# The Performative Language Games of *Dramapolitik*:
# How Abraham Lincoln became an intellectual patriot and
# George W. Bush became a cowboy diplomat

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When presidents attempt to transform a country, they do so by utilizing a keen understanding of the status quo and a knowledge of how to challenge it — and most often, they challenge it by delivering a key speech. Within this speech, leaders create a persona designed to challenge a previously-held public perception about themselves in an attempt to take the entire country in a new direction. In order for change to happen, the new persona of a president must reflect the needs and desires of the audience in a meaningful way. This essay presents a close reading of Abraham Lincoln's key pre-presidential speech—the one that propelled him to the presidency and George W. Bush's speech to Congress after 9/11—the one that purportedly made him "presidential." A comparative analysis of these two speeches reveal the kind of persona these presidents created and foreshadowed the types of decisions they would make in office — decisions that would affect their citizens and reshape the nation. Lincoln sculpted an erudite speech steeped in constitutional argument with a force of logic that proved to many that he wasn't just a rustic man of the West, but a statesman worthy of being a president. Bush shaped his post-9/11 presidency around a key speech that turned his flailing presidency around to the point where many saw Bush become "presidential" for the first time. Both Lincoln and Bush utilized performative rhetoric that not only transformed themselves, but also transformed how their audience perceived them — and by doing so, the audience empowered their leaders to take the country in a new direction. Lincoln pulled the country together and ended slavery; and while Bush presented strong leadership abilities in order to decisively respond to terrorism, the results were steeped in a neoconservative agenda designed to extend United States' hegemony around the world.

## Introduction

On Feb. 27, 1860, Abraham Lincoln performed a pre-presidential speech at Cooper Union in New York City. His speech against the expansion of slavery was steeped in such constitutional argument and clear logic that it altered his audience's perception of him as an "uncultivated" man of the West to one

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who is a statesman, propelling him to the presidency. Lincoln created a presidential style that the audience was looking for — someone who could clearly confront the issue of slavery and threats of disunion. In short, Lincoln provided a statesman-lawyer persona that pushed the country in a new direction and ultimately, after a civil war, held it together, thus fulfilling Lincoln's desire to convince his audience that he was made of presidential material, and one who would hold to the Constitution above all else.

After the crisis of 9/11, George W. Bush had to overcome his perceived vacation presidency to one that meant business. Thus, within a speech presented to Congress on Sept. 20, 2001, we find Bush molding a persona from elements comprising a cowboy, a priest, and a soldier — qualities that many felt embodied a leadership style strong enough to deal with a war on terror. Indeed, after performing this speech, Bush appeared "presidential" for the first time in the eyes of many. [1] Scholar Denise Bostdorff argues how Bush "underwent a metamorphosis . . . from an inept usurper into a competent, strong, and eloquent president" over a period of 10 days (2003, p. 313). However, the consequence of Bush's new persona would be a president taking advantage of executive privilege during post-9/11 fears resulting in the passage of the Patriot Act, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the tacit acceptance of torture, and detaining citizens without legal representation — all of which would challenge the strength and freedoms found in the United States Constitution.

This essay presents a comparative analysis of these two speeches, revealing how Bush and Lincoln each crafted a persona that reshaped the public perception of themselves, setting up their audience to accept their leadership in taking the country in a new direction. Under these circumstances, I would consider such a speech to be a performative utterance — where, according to Lyotard (1984), "its effect upon the referent coincides with its enunciation," placing the listener "within the new context created by the utterance," but the speaker "must be invested with the authority to make such a statement" (p. 9). Presidents hold such an authority. Lyotard contends, furthermore, that such performative utterances are expressed like "moves" in a game, and therefore, within the "language games" of knowledge and power, "to speak is to fight, in the sense of playing, and speech acts fall within the domain of general agonistics" (1984, p. 10).

A politician will perform an ideology in the agon of politics in an attempt to dominate the minds of others, creating, in the words of scholar Edwin Black, a "second persona" — what John Hammerback (extending Black's definition) describes as "reconstitutive discourse" (2001, p. 19). As Hammerback explains, the audience's view of the speaker is the "first persona." The second comprises the performer's view of the audience and the speaker's "message articulated through argument and explanation" (pp. 19-20). While Black argues how one can examine a speech to determine "what the rhetor would have his real auditor become" and although "actual embodiment" may not occur, the speaker still has an "image" of

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[1] "Just before the attacks on New York and Washington, Bush's job approval was at 51%, the lowest of his tenure. Then it rose to 90% Sept. 21, a record for presidents in the Gallup Poll. It stayed above 80% until March 4 and above 70% until July 22 [2002]" (Benedetto & Page, 2002). And "a Gallup poll in late November of 2001, less than three months after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, put Bush's favorable rating at 87% and his unfavorable rating at 11%" ("Poll: Bush approval," 2005).

what the audience could become (1999, p. 335).  Hammerback takes it a step further: "the merging of personae and message" may potentially "induce" an audience "to reorder their qualities of character and thereby alter their self-definition" (2001, p. 20). This very process of "reconstitutive discourse" becomes the culminating effect of political "language games," as explicated by Lyotard. The politician of *realpolitik* replaced by the politician of *dramapolitik*.[2] This latter kind of politician rises out of a national crisis and performs the language game of reconstitutive discourse in a speech (or series of speeches) revealing a character who can handle the crisis and change the nation in the process.

