs, cultures, and events present at that time (p. 4). It is not just about the symbols that are used to describe war. It is what is happening at the moment that helps develop perceptions. For example, traditional weapons of war and the ammunition are changing, yet past symbolic meaning remains. Wars that were once fought with grenades, bombs dropped from planes and guns have been replaced with bombs guided by GPS, car bombs and suicide bombers. These are weapons of war. One explosive is no less violent than the other however the GPS guided bomb is perceived

as sophisticated and the car bomb as irrational and primitive because it lacks technological advances.

Further, the feeling of nationality in the United States after 9/11 and the attachment of responsibility to the Muslim and Arab community for the events of 9/11 is part of the context that needs acknowledgment in this study. Thus, the study applies inter-textuality in its analysis. Inter-textuality is the way we understand one text whether written or visual as a point of reference to another text (Natharius, 2004, p. 241). While Iraqis were not responsible for these events, the terrorists were of Muslim and Arab descent and the invasion of Iraq is directly correlated to 9/11. In America, Muslim, Arab and terrorist hold different meaning after 9/11 than it did before 9/11 thereby deepening contextual meaning. Because Iraq is an Arab and mostly Muslim nation, it is here where these words have taken on new and perhaps dangerous meanings for Iraqi citizens.

Further, this study employs Hall's (1997) discussion about the way symbolic terms define power. "Power, it seems has to be understood here, not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way." (p. 259). Hall (1997) labels this "symbolic violence" (p. 259). Symbolic violence needs to acknowledge the presence of the American hegemonic ideology, or the perception that America and its culture is potentially viewed by Americans as the power broker of the world. Therefore, other cultures are perceived as subservient to American culture.

War is more than fighting enemies with an arsenal of guns, missiles, and bombs. Often, the stronger and longer lasting weapons of wars are found in the symbolic constructions that sustain, support and contribute to an “us” and “them” society.

Illija Tomanic Trivundza (2004) cites Dearing and Rogers, (1996) and McCombs, (1999) to remind us how the media “decisively shapes” our knowledge of the world at large (p. 481). The words written and spoken by the press which describe worldwide events, and in the case of this study, the invasion and occupation of Iraq are the American consumer’s introduction and essentially the textbook about Iraq and Iraqis. These are the same narratives that also find their way into current and future textbooks, movies, documentaries and are recorded in the nation’s newspapers and periodicals. They are chronicled into American history and the rhetoric in these narratives is our invitation to learn about a nation, its people and what happened during the Iraq war. Unfortunately this is also the basis for an “us” and “them,” rhetorical construction and one way in which words are in perpetual motion and become the weapons of mass destruction.

Ana López (1991) believes that Hollywood creates ethnic groups and underrepresented groups. Thus, provides the audience with an experience with the groups represented. (404-5). Does print media invite consumers to the same experience? Is it the representation of culture and individuals that constructs our assumptions about cultures that are different and unique and why is culture important?

Culture according to Hall (1997) is a difficult concept to define. In traditional meaning, it embodies the “best that has been thought and said” in society; the sum of ideas as represented; that which is a distinctive way of life for individuals, nations or

social groups and holds the shared values of social groups. Culture, Hall (1997) emphasizes, is the exchange of meanings between social groups and is dependent upon the individual participants interpreting what is stated in significantly similar ways (p. 2). Culture is a standpoint and culture is a practice. It is both passive and active in our lives. Our culture defines who we are, where we are from, and our values, attitudes and beliefs which are constructed from our symbolic interactions and our understanding of other cultures.

Generally speaking our understanding of Iraqis and their culture is abstract. By this I mean we do not have the opportunity to experience, touch, or actively participate in the culture. We cannot feel their [the Iraqis] emotions or understand their values, attitudes, and beliefs. Therefore, most of us develop meaning about the Iraqi culture based on a passive role of abstract learning grounded in the media's symbolic representation and not on personal experience and participation.

Wolfgang Teubert (2010) strengthens this argument with his thought on oral societies when he suggests that, "Narratives deal with a world outside of the shared reality" (p. 145). For the consumer of print media, reality is a narrative developed from a non-existent experience, a rhetorical construction. Further Teubert (2010) suggests that veracity is negligible. It is repetition that engages our shared reality (p. 147). The repetitiveness of words, phrases, and similar stories invite consumers to accept a perceived representation instead of questioning the contextual meaning. It is this very repetition of the ethnic, religious and tribal affiliation that Teubert speaks of which strengthens the notion of totalizing.

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CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What are the paths to developing the other? And whose reality is our idea of the other? Teubert (2010) believes that “The only reality we find that counts is the reality we find constructed in the discourse, in this entirety of texts that have been exchanged and shared between all the people who make up society” (p. 2). It is these same texts which invite us to construct an Iraqi’s identity as the other. Further there are those of us who produce the texts, and those who consume. Generally speaking the rhetoric found in newsprint, television and web hold greater weight in constructing meaning than what is spoken in conversation (Teubert, 2010, p. 1). However, we also interpret what we see and read and the media is no exception, yet, there is an importance in what the media interprets. As Teubert (2010) suggests, “we do not interpret our experiences for ourselves; we do it for an audience, imagined or otherwise. We want to learn from the interpretations offered by others, and we want others to share our interpretations. There is no meaning without society” (p. 1). And the media plays an important function in an individual’s identity.

Edward Said (1978) argues in “Orientalism, Western Conceptions of the Orient,” two distinct and related ideas. First, individuals identify themselves by who others are, and, there is a correlation between the print media’s (mis)representation in contrasting the West as superior, and the Orient as inferior which segments cultures as civilized and uncivilized (p. 5). Trivundza (2004) points out that Orientalism is primarily the “interplay of positive images of self-presentation and negative images of

other-representation” (p. 482). However, it is not just the comparison of self to others that is established. It is the assumption of subservience which this creates. As Hall (1997) suggests the identity of an American, or British or in this case, Iraqi, is also negotiated between nations (p. 236) and Americans negotiate who Iraqis are as rhetorically constructed by the press and by the events which have taken place over the last decade.

One key to understanding how this negotiation happens, is found in media literacy. In the simplest form, media literacy is our understanding about the way “media affects ourselves, our society, and our culture” (Natharius, 2004, p. 238). Natharius thought substantiates how powerful the media is in our life. Yet without understanding the impact of the media, consumers can lend themselves to represented perceptions. It is as Sarah R. Stein (2002) suggests, “Audiences are not considered to exist outside rhetoric as the subjects of its address, but rather to ‘live inside’ the rhetoric that constructs them” (p. 173). Thus, when we take note of the impact of media on our lives and Stein’s suggestion that we are confined by the rhetoric that constructs us, we can understand the strength of how rhetorical constructed identities impact our lives and the lives of other cultures.

It is also the rhetorical construction which helps us construct difference which Stuart Hall (2003), suggests create inferential racism or that which is a result of the “naturalised [*sic*] representations of events and situations relating to race, whether “factual” or “fictional,” which have racist premises and propositions inscribed in them as a set of unquestioned assumptions” (p. 91). Barker and Galasiński (2001) maintain that cultural understandings of texts do not stagnate; they actively involve the reader in

transformations. That text is positioned between the author and the reader, yet meaning is positioned from the perception of the consumer (p. 7). It is the ubiquitous rhetorical construction of the “other” found in the text that provides the foundation for stereotyping, generalizations and totalizing. Barker and Galasiński (2001) and Hall (2003) each suggest that factual events, or the case of this study, printed news articles about events in Iraq, are imbued with unconscious and unquestioned assumptions about those and the culture to which they refer.

And so the simplistic view of othering, is that it helps us make sense of who we are in relationship to the world. As Hall (1997) suggests, “difference is both necessary and dangerous” (p. 234). We use the difference to establish perception and the way in which difference is used provides us with the opportunity to navigate a positive or negative meaning.

