

EPIDEICTIC WITHOUT THE PRAISE: A HEURISTIC ANALYSIS
FOR RHETORIC OF BLAME

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is a historical and theoretical exploration of epideictic rhetoric of blame as it functions to build community and teach civic virtues. I have assembled a set of heuristics – concentrating on three strategies of creating ethos, establishing place, and utilizing ekphrasis – to examine the didactic nature of epideictic, especially in environments where social change is being demanded by the rhetor. The heuristic model encompasses 13 guiding questions, which then are applied to two case studies of rhetoric of blame: the writings of journalist Ida B. Wells to stop the lynchings of African-Americans during the 19th century, and a current website created by the Save Darfur Coalition to intervene in the genocide in Darfur, Africa.

While a significant amount of research has examined epideictic rhetoric of praise, existing scholarship on rhetoric of blame is minimal. Thus, this project helps to fill the gap both by furnishing evidence of historical and current instances of epideictic rhetoric of blame as it functions to build community and teach civic virtues, and by demonstrating a methodology to assess such discourse. At a time in our nation and neighborhoods when words of condemnation are often flung about too quickly and carelessly, a reliable methodology is needed for creating and analyzing rhetoric of blame – and how it accomplishes a rhetorical purpose beyond that of a one-sided volley of insults.

This study breaks new ground by offering a methodology for analyzing how the epideictic rhetor using words of blame can be successful through an expression of ethos and ekphrasis in bringing readers together, and the places where this occurs. This project is grounded in the work of more than a dozen scholars ranging from Sullivan to Royster, Laurer to Hauser, and Agnew to Bolter, and it furthers work concerning ethos and the transformative nature of epideictic discourse. Because new media technologies often play a crucial role in

today's epideictic rhetoric, I have designed the heuristics to be applied to a broad spectrum of epideictic pieces, such as essays, newspaper articles, speeches, videos and websites, which provides a richer understanding of rhetoric of blame from a 21st century perspective.

For family and friends, who are the greatest of blessings.
And for anyone who has taken on the difficult task of casting blame,
hoping to make changes and help others.

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CHAPTER I: THE DIDACTIC NATURE OF RHETORIC OF BLAME

Seen in its most traditional role as words of “praise and blame,” the genre of epideictic rhetoric surrounds us. From speeches following the September 11 tragedy to honors for World War II veterans to memorials of the Hurricane Katrina devastation, this rhetoric of ceremony and sentiment and display is encountered everywhere. And yet equally pervasive is a transformative quality of epideictic that seems to demand a broader definition than the genre historically has been assigned. The art of rhetoric – epideictic, especially, I would argue – offers the opportunity for a rhetor to lead her audience to new beliefs and ideas, and spur them on to unrealized progress. Communications scholar Mark Bernard White summarizes this extraordinary capability:

Rhetorical acts try to transform people in some way, and by so doing imply that the intended audience needs changing, that it is somehow deficient. Where a rhetor encounters confusion she may want to supply clarity of understanding, or perhaps she may want to change neutrality into agreement, skepticism into conviction, casual affinity into passionate commitment, and so on. (132)

While the genres of forensic and deliberative rhetoric have long been accepted as possessing the innate function of enacting change, the scope of potential for epideictic rhetoric has been more severely limited. However, through this project, I will examine the didactic nature of the epideictic genre, as it functions to build communities and to foster cooperative efforts, especially in environments where change is being demanded by the rhetor. As a professional journalist for nearly two decades, I’ve personally witnessed many instances of this power of words to express shared values, to build community, to make change and to help

others. The power of epideictic rhetoric to make such achievements is grounded in the work of theorists such as Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. In their explanation of what they label as “the new rhetoric,” they examine discourse as it relates to value judgments and the relationship of the rhetor as a teacher to the audience. “The epideictic genre is not only important but essential from an educational point of view,” they write, “since it too has an effective and distinctive part to play – that namely, of bringing about a consensus in the minds of the audience regarding the values that are celebrated in the speech” (1,388). White agrees, explaining that the word *didactic* stems from the Greek “skilled in teaching” – “Didactic literature has a primary or at least a predominant intention to transform its audience by teaching it something” (127).

A significant amount of scholarship has been dedicated to exploring expanded definitions and functions of epideictic rhetoric as it is employed in words of praise. Much less so has been the scholarship dedicated to examining words of blame. While a rhetoric of praise can readily be understood as capable of validating shared values and encouraging community – as we often experience at ceremonial and traditional occasions – those functions seem more difficult to achieve when employing a rhetoric of blame. For this study, I have focused more specifically on the rhetoric of blame, asking whether it can accomplish the same rhetorical, didactic purposes as rhetoric of praise. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains how epideictic rhetoric can be used for the promotion of civic values, through language of praise and blame. He substantially discusses many characteristics and attributes of *to kalon* as “the honorable, fine, or noble,” but gives limited attention to *aiskhron*, “the shameful” (75). His extended explanations of praiseworthy qualities leave us with an understanding of rhetoric of blame as being the opposite of virtue. Thus, we have examples of vice such as injustice, cowardice, lack of control, illiberality, little-

mindedness, and stinginess (76-77), as well as licentiousness, profiteering, flattery, softness, meanness and boastfulness (133). His approach to such shameful acts gives the impression that he believes that vice or virtue is self-evident. Aristotle writes: “Let shame [*aiskhyne*] be [defined as] a sort of pain and agitation concerning the class of evils, whether present or past or future, that seem to bring a person into disrespect” (132).

To gauge the effectiveness of rhetoric of blame in the public sphere – as Jurgen Habermas refers to the discursive arena for public discussion and the formation of ideas – I have assembled a set of heuristics concentrating on the three strategies of creating ethos, utilizing ekphrasis and establishing place. (Appendix C) Janice Lauer called in 1970 for new heuristics to be developed in rhetoric and composition studies, as they had been in psychology and mathematics (396). Noting that *heuristic* is a Greek term meaning “to find out or discover,” Lauer expands the concept as the “techniques within the *techne* of rhetoric that served to create effective discourse” (Enos and Lauer 79). She encouraged the use of heuristics to delve into invention and to better understand the creative problem-solving process of writers, and she saw such work as a way to renew the field. Since then, numerous techniques and systems have evolved, in addition to the ancient heuristics of Aristotle’s, and scholars such as Enos and Lauer worked to further explore the term and recognized its epistemological functions as well – “as a method of generating probable knowledge for oneself and others” (80). In the tradition of Lauer, I have developed these heuristics to analyze epideictic rhetoric of blame and to verify whether it is effective in accomplishing didactic purposes. While the subject matter can vary, the rhetoric of blame I would like to consider for this project is that which is employed to make social change for the benefit of a person or community of people who may be victims of injustice or oppression in society. Specifically, I will apply the heuristics to two case studies: the writings of pioneering

journalist Ida B. Wells and her efforts to stop the lynchings of African-Americans during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and a current website with similar rhetorical purposes created by the Save Darfur Coalition to intervene in the genocide taking place in Darfur, Africa.

Of the three categories of strategies, I consider ethos predominant in this set of heuristics. The creation of ethos by the writer is a rhetorical tool – the use of the ethical appeal in an attempt to persuade. Edward Corbett, drawing from Aristotle, explains that the attempt is successful “when the speech itself impresses the audience that the speaker is a man of sound sense (*phronesis*), high moral character (*areté*), and benevolence (*eunioia*)” (80). This creation of ethos is foundational to epideictic rhetoric, according to Dale Sullivan, who, also quoting Aristotle, notes that epideictic “does not rely on examples or enthymemes; rather its business is to invest subjects with dignity and nobility” (Ethos 117). I would further emphasize that the creation of ethos is fundamental for words of blame to be effective in accomplishing didactic purposes. Wells had to create a unique ethos for herself – as a writer, a woman, an African-American, an individual and a member of the Memphis community. Furthermore, she had to create an ethos for victims of the lynchings with the credibility necessary to inspire others to help them. Similarly, the authors of the Save Darfur Coalition website also have had to establish an epideictic ethos for their organization as well as the Darfuri people they want to assist. A better understanding of how both accomplished such a challenge is at the heart of my project.

A discussion of the epideictic genre cannot be complete without addressing its intersection with technologies of literacy. For Wells, the growing access of the African-American community to the technology of the printing press allowed her to distribute her discourse on the horrors of lynchings through newspapers and pamphlets. Today, computer technology and the global connection of the Internet provide a worldwide forum for exposure of

the suffering in Darfur. New media seems to have intensified the capacity of epideictic for transformation – within an individual reader, an audience, or in reality itself. Communication technologies offer an opportunity for further investigation of the strategies of my heuristics, which I argue are key to understanding epideictic rhetoric. Whether it is photographs on newsprint or videos streaming on a computer screen, the world of media offers another “place” where words and images are expressed, where ethos can be established and where community is formed and transformed. How is this accomplished – and how do the mediums facilitate and complicate the rhetorical practices? And, how do technologies of literacy broaden our understanding of epideictic rhetoric? My goal in this work is to answer these questions, among others, developing theory and then applying it through the analysis of the two historical instances of epideictic rhetoric where communities have been created or transformed by the rhetoric of blame. The heuristics I have established, which I discuss in-depth in the next chapter, provide a framework for understanding the rhetoric of blame from a 21st century perspective.

The remaining sections of this chapter provide an overall review of research and previous scholarship on epideictic rhetoric and its correlations with technology and community, some historical context for the two case studies, a summary of this dissertation and the methodology, a list of research questions, and chapter outlines.

Review of Research and Previous Scholarship

Epideictic Rhetoric

Since the classical era, epideictic rhetoric has never enjoyed a concrete definition upon which scholars can agree. Classifications have run the gamut from ceremonial “praise and blame” oratory to foundational discourse for all other rhetorical genres. Scholars both ancient and contemporary have debated the value and functions of its often ornamental, stylistic nature.

Debates over the definitions of epideictic rhetoric are much too broad to cover in this space, but we should recognize that traditionally, scholars have held epideictic in lesser esteem, based on Aristotle's limited definition of the genre – in contrast to his more lengthy treatments in the *Rhetoric* of the forensic and deliberative styles. For Aristotle, as mentioned earlier, the nature of epideictic rhetoric has its foundations in values and ideals, and language is a conduit for the exploration, preservation and advancement of virtues. In Book 1 Chapter 9, Aristotle discusses the specific virtues of *kalon*, the honorable, and *aiskron*, the shameful, as the foundations of praise and blame in epideictic. Among its characteristics are a focus on the present time, and an audience who plays the role of a judge or observer “concerned with the ability [*dynamis*] of the speaker” (Aristotle 48). Much more recently, there is some tendency among scholars to broaden the definition, augmenting its characteristics and the roles defining it, for instance, as a rhetoric of display (Rosenfield 131) or a performative rhetoric (Beale 225). Sullivan extends this line of thinking, specifically claiming rhetorical criticism to be epideictic in nature, especially as criticism is a process of evaluation and unveiling (Epideictic Character 341). “Unveiling a text can be an uncovering of the value system implicit in the text,” he states, adding that “describing and interpreting, normally considered initial stages in the act of criticism, are epideictic acts of unveiling, exposing the value system of a text or person to the gaze of spectators” (342).

As varied as the definitions, the functions of epideictic can be equally as diverse. Several scholars have noted how roles of epideictic extend beyond merely inducing sentiment. Rhetoric and communications scholar Celeste Michelle Condit lists three functions that she believes define the epideictic experience – one of which is the shaping of community. She claims rhetoric has the power to transform the community: “Whenever change intrudes into the community's life, the epideictic speaker will be called forth by the community to help discover

what the event means to the community, and what the community will come to be in the face of the new event” (289). Cynthia Sheard, too, in “The Public Value of Epideictic Rhetoric” posits epideictic “as a vehicle through which communities can imagine and bring about change” (771) and describes words as “instruments of personal, social, and political problem-solving” (766). Wayne Booth goes a step further and argues for the need for rhetoric to help us accomplish an ethical responsibility in society. In “The Rhetoric of Rhetoric,” he emphasizes that rhetoric cannot have merely one definition, and it must not be reduced to non-truths or anti-truths. Booth insists that “the term must always include both the verbal and visual garbage flooding our lives and the tools for cleaning things up” (3). Through the course of this project, I will maintain that epideictic is indeed a tool for cleaning things up. Yet another function is raised by communications scholar Robert Danisch, who has studied art and texts from the Harlem Renaissance as epideictic rhetoric and believes the genre is necessary for cultural pluralism. He states that it is “a way for a community to come to know itself and to come to know the other communities living in the same society. In addition, such exchanges lead to inevitable assimilation, transformation, and change, demonstrating the ongoing process of defining race and determining values” (298). Similar to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Gerard Hauser emphasizes the important teaching function of epideictic rhetoric. Grounded in Aristotle’s discussion of epideictic and its ability to teach civic virtues, Hauser sees the benefit of language that holds up noble characters and actions for others to imitate to the benefit of society. He states: “Epideictic exhibits public morality; we learn it through mimesis of deeds unfathomable were they not publicly exhibited and validated” (19). His focus, as was Aristotle’s, is primarily rhetoric of praise, but I would like to explore whether a similar didactic function is possible through rhetoric of blame.

It is important as well to acknowledge the perspective of some scholars who caution about community building – especially as it is established as a rhetorical purpose – because it may come at the expense of those who are not in the community. The limiting and oppressive qualities of community are noted by scholars such as Joseph Harris, who urges rhetoricians to take a more critical look at the definition of community. Recent theories on the power of social forces in writing, he believes, “have tended to invoke the idea of community in ways at once sweeping and vague: positing discursive utopias...yet failing to state the operating rules or boundaries of these communities” (12). Noting the seductive power of the term, he states, “for like the pronoun *we*, *community* can be used in such a way that it invokes what it seems merely to describe” (13). Another caution comes from Lester Faigley, who explains that there are a number of postmodern critiques of the concept of community “for suppressing the conflicts that exist within any social group” (226). Given that postmodern theory situates the subject among multiple discourses, he continues, the critiques “suggest the appeal to community is a means of relocating the wholeness of the self-aware subject within a coherent social group” (227). Further, Faigley warns that “notions of community unravel into complex sets of power relations” and indicate “where to locate agency in a postmodern subjectivity” (227). Marilyn Cooper agrees, suggesting this definition for community: “a way of labeling individuals as insiders or outsiders” (204). Specialized language and the manipulation of discourse by members of a community are ways of asserting power. Referring to the ideology that Richard Rorty defines as “foundational epistemology,” Cooper believes discourse communities can create the problem of foundationalism – “that truth is not a judgment made in an immediate social situation but grounded in external standards” (202). And then, incorporating technology into the epideictic situation, digital literacy scholar Samantha Blackmon asks her students whether they “feel

erased” as they view the communities represented by the Internet, and to consider “the repercussions of the formation and maintenance of a universal cyberrace in terms of a sense of community” (95). As we measure the effectiveness of rhetorical situations of epideictic in building community, this critical perspective is beneficial in helping to avoid a false, utopian concept of community or an attempt to overextend the endeavor without regard for context. With seeming consideration for these concerns, Henry Giroux, a founding theorist of critical pedagogy, states that “human community building is a cornerstone of critical pedagogy” and advocates “a politics of difference and community that is not simply grounded in a celebration of plurality” (Blackmon 86), which I find to be a helpful approach for this project. Furthermore, along with a more critical view of community, we should recognize that the Habermasian concept of a public sphere may not necessarily allow for the ideal setting for the writer to employ epideictic rhetoric and accomplish her didactic purposes. As digital communications scholar Barbara Warnick cautions, freedom of the medium in society to distribute the message – while important – is not enough, alone, to accomplish actions such as building community, making changes or helping others. She reminds us that it is not solely the words – nor solely the community – responsible for effecting the change.

The mere existence of public communication is not enough to ensure the viability of a public sphere, however. Its continuance relies as well on the extension of a common culture, shared experience, communal values, skill in and commitment to the processes of deliberation, access to news and information, and the public’s ability to influence social institutions and government policy. (2)

Her explanation neatly describes the complexities of the rhetorical situation that I believe my heuristics also address in order to foster more discerning analysis of epideictic.

Epideictic Analyses

Numerous historical examples of epideictic rhetoric in the traditional style of praise, and a much fewer number of those casting blame, have been analyzed. For the purposes of this dissertation, several analyses are worth noting. Kathleen Hall Jameson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell examined instances of hybrids of the genres of epideictic and deliberative/legislative, especially those with a strong call to action. They define hybrids, in an Aristotelian manner, as “dynamic fusions of substantive, stylistic and situational elements and constellations that are strategic responses of the demands of the situation and the purposes of the rhetor” (146). And further quoting Aristotle, they note “to praise a man is in one respect akin to urging a cause of action” (147). In their study, Jameson and Campbell examine eulogies delivered for Robert Kennedy by members of the US Congress, and the strategies used to accomplish both epideictic and deliberative/legislative purposes such as praising and memorializing Kennedy, while proposing policies, soliciting actions and calling for memorials on issues that he had supported. While their concentration was primarily upon words of praise, their work helps to broaden our perspective of epideictic rhetoric and its efficacious functions.

Takis Poulakos provides an ancient and unique example of epideictic rhetoric and its entrance into the public sphere in his study of Isocrates’ *Evagoras*. This tribute that Isocrates sent to Evagoras’ son, Nicocles, honored his father and used the display as an example of virtuous conduct for Nicocles to follow in his political leadership. Poulakos believes the tribute was a premiere instance of a rhetorical attempt to influence political leadership: “The conviction that an oration could affect the actions of political leaders had given rhetoric a new role in the affairs of the state, a role that had previously been played by poetry” (318). Here is a connection to the model of the public sphere and the place of rhetoric within it that will arise more fully

many centuries later. Poulakos also draws our attention to Isocrates' intriguing style of narrative in his epideictic rhetoric: "serving the community both imaginatively and informatively, narratives were at once stories and histories," (319) and this style also is evident in Wells' and the Darfur website's rhetoric. "The original aim to display a virtuous character," Poulakos explains, "is modified midstream by the subsequent aim to influence future conduct: display gives way to exhortation – *epideikton* yields to *symboleutikon*. This shift in the direction of the discourse overturns the reader's expectations" (325). From this, we can understand that the words instigate a change in the reader's actions, which I elaborate upon in the discussion on the heuristic of ekphrasis, a rhetorical tool of display.

In very different but related work, White, following his analyses of African-American literature, concludes that a significant portion of African-American literary discourse can be considered didactic. He lists some general characteristics of the literature, which also are found in my two cases studies.

We can note some common and persistent functions that discourse in the tradition performs, which include (a) calling for justice, (b) exhorting and encouraging, (c) exposing the evils of racism, (d) verifying African American humanity, (e) exploring issues of identity, (f) celebrating the lives and the value of common folks, and (g) exploring relationships between Black men and Black women.

(128)

These helpful models of analyses attend to social action, didactic purposes and cultural plurality – all of which are incorporated into the analysis of my case studies.

Case Studies

Before addressing the heuristics, I would like to provide some background and historical context for my two case studies. The writing of anti-lynching crusader and journalist Ida B. Wells provides a prime example of African-American didactic discourse. As editor of the *Evening Star*, a regular contributor to *Living Way*, co-owner of the *Free Speech*, and a nationally syndicated columnist (Royster 167), she was a prolific journalist, even contributing frequently to the white periodical press, writing her column “Ida B. Wells Abroad” that focused on her anti-lynching campaign in England. She published three pamphlets on lynching: “Southern Horrors,” “A Red Record” and “Mob Rule in New Orleans.” Jacqueline Jones Royster praises Wells for her role as rhetorician:

Wells was a rhetor, a speaker and writer whose use of language in public arenas had a significant impact on the thinking and behavior of the audiences of her day and on the application of law... She did spend considerable time engaging in rhetorical acts and demonstrating rhetorical eloquence and expertise. Wells had her eyes on action, and she seemed much more inclined to practice rather than preach the rhetorical arts. (169)

Wells clearly was not afraid to speak out when it came to sensitive matters that she felt called for change. On March 9, 1892, when three men – including one of her closest friends – were lynched in Memphis, she responded with editorials encouraging African Americans to go to Kansas or Oklahoma where they had more rights of citizenship. She also began to collect information on other lynchings, convinced that statistics and facts would persuade her readers that the horrible practice should not be allowed to continue. Royster explains: “Her basic goal was to tell the truth, to tell it simply, to tell it directly. She obviously felt that, in that way, she

could help her people to understand more clearly what was happening to them and around them. She also felt that such an understanding was important, in keeping with the general belief that knowledge is power” (171).

On May 21, 1892, she published an editorial in the *Free Press* that drew national attention because it questioned the motives of those committing the lynchings. Wells wrote: “Nobody in this section of the country believes the old thread-bare lie that negro men rape white women. If Southern white men are not careful they will overreach themselves, and public sentiment will have a reaction. A conclusion will then be reached which will be very damaging to the moral reputation of their women” (qtd by Royster 170). When the editorial was published, Wells was traveling on the East Coast. Royster describes the public reaction and Wells’ response:

The response of the white community in Memphis was to use this moment as an excuse to silence a discordant voice. They destroyed her press, attempted to kill her partner, and let it be known that if Wells ever set foot in the state of Tennessee again, she would be killed. Instead of silencing her, however, these actions provided an opportunity for Wells to intensify and direct her campaign much more freely away from the immediate terror of the South and more effectively in terms of the people she could influence to bring about change. (170)

Despite the danger, Royster emphasizes, Wells was committed to change and spurring her readers to a collective purpose. “Wells observed conditions and circumstances around her,” Royster states. “She called what she saw by its name, whether the name was pleasant or not, whether those around her affirmed her efforts or not; and she directed her audiences toward action” (173). Frequently, Wells’ accounts of these unpleasant and uncomfortable stories drew

directly from stories in the white press, and she effectively used their facts to shed new light on the horrible crimes.

Royster praises Wells' courageous stance and her use of rhetoric to accomplish social change – “In her essays, Wells was able to use her sociocultural knowledge and understanding, as well as her abilities as a thinker, language user, problem finder and problem solver with artistry. She used these rhetorical competencies to engage in the process of creating and transmitting meaning” (177).

Unifying her readers, no matter their race, was a rhetorical strategy that Wells successfully employed. Royster points out how the journalist identified national values and positioned them along side the injustices being suffered, continuing on to argue that *citizens* were being wronged. She explains: “Wells also reminds her audience that the institutions are ‘ours’ not just ‘yours’ but ‘ours’. Wells establishes an interactive space between the audience and herself, and then proceeds to lay out, piece by piece, a politically charged message that stings the conscience” (179-180). It is in that space that Wells' epideictic rhetoric seems most effective and didactic, and there that I will concentrate for this project.

Furthermore, Wells was quite adept at utilizing the technology of the day to further her work. As journalism scholar Charles Simmons recounts, the number of African-American newspapers was surging to nearly 2,100 in the United States at the time that Wells became co-owner and co-editor of the *Free Speech* in 1889. The NAACP calls 1889-1939 the “lynching era,” Simmons reports, and from 1889 to 1918 alone, 3,224 people were lynched (21). Concurrent with and resulting from the increase in lynchings was the rise in the number of African-American newspapers. Wells writes in her autobiography of spending summers traveling to neighboring states to advance circulation of her paper:

I went to most of the large towns throughout the Delta, across the Mississippi River into Arkansas, and back into Tennessee. Wherever there was a gathering of the people, there I was in the midst of them, to solicit subscribers for the *Free Speech* and to appoint a correspondent to send us weekly news. (39)

She was well aware of the impact that the spread of the newspaper and a network of information could have on African-American communities far beyond her own city of Memphis.

Today's communication technologies – especially with the breadth and depth of the Internet – today allow for an even broader audience than newspapers of the 19th century, and arguably a more effective medium for epideictic rhetors. Thus, an attempt to explore the definitions and functions of epideictic rhetoric seems incomplete at this time in history without addressing the impact of new media upon the public sphere. Therefore, this project incorporates a case study of efforts by a rhetor to use modern technologies to accomplish didactic purposes while employing rhetoric of blame.

For my second case study, I have selected the website www.savedarfur.org, which was created by the Save Darfur Coalition, a non-profit organization established to “raise public awareness and mobilize a massive response to the atrocities in Sudan’s western region of Darfur.” Among the organization’s concerns are that “the Sudanese government’s genocidal, scorched earth campaign has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives through direct violence, disease and starvation, and continues to destabilize the region,” according to the unity statement on its website. The goals of the coalition listed on the website include “ending the violence against civilians; facilitating adequate and unhindered humanitarian aid; establishing conditions for the safe and voluntary return of displaced people to their homes; promoting the long-term sustainable development of Darfur; and holding the perpetrators accountable.”

Beginning in 2003 and continuing to the present time, the Darfur region of western Sudan has been subject to numerous atrocities. Eric Reeves, a professor of English and Sudan researcher and analyst, has written extensively on the subject and chastised US, UN and other international leaders for failing to intervene in what he describes as “a massive and growing humanitarian crisis” (19). He explains that leaders in the nation’s capital of Khartoum, in order to secure their power, employed militia groups known as *janjaweed* (Arabic for “devil on horseback”), who have killed hundreds of thousands of Darfuri people and forced millions to flee as refugees to nearby eastern Chad in a calculated plan referred to as genocide or ethnic cleansing. According to Reeves:

Following the initial military operations, the Janjaweed and ground troops would engage in a systematic destruction of the livelihoods of the villagers. Homes, buildings, and mosques were burned; water wells, precious in this arid land, were poisoned with human or animal corpses; irrigation systems were destroyed; food and seed stocks were looted or burned; mature fruit trees were cut down; agricultural implements were destroyed. (3)

In the summer of 2004, leaders of human rights groups came together in Washington D.C. and organized the Save Darfur Coalition. The coalition would go on to become “an alliance of more than 180 faith-based advocacy and human rights organizations with more than 1 million activists and 1,000 community groups working to end the atrocities in Darfur,” (Thomas-Jensen 207). International affairs scholar David Lanz praises the group’s rhetorical and political effects: “Save Darfur, arguably the largest international social movement since anti-apartheid, has had an important impact in shaping the international response to the Darfur conflict” (1). The results of the coalition’s public awareness campaigns, rallies and lobbying efforts are

reported by historian Robert Collins: “Throughout a long, hot summer of terror, flight and struggle for survival the Western media – newspapers, magazines, journals, television, and the internet – relentlessly featured the plight of the beleaguered civilians of Darfur accompanied by demonstrations in Europe and the United States, countless public meetings, and speeches, both provocative and practical, exhorting governments to do something to protect the Africans of Darfur” (291).

At the present time, a tentative peace treaty between the Sudanese government and rebel Darfuri groups has been brokered and the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for war crimes for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, while an estimated 2.5 million Darfuri refugees have fled into temporary camps in Chad.

The Save Darfur Coalition’s website includes a number of interactive features employing a variety of new media technologies for epideictic purposes. To cite just a few of the dozens of options as of this writing, a visitor to the website can link to sign a petition to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, can sign up an e-mail address to receive regular updates from the coalition, can record an audio message of support that will be played over a radio station in Darfur, can send an e-mail postcard to President Barack Obama, can search by zip code for regional events held by local chapters of the organization, can purchase merchandise promoting awareness messages, and can link to read and comment on the organization’s blog, blogfordarfur.com. With its multi-modal approach and interactive format, this website, I will maintain, is a prime example of an epideictic text that could be analyzed by my set of heuristics. We can consider the website epideictic rhetoric, and more specifically as rhetoric of blame with its decisive stance in opposition to the treatment of the Darfuri people by the Khartoum government and its militia.

New Media Technologies and Epideictic Rhetoric

As the possibilities open to epideictic continue to multiply with new media, additional scholarship is vital to gain a critical understanding of their use. Warnick argues, as I will, that “a good deal of vibrant and effective public discourse in the forms of social activism and resistance occur online, that such discourse has had noticeable effects on society, and that it is therefore worthy of careful study by rhetoricians” (3). Our understanding of community has been radicalized by modern communications technology, significantly impacting epideictic rhetoric as well. Condit analyzes the relationship of rhetoric, community and technology, concluding “It [rhetoric] works not only to maintain community values (a conservative function perhaps), but also to accomplish the progressive function of adapting our community to new times, technologies, geographies and events” (297). Walter Ong also discusses the effect of technology on our sense of community, pointing out that secondary orality (via electronic technology) has created a strong group sense within our global village, but one very different from primary oral cultures:

Before writing, oral folk were group-minded because no feasible alternative had presented itself. In our age of secondary orality, we are groupminded self-consciously and programmatically. The individual feels that he or she, as an individual, must be socially sensitive. Unlike members of a primary oral culture, who are turned outward because they have had little occasion to turn inward, we are turned outward because we have turned inward. (134)

The communal nature of technology and rhetoric is problematized by digital rhetoric and design scholar Anne Wysocki as she draws attention to the materiality and agency of new media texts. Examining the interactive nature of hypertext helps us to see that community building is

complex because our relationships with readers are constructed. She states: “There are openings here for exploring who we might be within the relations we can build with others through the particular materialities of the texts we build” (17); and a creation of ethos, I argue, is fundamental in these relations. Epideictic undoubtedly plays a role in the produced positions we create, and Wysocki claims that awareness of those constructs aids in truly effective communication – “for it is how we produce and can see our own possible positions within the broad and materially different communication channels where we all now move and work with others” (22). Cynthia Selfe agrees: “In a postmodern world, new media literacies may play an important role in identity formation, the exercise of power, and the negotiation of new social codes” (Wysocki et al. 51).

While plenty of research has been written on rhetoric and technology in general, the scholarship on the specific relationship between digital technology and epideictic rhetoric is surprisingly very limited. Several studies have concentrated on the rise of communication technologies – such as the Internet, websites, blogs and e-mail – in Africa as a whole or in specific African countries (although the Sudan is not among them). One such study by South African journalist and professor Herman Wasserman looks at the use of information and communication technologies by social movements in South Africa as a result of the minimal coverage by traditional news outlets. Defining social movements as “groups that mobilize outside of ‘policy elites’” who “aim to fundamentally change government policy” (110), Wasserman explains how they have seized upon new media as an opportunity to carve out a space for stating their messages and achieving their purposes. “The interactivity made possible by news media technologies has led to a belief in their potential to create alternative public spheres,” he explains, “to find alternatives to a public sphere rationalized by the state and

market” and “a new discursive space between the market and the state” (112). The catalyst for rhetors to use new media is reminiscent of Wells’ belief that the white press of her time was also guilty of inadequate and inaccurate news coverage. Wasserman recognizes that the use of such technologies is limited in Africa by infrastructure concerns, illiteracy, language use, race, general and socio-economic inequalities, but the focus of his work is on agency instead of access. He acknowledges that “the view that ‘entire populations’ may participate in this sphere is too optimistic. However, ICTs [information and communication technologies], especially the Internet and e-mail, can broaden the scope and reach of local struggles by embedding them in the global arena” (119). For Wasserman, technology has granted a voice to those social movements, and with it, new authority to be heard and read and to make change in their societies. He states: “They provide the opportunity for interactivity and participation in a virtual public sphere in which alternative debates can develop outside of the parameters set by governments and the corporate sector” (120). Likewise, Douglas Kellner, a critical theorist of media culture, cites several examples in his discussion of technopolitics and revolution where movements are utilizing new media:

Different political groups are in fact engaging in cyberwar as adjuncts of their political battles. Israeli hackers have repeatedly attacked the websites of Hezbollah, while pro-Palestine hackers have reportedly place militant demands and slogans on the websites of Israel’s army, foreign ministry and parliament. Likewise, Pakistani and Indian computer hackers have waged similar cyberbattles against opposing forces’ websites in the bloody struggle over Kashmir; while rebel forces in the Philippines taunt government troops with cellphone calls and messages, and attack government websites. (191)

As Wasserman indicates, a rise in the use of communications technologies by epideictic rhetors to effect change in society seems to have stemmed from their perception of a failure of mainstream traditional media sources – such as newspapers, magazines, television – to sufficiently cover issues of concern. An analysis of newspapers’ coverage of the Darfur conflict shows, in the U.S., Canadian and Western media in general (Kim et al., Franks), limited reporting on this issue, as well as other disasters that have occurred in the poorest parts of the world. A 2006 report from CARMA International, a global media analyst, examined 2,000 articles from 64 daily and weekly publications in nine Western countries of six disasters: the two Gulf Coast hurricanes in 2005, the Bam and Kashmir earthquakes, the Darfur crisis and the Asian Tsunami. From the report, former BBC producer and political communications scholar Suzanne Franks concludes that “there appears to be no link between the scale of a disaster and the media interest it attracts” (281). She further points out that political and economic dimensions to the stories were covered far more frequently than human experiences. In contrast to natural disasters striking typically in one-day periods, the situation in Darfur has occurred over several years, even offering additional time for additional news coverage; but that was not the result. Franks states: “Suffering in itself does not create interest. There was plenty of that for many months... when the political perspective disappears then so does the coverage” (282). The challenge that Wells faced, and those concerned about Darfur now encounter, can be framed in one respect in terms of Galtung and Ruge’s analysis of foreign news values (81). They provide criteria that impact how judgments are made on the news-worthiness of a story. These include cultural proximity, negativity, sudden events vs. slow evolving, and complicated crises vs. natural disasters being clear cut. As Franks adds, “Crises which are complicated and need subtle and involved explanation or which lack obvious targets of blame are less likely to have appeal in

news values” (283). In the CARMA report, she notes, coverage of Darfur “rated amongst the worst for its sensational and ill-informed reporting” (283). Furthermore, historian Gerard Prunier proposes that the complicated historical and political conditions of Sudan contributed to meager media coverage: “For the world at large Darfur was and remained the quintessential ‘African crisis’: distant, esoteric, extremely violent, rooted in complex ethnic and historical factors which few understood, and devoid of any identifiable practical interest for the rich countries” (124).

Bernard Duffy describes epideictic as “this most anachronistic genre” (79), and it then seems ironic to examine it in the context of a high-tech world. However, recognizing the didactic intentions and the growing use of media by social movements – and their views of their own work in the public sphere – should prompt us to question what is occurring at the intersection of on-line communication and epideictic rhetoric. How is the discourse taking place in cyberspace changing our communities, from the local to the global? How are communities created and transformed through the use of the Internet? These are epideictic situations, calling for a rhetor’s response that has the potential to effect change – and today, what better place to begin to foster social changes and work to implement civic virtues than in cyberspace? Warnick calls for rhetorical critics to “take up the project of studying online public discourse” because “doing so will require us to rethink and adapt conventional canons of rhetoric and argument analysis” (23). I believe the set of heuristics I have developed, which I will discuss in the next section, will provide a critical, helpful tool for just such analysis.

Methodology

My methodology for this project, as stated earlier, includes an analysis of the above two case studies with a set of heuristics involving the three strategies of creating ethos, establishing

place, and utilizing ekphrasis. Broadly, this framework offers the opportunity to examine an epideictic situation of blame, concentrating on the persons involved (rhetor, subjects and audience), the contexts, and the language and its aesthetics. What follows is a brief review of previous scholarship on these three strategies.

Ethos

A significant number of scholars emphasize that ethos is crucial to the epideictic rhetor, and it is the first of three categories in this set of heuristics for analysis of the genre. White maintains that “epideictic discourse that attains to seriousness and aspires to significance raises an issue that is frequently subject to doubt, namely the issue of ethos, literally of character, of who we are, and what and how we are (or should become), of what we value or disdain” (130). In teaching students to employ ethical appeals in their writing, Corbett details various characteristics of a strong ethos:

If a discourse is to reflect a man’s moral character, it must display a man’s abhorrence of unscrupulous tactics and specious reasoning, his respect for the commonly acknowledged virtues, and his adamant integrity. If the discourse is to manifest a man’s good will, it must display a man’s sincere interest in the welfare of his audience and his readiness to sacrifice any self-aggrandizement that conflicts with the benefit of others. (81)

In later chapters, I will argue that these qualities are found in the rhetoric of Wells and the Save Darfur Coalition.