### The Man from the Wild West and the Cowboy Rancher

Lincoln, raised in poverty, worked on a farm until he was 22, completing less than a year of grade school.[3] Raised in privilege, Bush went to Yale and earned an MBA from Harvard. Lincoln eventually became a self-made lawyer, successfully practicing law in Springfield, Illinois. Bush unsuccessfully made Texas gold in the energy business. Lincoln served one term in the House of Representatives.[4] Bush was

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[2] *Dramapolitik* is not the same as anthropologist Victor Turner's model of social drama, which he adapted from Arnold van Gennep's model of the rite of passage (separation from the community, followed by a liminal stage, followed by reintegration back into the community), reading it through political crises (which became the schism that takes a society into a liminal stage and followed by either political redress or a permanent split) (cited in Schechner, 1985, pp. 167-168). Rather, I'm examining the implications of presidential character as a character that's created by means of a Barthesian myth — subsuming the values of an electorate in the public sphere (previously shaped by myth-making images) — and implicated into the public sphere as a character type (Barthes, 1972).

[3] It must be noted that 1850 fifth-grade texts in math or rhetoric was equivalent to a college-level text of today (Gatto, 2005). Furthermore, Gatto (2006) explains how a late 19th century fifth-grade reader included works by the following authors: "William Shakespeare, Henry David Thoreau, George Washington, Sir Walter Scott, Mark Twain, Benjamin Franklin, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Bunyan, Daniel Webster, Samuel Johnson, Lewis Carroll, Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and others like them" (p. 54). In 2005, publishing giant Simon & Schuster listed the following titles for fifth graders: *The Conch Bearer* by Chitra Divakaruni, *The Sea of Trolls* by Nancy Farmer, *The Secret of the Red Flame* by K.M. Kimball, *Among the Hidden* by Margaret Peterson Haddix, *Steal Away Home* by Lois Ruby, *Forty Acres And Maybe A Mule* by Harriette Gillem Robinet, *Among The Hidden (Shadow Children)* by Margaret Peterson Haddix, *The View from Saturday* by E.L. Konigsburg, and *Frindle* by Andrew Clements ("Children's Books," 2005).

[4] Lincoln attended less than one year of school. It must be noted, however, that in Lincoln's day there was no compulsory schooling and that, according to Gatto, 100 hours of disciplined study can provide the basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic — enough information for a person to become a self-learner (2005). In Lincoln's case, he was a voracious reader, carrying books with him to work so that he could read during breaks (he would learn to practice law by watching live courtroom dramas in conjunction with an Illinois law book) (Johnson, 2001, p. 6). One eyewitness noted Lincoln's prowess in winning over an audience:

elected twice as Governor of Texas (see Figure 1). Lincoln served as a captain of volunteers in the Black Hawk Indian war. Bush volunteered in the National Guard during the Vietnam War. Both never saw combat. Both would win presidencies on the Republican ticket. Both would initiate war in office.
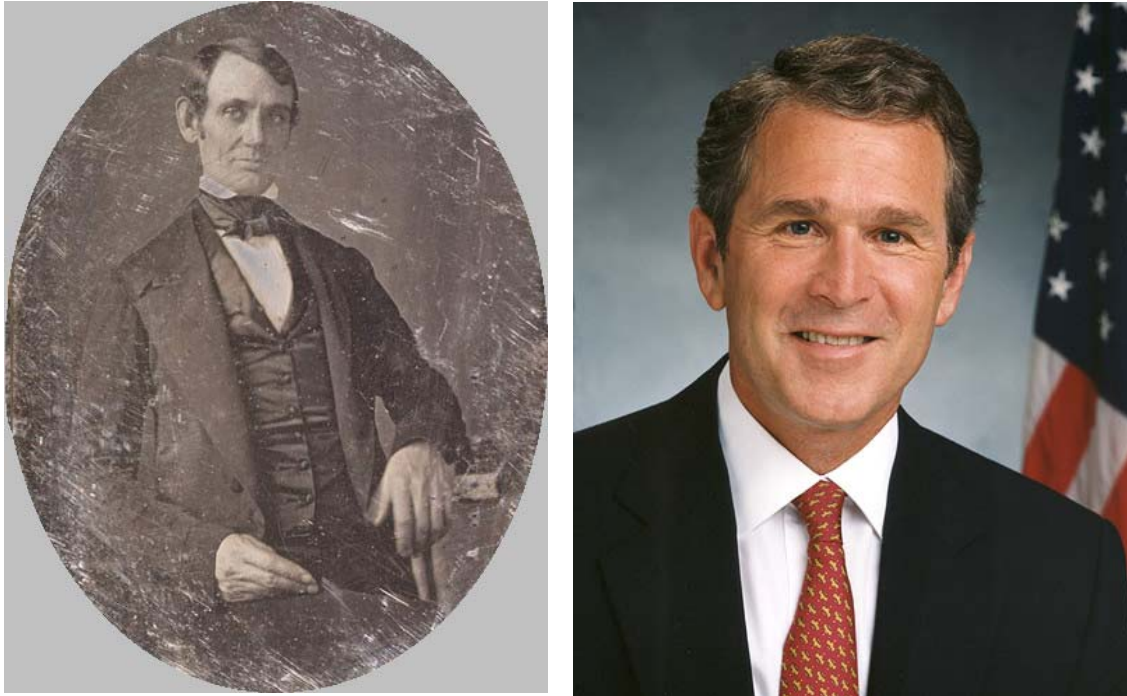