Therefore, the world which defines us, also defines who the other is, good and bad. And this becomes a rhetorical principle in our lives. It is these unquestioned rhetorical assumptions of media literacy that this paper examines.

To deepen the understanding of the “other” and “othering,” along with the formation of an “us” and “them” society, the paper reviews literature on the variety of ways in which othering takes place. First, the paper identifies how inter-textuality functions in our world and then how public identity or the cultural identity is established via rhetoric. Next, the literature examines how representation or the “link between language and concept” (Hall, 1997, p. 17) functions in rhetoric. Finally, totalizing and ideology are addressed to understand how these concepts contribute to othering.

INTER-TEXTUALITY

Inter-textuality is an important consideration in this study because it helps identify culture delineations or the contrast evident in the descriptors found in printed and imaged media rhetoric. Geographical references, artifacts, and physical appearance are part of the layers which contribute to the meanings of the texts which accompany the photos. For example, geographical differences are found in our living communities. Americans live in a society of neighborhoods, cities and towns. This is contrast against the villages and tribal life in Iraq. Villages evoke a feeling of small town, close knit, cloistered individuals, a life grounded in a collectivist society, dissimilar to the individualistic American society.

One area of inter-textuality that correlates to the media's rhetorical invitation is the consumer's exposure to the visual imagery which is part of war rhetoric. The images printed above, beside, or below the story or those we see on the television, in the news, in movies or on the web are an integral piece of the rhetorical construct. Barbie Zelizer (1999) discusses in her book "From the image of record to the image of memory: Holocaust photography, then and now," how "photographs help the public construct, understand, and remember the past" (p. 8). And it is these same photographs which help us construct, understand and perceive the current situation and perception of the text that is an example of inter-textuality, or the way meaning accumulates and "has its meaning altered by being read in context to other images" (Hall, 1997, p. 232). What we see in daily life, the images found in mass media, complement the text. These items are filtered by our own culture of origin and historic events. While images are not studied in this thesis, rhetorical constructions are

not independent from the images we see. One needs only to look at the images of the barefoot child, wearing oversized mismatched cloths, the tribal chief dressed in garb at a political meeting, or the marketplaces with raw meat hanging from hooks at the local open air markets to construct a visual image of life in Iraq and attach the visual image to the rhetorical construction.

These images and texts are supported by prior texts which we have read or been exposed to during our lives. These prior texts include our understanding of historical tribal life in America. The dimensional quality of text and/or visual images potentially imparts prejudices to our perception. We cannot avoid this exposure.

The images are a clear example of cultural difference, how the “other” is constructed and heightens differences. Joined with the dimensional exposure to rhetoric, the American consumer is invited to rhetorically construct an Iraqi’s identity through the use of words, some alien in everyday use or those which are interconnected to past associations which carry negative connotative meaning.

It is the mediated rhetorical construction of life in the war theatre which invites consumers to draw a correlation to tribal life in Iraq as irrational, violent and primitive.

IDENTITY

Thomas W. Benson (1993) writes:

Other writers on rhetoric have argued that, in important respects, the identities of the speaker, the listener, and other persons referred to in a speech or other rhetorical texts are actually created by the message, constituting social roles and personae that would not exist otherwise. In this sense, rhetoric is a way of being/becoming (p. xix).

What Benson (1993) suggests is that identity is a function of the rhetorical experience. Thus, we each have two identities: the one that is constructed [public] and the one who we believe we are [private] (p. xix). It is the invitation to the consumer to construct the public identity of Iraq and Iraqis contrast against the sophisticated American culture that this paper addresses.

Maurice Charland (1987) argues this thought in his paper, "Constitutive rhetoric: The case of the people québécois." As Charland states, "Texts are but surfaces; characters are, in a sense, but "paper beings," to use Barthes' phrase. These paper beings *seem* real through textual operations" (p. 139). Charland argues, "Subjects within narratives are not free, they are *positioned* and so what is significant in constitutive rhetoric is that it positions the reader towards political, social, and economic action in the material world and it is in this positioning that its ideological character becomes significant" (p. 141). Stated otherwise, text constructs, constricts and circles identity. In this case, the individual identity of Iraqis is constricted by text for the political, social, and economic agenda of the Iraq war. Individuals are rhetorically constructed and totalized through representation.

It is this very representation that Amin Maalouf (1996) suggests is the instance at which we find ourselves "Taking the line of least resistance, we lump the most different people together under the same heading. Taking the line of least resistance, we ascribe to them collective crimes, collective acts and opinions" (p. 21). And what we need to be cognizant of is "for each of us to become aware that our words are not innocent and without consequence: they may help to perpetuate prejudices which history has shown to be perverse and deadly" (Maalouf, 2000, p. 22). What Maalouf suggests is that the recorded anecdotes offer us the opportunity to understand the roots

of past prejudices and prevent future ones. These are the very prejudices that are sustained by rhetorical constructed identities.

REPRESENTATION

Representation according to Hall (1997) “is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the ‘real’ world of objects people or events or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events” (p. 17). Language is a way of representing a concept and thus words are used to stand in for ideas, thoughts, or concepts. As Hall (1997) suggests, meaning is dependent upon the concepts and images we form to identify, classify and understand the world, both internally, and through our verbal expression. And we also do this for the abstract in our lives: the things we cannot touch, feel or see. With the system of representation, we understand how things are similar and how things are different (p. 17). This is where the rhetoric found in the media holds its significance. Hall (1997) suggests, “meaning depends on the relationship between things in the world” (p. 18). In the case of this study the relationship between the American news consumer and the event in Iraq is significant. Lawrence Grossberg (1996) states reality is not represented, it is our relationship and our own ideologies that is represented (p. 159). It is this relationship which must be considered in this study and how things are similar and different are represented. It is the point where the consumer’s experience is derived from the mediated and (re)presented rhetorical construction.

TOTALIZING

Put simply, totalizing is “using a single label to represent the totality of a person” (Wood, 2008, p. 113). Therefore we limit the identity of a person to one idea, one adjective, one thought. According to Christopher Philip Long (2003) in the extreme context of the Holocaust, totalizing “seeks to render the world absolutely rational by purging it of everything ‘other’” (p. 210). Totalizing therefore narrows and distorts identity. Maalouf (2003) suggests that it also eliminates the very differences found within the same culture or ethnic group. For example, no two Christians, Muslims, Jews, Americans or Iraqis are alike: one may be violent and one may be peaceful, (p. 21) yet totalizing assists us to perceive each individual as ‘all individuals.’

The articles studied in this thesis provide evidence of how Iraqi individuals are totalized and identified through their tribal or religious affiliations.

IDEOLOGY

As discussed earlier, ideologies are an important function in our comprehension of culture. What the print media invites consumers to learn about Iraq is the difference between the cultures, the constructed reality, and not the absolute reality. Is the invitation to learn or to create us and them? Gorham (1999) discusses how power found in the way in which socially constructed realities become a natural way of life (p. 232). Gorham suggests that scholars consider the association between language (as in signs), and the context or myth, the perceived meaning when studying stereotyping. Gorham believes that repeated exposure will develop an automatic association between signs and certain myths or beliefs and that there is a relationship

between processing the information as contexts are primed for subsequent processing and beliefs that will impact the processing of future information (p. 237). It is this very repetition that is prevalent in the Iraq narrative. There is a commonality found in almost every story: attacks, deaths, insurgents and militants. It is these very words that surround the tribal life. It is easy to perceive the culture as primitive, irrational and violent when so many articles lack discussion about civilian Iraqis but instead focus on the dissention and distinction between Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds.