As discussed previously, Sullivan emphasizes that creating an epideictic ethos is the basis for the efficacy of this genre. He outlines five characteristics of the epideictic rhetor’s ethos, the last of which I find most interesting: the rhetor’s creation of consubstantiality with the audience.

By this, Sullivan, drawing from Kenneth Burke, believes that the “acting-together” of individuals makes them consubstantial with common concepts, ideas and attitudes. The rhetor can create this consubstantiality by “engaging the audience in a conversation that transcends time” (Sullivan 126). The difficulty – and perhaps a means to successful communication as well – is made apparent in Burke’s discussion of identification: “To identify A with B is to make A ‘consubstantial’ with B... If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, absolute communication would be of man’s very essence. It would not be an ideal, as it now is...” (545-546).

This discussion of consubstantiality also foreshadows the third characteristic, place. Referring to the etymological roots of the word *ethos*, meaning “place” or “dwelling,” Sullivan concludes that “*ethos* is not primarily an attribute of the speaker, nor even an audience perception: it is, instead, the common dwelling place of both, the timeless, consubstantial space that enfolds participants in epideictic exchange” (127). S. Michael Halloran also argues that a notion of place is found in the attempt to achieve identification or consubstantiality, which “is to articulate an area of shared experience, imagery, and value; it is to define my world in such a way that the other can enter into that world with me” (626). For instance, is the epideictic rhetor – in these cases, Wells or Save Darfur – successful because they were able through an expression of *ethos* to bring readers consubstantially together? And is there a “place” where this occurs? The digital media environment also provides an intersection of *ethos* and place that has yet to be fully explored. Zizi Papacharissi, who has studied political communication and communication technologies, notes: “Cyberspace is public and private space... Cyberspace provides new terrain for the playing out of the age-old friction between personal and collective identity; the individual

and community” (20). Hauser, who has concentrated on epideictic functions through rhetoric of praise, also observes the impact of ethos on the community, as it is expressed through a narrative of a “lauded hero” and promotes the teaching of civic values.

The lauded hero’s life is exemplary of a larger commitment to ethical bonds and moral rectitude. Importantly, this message requires rhetorical forging; civic virtue is not cast in the logical terms of philosophical statement but in the episodic terms of events. To follow the story and, more importantly, to testify to its truth requires the ability to grasp it as a statement of communal ethos. (16)

The analysis in Chapters 3 and 4 of the two case studies on the writings of Ida B. Wells and the website on the crisis in Darfur illustrates how both accomplish the establishment of an ethos through a rhetoric of blame.

Place

The second heuristic category focuses on place, which is complicated by the multi-layered contexts of epideictic rhetoric. Without repeating the earlier review of the correlations between ethos and place, I believe various understandings of place can be examined within epideictic discourse – from the communities created, the mediums of the writing, the relationship of reader and rhetor, the geographical locations and the public sphere at large. Hauser notes the importance of “the public sphere as a discursive realm with a reticulate structure in which citizens can engage freely in communication about matters of mutual interest, invent their common sense of what appears before them, and assert their common views in ways that identify them as a public” (18).

We also can consider how the concept of the public sphere is impacted by epideictic, especially within the medium of the digital environment. Because communication technologies

have so impacted our understanding of place, I have selected a website as a case study to assure that my set of heuristics is useful in applying to a broad spectrum of rhetorical texts. Debates have been numerous on the benefits and detriments of the Internet to the public sphere. Warnick considers both sides:

I want to avoid overly rosy prognostications about the internet's salutary influence on the public sphere. Nonetheless, it is the case that Web-based affordances offer a number of advantages for public discourse that are unavailable in mass media. Among these are affordability, access, opportunities for horizontal communication and interactivity, online forms for discussion and mobilization, networking capacity, and platforms for multimedia. (6)

Lois Agnew, in her recent study of an epideictic anti-war speech at a college graduation ceremony – which I would argue fails to negotiate the place chosen to reach an audience – maintains that this place of the discourse might be a place of “collision between speaker and audience” (160). Yet out of that collision can develop a strong bond of communication. She states: “Epideictic provides a space for the creation of a new awareness that transcends the immediate knowledge of either the rhetor or the audience” (152). Agnew believes it is the intentions brought into the situation by rhetors and audience that can leave them more open, or more closed off, to meeting in this place of understanding.

Ekphrasis

As epideictic rhetoric is often considered a rhetoric of display (Rosenfield 134), I argue that the technique of ekphrasis also is central to understanding this genre. Ekphrasis, from the Greek “to speak out,” is defined as a vivid description, or the use of “details to place an object, person, or event before the listeners’ eyes” (Burton). It also was another term for the Greek

protogymnasmata exercise of description. Lawrence Prelli, in his research on rhetorics of display, observes that descriptive and graphic discourse in all varieties of media surround us. He insists: “Rhetorics of display are nearly ubiquitous in contemporary communication and culture, and thus, have become the dominant rhetoric of our time” (2).

This suggests that the use of vivid, specific language is fundamental to epideictic discourse, in part, because it helps to fulfill the need that Hauser describes for epideictic rhetoric: to employ “a common vocabulary of excellence” among readers. He states: “The Greeks could speak to one another about civic virtue because they shared a common language of virtue. By implication, a public sphere populated by factions is reduced to babel without a common language with which they may articulate acts of excellence” (19). Thus, through this characteristic, we can gauge the effectiveness of a rhetoric of blame in a particular situation based on the rhetor’s use of ekphrasis. Wells is well-regarded for her use of specific language in reporting details and evidence of lynchings in the newspapers and pamphlets. The Save Darfur website also provides an opportunity to apply this heuristic as it is used in a digital media environment, where vivid description can be accomplished with not just words but images, video, sound, etc. Consideration of epideictic rhetoric through a website helps us to look at the use of common language and images in cyberspace.

Project Summary and Research Questions

I believe this study will contribute to an expanded understanding of the didactic function of rhetoric of blame, specifically in examining two case studies where it is a catalyst for social action. Sheard notes the value of epideictic in instigating change: “It interprets and represents one reality for the purpose of positing and inspiring a new one. We could say that epideictic’s relation to the world is reciprocal because such discourse both responds to and creates opportune

and critical moments in time (*kairos*) that warrant critical attention and corrective action” (790).

It is these actions of responding to and creating that I wish to elucidate in my study.

My primary research questions are as follows:

- By raising controversy, can rhetoric of blame accomplish the same rhetorical purposes as rhetoric of praise?
- How can rhetoric of blame bond communities, teach or form public morality, or highlight virtue by spotlighting vice?
- How can we gauge if rhetoric of blame is effective in the public sphere?
- How do technologies of literacy impact epideictic rhetoric and our understanding of ancient and contemporary rhetorics?
- How can three key strategies of a rhetoric of blame in the categories of ethos, place, and ekphrasis be used to establish a set of heuristics for analysis of epideictic rhetoric?
- How do the heuristics provide a framework for understanding the rhetoric of blame, and, more broadly, epideictic rhetoric from a 21st century perspective?

Chapter Outlines

Ethos, Place and Ekphrasis

In Chapter 2, I discuss the set of heuristics that I have assembled for constructing an epideictic text of blame or for analyzing epideictic rhetoric of blame and verifying if a specific discourse succeeds in accomplishing rhetorical, didactic purposes. These heuristics include the strategies of creating ethos, establishing place, and utilizing ekphrasis. I begin with a discussion of the epideictic’s role in establishing a relationship among rhetor, reader and subjects. I explore how an epideictic ethos can be created within a rhetoric of blame, and though it is not celebratory

nor ceremonial, how it can still create community. I also look at how we understand the role of the reader of the epideictic genre – as a spectator and community member. This includes a discussion of how the agonism of blame is balanced with an openness to dialogue. Second, I examine how we can understand the “places” where this ethos is created and where community is built. I question how the author acknowledges the rhetorical and social contexts of the situation. Furthermore, this section covers how Wells and the web site authors use kairos to carve out such places for themselves and their subjects and how the rhetorical situation is changed by the place of medium (newspapers, Internet) that each used. Third, I look at the way ekphrasis contributes to ethos, in light of epideictic’s role as a “rhetoric of display.” I also explore how the rhetor employs epideictic acts of unveiling for describing and interpreting and uses description and narrative to engage the imagination and emotions of the audience. And finally, I examine how the vivid pictures created by the rhetor frame subjects and highlight individuality.

Ida B. Wells – A Case Study

Chapter 3 opens with a literature review of Ida B. Wells and her work and influence as a rhetorician, as well as a discussion of the history of lynching and the role of the black press in the late 19th century. Using Wells’ writing from her newspaper and pamphlets, I illustrate how she effectively used a rhetoric of blame to create a community grounded in opposition to lynching. My analysis of her writing is framed by the heuristics explained in the previous chapter. Primary among these is the ethos she established for herself, as an individual and the ethos created for the victims of the lynchings and the African-American population as a whole. This section also discusses the authority she established and the authority she opposed through her rhetoric. I then analyze the notion of the place of Wells’ writing – in newspapers and pamphlets, in Memphis

and the northern United States, in the communities she created through her writing and in between the writer and reader. I also explore the rhetorical strategy of ekphrasis – her use of vivid description, or words as images – and how it contributed to her purposes. Finally, I argue that Wells’ effective use of these three strategies allowed her to create a sense of community and effect changes as a result of her rhetoric of blame.

Save Darfur Coalition – A Case Study

The fourth chapter presents another analysis, but this time, of a new media text, thus highlighting the usefulness of these heuristics in application to a broad spectrum of rhetorical pieces. This case study concentrates on an Internet website, www.savedarfur.org, created by the Save Darfur Coalition. The purpose of this website is to expose and intervene in the genocide taking place in Darfur, Africa. I provide a brief explanation of the historical context of the crisis in Darfur. I then apply my set of heuristics to this case study. This includes a study of the ethos of the organization and the ethos created by the website for the Darfuri people. I also explore the places created by the on-line epideictic rhetoric, both actual and virtual. Finally, I examine key features of visual rhetoric and explore how they are incorporated into the interactive digital texts of this web site, in light of the technique of ekphrasis. Again, I explain how the rhetoric of blame is effective in building a community of opposition to the Darfur crisis and advocating intervention.

Applying Theory, Conclusions and Implications

The final chapter summarizes the conclusions I have drawn in previous chapters and discusses implications of my research. I explain how this project contributes to a richer understanding of rhetoric of blame and provides – with its focus on technology – a 21st century perspective of epideictic rhetoric. Finally, I suggest some future studies that could be undertaken

based on the heuristics I have developed, especially in analyses of new media texts. I conclude by noting some pedagogical applications and discussing how the findings of my study advance our understanding of epideictic rhetoric in the rhetorical tradition.

CHAPTER II: HEURISTICS FOR ANALYZING RHETORIC OF BLAME – CREATING ETHOS, ESTABLISHING PLACE AND UTILIZING EKPHRASIS

Since ancient times, the heuristic has been utilized in rhetoric as both a guide to invention and a guideline for analysis. Numerous heuristical systems have been employed to explore the process of invention, or “the finding and creating of arguments, and more generally the making of meaning” (Johnstone, 8). Young, Becker and Pike, who developed a well-known heuristic based in tagmemic linguistics, describe the practice as a more of an art: “It was the art of systematic inquiry and provided a method for gathering information about a problem and asking fruitful questions” (120). Janice Lauer, who has written extensively on the process of invention, notes the contributions of heuristics to the writing process:

Heuristic strategies work in tandem with intuition, prompt conscious activity, and guide the creative act but never determine the outcome... Neither algorithmic (rule governed) nor completely aleatory (random), they prompt investigators to take multiple perspectives on the questions they are pursuing, to break out of conceptual ruts, and to forge new associations in order to trigger possible new understanding. (8-9)

While heuristics can be critiqued for their rigidity and over-reliance upon structure, I prefer the perspective of Barbara Johnstone and Christopher Eisenhart, who emphasize in their work on discourse analysis that flexibility is, in fact, the key to these “discovery procedures.” They explain: “Unlike the procedures in a set of instructions, the procedures of a heuristic do not need to be followed in any particular order, and there is no fixed way of following them. A heuristic is not a mechanical set of steps, and there is no guarantee that using it will result in a single definitive explanation” (11).

With these intentions, I have assembled the following set of heuristics as a framework to analyze the use of rhetoric of blame, as well as to create epideictic texts of blame. There are 13 guiding questions in three categories: creating ethos, establishing place, and utilizing ekphrasis. (Appendix C) The heuristics provide a systematic approach to examine an epideictic situation of blame, concentrating on the persons involved (rhetor, subjects and audience), the contexts, and the language and its aesthetics.

Ethos

*We are entrusted to let be what lies before us
even as we take it to heart
and bear it devotedly in our memory.
–Parmenides*

The category of ethos is addressed first in this set of heuristics, reflecting what I believe to be its importance in the epideictic encounter. Ethos – or the character of a person – comes to bear upon rhetorical discourse as it is used as a persuasive appeal, the ethical appeal, to the audience. Yet it is not only the rhetor’s ethos, but also that of the reader and the subject(s) that must be considered. This category, written as guiding questions, encompasses five strategies to analyze the functions of ethos in rhetoric of blame:

- How does the rhetor set up a relationship between the writer and reader?
- How are the roles of spectator and community member developed for the reader/viewer?
- How does the rhetor preserve her ethos – and that of her subject – while casting blame?
- How can the tension of agonism of blame be balanced with a “willingness to learn” from the audience?
- How does the rhetor set up a model of ethos for the reader to emulate?

1- How does the rhetor set up a relationship between the writer and reader?

The beginning of any interpersonal relationship typically starts with some sort of introduction. Likewise with the use of the ethical appeal, Dale Sullivan notes that the rhetor portrays herself as “a person of good will (*eunoia*), good sense (*phronesis*), and good moral character (*arête*)” (113), which he draws from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* 2.2.5. This initial presentation of self to the audience is a priority, and the techniques used to convey a sense of self are varied. For instance, Sullivan articulates five attributes that comprise one’s ethos – reputation, vision, authority, presentation of good reasons, and creation of consubstantiality with the audience (118), the last of which was discussed in the first chapter. Another way of perceiving the rhetor’s ethos in action is through communications philosopher George Yoo’s “AREV factors:” A factor – the rhetor seeks mutual agreement with the audience; R factor – the rhetor recognizes the rational autonomy of audience; E factor – the rhetor recognizes the equality of the listener with himself; and V factor – the rhetor understands that the ends of the audience have an intrinsic value (Sullivan 125). No matter how the characteristics of the ethical approach are classified, it is clear that the relationship between writer and reader must be grounded in a commitment to showing respect for each other and the subject. Rhetoric of praise naturally adopts this strategy; the respect for a subject and/or the audience is evident in the laudatory words. Rhetoric of blame, however, carries with it a more critical tone, one which the audience may be expecting or bracing itself against. It therefore requires the rhetor’s more persistent efforts to show respect and gain the audience’s trust that the discourse is meant to be a sincere exchange – not a one-sided volley of insults.

Another step in establishing the relationship between rhetor and reader is the creation or expression of a sense of shared culture, shared experiences or background. The rhetor’s

reputation, according to Sullivan, is “derived from being representative of the culture” (118). Epideictic rhetoric so often occurs on a “we’re-all-in-this-together” occasion, such as the U.S. President’s State of the Union address or a memorial following a natural disaster. The audience must be able to see how each participant – rhetor, reader, subject – fits into that big picture. Building a sense of community and bonding the audience thus are among the purposes of epideictic, praise and blame alike. Furthermore, these efforts help the rhetor to create an ethos for himself as a respected member of the community and to establish a relationship with the audience set in the midst of that public sphere – neighborhood, community, racial group, society, nation, or planet – with which the reader likely can identify. The rhetor wisely relies upon heritage to provide a solid foundation at the outset of their interaction because (as later strategies will address), he will need all of the audience’s good will to provide space for the words of blame to come. Rhetoric and communications scholar Celeste Michelle Condit comments on how the sense of shared culture provides a basis for progress within a community to occur: “Indeed, the reference to ‘heritage’ is usually very explicit in epideictic speeches. The community renews its conceptions of itself and of what is good by explaining what it has previously held to be good and by working through the relationships of those past values and beliefs to new situations” (289).

The sense of respect, trust and togetherness sets a positive tone for the epideictic rhetor to begin to introduce a demand upon the audience. Recalling Chaim Perelman’s statement that “argument begins in agreement,” which Kenneth Burke called “speaking in the voice of the other,” rhetoric scholar Cynthia Sheard argues for the “importance of establishing a common ground as a basis for persuading a reader (or listener) to think or to do whatever a writer (or speaker) deems necessary, urgent, productive, or otherwise significant” (766). Meeting on this

common ground, the rhetor who plans to employ blame to achieve her purpose will find an audience more open to granting her the authority to broach a subject of dissent or to propose an argument with which many may not initially agree. That authority, Condit asserts, will grant the rhetor the opportunity to use “the power of epideictic to explain a social world” (288). Relations between the audience and rhetor that are characterized by respect and shared experiences can allow more latitude for the rhetor’s expressions and her potential to effect change in a community.

A helpful case to illustrate this strategy is a situation where the epideictic rhetor failed to establish a relationship with his audience or achieve any common ground. (The case actually provides a useful illustration throughout this set of heuristics.) *New York Times* foreign correspondent Chris Hedges’ speech at the 2003 Rockford College commencement was intended to be an expression of opposition to the war in Iraq. However, rhetoric and composition scholar Lois Agnew’s study of that epideictic encounter reveals how Hedges approached the relationship with his audience, beginning with the first line of his speech: “I want to speak to you today about war and empire.” From the beginning, Agnew believes Hedges did not show the respect the audience was expecting. She explains: “The words ‘I want to speak to you’ convey the fact that the speech will contain the speaker’s argument but fail to establish his commitment to discovering a vision with the audience” (156). The audience responded almost immediately with booing, comments of hostility, attempts to shut off the public address system and even walking onto the stage. Agnew points out the speaker’s error that the audience apparently assessed as well: “Hedges’ failure to acknowledge the graduates, the occasion, or the audience prior to beginning the speech as a lack of courtesy or a refusal to recognize the particular significance of that day in the lives of those who attended” (156). The absence of a sense of respect prevented

Hedges from building trust and from guiding the audience to “a recognition of their common identity as citizens” (158), she states. Furthermore, Agnew cites “his failure to establish an ethos that encouraged the audience’s trust early in the speech” and “his detachment from the audience, which limited his opportunity for establishing a sense of shared purpose with them” (159), both of which contributed to the lack of authority he was granted by the audience to present his rhetoric of blame.

Coinciding with the establishment of a relationship between the rhetor and reader is the establishment of an ethos for the subjects of discussion. In rhetoric of blame, the relationship of the reader and subject is as vital as that of the reader and rhetor, I would argue, and this will be evident in the case studies in the coming two chapters. If the rhetoric of blame is to be employed to make social change for the benefit of a person or community of people who may be victims of injustice or oppression in society, then it is crucial that the audience also come to appreciate an ethos of the subject(s) based on the qualities, previously mentioned, of respect, trust, equality and a common heritage. One effective method to establish the subject’s ethos is an insistence of the rhetor upon recognition of individuals amidst the general population. A fine illustration of this strategy is found in a study of Civil Rights photos in *Life* magazine from 1958-1968 by Victoria Gallagher and Kenneth Zagacki. They explain how the artwork and photos “operated rhetorically to *make visible* people and abstract concepts” (114) and provide “compelling images of real people in all their individuality and immediacy” (119), which I would describe as successfully creating an ethos for the subjects. Gallagher and Zagacki argue that the photos “functioned rhetorically to evoke the common humanity of blacks and whites in compelling and profound ways by enabling viewers to recognize –and confront the implications of – themselves, their values, and their habits in the actions and experiences of others” (114). The epideictic

rhetor asks the readers to consider the ethos of the subject in relation to themselves. This method will be used to create an ethos for the subjects in the rhetoric of blame in the two forthcoming case studies.

2- How are the roles of spectator and community member developed for the reader/viewer?

In the reciprocal relationship of the epideictic encounter, the rhetor helps to establish a role for the reader/viewer as both a spectator and an agent of the community who can take action to promote the good and inhibit the bad. The initial role, as spectator, is demonstrated in Lawrence Rosenfield's definition of the purpose of epideictic as unveiling a "luminous" subject, which suggests that the subject is indeed intended for beholding by the audience, acting as spectators. "The term epideictic comes from *epideixis* ('to shine or show forth')," he writes. "Epideictic, therefore, acts to unshroud men's notable deeds in order to let us gaze at the aura glowing from within" (135). For Rosenfield, the epideictic encounter seems to be almost a spiritual experience for the audience as they are confronted with the sense of being of the subject matter. He believes true epideictic occurs at the juncture of *altheia* (unconcealment) by the rhetor and *thaumadzein* (beholding wonder) of the reader (137). He explains: "It lets be what lies before us so that we may acknowledge the radiance that is present to us," and this "enables the listener who approaches what *is* in a spirit of appreciative attention to join with the speaker in taking reality to heart" (133). Likewise, Richard Vatz describes this action as imbuing a rhetorical situation with "salience," and Perelman calls it "presence" (Vatz 463). Rhetoric of praise or blame holds out a subject for the audience's consideration, for their recognition of it as what it is – good or bad. Moreover, the epideictic rhetor does not just place a subject on display, but also joins a value to it.

Rosenfield is content to halt the rhetorical process at the point of beholding; he doesn't see judgment or decision-making as part of epideictic, and he even asks "what transforms the bystander into a beholder?" (141) without providing an answer. I would disagree with his conclusion that the reader is only a spectator and argue that the capacity for action is inherent in epideictic, that action (i.e. social change in many cases of rhetoric of blame) is actually a byproduct of *altheia* and *thaumadzein* when they are brought together in the epideictic encounter. The rhetor establishes an ethos for the reader that includes a role as an active community member. Rosenfield does not concede that action results from the act of beholding, but he does acknowledge that meditation, reflection and finally understanding are consequences of epideictic rhetoric. As "both speaker and listener are engaged as beholders," he concludes, "their attention is arrested when they gratefully appreciate the meaning of what is, as it is. Such understanding marks the beginning of thought, for the testimonial invites its participants to meditate" (146). I would agree that this is a crux of the ethical appeal, that epideictic aids the reader in truly beholding and appreciating the salience or presence of the subjects and then sincerely reflecting upon the matter. Quite often, epideictic rhetoric of praise is successful in such an appeal. Memorials to the September 11, 2001 heroes, Hurricane Katrina victims and World War II veterans are fine examples. However, with rhetoric of blame, another step must follow – the rhetor must encourage the audience to take their new understanding and channel it into action or change.

Given that the setting of epideictic is so fixedly located within the community, the rhetor has an opportunity to propel the reader into the role of an active, vital participant in that community. Aristotle insisted on the use of epideictic as a method of formation of morality in the *polis* and saw it as a method for creating good citizens. Sheard agrees, citing examples of

fine epideictic as those that “seek to instill a sense of personal responsibility for the larger community’s welfare” (781). Hauser further suggests that the quality of the public sphere – the arena for public discussion and the formation of ideas – is contingent upon epideictic discourse. He states: “Before citizens can imagine the possibility of a vibrant public realm, they require a vocabulary capable of expressing public issues and experiences of publicness, which are civic needs, I will argue, that epideictic addresses” (6). The didactic function of epideictic is apparent as the rhetor cultivates the role of readers as active community participants, teaching the audience about an issue and proposing what their reaction should be. The role of the audience is not passive, neither as beholder nor as community member. And despite what appears on the surface to be a negative tone, rhetoric of blame contains the optimism that its words will not be ignored or rejected, but accepted so the purported injustices will be righted and the community made better. Epideictic encourages a transformation from the stage of beholding, “a way of seeing that can illuminate and justify change” (Sheard 781), to the acceptance of what action should take place. The roles of beholder and active citizen come together to foster change. As Sheard concludes, “In effect, then, epideictic discourse alters the reality in which it participates by making its vision a reality for its audience and instilling a belief that the power for realizing the vision lies with them” (781). Another example of the epideictic progression of beholding and transforming occurs in Socrates second speech of the *Phaedrus*, which describes the conversion of the lover’s soul, brought about by the lover beholding his beloved’s face. The story of the lover is an allegory for the understanding of Platonic ideals through the use of rhetoric, according to rhetoric scholar John C. Adams, and it “depicts the curative power of rhetoric” (13). Adams’ discussion in “Epideictic and its Cultured Reception” also highlights the didactic or teaching nature of epideictic. “The lover’s conversion is a part of his learning,” he explains. “[And] goes

hand in hand with Plato's concept of how the study or contemplation of rhetoric may first prepare the soul to properly *receive* the earthly expression of the divine Idea of Beauty – in an attitude of reverence or pious desire. It also shows how different people may be moved by the same image, for different reasons, and to different ends” (13). The importance of the image, or text, that is being viewed by the beholder, by the audience, will be further discussed in the third category on ekphrasis.

3- How does the rhetor preserve her ethos – and that of her subject – while casting blame?

With the respect given, trust established, and authority rendered between the rhetor and reader, the epideictic rhetor must then cast the blame – must criticize, deride or condemn, as she believes is necessary. Epideictic rhetoric of praise is an easier duty, providing noble examples of people or actions upon which readers can model their own behavior. Casting blame upon a person or action is indeed a more challenging rhetorical task. As Sullivan cautions, “Since epideictic is about character and ethos is the portrayal of character, there is a natural link between the two. Furthermore, the epideictic speaker must be able to praise and censure while at the same time portraying a character that does not appear to be that of a flatterer or a cynic” (117-118). Without attention to the strategies found in this set of heuristics, rhetoric of blame can quickly become spiteful, shallow, hate-filled and ineffective in reaching a broader audience or fostering social change. Rhetoric of blame, when employed judiciously, should be understood as a democratic method of social change. As Hauser states: “Epideictic offers instruction on recognizing virtue [or rejecting vice, I would add] and thereby on retaining persuasion as an alternative to authority or force in the public domain” (16). He notes its success in ancient Greece: “In the less than idyllic conditions of Athenian public life, this mediating influence was essential to bringing its sometimes cantankerous citizens to a common sense of the virtuous

path” (17). Likewise, political science and communications scholar W. Lance Bennett, in his analysis of the Internet and global activism, sees a benefit to the public sphere and public institutions from digital rhetoric. He states: “The recent period has been marked by impressive levels of global activism, including mass demonstrations, sustained publicity campaigns against corporations and world development agencies, and the rise of innovative public accountability systems for corporate and governmental conduct” (19-20).

Whether occurring in ancient or modern times, casting blame, as part of the epideictic genre, is not intended to incite violence or cause harm, but instead, to often stop violence and to always allow an opportunity for those on opposing sides of an issue to honestly discuss the differences. Efforts to maintain ethos can help preserve this purpose.

With rhetoric of blame, someone or something will be found at fault or in error, and thus a change is being called for to alleviate the injustice or oppression to the subject(s). In the case studies that follow, Ida B. Wells will demand that the lynchings of African-Americans, who have not been charged by the judicial system, be stopped. The Save Darfur Coalition will call for worldwide pressure on the Sudanese government to end the genocide of the Darfuri people. The blame is leveled at those believed to be responsible for the unjust action. Yet, at the same time, epideictic criticism may be directed toward the audience – none of whom may be directly engaged in or responsible for the actions condemned. The words of blame likely will condemn those who are part of a community where injustice is occurring but they are doing nothing to prevent it. Sheard explains: “the critique is only part of the story. Ultimately, the critique leads to a vision that the audience is not only invited to share but exhorted to help actualize... The blame is laid upon the audience of the speech as well. Each discourse creates an atmosphere of urgency to which the audience must respond” (780). The rhetor’s depiction of someone or

something as in error and in need of change entails some self-reflection by readers as they consider their own involvement in the situation and how/if they should respond. As Condit concludes, it is thereby “though ‘appraisal’ of the events, persons, and objects in our lives that we define ourselves” (291). The words of blame cause the reader to contemplate their own ethos – a process further discussed in the fifth strategy of this category.

This may not necessarily be a comfortable experience. And yet the catalytic nature of epideictic in accomplishing social change may very well be located in its pointedness. Gallagher and Zagacki observe that blunt effectiveness in the Civil Rights photos compels the reader to behold the circumstances of what is deemed to be wrong. They state:

And as with controversial speech making or discourse, photography sometimes presents us with subjects to which we may not wish to attend; in a way photographs may function to force us to look at subjects we have otherwise chosen to ignore, making us think about them and, even, imagine ourselves in their situation. Yet it is in its capacity to make things visible that photography functions transformatively, and thereby rhetorically. (116-117)

Undoubtedly, there is a delicate balance to be maintained, which is discussed in the next strategy.

4- How can the tension of agonism of blame be balanced with a “willingness to learn” from the audience?

The genre of epideictic in its mode as rhetoric of praise typically carries a positive tone – often one of pride, happiness or bittersweet sentiment. In contrast, the genres of forensic and deliberative rhetoric by nature take on a more competitive tone, often with two or more “sides” to the discourse pitted against the others. Condit contrasts the latter two genres as having “a focus on division” compared to the “unity and sharing” of epideictic (289). But rhetoric of

blame seems to share the more agonistic nature of forensic and deliberative, and the writer's efforts will need to be concentrated all the more on preserving the reader's good will and maintaining a positive ethos because the blame can easily evoke opposition. The confrontational nature of rhetoric of blame cannot entirely be avoided, but it can be mitigated with attention to creating and sustaining the point of coming together for rhetor and reader. As we learn from Agnew's study of the anti-war speech at a college commencement, the rhetor must be open to a reciprocal relationship with the audience. Agnew's analysis of what was lacking in that instance points to a technique that can balance the agonism. She states: "He misses the opportunity to demonstrate his willingness to learn from his audience, which is a crucial corollary of the successful negotiation of epideictic. He was denying their own experience" (158). That willingness to learn requires an openness by the rhetor to the shared experience of the rhetorical situation, and an acknowledgment of the ethos of the audience. It is a recognition that the discourse will be a mutual exchange and not a one-sided condemnation for it to truly further the rhetorical purposes of the situation.

This is not to say that the epideictic encounter will be without discomfort or awkwardness. If a social change is being promoted by a rhetor through an explanation of why something is considered to be harmful and must be reformed, there likely will be a response that includes resistance to the change. However, the role of epideictic in such situations can, in fact, be helpful. As Sheard explains, "Ultimately, the epideictic 'moment' is one of dis-ease to which discourse may respond therapeutically" (790). And Walter Beale agrees with this conclusion, remarking on the paradox that "the epideictic or rhetorical performative discourse is as much an instrument of social upheaval as of social concord" (243). Rhetoric of blame, in causing some

upheaval, is seeking to correct an injustice by educating the audience and transforming the community.

Although it will be covered in the third category on ekphrasis, it should be noted here that the eloquence of the language contributes to a diminishing of the agonistic tone as well. The style, grammar and vocabulary employed in epideictic are rhetorical choices of the writer to present his argument and facilitate the audience's acceptance of it. His choices reflect his understanding of the relationship with the reader. Communications scholar Christine Oravec insists: "the rhetor receives common values and experiences from his audience and, by reshaping them in artistic language, returns these experiences heightened and renewed" (171) – a reciprocal process, I would add, that opens the audience to hearing, and hopefully accepting, these harsh words of blame.

An additional challenge in the midst of this balancing act is addressing a variety of audiences – those who will agree with the words of blame and support the change being recommended, those who will disagree and be opposed to change, and those who are unaware of or apathetic about the issue, among other perspectives. There is difficulty in creating an ethos that appeals to different audiences, and Sheard recognizes that frequently an epideictic rhetor will be writing to an audience supportive of the social change being advanced, but "the larger audience for the speech – those on whom the actualization of its vision depends – must be won over" (780). After all, the rhetor's goal is not to divide her audience members – from each other, from the subject, or from herself – but to unify them and help them collectively come together in a mindset to behold and appreciate the ethos of herself and, more importantly, the subject. Since the accomplishment of social change likely depends on a widening base of knowledgeable

supporters to advocate the change, the rhetor must concentrate on persuading those readers who are unacquainted with the issue or believe it is without merit.

The use of new media technology has proven to facilitate a rhetor's attempt to speak to diverse audiences, especially if that rhetor is speaking from the margins. Douglas Kellner, in his discussion of what he describes as "technopolitics" and revolution, sees an advantage for rhetors in the margins using computer-aided technology because it "opens new terrains of political struggle for voices and groups excluded from the mainstream media and thus increases potential for resistance and intervention by oppositional groups" (181). Securing a place in the cyber-world to reach more readers is a rhetorical strategy not to be overlooked by today's epideictic rhetor. To that end, the case study of the Save Darfur Coalition website in Chapter 4 will highlight the "basic function of rhetorical performative discourse," which Beale maintains is found "in the cultivation, preservation, strengthening and the enlargement of constituencies" (243). As the rhetor balances his words of blame with an openness to the audience, who may even at times be hostile, he ultimately must remain committed to broadening support.

5- How does the rhetor set up a model of ethos for the reader to emulate?

The didactic quality of the epideictic ethos is evident in the creation of a model to provide the audience with a person, action or ideal to emulate in the case of rhetoric of praise, or to reject or replace in the case of rhetoric of blame. As was noted in a previous strategy, this may call for some self-reflection and perhaps a personal transformation by readers. Sheard elaborates: "epideictic discourse can be a vehicle for self-reflection and self-criticism, an expression of critical and rhetorical self-consciousness, both publicly and privately. It can help us to scrutinize our own privately and publicly held beliefs and prejudices, to evaluate them, and to decide whether to reaffirm or reform them." (777). Along with the external action of change demanded

in the community, there can be internal change required to conform to the model. Mark Bernard White refers to this as “rhetoric of edification,” and he contends that it results in personal transformation. “Epideictic rhetoric can function to edify character by calling or challenging its audience to become their better, nobler, braver, and more virtuous selves. Aiming toward the inner life of its audience, it enacts rhetoric for the private person within a public context” (130). Almost a heuristic of its own, epideictic offers a model and then challenges the reader to measure his own character against it, which may account for some of the discomfort in the situation, as White points out: “In the rhetoric of edification, the discourse will evidence an assumption that the audience falls short of an ideal stance” (132). Sometimes the model held up is personal, reflecting the rhetor herself, as is found in Ida B. Wells’ rhetoric. This can be a daring maneuver, as S. Michael Halloran explains by defining ethos as “the measure of one’s willingness to risk one’s self and world by a rigorous and open articulation of them in the presence of the other” (628).

The strategy is intended to direct an audience to take certain action the rhetor believes to be for the benefit of the community. Beale’s discussion of epideictic as “rhetorical performative discourse” strengthens the connection between discourse and action. He cites J.L. Austin’s “How to Do Things with Words” which views language as illocution, or as social action. Austin developed a useful sub-classification of illocutions, some of which I have extracted here to provide instances where rhetoric of blame could be utilized to prompt action:

- Behabitives, or “reaction to other people’s behavior,” such as deploring, condoling, protesting, and challenging;

- Commissives, which “commit the speaker to a certain course of action” and are “often made on behalf of an audience,” such as promising, undertaking, contracting, pledging, swearing, envisioning, and proposing;
- Verdictives, which are the “delivering of a finding, official or unofficial, upon evidence or reasons as to value or fact” or “assessments of character or of the historical significance of events,” such as finding, convicting, ranking, estimating, and dating;
- Expositives, or the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and of references and their bearing upon a community, such as urging, insisting, defying, and testifying (Beale 235-237).

Austin’s set of heuristics is helpful for identifying and creating texts of rhetoric of blame, but as Beale notes (238), they do not capture the full picture because they neglect the rhetorical situation, which will be discussed further in the following category of place.