*Figure 1.* Abraham Lincoln as a young man serving in the House of Representatives. George Bush serving as Governor of Texas. Despite some similarities of background, vast differences would mark these two men and shape characters who would define the nation in time of war. (Lincoln photo courtesy Library of Congress. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://rs6.loc.gov/pnp/dag/3g/3g02000/3g02439r.jpg.  Bush photo courtesy of U.S. Foreign Office. Pristina, Kosovo. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://pristina.usmission.gov/bushph/in3a.htm).

Despite some similarities — and vast differences — between these two men, an examination of their respective speeches reveals how Lincoln and Bush remade themselves practically overnight. Lincoln's character was modeled from what he knew best: a lawyer, an intellectual gentleman who knew analysis and logic like a Socratic philosopher. One of Lincoln's legal contemporaries, Leonard Swett, marveled at Lincoln's ability in the courtroom to argue "the case of his adversary better and more forcibly, than his opponent could state for himself" (cited in Johnson, 2001, p. 8). (See Figure 2.) On the other hand, Bush's

> For the first half-hour, his opponents would agree with every word he uttered and from that part he began to lead them off, little by little, cunningly, until he seems to have gotten them all in the fold. He displays more shrewdness, more knowledge of the masses of mankind than any other public speaker we have heard. (Cited in Holzer, 2005, p. 185)

speech writers wanted him at *his* best: a "straight-up guy" who embodies the "conscience of the White House," in the words of Matthew Scully, one of his key speech writers (Scully 2007, p. 84). At the same time, he cultivated the independent and decisive "cowboy" role (many photo-ops of Bush at his Crawford, Texas ranch include a cowboy "costume") (see Figure 3). Indeed, *The Boston Globe* claimed that Bush engaged in "cowboy talk" "in the aftermath of 9/11 when [he] dragged out his Texas drawl to say that "those folks in the Taliban," well, he was going to "smoke 'em out," and that Osama bin Laden must be taken "dead or alive" (Sennott, 2002). The latter being an answer to a question put to Bush on Sept. 17, 2001 to employees at the Pentagon. The questioner asked, "Do you want bin Laden dead?" The President's response, "'I want justice. There's an old poster out West, as I recall, that said, 'Wanted: Dead or Alive'" (White House, 2001).