Gorham also notes that the media is not the only source of myth-consistent information: individuals, educational and professional institutions, family, relatives and social networks are also influential (p. 237). The constructions of beliefs are influenced by several external sources and not solely the media. This is parallel to Hall's (2003) thought that ideology is a function of collective unconscious and social consciousness (p. 90). The dangerousness of difference is found in creating a dominant ideology which serves to form a subservient ideology.

All of these things assist each of us to construct the "other" and an "us" and "them" society. The accumulation of meaning found in inter-textuality, our socially constructed identity, the reality of the prominence of representation in our lives, the function of totalizing a group or culture and finally our ideology. The danger is that when we construct the other, it allows for representation instead of recognition, and the other as constructed by rhetoric is invidious and pervasive and the unavoidable logic of language.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Since the *New York Times* is considered the leading authority for print news media, I chose to focus the lens of this study on articles published by the *New York Times* which (re)present the Iraqi citizen and culture to the American news consumer. Further, I narrowed my search by selecting only articles which include tribe, tribes, tribalism or tribal in either the headline or the content of the article. This allowed me to create a limited scope, however illuminate how discussion about tribal culture rhetorically constructs Iraqis as primitive, irrational or violent.

For the content analysis, I accessed the *New York Times* through the ProQuest search engine to poll *New York Times* by year for the number of articles which contain both Iraq and tribe, tribes tribal or tribalism in the headlines. I then polled the *New York Times* for the number of articles which contain tribe, tribes, tribal or tribalism in the headlines and Iraq in the body content. I reversed the search and polled the *New York Times* for the number of articles which contain Iraq in headline and tribe, tribes, tribal or tribalism in the content. The final search was to identify the number of articles which include Iraq and tribe, tribes, tribal or tribalism in the article content.

Once the articles were identified, I used opportunistic sampling to review the articles which contain Iraq and tribe, tribes, tribal or tribalism in the headline or content to substantiate the thought that Iraqis are constructed as irrational, primitive and violent. Opportunistic sampling is a type of purposeful sampling which allows the

researcher to follow the trail of evidence. Since the number of articles which contain both Iraq and a form of tribe in the headlines is relatively small, opportunistic sampling allowed me to identify articles which also contained these words in the content and use these articles as evidence. It is important to note that the headlines do not stand independent of article content. The headline is a representation and leads to content and provides further demonstrated evidence. Therefore, it is important to consider the headline.

After the articles were identified, I reviewed the headlines by year to select articles for review. I chose a total of 71 articles which include a form of tribe and Iraq in the content or headline in which the headline rhetorically constructs a primitive, irrational or violent person, people or culture. For example, “What rough beasts?” (2005) an Op-ed by Maureen Dowd; “Playing Den Mother to a Fledgling Iraqi Army” (2006) by Roger Cohen, and 26 “Killed in Revenge Attacks Outside Baghdad” (2006) by Michael Luo and Qais Mizher. Each headline rhetorically constructs Iraqis as primitive (beasts), irrational and subservient (needing a den mother, fledgling) or revengeful (revenge attacks).

Once done reviewing the articles, I chose those which best exemplified the rhetorical construction of Iraqis as primitive, irrational and violent and critically assessed the content, contrasting the information presented against American culture.

In this study I employ Hall’s (1997) definition of other which rests on four theoretical accounts. First, borrowing from linguistics, Hall states that “difference matters because it is essential to meaning; without it meaning could not exist” (p. 234). Put simply, meaning is found in contrast or difference. For example, to know

what happiness is, we first must know what sadness is. Second, Hall relies on Mikhail Bakhtin's explanation of how meaning is developed through dialogue and that meaning is negotiated between the participants. Similar to the events of today, to understand how Americans feel about Iraq, one needs to comprehend how Americans demonstrated nationality prior to and after 9/11. The third theory that Hall offers in his definition of other is that cultures are assigned meaning based on classification or order (p. 236). This is how humans identify who and what they are. Hierarchies of societies are built upon the stratification of socio-economics, education, and such. This is followed by the fourth theory that "other" is "fundamental to the constitution of the self" (p. 237). When we speak about our fundamental constitution of the self, we illuminate who we are against our understanding of others, and as such, our world is comprised of others. Our self is "us" and everyone else, no matter whom, is the "other" or "them." I know the mother I am, because I know other mothers including my own. In this sense, my mother is the "other," and this is the function of the fundamental constitution of self.

Additionally, the study uses American ideology to establish how the "other" is defined when discussing Iraqi culture. The term ideology underscores Hall's (2003) thoughts that "ideologies are not the product of individual consciousness or intention" (p. 90). Ideologies are a product of unconscious collective social consciousness. Similar to identity scripts, ideologies are present in our societies and naturalized over time (Hall, 2003, p. 90). Thus ideologies are the invention of society and a collective identity which become a naturalized truth.

Ideologies are an important product of othering. They have the ability to promote an “us” and “them” society. They also define our public self or the culturally constructed identity which advises our psyche who we are in relationship to other cultures. 9/11 produced more than the war on terrorism. As Trivundza (2004) states, the administration quickly provided “clear interpretative frame – *the War on Terrorism* – for understanding the terms ‘allies’ and ‘enemies’” (p. 480). The phrase demanded that even small countries to either side “with ‘the civilized West’ or the ‘barbaric other’” (p. 480). But ideologies are not present without culture and therefore we must consider how culture and specifically the position of rhetoric in culture impact this study.

It is important to understand that this paper views rhetoric from a cultural standpoint. Roichi Okabe (2007) in a study in rhetorical competence suggests that rhetoric is “inseparable from the general knowledge system of which it is a part. The position and function of rhetoric in each culture is thus highly contextually dependent” (p. 76). What Okabe suggests is that we understand what we read in the context of the point of view of our culture of origin. However, we must also consider the viewpoint of the author. Can the author be subjective to another culture without imparting their cultural background within the rhetoric writings?

As the findings demonstrate, the repeated rhetoric constructs and delineates American culture and citizens from Iraq culture and citizens. According to Barker and Galasiński (2001), the polysemic nature of text, or the way in which texts assume multiple meanings due to the point of view of the consumer, leave the meaning and

definition of the text found in print media to the consumer (p. 7). However, it is the same perceived meaning that is an invitation by the media.

Thus, the study focuses its content and close textual lens on the cultural divide, the place where Americans meet Iraqis through the rhetorical discourse published in the *New York Times*. It focuses on representation of Iraq and Iraqis as found in rhetorical constructions to identify the presence of Hall's theory of the other.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The first part of the study identified the number of articles which describe events in Iraq and contain tribe, tribes, tribalism or tribal and Iraq or Iraqi in either the headline or content. While there are relatively few articles which contain Iraq(i) and a form of tribe in the headline, the amount of articles which contain Iraq(i) and a form of tribe in the content appeared on average 271 days per year over the six years studied. That means that approximately 5 days of each week for the past 6 years, stories have been published about Iraq that also utilizes a form of the symbol tribe. This frequency of these symbols helps to support my argument of the rhetorical construction of the Iraqi population as “other.”

Tribal, defined by *The Oxford American College Dictionary* means “of or characteristic of a tribe or tribes, chiefly derogatory characterized by a tendency to form groups or by strong group loyalty” (p.1489); tribe is defined as “a social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader, derogatory a distinctive close knit social or political group; derogatory a group or class of people or things” (p. 1490) and tribalism is defined as “the state or fact of being organized in a tribe or tribes; black tribalism became the excuse for creating ethnic homeland; chiefly derogatory the behavior and attitudes that stem from strong loyalty to one’s own tribe or social group” (p. 1489-90).

It is the derogatory connotation found in the rhetorical construction which is the focus of this study and how it constructs tribal life as primitive, irrational and violent. Table 1 exhibits the number of articles which employ a form of tribe in discussion about events and life in Iraq.