In the effort to establish a model for the reader, the rhetor’s own ethos may be displayed as the measuring stick for comparison. This didactic quality of the epideictic ethos can be traced back to Isocrates as communications ethics scholar Michael Hyde explains in his introduction to “The Ethos of Rhetoric”:

...the orator is necessarily both a student and teacher of the dynamics of civic responsibility. Heeding the call of *public* service as a person of ‘good repute,’ his presence and rhetorical competence are a ‘showing-forth’ (*epi-deixis*) of *ethos*, a principled self, that instructs the moral consciousness and actions of others and thereby serves as a *possible* catalyst for them to do the same for the good of their community. (xv)

Readers are faced with numerous choices in terms of how to act – or whether to act at all – on social issues. The epideictic rhetor with words of blame can provide *phronesis*, practical wisdom or prudence, to guide their actions and encourage them to model their own ethos upon that which is upheld. Hauser explains how epideictic can provide such guidance: “Whereas *sophia* offers insight into the truth, the preserve of *phronesis* is insight into what to think and do when confronted by conflicting alternatives. Its end is not theoretical knowledge but responsible action to resolve the differences of divergent perspectives that surface when we address concrete problems” (12). The teaching function of epideictic serves to educate community members on how to behold, understand and respond to a certain issue within the public sphere.

Place

*Authority and place demonstrate and try the tempers of men,
by moving every passion and discovering every frailty.
– Plutarch*

The category of place plays an interesting role in my set of heuristics because of our multiple understandings of place – from the communities created by the text, to the mediums of the discourse, the locations of rhetor and reader in relation to each other and the subject, the geographic locations of the subject, and the public sphere. This category should not be perceived as disconnected from the previous category, as its association with ethos is quite strong, which Hyde demonstrates:

One can understand the phrase ‘the ethos of rhetoric’ to refer to the way discourse is used to transform space and time into ‘dwelling places’ (*ethos*; pl. *ethea*) where people can deliberate about and ‘know together’ (*con-scientia*) some matter of interest. Such dwelling places define the grounds, the abodes or habitats, where a person’s ethics and moral character take form and develop. (xiii)

And just as place can impact rhetoric of blame on many levels, we also find that epideictic can renew the places of discourse. In fact, Hauser believes epideictic is “an essential didactic element necessary for a smoothly functioning public sphere to exist” (17).

To analyze how a writer navigates the various places of rhetoric of blame, I have organized this category of the heuristics into four guiding questions:

- Where is the rhetor working within and against the structures of the text and the genre?
- How does the rhetor acknowledge the rhetorical and social context she is in?
- How does the rhetor break down spatial limits?
- How does the rhetor use *kairos* to accomplish her rhetorical purpose in the right place at the right time?

6 –Where is the rhetor working within and against the structures of the text and the genre?

The structures of the epideictic genre as well as the text itself carry with them certain expectations of the reader. In many ways, rhetoric of praise is most conservative in its discourse – closely following established rituals and traditions of a culture as it functions to build communities and cement values, as we witness through examples such as Memorial Day speeches or obituaries in the newspaper. Rhetoric of blame, however, is inherently more challenging to the boundaries of rhetorical expectations.

With a definitive structure, the discourse is limited in a variety of ways – what can be stated, how it is expressed, where and when it is acceptable, the format and medium used, and who the rhetor is, among other limitations. Literature scholar Jeffrey Kittay notes that limits for epideictic are often set by the rhetorical techniques of description and narration, which also will be discussed in the third category of ekphrasis. Literary scholars traditionally have posed the two in opposition – description as a more static discourse focused on a particular scene, and

narration as a linear discourse, fluid with the passing of time. Remarking on the historical opposition, Kittay prefers to point out their interwoven relationship: “It is upon narrative that description is to depend, it is narrative which is called upon to hold and control it. It is the representation of action which is there to keep description ‘in its place’” (225). And he questions: “In what sense can ‘description’ be truly free of action?” (227). I would answer that both techniques give a structure to the text and the epideictic genre. Rhetoric of blame may employ any combination of description and narration – discourse that both describes a scene or creates a place, and narrates the action that can call the reader to move beyond that place. The dichotomy of description and narration reminds us of the distinction between beholding and acting raised earlier.

Again, there seems to be a delicate balance between a creative pushing of the limits and a crossing over. And while the rhetor holds the responsibility for choosing where and how far to cross the boundaries, the audience holds the authority to decide how far to allow the rhetor to go – and still remain in the same place with them. Agnew believes that “speakers and audiences....must work together within the boundaries that shape the cultural moment” (151), and this carries with it “a framework that reflects both constraint and creativity” (152). (Their cooperation being yet another fruit of the relationship between rhetor and reader discussed earlier.) The audience will be aware of certain customs and traditions associated with epideictic as a genre related to their rhetorical situation, whether it is the patriotism and heroism that marks a Memorial Day speech at the town cemetery or the optimism and work ethic that underlies a commencement address in the high school auditorium. Their sense of shared culture has provided them with shared assumptions of what is considered to be appropriate subject matter, tone, style, vocabulary, and so forth in a particular place. If the rhetor too severely modifies the

structures, the audience will recognize the sense of place has been violated. Referring to her subject of the anti-war speech at commencement, Agnew notes the result of such a decision: “The speaker who alters generic conventions without careful negotiation with the audience will not be granted the authority to adapt those conventions to the unique moment in which the discourse is situated. To destroy generic conventions rather than mastering and using them creatively often leads to failed communication” (155).

If attention is not given to the strategies related to ethos, the audience from the outset likely will not grant authority to the rhetor to create a place where they can come together. The rhetor must equally be mindful while navigating structures of the genre and text, especially because in this place, some blame will be cast and the readers must consider their own responsibility in the matter. The blame, employed for a didactic function, may push against the structures if it is meant to be a catalyst for social action. In contrast to words of praise, which provide a more comfortable place for the reader, words of blame likely will fall on the outer edges of the limits of what the reader will perceive as acceptable. A rhetor who neglects the boundaries, or too harshly breaks down those structures risks a reaction from the readers that will more firmly entrench the structures and oppose any change. Such was the reaction noted by Agnew in her case study, where the epideictic rhetoric “immediately threatened the audience’s beliefs about the speech’s appropriateness, which in turn led them to cling to rigid formal expectations rather than welcoming the creativity the speech attempted to offer” (156-157).

7 – How does the rhetor acknowledge the rhetorical and social context she is in?

While recognizing the structure of the text and genre, the writer also must consider the rhetorical and social environment. Sullivan states that: “rhetorical genres are tied to social situations” (114), and this seems to be especially true with rhetoric of blame. The place –

including the time, setting and environment – comprises many factors that furnish a rhetorical and social context for the discourse. It is the coming together of rhetor, audience, subject and place(s) that creates the rhetorical moment. Furthermore, the context can be understood as providing a framework for the mindset of the rhetor and readers as a place of shared opinions and intentions. Comparative literature scholar Janice Hewlett Koelb notes the connection between mind and place as she discusses its role in poetry, which can equally be applied to rhetoric.

That places can function as emblems of mind is a notion inherent in the Greek and Latin meanings of their words for *place*. Like Greek *topos*, which gives us both *topic* and *topography*, the Latin word *locus* has a wide range of both physical and intellectual meanings; *locus* can mean a physical place of an intellectual position or outlook (both *position* and *outlook* of course being spatial metaphors). In American slang, we say we are ‘in a good place’ when we are psychologically at ease. (12)

There also is a strong correlation between epideictic ethos and place, as Sullivan nicely summarizes: “Ethos is not primarily an attribute of the speaker, nor even an audience perception: It is, instead, the common dwelling place of both, the timeless, consubstantial space that enfolds participants in an epideictic exchange” (127). In a similar argument, Nedra Reynolds in “Ethos as Location” defines locations as “the sites on which an individual’s social identity is constructed” (325) and interprets ethos as a “space, place or haunt” (327), adding that “Aristotle used *ethos* to refer to the function of the polis: society is the haunt where a person’s character is formed” (328). While the rhetor is trying to create a place where her own ethos or that of her subject can be fostered, she must be conscious of the rhetorical and social context in which it is

located. The anti-war commencement speech again provides a helpful illustration. Agnew notes that one of the strongest criticisms of that rhetoric of blame came from the graduates themselves, who complained that the address lacked the “proper focus” on them. They believed the context of the epideictic encounter should have centered on themselves, and when it did not, the graduates, lacking a place in the discourse, could not come together with the rhetor.

An equally important part of acknowledging the rhetorical and social context is to be transparent about the rhetor’s own role in that context, or as Reynolds explains, “Writers construct and establish *ethos* when they say explicitly ‘where they are coming from’” (332). A sincere admission of the rhetor’s place in the context will build trust within the relationship. This may present a challenge – but also a benefit – when the rhetor is writing from the margins, or places that historically have been considered outside the typical economic, social or cultural environment of many writers in the traditional canon. Epideictic seems to be the genre of many of those writing from the margins. In ancient times especially, it was considered “the province of non-citizens,” specifically the Sophists, who did not have rights to participate in the Greek Assembly or democratic courts (Duffy 80). Reynolds, who has explored the “geographies of writing,” believes there is an advantage to the rhetor’s place in the margins: “Individuals can see differently when they are on the margins or borders of particular groups; it is easier to observe from the outside, where the perception is broader, keener, or productively different” (331). For writers using rhetoric of blame, this may mean that they have language and experiences that can more effectively express situations of social problems, shedding light on issues for readers from other places. Writers from the margins may be more familiar with the outer limits of a rhetorical situation – and know where the boundaries can be pushed. Both of these advantages, I believe, will be evident in the two forthcoming case studies. Reynolds concurs that a place in the

margins can be beneficial to the writer using words of blame to accomplish a social change because “rather than arguing a move to the center, their goal is to change the structure altogether, so that authority can be claimed even by those whose differences are marked, and whose distance from the center is considerable” (330).

The rhetor’s acknowledgment of her own place and that of the audience and subject within the context of the epideictic encounter can help all parties to see – especially in a tense situation where criticism has been expressed and change demanded – how far each must come to reach a place of shared opinions. Reynolds elaborates on this process: “Locating *ethos* in written texts requires attention to the mediation or negotiation that goes on in the spaces between writers and their locations,” and this can be accomplished “by emphasizing where and how texts and their writers are *located* – their intersections with others and the places they diverge, how they occupy positions and move in the between” (333). With all of our concentration on the places of the rhetor, reader and subjects in a rhetorical and social context, Reynolds’ explanation is a helpful reminder to notice what is in between those places, as well as what is absent.

8 – How does the rhetor break down spatial limits?

One of the most fascinating aspects of epideictic is its capacity– even while attending to the structure of the genre and text and the rhetorical and social contexts – for allowing a breaking down of spatial limits. Hyde encourages us to be aware of how the *ethos* established by a rhetor also marks out a specific place.

The *ethos* of rhetoric directs one’s attention to the ‘architectural’ function of the art: how, for example, its practice grants such *living room* to our lives that we might feel more *at home* with others and our surroundings. The *ethos* of rhetoric would have one appreciate how the *premises* and other materials of arguments are

not only tools of logic but also mark out the *boundaries* and *domains* of thought that, depending on how their specific discourses are *designed* and *arranged*, may be particularly inviting and moving for some audiences. (xiii)

His explanation with its emphasis on the physical space of rhetoric helps us to visualize a setting for the epideictic encounter, such as the steps of a civic monument, the altar of a church or the stage of a college auditorium. The sharing of this space by rhetor and audience can be a source of comfort and solidarity, particularly if the epideictic encounter is an occasion of sadness or tragedy. The shared space also can contribute to the sense of shared culture discussed in the category of ethos. Furthermore, in providing a place where the audience feels at home, i.e. Hyde's "living room," may help to create a common ground upon which the rhetor can cast blame, providing initial stability before raising conflict. Another sense of shared space exists between the audience and subjects, if the rhetor's words can effectively transport readers to the location of the subjects. For Ida B. Wells, that would be the center of an angry lynch mob; and for the Save Darfur Coalition, that would be a village burned to the ground by the Sudanese militia.

In a new media environment, the notion of creating a physical place is radicalized, as digital literacy scholar Laura Gurak nicely summarizes: "Delivery in cyberspace means multiple, simultaneous transmissions of messages across great distance and without regard for time" (248). One on hand, the audience can interact with the epideictic rhetoric of a website, for instance, from the comfort of a home or office computer. Yet the video and audio can transport the audience to far-off places with the intimacy and immediacy of a first-hand witness. The shared space of such an epideictic encounter contains both comfort and conflict, both the familiar and the other, as the spatial limits are dissolved.

The nature of epideictic also seems to discourage a strict following of a linear timeline. The writer may be calling the audience's attention to a problem existing here and now, while invoking values and shared cultural experiences of the past, and demanding a change for the future. In many ways the rhetor seems to be held fast to some rigid restraints, but it is the most creative and effective rhetor who uses epideictic to transcend the boundaries as well. Sheard comments on this interesting paradox of "epideictic's enduring connection to ritual, through which it appeals to a kind of culturally grounded morality and collapses temporal distinctions so that past, present, and future needs and desires can be seen to merge" (773).

Through this strategy of transcending time and space, the very large or foreign place is brought to the intimate, present location – to a place of consubstantiality among rhetor, reader and subject. A writer from the margins knows that his place – or the subject's place – may appear to be a far-removed location to the reader and thus needs to be brought home to the audience if they are all to come together. Gallagher and Zagacki, in their Civil Rights photo study, consider why the pictures are so effective in achieving this rhetorical strategy, and they suggest it is due to "the immediacy of a photograph, the way in which it captures moments of embodiment and enactment – moments that are both situated within an historical context and transcendent of that context" (116). The rhetor, in that case the photographer, crosses the spatial limits with methods similar to those used by Wells and the Save Darfur Coalition.

Rosenfield's discussion of epideictic's role in prompting the reader to behold the subject offers another means to examine how spatial limits can be transcended, which he refers to as a place for "meditative remembrance" (148). As he explains, "Beholding is subversive in that it reverses the ordinary cognitions and makes that which is immediately present to us recede into the background even as that which is distant and hidden grows nearer to us. Beholding thus

annihilates the dimensions of time and space themselves” (149). Epideictic rhetoric thus creates a place where beholding can occur and invites the audience to participate. However, I would again emphasize that epideictic calls upon the audience to do more than just observe, but additionally, to “break down the descriptive limits,” borrowing Kittay’s phrase (229). He compares the difference between beholding, or description, and taking action, or narrative, (which also will be discussed in the third category of ekphrasis) to the feeling of impotence in a dream where we are spectators or witnesses – “those who simply watch and see, not allowed to intervene. This is why history as well so often takes the form of spectacle. The surface, the spectacle, closes us out” (229-230). The limitations of place may seem to be so restrictive that the audience, subject or even rhetor can feel powerless. This, Kittay says, is what makes narrative so radical; it can change direction and orientation.

A hero is continually breaking through limits and occlusions, resituating himself or being resituated. The road, the voyage, that omnipresent metaphor of narrative ‘line’, only *seems* continuous; it is the locus of uncertainties, detours, and discontinuities.... It can be a dis-place rather than a place, a ‘here’ suspended between an absent ‘there’ already submitted to and abandoned, and another absent ‘there’ yet to be reached. (233)

It is this place to which epideictic calls the audience – to be the hero, to take action, to come together and make social change. The two case studies in the following chapters are forthright in this call to action. The rhetoric of blame is utilized not just to condemn, but to reveal an injustice and demand action by community members to end suffering.

The potential of these places and dis-places is greatly expanded due to new media technology that alters our sense of actual and virtual places and their limits. As a result, Bennett

argues, computer-aided technology enriches epideictic's function to create a community and a place for the community to come together. He states: "the Internet and other technologies, such as cellular phones and digital video, enable people to organize politics in ways that overcome limits of time, space, identity, and ideology, resulting in the expansion and coordination of activities that would not likely occur by other means" (20). Kellner presses this conclusion further insisting that today's rhetors, especially those in the margins, can only be effective in changing society through their use of new media. "If forces struggling for democratization and social justice want to become players in the cultural and political battles of the future," he predicts, "they must devise ways to use new technologies to advance a radical democratic and ecological agenda and the interests of the oppressed" (184). Using the example of protest movements against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999, Kellner lists the many rhetorical tools accessed through technology: websites and Internet mailing lists that distributed materials for organizing; protestors who were recruited and met via the Internet; Internet news coverage of the event showing various groups' protests and debate over the WTO and globalization; and Internet photos and eyewitness stories offering many representations of the protest. He praises the Internet for providing access to diverse audiences, adding "such networking links labor, feminist, ecological, peace and other anti-capitalist groups, providing the basis for a new politics of alliance and solidarity to overcome the limitations of postmodern identity politics" (189). These opportunities to break down spatial limits presented by new media for didactic and community-building purposes will be further analyzed in the case study on the Save Darfur Coalition website.

9 – How does the rhetor use kairos to accomplish her rhetorical purpose in the right place at the right time?

Upon securing some sense of the places of the epideictic encounter, the writer must then make a decisive effort to carve out a right place and right time for the rhetoric of blame, which is the use of *kairos* to accomplish rhetorical purposes. James Kinneavy, asserting the importance of the ancient concept of *kairos* for modern theory of composition, defines it as “the right or opportune time to do something, or right measure in doing something” (221). Scott Consigny’s study of Gorgias’ use of epideictic further explains this technique: “Gorgias frequently speaks of the importance of *kairos*, a term usually translated as the ‘opportune,’ the ‘fitting,’ or the ‘timely’ and one closely associated with the idea of ‘adaptation’ to a situation” (284). The successful epideictic moment is *kairotic*, marked by the right time in conjunction with the right place. Rosenfield also remarks on the connection between epideictic and *kairos*, describing it as: “The moment when speaker and listener join in focusing vividly on that presented to the mind’s eye” (149). To create that moment, the rhetor must recognize the rhetorical situation at hand. Refraining from entering the argument of Lloyd Bitzer and Richard Vatz over whether it is the situation or the rhetor which is dominant, it is important to elicit from their discussion the importance of context, including place, in the rhetorical act. As Bitzer notes, “rhetorical discourse comes into existence as a response to situation, in the same sense that an answer comes into existence in response to a question, or a solution in response to a problem” (5). Rhetoric of blame, especially in the two case studies that follow, can easily be understood in such a fashion, as responding to a condition of injustice or oppression in society and providing responses to end it. Without the situation, there would be no rational reason for the blame. However, it is the responsibility of the epideictic rhetor to seize the opportunities of the rhetorical situation to make meaning for the audience. As Vatz states, “To the audience, events become meaningful only through their linguistic depiction” (463). And indeed, the two case studies will show that many

members of the audience were never aware of the situations of blame until they were expressed by the rhetors, Wells and Save Darfur.

The kairotic moment for rhetoric of blame illuminates the difference between what is (the something/someone being criticized) and what should be (the resolution of the problem), which Sheard declares as epideictic's "tendency toward 'idealization'" (770). For instance, the Civil Rights photos in *Life* magazine make use of kairos when they "reminded viewers that a large gap existed between abstract political concepts like democracy and what was actually occurring in American streets" (117), according to Gallagher and Zagacki. Employing the rhetorical strategies discussed previously, the epideictic rhetor seizes the moment and, in this place, explains what he believes to be wrong and how/why it needs to change – how the gap should be closed. What is and what should be are brought together in this place for the reader to behold, to meditate upon, and hopefully to make the change. Sheard summarizes this process: "By bringing together images of both the real – what *is* or at least *appears to be* – and the fictive or imaginary – what *might be* – epideictic discourse allows speaker and audience to envision possible, new, or at least different worlds" (770). Rhetoric of blame can work toward that ideal by condemning in hopes of teaching the audience that their reaction is necessary to make a social change for the benefit of themselves and/or others.

Especially within rhetoric of blame, which can contain harsh words that may seem depersonalizing, it is important that the kairotic moment include a recognition of the ethos of the subject, as well. Condemnation that only focuses on blaming someone or something and lacks any reference to the subjects – likely the victims of the injustice being condemned – will fail to express an ethos for the subjects to which the readers need to relate. Gallagher and Zagacki note how the Civil Rights photos produced an effective epideictic experience because they

“demonstrate how visual images can work both to articulate and to shape public knowledge through offering interpretive and evaluative versions of who does what to whom, when and where” (115). To be seen as merely taking advantage of a situation, or exploiting the *kairos* without regard for the subjects, can result in a significant loss of *ethos* for the rhetor. Minding the reciprocal relationship with the audience provides a stronger foundation for the *kairotic* moment.

The rhetor must be so bold as to take hold of the opportunity and thrust it upon the audience. But the readers also must take on the responsibility to enter the *kairotic* moment and accept the challenge – no easy task, necessarily, for either. Sullivan believes both are entering a space “carved out by their mutual contemplation of reality” (128), which seems to indicate that a place is being created for the action of beholding that was discussed earlier. Rhetoric of blame that actually occurs at a *kairotic* moment and is truly effective in transforming readers and changing a community may indeed be rare, but perhaps its rarity is the reason, for Sullivan, that its place is “sacred.” He explains:

It is primarily the rhetor’s responsibility to carve out a consubstantial space in which the *epideictic* encounter can take place, but it is up to the audience to enter that space and participate in the celebration. One can almost call such a place sacred, for it is the place where the educative and celebratory functions of *epideictic* take place, the place where the continuing ideology of an orthodoxy is given birth in a new generation and rebirth in those who already dwell within the tradition. (128)

The connection of *kairos* to the sacred is made by a range of ancient and modern scholars, and found in Aristotle’s doctrine of virtue, Cicero’s concept of propriety and theologian Paul

Tillich's determination of kairos as a foundation of the Christian New Testament. They have understood kairos as it "brings timeless ideas down into the human situations of historical time. It thus imposes value on the ideas and forces humans to make free decisions about these values" (Kinneavy 227). The function of kairos within epideictic grants rhetoric of blame a grander sense of purpose beyond entertainment – that the change being demanded may be a serious undertaking for a community and its members. Furthermore, the didactic quality of epideictic is upheld in the broader moral purpose of the kairotic moment as it is connected to the ideals of virtue and justice.

Despite its seemingly negative tone, rhetoric of blame can offer a proactive perspective on a social issue of oppression or inequality. Sheard indicates some of the approaches that a rhetor can take and her explanation reflects that optimism: "Epideictic can be seen as capable not only of *responding* to situations or 'exigencies' ... but of *identifying* or *creating* them and, in this way, preceding, even precipitating, deliberative or forensic rhetoric, by instilling a sense of responsibility for and possibility of change for the better" (786). How can we know that the rhetor has effectively seized the kairotic moment? Sullivan rightly suggests a way to measure the epideictic encounter as "the experience of members of an audience who find that the speaker is saying exactly what needs to be said, who find that they are being caught up in a celebration of their vision of reality" (128). The result, which will be discussed further in the final chapter, is that a place exists to allow an advanced, shared understanding for all – as Agnew states: "Thus epideictic provides a space for the creation of a new awareness that transcends the immediate knowledge of either the rhetor or the audience" (152).

Ekphrasis

*“What then is the effect of rhetorical visualization?
There is much it can do to bring urgency and passion into our words;
but it is when it is closely involved with factual arguments
that as well as persuading the listener, it enslaves him.”
– Longinus*

The third category in this set of heuristics I have assembled are classified under the term *ekphrasis*, a rhetorical tool of display that uses vivid description to create a picture before the reader’s eyes. Literature scholars and art historians have long applied and discussed ekphrasis, particularly as used in artistic criticism, poetry and descriptive writing. James Heffernan, who has examined the relationship between visual art and language, defines it as “verbal representation of graphic representation” (299) that is commonly employed by a writer to describe a piece of artwork. Despite being a long-standing literary practice, he claims ekphrasis is neither well-understood nor well-practiced today. “The literary representation of visual art is at least as old as Homer, who in the eighteenth book of the *Iliad* describes at length the scenes depicted on the shield of Achilles... Nevertheless, the ancient term is still struggling for modern recognition” (297), he states. Koelb argues that many scholars in modern English and literary theory have misinterpreted the definition of ekphrasis as being only concerned with writing that discusses art. She attributes the confusion to a citation in the 1949 Oxford Classical Dictionary associating it with the representational arts. Instead, she prefers Theon’s first century definition of ekphrasis, which covers the description of people, places, things, times and events, and she adds, “Works of art have no special status at all” (3). While insisting on the rightful place of ekphrasis in rhetoric, Koelb’s definition highlights an important quality of the technique: “What matters to the ancients is that the presentation, whether long or short, have a heightened and

credible immediacy” (4). It is the immediacy, the proximity of the words of blame or praise that impact the reader and contribute to the vividness of the rhetorical situation.

I have organized the category of ekphrasis into four guiding questions to address the rhetor’s use of language and the related aesthetics:

- How does the rhetor create a vivid picture and how does her eloquence contribute to visualization?
- How does the rhetor employ epideictic acts of unveiling for describing and interpreting?
- How does the rhetor use description and narrative to engage the imagination and emotions of the audience?
- How does the picture created by the rhetor frame subjects and highlight individuality?

10 – How does the rhetor create a vivid picture and how does her eloquence contribute to visualization?

The technique of creating a vivid picture with words can be employed in various forms, characterized by several related figures of description: in Latin, as *descriptio* and *evidentia* and in Greek, as *enargia* and *hypotyposis*. *Enargia*, from the Greek “visible,” is a group of figures used to create “vivid, lively description,” (Burton) and its Latin synonym is *descriptio*.

Hypotyposis is another synonym but, more specifically, a “lively description of an action, event, person, condition, passion, etc. used for creating the illusion of reality” (Burton). *Evidentia* is listed among the five virtues of style developed by Cicero and Quintilian. It does not refer to logical proof, as we might expect to find in the forensic and deliberative genres, but “refers to that which comes before the eyes. If clarity is that quality of style that measures how well language reaches the understanding, then ‘evidence’ measures how well language reaches the emotions” (Burton). All of these terms in some manner refer to the rhetor’s attempt, by

providing more detail, to engage the audience in clearly seeing before them an image, person, object or scene – sometimes pleasant or honorable as with rhetoric of praise, and sometimes brutal or horrifying as with rhetoric of blame. The rhetor’s hope is the clearer the picture, the more persuasive the argument. More than providing description for entertainment, the discourse is meant to influence the reader. Perhaps it was the elaborate stylistic nature of ekphrasis (and epideictic in general) that has historically contributed to its suspect reputation – and that of the Sophists who engaged in it – of being part of a gratuitous display of rhetorical skill without pedagogical, moral or civic purpose. However, scholars such as Michael Beaujoir resist attempts to dismiss ekphrasis as mere ornamentation. Referring to Quintilian’s discussion of *evidentia*, Beaujoir considers ekphrasis with its “powerful forensic connotations” (29) to be a valuable tool of persuasion:

In Quintilian’s idiolect, then, *evidentia* encompasses all sorts of ‘word pictures’ within the context of persuasive oratory. This implies that description is meant to arouse emotions and carry the audience’s judgment: it encodes horror and dismay, surprise or reassurance. In the forensic and political assembly situation, both contestants use *evidentia* and all other descriptive figures which the Greeks called *enargeia* in order to sway the listeners within the limits of what they may swallow as probable and possible... Description, in this sense, is intimately bound up with violence, war and peace, crime and punishment. It never is gratuitous, ornamental, or ‘objective.’ (29)

Drawing the audience into close proximity with the subject is intended to impact their thoughts and emotions in a persuasive manner. Helping the reader to feel a sense of nearness or togetherness with the subjects reinforces the ethos being established and marks a sense of place, as was previously discussed. Koelb notes that this technique of using words to bring a rhetorical

situation to the place of an audience has been a common practice in many eras: “Even in the late 18th century, the classical idea of vivid description, the ‘as if present’ notion, was still as alive and well among influential rhetoricians as it was among poets” (19).

The “picture” shared by rhetor and readers contributes to that sense of shared culture in their relationship, as discussed in the category of ethos. And Condit agrees: “To insure the power of this shared experience, the speaker must create a vivid picture of the shared definition, not merely a clear and rationale case, and so the epideictic speech may have more pronounced stylistic display than deliberative or forensic addresses” (292). Admittedly, judging the effectiveness of a text in creating a vivid picture is a subjective process. However, we can say that the audience in the epideictic encounter bears almost the sole authority for deciding – individually and collectively – whether a rhetor has done so.

The quality of eloquence, although often derided as superficial, contributes to the rhetor’s ability to create a picture for the audience. Classics scholar Simon Goldhill comments on the power of this capacity: “A brilliant visualization, then, has the power to astonish – *ekplessein*, that key term for psychological affect in rhetorical and realist art. Visualization amazes” (5). The eloquence of epideictic rhetoric often is equated with its value as entertainment, which may have led to the ancient bias against it as showy but shallow. However, Condit sees the use of eloquence as offering the rhetor the “opportunity for creativity,” and she believes that audiences relish the chance to be entertained because “they are allowed to stretch their daily experiences into meanings more grand, sweet, noble, or delightful” (290). Eloquence includes a number of techniques, such as the use of figurative language, metaphor, metonymy, antithesis, amplification, contrast and other poetic devices. While I will not elaborate on all of these here, I would like to address two. Amplification, or a heightening for effect, was an ancient

characteristic of epideictic, often used for showmanship to the point of scorn. Amplification can be accomplished with a variety of technical methods, such as the use of adjectives, modifiers and qualifiers that aggrandize the picture created for the audience; and new media such as photos, audio and video can further amplify discourse. Yet it is a heightening of community standards that epideictic can seek to accomplish, affecting a variety of social concerns much greater than entertainment. Rosenfield explains how the language of epideictic can transform a community in this way: “For it is in the act of ‘realizing’ excellence through expression (amplification), of seeking to make it permanent by attending carefully to its beauty, of congealing the inherently good in words which can be ‘taken to heart’ that makes amplification a prelogical yet psychologically consequential event when the participant actualizes what is for the community’s benefit” (145).

The use of contrast in ekphrasis also can be strikingly effective in epideictic, which is illustrated in Gallagher and Zagacki’s study of Civil Rights photos. Thought by many in the audience at that time to be very different, black and white people were pictured together engaged in shared activities like praying, talking and working. The photographs “brought into sharp relief the sameness or similarity of the dark skinned and light skinned people – they were engaged in the same activities, visibly in sympathy with one another – revealing otherness as inconsequential even as they maintained diverse cultural roots and practices” (123), according to Gallagher and Zagacki. In addition, the photos used contrast with place and action to achieve their rhetorical purposes. For instance, violent scenes were shown occurring in familiar settings, and police officers were shown in brutal acts, not protecting the innocent as they are usually perceived. Rhetoric of blame frequently works to expose something believed to be wrong by

simultaneously holding up that which is considered right. The contrast is offered in a didactic manner to teach the audience why the rhetor believes something or someone needs to change.

Readers, Condit believes, connect eloquence in epideictic with a rhetor's capacity for leadership in society. She states: "The audience judges the fullness of the speaker's eloquence because audiences rightfully take eloquence as a sign of leadership. The person who knows truth, recognizes and wields beauty, and manages power stands a good chance of being a desirable leader for the community. Eloquence is a manifestation of those qualities" (290-291). To ask that an epideictic encounter be eloquent, transformative and didactic may indeed be asking a lot; and with all of those demands, Condit does not see many public addresses fulfilling the true nature of epideictic. She contends: "In speeches which define the community and the situations it faces, the speaker displays leadership and is judged for the humane vision with which the audience is 'entertained'. Simultaneously, the audience gains understanding of its shared self as community is created, experienced and performed. Such complete forms of epideictic may indeed be rare" (291).

11 – How does the rhetor employ epideictic acts of unveiling for describing and interpreting?

With epideictic understood as an act of unveiling, ekphrasis contributes to this practice by enhancing the display. The illustrative quality of ekphrasis lends itself to the expository writing techniques of describing and interpreting – both acts that highlight the rhetorical choices open to the writer. The role of interpreter is predominant for the epideictic rhetor, especially when we consider rhetoric of blame as a tool for social change. As Beaujoir lists the synonyms of description – "represent, delineate, relate, recount, narrate, express, explain, depict, portray" (27) – we see the varying degrees of interpretation that are involved in ekphrasis – much more than providing simple, objective facts. Ekphrasis involves specific choices with language that

describes a scene, for instance, including or excluding people, actions, motives, causes, circumstances and details as the rhetor decides. For instance, the art of interpretation is evident in words selected for a picture title or photo caption, which “begins the work of interpreting a picture for us,” according to Heffernan (303). Interpretation through the descriptive language of ekphrasis can move the reader to an understanding beyond that displayed by the “frozen” picture. The descriptive words of a photo caption provide “a narratable answer to the question which any picture of an arrested act provokes: ‘what will happen next?’” Heffernan states (306).

Classics scholar Shadi Bartsch and art historian Jas Elsner are intrigued by the potential of ekphrasis to facilitate any number of different interpretations by different rhetors. “In drawing us to interpretation, it also draws attention to the insubstantiality of those interpretations” (ii), they state, and compare ekphrasis to Rorschach ink drawings because those pictures also “point to the subjectivity of the interpreter” and “[go] beyond what can or could be seen” (ii). The epideictic rhetor’s choices thus can be analyzed by the audience, as readers examine the words to try to discover what descriptive details were included or excluded in the display. Sullivan comments on what this reveals about the rhetor: “Describing and interpreting, normally considered initial stages in the act of criticism, are epideictic acts of unveiling, exposing the value system of a text or person to the gaze of spectators” (342).

Thus the use of ekphrasis by the rhetor and his role as interpreter create a subsequent role for the reader as an interpreter as well, which I believe is part of the reader’s role as an active community member. Bartsch and Elsner call for an analysis of “how ekphrasis may itself produce the viewing subject” (iii). In a similar manner, Goldhill contends that the “critical gaze” of the art historian is based in ekphrasis and is a “value-laden view of things.” However, he cautions that the gaze can have a manipulative effect on viewers: “It creates and regulates the

viewing subject – both by a selection of what to look at and how to look” (2). While Goldhill considers the rhetor’s use of interpretation and description as more manipulative than I would, his cautious approach to the use of ekphrasis is helpful as we examine its effects on viewers. In contrast, Beaujoir sees the use of ekphrasis as strengthening the role of the audience because it requires the reader to serve as a “witness” to the scene being described – an act reminiscent of Rosenfield’s beholding of a subject. Engaging readers to feel as if they are witnesses to a scene enhances the sense of nearness and, Beaujoir concludes, lends a forensic quality to the rhetoric and advances its persuasiveness. “*Evidentia* must be ‘experienced’ by the audience or the report of an eyewitness, the emphasis being placed here on *witness*, with all its forensic dimensions,” he explains (29). Taking on the responsibility of serving as a witness in a formal or public capacity – or as an active agent of the community, as I would describe it – also reinforces Hauser’s observation that rhetoric is beneficial to the polis.

In addition, the effect of ekphrasis on viewers or readers can contribute to their sense of shared experience with the rhetor. Literary critic and theorist Murray Krieger has argued “*enargeia*, the quality of vividness, ... can spur a confusion of subjectivities between the poet/describer and the reader/hearer, the latter becoming so enthralled by the image that he identifies with the describing poet rather than with an external spectator in front of a visual scene” (Bartsch iii). He seems to be stating that the use of ekphrasis can be so vivid, so effective that the reader becomes a part of the scene – moving from beholder to participant, which may very well be the intent of the epideictic rhetor. And the vividness of ekphrasis has only been enhanced with new media technology, as will be examined in the fourth chapter, with an interactive quality that can invite the reader to become part of the virtual world.

12 – How does the rhetor use description and narrative to engage the imagination and emotions of the audience?