**Figure 2.** Lincoln cultivated an intellectual approach so that he could earn his way as a lawyer and later as a thoughtful politician. He had to climb his way out of the poor farmer image and create a *mise-en-scène* that would help cultivate his political ambitions. (Sketches by Lloyd Ostendorf, courtesy of The Lincoln Institute. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from
http://www.mrlincolnandfriends.org/photo_credits.asp?photoID=340 and
http://www.mrlincolnandfriends.org/content_inside.asp?pageID=3&subjectID=3).
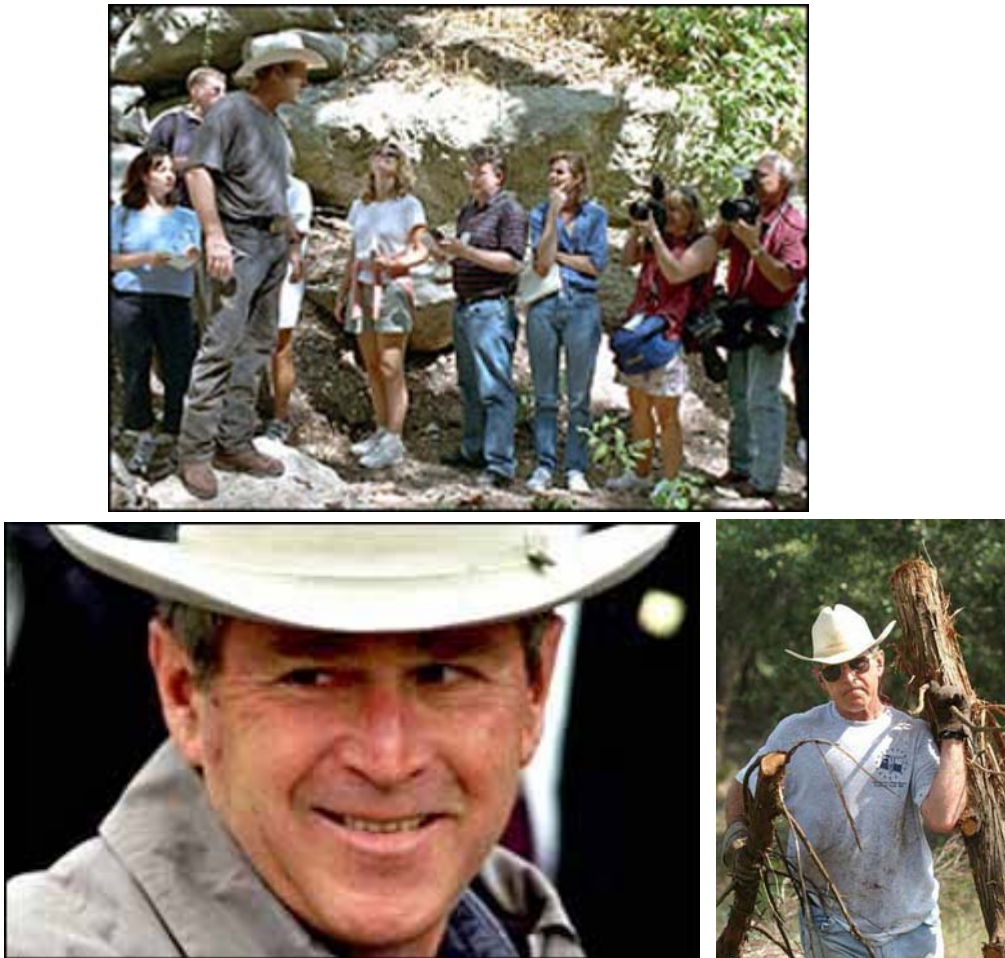
**Figure 3.** Photo-ops of President Bush include images of him dressed as a cowboy at his Crawford, Texas ranch. Bush's *mise-en-scène* outside the White House included the performance of a Texan cowboy rancher who would successfully restore certain cowboy behaviors within his foreign policy after he became the wartime president. Thus his reference to hunting down Osama bin Laden: "Wanted: Dead or Alive" — a motif of many Western genre films — wasn't seen as being outside his character for many voters. (Top photo by Moreen Ishikawa, courtesy of *The Village Voice*. Retrieved September 15, 2007, from http://www.villagevoice.com/news/0439,baard,57117,1.html. Bottom left photo by the Associated Press. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://www.cnn.com/images/0011/top.gw.bush.hat.ap.jpg; bottom right photo by the White House courtesy of *The Village Voice.* retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://www.villagevoice.com/blogs/bushbeat/archive/2004_12.php).

Despite the fact that he was known regionally as one of the best debaters in the West, Abraham Lincoln had to still overcome a Wild West stigma. He shaped, through a language game of reconstitutive discourse, an image of himself, designed to engage a sophisticated New York City audience. Indeed, the initial reaction of the crowd to Lincoln was daunting. His "awkward arms and disheveled hair" along with his out-of-style clothing (for New York) caused one journalist to reminisce, "Old fellow, you won't do; it's all very well for the Wild West, but this will never go down in New York" (cited in Holzer, 2005, pp. 108, 109, 114). However, by the end of his speech, Lincoln was perceived as an intellectual giant, so much so that he became a potential presidential candidate practically overnight. Indeed, Lincoln even presented some of his Cooper Union ideas previously in Kansas, apparently wanting to test the impression of his ideas on an audience before taking the speech to New York (Linkugel, 1974).

George W. Bush's public perception before his speech was one of a vacation president, one who didn't work hard — one poll indicated that the public was displeased with his time away from the White House (Hall, 2001) and that he went to bed at 9 pm ("Bush faces 60th birthday," 2006). Furthermore, on 9/11, Bush sat in a schoolroom during a photo-op when his Chief of Staff whispered in his ear that the United States was under attack. Bush would continue to sit in silence for several minutes, a silence filmmaker Michael Moore (2004) filled with irreverent commentary in *Fahrenheit 9/11*. *Washington Post* writer Joel Achenbach (2004) would raise the debate, as well, quoting presidential historian Douglas Brinkley, "'I don't understand how one sits there. I just don't. Minutes are an eternity in that sort of situation. . . . A quick presidential decision may save lives'" (see Figure 4). However, shortly after this, Bush would engage "a pattern of increasing self confidence" (Hart & Childers, 2005, p. 183) through performative decisiveness "in an apparently natural manner" (Alexander, 2006, p. 72), the result of which redefined him as — if not a cowboy diplomat — then one who would embody such traits so prevalently that many media outlets would refer to President Bush's post-9/11 leadership style in such a way.[5] Indeed, Bush's reconstitutive discourse embodied the cowboy rhetoric so well that an independent Pew Research Center poll found such one-word descriptors adhering to Bush's persona: "'confident,' 'courageous,' 'determined,' and 'decisive'— in short, traits associated with the mythic cowboy" (Westcott 2003).[6]

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[5]  Articles in *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Village Voice*, *BBC News*, *TIME*, among others make reference to Bush's cowboy image. Some scholars make reference to Bush's religious orientation in examining Bush's decision-making patterns, such as Denise Bostdorff's examining parallels between Puritan political covenant renewal speeches and Bush's post 9/11 speeches, even "viewing [Bush] as a sort of 21st century Cotton Mather" (2003, p. 297). But the cowboy image sticks in the popular press, mainly as a pejorative term against Bush.