Year	Content: Iraq,* Tribe**	Headline: Iraq*, Tribe**	Headline: Tribe** Content: Iraq*	Headline Iraq* Content: Tribe**
2003	297	1	7	100
2004	269	2	2	97
2005	229	0	0	72
2006	253	1	2	73
2007	366	2	5	130
2008	285	0	3	82
2009	201	4	4	65
Total	1,900	13	23	619

*Iraq or Iraqi; **Tribe, tribes, tribal, tribalism

Table 1 - Number of articles which utilize tribe, tribes, tribal or tribalism when discussing events in Iraq.

To further demonstrate correlation of these articles to totalizing, a total of 840 contain Iraq or Iraqi and a form of tribe and Sunni, 813 articles contain Shiite with Iraq or Iraqi and a form of tribe and 1,101 contain the word “attack.” The tribal culture in Iraq holds Sunni, Shiite and attack as an adjective. Whether it is Sunni attacking Shiite, Shiite attacking Sunni, the Sunni or Shiite being attacked, the connotative meaning of attack is something of a violent nature.

As stated earlier in this thesis, there is strong corollary evidence of the rhetorical construction of a primitive, irrational and violent society in the headlines which potentially leads consumers to perceive meaning. The appendix of this thesis provides a detailed listing by year of the headlines which rhetorically construct this meaning. For example, “Inching Toward Democracy, Catching a Big One, Changing a

Chant” (2003) by Anthony DePalma, and “Iraq’s Election, Its Outcome Murky, Is Seen as a ‘Jungle of Ambiguity’” (2004) by John F. Burns. DePalma’s headline suggests that there is no democracy is given further meaning by catching a big one which could mean fish or “big” as in tribal chief, and changing the chant strongly slants all that is written before toward a perception of tribal life. Burns’ use of ‘Jungle’ in a headline about elections, suggests that Iraq is primitive. Further, Burns use of jungle infers that there is a wild, untamed, primitive climate in Iraq.

There were also articles which discussed historical events in American history and draw a parallel to Iraq. Michelle O’Donnell’s article “Rich in Glory and Agony, The Cavalry Rides Again” (2003) discusses the history of The Seventh Cavalry back to 1861 as “a moment in American history echoed through the Iraqi desert” (p. 4.5). The article brings the reader to the current date through discussion of “the men who provided the only security that pioneers might find, and during the Indian Wars of the 1870’s, the Seventh Cavalry was made famous by a string of victories” and “campaigning to force the Sioux, led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, onto reservations” and how 220 of Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer’s men were *slaughtered* by the Sioux (p. 4.5) The discussion also uses the euphemism “rode” each time it discusses a new war. In the 1800’s the “horse mounted-regiments roamed,” and in the 20th Century, the Seventh Cavalry was dismounted, however, “In the 1960’s, Seventh Cavalry units *rode* again,” this time in helicopters, and finally in Iraq, “it rides in tanks” (p. 4.50). Thus, the frame creatively draws perceptions of American history to the war in Iraq and imaginatively proposes a relationship between the war in

Iraq and the wars in the 1800's in which the Indians slaughtered, a.k.a. savagely murdered Custer's men.

Therefore, the principle of rhetorical construction is found in multiple layers of published media. It is found in the headline and in the content and inter-textuality as the stories are related to America's history. Thus, this thesis reviews articles that parallel the American historic attachment to tribal life as primitive, articles that distinguish American culture as refined and sophisticated as in the Petit murder trial, contrast against tribal law and articles which discuss irrationality of an Iraqis motive against the rational Americans response.

Robert T. Craig (2000) states that "Although social convention establishes a rough correlation between words and ideas, however, conscientiously we follow these conventional rules of language we ultimately have no way of knowing whether the corporeal signs we choose to represent our thoughts will excite similar thoughts in the mind of another person" (p.2). Thus, it might be said that when the American print media chooses words which accurately describe a foreign culture to the consumer, there might be an invitation to take the words out of context. Symbols hold different meanings in different cultures. The reality is that as different as Iraq culture is from American culture the compelling differences are found in the rhetorical construction.

THE RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ AND IRAQ IS AS PRIMITIVE AND IRRATIONAL

Primitive according to *The Oxford American College Dictionary* is defined as "relating to, denoting, or preserving an early stage in the evolutionary or historical development of something; relating to or denoting a preliterate, nonindustrial society

characterized by simple social and economic organization; having a quality or style that offers a basic level of comfort, convenience of deficiency; (of behavior, thought, or emotion apparently original in unconscious needs or desires unaffected by reasoning” (p. 1079). In today’s world, what constructs a primitive culture or behavior?

While tribal culture is part of America’s landscape and it is a strong part of our roots, because of the historical perceptions of America’s history, past tribal culture in America might be perceived as savage and primitive. Hall (2003) discusses this thought in his essay “The whites of their eyes.” Hall (2003) points to the “recurring persistence” of the “grammar of race” (p. 91). Even as we become wiser, and the cultural disparities are blended, the images still remain in old movies, (Hall, p. 91) television shows, texts, comic books, children’s toys, and other merchandise. Thus, within the rhetorical construction of “tribe,” there remains the historical representation of tribal life in America. The rhetorical construction is often imaged through the eyes of the Euro-American settler and not through the eyes of the American Native. It is important to note that tribes often have a negative connotative rhetorical construction.

To understand the impact of the word tribe in this study, one needs to consider the correlation between tribal representation as primitive in American history and tribal life as represented in Iraq. This is where inter-textuality becomes a piece of the rhetorical construction. Tribal life in Iraq which is constructed as primitive and irrational does not stand independent of the hatchet wielding Indian scalping the settler. It is this very native who belonged to a “tribe.” America’s history holds savagery, irrational and primitive behavior which is attached to its settlement, not to

tribal life. As evidence in “Rich in Glory and Agony, the Cavalry Rides Again” (2003), in which the war in Iraq is related to American history, there are those who still hold the image of America’s settlement wars.

The thought that American tribal lands are often located in remote areas still invite an aura of mysticism about tribal life. Johnson and Hook (1994) suggest that because tribes are in a naturally occurring environment far from urban life, some modern Indian reservations breed social deprivation (p. 196). But, it is more than the social disparities that impact the Westerner’s perception of tribal life. Today’s American natives are assimilating into a European-American culture (Johnson & Hook, 1994, p. 196-7). This very assimilation prolongs the continued perception of a dominant culture and the perception that tribal life is subservient to a dominant Western culture. In this very sense, tribal life is civilized by Western culture which suggests that tribal life is primitive. It is this very representation of tribal life in Iraq that this thesis provides.

Christiane Bird (2004) discusses Iraq tribal life in her book *A thousand sighs, a thousand revolts: Journeys in Kurdistan*. Of particular interest to this paper is the days spent with Arjin, a Kurdish professional woman who lives in the town of Zakho. While some Kurds are interested in their tribal heritage, and as Bird (2004) states, “tribal affiliations are still central to Iraqi Kurdish identity” (p. 112), there are those individuals such as Arjin who view tribal affiliations similar to an American claiming to be from New York or Boston (Bird, 2004, p. 112). And so, if Arjin is correct, tribal life in Iraq is a rhetorical construction of perceived culture.