Krieger's definition of ekphrasis, as words that portray a specific moment captured in time, set a present day standard in scholarship. Many scholars have come to associate description with the novel or other works of fiction, and narrative as the more serious matter of rhetoric. And yet, a number of scholars disagree with limiting the term in that way, considering it more than a frozen picture, involving narrative and interpretation, as well. Resisting the traditional dichotomy of description and narration, Koelb argues against definitions that make it "formally distinguished from, or even opposed to, narrative" (4), and cites the ancient use of ekphrasis that incorporated narrative as part of the *protogymnasta* exercises. Philippe Hamon and Patricia Baudoin believe there is some rhetorical danger in the use of description because the reader may consider it as dull, overdone or unnecessarily stalling the forward movement of the narrative. In their essay, "Rhetorical Status of the Descriptive," they caution against "a risky 'drift' from detail to detail" (11) and advise "description must not be digression" (13). They also note the literary prejudice toward it: "For most classical theoreticians, the 'detail' first must be reduced, done away with, and then, it must be homogenized, integrated into a series of 'equivalent' details – which suspends and annuls its very status of 'relief' element" (12). However, I would argue that managing this tension between narration and description allows the rhetor to engage the emotions and imagination of the reader, which is vital for an effective epideictic encounter. The tension between description and narration also affects the reader's role as interpreter. Hamon and Baudoin contend that the description used in a discourse "blocks and suspends the momentum of reading. But it also requests a 'translation' as to its meaning, its function in the work; it calls upon and interrogates the reader whom it transforms into an

interpreter” (11). As in the previous strategy, there is an opportunity for the reader to examine the words and choices of the writer.

Likewise, Heffernan insists that the static nature of artwork (the picture) is actually freed by narrative (the word), which is a very different viewpoint from the commonly-accepted maxim that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” He states: “From Homer’s time to our own, ekphrastic literature reveals again and again this narrative response to pictorial stasis, this storytelling impulse that language by its very nature seems to release and stimulate... Language releases a narrative impulse which graphic art restricts” (301-302). He believes it is the narrative quality of ekphrasis which gives it efficacy – that the word accomplishes more than the picture. This will be an interesting perspective to consider further in the case study on the Save Darfur Coalition website.

Yet again, we can recognize in epideictic the need to maintain a balance, here between the picture created through ekphrasis and the words themselves. Bartsch and Elsner ask us to contemplate what would be the peak of the tension, which they label as “ekphrastic fear,” or “the possibility that the distinguishing characteristics between word and image might collapse” because, they insist, “in its ever-shifting relationships to the texts in which it is embedded, it is not still... even at its stillest, ekphrasis plays with the tension between that stillness and narrative” (i-ii). Given the structure and boundaries of the text discussed earlier, and the ethical model calling for a hero to break through the linear narrative, and the capacity for epideictic to dissolve spatial limits, it is intriguing to consider how ekphrasis impacts the genre through this tension. Bartsch and Elsner further encourage us to imagine an “ekphrasis degree-zero” that “would come dangerously close to a litany of colors, shapes, bumps, ridges, textures” (ii), which I propose may be found in digital rhetoric.

The rhetor's intertwining of narrative and description also helps to engage the emotions of the reader. Goldhill comments on the connection between ekphrasis and emotions. He states that "Quintilian uses the notion of *phantasia*, 'impression,' to insist that through *enargeia* in ekphrastic prose, the orator can reach the innermost mind – the deepest emotions – of the listener" and therefore, "The orator who is *euphantasiotatos* – skilled in the work of *phantasia* – is most powerful at getting into the emotions ... of his listeners" (4). Bartsch and Elsner also associate the vividness of ekphrasis with its effectiveness in causing "a sense of wonder at the immediacy of the described object or scene; an emotive response such as pity or fear and a degree of immersion into the imagined visual" (v). In addition, emotion can be linked to ethos and the virtue that an epideictic text is upholding. According to Adams, Aristotle's "model rhetor" displays the virtuous and ethical qualities of his subject as a method of phronesis for the audience. He states: "The emotional experience completes the observers' intellectual grasp (understanding) of the relationship between the concept of virtue and its concrete manifestation in an exemplar" (296). Therefore, by engaging the reader's intellect and emotions, ekphrasis becomes a vital tool used by the epideictic rhetor to establish an environment conducive to deliberation and beholding.

13 – How does the picture created by the rhetor frame subjects and highlight individuality?

The vivid picture of ekphrasis can be used by the epideictic rhetor to frame the subject for the reader and to focus on a certain subject or action set in a specific place and time. This could be a noble scene held up by rhetoric of praise to be repeated or an alarming scene called out by rhetoric of blame to be reformed. The use of this strategy is parallel to the strategies already discussed in accentuating the particularity of the subject's ethos, as well as localizing of place to the immediacy of the reader. Ekphrastic language can facilitate identification of the audience

with the subject, but it is most effective when the description does not eclipse the subject.

Hamon and Baudoin hold that there is an order, which I have maintained in my set of heuristics, which places ethos above ekphrasis. They insist: “Description must...remain subordinate to the highest hierarchical instances of discourse, to the narration on one hand, and on the other to the highest existing subject, *the Subject*, the human being. [It is] a discourse that caters to individuality, to personality” (13). If rhetoric of blame is intended to unveil an unjust situation in order for it to be corrected, there is great importance in assuring that the reader can see the subject or victim amidst the details of the picture. Gallagher and Zagacki point out how the sharpened focus functions rhetorically in the *Life* magazine photos, which “brought what had been previously invisible, in light of the abstract, de-personalized nature of the rhetoric, into clear focus” (125). The photographers quite literally framed their subjects just as the epideictic rhetor does with words.

Heffernan provides one further perspective on the term, which I believe is helpful in examining the use of ekphrasis by rhetors such as Wells or Save Darfur members who are speaking from the margins. As ekphrasis is used to describe works of art, such as Keats’ famous “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” Heffernan explains, it encompasses an action best described by the term, *prosopopoeia*, which is “the rhetorical technique of envoicing a silent object.” Typically, art historians employ this term for a text that “gives a voice” to inanimate creations such as paintings or sculptures. I would argue that the epideictic rhetor’s use of ekphrasis in rhetoric of blame is a way of giving voice to subjects, or victims, previously unheard of or from.

Etymologically, ekphrasis means “speaking out” or “telling in full” (Heffernan 302), which is what rhetoric of blame may be, in fact, accomplishing in the broader social context by envoicing those who have been silent.

The interconnections of these 13 guiding questions, which this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, cooperate in forming a methodology for appreciating how the epideictic rhetor can be successful through an expression of ethos and ekphrasis in bringing readers together and the places where this occurs. Using this set of heuristics for analysis can enhance our understanding of how rhetoric of blame can be effective in accomplishing didactic purposes, forming communities, and effecting social change. To illustrate the application of the heuristics, two case studies in which rhetoric of blame is a catalyst for social action will follow in the next two chapters. First, in Chapter 3, I look at the writings of pioneering journalist Ida B. Wells and her efforts to stop the lynchings of African-Americans during the 19th century. Through her newspaper articles and pamphlets, I argue, she effectively used epideictic blame to create a community grounded in opposition to lynching. Primary in her rhetorical technique was the ethos she established for herself, as an individual, and the ethos created for the victims of the lynchings and the African-American population as a whole.

Because technologies of literacy undeniably impact epideictic rhetoric, I have constructed this set of heuristics so that it can be applied to a broad spectrum of epideictic pieces – essays, newspaper articles, speeches, videos, websites and more. And so, in Chapter 4, I examine a website created by the Save Darfur Coalition to intervene in the genocide taking place in Darfur, Africa. Again, I explore how the rhetoric of blame is effective in building a community of opposition – in this case, opposition to the Darfur crisis and promotion of intervention on behalf of the victims. Key features of visual rhetoric are explored in light of the technique of ekphrasis and the actual and virtual places created by on-line epideictic rhetoric.

CHAPTER III: “DISMAYED BUT UNDAUNTED”

IDA B. WELLS – A CASE STUDY

Can an epideictic text of blame be effective in building community and making change in society? Applying the heuristic tools explained in the previous chapter, I would like to explore this question in more detail through the following case studies in this chapter and the next. For the first illustration of the application of these heuristics, I have selected the writings of African-American journalist Ida B. Wells, who was dedicated to ending mob violence in the United States during the late 19th century. Wells was a powerful, yet refined rhetor who used words of blame to illuminate the crime of lynching and build a community to end it. Before beginning with an analysis of Wells’ use of ethos, a brief biographical sketch is helpful.

Ida B. Wells was born in 1862, during the Civil War, one of six children to parents who both were slaves, working as a cook and a carpenter in Holly Springs, Mississippi. Wells attended Shaw University, a Methodist school run by Northern missionaries, and learned proper manners, along with a strict code of conduct from her mother at home (Davidson 42). When yellow fever struck Holly Springs and her parents died, Wells took the lead of the family, caring for her younger brothers and sisters. She started teaching, and in 1881 was invited to live in Memphis by Fannie Butler, her father’s stepsister. In the introduction to Wells’ autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*, her youngest daughter, Alfreda Duster, speculates on the unlikelihood that the young teacher would soon wield harsh words of blame against so many powerful people: “Her refined and ladylike appearance did not suggest that she was destined to defy mobs and become a vigorous crusader against the injustices that beset the Negro people in the post-Reconstruction days in the South” (xviii).

However, her crusade began that same year while riding on the Chesapeake, Ohio and Southwestern Railroad to her teaching position. She filed a lawsuit challenging the “separate but equal” concept, after she was bodily removed from the train because she would not accept second-class accommodations in the smoking car when she had paid for first class (Davidson 73). Her career in journalism then started in 1884 when she wrote news stories about her railroad lawsuit and other political issues for several black newspapers. The network of black journalists throughout North and South was strong, and Wells became involved and well-known. T. Thomas Fortune of the *New York Age*, after meeting her at a conference, wrote:

She has become famous as one of the few of our women who handle a goose quill with diamond point as easily as any man in newspaper work... She has plenty of nerve and is as sharp as a steel trap... Decidedly Iola [one of her pen names] is a great success in journalism and we can feel proud of a woman whose ability and energy serve to make her so. (Duster 33)

In 1889, Wells joined Taylor Nightingale and J.L. Fleming as owners of the *Free Speech and Headlight*. Following the March 1892 lynching of three African-American men in Memphis, Wells wrote two provocative editorials: one encouraging African-Americans to boycott white business and move West to protest their unjust treatment in Memphis, and another questioning whether lynchings truly were the result of black men raping white women (as was so often claimed) when frequently the relationships were consensual. The white community responded by destroying the *Free Speech's* presses and threatening the lives of the paper's owners. Wells was traveling at the time and did not return to Tennessee, taking a position writing for the *New York Age* as a quarter partner in the business. One of her first major projects was a study of yearly statistics from the *Chicago Tribune*, which showed that of 728 mob killings from

1882 through 1891, no rape was even alleged in nearly two-thirds of cases, leading many to question the real cause of lynchings. Ten thousand copies of the paper were printed with that article (Davidson 162); and two New York City women supporting anti-lynching efforts raised money to have the article printed as a pamphlet, which became *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*.

Wells went on to travel around the United States and England, speaking out and writing in opposition to lynching and mob violence. In 1895, she married a lawyer, Ferdinand Barnett and moved to Chicago where they had four children. She continued writing, but also committed herself to other activist work such as organizing black women's civic clubs, working as a probation officer and running for elected office. Ida B. Wells-Barnett died in 1931 at the age of 69.

For this case study, I have concentrated on Wells' public writing, primarily three of her pamphlets: *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*; *The Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the U.S.*; and *Mob Rule in New Orleans: Robert Charles and His Fight to Death, the Story of His Life, Burning Human Beings Alive, and Other Lynching Statistics*, all from a collection "On Lynchings," edited by Patricia Hill Collins. I also have focus on some of Wells' newspaper articles and her autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*, edited by her daughter, Alfreda Duster. In some categories, I have combined questions in the heuristic to address correlated matters.

Ethos

The rhetorical strategy of creating ethos has a three-fold task of focusing on the character of the rhetor, the subject(s), and the reader. As stated previously, I consider ethos to be predominant in these heuristics, and the analysis that follows attests to its importance in the

epideictic encounter. Applying the heuristics to Wells' rhetoric will show how the creation of ethos is fundamental to her use of words of blame in accomplishing didactic purposes.

1. How does the rhetor set up a relationship between the writer and reader?

Much of what is known about Wells' rhetorical presentation of self is found in her autobiography, *Crusade for Justice*. In this text, we see many of the qualities for which Wells has become well-known. Duster captures her public ethos quite well with this assessment: "In newspapers, magazines, journals and books of the period from 1890 to 1931, Ida B. Wells-Barnett was described over and over again as militant, courageous, determined, impassioned, and aggressive" (xiv). Wells wrote four first-person narratives: an 1885-87 diary, an 1893 travel journal, her autobiography and a 1930 diary. Miriam DeCosta-Willis, editor of the published version of Wells' Memphis diary, observes a different ethos in the rhetor's more private writings, and concludes: "In *Crusade*, the private person is obscured by the public persona, a serious and committed militant, who shapes and controls, retrospectively, the narrative of her life, always conscious of her audience and confident about her place in history" (12).

Wells' concern for creating and presenting a strong and righteous ethos cannot be overstated. She seems to make every effort to present herself as a "a person of good will (*eunoia*), good sense (*phronesis*), and good moral character (*arête*)" (Sullivan 113) not only in her writing, but also in her work as a teacher and journalist, and in her social relationships. To do so, she had to struggle against a prevailing cultural attitude that was extremely prejudicial toward black women. As historian Patricia Schechter points out, "Black women had little enforceable claim to rights and respect in American society during Wells's lifetime. When visible at all, their image typically served as foil or negative counterpoint for the dominant order" (8-9). And in addition to a status of being negligible was the image of the aggressively sexual

African-American woman. According to DeCosta-Willis, “a major threat to racial advancement, in the opinion of Black leaders, male and female, was the figure of the loose woman – insatiable, promiscuous, and vulgar – a stereotype that was a product of racist mythology” (4). Wells countered such notions by positioning herself as a serious, refined Christian woman who insisted upon the highest standards of behavior for everyone. Unceasingly, she called for equal, just treatment for all people – black and white, men and women. In her preface to her *Southern Horrors* pamphlet, she writes, “The Afro-American is not a bestial race. If this work can contribute in any way toward proving this, and at the same time arouse the conscience of the American people to a demand for justice to every citizen, and punishment by law for the lawless, I shall feel I have done my race a service. Other considerations are of minor importance” (P. Collins 26).

She also was quite adept at asking for help from other black leaders and professionals. She secured the endorsement of abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass for her work, and both pamphlets, *Southern Horrors* and *Red Record*, open with a letter from Douglass, praising her efforts and her writing, thus advancing her ethos and further legitimizing her writings. Douglass wrote: “Let me give you thanks for your faithful paper on the lynch abomination now generally practiced against colored people in the South. There has been no word equal to it in convincing power. ... Brave woman! You have done your people and mine a service which can neither be weighed nor measured” (P. Collins 28).

While Wells was cognizant of her own role in the epideictic encounter, she seems much more committed to strengthening the ethos of her subjects, the victims of mob violence. Schechter comments on this dual rhetorical effort: “In order to launch resistance to lynching, Wells had to prove African Americans to be victims worthy of sympathy and citizens deserving

of protection. At the same time, she needed to present herself – an educated, middle-class Southern woman of mixed racial ancestry – as a credible dispenser of truth...” (84). One technique to establish the subjects’ ethos is a reminder of the shared heritage with the reader as fellow American citizens, which the journalist frequently utilized. In *Red Record*, she writes: “No class of American citizens stands in greater need for the humane and thoughtful consideration of all sections of our country than do the colored people, nor does any class exceed us in the measure of grateful regard for acts of kindly interest in our behalf” (P. Collins 129). She also recalls in *Red Record* the honorable role of African-American men during the recently-fought Civil War as protectors of the white women left home alone: “The Negro may not have known what chivalry was, but he knew enough to preserve inviolate the womanhood of the South which was entrusted to his hands during the war. The finer sensibilities of his soul may have been crushed out by years of slavery, but his heart was full of gratitude to the white women of the North” (P. Collins 64). Furthermore, in the same pamphlet, she praises the hope of African-Americans in American democracy despite their treatment:

Scourged from his home; hunted through the swamps; hung by midnight raiders, and openly murdered in the light of day, the Negro clung to his right of franchise with a heroism which would have wrung admiration from the hearts of savages. He believed that in that small white ballot there was a subtle something which stood for manhood as well as citizenship, and thousands of brave black men went to their graves, exemplifying the one by dying for the other. (P. Collins 59)

In addition, in *Southern Horrors*, the journalist asserts the contribution of black men to the national economy: “To Northern capital and Afro-American labor the South owes its

rehabilitation. If labor is withdrawn capital will not remain. The Afro-American is thus the backbone of the South” (P. Collins 50).

Her various portrayals of black men uphold an ethos of respectful, patriotic, hard-working citizens. Wells conveys the tragic stories of mob violence to many and varied audiences, emphasizing the shared heritage of readers and victims as fellow citizens and fellow Christians. The audience is encouraged to see the subjects in a new light, as those deserving of respect, compassion and justice; and a strong bond is established between the readers and subjects as she relates their individual cases, describing the victims’ home lives, work, family members and circumstances of the alleged crimes. She laid a solid foundation to establish a good relationship among herself, her readers and the subjects.

2. How are the roles of spectator and community member developed for the reader/viewer?

Wells is highly successful in casting the reader in the role of a witness. In the epideictic encounter, she unveils the subjects of lynchings as innocent victims of horrid crimes that take place outside the law, yet often with the allowance of law enforcement agents and elected officials. Wells holds out these situations for her audiences to view, so that they can recognize the evil and injustice present. As “by-standers” to these crimes, readers have the opportunity to “see” the events unfolding through her narratives (a point which also will be discussed in the analysis of her use of ekphrasis). For instance, Wells writes about people who were burned alive in one chapter of *Mob Rule in New Orleans*. She relates the case of Lee Walker, who was dragged through the streets of Memphis and burned before the courthouse because he had frightened some girls in a wagon along a country road by asking them for a ride. They screamed and nearby men working on a field claimed he attempted to assault the girls. Wells’ account of the lynching contains graphic details to provide a clear picture to readers who had never heard or

witnessed such violence: “After he was apprehended and put in jail and perfectly helpless, the mob dragged him out, shot him, cut him, beat him with sticks, built a fire and burned the legs off, then took the trunk of the body down and dragged further up the street, and at last burned it before the court house” (P. Collins 199). Recounting another lynching in Lake City, South Carolina, Wells describes how a black postmaster and his infant child were killed by a mob because he would not give up his government-appointed job: “The father and his baby were shot through the open door and wounded so badly that they fell back in the fire and were burned to death” (P. Collins 199).

Wells apparently recognized the rhetorical impact of her narratives. In *Southern Horrors*, she writes, “The assertion has been substantiated throughout these pages that the [white] press contains unreliable and doctored reports of lynchings, and one of the most necessary things for the race to do is to get these facts before the public. The people must know before they can act, and there is no educator to compare with the press” (P. Collins 52).

After detailing these tragedies, Wells consistently follows up with a demand that the audience take action, that they take up the second role in the epideictic encounter of being an active community member. She sets very high expectations for members of the community, calling upon everyone to condemn and prevent future mob violence. In *Ida B. Wells-Barnett: An Exploratory Study of an American Black Woman*, Mildred Thompson states that Wells’ public lectures emphasized three means of protest: economic boycotts, emigration from Southern towns, and investigations by black press (34). Her instruction on how readers should respond to these tragedies was framed by her understanding of each individual as a vital community member – and the consequences that lynchings were having on the public sphere itself. She was

concerned that the prejudice and lawlessness were damaging the security of the nation, the foundations of democracy, and the freedom of speech. In *Southern Horrors*, she writes:

The result is a growing disregard of human life. Lynch law has spread its insidious influence till men in New York State, Pennsylvania and on the free Western plains feel they can take the law in their own hands with impunity, especially where an Afro-American is concerned. The South is brutalized to a degree not realized by its own inhabitants, and the very foundation of government, law and order, are imperiled. (P. Collins 47)

Despite many instances of corrupt sheriffs, biased judges and juries, and negligent politicians, Wells firmly believed in the U.S. judicial system, the authority of the court and the democratic system. In *Red Record*, she advises:

Think and act on independent lines in this behalf, remembering that after all, it is the white man's civilization and the white man's government which are one trial. This crusade will determine whether that civilization can maintain by itself, or whether anarchy shall prevail; whether this Nation shall write itself down a success at self government or in deepest humiliation admit its failure complete... (P. Collins 149)

And in *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, she states, "That is all the Negro asks – that is all the friends of law and order need to ask, for once the law of the land is supreme, no individual who commits crime will escape punishment" (P. Collins 202).

Furthermore, Wells remained hopeful that unified action by community members would make a difference in society. Perhaps the rhetor inherited that faith from her father who "valued civic duty and was a joiner" (Davidson 21), following politics closely and holding memberships

in the Masons, board of trustees for Shaw University, and 4-Ls: Lincoln's Legal Loyal League. While traveling in England, Wells learned about the civic groups women had organized and brought the idea back to the United States with her. Duster acknowledges her mother's work in building up communities: "She urged her female listeners to become more active in the affairs of their community, city, and nation, and to do these things through organized civic clubs" (xix). And Schechter credits Wells' anti-lynching movement as the inspiration for the group of organized black women who eventually took the name the National Association of Colored Women (115). Historian James Davidson summarizes her efforts well: "Wells kept speaking out, joining organizations, holding the world to her high standards" (173).

3. How does the rhetor preserve her ethos – and that of her subject – while casting blame?

4. How can the tension of agonism of blame be balanced with a "willingness to learn" from the audience?

Wells' use of the rhetoric of blame was powerful, defiant and unrelenting. Such relentless condemnation would seem to have resulted in damage to her ethos, and yet among many audiences (although not all, admittedly) she retained a fine reputation in the midst of her sharp words. Lynching was just one of many social and racial troubles on which she would write, as her daughter explains: "For more than forty years Ida B. Wells was one of the most fearless and one of the most respected women in the United States. She was also one of the most articulate. Few defects in American society escaped her notice and her outrage" (Duster, ix).

Overall, she blamed the continuation of mob violence on "leniency on the part of the national government, indifference in the pulpit and in the press, abandonment of its principles by the Republican Party" according to Thompson (36). And while condemning those who carried out lynchings, Wells was equally critical of anyone who allowed lynchings to take place or did

not speak out against them, which constituted the majority of her audiences – whether that was a Masonic group in the South, a civic group of white women in the North, a literary club on the East Coast, or African-Americans of all social classes who read her newspapers. As Patricia Collins states, “For Wells-Barnett, those who failed to take a stand against lynching, or who remained silent and looked away, were as culpable as those committing the acts” (10). Blame was shared equally among blacks and whites, as far as Wells was concerned. She writes in *Southern Horrors*, “The men and women in the South who disapprove of lynching and remain silent on the perpetration of such outrages, are *particeps criminis*, accomplices, accessories before and after the fact, equally guilty with the actual lawbreakers who would not persist if they did not know that neither the law nor militia would be employed against them” (P. Collins 49).

Wells also had harsh words for the white press, which ignored crimes of lynchings or cast the subjects as guilty criminals. Davidson explains: “Based on her own experience, however, Wells understood that the white press often contained ‘unreliable and doctored reports of lynchings’ (161). *Red Record* criticized the white newspapers when they failed to demand an investigation for five lynchings in 1893. “It tells the world ... that Lynch Law has become so common in the United States that the finding of the dead body of a Negro, suspended between heaven and earth to the limb of a tree, is of so slight importance that neither the civil authorities nor press agencies consider the matter worth investigating.” Wells lists the three victims’ names and their cities, but points out that in two of the stories “so little attention was paid to the matter ... even their names were not given” (P. Collins 94).

She seemed especially disappointed in the lack of action by those of her own race and criticized the Afro-American League, demanding fewer speeches and more action from the

group. After attending a convention in Knoxville, the journalist wrote an essay of blame for the *Cleveland Gazette*, on August 1, 1891, that states:

A handful of men, with no report of work accomplished, no one in the field to spread it, no plan of work laid out – no intelligent direction – meet and by their child’s play illustrate in their own doings the truth of the saying that Negroes have no capacity for organization. Meanwhile a whole race is lynched, proscribed, intimidated, deprived of its political and civil rights... and we sit tamely by without using the only means – that of thorough organization and earnest work to prevent it. No wonder the world at large spits upon us with impunity. (Davidson 121)

Surprisingly, black editors appreciated her candid style, Thompson maintains, with plenty of blame to be shared by all: “Her vehement reactions were as quickly directed at the dishonesty, tepidity, or immorality of other blacks as against whites. She was a severe critic of southern black men. She despised the man who curried favor from whites, and she censured the ‘leader’ who forgot the poverty and deprivation of the masses.” (16-17).

White elected officials, especially Southern governors, did not escape Wells’ censure. Politicians were continually called upon to end the lynchings in their states and communities. Remarking on their response to Wells’ rhetoric of blame, Thompson states, “She had focused her attack mainly on Southern officials of the United States, accusing them not merely of allowing lynchings but also of fostering them. The responses of several governors indicated their irritation with this unpleasant exposure, and their immediate tendency, too, was to discredit Ida B. Wells and her message” (61). In *Red Record*, Wells expressed her pleasure that they were feeling pressure from the anti-lynching campaign in England. “Since the crusade against lynching was

started, however, governors of states, newspapers, senators and representatives and bishops of churches have all been compelled to take cognizance of the prevalence of this crime and to speak in one way or another in the defense of the charge against this barbarism in the United States” (P. Collins 122).

For some, Wells’ blame was made all the more sharp because of the reasoning underlying it. Beginning with her premiere story in the *New York Age*, the journalist began to reveal the economic and racially oppressive motives behind lynchings. In her autobiography, she explains her conclusions: “Like many another person who had read of lynching in the South, I had accepted the idea meant to be conveyed – that although lynching was irregular and contrary to law and order, unreasoning anger over the terrible crime of rape led to the lynching; that perhaps the brute deserved death anyhow and the mob was justified in taking his life” (Duster 64). However, when her three friends were lynched in Memphis and they had committed no crime, she realized other causes were at the root of the violence. “This is what opened my eyes to what lynching really was. An excuse to get rid of Negroes who were acquiring wealth and property and thus keep the race terrorized and ‘keep the nigger down.’ I thus began an investigation of every lynching I read about” (64). Thompson describes how fully this notion had permeated US culture: “While lynching was an acknowledged blight on the national scene, the prevalent view among the white population was that lynching was a necessary measure for keeping the criminally inclined black in line. The Southern proponents of lynch law had successfully propagated the myth of the black man’s lust and criminality” (26-27).

Along with revealing the economic motivations, Wells also was brave enough to state that many of the so-called “rapes” of white women actually were consenting interracial love affairs. As Davidson explains: “In the newspapers, then, ‘rape’ was not always rape. The charge

sometimes masked a relationship based on mutual consent. It also served, Wells began to believe, as a convenient excuse” (155).

In trying to manage the tension of agonism, Wells seemed to be well aware that a balance was necessary. After her editorial in Memphis casting doubt on the question of rape, the journalist realized that white Southerners were infuriated by allegations of a personal relationship between a white woman and a black man. Davidson comments on that public reaction: “To suggest such an affinity was to strike sparks to a tinderbox of public rage. And some whites were using that rage deliberately, brandishing the specter of rape as an excuse to intimidate any African-American who struck them as too prosperous or outspoken” (157).

Wells was mindful that her rhetoric of blame could result in serious consequences or violence of its own. She cautioned in *Mob Rule in New Orleans* that the furious manhunt for Robert Charles, a black man who had killed a police officer who tried to arrest him without cause, resulted in harm to many innocent citizens, damage to property and poor decision-making in the heat of anger:

In the frenzy of the moment, when nearly a dozen men lay dead, the victims of his [Charles'] unerring and death-dealing aim, it was natural for a prejudiced press and for citizens in private life to denounce him as a desperado and a murderer. But sea depths are not measured when the ocean rages, nor can absolute justice be determined while public opinion is lashed into fury. There must be calmness to insure correctness of judgment. The fury of the hour must abate before we can deal justly with any man or cause. (P. Collins 193)

Wells seems to insist that her pointed observations should lead to a recognition of the problem of violence – not create more violence as a response.

The rhetor persistently attempted to unify herself and her subjects with her audience. In *Red Record*, she asks for respect and openness toward African-Americans:

Before the world adjudges the Negro a moral monster, a vicious assailant of womanhood and a menace to the sacred precincts of home, the colored people ask the consideration of the silent record of gratitude, respect, protection and devotion of the millions of the race in the South, to the thousands of northern white women who have served as teachers and missionaries since the war. (P. Collins 63)

She states outright that her intention is more a concern with righting the wrong than blaming the transgressor: “These pages are written in no spirit of vindictiveness, for all who give the subject consideration must concede that far too serious is the condition of that civilized government in which the spirit of unrestrained outlawry constantly increases in violence, and casts its blight over a continually growing area of territory” (P. Collins 64).

Furthermore, by using the reports from the white press to tell the stories, her own ethos is bolstered. “The purpose of these pages which follow shall be to give the record which has been made, not by colored men, but that which is the result of compilations made by white men, of reports sent over the civilized world by white men in the South. Out of their own mouths shall the murderers be condemned” she states in *Red Record* (P. Collins 64). She shows a willingness to learn, crediting the white press where reporting was not biased. Again in *Red Record*, after quoting from the *Arkansas Democrat*, she writes, “The paper mentioned is perhaps one of the leading weeklies in that state and the account given in detail has every mark of a careful and conscientious investigation” (P. Collins 73).

Addressing such a multiplicity of audiences – black, white, Northern, Southern – presented an additional challenge for Wells, but allowed for various intensities of rhetoric of

blame. And she did not always achieve an ideal balance between the agonism of blame and unity of the encounter. However, Schechter asserts that Wells believed the risk was worth it. “Ida B. Wells was also a fighter who risked misunderstanding and punishment for assertive conduct. By challenging the stories of her day about how the world worked as well as the assumptions about who she could be in that world, Wells unsettled nearly all of her audiences, eliciting tears in some settings, cheers or taunts in others, and violence and vengeful fantasies in still others” (35).

Perhaps her success in negotiating these tense encounters was aided by the sense of hope that she projected. She writes optimistically in *Red Record* of “an awakened conscience” spreading throughout the country (P. Collins 125), and her faith that readers will take action. After lectures, Wells was asked what could be done to aid the anti-lynching cause. “The answer always is: ‘Tell the world the facts.’ When the Christian world knows the alarming growth and extent of outlawry in our land, some means will be found to stop it,” she explained in *Red Record* (P. Collins 151).

A further mitigation of her harsh words could have occurred through consideration by readers of all her work on behalf of African-Americans. Wells organized women’s clubs, established a facility in Chicago for young people to meet safely and promoted political participation by African-Americans. As Duster attests, “If Ida B. Wells spent much of her time fighting the evil aspects of human relations, she worked equally hard in the effort to devise means to improve the lot of her fellows” (x).

5. How does the rhetor set up a model of ethos for the reader to emulate?

Through her newspaper stories and pamphlets, Wells clearly establishes a model of ethos as a didactic function of her epideictic rhetoric. Her dedication to writing and speaking indicates

her understanding of Austin's concept of language as illocution or social action. Her rhetorical texts clearly fall into several of his subclassifications of rhetoric of blame that prompt action. For instance, expositives, or the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and of references and their bearing upon a community, such as urging, insisting, defying, and testifying (Beale 235-237) are evident in her writing. Patricia Collins argues that "Wells-Barnett clearly sees the task of prodding a large and seemingly uninformed White American and European public to take action against lynching as essential to its eradication... She believes that public sentiment will change if people are better informed" (18). Also, behabitives, or reaction to others' behavior, such as deploring, condoling, protesting, and challenging are at the heart of Wells' epideictic. For instance, in *Southern Horrors*, Wells writes:

Men who stand high in the esteem of the public for Christian character, for moral and physical courage, for devotion to the principles of equal and exact justice to all, and for great sagacity, stand as cowards who fear to open their mouths before this great outrage. They do not see by their tacit encouragement, their silent acquiescence, the black shadow of lawlessness in the form of lynch law is spreading its wings over the whole country. (P. Collins 40-41)

Along with using accusing words to create a model for action, Wells was quite willing to commend anyone who she believed had acted in a fair and just manner. She holds up individuals, businesses and institutions as models for her audience to emulate. In *Southern Horrors*, she praises a variety of community agents for their endeavors:

Some of the great dailies and weeklies have swung into line declaring that lynch law must go. The President of the United States issued a proclamation that it not

be tolerated in the territories over which he has jurisdiction. Governor Northern and Chief Justice Bleckley of Georgia have proclaimed against it. The citizens of Chattanooga, Tenn., have set a worthy example in that they not only condemn lynch law, but her public men demanded a trial for Weems, the accused rapist, and guarded him while the trial was in progress. (P. Collins 48)

In another instance, in *Red Record*, she makes a direct appeal to Governor Thomas Jones of Alabama, quoting from one of his speeches in which he regrets that lynchings were committed and he urges that they stop. “The evil cannot be cured or remedied by silence as to its existence. Unchecked, it will continue until it becomes a reproach to our good name, and a menace to our prosperity and peace; and it behooves you to exhaust all remedies within your power to find better preventives for such crimes” (P. Collins 126). She also praises small efforts made, such as that of African-American minister Reverend King who witnessed the lynching of a man in Paris, Texas and tried to help him, but ultimately could not dissuade the mob. King later told his story to a newspaper in New York and Wells cites his eyewitness testimony, commending his bravery. “He was a witness of the awful scenes there enacted, and attempted, in the name of God and humanity, to interfere in the programme. He barely escaped with his life, was driven out of the city and became an exile because of his actions” (P. Collins 81).

Should readers believe that she held hard feelings against white women because of their roles in lynchings, Wells holds up the Northern women who came to the South as Christian missionaries serving as teachers in many black schools, such as Shaw that Wells had attended. She applauds their work and presents a nearly perfect ethos for these women: “When emancipation came to the Negroes, there arose in the northern part of the United States an almost divine sentiment among the noblest, purest and best white women of the North, who felt called to

a mission to educate and Christianize the millions of southern exslaves. From every nook and corner of the North, brave young white women answered that call” (P. Collins 63).

To formulate the model of ethos, Wells encourages self-reflection in hopes of a personal transformation among her readers to support her cause. As Schechter explains further, Wells “exposed how taken-for-granted concepts like ‘race’ and ‘rape’ were socially constructed and politically deployed. In so doing, she challenged readers to examine the assumptions that held their personal identities and sense of the social order together. It was a challenge few joined and many resisted, even to the point of violence” (88). Wells holds up a model of an active citizen who is willing to stand up for the rights of citizens of all races and who opposes efforts to skirt the justice system. Her insistence on self-reflection is intended to prompt readers to consider their own roles and responsibility in this serious matter. As part of that ethical model, she herself stands as model of a critical reader, questioning what is being taught to readers by other rhetors. In *Southern Horrors*, she asks audiences to be aware of a motive when reading accounts in white newspapers and notice when the press is silent following instances of mob violence: “Has it a motive? We owe it to ourselves to find out” (Schechter 86).

In *Red Record*, Wells proposes that self-reflection also was fostered by the critical eye of the English public upon the mob violence taking place in the US, concluding: “This has not been because there was any latent spirit of justice voluntarily asserting itself... but because the entire American people now feel, both North and South, that they are objects in the gaze of the civilized world and that for every lynching humanity asks that America render its account to civilization and itself” (P. Collins 122).