[6]  What is perhaps more interesting is how Bush never performed this cowboy-type role when he was governor of Texas, according to editorial columnist William McKenzie writing for *The Dallas Morning News*, "The only thing unusual about the Bush hat is that most of the folks here and around Texas had probably never seen their governor wearing a cowboy hat. I never had, and I had covered Mr. Bush pretty closely. He was never a Yankee-in-disguise, but nor was he your Claytie Williams-style cowboy pol" (2007). Indeed, Roderick Hart and Jay Childers note how Bush, as Governor of Texas, "was hardly

**Figure 4.** During the attacks on 9/11, Bush sat in a classroom reading a story to children. The Bush Administration claimed that Bush kept reading the story, even when he knew the country was under attack in order to project an image of calm. The staff attorney for the 9/11 Commission would testify, "The national press corps was standing behind the children in the classroom. He saw their phones and pagers start to ring. The President felt he should project strength and calm until he could better understand what was happening" (in Moyers, 2004). However, filmmaker Michael Moore, performing the role of court jester, would make fun of Bush's inaction, creating a character of ineptitude (2004). Much of Bush's image in the press up until 9/11 presented an unpopular president who would take a lot of vacations. His 9/11 speech would challenge this persona and create a presidential make-over which propelled him to a second term in office.
(Left photo courtesy of Vocal. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://hcgtv.com/archive/8/2005-8; photo on right, courtesy of *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://www.sfgate.com/cgibin/object/article?f=/chronicle/reviews/movies/FAHRENHEIT911.DTL&o=0 &type=movies).

### Summary of Speeches

Abraham Lincoln's Cooper Union speech contained three sections revolving around his central question: "Does the proper division of local from federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbid our Federal Government to control as to slavery in our Federal Territories?" Democratic rival Senator Douglas "holds the affirmative, and Republicans the negative." In the first section, Lincoln defined who the founding fathers were, and how they voted on various issues of slavery. In the second section, he addressed "the Southern people," denying, through force of logic and facts, that the Republican party was

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an ideologue. He was instead a pragmatist, quickly befriending the Democratic lieutenant governor" who ended up mentoring Bush (2005, p. 180).

trying to force secession on the South. In the third section, Lincoln addressed his fellow Republicans and argued that there was only one position that would convince the South that the Republicans were not out to get them — but to do so, the Republicans would have to illogically turn their backs on the Constitution. Lincoln concluded with his famous line, "Right makes might."[7]

In Bush's address to a joint session of Congress (and televised to the American people and broadcast to the world), he discussed the terrorist attacks against the United States nine days earlier. He opened with a discussion on the "state of the Union," contending that it "is strong," but that "we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done."

Bush proceeded to talk about the unity of America and the support of America from around the world, noting that citizens from eighty nations died in the attacks. Calling the attackers "enemies of freedom," Bush transitioned to four questions by which he structured the rest of the speech. These questions would ostensibly be the ones that his viewers would naturally have asked after 9/11: "Who attacked our country?," "Why do they hate us?," "How will we fight and win this war?" and "What is expected of us?" Bush concluded with a soliloquy about his personal responsibility, "I will not forget this wound to our country or those who inflicted it.  I will not yield; I will not rest; I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people."[8]

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[7]  For convenience, all citations from Lincoln's Cooper Union speech will be from Holzer, 2005. No further citation to this speech will be made in this essay. A full text of the speech may be found online at Abraham Lincoln Online. http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/cooper.htm

[8]  For convenience all citations from Bush's Sept. 20, 2001 speech will be from Bush, 2001. No further citation to this speech will be made in this essay. A full text of Bush's speech may be found at The White House online. http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html

Note that Bush's language is not much different than Prime Minister Churchill's May 13, 1940 speech, his first speech to the House of Commons. At one point, Churchill says, "You ask, what is our policy? I say it is to wage war by land, sea, and air. War with all our might and with all the strength God has given us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy" (Churchill, 1940). Bush's use of emotive language is also similar to President Franklin Roosevelt's Dec. 8, 1941 Pearl Harbor speech, "No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory" (Roosevelt, 1941). Unlike Bush, however, for both Churchill and Roosevelt, it was rational to use emotive language in order to rally a nation *needing* to go to war. Proof wasn't required in their speeches, since evidence existed. Without the fight, Britain would have fallen to the Germans and the United States would not have been there for its allies. Notice also that Roosevelt in the same speech asked permission for war, "I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, Dec. 7, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire." Al Qaeda's attack wasn't a strike from a particular country — such as Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor — and direct proof of an attack by particular members of al Qaeda have not been