Edward Wong, a Baghdad correspondent for the *Times* since November 2003, reviewed Dr. Ali A. Allawi's book, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the war, losing the peace*. While a book review is generally not part of an analysis, Wong interjects a great deal of his personal knowledge and experience as a Baghdad correspondent. The review gives readers insight into the book, however, it is the review of the book which rhetorically constructs Iraq and Iraqi life as primitive in a way vaguely familiar as found in American history. Wong interrupts the book review with his own editorial comments which produces more of an informative article instead of a book review. The review was published by the *New York Times* on May 27, 2007 under the headline, "Tribal Loyalties," and begins with "Tribal loyalties in Iraq, the state no longer matters" (p. 7.18), which suggests that democracy is unrecognizable and because of tribal loyalties, there is a disregard for law and order. Further, 'Tribal loyalties' is different than patriotism and constructs Iraqis as tribal, not nationals. Is Iraq a country of tribes, or is Iraq a country with tribes as nationals? Wong then uses the old adage, "Because of a lack of horses, they put saddles on the dogs" (p. 7.18), thus invites consumers to two thoughts. First, Iraqis have not progressed and second, Iraqis lack rational sense. Further, this cliché attaches an image of frontier land in America and strongly complements 'tribal loyalties.' The derogatory adage is followed by the statement that "There are no real leaders, a Kurdish friend told me, and the Americans have blindly, and often desperately propped up politicians who are venal, ineffective, and more than a little megalomaniacal" (p. 7.18). Tribal loyalties are headlined in this article thus, Iraqi politicians are from tribes, are ineffective leaders, willing to barter or be bought and

are delusional or out of touch with reality. This rhetorically constructs an invitation to perceive tribal leaders as irrational and primitive in their governance.

Wong's limited review of Allawi's book quotes Allawi's thought that "the process of modernization and urbanization was skin deep in Iraq and that tribal values born of the experience of surviving in the harsh environment of the desert, continued to hold sway for the vast majority of the country's inhabitants.' Confronted with an outside force, 'Iraq would rapidly shed its civilized veneer and revert to the culture and values of tribal nomadism.' And though the state may be 'a defining feature of advancing civilizations,' in Iraq it 'stands in contrast to tribal solidarity as an organizing principle'" (p. 7.18). Wong suggested that the book is similar to what journalists have been writing and consumers have been reading about the war in Iraq (p. 7.18). The above clearly invites readers to construct an image of a primitive culture, one that lacks civility, with phrases such as 'an advancing civilization' 'nomadism' or ready to go to battle and live with a minimal level of comfort, constantly roaming from place to place. Even more, it constructs Iraqis as primitive and lacking irrationality and composure, committed to the constructed lawlessness (civilized veneer) and nomadism of tribal life. Additionally, when stating that the administration (state) is advancing civilization, it would stand to reason that tribal life in Iraq today is considered uncivilized.

An area of constructed primitive law and order is found in Marc Santora and Suadad N. Al-Salhy (2009) article, "Iraq Tribes are Upset by Sentence Given to G.I." They discuss the sentence given to the American soldier for raping and murdering a young Iraqi and her family and burning the family home. First, the identification of

Iraqis as tribes and not as leaders, family members, friends, or relatives, or even the Iraqi public invites a difference in the connotative consumer response. The article describes a situation that is eerily similar to an event in Cheshire, Connecticut in which the Petit family home was invaded, the mother and daughters raped and murdered, and the family home burned, thus, I use both articles to aid in how the same situation is rhetorically constructed in mediated news.

As constructed, the article about the Iraq home invasion, rape, murder and burning of the home discusses punishment from a standpoint of tribal honor instead of punitive justice. “That soldier entered an Iraqi house, raped their under-age daughter and burned her with her family, so this sentence is not enough, and it is insulting for Iraqis honor.” “Leaders of the Janabi tribe of which the girl, Abeer Qassim Hamza al-Janabi was a member,” and “In the name of the Janabi tribe, I reject this sentence completely. This is a tribal issue and we cannot accept any moderate sentence except death.” Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki is quoted saying that the decision is a “victory for human rights,” and that “in the American justice system there are conflicting laws governing the death penalty” (p. A.6). Thus, the headline, “Iraqi Tribes are Upset...” and the content, “I reject this sentence” and “tribal issue” suggests a primitive response to the crime. This is confirmed with the statements from the Prime Minister that this is a victory for human rights. But, what is the difference between what the tribal leaders are asking for in the crime in Iraq and what the legal system of Connecticut sought in seeking the death penalty for the defendants in the Petit family home invasion, rape, murders and fire?

The Petit family murder was similar to the murder in Iraq. William Glaberson (2010) wrote in "For Jurors, a Harrowing Trial, but Unity on the Proper Punishment," which discusses the jurors in the Petit murder. He describes the scene in the courtroom and the jury responses from an empathetic standpoint for the family, victims and jury. "They [the jurors] sat feet from grieving family members." "Mr. Gram said the conversation veered broadly and included discussion of whether society had the right to take a life. In the end, he said, all the jurors agreed that if there was ever a case in which the death penalty was appropriate, the Cheshire case was it," There is discussion about a meeting between the jury and Petit family in which the Petit family apologized for putting the jury through the trial (p. A.28). Further, Glaberson speaks to the "havoc wreaked at the Petit house" (A.28), and that death by lethal injection was expected from the start (A.28). The struggle of the jury is empathically constructed by several jurors' comments about the emotional difficulty of the sitting through trial. Further, the death penalty is discussed in a compassionate manner. But, while there is no mention of the feelings of the families or the tribe in the horrific event in Iraq they are spoken about with compassion and concern in the Petit family situation.

What the evidence suggests is that difference is a result of the mediated rhetorical construction. The focus in the article about the rape in Iraq is on revenge and tribal honor as a system of justice while focus of the Petit home invasion is on the Petit family as the victim and punishment as punitive and justified. Both warrant punishment. The difference is that in one instance punishment is defined as primitive and revengeful, and the other, it is defined as the civilized system of justice. Americas

system of justice and the “death penalty,” support punitive punishment; Iraq’s tribal life is constructed as revengeful, which supports retaliatory punishment.

Another article which provides evidence of this thought was written by Amatzia Braum (2003). “Victory in Iraq, One Tribe at a Time” discusses the responsibility for the missile attacks on the hotel where Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was staying. Suggesting that forces loyal to Saddam Hussein are rooted “in part in centuries-old tribal kinship and religious identity” (p. A.25). Braum wrote that “attacks on coalition troops should be viewed through the prism of tribal warfare. This is a world defined in large measure by avenging the blood of a relative (al-tha’r); demonstrating one’s manly courage in battle (al-muruwwah); generally upholding one’s manly honor (al-sharaf). For some of these young men killing American soldiers is a political act, but it is also not unlike what hunting lions was to British colonial officers in 19th-century Africa: it involves a certain risk, but the reward is great” (p. A.25). This rhetoric constructs the enemy in a primordial state. It does it by comparing behavior of the “enemy” as revengeful, done to exhibit manliness and courageousness, similar to hunting animals, a victor over his prey disavowing the political nature of the climate. It suggests that attacks are vengeful and a “hunt” and not an act or reaction committed in fear for one’s life or as a result of war. Further, “Tribal kinship” draws the connotative perception of the rhetorical constructs of the Iraqi enemy as primitive and irrational. It could have been stated as “troops loyal to Saddam,” however, tribal kinship draws a different image. “Tribal warfare” is rhetorically different than present wars because it draws on inter-textuality to create perceived meaning. America invaded Iraq. Is this similar to the tribal

warfare of America's settlement? This is a war fought in the 21st Century with references to a primitive, uncivilized culture. Further, the headline, "Victory one tribe at a time" suggests, the battle is against the tribes not against a terrorists.

To further deepen the argument, the thesis now provides evidence of how Iraqis and their culture are rhetorically constructed as violent, how bombs are rational and car bombs are irrational, how the preemptive attack by an American troop is constructed as justified, yet an attack by an Iraq revengeful.