Although Wells does not seem to seek fame or personal recognition in the anti-lynching campaign, she does use her own actions to further model the behavior she demands. She writes

in *Crusade for Justice* about the decision to stay in New York and report from there, after the threats on her life and business in Memphis. “They had destroyed my paper, in which every dollar I had in the world was invested. They had made me an exile and threatened my life for hinting at the truth. I felt that I owed it to myself and my race to tell the whole truth” (Duster 62-63). Though she spoke rarely of the toll the work took on her, Wells was full committed to the cause, often to the detriment of her own health. Davidson explains, “Wells labored doggedly – often to the point of exhaustion – to protest, lead, and shame her fellow citizens into action” (167). Schechter praises Wells’ personal epideictic efforts: “Rather than let her suffering or victimization immobilize her, Wells directed her feelings toward fostering the love, respect, and solidarity that she expected to be shared and acted upon by those who opposed lynching” (21).

Wells does not hesitate to point out occasions where she is disappointed by the response – or lack thereof – from those who she believes should behave differently. For instance, after writing an editorial criticizing the school district for providing poorer conditions for black schools than white schools, Wells found that her teaching contract was not renewed. Friends told her she should have predicted the consequences. In *Crusade for Justice*, she responds, “But I thought it was right to strike a blow against a glaring evil and I did not regret it. Up to that time I had felt that any fight made in the interest of the race would have its support. I learned then that I could not count on that” (Duster 37). She cites another instance in *Red Record* where the audience failed to live up to expectations, concerning the case of Rufus Bigley in Quincy, Mississippi, who was not found guilty, but hanged by a mob. She writes, with regret: “It may be remarked here in passing that this instance of the moral degradation of the people of Mississippi did not excite any interest in the public at large. American Christianity heard of this awful affair and read of its details and neither press nor pulpit gave the matter more than a passing comment”

(P. Collins 99). However, neither the injustice and violence she witnessed nor the inaction of the American public could wither her perseverance, and “dismayed but undaunted, she worked diligently” (Duster xix).

Place

The multiple layers of context in epideictic discourse are examined in this category of the heuristics. Various understandings of place can be analyzed – from the communities created by the rhetoric, the mediums of the writing, the positioning of the reader and rhetor, the geographical locations and the public sphere at large. Wells’ words of blame were influential on many of these places, and as this analysis shows, she was successful in carving out a place for the readers and subjects to come together in new understanding.

6. Where is the rhetor working within and against the structures of the text and the genre?

7. How does the rhetor acknowledge the rhetorical and social context she is in?

Both the structure of the genre and text, as well as the rhetorical and social contexts, created very formalized boundaries for Ida B. Wells, presenting her with some significant rhetorical challenges if she was to be effective in her rhetoric of blame.

Already quite bold with her subject matter and sharp words of condemnation for many readers, Wells had to confront social and cultural attitudes that neither privileged her as a rhetor, nor provided any space for the voice of her subjects. Thus, she had to construct a place for her ethos and that of her subjects, as well as a place for readers to come together with them. Wells was part of the first generation of African-Americans following the emancipation of slaves. This was a time of political reconstruction, which also saw the reconstruction of race “as a concept and as a social and political weapon,” according to Davidson, who explains: “Like so many other black Americans, Wells found that she could forge her own identity only by challenging and

contesting the second-class citizenship that emerged out of that reconstruction of race.”

Unfortunately, lynching was “at the center of that reconstruction” (Davidson 10-11). Thompson demonstrates the severity of the situation in which Wells had to work:

From the 1890s into the 1920s, segregationist thought was crystallized and publicized systematically and authoritatively in the entire nation. Racist ideas were accepted by intellectuals and academicians. In the South anti-black sentiment became extreme. Blacks were looked upon not merely as inferior, but as immoral and criminal, incapable of reaching the white man’s civilization, and prone to revert to barbarism in freedom. (67)

Although the race-based social structure of the nation at that time was not conducive to Wells’ rhetoric, it was a time of change, which she used to her rhetorical advantage. Schechter describes the context of “rural discontent ... in an increasingly polarized racial climate. In 1891-92, the cotton-growing [Mississippi] Delta region boiled with populist and agrarian unrest” (74). In many ways, Wells quite readily conformed to the social mores of the day. For instance, based on a February 20, 1887 diary entry by Wells, DeCosta-Willis notes: “Black men created a model of bourgeois social respectability; they established and enforced codes of ‘proper’ womanly behavior. When a group of men decided that attendance at the theater was inappropriate for a teacher, Wells accepted the criticism and vowed to be a better example to her students” (133). However, we also can find situations where Wells pushed the boundaries of acceptable, traditional behavior for women. Patricia Collins noted that she “refused to confine her activism to community-development strategies deemed appropriate for women” (11). She traveled widely, often alone, later traveled with her nursing baby, and she participated in interracial political groups.

Upon moving to New York, Wells recognized that the rhetorical context for her writing was decreasing. Schechter believes that Wells felt “there was little hope of freedom of speech in the South, and she likened northern opinion to a ‘stone wall’” (90). In establishing a place for herself and her message, she deliberately took the pen name “Exiled.” After her editorial on the myth of rape, she recalls in *Red Record*, “It was for the assertion of this fact, in the defense of her own race, that the writer hereof became an exile; her property destroyed and her return to her home forbidden under penalty of death” (P. Collins 61). The place she had tried to establish for her rhetoric of blame in Memphis had been destroyed. The mob who raged against her newspaper tried to assign her another place – one without a voice, as Schechter emphasizes: “Indeed, death threats attempted to enforce her staying in her ‘place’” (35). However, Wells rejected that alternative and created a new place in New York where she could continue her writing and even expand the place by reaching larger audiences.

The white press contributed little to Wells’ rhetorical efforts to construct a safe place for readers and subjects to come together. The rhetoric of blame found in white newspapers created a context that was in conflict with her epideictic. “As if to justify the crackdowns on African American protest and leadership,” Schechter states, “the white Memphis press began to chant about black criminality with headlines like ‘Bad Negro Robber, “He May Be Lynched,” and now a new ‘Old, Old Story: A Brutal Negro, A White Lady, an Assault and a Lynching’” (75). Those same papers called Wells’ ethos into question as well. For instance, the *New York Times* described her as being of “very light complexion,” “coffee colored,” and attempted to link her to immorality as “a slanderous and nasty-minded mulattress” (Schechter 105). Yet she handily countered their words of blame. Patricia Collins declares, “Wells-Barnett’s brilliance lay in her decision to use the data collected by White journalists to challenge the prevailing wisdom on

lynching” (17). Most notably, Chapter 3 of *Southern Horrors* is filled with statistics compiled by the *Chicago Tribune* on lynchings (P. Collins 40).

In addition to her personal negotiation of the social context, her entire argument was framed by the notion of place and challenged those trying to keep African-Americans in a place of oppression. Wells opposed the attempts of white people and institutions to keep black people in a lesser social and economic place, as well as attempts to create a place where African-Americans could be grouped together as ignorant, unlawful, dangerous and lazy. As she observes in *Southern Horrors*, “the whole matter is explained by the well-known opposition growing out of slavery to the progress of the race. This is crystallized in the oft-repeated slogan: ‘This is a white man’s country and the white man must rule.’ The South resented giving the Afro-American his freedom, the ballot box and the Civil Rights Law” (P. Collins 39). Lynching was one way for white authority to violently establish that place of oppression for African-Americans. Thompson maintains that lynching was “the most effective device for controlling and later taking the black’s vote, for keeping him economically dependent and disadvantaged,” and holds that because “the real reason for the upsurge in lynchings was not admissible, the complex mythology of the black man’s lust for white women and children was contrived to justify the practice” (27). Duster contrasts the situation of white and black men at that time: “This was done by white men who controlled all the forces of law and order in their communities and who could have legally punished rapists and murderers, especially black men who had neither political power nor financial strength with which to evade any justly deserved fate” (70). Wells also was frustrated by a judicial system that seemed to be hijacked by prejudicial actions. She reports such a case in *Red Record* of a black family who was lynched, after being suspected of poisoning a well. “The matter came up for judicial investigation, but as might have been

expected, the white people concluded it was unnecessary to wait the result of the investigation – that it was preferable to hang the accused first and try him afterward. By this method of procedure, the desired result was always obtained – the accused was hanged” (P. Collins 98).

8. How does the rhetor break down spatial limits?

Wells’ diligence in bringing her audience to a place where they could behold the evils of mob violence is foremost evident in her dynamic use of detailed accounts of lynchings. Mindful that she was relating information never found in accounts of lynchings by the white press, she was extremely effective using descriptive language (which will be analyzed in the next section on ekphrasis) to paint a picture of each place of violence. For example, a story in *Mob Rule in New Orleans* describes a victim in the marketplace:

Between 1 and 2 o’clock this morning a mob of several hundred men and boys, made up of participants in many of the earlier affairs, marched on the French Market. Louis Taylor, a Negro vegetable carrier, who is about thirty years of age, was sitting at the soda water stand. As soon as the mob saw him fire was opened and the Negro took to his heels. He ran directly into another section of the mob and any number of shots were fired at him. He fell, face down, on the floor of the market. (P. Collins 181)

Another section of the same pamphlet, condemning the crimes of burning human beings alive, gives examples from 1891 in Texarkana, Arkansas; 1893 in Paris, Texas; July 1893 in Bardwell, Kentucky; and July 1893 in Memphis, Tennessee. She takes reader to each of these places with descriptive, succinct narratives of each case.

And while the audience likely does not feel “at home” in these places, readers from varied backgrounds and time periods can feel as if they are actually present and witnessing such

heinous acts as these. The resulting feelings – which Wells hoped would spur the audience to action – include horror, frustration and outrage. She puts readers in contact with the descriptive limits of place – we are there, but we are powerless to act as the horrible crime already has taken place, the victims are dead. And yet, unlike a dream where we remain powerless to act, Wells leads readers to a place where we can see this evil and do something about it. Not to save the subjects in the story, but to help others.

Wells further broke down spatial limits by eliminating the dichotomy of private and public space, as she contrasted the public and private places involved in the mob violence. As Schechter argues, “Wells described both the ‘private’ crime of rape and the more ‘public’ crime of lynching as systematic wrongs perpetrated by whites against blacks. The press portrayed lynching as something men did to other men in public. It was publicized aggressively and its victims made into a spectacle. By contrast, rape was mundane, usually unnamed and ‘private’ (87). What was intended to be kept private, Wells made public with her pronouncements that white and black women who were victims of rape did not receive the same just treatment.

9. How does the rhetor use kairos to accomplish her rhetorical purpose in the right place at the right time?

If there was a “right” place and time to protest and condemn lynching, Wells would have said that it was far earlier than her own writings and lectures since the violence had gone on too long without protest. But Wells seemed to recognize the kairos of her rhetorical situation and felt that she was meant to seize the opportunity she found there. From her introduction to *Southern Horrors*: “It is with no pleasure I have dipped my hands in the corruption here exposed. Somebody must show that the African-American race is more sinned against than sinning, and it seems to have fallen upon me to do so” (P. Collins 25). In the June 25 issue of the *New York Age*,

she told her story of being exiled from Memphis. Thompson contends that the interest of Northern readers in that story with its volatile reasoning behind lynch law motives gave Wells “a sense of prophetic calling. She felt that she had been chosen by circumstances to demonstrate the evils of lynching and to make known the false reasoning given by Southerners for continuing the practice” (30).

Wells expresses the kairotic moment through her rhetoric of blame by pointing out the gap of injustice and oppression that existed for African-Americans. She knew her audience, the American people, must be made aware of the tragedies if things were to change. “Since my business has been destroyed and I am an exile from home because of that editorial, the issue has been forced, and as the writer of it I feel that the race and the public generally should have a statement of the facts as they exist” she states in *Southern Horrors* (P. Collins 31). Her effectiveness as an epideictic rhetor began with words of blame that enlightened others. According to Thompson, “she explained that she had assumed the task of crusader against lynching not because she had a natural inclination to recite its horrors, but because she had witnessed society’s need to be informed about it” (35). And upon becoming informed, Wells believed, readers could unify and take action.

Consistently, her stories advocated that immediate action was needed. The entire first chapter of *Red Record* appeals to the kairotic, explaining how African-Americans for too many years were victims of mob violence and deserved equal and just treatment from the law. She pleaded with readers to respond and support the anti-lynching campaign. “Lynching is no longer “Our Problem,” it is the problem of the civilized world,” she states (P. Collins 123). In the final chapter of *Red Record*, she questions readers, prodding them to recognize the opportune time to act:

Can you remain silent and inactive when such things are done in our own community and country? ... What can you do, reader, to prevent lynching, to thwart anarchy and promote law and order throughout our land? 1st. You can help disseminate the facts contained in this book by bringing them to the knowledge of every one with whom you come in contact, to the end that public sentiment may be revolutionized. Let the facts speak for themselves, with you as a medium.

(P. Collins 148)

Wells seems convinced that the epideictic encounter will result in a change. She believed the conscience of the nation would not be able to endure the violence of lynching much longer. “When this conscience wakes and speaks out in thunder tones, as it must, it will need facts to use as a weapon against injustice, barbarism and wrong. It is for this reason that I carefully compile, print and send forth these facts. If the reader can do no more, he can pass this pamphlet on to another...” she writes in *Mob Rule in New Orleans* (P. Collins 154).

The kairos of Wells’ epideictic rhetoric also contains a connection to the sacred. A religiously educated woman, she allowed her Christian faith to provide a foundation for her writing, her work and her ethos. As Schechter explains, “Wells’s appeal to race love touched back on her fundamentally religious understanding of self, community, and politics. Individuals’ treatment of one another determined the quality of community life and, by extension, shaped political possibilities and general progress” (63). Wells was given a gold brooch in the shape of a pen with the word “Mizpah,” which is a place in the Hebrew bible meaning “lookout.” Schechter believes the rhetor’s appreciation of the gift reveals her awareness of her calling, “christening Wells with a new identity and mission from scripture. Wells proudly wore the brooch at public events in the coming years” (19). She would have recognized that fulfilling her

mission as a prophet to her readers entailed negative consequences – a lesson she had learned from her study of the Christian Old Testament’s many stories of prophets and their frustrations and sufferings in delivering messages of edification. Wells’ association of her work with a Christian mission is evident in her writing. DeCosta-Willis notes the liturgical “call-and-response” pattern in Wells’ diary entries, in which “she appeals to God for assistance and guidance. Her many prayers, which recall the formulaic and ritualistic incantations of the Black church, serve as framing devices in some entries and as acts of closure in others” (127).

Ekphrasis

Ekphrasis, the use of vivid description, is a rhetorical strategy that contributes a graphic quality to the epideictic encounter. Rhetoric of blame interprets a situation and creates a visual picture for the readers, engaging the audience’s imagination and emotions. This analysis demonstrates how Wells’ writing served the epideictic function of a “rhetoric of display” to illustrate the evils of mob violence.

10. How does the rhetor create a vivid picture and how does her eloquence contribute to visualization?

Wells’ newspaper articles and pamphlets are literally filled with hundreds of stories in which she creates vivid pictures for the reader, using ekphrasis to persuade. Using Quintilian’s concept of *evidentia*, the “word pictures” create powerful imagery and draw the readers into close proximity with the subjects, the victims. For example, in *Red Record*, she writes with graphic intensity:

The negro was placed upon a carnival float in mockery of a king upon his throne, and, followed by an immense crowd, was escorted through the city so that all might see the most inhuman monster known in current history.... Smith was

placed upon a scaffold, six feet square and ten feet high, securely bound, within the view of all beholders. Here the victim was tortured for fifty minutes by red-hot iron brands thrust against his quivering body. (P. Collins 80)

Her description of the manhunt of Robert Charles in *Mob Rule in New Orleans* further illustrates her technique. “While the building was burning Charles was shooting, and every crack of his death-dealing rifle added another victim to the price which he had placed upon his own life. Finally, when fire and smoke became too much for flesh and blood to stand, the long sought for fugitive appeared in the door, rifle in hand, to charge the countless guns that were drawn upon him” (P. Collins 170-171).

With poetic descriptions and bold characters, Wells’ narratives featured plots to carry the reader along upon a wave of action, building toward the inevitable tragedy. In *Red Record*, she tells of the lynching of six black men in 1894 who died when police officers deliberately drove them into an ambush of a mob of lynchers:

At the time and upon the chosen spot, in the darkness of the night and far removed from the habitation of any human soul, the wagon was halted and the mob fired upon the six manacled men, shooting them to death as no humane person would have shot dogs. Chained together as they were, in their awful struggles after the first volley, the victims tumbled out of the wagon upon the ground and there in the mud, struggling in their death throes, the victims were made the target of the murderous shotguns, which fired into the writhing, struggling, dying mass of humanity, until every spark of life was gone.”

(P. Collins 122)

Duster notes the impact of the imagery: “She was perhaps the first person to recite the horrors of lynching in lurid detail. By the written and spoken word she laid bare the barbarism and inhumanity of the rope” (ix).

The eloquence of Wells’ rhetoric was enhanced by a formal style, and though shocking, her harsh words were rarely crude in their condemnation and often lyric in their plea for change. For instance, in *Southern Horrors*, she reports a case in Maryland of a black man lynched for raping a white girl. But when the *Baltimore Sun* reported the rapist had been identified by the girl as being white, the assailant was not prosecuted because the authorities believed that the girl would be too traumatized by testifying. Wells speaks harshly of such cover-ups: “This cry has had its effect. It has closed the heart, stifled the conscience, warped the judgment and hushed the voice of press and pulpit on the subject of lynch law throughout this ‘land of liberty’” (P. Collins 40).

She frequently employed the technique of amplification, which sadly was not difficult for her because of the hundreds of lynchings. In Chapter 2 of *Southern Horrors*, she builds paragraph upon paragraph of short stories describing cases of lynchings, ranging from Memphis to Tuscumbia, Alabama to Chattanooga to Texarkana to Natchez, Mississippi. After chronicling nine such stories, she writes: “hundreds of cases might be cited, but enough have been given to prove the assertion that there are white women in the South who love the Afro-American’s company even as there are white men notorious for their preference for Afro-American women” (P. Collins 33-37). And in *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, she accumulates a long list of crimes in one sentence:

During the entire time the mob held the city in its hands and went about holding up street cars and searching them, taking from them colored men to assault, shoot

and kill, chasing colored men upon the public square, through alleys and into houses of anybody who would take them in, breaking into the homes of defenseless colored men and women and beating aged and decrepit men and women to death... (P. Collins 176)

The story of an “imbecile” lynched in Paris, Texas, in *Red Record*, records numerous methods of torture:

It was horrible – the man dying by slow torture in the midst of smoke from his own burning flesh. Every groan from the fiend, every contortion of his body was cheered by the thickly packed crowd of 10,000 persons. The mass of beings 600 yards in diameter, the scaffold being the center. After burning the feet and legs, the hot irons—plenty of fresh ones being at hand—were rolled up and down Smith’s stomach, back, and arms. Then the eyes were burned out and irons were thrust down his throat. (P. Collins 81)

However, Wells was cautious not to overuse the technique so as to lead the reader to doubt her words. “In order to be safe from the charge of exaggeration, the incidents hereinafter reported have been confined to those vouched for by the *Tribune*,” she states in *Red Record* (P. Collins 64).

Contrast is another effective technique she used to create a vivid picture. One of her primary efforts was to compare how justice was rarely sought for black women who were raped, as opposed to white women. In *Southern Horrors*, she explains that rapists of black women were not lynched and questioned the “justice” sought for those crimes. The contrast between the behavior of Christians and the Scripture in which they believed also was noted. When a black family was hanged for alleged well poisoning before they were put on trial, she laments, “this did

not protect the women from the demands of the Christian white people ... In any other land and with any other people, the fact that these two accused persons were women would have pleaded in their favor for protection and fair play, but that had no weight with the Mississippi Christians” (P. Collins 99).

She also contrasted the violence of those who supposedly were upholding the law with the peaceful, passive actions of the allegedly guilty. In *Red Record*, she writes of three men and woman in a Carrolton, Alabama jail awaiting trial when lynch mob broke in. “They were caged in their cells, helpless and defenseless; they were at the mercy of civilized white Americans, who, armed with shotguns, were there to maintain the majesty of American law” (P. Collins 125). And finally, Wells provides a picture of individual victims as good, hardworking people – unlike the white press’ portrayal of them as terrifying, brutal criminals. From *Mob Rule in New Orleans*:

The bloodthirsty barbarians, having tasted blood, continued their hunt and soon ran across an old man of seventy-five years. His life had been spent in hard work about the French market, and he was well known as an unoffending, peaceable and industrious old man. But that made no difference to the mob. He was a Negro, and with a fiendishness that was worse than that of cannibals they beat his life out. (P. Collins 182)

Within the ethos Wells constructed for herself, a contrast also is evident. The refined Christian woman with a strict moral code and particular social manners is an extreme from the violent, lawless mob she condemns. Her ethos and the ethical model that she displays for the readers could not be more different from the graphic descriptions and pictures of brutality and inhumanity of those committing the lynchings. Her public presentations were further emphasis

of how contrast is embodied; an ethos of feminine compassion and propriety boldly speaking out to teach and inspire a community, as compared to an ethos of inhumanity embodied in a mob defying ideals of justice and freedom to do violence to bodies – and boldly displaying that violence – in order to frighten and oppress a community.

Wells' overall style of writing, even with her use of poetic devices, was simple and concise. She had a rhetorical awareness of her audience's need for a straight-forward story from the very beginning of her journalistic career. She recalls in *Crusade for Justice*:

I had an instinctive feeling that the people who had little or no school training should have something coming into their homes weekly which dealt with their problems in a simple, helpful way. So in weekly letters to the *Living Way*, I wrote in a plain, common-sense way on the things which concerned our people. ... I never used a word of two syllables where one would serve the purpose.

(Duster 24)

The reviews from English newspapers reported a similar assessment while she was lecturing overseas: "She spoke with singular refinement, dignity, and self-restraint; nor have I ever met any other 'agitator' so cautious and unimpassioned in speech. But by this marvelous self-restraint itself she moved us all the more profoundly" stated London's *Christian Register* on April 12, 1894 (Schechter 25).

11. How does the rhetor employ epideictic acts of unveiling for describing and interpreting?

12. How does the rhetor use description and narrative to engage the imagination and emotions of the audience?

The act of unveiling a subject for the audience is crucial for the epideictic rhetor. Wells was fully committed to this disclosure as the very heart of her rhetoric – to put on display the

horrifying and unjust actions against her own people. After she tells the story in *Red Record* of a black man and his wife in Arkansas who were killed before a trial could even take place, Wells comments on the fact that African-Americans should not believe that the US justice system always acts in a transparent and legal way:

Perhaps the civilized world will think, that with all these facts laid before the public, by a writer who signs his names to his communication, in a land where grand juries are sworn to investigate, where judges and juries are sworn to administer the law and sheriffs are paid to execute the decrees of the courts, and where, in fact, every instrument of civilization is supposed to work for the common good of all citizens, that this matter was duly investigated, the criminals apprehended and the punishment meted out to the murders. But this is a mistake; nothing of the kind was done or attempted. (P. Collins 76)

Wells understood her responsibility was to expose the system when it was not operating as it should have been.

Her stories – in comparison with accounts in the white press – demonstrate how important the act of interpretation is for the rhetor and reader. Her powerful descriptions produce a viewing subject in the reader, as Bartsch and Elsner refer to it, one who feels as if she is being supplied with the details so as to be present in the story. Wells directs the reader's gaze upon truly awful scenes, interpreting for us, yet also forcing us to interpret what we are seeing in order to understand the injustice.

Wells works further to produce a visual subject in the reader with her inclusion of photographs and wood cuts. *Red Record* has a cut of the lynching of C.J. Miller at Bardwell, Kentucky on July 7, 1893, which is a line drawing of a man hanged by a chain with a crowd

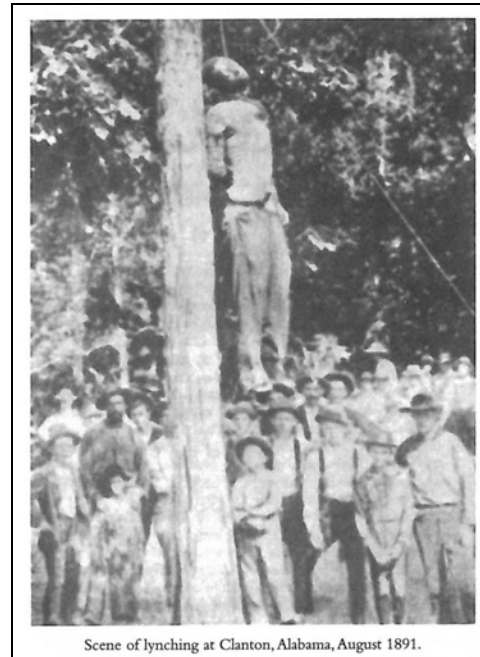
gathered around (P. Collins 90). *Red Record* also has a reproduction of a photograph taken in August 1891, in Clanton, Alabama, of a black man hanged from a tree with at least 20 white men and boys standing below him, looking at the camera (P. Collins 104).

Figure 1: Lynching Woodcut



Red Record (P. Collins 90)

Figure 2: Lynching Photograph



Red Record (P. Collins 104)

Just as she had compiled lynching statistics and accounts from white newspapers, here she selects pictures and drawings created by white photographers and artists to use for her own purposes. Schechter comments on what a radical rhetorical choice this was: “In an age increasingly committed to ‘black and white’ views of social reality, some audiences did not want to see shades of gray – or even the evidence. In England, pictures of lynched men were censored in the press and in the United States were viewed as suspiciously ‘salacious’” (113). By amplifying her descriptions with photographs and woodcuts, Wells again places these tragedies

on display and accentuates the audience's role as witnesses, literally seeing the violence unveiled. She provides little interpretation beneath each picture, listing only the date and place, with the victim's name in one case. Her inclusion of the graphic pictures reinforces her insistence that the audience act as critical readers, reflecting upon and questioning what they see. Wells' placement of the images in the context of her rhetoric of blame is a strategy challenging what readers may have previously interpreted about these stories.

The pictures and Wells' descriptions combined to incite strong emotions in the audience – strong enough to encourage them to take action in defense of victims. Detailing fierce and merciless violence committed against often innocent victims, Wells could stir emotions in readers such as fear, sympathy, horror, indignation, anger and vengeance. For instance, in *Red Record*, Wells writes of four people who were lynched in Alabama: “Then these lynchers went quietly away and the bodies of the woman and three men were taken out and buried with as little ceremony as men would bury hogs” (P. Collins 125). From this sentence, the reader can find herself feeling anger that this violence occurred, fear that she could be a victim of such mob violence, sadness over the loss of human life, shock that the perpetrators could care so little for innocent victims, and disgust that they would choose to commit such a horrible act.

Interestingly, Wells rarely mentioned emotions specifically in her stories, but she expected the reaction to be emotional. In *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, she states in the introduction that she “does not attempt to moralize over the deplorable condition of affairs shown in this publication, but simply presents the facts in a plain, unvarnished, connected way... We do not believe that the American people who have encouraged such scenes by their indifference will read unmoved these accounts of brutality, injustice and oppression” (P. Collins 154).

Despite the spectrum of emotions that resulted from her epideictic blame, Wells avoided expressing any personal emotion that could have been interpreted as dramatics and thus dismissed. Davidson notes that her speeches were “direct, logical” and “Wells understood that if she hoped to be believed by white audiences as well as black, she could not appear overwrought or, worse still, ‘hysterical,’ lest her emotions be taken as a sign of ‘women’s weakness’ and her arguments discounted” (175). And in her writing, Davidson states, she maintained the same tone “like a lawyer reviewing her case. Yet the narrative was always intensely personal, could only be intensely personal, for it was her life and her past as she knew it when she spoke of the Afro-American as receiving ‘freedom, the ballot box, and the Civil Rights Law’” (175). In her autobiography, Wells regrets one instance where she could not help from crying while speaking. At a large meeting in New York City in 1892, following her famed publication in the *New York Age*, she broke down in tears while telling her story. “A panic seized me. I was afraid that I was going to make a scene and spoil all those dear good women had done for me. I kept saying to myself that whatever happened I must not break down, and so I kept on reading” (Duster 79). Though tears were streaming down her face, her voice did not waver and she finished her story. “I was mortified that I had not been able to prevent such an exhibition of weakness. It came on me unawares. It was the only time in all those trying months that I had so yielded to personal feelings” (Duster 80). Despite her concerns, the audience did not mind her emotional display and applauded her words.

13. How does the picture created by the rhetor frame subjects and highlight individuality?

Wells’ use of ekphrasis to focus on individuals and tell their personal stories is quite powerful. Patricia Collins argues that this technique is a way of “extracting African-American pain from behind the mask of virulent stereotyping justified by scientific racism, [and] Wells-

Barnett provides names, dates, and graphic details of the violence inflicted upon African Americans;” and as a result, “We feel the pain of those who are lynched and the loved ones left behind – she makes them real” (16). Wells brings to light the abstract with her accounts. One of the most extended examples is in Chapter 2 of *Red Record* (P. Collins 65), taken from the *Chicago Tribune*, listing all lynching victims in 1893 by charges – arson, robbery, assault, alleged rape, insulting whites, and more – with dates, names (although many state “unknown negro”) and the cities and states where the crimes took place.

Ironically, Wells was fighting against similar efforts by those engaged in promoting lynching acts. In what today seems to be an astonishing act of heartless greed, cheap postcards were sold by photographers who took pictures of hanged victims with audience members proudly standing below. Schechter notes that this “folk pornography of the South” that was sold as souvenirs was “serious business” (82). In these cases, the framing of the individual exploited the ethos of the subject, celebrating the violence portrayed. In contrast, Wells’ pictures and narratives portrayed subjects as individuals – similar in many ways to the audience – but who were victims of unlawful oppressors.

The journalist also was extremely effective at her use of *prosopopoeia*, or envoicing a silent object. Wells spoke out on behalf of black women who were raped, questioning why justice was not sought for their cases as it was for white women. She also notes the little regard that was paid to crimes committed against African-Americans in general. In *Red Record*, she writes of the 1892 lynchings in Moberly, Missouri and Fort Madison, South Carolina of black men for “being saucy to white people” (P. Collins 95), and she criticizes authorities for the lack of a criminal investigation. “They were dead and out of the way and as no one would be called upon to render an account for their taking off, the matter was dismissed from the public mind”

(P. Collins 95). Wells saw her rhetoric as the opportunity to give voice to those who could not or did not speak out – or to whom no one was listening. “Regardless of numbers, the colored people found themselves voiceless in the councils of those whose duty it was to rule” she states in *Red Record* (P. Collins 59).

As this analysis shows, Wells was unique for her time as a female African-American rhetor who would speak out with words of blame to expose the horror and injustice of lynchings to a wide audience, black and white, in the United States and Europe. “As a journalist and single-minded agitator for the black American’s rights, she had been recognized and honored in the black community,” Thompson summarizes. “As an anti-lynching crusader, she moved into a position in which her almost single-handed efforts would be variously approved, rewarded, and condemned by blacks and whites in the United States and Europe” (32). Wells was fully aware she had a difficult rhetorical purpose to achieve. As Davidson concludes, “For the rest of her life she assumed the formidable task of rousing whites and blacks alike to face hard truths: for whites, that racism was as pervasive in the North as in the South and would require a national solution; for blacks, that a policy of accommodation was futile so long as the color line restrained those who worked hard, did well, and ‘got along’” (202). In her lifetime, she was not rewarded with seeing all of her hopes accomplished, but she did witness many improvements and changes. Early on, she welcomed one such achievement, writing in her diary April 18, 1887 after attending a meeting of the Negro’s Mutual Protective Association: “The Negro is beginning to think for himself and find out that strength for his people and consequently for him is to be found only in unity” (DeCosta-Willis 142).

By applying this set of heuristics, this analysis of Wells’ rhetoric of blame can help us understand how effective she was in teaching her readers about the injustice of mob violence and

in bonding a community in support of the anti-lynching campaign. Her attention to the rhetorical strategies of creating ethos, establishing place and utilizing ekphrasis ensured an epideictic encounter that resulted in personal transformations and changes in society on behalf of African-Americans.

The format of these heuristics facilitates an analysis that addresses the strategies individually, and yet deeper exploration of each category reveals how they overlap and reinforce one another. This can be attributed to the recursive nature of the writing process – no rhetor could selectively concentrate only on a few strategies, isolating them from all the others. However, this also suggests that the strength of the connections among the 13 guiding questions contributes to the strength of a rhetorical text of blame as being considered an effective piece in the epideictic genre, as will be discussed in the final chapter.

Following this historical case study of epideictic rhetoric, I would like to turn to a current example. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate the applicability of these heuristics to a website created by the Save Darfur Coalition that uses rhetoric of blame. The rhetoric of this organization shares with Ida B. Wells a didactic function, educating the public and calling for an end to tragedy, in this case, genocide in Darfur, Africa.

CHAPTER IV: “MAKE THEM LOOK”

THE SAVE DARFUR COALITION WEBSITE – A CASE STUDY

While the previous chapter illustrated the usefulness of this heuristic model for an examination of a historic epideictic text for its didactic and communal functions, this chapter analyzes rhetorical strategies in the categories of ethos, place and ekphrasis as they are utilized in a current text of rhetoric of blame. This case study explores the epideictic nature of a website created by the Save Darfur Coalition, www.savedarfur.org. The coalition has a concern that “the Sudanese government’s genocidal, scorched earth campaign has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives through direct violence, disease and starvation, and continues to destabilize the region.” Its rhetoric of blame is clear in the decisive stance opposing the treatment of the Darfuri people by the Sudanese government and its militia.

Applying the guiding questions of my heuristic model to this website can enrich an analysis of Save Darfur’s rhetorical purposes and measure its effectiveness in teaching and fostering social change in the midst of this crisis in Darfur. Before beginning with an analysis of the coalition’s ethos, a historical review is helpful.

According to historian Robert Collins, the history of independent Sudan originates in 1956 when British and Egyptian rulers withdrew from the region. The largest country in Africa, Sudan covers about 1 million square miles, nearly the size of the United States east of the Mississippi, and Darfur is the name of the western region of the nation. The country’s geographic diversity reflects its varied political and cultural natures with “the Congo-Nile watershed to the south, the Ethiopian escarpment and Red Sea Hills to the east, and the Sahara Desert to the north” (R. Collins 1).

To highlight several of the political events in recent history that indicate the instability of the region, Robert Collins, a renowned professor of Sudanese history, notes that in 1969, Colonel Mu' ammar Qadhafi engineered a military coup to depose the king of Libya and "proclaimed himself a reformer for 'Libya, Arabism, and Islam,'" seeking to unify Libya, Egypt and Sudan into a single state (278). The president of Chad (the nation to the west of Sudan) denounced Qadhafi's attempts to destabilize Sudan, and in 1988 helped to arm the tribe of the Fur, who organized 6,000 soldiers into the Federal Army of Darfur (279). 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir became president of the Islamic Republic of Sudan in 1993, and he remains in office today (198). Concurrent with these political occurrences, a famine struck the country through the mid-1980s and a civil war raged between north and south Sudan between 1983 and 2005, killing 2 million people.

The source of much strife in Sudan is conflict between numerous cultural, political and religious groups. In July 2001, Robert Collins explains, a group of Fur and Zaghawa activists swore an oath on the Qur'an "to co-operate in their opposition to the Arabization of Darfur" (286). Attempts were made to unify some tribes and in October 2002, the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa tribes elected a triumvirate with Abdel al-Wahid al-Nur as chairman, who is still one of the primary Darfuri leaders opposed to the Sudanese government based in the capital city of Khartoum. However, the tribes' solidarity soon was dissolved by deep ethnic divisions. Fighting intensified in February 2003, when 300 rebels led by Al-Wahid, calling themselves the Darfur Liberation Front, seized the capital town of Gulu in western Darfur and raided police facilities and an army post. Two weeks later, calling themselves the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army, they fought there again, killing 195 government soldiers. They released a statement, saying they "opposed policies of Arabization, political and economic marginalization," and "the brutal

oppression, ethnic cleansing, and genocide sponsored by the Khartoum Government” (R. Collins 287).