### The Language Game of Lincoln's Speech

Abraham Lincoln's persona, as found in his speech, was filled with elements of analysis and logic designed to convince his audience that he was the right man for president, that he was a thoughtful leader with solutions. Thus the tenor of Lincoln's speech was designed to win over the skeptic through clear logical power — the heart of Lincoln's language game — and comprised the primary weapon he utilized in order to prove to a New York City metropolitan audience that his intellect was good enough to lead a country on the verge of civil war (see Figure 6). At the time, Illinois was considered the Wild West, so his audience was expecting from Lincoln, as one eyewitness noted, "something weird, rough, and uncultivated" and his appearance, for many, "did not fit in with New York's conception of a finished statesman" (cited in Holzer, 2005, pp. 109-110). Since Lincoln could not change his costume, he would use language and the means of performing it the primary means of shaping his persona.
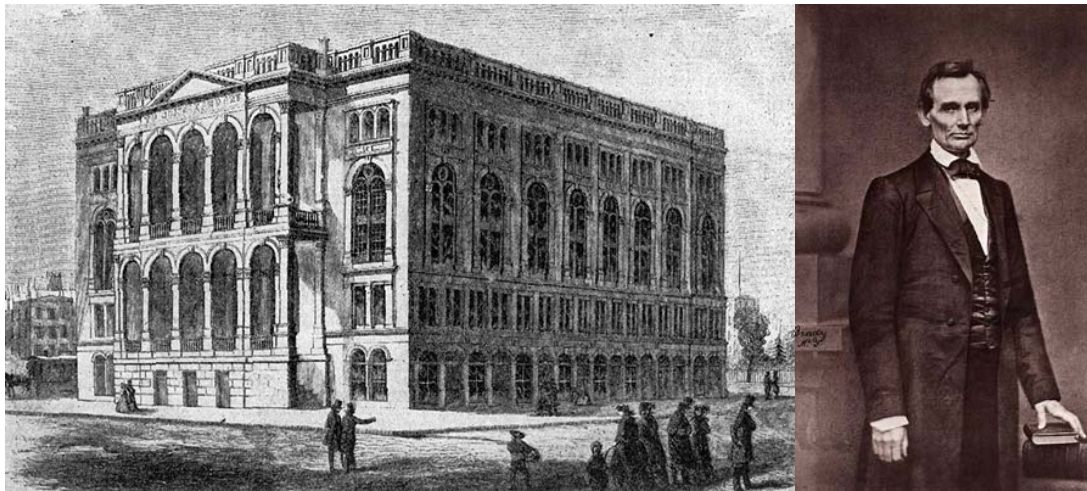


*Figure 6.* Cooper Union hall in New York City at the time of Lincoln's speech. Lincoln purchased a new suit and had this photograph taken of him by Mathew Grady, who would become famous through his Civil War photography. Despite this, many still felt his suit to be out of fashion and when he gave his speech, his hair was disheveled — only enhancing his Wild West persona. However, his audience would eventually see through his appearance and Lincoln's worthiness as a potential presidential candidate — his redefinition of self as an intellectual giant — would be shaped by the speech he gave at Cooper Union on Feb. 27, 1860. In addition, he astutely gave copies of his speech to the press, so they would accurately print it in newspapers the day after his performance. (Drawing by Albert Shaw, courtesy of The Lincoln Institute. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from
http://www.mrlincolnandnewyork.org/photo_credits_content.asp?photoID=138&subjectID=&ID=

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fully proven, for some, who believe there's evidence of particular terrorists named in the attacks being alive, today (see Kyle, 2006).

and photo by Mathew Grady, courtesy of Yale University. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://www.yale.edu/terc/democracy/may1text/images/Cooper%20Union.jpg).

One eyewitness who saw Lincoln give speeches in Illinois, noted a change in Lincoln's typical stump speech performances. Lincoln changed his performance from "walking up and down, swaying about, swinging his arms, bobbing forward" to a reserved, statesman-like manner, "standing up stiff and straight, with his hands quiet, pronouncing sentence after sentence, in good telling English. . . ." (cited in Holzer, 2005, p. 145). As a way to further enhance his new persona in the eyes of his audience, Lincoln also stepped back from emotional diatribe to the statesman-like use of reason, facts, and the Constitution to cogently present the young Republican party's position on slavery: expansion of it is not within the purview of the Constitution and slavery should be contained in existing states until it eventually dies of its own immoral weight.[9]

Lincoln opened his logical argument by quoting a line from Senator Douglas's speech given in Columbus, Ohio a few months earlier, "Our fathers, when they framed the Government under which we live, understand this question just as well, and even better, then we do now" (the Federal Government's position on the expansion of slavery). Rather than attack Douglas or revert to emotive language — a technique found throughout Bush's speech — Lincoln, in fact, agreed with Douglas, "I fully indorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse." To differentiate the Republicans from "that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas,"  he then asked a simple question, "'What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned?'" In order to answer that question, Lincoln proceeded to ask another question before finding his answer, "What is the frame of government under which we live?" The answer, of course, is obvious: the Constitution. (See Video 1.)