THE RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ AND IRAQ IS AS VIOLENT

War is violent and thus reporting of the events in the war theatre naturally predisposes news reports to violence. Edward Wong (2004) wrote "We've Seen the Enemy and They Are . . . Who Exactly?" Mr. Wong discusses the insurgent groups and the competing ideologies in Iraq. His article begins: "To hear the American commanders in Iraq tell it, William Butler Yeats could well be the poet laureate of Iraq's insurgency. If the guerrillas were to win this war with their suicide car bombs and televised beheadings, what would come next? Nothing, the commanders say, but a widening gyre, and things falling apart, and finally, mere anarchy being loosed in the cradle of civilization" (p. A.1). It might be suggested that civilized military armies attack with missiles and guided bombs, while irrational, violent, guerrilla armies attack with suicide bombs car bombings or televised beheadings to invoke fear. Both kill, both are violent, yet one is civilized and the other irrational. Beheadings further promote a savage, irrational individual who releases chaos on the streets.

Christina Konstantinidou (2007) discusses this dichotomous representation in her article "Death, Lamentation and the Photographic Representation of the Other

During the Second Iraq War in Greek Newspapers.” Konstantinidou (2007) cites Louw’s (2003) thoughts that impressions provided of the Vietnam War were that “of a bloody, dirty and messy affair’ (p. 149), the constructed images from the 1990’s to the Second Iraq War is that warfare is represented as “a clean and bloodless videogame with minimal human casualties” (p. 149). Further, perception management is employed in two ways: admiration for the West’s technological supremacy, ideals of humanity and moral superiority of the Western, caste against the ‘dark, inhumane and morally inferior enemy’ (p. 149). The precision with which American’s warfare is rhetorically constructed stresses the difference found in the arsenal of weapons. The guided missiles and bombs are precise, the West is superior in their game and everything else is inferior, primitive and irrational.

Marc Santora (2007) wrote about the presence of violence north of Baghdad in “Iraqi Militants Launch Attack on U.S. Outpost.” Santora’s discussion of the assault in which the insurgents used suicide bombers is significant when he wrote, “It appeared to be part of a renewed drive by insurgents in recent weeks as more American and Iraqi troops flood the streets of Baghdad and thousands of marines head to western Anbar Province to stem the violence. Hundreds of Iraqis have died in a recent wave of car bombings in Baghdad and elsewhere” (p. A.1). Violence is equated with the irrational car bomb, not with the rational soldier who fires a gun as discussed in the next article. Further, the use of “U.S. Outpost” is additional reference to the wars of American settlement, thus, evidence of imaging a perceived historic savage war.

A strong example of how Iraqis are constructed as irrational and violent is found in Edmund L. Andrews' July 2, 2003 article, "In Day of Violence in Iraq, Attacks From All Directions." The article discusses the violent climate of Baghdad. "The gunfire and bombing seemed to come from all directions today, leaving a trail of bitterness, confusion and hunger for revenge. The death toll included militant anti-American Muslims and people who were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time" (p. A.1). Muhammad Jassim, a militant Sunni Muslim suggests that "Anyone who shoots an Iraqi in this town will have a reaction, a random reaction." It might be that other people are hurt, innocent people. And after this, the families of those victims will ask for revenge" (p. A.1). This is an example of how Iraqis are responding to confusion: with revenge, violence and irrationality, a reaction instead of an action as the American soldier's response to the situation is described:

The incidents have made anxious American soldiers even quicker about pulling their triggers. Late this afternoon, soldiers at a checkpoint in one of Baghdad's wealthiest neighborhoods opened fire on three cars and killed at least two Iraqis. Confronted with maddeningly unpredictable attacks and sweltering in Baghdad's scorching summer heat, American soldiers have become more willing to shoot first and ask questions later. In two separate incidents only an hour and a few hundred feet apart, American soldiers manning checkpoints here fired on cars carrying Iraqi civilians, killing at least two people and wounding several others. "People have used car bombs against us," said Maj. Scott Slaten, a public affairs officer with the First Armored Division. "People running checkpoints are usually criminals, Baathists or people fleeing crimes who didn't think they would get caught." Witnesses said there were no signs ordering drivers to stop, and it was easy to miss or misunderstand the soldiers. "They killed innocent people for nothing" said Selwain al-Naimi, who witnessed the second incident. The first occurred at 4:30 p.m., at a roundabout leading to a bridge that provides entry to the grounds of the Republican Palace, which is the headquarters for the American-led occupation here. Major Slaten said a car rushed a checkpoint, causing a soldier to open fire with a machine gun to deter what he perceived as a threat. Two unidentified Iraqi civilians were killed. Major Slaten said a search of their car yielded a loaded 9-millimeter pistol and a "large amount" of Iraqi money. An hour later – "understanding these guys are a bit tense now," Major

Slaten said – an elderly man driving a Toyota approached a similar checkpoint on a ramp leading to the same roundabout. Major Slaten said the man was driving so fast that a soldier had to jump onto the curb to get out of the way. But witnesses said the car had stopped by the time at least one soldier opened fire with a 50-caliber machine gun. The car's windshield was shattered, and the driver wounded by the glass, Major Slaten said. No weapons were found in the car. (p. A.16)

This is just one example of mediated news' rhetorical construction of difference in response to a fear induced situation. While there is a perception of an irrational, revengeful response by Iraqis, it is the same response American soldiers have to their fear. Only in the case of the American soldier it was preemptive as suggested by the thought that "American soldiers have become more willing to shoot first and ask questions later (Andrews, 2003, p. A.1). The American is acting, as in "willing to shoot first," and killing innocent people is defended as rational and a defense mechanism, whereby the Iraqi is reacting as a "random reaction" and "innocent people will be hurt" which creates a presumption of irrationality. The American is anxious, tense, confronted with unpredictability, while the Iraqi is confused, bitter and wanting revenge.

Other articles report of response by Iraqis to other tribes, ethnic groups or American troops as retaliatory. Evidence of this is found in headlines such as "When is it Revenge and When Is It Justice?" (Whitney, 2003); Op-Ed, "A City that Lives For Revenge" (Mackey, 2004), and "In Days Before Hanging, a Push for Revenge and a Push Back from the U.S." (Bruns, Glanz, Tavernise & Santora, 2007). The use of *revenge* prejudices an irrational thought. This is where the rhetorical construction loses authority. The fear of the Iraqi is negated with a revengeful reaction which suggests an irrational response, while as evidenced in Andrews article, the American

soldier's preemptive response is grounded in rationality.

TOTALIZING AND IDEOLOGY

As stated previously in this thesis, an area that needs careful consideration is the intimacy with which reporters are engaged with the interactions in the war theatre. The headlines often report casualties of Iraqis in numbers comparable to school shootings, soldier casualties, and gang violence in America. One death seemingly is insignificant as many deaths. There is no difference in the headline "950 Die in Pilgrims' Stampede on Baghdad Bridge" written by Robert F. Worth (2005) and the headline by Sam Dagher (2009) "Bombs Kill 8 in Baghdad As Shiite Pilgrims Return." One describes the death of many, the other the death of few, yet both attach significance to Pilgrim and Shiite. Were they female, male, young, old, families, Iraqis, or as rhetorically constructed, the deceased are grouped together as Shiites, Pilgrims, and itinerants without a country and an identity? Worth's article uses "Pilgrims" approximately 12 times and "Shiite" approximately 14 times to describe the event and refers to the victims as woman and children twice. Further, the constructed headline "950 Die in Pilgrims' Stampede on Baghdad Bridge" syntactically provides evidence of rhetorically constructed uncivilized behavior. The pilgrims' stampeding suggests this is intentional as opposed to individuals who were fleeing an attack.