By August 2003, with hostilities continuing, government leaders in Khartoum rearmed the Darfuri Arab militias, the *janjawiid*, to the escalating horror of civilians, as Robert Collins explains:

The Fur... were the primary targets for the mounted *janjawiid* commandoes, usually comprised of 100 raiders who would sweep down on a village just before dawn. The pattern of destruction was the same. The men were killed, often mutilated, the women raped, and the children sometimes abducted or killed. The village was burnt, livestock seized, fields torched, and the infrastructure – wells, irrigation works, schools, clinics – methodically destroyed in a systematic scheme to drive the African population from their ancestral lands – ethnic cleansing for Arab colonization. By January 2003 hundreds of Fur had been killed, thousands wounded, and tens of thousands had fled from the wasteland left behind by the *janjawiid*. (289)

Concerned about the devastating effects on Darfuri residents, leaders of US human rights groups came together in summer 2004 for a meeting coordinated by the Committee on Conscience at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. to discuss an advocacy campaign in the United States. From this meeting, the Save Darfur Coalition was born. In fall 2005 and winter 2006, while US leaders and allies tried to bolster United Nations peacekeeping, the efforts of the UN and other humanitarian agencies were devastated by continuing harassment from the *janjawiid* and gangs of deserters from the Chad army. Robert Collins calculates that the mounting violence at that time had led to the deaths of more than 200,000 inhabitants of

Darfur and another 2.5 million had become internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees in Chad (295).

Until mid-2005, the Save Darfur staff consisted of one coordinator and several interns assisted by a consulting firm for non-profit organizations. However, by 2005-2006, the organization had an annual budget of \$15 million and had implemented “aggressive Internet fundraising,” according to J. Stephen Morrison, director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies Africa Program at MIT (182). The rhetorical efforts of the organization were beginning to raise awareness among US citizens and elected officials. Morrison elaborates, “The coalition was able to bring about concerted pressure through media blitzes, divestment campaigns, saturation petition drives, electronic postcards, student chapters, high-profile ‘Global Days for Darfur’ and expensive advertising” (182). Writing on the Save Darfur movement in *African Affairs*, David Lanz credits the organization for successfully pressuring UN leaders to intervene, and notes that in March 2005, “the UN Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC [International Criminal Court]. Save Darfur was central in this endeavour and it is clear that had it not been for their mobilization, the referral would not have happened” (5).

In April 2006, the coalition held its most well-known event, a rally in Washington D.C. with an estimated 50,000 people attending, including then US Senator Barack Obama. Tens of thousands of people gathered in 29 other US locations and Darfuri people were listening on short-wave radios (Hamilton 339). Shortly after, the Sudanese government and one Darfuri rebel movement signed the Darfur Peace Agreement, which led to a UN force taking over peacekeeping operations from the African Union.

In May 2006, “Save Darfur pressed forward with its calls for a UN mission, unhindered access for humanitarian workers to reach those in need, and further regional and international

diplomacy to craft a peace deal that could work. A surge of new online activists and their generous donations buoyed this stage of the campaign,” according to Sean Brooks, who serves on the policy and government relations teams at the coalition and leads research (134-135).

But peace and stability remained elusive in Sudan, and in December 2006, Robert Collins reports, “after the humanitarian agencies at Gereida, holding the largest concentration of IDPs (130,000) in Darfur, were attacked and its workers killed, virtually all humanitarian personnel were evacuated” (299). Hoping to further cement peace negotiations and secure safety for humanitarian work, the Save Darfur international director, Ambassador Larry Rossin (a UN peacekeeping official in Haiti and Kosovo) and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson traveled in January 2007 to Sudan to meet with President Bashir. A 60-day cease-fire was agreed upon to allow peace talks to resume with Darfur rebels.

Following many months of international political negotiations and investigations, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant on March 4, 2009, for President Bashir on counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. South Sudan is set to hold a referendum in 2011 on whether it will secede from the rest of the nation. At the time of this writing, the Save Darfur Coalition and other humanitarian aid groups continue to try to provide relief and safety for the millions of people displaced and victimized by the violence.

The Save Darfur Coalition website is the organization’s primary rhetorical tool to communicate with members and initiate dialogue with new supporters. The coalition’s print and television advertisements, banners at rallies, and promotional materials (T-shirts) all reference the website address and direct the audience there. The website includes a number of interactive features employing new media technologies for epideictic purposes of constructing community and shared values. The ideal audience is one who returns to the website frequently, even daily,

to receive news updates, learn about new activist opportunities, and connect with other readers. This analysis will clarify how Save Darfur leaders have come together with readers around the world to establish a relationship and uphold a vision for change through the epideictic encounter.

Ethos

The use of the ethical appeal as a rhetorical strategy is a particularly complicated task for the Save Darfur Coalition because the identity of both the subjects and those being condemned is at the root of the conflict and oppression. Political, religious and cultural interpretations of one's self and the other in Sudan are quite complex and beyond the scope of this work. It should be noted that attempts to portray the conflict as Arab versus African fail to account for the 600 ethnic and linguistic groups in Sudan. Historian Gerard Prunier, director of the French Center for Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa, argues that the varied definitions of being African or Arab are complicated by circumstances including some Africans who have "lost" their language over time and now speak Arabic; that there are different idiomatic uses of the word "Arab" in Sudan by different peoples; and that there are some people who consider themselves Arabs, but are not considered so by others (5). Robert Collins agrees, adding that there is debate over a national identity, as to what "Sudani" means, because of "a label of national identity defined as Arab and Islamic that made it narrow and exclusive and holding little or no appeal to one-third of inhabitants of Sudan who were non-Muslim, non-Arab Africans." He further comments on the cultural confusion of imposing labels on Sudanese individuals: "Moreover, the rest of the Arab world did not always share the elite's belief that the Sudanese were authentic Arabs, while the elite themselves wrestled with the ambiguity that being Sudanese included Black Africans, with whom they did not wish to be confused" (9).

Recognizing the complexity, this section of the case study will concentrate on the coalition's creation of an ethos for the organization itself and its members, as well as the Darfuri people as victims of a brutal government and in need of the audience's assistance.

1. How does the rhetor set up a relationship between the writer and reader?

Beginning with a rhetorical presentation of the coalition's ethos, it is evident that the website strives to construct a credible, authoritative and action-oriented character for Save Darfur and its leadership. In the attempt to establish a relationship between the coalition and audience – website readers/viewers, coalition members and potential members – several achievements are notable.

Linked from the home page, under “About,” <http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/members> is a list of hundreds of organizational members tied to the coalition, such as the Alliance of Baptists, American Islamic Congress, National Black Law Students Association, and Teachers Against Prejudice, as well as many regional associations with diverse interests, members and locations. This long list provides a sense of shared heritage with the reader who may be a member of one of the organizations and gain an immediate sense of connection. In addition, the respectable nature of these organizations – many based in education or religion – is transferred to the coalition by association. In a similar fashion, another page <http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/board> lists the Save Darfur Board of Directors and their affiliations, including Chairperson Dr. Antonios Kireopoulos, National Council of Churches; Vice-Chairperson Sam Bell, Genocide Intervention Network; Zeinab Eyega, Sauti Yetu Center for African Women; and Rabbi Steve Gutow, Jewish Council for Public Affairs. The reputation of the coalition is elevated with leadership by a diverse group of church leaders, activists and

medical doctors, among others, who lend their support and personalize it as a caring, credible institution.

Furthermore, a description of the current Save Darfur president, Jerry Fowler, positions him as a man of good character, who is knowledgeable, hard-working and well-established in the broader community: “Fowler coordinates joint Darfur advocacy efforts among the coalition’s more than 180 member organizations and directs communications with more than one million Darfur activists, more than one thousand community coalitions, and joint efforts within a strong global movement in 50 different countries.” <http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/staff> The website continues on describing his expertise and past service to community and country as the founding director of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Committee on Conscience, instructor of law at several universities, and former US Army officer.

Save Darfur has broadened its ethical appeal with a connection to US movie and television actors. The coalition is often recognized by a large American audience who may never have even visited the website, but know of its association with celebrity spokespeople such as George Clooney, Don Cheadle and Mia Farrow. These movie stars are prominent at rallies and in popular media coverage of Save Darfur events. Mentions of celebrities’ work on behalf of the organization are found in sections of the blog, <http://blogfordarfur.org/>, including an Activism section and the “Newsroom.” The association with TV and movie stars helps to expand public awareness of the coalition’s mission to a wider audience by drawing fans of celebrities into a relationship with the organization.

While glamorizing its ethos with popular celebrities, Save Darfur balances the presentation on the website by offering many pages of intricate historical and political details on the situation in Darfur. Accessible via the hyperlink “Learn” on the home page are numerous

policy papers, such as a blueprint to achieve President Obama's objective of comprehensive peace for Sudan, an analysis of Sudanese government actions and promises, and a letter asking for the UN Security Council's support of the International Criminal Court and for Darfuri victims. http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/policy_papers Another page provides related US Congressional legislation with overviews and hyperlinks to full resolutions from Congress in the past four years, plus appropriations bills and pending legislation. http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/passed_legislation All of these texts lend credibility to the organization and create an intellectual, knowledgeable ethos, emphasizing that its understanding of the issue is deeper than a 30-second sound byte or a phrase for a bumper sticker, which could be insinuated with too much focus on the celebrity ethos.

Beyond the Save Darfur website, the coalition's ethos is enhanced by frequent support from journalists, human rights organizations, historians and scholars. Writing in *Washington Quarterly*, Morrison commends the organization's rhetorical achievements, stating: "The Darfur movement has achieved much in its short span, reaching far corners of American society and significantly shaping US opinion" (189). Nicholas Kristof, a *New York Times* reporter who has covered the issue extensively and traveled to Darfur more than a half-dozen times, repeatedly has commended the Save Darfur leadership and members. In January 15 and 16, 2007 posts on the *New York Times* blog, entitled "Those Heroes of Darfur," he cites examples of "ordinary people" aiding the cause, such as homeowners posting "Save Darfur" signs on their lawns; schoolchildren forming clubs, hosting bake sales and washing cars to raise money; people attending a weekly vigil outside the Sudanese Embassy in Washington D.C.; and Santa Clara University students who built a mini refugee camp where they slept and fasted. Kristof praises the coalition's effective work and its diverse membership:

The leadership of the group behind the diplomatic initiative – the Save Darfur Coalition – gets enormous credit. Dave Rubenstein [former president] has managed to hold together a group that runs from liberal New Yorkers to evangelical Christian Texans, from Jews to Christians to Muslims. In a polarized world, that is a real achievement – and one reason for the group’s influence.

(“Those Heroes”)

Kristof also quotes Ken Bacon, head of Refugees International, commenting on the organization’s rhetoric of blame and its impact on President al-Bashir: “One thing that was very clear was that the Save Darfur movement has gotten under his skin. The vilification of the Khartoum regime in columns and editorials and ads is making a difference.” Kristof concludes: “Let’s have no illusions about how much more pressure will be necessary to stop the slaughter, but let’s also celebrate this moment. Mr. Bashir has blinked, showing that it just may be possible to fight genocide with moral courage and lawn signs” (“Those Heroes”).

Coinciding with the construction of an ethos for the coalition and its members is an equally strong emphasis on the subjects, the Darfuri people victimized by the genocidal and violent practices of the Sudanese government. The website is filled with photos, videos, and written stories of Darfuri individuals. On the home page, the link accompanying “Check Out our Blog” is not a photo of bloggers, but instead a photo of Darfuri people. The “Donate” page emphasizes the people who are aided by the campaign: “Your donation helps us fight for the 4.9 million still suffering in Sudan. We’re campaigning so: Refugees can return home safely; Humanitarian aid groups can reach those in need; Security forces can keep the peace.”

https://donate.savedarfur.org/08/savedarfurcoalition_go?utm_campaign=donate&utm_source=s

[avedarfur.org&utm_medium=main_nav](http://www.savedarfur.org&utm_medium=main_nav)> An ethos of helplessness and need is created for the subjects, who are held up as deserving of dignity and safety.

The subjects also are accentuated on the page, “Responding to genocide,” in which a three-part solution is proposed: 1) peace for all Sudan, 2) protection of civilians and 3) justice.

<<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/learn>> The second part, protection of civilians, states:

Many Darfuri civilians rely on peacekeepers to provide protection and stability in the present realities of the conflict. For the people of Darfur, their home has become an unpredictable climate of violence and survival. According to the United Nations, 4.7 million people in Darfur rely on humanitarian aid for food, healthcare, clean water, and countless other services. On March 4, 2009, the Sudanese government recklessly expelled 13 international aid organizations and shut down three domestic relief institutions, representing about 50 per cent of the aid delivered in Sudan and placing millions of lives at risk.

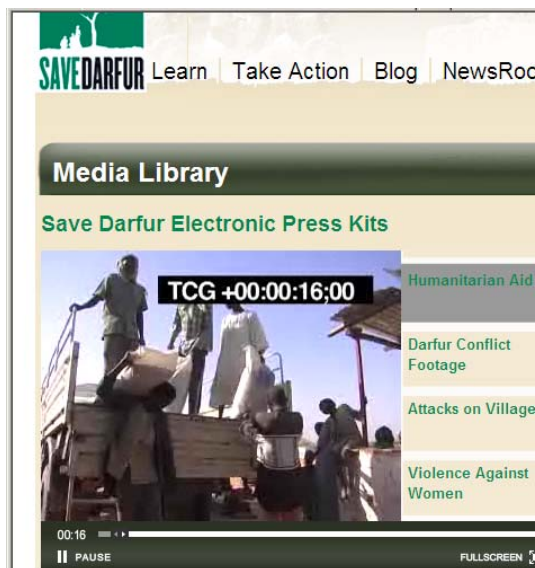
In the midst of the violence and political problems, the audience is asked to focus on the people and their needs. There also is a concern for women and girls presented on the same page: “Rape is endemic. The Sudanese government and its *janjaweed* militias continue to conduct a targeted campaign of sexual violence. The camps where women and children are forced to flee are also unsafe, and when they leave to collect firewood or other essentials they are often attacked.”

Parallel to its rhetoric of blame, the coalition explains the consequences for women and children, helping readers to understand the horrors the Darfuri people face in their daily lives. The audience of the website is encouraged to recognize that the Darfuri people have become victims undeserving of such brutal treatment and they should not be neglected by other global citizens who can help.

2. *How are the roles of spectator and community member developed for the reader/viewer?*

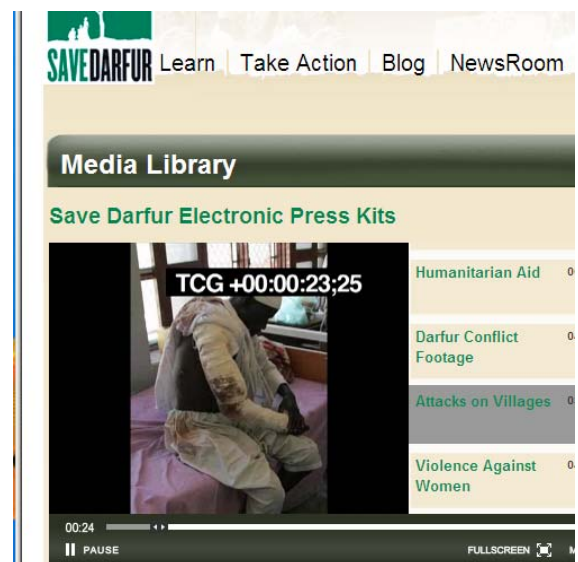
With a relationship established among the rhetor, audience and subjects, Save Darfur continues on to establish two very resolute roles for website viewers. The initial role, as a spectator, is a powerful epideictic experience enhanced by video and photos that can transport the audience from home computer to Africa with a few clicks of the mouse. Beginning on the home page, the website creates an ethos for the reader/viewer as a “beholder” of the tragedy in Darfur. The ethos of the subjects is brought home to the audience who can witness the living conditions, the effects of violence, physical injuries to victims, and personal stories of Darfuri people. The website places on display a series of raw video footage on the page “Electronic Press Kits” so the audience may see life in a refugee camp in Chad, delivery of humanitarian food and supplies, and violence done to women and children. <http://media.savedarfur.org/>

Figure 3: “Humanitarian Aid” video footage



<http://media.savedarfur.org/>

Figure 4: “Attacks on Villages” video footage



<http://media.savedarfur.org/>

The unveiling process reveals to readers that their response is vital. Indeed, the two roles of spectator and community agent can hardly be distinguished in some encounters with the webtext. The coalition is teaching the audience, as stated earlier, when the issue is placed on display under the pull-down menu of “Learn” with pages explaining the history and geography of Darfur, related Congressional legislation and policy papers. Also, the “Daily Darfur News” feature on the home page includes a news story each day with links to Al Jazeera video stories, Voice of America news, and BBC News. All of these pages hold out the situation of blame for the audience to recognize and attach a value. More than a passive beholder, the reader must make an effort to fully comprehend some of these pages with lengthy, detailed explanations.

But the rhetorical agency of the website pushes the reader on to further action and numerous pages cultivate the role of an active community participant. Save Darfur is quite assertive on the home page – likely the initial encounter with readers – through numerous commands to “take action,” “give,” “donate,” “download,” and “join the movement.” Toward the bottom of the page, a red arrow points to “3 Things You Can Do to join the movement” with green numerals “1, 2, 3: Get Action Alerts, Learn About the Movement, Check Out Our Blog.” There are two links to donate, including one large red box marked “Donate,” as well as two places to buy merchandise promoting the coalition. (Appendix A) Furthermore, under a pull-down menu for “take action,” a series of pages explains how to plan an event, host a movie screening, attract media attention, and even how to lobby on behalf of this issue.

http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/how_to_guides (Appendix B)

Save Darfur offers many ways to become involved and even suggests a specific model for action, which will be discussed below. One proposal combines the roles of spectator and agent in an interesting manner, encouraging supporters to wear a green wristband and T-shirts

emblazoned with the logo “Save Darfur.” The coalition encourages readers to wear the wristbands and share them with friends to promote awareness of the crisis in Darfur and demonstrate solidarity with the movement. The green wristbands read “Not On Our Watch – Save Darfur.” The coalition is well-aware of the rhetorical impact of the merchandise, as it states: “Wristbands serve as a visible declarations of our desire to bring an end to the violence and atrocities in Darfur. Moreover, the bands further our awareness and education efforts by stimulating conversation on the crisis.” <<http://savedarfur.orders.fulfillmentworks.com/Items.aspx?hierId=Wristbands>> The webpage marketing T-shirts echoes the same understanding of the need for readers to become beholders as it states: “Make them look at T-shirts.” Save Darfur again acknowledges the agency of the visual rhetoric: “The shirts present a uniquely powerful message that raises awareness about the conflict while providing onlookers with an easy way to take action. People must open their eyes to the genocide before we can Save Darfur. Make them look.” <<http://savedarfur.orders.fulfillmentworks.com/Items.aspx?hierId=Shirts>> In both cases, readers are asked to serve as active community members by wearing the promotional accessories, and in doing so cause others whom they encounter to become beholders of the rhetorical situation.

Save Darfur staff member Sean Brooks agrees that members and volunteers who have been learning and speaking out contribute to the organization’s success. Between 2002 and the present time, he explains, “is an interesting story of grassroots mobilization, in which hundreds of thousands of people learned cogent details about the crimes of Darfur, which they repeated to their friends and families and elected representatives” (133). However, he also seems to be cognizant that transforming the audience from beholders into agents is no simple task, as he concedes, “Advocating for American leadership and a responsible set of policies that will create

opportunities for Sudanese to reach their own durable political solutions is certainly more challenging than raising an urgent alarm about mass atrocities and genocide” (143). And Laura Gurak’s work on communities in cyberspace further reminds us that rhetorical delivery via digital media does not guarantee reader response. She states: “Speed of delivery alone, however, will not move people to action,” but instead, “the combination of electronic delivery and a strong community ethos” (250).

3- How does the rhetor preserve her ethos – and that of her subject – while casting blame?

Save Darfur’s rhetoric of blame is clear in condemning Sudanese government leaders for encouraging and allowing atrocious acts of violence to be committed against innocent civilians, in addition to the neglect of those suffering in the aftermath of the violence. From the page under “Learn” explaining “What Has Happened in Darfur?”:

President al-Bashir and others in his government created the anarchic conditions presiding in Darfur today through their violent counterinsurgency campaign targeting innocent men, women and children. Furthermore, the Sudanese government has obstructed the deployment of an international peacekeeping force, avoided serious negotiations with the rebel groups, refused to prosecute any individuals responsible for crimes against humanity committed in Darfur, and most recently expelled thirteen international humanitarian aid groups from Darfur. These actions continue to leave many civilians in Darfur unprotected and dispossessed of their basic human rights. <<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/primer>>

President Bashir has clearly become the face of the Sudanese government and draws the sharpest condemnation from the coalition and other organizations as being responsible for the

tragedy in Darfur. On March 4, 2009, a joint statement was issued by the Save Darfur Coalition, the Enough Project, Genocide Intervention Network, Refugees International, Physicians for Human Rights, Stop Genocide Now, Africa Action and American Jewish World Service: “We welcome today’s decision by the judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.” http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/press/darfur_sudanese_diaspora_leaders_worldwide_issue_letter_of_support_for_bash/ A link to the ICC page further elaborates the charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. <http://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/doc/doc639078.pdf> And a photo of Bashir is posted on the coalition’s webpage on Responding to Genocide, under “Justice and Accountability”. <http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/learn/>

Figure 5: Sudan President Omar al-Bashir



<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/learn/>

The coalition augments the blame cast on President Bashir by comparisons with Bosnian dictator Slobodan Milosevic, who is recognized in the global community as responsible for the genocide in Bosnia. In a January 15, 2010 blog post, Brooks writes about the upcoming elections in Sudan and Bashir’s campaign strategy: “While Milosevic attempted to steal the

Serbian elections in 2000 after a decade of bloodshed in the Balkans, he could not campaign in Srebrenica, the site of the worst massacre during the civil war because Bosnia had gained independence. In stark contrast, Bashir's visit to Darfur serves as a pre-election victory lap at the scene of the crime." Brooks criticizes Bashir's attempts "to hide the fact that 2.7 million Darfuris remain displaced, a peace agreement with the Darfuri rebels remains elusive, and Bashir and others perpetrators of war crimes remain fugitives from the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes committed in Darfur."

Accompanying the harsh words, the coalition leaders preserve the ethos of the organization with an emphasis on peacemaking and calls for humanitarian aid. The mission statement indicates this perspective:

We are committed to the goals that the Save Darfur Coalition advocates for, including:

- Ending the violence against civilians;
- Facilitating adequate and unhindered humanitarian aid;
- Establishing conditions for the safe and voluntary return of displaced people to their homes;
- Promoting the long-term sustainable development of Darfur; and
- Holding the perpetrators accountable.

http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/unity_statement

The order in which the five goals are listed indicates a priority placing emphasis on the subjects first and then blaming those responsible last.

The coalition engages in the rhetorical strategy of upholding the subject's ethos in the midst of blame. With tragic video footage and explicit emotional narratives, it would be easy for

Save Darfur to be seen as exploiting the subjects as victims worthy of pity or shame. The coalition holds up the situation of blame by documenting the treatment of Darfuri people with video of attacks on villages, violence against women and the living conditions of refugee children. <http://media.savedarfur.org/> But the website creators seem committed to maintaining the dignity of the Darfuri people in the midst of the crisis, preserving the ethos of the subjects. For example, in the video “Voices for Darfur: 5 Years of Advocacy,” Save Darfur President Fowler speaks about his use of advertising to promote awareness of the issue and draw new audience members to the website. He recognizes the importance of advertising, but cautions that it is not the sole purpose of Save Darfur. Fowler states: “One thing we shouldn’t lose sight of: the movement came before advertising... The movement made advertising possible.” <http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/voices-for-darfur-video> He seems to be emphasizing that the suffering of the Darfuri people and the response of global citizens to assist the victims must be recognized when beholding the tragedies described in the advertising texts. What Save Darfur accomplishes with these gestures is what Gallagher and Zagacki noted of the Civil Rights photos in *Life* magazine – a commitment to the subjects’ ethos accompanied by a prompt for self-reflection among readers. They point out that the “images interrogate viewers so as to invoke self-awareness about the conscious lived experience of others.” As readers see themselves in the images presented, they are asked to consider how they “might have responded morally to the particular time and space in which others find themselves” (124).

The organization’s focus on peacemaking and the peace process further testifies to the function of rhetoric of blame as a democratic method for social change. As Lanz describes, albeit somewhat critically: “The leaders of the Save Darfur movement operated very skillfully, maximizing the impact of their work through coalition building. They created a movement,

whose cause was sufficiently vague and non-menacing to allow it to become a catch-all for various civil society groups” (3). His evaluation illustrates Save Darfur’s success in using dialogue – not a response of violence – to teach and make changes in society. At the coalition’s instigation, a number of world leaders took action without force to stop the genocide, as Lanz has to admit: “Save Darfur has been most successful in affecting the rhetoric of governments, the most spectacular achievement being former US Secretary of State Powell’s 2004 determination that the Darfur conflict constituted genocide” (3). In Europe, Lanz reports, Save Darfur had a similar impact: “Darfur also became a favoured topic of the French and UK governments, epitomized in President Sarkozy and Prime Minister Brown’s joint op-ed [August 31, 2007] in *The Times*, advertising their commitment ‘to save the Darfuris’” (4). Save Darfur also was successful in accomplishing some divestment from Sudan, by pressuring passage of the 2007 Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act in both houses of Congress, requiring companies with government contracts to prove they are not doing business in Sudan. These actions maintained their perspective on peaceful resolutions to the problem and that the blame is not intended to incite more violence, consequentially enhancing the coalition’s ethos as a capable and influential professional organization.

4 - How can the tension of agonism of blame be balanced with a “willingness to learn” from the audience?

A serious loss of ethos can be the result of a rhetor casting blame with the sole intent of confrontation. The ethical appeal is not presented in such a way on this website, which evidences a willingness to learn, articulating that a resolution of the crisis will not occur through more violence, but through negotiations. One of the pages explaining the coalition’s goal of seeking justice states: “The pursuit of justice and accountability is about far more than exacting

retribution or revenge for past crimes” and diplomacy is urged to resolve differences.

[<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/learn>](http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/learn)

To ensure that its message of blame be clearly directed and not misinterpreted or used for prejudicial ends, the coalition includes a page dispelling three common myths: that the crisis in Darfur is an Arab versus African conflict, that the conflict is a dispute over water resources, and that the conflict is Muslim versus Christian based. [<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/primer>](http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/primer)

This explanation is an attempt to assure that blame is not targeted toward others beyond the Sudanese government. It also is a response to criticism the organization faced early on that its policy platform was too simple and more interested in merchandising a message for “a bumper sticker,” according to Rebecca Hamilton and Chad Hazlett, activists who have worked in Sudan through the Genocide Intervention Network. They credit Save Darfur with perseverance and success in achieving its rhetorical purposes: “Notwithstanding such criticism – which continued and intensified thereafter – Save Darfur would eventually emerge as a central forum for spreading awareness, organizing major events, and occasionally gaining access to the highest levels of the Administration” (144). Brooks also argues that Save Darfur addressed the shortcomings in its rhetorical strategies. The organization “ultimately recognized its policy deficiencies and attempted to fill them with highly knowledgeable and experienced Sudanese and American policy makers and human rights defenders,” he explains, and “has added increasing layers of nuance and depth to its policy recommendations” (141). For instance, the coalition originally had recommended that a no-fly zone should be established by the UN over Sudan to prevent air attacks on villages. But demonstrating a willingness to learn from others, it then reconsidered that position “after listening to the concerns of humanitarian groups on the ground and heeding the advice of other experts” (141), Brooks explains, adding “to Save Darfur’s credit,

the coalition has constantly been evolving and seeking to redress its deficiencies and errors” (143).

Mahmood Mamdani, a professor of government and an outspoken critic of the Save Darfur Coalition, advocates an internal solution for Sudan with no external humanitarian intervention. He writes: “The history of colonialism should teach us that every major intervention has been justified as humanitarian, a ‘civilising mission’” and he questions the motives behind Save Darfur’s rhetoric of blame, stating “the chronicling of atrocities had a practical purpose: it provided the moral pretext for intervention” (“Politics”). After Mamdani’s rebuke of Save Darfur in his book *Saviors and Survivors* and in an article in the *London Review of Books*, Brooks states that an advisor for Save Darfur met with Mamdani, “seeing substantial ground for general agreement with Mamdani on the necessary political solutions to resolve the Darfur issue, and also agreeing with him on the need to promote further Sudanese, African, and Arab voices in the global advocacy campaign” (135). Concerned that the coalition’s blame may be misunderstood or interpreted as anti-Arab intent – as Mamdani claims – Brooks expresses a willingness to learn and encourages the organization to clarify its sharp words. He contends: “the advocacy movement should consider integrating further historical details in its narrative of the Darfur conflict, especially as the message of Darfuris in the diaspora and of certain rebel leaders in exile grows increasingly ideological and the fate of Darfuri Arab tribes remains severely neglected” (137).

Another instance suggesting a willingness to learn came in 2006 when a Save Darfur advertising campaign featured an exaggeration of casualties. The ads in US and British publications claimed that 400,000 innocent men, women and children were killed in Darfur, and urged intervention. The British Advertising Standards Authority ruled the ads were misleading,

and Brooks also acknowledged the “coalition’s past misuse of mortality figures” (138).

Morrison also points out the coalition’s response to the criticism: “Under intensified criticism in the face of this controversy, the coalition overhauled its leadership and scaled back the vitriol of its advertising campaign in 2007” (183).

5 - How does the rhetor set up a model of ethos for the reader to emulate?

The model of ethos created by Save Darfur is one that teaches the reader to become a compassionate, active global citizen. The coalition provides a practical “how to” guide that specifies model actions. On the “Take Action” page are guides that teach concerned individuals how to accomplish various rhetorical actions on behalf of the organization’s purposes.

http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/how_to_guides These step-by-step instructions include how to plan an event, plan a fundraiser, lobby a senator or representative, host a movie screening, find speakers, and attract media attention. To reinforce the response they are teaching, Save Darfur created a recognition program to honor those who have responded and taken action. A blog post on January 13, 2009 explains that the “Darfur Heroes” program “highlights individuals and groups who play a crucial role in helping end the violence in Darfur through awareness-raising and other efforts.” That month, Save Darfur honored college student Jon Brian for his work “to educate his community and raise money by refurbishing and auctioning off a car.” <http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/179>

The website praises the work of many individuals who are following the model, and students especially are held up as meeting the ideals. Hamilton and Hazlett point out: “One of the most prominent features of the Darfur movement is that much of its numerical strength, resilience, and even policy successes can be attributed to the overwhelming contribution of students – initially from colleges and universities, but later from high schools as well” (344-345).

The projects of the national student group, Students Take Action Now: Darfur (STAND), are cited frequently. In addition, the “What You Can Do” page features a photo of students at a rally, holding them up as a model for action.

Figure 6: Students Rally For Darfur



http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/take_action

Another page of the website models the ideal response by highlighting a letter to the editor in *The Tennessean* written by 14-year-old Jessica Goldstein from Brentwood, Tennessee. The coalition compliments her writing: “Thanks, Jessica! It is advocates like you that keep Darfur and Sudan in the media and on the minds of newsmakers and policy leaders.”

<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/2725>

A subcategory of the blog is dedicated to “Students,” <http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/category/students> which includes a video – also posted on YouTube – that shows students delivering a large gold star and a yellow smiley face to the Sudanese embassy in Washington D.C. <http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/1612> The star had messages written on it, such as “Can’t we be friends?” The students explain in the blog post that their actions were prompted by comments made by Scott Gration, US special envoy to Sudan, that the US should give “cookies, gold stars and smiley faces” to President Bashir and trust his goodwill gestures. The students question whether “kindergarten-like rewards” can end genocide and they doubt Bashir’s

sincerity. Instead, they provide a link to a checklist for a Sudan policy with a balanced list of approaches that they believe would be more effective. <[http://savedarfur.org/pages/ checklist](http://savedarfur.org/pages/checklist)>

This example demonstrates that the coalition views the model citizen/activist as a critical reader, interrogating the rhetoric of public officials. Cynthia Sheard has argued this point, that epideictic discourse will “invite individuals to evaluate the communities or institutions to which they belong, their own roles within them, and the roles and responsibilities of their fellow constituents, including their leaders” (771).

Place

The category of place impacts rhetoric of blame on many levels, and the digital environment of this case study further complicates and enriches our understanding of this genre. The writer can choose to construct and navigate many places of the epideictic encounter, and attention to the strategies below allows the rhetor, audience and subjects to come together for understanding and action, as this analysis illustrates.

6 – Where is the rhetor working within and against the structures of the text and the genre?

7 – How does the rhetor acknowledge the rhetorical and social context she is in?

Through narration and description, the epideictic rhetor constructs a place where the audience will listen to the words of blame and respond to them. The rhetor must be cognizant of readers’ rhetorical expectations that they carry with them into that space – shared assumptions that are bred by the structures of the text and genre as well as social and cultural contexts. While epideictic texts on the written page set particular limits on narration and description, digital epideictic rhetoric like that of the Save Darfur website is marked by different opportunities and challenges for the rhetor. For instance, the traditional concept of description as static discourse focused on a particular scene is transformed by videos and photos casting blame and calling for

the audience's response. Colors, movement, action and sound in the media of videos and photos augment the scenes held up for beholding. This is illustrated in the electronic press kits, which are 3 to 6 minute video segments on topics of Humanitarian Aid, Refugee Children, Darfur Conflict, Attacks on Villages, and Violence Against Women. <http://media.savedarfur.org/>

While employed in the narrative function of telling the story of the genocide and suffering of Darfuri civilians, the use of the videos also serves a strong descriptive purpose. In fact, the website nicely balances narrative and description – so long seen by literary scholars as opposing forces – and they work cooperatively, both strengthening the epideictic experience. The epideictic presence created by the video establishes a place for the reader to “visit” or “enter” where he can personally witness the details of the Darfuri environment that a text would describe with words. All of the video segments are rich with details. For instance, “Darfur Conflict Footage” shows dead animals lying on the ground with flies buzzing around, burned tents and charred crops rustling in the wind, and blackened rubble remaining from homes that were bombed. Some would argue, as Jay David Bolter does, that the ekphrastic strength of the visual may one day subsume the text, and he states: “The verbal text must now struggle to assert its legitimacy in a space increasingly dominated by visual modes of representation” (271). But despite the powerful descriptive agency of these video segments in establishing a place for the audience to behold the situation of blame, the visual also allows the rhetor to carve out a place for the subjects' voices to be heard and for their words to be read.

Certainly, the traditional linear narrative of a text is altered by the interactive nature of the Internet that permits the reader to choose her path through the coalition's website as it tells the story of what is occurring in Darfur. Hyperlinks allow us to decide what pages we read, where we navigate, and in what order. No longer can the epideictic rhetor control the flow of the

narrative. At the same time, the rhetor has greater power to change the narrative at any time, introducing new elements or deleting previous information, by daily adding to pages or removing material from the website. Even as this is being written, the Save Darfur website narrative is being revised with new photos and stories as events unfold. It is indeed as Sheard describes: “epideictic as generative, ongoing, and kairotic, never having the last word” (790).