It must be noted, that in the Fall of 1858, Lincoln and Douglas presented their famed oratorical debates in Illinois. In many ways, Lincoln was attempting to extend and finalize these debates through his Cooper Union address. For example, in a 30-minute response to Douglas's speech given in Charleston, Illinois on Sept. 18 (the fourth joint debate), Lincoln challenged Douglas's veracity that the slavery issue was settled and would foreshadow the main point he would raise in the opening of his Cooper Union speech, ". . .  I say there is no way to put an end to slavery agitation among us, but to put it back on the basis that our fathers put it on, restricting it to the old States and prohibiting it in the territories, thus the public mind being in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction" (Holzer, 1993, p. 228).

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[9]   In a Troy, Kansas warm-up speech to the later Cooper Union speech, Colonel Andrew Agey — who owned slaves in Kansas — disagreed with Lincoln's argument. However, he felt Lincoln presented "the most able — the most logical — speech I ever listened to" (Linkugel, 1970, p. 179).
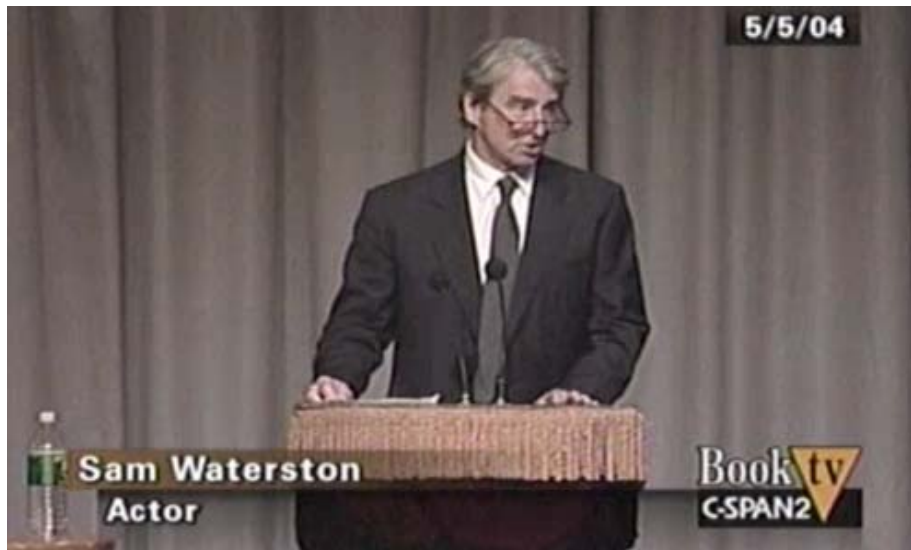
Click [Flash icon] to view Flash movie.

Click **here** to download entire movie.

Click **here** to download Adobe Flash Player

*Video 1.* Actor Sam Waterston performs Abraham Lincoln's Cooper Union speech. Here, we see how Lincoln set up his argument through logic, avoiding emotional attacks against his rival, Senator Douglas. (Excerpted and edited by the author from C-SPAN.)

However, for Lincoln in his later Cooper Union speech, a glib answer — his past persona — had to be erased. As Michael Leff observes, "Recall that in his earlier speeches, Lincoln's problem was that his arguments rested on vague, rather idealistic grounds, whereas the opposing view encompassed concrete constitutional and historical evidence" (2001, p. 237). Thus Lincoln not only altered his body language, but he went deeper into logic and proved his lawyerly skills. He continued to ask and answer his questions in a detailed scholarly analysis by defining the Constitution, as well as the framers of the Constitution (the 39 signatories to it), and then presented the voting records of these 39 founding fathers (as well as the 76 members of Congress "which framed the amendments thereto") in relationship to the Federal Government's position on slavery from 1784-1820: votes on the "Ordinance of '87"; the enforcement of the act in 1789; the prohibition of bringing slaves into the newly organized "Territory of Mississippi" "from any place without the United States" (1798); the limitation of how slaves were brought into the State of Louisiana (1803-1804); and the prohibition of slavery in Missouri (1819-1820). Lincoln's research revealed that a majority of the founding fathers "certainly understood that no proper division of local from federal authority, nor any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control slavery in the federal territories." He closed this section of his speech by concluding that the Republicans want to act and interpret their position on slavery as the founding "fathers marked it . . . as an evil not to be extended . . . ."

Furthermore, Lincoln referenced the Supreme Court's 1857 Dred Scott decision equating slaves with property by their ill-fated interpretation of the Fifth Amendment "which provides that no person shall by deprived of 'life, liberty, or property without due process of law.'" Also, he mentioned that Senator Douglas's argument hinged on the Tenth Amendment — that any power not defined in the Constitution

"are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Lincoln defied these interpretations by asserting the following logic: the founders would not interpret such amendments to the Constitution in such a way, because, as Lincoln had earlier spelled out in his address, the voting records of the founding fathers revealed how they questioned the various issues of slavery — the evidence of the founding father's votes were "inconsistent" with both Douglas's Tenth Amendment argument and the Supreme Court's Dred Scott Fifth Amendment interpretation.