The death of Mr. Saif Aldin, a divorced father of a six year old is discussed in Paul von Zielbauer and Andrew E. Kramer's (2007) article, "Iraqi Journalist is Shot and Killed in Baghdad." This same article which discusses Mr. Aldin's death discounts individual deaths. "Three senior members of one such Sunni group, the

Salahuddin Awakening Council, were killed Sunday near the north oil city of Kirkuk, the Iraqi police there said” and “Elsewhere in Baghdad, a car bomb exploded in a busy traffic circle downtown, killing eight people and wounding 15, an Interior Ministry official said” (p. A.8). Therefore, one’s identity is validated and negotiated through the disregard of others who lost their life. They are presented as an afterthought, and “elsewhere.” Again, they are individuals without a country, culture and personal identity, belonging to a group (Sunni) and in the case of the eight who lost their life, they hold no identity. To even include this information in an article which discusses the death of a journalist dismisses the loss of others lives. Further, any authenticity that the U.S. has given to the Awakening Council is negated when the leaders are not acknowledged.

Another article, “Attackers Kill 39 in Iraq: Massacre Details Emerge” by Alissa J. Rubin, Ali Adeep and Qais Mizher (2007), describes the victims as “Nine families were annihilated in our village and two Shiite families were annihilated two days ago” (p. A.8). Generally speaking there is a propensity to create one ubiquitous persona attached to religious, ethnic, or tribal affiliation. Too often, either identities are concealed through group attachment as found in “Sunnis and Shiites Unite to Protest U.S. and Hussein” (Kifner & Smith, 2003, p. A.1) or Sunni or Shiite is attached to a personal name as in Mr. Abbas, 52, A Shiite Muslim preacher (LeDeuff, 2003, p. B.1).

Sunni, Shiite and Kurd have become the face of Iraq. This would be similar to defining nationals of Ireland, England, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as Protestant and Catholic because of the conflict. It would be comparable to identifying

victims of school or office shootings as 10 African Americans, 5 Protestants or 3 Jewish. Totalizing serves to erase the multidimensionality of people aiding in the process of othering.

To all of this there is one area which completes the hegemonic ideology present in the rhetorical construction of Iraq as the other. John F. Burns (2006), wrote “Could a New Strongman Help?” The article discusses how Iraqis “crave” a “strong leader” “to end the current wave of sectarian bloodletting that left to build on itself, could ultimately match the mass killing that characterized Mr. Hussein’s psychopathic years in power” (1.37). The word strongman suggests a physical, authoritarian person, not a leader. Burns uses this very same phrase again in his 2004 article “Baghdad’s Strong Man Struggles to Keep His Grip.” In this article, Burns discusses Dr. Ayad Alawi’s injury to his wrist and questions his leadership abilities. He writes (thus translates) that “many Iraqis who heard the story told friend they would not be unhappy if it were true, because it would show that Iraq finally had a strongman at its helm again, one who might restore order (p. 4.5). Are the individuals in charge considered “strongman” or leaders? These are two different designations. A strongman as defined by *The Oxford American College Dictionary* is “a man of great physical strength, esp. one who performs feats of strength as a form of entertainment; a leader who rules by the exercise of threats, force or violence” (p. 1367). The leaders of Iraq are physically compared to Popeye with an eye on Hitler. The use of “strongman” potentially rhetorically constructs a perceived image of leaders in Iraq with cartoon qualities.

All of these items allow consumers to promote their own ideology. Justice in

Iraq as in the case of rape is mediated and rhetorically constructed as revenge, yet the very same event is rhetorically constructed as punitive through the process of the American judicial systems. An Iraqi is confused by the very same fear that is defined as anxious for the American soldier. The result is that the response is constructed as preemptive and noble for the American and irrational, primitive and inhumane for an Iraqi. The thought that the face of Iraq is reduced to an ethnic, religious or tribal affiliation, creates a sense of social ubiquity, while Americans host a multi-dimensional social identity which includes numerous affiliations.

This is completed with the notion that Iraqis need a strongman, a Popeye. This news mediated rhetorical construction invites American consumers to perceive their social ideology as more advance, sophisticated and dominant and presents Iraq as a subservient culture. It is Hall's (2003) thought that ideologies are the invention of society and a collective identity which become a naturalized truth (p. 90) and identifies how symbolic violence promotes the presence of the sophisticated American hegemonic ideology cast against the primitive, irrational Iraqi culture.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Robert Fisk's (2005) book *The Great War for civilization: The conquest of the Middle East* discusses the American soldiers' attack of a village in Hajibrigit, Afghanistan. Fisk tells how an eighty-five year old tribal leader was shot and killed. To force individuals to identify this man, women were tied up and a three year old left was to die in a well she stumbled into as she ran away from the commotion. Men were forced to strip down; hands and legs manacled together and their beards shaved. Their heads were covered with sacks and they were placed in cages. A member of the Special Forces justified this because "when the Americans go into a village and see a farmer with a beard, they see Osama bin Laden" (p. 892-894). Is this any different from the Iraqi citizen who sees the threat in the war theatre? This is a result of totalizing.

As this paper demonstrated, the response to fear by both the Iraqi citizen and the American soldier is similar. It is the constructed response in mediated reports which is different. One is justified as a valid response; the other is disregarded as irrational, primitive and revengeful. Even legislative response is constructed as revenge. "Kurds are very frustrated and are taking revenge by holding up other legislation in Baghdad," said Joost Hiltermann, a senior analyst of the Middle East for

the International Crisis Group (Rubin, 2008, p. A.8). In the American political system this would be referred to as a filibuster.

Iraqis as individuals are similar to Americans. Iraq culture is vastly different from American culture. However, at least for readers of the New York Times, it is the rhetorical construction which establishes the perception of difference in humans. To seek the death penalty in the American culture is perceived as justice, yet as demonstrated in the Iraq culture, because justice is a “tribal issue” it is constructed as revengeful and rejected as inhumane. GPS guided missiles and bombs dropped from an American jet by a member of the armed forces seem less violent than a car bomb. Today, the weapons in the war chests have changed, yet there is a rationality attached to the bomb dropped from the jet and an irrationality attached to the car bomb.

The presentation of American culture as sophisticated provides evidence of a dominant and subservient ideology. Constructed in rhetoric, it guides perceptions and sustains and supports an “us” and “them” subservient identity. It is the bombs, the response, and the thought that ‘could; a strongman help.

Do we develop cultural blindness to the qualities and the humanness of other cultures when Americans learn about other cultures from print media? If not, we are invited to learn through representation instead of recognition.

This invitation become as Daniel Goleman (2006) suggests, an “Implicit biases, automatic and unconscious stereotypes” (p. 300). The rhetorical construction drives us to further manifest an “us” and “them” society, and promotes othering and a hegemonic ideology in America. The repeated exposure and framing impacts our

perception of Iraqi's and American Iraqis and is the perpetual roadmap to stereotyping.

The face of war is changing. The weapons have changed and the speed at which consumers receive the information from the news media and the intimacy of the casualties of the enemies has changed. Perhaps this is where the reports from the battlefield are losing authenticity. Is this another case where technology is ahead of human interaction?

I believe this study strengthens the argument that calls for careful consideration of how cultures are represented in the press. For many consumers, this is the education, the opportunity to learn about another culture. This is the consumer's only interaction with a different country and culture. And it is here that I suggest that the real weapons of mass destruction are the words of mass destruction, rhetorically constructed in symbolic representation, not in symbolic recognition.