Nonetheless, in the new media environment, the delicate balance remains for the rhetor to maintain between pushing against boundaries so their words of blame are heard by a larger audience and offending readers who believe the narrative has appropriated a place where it does not belong. In contrast to the previously mentioned compliments of the coalition in explaining the tragedy of Darfur and aiding public understanding, Lanz criticizes Save Darfur in his *African Affairs* essay for using a narrative that he believes characterizes the situation as “a place of good and evil, victims and perpetrators, villains and heroes: the evil Sudanese government mobilized vicious ‘Arab’ tribal militias and induced them to commit genocide against innocent ‘African’ victims. The heroes of this tragedy are Western aid workers, human rights activists, and the advocates themselves who courageously save lives and speak out against the atrocities” (2). Lanz claims the narrative was constructed to justify Western military intervention in African affairs. This critique, along with others that insist the coalition has oversimplified the issue, is addressed by the website authors with various texts and multi-modal approaches. The coalition is aware that diverse audience members come to the place of the website with different degrees of knowledge of and concern for saving Darfur. Therefore, the structure of the webtext contains multiple pieces to speak to different readers: a “Darfur primer” offers a 1,000-word overview, but there also are lengthy policy papers explaining the organization’s opinion on topics, such as the relationship of the UN Security Council and a joint UN-African Union peacekeeping force

(UNAMID). The opportunity for readers to choose their own paths through the narrative also presents the coalition with the opportunity to offer more than one narrative to educate different audience members.

While the new media environment is a generative space for the coalition's rhetoric of blame, it is still constricted by many of the same social and political boundaries that the traditional rhetor would face. Foremost in their efforts, the Save Darfur leaders had to find a place for the ideal audience to behold the situation of tragedy and hear the words of blame. Limits on discussion of the issue were set by mainstream US media that had taken only minor interest in the Darfuri violence. Prunier remarks on the constricted space: "The deteriorating situation in Darfur had been known to the wider world since around 1999, but only through specialized publications such as *Africa Confidential* or the *Indian Ocean Newsletter*" (125).

Save Darfur's prompting for action to end the suffering of the Darfuri people occurred in an American political environment of indifference, inattention and unrelated priorities. As Robert Collins states: "Despite its humanitarian rhetoric, the political response from the West was ambivalent. With its armed forces ensnared in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States was unwilling to commit its few remaining troops to a difficult military mission in yet another Muslim country" (291). Prunier points out the fickle nature of media attention with which the coalition also had to contend: "Moral indignation and its attendant media coverage kept rolling on till the end of 2004. Darfur was *the* humanitarian crisis and horror story of the year... Then came the Asian tsunami on 26 December, and Darfur instantly vanished from the TV screens and the pages of newspapers" (128).

And yet, Save Darfur leaders would continue to use new media technologies to push the boundaries of the public sphere and push back against the structures that threatened to eliminate

the place they had created. Morrison compliments their insistence: “The coalition suffused the Internet, media, and other outlets with relentless claims that genocide in Darfur continued apace. It sustained its strong ties in Congress and internal links up to senior levels within the Bush administration. Its views were echoed often in the editorial pages of major US newspapers” (183). Deborah Murphy studied 83 editorials and op-eds on Darfur in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Times* from March to September 2004 and concludes that the narrative of blame combined with a focus on the ethos of the victims “probably accounts for a great deal of the success had by human rights advocates in attracting attention to Darfur.” Murphy, who worked for Africare, the US State Department, and the World Resources Institute, argues: “Taken together, the ethnic targeting of the victims, the plight of the displaced, and the culpability of the Sudanese government proved to be a powerful formula for demonstrating the need for intervention” (315).

The coalition’s discussion of Darfur also was regarded in the context of the 1994 African crisis of mass killings in Rwanda. Murphy notes that of 12 editorials in the four papers, eight were clustered around the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide on April 7 (315). On May 30, 2004, Susan Rice and Gayle Smith, former Clinton administration officials, wrote in the *Washington Post*: “Ten years ago, CNN ran footage of bloated corpses floating down Rwanda’s rivers, while Washington debated whether to call it ‘genocide’... Like many others, we remain haunted by the Rwandan genocide” (Murphy 319). For many readers, Save Darfur’s description of the genocide in Sudan evoked feelings of failure and frustration that such a horror was repeated due to the lack of international intervention.

In addition to encountering apathy or a lack of understanding from the American public, Save Darfur also has been confronted by opposition to their epideictic rhetoric. The coalition’s

words of blame were met, not unexpectedly, with a response of denial from the Sudanese government. Prunier asserts that the government of Sudan “did not shrink from the most preposterous statements,” as when Sudan’s Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail stated in an interview with Voice of America radio network on April 28, 2004: “I can assure you that all those who have been killed, whether militia, rebels, soldiers or civilians caught in the fighting, do not reach 1,000” (135). Frequent coalition critic Mahmood Mamdani also has opposed humanitarian work in Sudan and believes European colonialism is inflaming the situation, which is just part of a US led “war on terror.” “At best, Save Darfur was a romance driven by a feel-good search for instant remedies,” he charges. “At worst, it was a media-savvy political campaign designed to portray ‘Arabs’ as race-intoxicated exterminators of ‘Africans’” (70). Both of these were attempts to frame the context from very different perspectives than that of Save Darfur, which the coalition has attempted to address. Coalition president Fowler explains in the “Voices for Darfur” video that efforts to diversify coalition leadership and participation have included partners in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. He states: “It’s not a problem that that the United States can address alone.” <<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/voices-for-darfur-video>>

In the face of opposition and restrictions on places for their voice, Save Darfur leaders are modeling the use of digital rhetoric to create more and different spaces for their words of blame to be read and heard. One such action is detailed in a December 8, 2009 blog post, entitled “A Tweet and Ring to My Congressman,” from a person who both telephoned and sent an electronic message via Twitter to her congressman, Jim Moran of Virginia. She writes: “In my phone call and Twitter message to Congressman Moran I asked him to lead efforts to restore unrestricted humanitarian access in Darfur and prioritize the return of services for survivors of gender based

violence.” <<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/2409>> Her use of new media indicates that Save Darfur members – along with coalition leaders – are not limiting themselves to traditional media but actively inviting new audience members into places of discourse established with new media.

Remarking on the increasing overlap of the places of new media and traditional media in his discussion of the Internet and global activism, political science and communications scholar W. Lance Bennett observes that: “The digital public sphere for contesting media power would be far less important if it were sealed off from other communication channels in society.

However... the various media spheres are becoming increasingly porous” (33). Save Darfur’s negotiation of these places and contexts is not only expanding their audience, but also disintegrating boundaries, as will be discussed further in the next question.

8 – How does the rhetor break down spatial limits?

The various places of this rhetorical situation have been connected by the website creators as they deconstruct boundaries of time and space. Save Darfur controls the notion of place in several strategic ways to bring readers together from varied cultures around the world to form bonds of community and a sense of shared purpose. Several webpages achieve the function of bringing the genocide of Darfur, Africa – on a foreign continent amidst foreign cultures – “home” to a US audience, who may never have traveled to Africa or met a Sudanese citizen. A blog post on November 27, 2009, “Light a Candle,” describes how a small group of American women gathered on Thanksgiving Day to light a candle in remembrance of Darfuri women who have been sexually assaulted. <<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/2258>> One of the women writes: “For the three of us, it truly was a way to connect with women in Darfur. We talked about what they would be doing today. Their day would have been a repeat of the last Thursday in November for the past five years – uncertainty, insecurity and unparalleled fear of being sexually

violated while taking a routine walk to collect firewood.” Their action connects them with women across the globe and prompts others to participate by coming together. It models beholding of the tragedy, compassion for the subjects, and a desire for shared action. In a similar way, an October 5, 2009 blog post illustrates how the issue with its consequences and resolutions is brought to US soil by the coalition. The post explains that Save Darfur hosted a demonstration and information session at the 2009 G-20 summit of world leaders in Pittsburgh, thereby bringing home and displaying the problem to this country, how “the world’s largest economies have the potential to support peace and political reform in Sudan.” <<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/1668>>

The coalition breaks down spatial limits in the opposite way as well, helping readers to feel as if they can travel in person to Sudan and verify the tragic situation for themselves. Two webpages, for example, show US citizens, celebrities and students traveling to Darfur to lend their help to the victims. A May 12, 2009 post from the “IDP Camps” section of the blog states that ESPN’s “SportsCenter” featured NBA basketball star Tracy McGrady of the Houston Rockets and Enough’s Omer Ismail and John Prendergast on a trip to eastern Chad.

<<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/338>> They are working together on the Sister Schools Program, an initiative to connect American schools with schools in 12 refugee camps in Chad. Together with raising funds and providing teacher training, sports equipment and school supplies, the blog post explains that “the program also aims to foster cross-cultural relationships and mutual understanding between American students and Darfuri refugee students through letter exchanges and video blogging,” which are additional moves to bring readers and subjects together in the place of the epideictic encounter. Another story, posted on March 30, 2009, provides video of the organization Stop Genocide Now (SGN) on a trip to refugee camps in

Chad, where volunteers are shown interacting with the children. The post explains: “Although the joy and resilience of these children is evident in this video, Gabriel from SGN sent a message yesterday saying ‘I asked a classroom of 52 students for anyone that ate something that morning to raise their hand, 8 of them did.’” <http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/217> The website audience gains the experience of witnessing the children’s daily environment and understanding the hardships they must endure. What is accomplished in these two instances, therefore, is what Douglas Kellner, a critical theorist of media culture, describes as a “refiguring of politics” through new media, or a “a refocusing of politics on everyday life and using the tools and techniques of new computer and communications technologies to expand the field and domain of politics” (189-190).

Furthermore, the coalition creates a physical space for the coming together of diverse peoples with a demonstration at the White House. A post on May 25, 2009, from the “Darfuri Stories” section of blog, featured photos and a story about a group of US citizens and Sudanese people living in the United States who “gathered in front of the White House to express their disappointment in President Obama for not being active enough on Darfur.” They delivered over 86,000 signatures on a letter to the President, expressing their concerns. Photos posted on the blog show people of various ages and nationalities carrying signs blaming President Bashir for the genocide and asking President Obama for help. <http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/653> (Figure 7)

Figure 7: Rally in Front of White House



<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/653>

This rally is a display of the solidarity of people who have come from various places to join their voices to speak at a place of authority. Their origins from around the globe, instead of causing divisions, illustrate that a collective mission can be accomplished with cooperation.

In each of the above five examples, the setting for the epideictic encounter is created, transcending time and space between the United States and Africa, to contribute to a sense of shared culture and strengthening the relationship of readers and subjects. Save Darfur President Fowler believes the connection of communities is crucial. In the “Voices for Darfur” video, he states: “We have to take this [concern for Darfur] to the groups we’re part of to make it a group effort.” <http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/voices-for-darfur-video>

In addition to the opportunities that the coalition’s website constructs for readers to behold the tragedy in Darfur, the spatial boundaries are deconstructed to provide for the voices of the Darfuri people to speak to readers and to speak to authority. A December 10, 2008 blog post from the “Darfuri stories” section of the blog, details a meeting between then US President George W. Bush and Darfuri author and advocate Halima Bashir with a transcript of their comments to the media, in effect, placing the audience at the scene of their meeting. This

excerpt of their conversation reveals a display of the violence and a sense of shared commitment in responding:

THE PRESIDENT: I have just had the distinct pleasure and honor of visiting with Dr. Halima Bashir, who wrote a book called “Tears of the Desert.” This good soul brings firsthand accounts to what life is like in Darfur. She has witnessed violence, deprivation, and she carries a message of a lot of people who want our help. I assured her that, in spite of the economic difficulties, our aid will continue to flow. We will use our influence to make sure the aid gets to the people of Darfur....

DR. BASHIR: Thank you very much for the President to invite me to the White House. I think this is — I’m very happy because now Darfur victims’ voices is heard in the White House and to the American people and to the world. And I think the President, the message I send to him is going to — to do more work in Darfur to handle the situation, and to (inaudible) troops and the ICC ruling and just to stop the genocide and the crisis in Darfur, because now more than five years and we do not need to wait anymore. We need real action. I thank you very much. <<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/169>>

Much like the rally in front of the White House, this encounter places the situation on display in a space of authority, holding it up for the US President and others in power to witness and encumbering them to respond. Dr. Bashir is grateful for this occasion, for more places for the people’s voices to be heard, and for her presence in a place where she can fulfill an epideictic role, teaching the President and public and encouraging change. Furthermore, the President’s promise of help models the action that Save Darfur is asking from all readers.

9 – How does the rhetor use kairos to accomplish her rhetorical purpose in the right place at the right time?

A strong sense of kairos prevails throughout the website as readers are urged to recognize that today is the right time to take action with frequent requests from the coalition for immediate response. We are told that the problem has gone on long enough and must stop now. Language such as “act immediately” and “give today” is used frequently throughout the website. The “What You Can Do” page is filled with this sense of urgency: “The horrific violence that has gripped Darfur over the past few years may be less prevalent today, but Sudan is still threatened by the potential of a return to war and genocide. Be part of the fight to end the violence and help bring peace to Darfur and all of Sudan by joining the Save Darfur Coalition today.”

<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/take_action> Seven specific actions are mentioned as opportunities to seize at the present time: sign up for email updates, learn more about Darfur, join a local group, host an event, join the “Moved by Faith” initiative, lobby Congress, and make a donation.

An awareness of the kairotic moment is found in the event “Honoring the past, acting now for Darfur,” which illustrates epideictic’s effectiveness in reflecting today on past events and seeing change for the future. An April 20, 2009 blog post states that DC-area advocates for Darfur and three buses of advocates from Pittsburgh joined more than 450 communities across the United States in the memorial event. It began with a ceremony honoring victims of the genocides and mass atrocities in Armenia, Germany, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, South Sudan and Darfur “through personal stories, prayers and the building of a memorial in front of the White House.” Photos of the event were posted to the website, which explains: “During the memorial ceremony, Joseph Seberenzi, a former member of the Rwandan Parliament, joined in

not only honoring the memory of his loved ones murdered during the Rwandan genocide, but in calling for action to end genocide in Darfur.” Seberenzi’s comments are filled with a sense of kairos and a command to seize the moment, as well as an affirmation of the subjects’ ethos:

Now, it is not the time to talk; it is not the time to stand by; it is the time to act.

Now it is the time to remember that the people of Darfur are fellow human beings; are God’s children.

Now is the time to remember that each of us owes the people of Darfur help in whatever ways possible. ...

I am here today to remind world leaders the ancient wisdom that to whom much is given, much is required; please use the power given to you to stop the genocide in Darfur!

I am here today, to tell my fellow genocide survivors, to seek justice, and to never seek revenge;

I am here today to tell victims of violence, to overcome their sufferings, not with violence, but with peaceful means. <<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/253>>

His words echo the coalition’s calls for action, aid and justice. They also provide a clear picture of what is occurring and what should be changed. What takes places at this event is exactly what Rosenfield concludes to be a desired outcome of the epideictic encounter: “Epideictic’s understanding calls upon us to join with our community in giving thought to what we witness, and such thoughtful beholding in commemoration constitutes memorializing” (133).

The sacredness of the memorial ceremony connects Save Darfur activists to a larger purpose, to timeless ideals of virtue and moral courage. Likewise, Save Darfur President Fowler observes this sacred, kairotic quality in the organization’s mission. In the “Voices for Darfur”

video, he explains: “There has been something exceptional created here in response to the suffering of civilians in Darfur. It’s a mass movement. It’s what I’ve called a constituency of conscience.”

Undoubtedly, many charities and humanitarian organizations would argue that the present time is always the time for swift action – that a response must come today to make a difference. But Kinneavy’s definition of *kairos* emphasizes the “opportune” moment along with the “right measure” (221). This sense of propriety is found on the Save Darfur website in the call to action. Recognizing that members and potential members of the organization perceive certain behaviors on a range from acceptable to radical, depending on an individual’s understanding of social boundaries, the coalition suggests a variety of actions on behalf of the Darfuri people. There are some examples of marches in front of embassies and public protests, but many more suggestions to participate in car washes, bake sales, educational rallies, and buying/wearing T-shirts.

Ekphrasis

The technique of ekphrasis, or vivid description, historically has been employed with text – occasionally accompanied by photographs or drawings – to produce a picture for the audience. Digital rhetoric forever altered the presentation as it allows for text and graphic elements such as photos, videos and sound to be interwoven to create a detailed, immediate picture. For Bolter, new media technology is so powerful in its presentation that it is displacing words in the technique of description. He argues that “the relationship between word and image is becoming as unstable in multimedia as in the popular press, and this instability seems to be spreading. Even when words and perceptual media are brought together in the same space, they seldom achieve the harmony that existed in the classic age of print” (262). This balance may reconceptualize

ekphrasis – and epideictic as well, although such a discussion is beyond the scope of this project. However, this case study of the Save Darfur website demonstrates that the strategy of ekphrasis contributes to the potency of rhetoric of blame, while strengthening ethos and constructing space for teaching shared values and making social change.

10 – How does the rhetor create a vivid picture and how does her eloquence contribute to visualization?

The Save Darfur website includes numerous pages with photos and videos of Darfuri people, telling their stories, and explaining the crimes committed against them, their response and their suffering in the wake of the violence. The video footage, as I have discussed previously, produces a strong impact on the senses by engaging viewers with graphic details of the tragedy, allowing them to behold the evil of the situation – the reason for the blame – and persuading them to lend their support to end it. For example, the electronic press kit “Violence Against Women” shows women holding and caring for their children, seated around fires, and carrying firewood or large water pots on their heads. A portion of the footage shows a woman with one arm cooking in her home. Wearing brightly-colored native dresses, they can be heard talking to one another and their children. The video provides a realistic view for the audience to see actual Darfuri women who have been victimized by the violence of the conflict.

Figure 8: Women Carrying Water video



<http://media.savedarfur.org/>

Figure 9: Women Caring for Children video



<http://media.savedarfur.org/>

The technique of amplification is sadly effective in creating a visual picture of this rhetorical situation because of the countless stories of tragedies that have been committed upon hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. Brooks credits amplification with a great deal of the coalition's rhetorical success. He writes: "This ability to amplify and translate the very real pain of Darfuris for a diverse array of audiences may ultimately explain why so many people have responded to Save Darfur's campaigns around the world" (143). However, Mamdani, as part of his criticism of the coalition, points out how the technique can be interpreted by some readers as too graphic or exploitive of the subjects' ethos for political purposes. He contends: "Newspaper writing on Darfur has sketched a pornography of violence. It seems fascinated and fixated on the gory details, describing the worst of the atrocities in gruesome detail and chronicling the rise in the number of them. ... This voyeuristic approach accompanies a moralistic discourse whose

effect is both to obscure the politics of the violence and position the reader as a virtuous, not just a concerned observer” (“Politics”).

The coalition also employs the technique of contrast in its use of ekphrasis to influence the audience. One particular contrast frequently raised is the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the genocide in Darfur, as noted earlier. Save Darfur’s use of the term “genocide” to describe the Sudanese government’s deadly actions has been effective in creating a clear picture, but this rhetorical decision has been questioned because genocide has complex political, legal and rhetorical implications. Robert Collins notes that “ethnic cleansing” was initially the description used by most humanitarian groups such as Amnesty International, Red Cross, and Medecins Sans Frontiers (290). But in September 2004, US Secretary of State Colin Powell, speaking before the US Senate foreign relations committee, was quite bold in declaring “genocide has been committed in Darfur, and that the government of Sudan and the *janjawiid* bear responsibility – and genocide may still be occurring” (R. Collins 292). Remarking on the rhetorical impact of the word, Collins suggests that Powell’s statement “reinvigorated the campaign for Darfur in the United States and Europe, characterized by public demonstrations, extensive media coverage, and Darfur ‘tech-ins’ among university students, as well as the formation of the influential and well-financed Save Darfur Coalition” (293). The result, he maintains, was that by February 2005, “the ethnic devastation caused by the *janjawiid razzias* [raids] was so widespread and consistent that the humanitarian agencies began to declare a genocide in Darfur” (292). In her study of US newspaper coverage, however, Murphy argues that “the Darfur crisis was labeled ‘genocide’ almost from the moment it first attracted attention” (333). She observes that 14 of 24 articles appearing between March and early June called the conflict “genocide” or “possible

genocide,” while at the time, the Bush administration had announced a legal analysis was being conducted to see if the crisis met the Genocide Convention’s definition.

Contrasting Darfur and Rwanda emphasized the need for action so that the genocide of Rwanda would not be repeated in Darfur. Political science and international studies scholar Eric Heinze compares the rhetoric of genocide and US foreign policy in Rwanda and Darfur and argues that the term evokes what I believe is a kairotic response. He explains: “it is a matter of legal hairsplitting that separates genocide from ‘mere’ mass murder or ‘simple’ crimes against humanity. But the word ‘genocide’ undoubtedly has entailments that these other atrocities do not: it is more inflammatory, more reproachful, and entails at least a moral (if not legal) obligation to stop such acts” (383). Hamilton and Hazlett, in their comparison, believe that several differences assisted Save Darfur’s endeavors to educate the public and persuade the audience to help. They state: “Darfur also had the benefit of coming after the Rwandan genocide and the guilt it produced, and of unfolding much more slowly, allowing time for organizing” (337).

Mamdani, however, is again critical of Save Darfur for its use of the contrast: “It seems that genocide has become a label to be stuck on your worst enemy, a perverse version of the Nobel Prize, part of a rhetorical arsenal that helps you vilify your adversaries while ensuring impunity for your allies.” But he does concede that: “Darfur is today a metaphor for senseless violence in politics, as indeed Rwanda was a decade before” (“Politics”). However, in reviewing the Save Darfur website, I witnessed only a few graphic portrayals of genocide committed against the people, such as a video of bandaged limbs of hospital patients and wounded children. More often the tragedies are described in narrative form, often directly by Darfuri citizens. As a result, Save Darfur maintains the dignity of the subjects and does not resort to needless displays

of the atrocities. The coalition's use of contrast is successful, as even Mamdani cannot deny, in creating a picture for readers of what is wrong in Sudan, aware that they will recognize it as being far different from what is right and from what should be occurring there.

11– How does the rhetor employ epideictic acts of unveiling for describing and interpreting?

12 – How does the rhetor use description and narrative to engage the imagination and emotions of the audience?

The vividness with which the coalition unveils the treatment of Darfuri civilians is essential in causing readers to become witnesses. The audience, watching as the details of violence and suffering are shown in videos and photos and listening to the stories of the people, can identify with the subjects and can clearly interpret that actions of support and change must take place. Kristof is convinced that the unveiling process begins the transformation of readers and society. He writes in a March 27, 2004 *New York Times* blog post: “One of the lessons of history is that very modest efforts can save large numbers of lives. Nothing is so effective in curbing ethnic cleansing as calling attention to it” (“Will We Say”).

One unique method of unveiling directly involves readers who are encouraged to participate in the Save Darfur project of a “Creative Community” in conjunction with the coalition's “16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence” campaign. As explained in a December 13, 2009 blog post, coalition members were asked to share or start an artistic project focused on the conflict in Sudan. “We asked: have you done something artistic or out-of-the-box in your community to draw attention to the crisis, or do you want to?” <<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/2582>> Save Darfur received poems, paintings, songs, films, and essays on using art for social change, and they are being collected for a page on the website called the Creative Community, as “a place both to display the terrific work of our activists and to provide

inspiration for others who want to create a Sudan-related project, but aren't sure how to start."

This forum offers a place for readers to engage in the epideictic encounter by describing and/or interpreting their experiences of the tragedy in Darfur and displaying them. The first work unveiled was a painting by Lori Khan of Houston, Texas, titled "Listen!"

Figure 10: "Listen!" painting by Lori Khan



<http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/2582>

The blog post quotes Khan explaining the ekphrastic technique in her piece, which features both words and graphics. She writes: "I want the viewer to see the painting and to listen, if you will, to the cries of the victim [of rape] and, perhaps most importantly, take action to prevent the further victimization of women. I chose the name 'Listen!' because it is a proactive word and the person depicted in the painting is speaking to the viewer, her words painted into the background of the painting." Her work purposefully engages the senses of the audience to draw them into understanding of the crimes by seeing and hearing the violence. Khan is interpreting the reaction of the victimized women with the intent of causing the audience to interpret that a response of aid is needed. Her vivid depiction of the woman's experience strengthens the relationship of readers and the subjects, and it corroborates the role of the visual in describing

and unveiling, a point argued by Gallagher and Zagacki: “visual images also create epiphanic moments by contributing to an unfolding process of articulation and interaction that enable an ‘other’ to become known as a human being with specific and acceptable human traits and qualities” (121).

Description and interpretation also work together within the website to produce a visual subject in the reader. The presence of the image in this case study is certainly quite forceful due to the nature of the medium, the digital environment that so readily embodies the visual. However, the Save Darfur Coalition does not rely predominantly on violent or graphic images to describe the conflict. A fusion of word and image is crafted for the website so that pictures of suffering and oppression are interpreted by readers in whom powerful emotions are evoked. With graphic and detailed personal accounts from victims, it would be difficult for readers not to feel sadness and compassion for these innocent people. The coalition’s blame of the government and President Bashir’s crimes and indifference to the people’s suffering likely engenders emotions such as anger, horror, fear and vengefulness. The website generates these responses to spur on action, but the coalition leaders balance the passions with a sense of respect toward the subjects and commitment to peaceful response. The April 23, 2009 blog post following the “Honoring the Past, Acting Now for Darfur” event features numerous photos of the people who participated in this rally/ceremony. <http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/268> The blog post is linked to a Flickr site with a slideshow from photographer L. Ryan Riley. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ryanrileyphotography/sets/72157616967676503/show/with/3457239216/> Protestors of all ages, races and nationalities hold colorful signs and message banners in support of Save Darfur. The photos do not have captions, so readers must interpret for themselves why these people have come together for a shared purpose in casting

blame and calling for help for the Darfuri people. The blog post also creates a sense of shared responsibility among readers, by inviting “if you took photos, share them,” an act through which the audience can offer their own descriptions and interpretations of coming together in that place.

13 – How does the picture created by the rhetor frame subjects and highlight individuality?

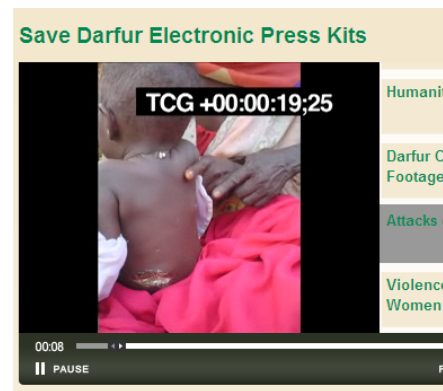
The use of ekphrasis on the Save Darfur website frequently focuses on individuals to describe the tragedy in Sudan that has devastated hundreds of thousands of people. The raw video footage “Attacks on Villages” illustrates this descriptive technique. <http://media.savedarfur.org/> The video opens with aerial shots of burned fields and smoldering villages seen from a distance (Figure 11), but then moves to shots of individual victims, such as an emaciated cow wandering alone, a wound on a child’s back (Figure 12), and family members sitting next to the hospital beds of loved ones who have bandaged limbs and heads.

Figure 11: Burning Village aerial video



<http://media.savedarfur.org/>

Figure 12: Wounded Child video



<http://media.savedarfur.org/>

The “picture” upon which the readers must gaze is perhaps overwhelming to their senses – acres of bombed farms and homes, hundreds of thousands of citizens who have been killed or fled in terror. What may be more comprehensible – although no less repugnant – is to view the suffering of individual people that makes the epideictic encounter personal for readers. The

intended reader response is the same sought by the Civil Rights photos in *Life* magazine where, Gallagher and Zagacki find, “the photographs evoked common humanity by creating recognition of others through particularity” (117).

The attempt to bring to light the abstract by unveiling individual stories can be criticized as reducing the issue and ignoring its complexity of political, cultural and religious causes and consequences. Brooks acknowledges this perspective, but explains the value of this rhetorical strategy in educating the audience. “Save Darfur and others in the movement have been guilty at times of simplifying the nature of the conflict in order to attract and retain supporters,” he states. “Indeed, Save Darfur shares this fault with advocacy organizations working on a whole host of other domestic and international issues, all of which vie for the same media space” (140).

Save Darfur has constructed a place in the public sphere for framing the subjects in order to display the issue. Writing in the *Journal of Genocide Research*, Eyal Mayorz clarifies this point, emphasizing the importance of salience, as did Katz, for an issue to maintain a place in the public sphere via mainstream media. He states: “For a crisis like Darfur to make a meaningful impact on presidential approval ratings or other political indicators, it would have had to acquire – or, more accurately, be assumed to acquire – a very high salience in public discourse over a long period of time.” Mayorz notes that the coalition, in attempting to influence and educate political officials and the US public, had to compete with wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which could have allowed the Sudanese crisis to become a “side show for the majority of the American public” (379).

The framing technique balances the ekphrastic language and images so they do not overwhelm the subject’s ethos. A June 29, 2009 post from the “Darfuri Stories” section of the blog describes how the BBC’s Mike Thompson interviewed a female student who suffered a

violent attack at her university by the Sudanese government militia. “This first hand account of the violent attack on female students at Khartoum University is an opportunity to hear about the violence facing Darfuris today in Sudan” the website states. <http://blogfordarfur.org/archives/782>> A link connects the readers to listen to her audio account of the attack. She is quoted as casting blame and asking for assistance: “We are hoping that the international community will help protect us by telling President al-Bashir that this violence against young women is wrong; it’s against both the law and our religion. He should stop this and allow us to continue our education.” Simultaneously, coalition leaders also must work against moves by the Sudanese government to frame themselves as responsible and law-abiding leaders of the country. Brooks explains this challenge: “At every stage, Bashir and his inner circle have effectively framed international concern regarding the crisis as the product of a duplicitous western campaign to destabilize the country” (139).

It is also notable that the coalition has constructed a place for narratives and descriptions to be shared not only by the rhetors and readers, but also the subjects. Save Darfur leaders are committed to the use of *prosopopoeai*, or envoicing a silent object. Estimating that millions Darfuris have been affected by the conflict in the past six years, Brooks recognizes the difficulty of this task because the political structures are pushing back on the places created for the people to speak out. He explains: “Since the failed Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006, the vicious cycle of rebel fragmentation has only made the voices of the average Darfuri even more difficult to discern” (140). The coalition seems intent in its endeavors to secure an audience for the subjects but not to appropriate the tragic stories from the people. Brooks defends that rhetorical strategy: “Some of the most useful efforts of the more mature Save Darfur Coalition have sought to provide platforms to Darfuris to tell their own stories and to provide time and space for Darfuris

in the diaspora and civil society to articulate their concerns in future negotiations with the Sudanese government” (141). In the electronic press kit on the Save Darfur president, Fowler echoes that point. Speaking at a rally of students, he declares: “The refugees, the Darfuris, are desperate not to be abandoned. Your presence here today shows we are not going to abandon them while their lives hang in the balance.” <<http://media.savedarfur.org/>>

One of the Save Darfur video advertisements on the website also seeks to validate the voices of the Darfuri people. The commercial features individual shots of different US residents reading from cards or papers, each stating a sentence from a person victimized by the Sudan conflict: “I saw a woman who was raped.” “I lost all my family.” “The government just wants us to disappear and die.” It closes with the last person stating, “Somebody come and save us,” and then a black screen with white letters reads “Be a Voice for Darfur” with the website address.

<<http://dl.nmmstream.net/media/darfur/advertisements/SDCadNP2.mov>> The commercial in an epideictic role teaches the viewers what is happening in Darfur and calls them to become involved by supporting the subjects. The ad models the helpful action of speaking on behalf of those who cannot, and the result is an emotionally-charged, persuasive digital text.

Ultimately, this understanding of the use of ekphrasis to frame subjects in a picture and to envoice the subjects can contribute to an expanded function for epideictic rhetoric. Bartsch and Elsner, in the introduction to their “Eight Ways of Looking at Ekphrasis,” believe the technique prompts new “opportunities for the discovery of meaning.” They explain that ekphrasis can be “a mirror of the text, a mirror in the text, a mode of specular inversion, a further voice that disrupts or extends the message of the narrative, a prefiguration for that narrative” (i). Fulfilling these various roles, as ekphrasis does on the Save Darfur website, it is especially generative in working with ethos and place to contribute to the epideictic rhetor’s purposes.

As this analysis shows, Save Darfur has been successful with its rhetoric of blame in illuminating the crime of genocide taking place in Sudan and mobilizing a worldwide community to try to end it. Although great suffering and oppression of innocent Darfuri civilians continues to take place, the coalition members have called an audience to join them in the kairotic moment in order to accomplish much. Kristof highlights some of the coalition's accomplishments based in its rhetorical agency:

For all the failures, there is something inspiring about how hundreds of thousands of university students around America have marched, fasted, and donated money on behalf of people of a different race and religion who live halfway around the world, in a land they had never heard of five years ago... Those protests and 'Save Darfur' lawn signs prompted a vast relief effort that is keeping millions alive in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic. ("What to Do")

Vividly situated in the digital media environment, Save Darfur's rhetoric of blame has constructed a community of opposition to the crisis founded on the ethos of passionate activists and compassionate volunteers, as well as an ethos of worth and dignity of the subjects. Truly, as rhetoric of "edification," as White defines it, their discourse is effective in teaching an American audience about the international issue and mobilizing readers to become coalition members, active citizens and critical readers, not remaining passive viewers. The coalition is bonding diverse residents around the globe into a community in support of ending the genocide and sending humanitarian help to Darfur.

Application of this set of heuristics provides new understanding about the use of rhetoric of blame. Like Ida B. Wells, the Save Darfur Coalition wants the accused to face just punishment, but also the subjects to be treated fairly and humanely. The rhetoric of blame in the

epideictic encounter does not consist merely of harsh words but also expresses compassion for the subjects, the victims, and it is grounded in an ethical appeal that holds up the horrors to be recognized along with the Darfuri people to be understood and appreciated as fellow human beings. This case study validates the positive, even optimistic, nature of rhetoric of blame, as Save Darfur seeks to build up volunteers, members and the subjects, and unite them in a shared experience for the betterment of each other.

From this work, we also can draw some conclusions about the crucial role that the epideictic genre plays in society. Save Darfur has been successful primarily through new media technologies in carving out places in American society for people to come together and express their concern for Darfur, places for the voices of Darfuri people to be heard, and places to speak to authority in order to educate and make changes. These are both places where the discourse may previously not have been welcomed as well as places that did not exist before Save Darfur's rhetorical efforts. The coalition's rhetoric of blame has caused some discomfort in the audience, but the tension of agonism has served as a lever to move apathetic or unaware readers.

Careful practice of rhetorical strategies in the categories of creating ethos, establishing place, and utilizing ekphrasis has been shown, again in this case study, to be indicative of effective epideictic rhetoric. This heuristic model offers many additional pedagogical and theoretical uses in writing invention, finding and creating arguments, and making meaning, which will be addressed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER V: APPLYING THEORY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

I began this dissertation with questions about the effectiveness of rhetoric of blame – whether it can accomplish the same rhetorical purposes as rhetoric of praise and whether it can bond communities, form public morality, or highlight virtue by unveiling vice. At a time in our nation and neighborhoods when words of condemnation are often flung about too quickly and carelessly, a reliable methodology is needed for creating and analyzing rhetoric of blame that achieves a rhetorical purpose beyond that of a one-sided volley of insults.

I believe the set of heuristics that I have assembled provides that perspective. Existing scholarship on rhetoric of blame is minimal, and thus this project helps to fill the gap both by furnishing evidence of historical and current instances of epideictic rhetoric of blame as it functions to build community and teach civic virtues, and by demonstrating a methodology to assess such discourse. In addition, the heuristics address new media technologies, which play a crucial role in today's epideictic rhetoric. This project is grounded in the work of more than a dozen scholars ranging from Sullivan to Royster, Laurer to Hauser, and Agnew to Bolter. Revealing a true interdisciplinary nature, the heuristics are drawn from research in rhetoric, composition, digital literacy, literature, journalism, history, critical theory, literary theory and aesthetics. I believe this also indicates a relevance and practicality for explorations into rhetoric of blame in many fields.