APPENDICES

Articles which contain a form(s) of tribe and Iraq in headline and / or content

Date	Headline	Author
1/5/2003	In Iraq's Tribes, U.S. Faces a Formidable Wild Card	Neil MacFarquhar
3/23/2003	Rich In Glory and Agony, the Cavalry Rides Again	Michelle O'Donnell
4/2/2003	Warring Tribes, Here and There [Op-Ed]	Maureen Down
4/16/2003	Inching Toward Democracy, Catching a Big One, Changing a Chant	Anthony DePalma
4/19/2003	Cleric Assumes a Bully Pulpit	Charlie LeDuff
4/19/2003	Sunnis and Shiites Unite to Protest U.S. and Hussein	John Kifner & Craig Smith
4/27/2003	The Meaning Of a Skull [Op-Ed]	Thomas L. Friedman
5/11/2003	Back In Iraq, A Cleric Urges Islamic Rules	Susan Sachs
6/25/2003	Veil of Secrecy Around Village Hit in U.S. Raid	Patrick E. Tyler
7/2/2003	In Day of Violence In Iraq, Attacks From All Directions	Edmund L. Andrews
7/16/2003	Rape (and Silence About It) Haunts Baghdad	Neela Banerjee
7/27/2003	When Is It Revenge and When Is It Justice	Craig R. Whitney
9/7/2003	Another tribe without a state	Orville Schell
10/1/2003	Iraqi Villagers and G.I.'s In an Uneasy Coexistence	Patrick E. Tyler
10/28/2003	Victory in Iraq, One Tribe At a Time	A. Baram
11/5/2003	In Scorched Hills, Tribes Feel Bereft and Forgotten	Charlie LeDuff
11/14/2003	The Sabotage of Democracy [Op-Ed]	Reuel Marc Gerech
11/23/2003	Iraqi Town Relishes Freedom, But Resentment Runs Beneath	Steven Lee Myers
12/14/2003	There Is No Crash Course In Democracy	John F. Burns
2/8/2004	Is the Group Responsible for the Individual's Crime?	Adam Liptak
4/29/2004	A City That Lives for Revenge [Op-Ed]	Sandra Mackey
5/19/2004	Cleric Tells Fighters and Occupiers to Leave Sacred Cities	Edward Wong
7/26/2004	Iraqi Insurgents Using Abduction as Prime Weapon	James Glanz
9/19/2004	Baghdad's Strong Man Struggles to Keep His Grip	John F. Burns
10/17/2004	We've Seen the Enemy and They Are . . . Who Exactly?	Edward Wong

Date	Headline	Author
11/27/2004	Big Iraqi Parties Are Urging Delay in Jan. 30 Voting	Edward Wong,, Khalid al-Ansary, Richard Oppel, Jr. Robert Worth & Steven Weisman
12/5/2004	Mayhem In Iraq Is Starting to Look Like a Civil War	Edward Wong
12/16/2004	Politics and War Crimes in Iraq [Editorial]	New York Times
12/18/2004	Iraqi's Election, Its Outcome Murky, Is Seen as a 'Jungle of Ambiguity'	John F. Burns
2/20/2005	Are they Iraqis, ultimately, or are they Kurds?	Nir Rosen
3/29/2005	Sunni Leader Vows Support For Insurgents	Robert F. Worth, Mona Mahmoud & Zaineb Obeid
5/7/2005	What Rough Beasts? [Op-Ed]	Maureen Dowd
9/1/2005	950 Die in Pilgrims' Stampede on Baghdad Bridge	Robert F. Worth, Thayer Aldaami, Khalid al-Ansary, Layla Isitfan, Abdul Razzaq al-Saiedy, Harb al-Mukhtar & Qais Mizher
10/1/2005	A Wolfie In Sheep's Clothing [Op-Ed]	Maureen Dowd
11/22/2005	That First Thanksgiving [Op-Ed]	John Tierney
1/29/2006	Playing Den Mother to a Fledgling Iraqi Army	Roger Cohen
4/2/2006	If Not Peace, Then Justice	Elizabeth Rubin
7/10/2006	In Iraq's Mayhem Town Finds Calm Through Its Tribal Links	Sabrina Tavernise & Qais Mizher
9/18/2006	Most Tribes in Anbar Agree to Unite Against Insurgents	Khalid al-Ansary & Ali Adeeb
10/8/2006	Suicide Bomber Kills 14 in Northern Iraq City	Sabrina Tavernise, Ali Adeeb, Qais Mizher and Iraqi employees of The New York Times
10/15/2006	26 Killed in Revenge Attacks Outside Baghdad	Michael Luo and Qais Mizher
11/12/2006	Could a Strongman Help?	John F. Burns
12/17/2006	Iraqi Chief Calls Forum to Press for National Reunification; Major Groups Are Absent	Marc Santora & Abdul Razzaq al-Saiedi
1/3/2007	A Hanging And A Funeral [Op-Ed]	Thomas L. Friedman
1/7/2007	In Days Before Hanging, a Push for Revenge and a Push Back From the U.S.	John F. Burns, James Glanz, Sabrina Tavernise, Marc Santora & David Sanger
2/20/2007	Iraqi Militants Launch Attack on U.S. Outpost	Marc Santora
3/3/2007	In Lawless Sunni Heartland of Iraq, a Tribal Chief Opposes the Jihadists and Prays	Edward Wong, Khalid al-Ansary & Helene Cooper

Date	Headline	Author
3/4/2007	Choosing a Sect	Noah Feldman
5/27/2007	Tribal Loyalties	Edward Wong
7/1/2007	Wrapped in the Star-Spangled Toga	Adam Goodheart
7/18/2007	Attackers Kill 39 In Iraq; Massacre Details Emerge	Alissa J. Rubin, Ali Adeeb & Qais Mizher
7/18/2007	Same People, Same Threat: [News Analysis]	Scott Shane
10/15/2007	Iraqi Journalist Is Shot And Killed In Baghdad	Paul von Zielbauer & Andrew Kramer
10/18/2007	Mastermind of '80s Gas Attacks on Kurds Is Taken to a Gallows Site in Baghdad	Andrew Kramer, Qais Mizher
11/17/2007	Sunni Group Says U.S. Killed Its Members	Cara Buckley, Khalid al-Ansari and Qais Mizher
2/6/2008	U.S. Forces Kill 4 and Wound Girl in Iraqi Family in Raid	Solomon Moore & Khalid al-Ansary
5/28/2008	Warrior for Al Qaeda Rallies Recruits With Her Online Fury [Foreign Desk]	Elaine Sciolino & Souad Mekhennet
7/12/2008	Iraqi Shiites Reclaim a Village Razed by Sunnis [Foreign Desk]	Alissa J. Rubin
8/3/2008	The Last Battle	Michael R. Gordon
10/28/2008	Rejection of Oil Law and Move To Create Tribal Councils Add to Tensions With Kurds	Alissa J. Rubin
1/1/2009	National Unity is Rallying Cry in Iraq	Steven Lee Myers
1/3/2009	Suicide Bomber Kills at Least 24 as Iraqi Tribal Leaders Meet to Discuss Reconciliations [Foreign Desk]	Timothy Williams and Riyadh Mohammed
1/11/2009	Dispute Weakens Iraqi Sunni Coalition [Foreign Desk]	Sam Dagher
1/20/2009	Tribal Rivalries Persist As Iraqis Seek Local Posts [Foreign Desk]	Sam Dagher
2/17/2009	Bombs Kill 8 In Baghdad As Shiite Pilgrims Return [Foreign Desk]	Sam Dagher
2/19/2009	The Long, Dusty Trek Toward Tolerance [Arts and Leisure Desk]	Donald G. McNeil, Jr.
5/19/2009	Iraq Arrests 2 Sunni Leaders, Raising Fears of Violence	Marc Santora
5/23/2009	Iraq Tribes Are Upset By Sentence Given to G.I.	Marc Santora & Abdul Razzaq al-Saiedy
5/23/2009	Iraq: U.S. Attacks Tribal Fighters [Brief]	Campbell Robertson
9/3/2009	In Bank Killings, Highs and Lows of Iraq Justices [Foreign Desk]	Rod Nordland & Rihadh Mohammed
9/3/2009	Old Problems Persist Despite New Leadership in Iraq's Anbar Province [Foreign Desk]	Sam Dagher

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