This final chapter begins with a summary of findings from the application of the heuristics to the two epideictic case studies in Chapters 3 and 4. Following that is an explanation of conclusions that can be drawn about the heuristics as a systematic approach for examining rhetoric of blame. I then conclude with a discussion of implications and pedagogical applications of the heuristics and some suggestions for future scholarship.

Ethos

The application of the heuristics to the case studies in Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrates their effectiveness as an assessment tool and provides insight to the role of epideictic blame in society. The creation of the rhetor's ethos along with the subject's ethos, as discussed in Chapter 2, is primary among rhetorical strategies. In both case studies, the rhetors are mindful of the presentation of self to the audience. Wells, as stated earlier, presents herself with a strong and righteous ethos, as a serious, refined Christian woman with deep concern for her people. Save Darfur leaders present the organization in a similar way – as a credible, authoritative, successful organization. The examples in Chapter 3 and 4 show how the rhetors emphasize a common heritage, gathering readers into a shared experience. This effort extends into the establishment of an ethos for the subjects. Respect is extended to others – readers and subjects – modeling the behavior the author holds out as the proper response to the exigency of each situation.

And while the rhetors cannot be shy about casting blame upon those whom they believe are in the wrong, the greater chance for extending dialogue seems to occur when those sharp words are not the dominant or final impression upon the reader. Equally strong must be words of support for the subjects, which is evident in both case studies. Both Ida B. Wells and Save Darfur fortify the ethos of their subjects by presenting them as part of the shared experience, the relationship that rhetor and reader already enjoy. Wells constructs an ethos for her subjects as African-Americans worthy of understanding and deserving of protection. Save Darfur leaders create a similar ethos, perhaps further emphasizing the Darfuri people's helplessness and need in the face of ruthlessness. Through techniques and technologies available to the rhetors such as stories, images and raw video footage, readers learn, in both cases, of the subjects' daily lives and come to know the environments of fear and injustice that are being criticized. The rhetors in

both cases also connect the subject ethos to the readers' collective view of themselves as patriotic Americans, concerned Christians, and honest hard-working people – a self-image that the readers want to believe in and want to exist. Both Wells and the coalition illustrate how their subjects share that heritage and therefore are deserving of the audience's attention, underscoring "a recognition of their common identity as citizens" (Agnew 158).

Showing how interwoven the strategies are, the rhetor – using the above strategies – successfully creates a place where the reader can come to learn about and act on behalf of the "other." Recognizing or beholding others, then, places the readers in a situation to reflect on the matter at hand and "join with the speaker in taking reality to heart," as Rosenfield explains (133). As Chapter 3 recounted, Wells understood that "the people must know before they can act" (P. Collins 52), which makes clear the didactic foundation of epideictic. Readers, as witnesses, must learn of the exigency so they can be encouraged to act upon it. The seemingly ironic optimism of rhetoric of blame is also revealed: the words of criticism serve not just to condemn someone or something as being bad or wrong, but to call out for change into something better and to insist that is possible. Sheard observes this power of the epideictic encounter and its effect on the audience, as Chapter 2 notes, of "making its vision a reality for its audience" and "instilling a belief that the power for realizing the vision lies within them" (781). The Save Darfur website provides evidence of these encounters – of readers who learn of the suffering of the Darfuri people and recognize that words and rhetorical actions can make a difference, and so they write letters to the editor, carry protest signs in front of the White House, wear colored wristbands of support, and share their encounters with others through blog posts.

And yet, accompanying the many examples of readers who support the rhetorical efforts of Wells and Save Darfur are many instances where the bold words cause tension and

discomfort, especially as they persuade readers to engage in self-reflection. White classified it as “rhetoric of edification” and I have shown that Wells, in working to build up a community, held herself and others to a high standard. She made it clear that those who were silent or ignored the mob violence were guilty of allowing it to continue – that not taking on their roles as active community agents was a crime of its own.

A portion of epideictic blame is really a firm insistence by the rhetor that the audience take a sincere look at the exigency and themselves. In the same way that Gallagher and Zagacki note how the Civil Rights photographs “force us to look” (116-117) at the injustice taking place in America in the 1960s, the Save Darfur leaders urge that coalition members must “make them look” at the inhumane crimes in Darfur in 2010. The call for change is a transformation of ethos and a negotiation of identity. Davidson points out that the process is, for Wells, both collective and discordant: “Wells entered eagerly into this spirited dialogue of ambition and eloquence, protest and petty bickering as African American journalists sought to define what it meant to be black and free... Wells spoke out forcefully on many such issues” (103). As discussed in Chapter 2, this is the notable accomplishment of the epideictic rhetor in society; as Condit explains, it is “through ‘appraisal’ of the events, persons, and objects in our lives that we define ourselves” (291).

Unlike mean-spirited words of blame intended only to insult or hurt others’ feelings, the effectiveness of epideictic rhetoric is an agonistic nature that confronts readers’ attitudes and self-image. While Wells and the Save Darfur leaders do condemn those who are responsible for injustice and violence against the subjects, the authors also confront their audiences’ apathy and push into the discomfort (why should they look, care, act?) that is likely at the “moment of disease” that Sheard mentions (790). The degree of confrontation certainly can vary in the

epideictic situation, as Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate. While Wells is defiant and unremitting toward those who she believed should join her – fellow African-Americans, Northerners, the white press, politicians – Save Darfur leaders take a gentler, more inviting approach. In recruiting new coalition members through the website, they do not condemn those who are not helping, but encourage involvement that even is glamorized by celebrities. Activism is made comfortable and convenient for the audience, as Chapter 4 examples describe, offering opportunities to support the mission through yard signs, car washes and bake sales. Assuredly, the contexts differ for the two case studies, as does the proximity of the violence and the degree of commitment required from each audience. (Consider the difference in involvement between attending a Save Darfur rally in 2010 and attending an anti-lynching rally in 1889.) Minimal confrontation occurs in the Save Darfur case – between the rhetors and those they are blaming, as well as rhetors and readers. Their success in negotiating the agonism can be contrasted with the confrontation that takes place in Agnew’s case study of the anti-war commencement speech where the rhetor asked the audience to look at themselves, without any consideration of establishing a relationship between the parties, and thus the audience would not trust him or meet him a place of shared experience.

As part of the edifying work that the words of blame intend to accomplish, the rhetors in the two case studies offer ethical models for action – Wells presenting herself as one example, and Save Darfur providing a how-to guide for community activists. And while these models are held up for the audience to measure their own actions against, the discourse of the rhetors also can be seen to provide a model for audiences to become critical readers and producers of their own discourse. Austin’s sub-classifications of illocutions, outlined in Chapter 2, are particularly effective in recognizing models of language as social action. Both Wells’ and Save Darfur’s

rhetoric of blame can be seen as behabitives, or reactions to other people's behavior – as they are deploring and protesting the actions of the lynch mobs and the Sudanese government, and they are challenging society to stop the oppression. The case studies also serve as excellent examples of verdictives or “the delivery of a finding” and “assessments of character or the historical significance of events.” Wells unveils her findings that the motivation for many lynchings was not to punish rapists, but instead to oppress African-American men, and she fears the long-term consequences for freedom and democracy in the United States. Save Darfur, with policy papers and video footage shot in refugee camps, reveals the conditions discovered in Sudan and presents their assessment of the process needed to establish peace and provide humanitarian aid. Finally, both case studies illustrate rhetoric that Austin would describe as expositives or “the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and of references and their bearing upon a community” (Beale 235-237). By urging action on behalf of the victims, defying those in authority who would prefer to keep their evil actions hidden, and testifying on behalf of those victims who could not speak out or have no place to speak out, both Save Darfur leaders and Wells model rhetorical actions that the audience could effectively utilize in many situations – a point I will discuss further below.

Place

Whether it is conceptualized as Habermas' public sphere, Sullivan's “dwelling place of speaker and audience” or Hyde's “living room,” a recognition of context and environment, as I have demonstrated, is vital to the successful epideictic encounter. The connection of place to ethos is made clear in Hyde's understanding of space and time as places where we “know together – *con-scientia*” (xiii). Bolter complements this discussion by explaining the power of description, or ekphrasis, to contribute to that place: “The work of art or literature is supposed to

describe an *environment* that the viewer or reader can inhabit for the time in which she is enjoying the work... Virtual environments offer an apparently unmediated perception of another world” and “achieve total empathetic involvement in a created world” (267-268).

Attention to the structures of text and genre as well as the social and rhetorical contexts of an epideictic situation allows the rhetor to be effective in using the ethical appeal. Reynolds notes how writing from the margins gives the author a unique perspective on the places of the rhetorical situation, and often that rhetor’s goal is not a move to the center – out of the margins and into the mainstream – but “to change the structure altogether” (330). Epideictic rhetoric of blame harnesses this very potential. In the case studies, the rhetors are speaking on behalf of subjects who are in the margins of their societies and/or the global society. The words of blame can help readers to recognize the places of all involved – themselves, rhetors, subjects, victims, oppressors and those in authority. The audience also can be asked, as Reynolds suggests, to notice what is in between these places and how people can come together, that is, can cross the gaps. I would argue that an understanding of ethos can fill those gaps and make the connections between places.

While the epideictic rhetor does have license to be more creative than perhaps the forensic or deliberative rhetor, it remains the reader’s prerogative to decide how much latitude to grant the rhetor in pushing the boundaries of the structures and contexts. This acknowledgment of the reader’s authority helps to balance the heuristic system, as Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford suggest, to avoid “overemphasizing the power of the writer and undervaluing that of the reader” (88). They urge that we recognize “the constraints placed on the writer, in certain situations, by the audience” and “that readers’ own experiences, expectations, and beliefs do play a central role in their reading of a text” (88). Without attention to ethos, I would contend, the rhetor will fail to

receive the cooperation of the audience, as was demonstrated in the anti-war commencement speech. New media technologies hold additional opportunities for granting further authority to readers. As discussed in Chapter 4, the interactive nature of the Internet allows the readers/viewers to choose their own paths through a website. The narrative is not a limited structure solely decided by the author, and Save Darfur responds to this rhetorical opportunity by offering more than one narrative, thereby directing its discourse to diverse readers.

Furthermore, rhetorical strategies of place offer an opportunity to empower subjects. Rhetoric of blame, intent on making social change for the benefit of a person or community who are victims of injustice or oppression, may be revolutionary in constructing a place for the victims' voices. Consider the examples in Chapter 4 of Save Darfur's rally for Sudanese people in front of the White House to speak to those in authority or the meeting of Sudani author/activist Halima Bashir with the U.S. President. Rickie Solinger and the other editors of *Telling Stories to Change the World: Global Voices on the Power of Narrative to Build Community and Make Social Justice Claims* describe the empowering experience for subjects who tell their own narratives. They explain that participants in the Telling Stories project are "using narrative as a way to transform identity from *victim* to *agent* to *public critic*, a person with full legal status in the public square" (1). Securing a place for their narratives in the public sphere, the subjects experience a transformation of their own ethos as they transform their places in the margins. Solinger, et al., agree that "Telling stories of indignity, tragedy, hope involves the teller in acts of transformation: experience and identity become mutable...The story becomes a way of remaking the world; being a storyteller in these contexts means being an activist" (6).

The experience of place can be equally as moving for readers, who are "brought" to a place through the narration and description of the author to become witnesses of the actions that

are being condemned. In breaking down spatial limits, the rhetor can help the audience to cross time and space to experience those places. What Kellner describes as “a refocusing of politics on everyday life” (189) is achieved when the epideictic rhetor brings the issue into “the living room.” Save Darfur President Fowler seems to follow that advice when he calls out to those at a rally to “take” their concern for Sudan “to the groups we’re part of.”

<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/voices-for-darfur-video> It is notable that he uses the word “take,” instead of “discuss with them” or “interest them in the issue.” “Take” gives the issue a physical sense, as if the epideictic encounter were a material object, like a photograph, that could be transported to other locations to recur and engage others again and again, emphasizing how place gives a embodied sense to the exigency and epideictic itself.

The empowerment of readers and subjects realizes Sheard’s claim that epideictic has a “tendency toward ‘idealization’” because it “allows speaker and audience to envision possible, new or at least different worlds” (770). The rhetor must be bold in thrusting the responsibility upon readers, who must accept the challenge. Constructing the right place and time to do so, that is, using *kairos* to seize the opportunity, seems to involve a sense of prophetic calling for the rhetor. Wells definitely saw this as her role, as Chapter 3 explains, and African-American leaders of her time agreed. At her death, fellow activist W.E.B. DuBois wrote: “She roused the white South to vigorous and bitter defense and she began the awakening of the conscience of the nation” (Thompson 126). Save Darfur President Fowler also seems to see a grander sense of purpose for his organization’s rhetoric as well, which he believes is based on a “constituency of conscience.” <http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/voices-for-darfur-video> Sullivan has seen this relation, and drawing from Burke, explains that the “acting-together” of individuals makes them consubstantial with common concepts, ideas and attitudes. The rhetor can create this

consubstantiality by “engaging the audience in a conversation that transcends time” (126) and, I would add, by uniting ethos and place.

Ekphrasis

The vivid picture presented to the reader through the use of ekphrasis in rhetoric of blame ultimately creates a more dynamic experience due to the “heightened and credible immediacy,” as Koelb describes it (4). However, the four guiding questions in this category of the heuristics help us to see that ekphrasis provides more than mere decoration for the epideictic environment. As Duffy explains: “Figurative language becomes the means of disclosing resemblances of the truth and conveying them through the arousal of imagination” (89). The descriptive details contribute to a sense of place as they create a proximity between audience, subject and rhetor, which additionally strengthens the relationship, impacting the ethos being created.

Ekphrasis traditionally has been considered descriptive text, and yet through new media technologies, text and image have fused to the point that they are often inseparable. The rhetors in my two case studies augment their discourse with images that also seek to cast blame. Wells crafted her newspaper stories and pamphlets with raw intense accounts of brutal crimes carried out on innocent victims. Poetic descriptions and bold characters, as explained in Chapter 3, fill her tragic stories. She includes one photograph and one woodcut (line drawing) in her pamphlets, so that readers could literally see the violence unveiled in graphic format. The Save Darfur website contains some video footage of burned homes and crops and wounded Darfuri people. However, despite its capacity for large quantities of video, photos and graphics, the tragic images are limited, and there are many more instances of textual descriptions of suffering. In both case studies, the images seem to be explanatory, but not exploitive. They are graphic, but I would argue that they are not a “pornography of violence” as Mamdani claimed about some

Darfuri news coverage. The audience's gaze is directed upon truly awful scenes and leaves the reader feeling not like a voyeur but like a witness to a crime that encumbers us to help.

By utilizing ekphrasis and placing the reader at the scene, the rhetor also encourages the audience to act as an interpreter of what is being viewed, which again emphasizes the role as critical reader. Beholding the violence unveiled through descriptive words and images, the critical reader must reflect upon and question what is witnessed. Wells, for instance, wanted readers to ask: is this a guilty man being hanged and justice being served? Or a victim being murdered without a jury trial ever conducted? Although Bolter sees the dominance of the visual as "a denial of ekphrasis" (265), Heffernan argues that there is "a narrative response to pictorial stasis" and language frees the "narrative impulse which graphic arts restricts" (301-302). I would argue, and I believe the case studies provide evidence, that the epideictic rhetor seems to be most effective working with a generative remixing of text and image. Employing the rhetorical strategies of these heuristics does not allow the rhetor to neglect the text or the image.

The contribution of ekphrasis to the didactic nature of rhetoric of blame is illustrated in Chapters 3 and 4, assisting Wells' and Save Darfur's rhetorical purposes. In a similar fashion, the ancient example of Philostratus' *Imagines*, a collection of essays describing myth-themed paintings, uses ekphrasis in an ethical appeal. Beaujoir commends the use of the textual and visual to "combine a sensual signifier and an ethical meaning." He explains that "the picture (the fictional visual object) is a text, simultaneous and condensed, which conveys ethical messages in an emblematic sort of way." Just as Wells and Save Darfur leaders accomplished, Philostratus' use of ekphrasis functioned to "serve a pedagogical purpose: the purport to educate the moral sense by way of the physical senses" (31-32).

Converging Strategies

As I discussed in Chapter 3, the format of the heuristics may indicate that analysis should distinguish or separate the rhetorical strategies from each other. However, the in-depth analysis of the case studies reveals how the categories are entwined and reinforce one another. The converging strategies of the writing process with its recursive and reflexive practices are made clear as we answer the guiding questions of the heuristics. Their overlapping nature helps us to avoid imposing an artificial, stiff arrangement on a text, following Johnston and Eisenhart's suggestion for flexibility in these "discovery procedures" (11), and instead expand rigid paradigms traditionally set on the epideictic genre. For example, Wells' use of lynching statistics and accounts from the white press employed ekphrastic techniques, while carving out a place for the voices of the subjects, and enhancing her own ethos as a rhetor. The methodology provides a framework not to restrict rhetoric of blame, but to allow conscious reflection on words of criticism and their rhetorical, didactic purposes.

The reticulate strength of the 13 guiding questions is further validated when we attempt to consider any of the strategies isolated from the others. A lack of attention by the rhetor to the strategies of place, I would argue, results in an isolated, artificial feeling to the text. Without a context for the audience, the epideictic encounter lacks a place for the reader to approach and it becomes too foreign for understanding or perhaps even interest. It is fair to wonder whether it is even possible to create a rhetorical situation that occurs outside of contexts or ideologies, but regardless, the exigency must be understood in relation to other people or things. Without a sense of grounding that strategies of place provide, readers likely would feel no sense of responsibility in the relationship ("This is my place.") nor authority ("This is my place to change."). Wells provided that place for her white Northern audience, noting that lynchings of

fellow US citizens were taking place in a nation dedicated to justice and equality. She also urged her African-American readers to see a place for themselves where they could come together to stop the racist mob violence and demand fair treatment.

Accompanied by the strategies of ethos, place gives a sense of embodiment to the issue at hand. In the reverse, a focus on place without any attention to ethos, I would assert, fails to create a shared experience or relationship among rhetor, reader and subject. In the case of the Save Darfur website, this would result in a description of the genocide in Sudan that could be interpreted as just another location of more senseless violence in the world and result in an apathetic response from readers. Unveiling all of the tragedies in Darfur without establishing an ethos for the subjects in relation to the reader becomes an attempt at argument by over-amplification; and descriptions of violence and suffering that continue repeatedly can lead to feelings of inability and impotence in the audience. Following their study of the Civil Rights photos, Gallagher and Zagacki caution that “global accumulation” of such photos “often alongside images of other peoples’ suffering” may make viewers believe the exigency is too great and it cannot be overcome or changed (131).

Focusing on ekphrastic techniques without concern for ethos can create similar results. To be seen as more than exploitation or cruelty, the rhetoric of blame must include a call to help the victims that is equally as loud as the censure of the oppressors, and this legitimates the genre as more than vitriolic entertainment. At such a point, Mamdani’s complaints of a “pornography of violence” become apparent – ekphrasis expressed without any ethos.

From ancient times, ekphrasis – as well as epideictic – has been dismissed frequently as showmanship or decorative speech. But the case studies of this project demonstrate that visual description makes the epideictic encounter real and knowable for an audience. Attention to ethos

and place without ekphrasis can result in a rhetorical situation that is cold and unemotional. If Wells had not used her ekphrastic techniques, would her readers have been so moved to see the injustice and respond with their support? Ekphrasis, especially as it is expressed through new media, engages the reader's emotions and imagination, which can be powerful motivators for action. Poulakos remarks on this cause and effect, stating, "display gives way to exhortation" or "*epideikton* yields to *symboleutikon*" (325). The description helps to create the vision of what is possible – the idealistic quality of epideictic, as Sheard describes it – and prompts the reader's imagination to envision what could be accomplished.

Implications and Applications

The heuristics and ensuing analyses of rhetoric of blame serve a number of broader goals for the field of rhetoric and composition studies and for society at large. First of all, this systematic approach advances our understanding of the composing process as it details invention, the finding and creating of arguments. Duffy explains that "Plato presents epideictic as a means of publicly celebrating the values recognized to underlie the noble deeds of previous generations, values, as I said, which are at the core of future deliberation and action" (90). Both rhetoric of praise, as he maintains, and rhetoric of blame, as I have demonstrated, are effective vehicles for deliberation and action. The heuristics assist in determining and comprehending the many complex rhetorical decisions involved in an epideictic text of blame.

They also aid in identifying and constructing opportunities for action and change, as Sheard states: "Epideictic rhetoric is especially necessary, I would argue, for it has the capacity to link thought with action, vision with reality, criticism with change" (788). Traditionally, this has been accomplished with texts of praise, but rhetors such as the Save Darfur Coalition and Ida

B. Wells show us that words of condemnation can be equally effective in teaching an audience and making changes in society to help others.

With their encouragement of self-reflection, the heuristics facilitate knowledge of ourselves as we come to see the roles played in society and our individual places as rhetor, reader, subject, witness, victim, perpetrator and other. The shared ownership in rhetoric and shared responsibility of rhetor and reader is made explicit, as well. Hauser elaborates on the potential for epideictic “to reinvigorate enlightened discussion based on something more than the emotions of self-interest or vengeance. It can educate us in the vocabulary of civic virtues that may constitute citizens as an active public, and communicate principles on which responsible citizenship may be based and a vibrant public sphere can thrive” (20). As both rhetor and readers participate in the epideictic encounter, a sense of authority is generated. Their commitment to responsible, reflective dialogue can benefit the public sphere by renewing or expanding places of discourse or even creating new discursive arenas, especially with new media technologies.

Furthermore, the heuristics work toward putting feminist inquiry goals into practice as we investigate rhetorical goals. They can unveil women’s experience and women’s discourse strategies, as Patricia Sullivan advocates in her discussion of “Feminism and Methodology in Composition Studies,” and as Ida B. Wells accomplishes. Although the influence of gender is not specifically mentioned, another question could easily add this consideration to the analysis, especially in the category of ethos. The discussion of place does include attention to social and rhetorical contexts that encompass the status of women, which was addressed in Chapter 3 and to some extent in Chapter 4. The heuristics also privilege a plurality of voices including those from the margins, allow “other” perspectives to be shared and “empower voices we were previously

unaccustomed to hearing,” as Sullivan states (53). Finally, the heuristics incorporate feminist inquiry techniques by reinterpreting the notion that the researcher or rhetor must maintain an objective perspective of the subjects. Instead, subjectivity is at the heart of epideictic and the methodology makes no attempt to appear “value-neutral,” which Sullivan also recommends (56).

In evaluating the heuristics’ use as a tool, several conclusions can be drawn, offering some directions for future work. First of all, my set of questions (Appendix C) should not be seen as a definitive list, as certainly more could be added. Working through the case studies, I encountered aspects of each text worthy of future analysis that are not addressed by the heuristics I assembled. What is the context of reception for an epideictic text of blame? What is the nature of the responses generated? What are the subjects’ reactions and responses to the epideictic encounter? These are only a few examples of additional questions that could guide an exploration of a text. It also could be interesting to employ the heuristics to study rhetorical texts of praise, with some adaptation of the questions. Although there has been much more scholarship of epideictic rhetoric in the mode of praise, this methodology could be beneficial to examining the invention and meaning-making strategies of a text that praises.

Ethical considerations are not part of my heuristic system, but are quite worthy of analysis as well. A significant portion of both cases focuses on the rhetors’ use of *kairos* and their decisions to hold up an issue for beholding and response. Vatz declares “the rhetor is responsible for what he chooses to make salient” (464), which could prompt us to ask what do you choose to unveil or who do you choose to blame? And what do you do with the reactions provoked? Thompson states that “Ida B. Wells combined assertiveness, the need of the times, and her own experience to assume the task... She carried out the mission of agitator and

propagandist for which she felt her experiences qualified her.” (65). The writer’s sense of responsibility and ensuing rhetorical choices could provide fruitful areas for study.

In addition, my two case studies focus on epideictic blame that is cast where truly inhumane actions are occurring. However, future scholarship could apply and adapt the heuristics to situations where blame cannot be or is not so easily assigned, where an issue is disputed to a much greater degree. Current examples of such discourse might include the blame of the BP Corporation and its response to the oil drilling disaster off the Louisiana coast or the blame of the US federal government and banking companies for the collapse of the housing market. Analysis of a wider range of case studies could continue to contribute, as I believe my study does, to a broader understanding of the genre of epideictic rhetoric.

Pedagogical Applications

Pedagogically, this set of heuristics could function as a guide for students in the composition classroom helping them to learn and practice rhetorical analysis. To facilitate such a study, especially for first-year writing students, I would suggest a limited version of the heuristic system, such as five categories: creating a relationship between rhetor, reader and subject; creating roles of beholder and community agent for the reader; the rhetor’s willingness to learn; the kairos of the situation; and creating a picture with individual framing. Students could conduct rhetorical analyses of all sorts of texts using these guiding questions to interrogate the texts and images. This methodology asks students to study and cooperate in a rare action: to stop and reflect, listen and consider, and appreciate what *is*. In a society overwhelmed with multi-tasking, the student is asked to enter Rosenfield’s place of “meditative remembrance” (148) to focus and learn, to join the subjects in a place of sincere interaction, and share in

collective discourse. The student can learn to recognize this practice and appreciate how rhetoric can encourage it in an audience.

Sheard reminds us that for the ancients, “words were instruments of personal, social and political problem-solving” (766), and in that spirit, the heuristics could serve as guidelines for many writing classroom activities. Students could use this methodology to help them write their own texts of blame. Or, students could look at situations of blame that are rhetorically ineffective to come to know why and how future discourse could be improved. If problems are unveiled by an epideictic text of blame and change has not occurred, why? Case studies could be examined in which a rhetor is trying to shift blame away from himself – a practice which has numerous political and workplace applications. Students can consider whether the casting of blame is an attempt to distract readers from something else – another exigency – that the rhetor is trying to hide. How effective is a text of blame in gaining a widening audience? Students could examine a rhetor’s attempts at willingness to learn, the degree of celebrity ethos employed, agonism generated, or self-reflection encouraged. They could apply the heuristics to a text of rhetoric of blame in forms as described by Austin, such as habitives, verdictives or expositives. Focusing the work specifically on digital rhetoric provides opportunities for students to examine uses of new media to create places and communities, cyberspace as a public sphere, or the establishment of a cyber-ethos. These are only a few of the numerous strategies that can be pulled from the heuristics for individual study and practice. All of this are evidence of the valuable pedagogical function of epideictic, which Sheard summarizes well: “If we want our students to conduct themselves, both privately and publicly, as ethical individuals, responsible citizens, and conscientious members of their many communities, we ought to be teaching them to appreciate the relationships between words and deeds. One place we might

begin is with the ways in which such relationships exist in epideictic rhetoric” (766-767). The heuristics can engage students with public writing, helpfully providing a framework as they develop their civic writing and rhetorical skills.

One of the predominant benefits that I see in these heuristics is offering a methodology to examine successful ways of bringing people together for genuine discourse on serious, controversial and even volatile topics. The heuristics can teach students how to understand, create, and respond to rhetoric of blame as it is used in the midst of a crisis or controversy. The methodology can assist us in discerning its results, its didactic potential, how it “responds therapeutically” (Sheard 790), and the places where blame occurs. If we hope to use discourse to resolve problems – social, political, educational, financial and more – we need language, writing skills and rhetorical strategies to broach and investigate controversial issues in public forums. Many modern communication models, as Wayne Booth laments, have degenerated into win/lose contests of screaming, name-calling or condescending pithy barbs intended to be repeated by the mass media. Booth suggests: “Let us all attempt to enlarge the ‘domain’ of those who work to avoid misunderstanding” (21), and I would agree. Without a way to negotiate exigencies that call upon a rhetor to speak boldly or criticize someone or something, the writer may be intimidated or fail to accept the responsibility to act. There also is a tendency to quickly dismiss any negative words as superficial insults (perhaps hoping to avoid the awkward or uncomfortable tension they generate) without recognizing the rhetorical purposes behind the condemnation. Instead of being afraid to approach topics for fear of the responses, this robust inquiry model helps us learn and practice ways to engage with others – especially when we don’t agree with others. Contemporary instances of the Tea Party movement or national health care reform efforts are ripe for analysis with these heuristics. Yet this methodology also can assist in

constructing discourse as we engage in the public sphere. We must concentrate on the sense of optimism that pervades epideictic rhetoric of blame, recognizing that it is not mere criticism. It intends to build up and not just tear down, which the case studies have revealed is quite difficult work.

Conclusion

The 13 guiding questions suggest helpful strategies for the epideictic rhetor and can aid us in examining instances of past success to reground future work. They should not be seen as restricting creativity, as assuredly we can find rhetorical texts that contradict some of the heuristics I have assembled, yet still are effective in engaging readers, building communities and making change. However, the intricacies and complexity of the heuristics do seem to infer that there are high standards set for rhetoric of blame that truly accomplishes those rhetorical purposes.

To ask that an epideictic encounter of rhetoric of blame be didactic, kairotic, transformative, edifying, vivid and eloquent may indeed be asking a lot. But those qualities, I would argue, are what separate epideictic rhetoric of blame from superficial, mean-spirited insults only intended to vent emotions or hurt others' feelings. True epideictic rhetoric of blame may be rare. When an audience sees a Fourth of July speech as being cliché and trite, for example, Rosenfield states that they are correct because they recognize what is missing in that epideictic. He explains: "participants in such ceremonies have lost a vital connection with the human being that makes that celebration significant." What is vital for epideictic, he maintains is "openness of mind, felt reverence for reality, enthusiasm for life, the ability to congeal significant experiences in memorable language" (150). And if the rhetor is successful, Sullivan

believes the audience will find themselves “caught up in a celebration of their vision of reality” (128).

I hope that these high standards – also held up by Ida B. Wells and the Save Darfur Coalition in their work – are evidence that great things can be accomplished with epideictic rhetoric of blame. I am encouraged by Plato’s perspective of “the epideictic genre as holding the greatest potential for an exposition of what rhetoric ought to be in the ideal” (Duffy 87).

To that end, Aristotle’s minimal discussion of epideictic blame in the *Rhetoric* should not prevent us from considering all the works and potential of words of blame. They serve a purpose, as I have demonstrated with this project, that is far greater than merely to describe the opposites of the good and the honorable, and these harsh words do have additional value in the rhetorical situation. We should discount neither the service they can provide nor the discourses they can enable, as my two case studies have proven. Dale Sullivan explains that epideictic is determined by “a constellation of purposes: preservation, education, celebration, and aesthetic creation” (Ethos 116). I hope this research has unveiled that constellation within rhetoric of blame and its contributions to the teaching of an audience, formation of communities, and fostering of social change.

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APPENDIX A

SAVE DARFUR COALITION HOMEPAGE

SAVE DARFUR

Learn | Take Action | Blog | NewsRoom | Give | Store | About

SEARCH site search

Email Zip Code Sign up to get Email updates

Donate today to help us reach our goal by Sept 30!

G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh »

Moved By Faith »

Tell President Obama To Lead For Peace In Sudan »

DONATE

Events Center Find events Plan Events! CLICK HERE »

Get the Toolbar Every search helps fight Genocide CLICK HERE »

Help us build an undeniable movement for peace in Sudan Make your gift today MORE »

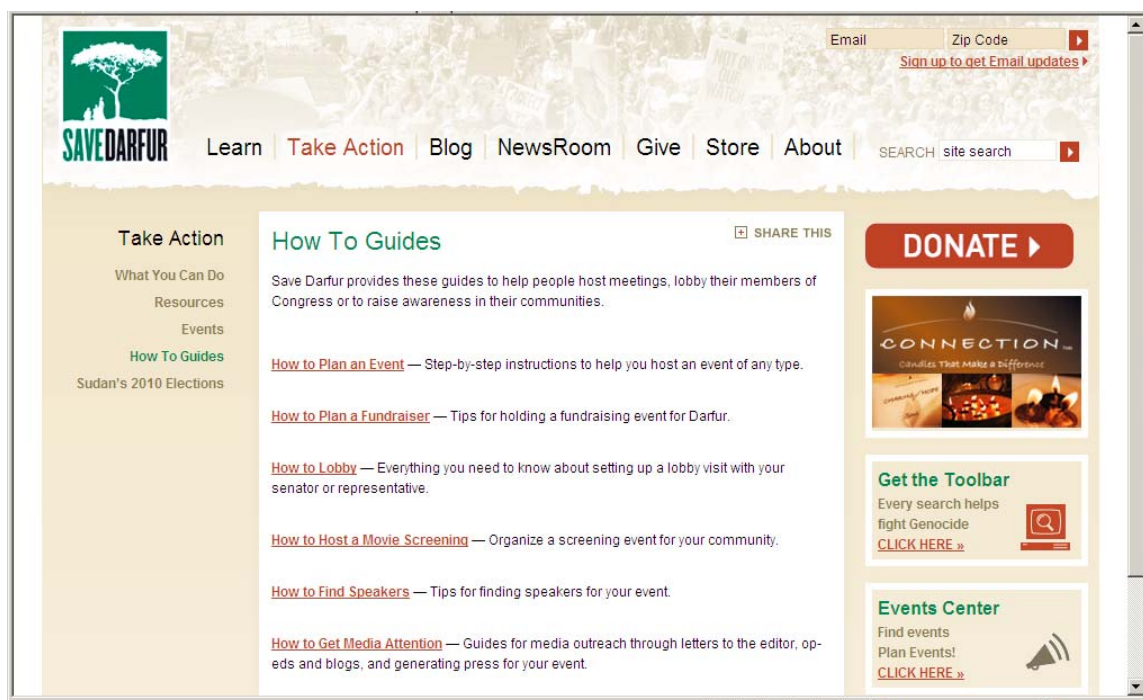
➔ **3 Things You Can Do** to join the movement

- 1 Don't Forget Darfur**
Sign our petition urging President Obama to remember the people of Sudan.
- 2 Get Email Updates**
Sign up to receive regular Email updates from Save Darfur
- 3 Download Our Toolbar**
Every search donates to help end the crisis in Darfur

<www.savedarfur.org>

APPENDIX B

SAVE DARFUR COALITION “TAKE ACTION” WEBPAGE



<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/how_to_guides>

APPENDIX C

HEURISTIC QUESTIONS

The following are 13 guiding questions that can be used to examine an epideictic situation of blame, concentrating on the persons involved (rhetor, subjects and audience), the contexts, and the language and its aesthetics.

Creating Ethos

- 1 - How does the rhetor set up a relationship between the writer and reader?
- 2 - How are the roles of spectator and community member developed for the reader/viewer?
- 3 - How does the rhetor preserve her ethos – and that of her subject – while casting blame?
- 4 - How can the tension of agonism of blame be balanced with a “willingness to learn” from the audience?
- 5 - How does the rhetor set up a model of ethos for the reader to emulate?

Establishing Place

- 6 - Where is the rhetor working within and against the structures of the text and the genre?
- 7 - How does the rhetor acknowledge the rhetorical and social context she is in?
- 8 - How does the rhetor break down spatial limits?
- 9 - How does the rhetor use *kairos* to accomplish her rhetorical purpose in the right place at the right time?

Using Ekphrasis

- 10 - How does the rhetor create a vivid picture and how does her eloquence contribute to visualization?
- 11 - How does the rhetor employ epideictic acts of unveiling for describing and interpreting?
- 12 - How does the rhetor use description and narrative to engage the imagination and emotions of the audience?
- 13 - How does the picture created by the rhetor frame subjects and highlight individuality?