Lincoln wasn't given an anti-slavery speech[10] — he was given a presidential speech. Leff agrees: ". . . the design of the whole text  . . .  works effectively toward promoting the speaker as a presidential candidate. . . . [It] progressively constructs the speaker as persona for his party, and this identification is precisely suited to Lincoln's purposes" (2001, p. 234). In the logic of reconstitutive discourse, Lincoln reframed himself from the initial perception as being "uncultivated" and presenting an "awkwardness of unconscious rusticity" (cited in Holzer, 2005, p. 109) to as deep and strong a thinker as any in New York City, so much so that many were convinced to nominate this man from the Wild West to the Republican ticket, rather than New York's Senator Seward, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee.

### The Language Game of Bush's Speech

If Lincoln had to create a persona in context of a country on the verge of disunion,[11] Bush had the task of presenting a persona who could unify the country at the cusp of the 21st century when brazen terrorist attacks stabbed fear throughout a nation on Sept. 11, 2001. Within this speech we can find a persona embodying three roles — the cowboy, the priest, and the soldier. Bush's speechwriters (Michael Gerson, John Gibson, John McConnell, and Matthew Scully) instilled this unity by refusing to play the victim, but instead engaged the opening part of the speech with a language game of heroism: the state of the Union has "been delivered by the American people" through its heroic deeds of the passengers of Flight 93 who struggled against the terrorists. Bush also mentioned — later on in the speech — police officer George Howard, pulling out the victim's police badge, as he noted how he "died at the World Trade Center trying to save others" (see Video 2). Bush referred to the sacrifice of the rescuers, as well as "the unfurling of flags, the lighting of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers — in English, Hebrew, and Arabic." He claimed that the "entire world has seen the state of our Union — and it is strong." By framing his argument around the American people, Bush invoked the unity of patriotism, a patriotism that revolved around the pride of country: flags, candles, and prayers, while the image of those who gave blood evoked the blood of patriots.

By setting up his argument around the heroic deeds of Americans, Bush began the step by which he would win over his audience by challenging the image that they were just victims of an attack, the first

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[10] Lincoln was originally to present his speech at Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's parish, which author Harold Holzer would label as "one of the nation's shrines to abolitionism" (Holzer, 2005, p. 10).

[11] Leaders from the South claimed that if you voted Republican, it would force the Union to break. (Holzer, 2005, pp. 274-276, footnote 30.)

step in crafting his cowboy persona. Indeed, Smith contends that Bush re-shaped the victim rhetoric in less than 48 hours, citing how he at first referred to the country as being under attack to a country that would take a proactive stance of "ridding the world of evil" (2005, pp. 38-39).



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*Video 2.* Bush uses emotional language to win over his audience, opening his speech about the state of the Union. Later, he pulls out  police officer George Howard's badge, given to Bush by the victim's mother after 9/11. (Excerpted and edited by the author from C-SPAN, Sept. 20, 2001).

The center of Bush's language game revolved around the following few lines:

Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.

This was the heart of Bush's reconstitutive discourse and shifted the audience's perception of him as "inept" to the can-do cowboy — hunting enemies down and taking them "dead or alive." Smith contends that Bush engaged in what Theodore Windt calls "crisis rhetoric," where the president has "mastery" over the knowledge and situation, placing this mastery within the context of a "historic struggle" of good versus evil, and the "support for the president" in this struggle is a "mark of honor and character for the American people" (Smith 2005, p. 33).

By utilizing such binary rhetoric of good versus evil, however, Bush ended up evoking the very tropes of his enemy, according to Douglas Kellner, who argues that Bush's rhetoric mirrored in many ways

the rhetorical intent of Osama bin Laden, "Interestingly, Bush administration discourses, like those of bin Laden and radical Islamists, are fundamentally Manichean, positing a binary opposition between good and evil, us and them, civilization and barbarism" (Kellner, 2004, p. 47). At the same time, this righteous dualism was also the very step which would set up his "priestly" persona. Bush won so many over, Denise Bostdorrf explains, because he invoked a "reanimation of the appeals and forms of covenant renewal rhetoric" (2003, pp. 297-298). Bush portrayed post-9/11 American citizens

> as a special people watched over by a benevolent God; depicted external evil that necessitated a new national mission; optimistically urged the need for a renewal of the national covenant, particularly by the younger generations; described September 11 as a successful test of character and opportunity for cultural change; and encouraged acts of faith and 'good works.' (pp. 301-302)

However, David Domke claims that Bush "converged a religious fundamentalist worldview with its political language" creating "political fundamentalism" designed "to offer familiarity, comfort, and a nation-affirming moral vision to the American public in the aftermath of September 11th" (2004, p. 69).

Alexander argues that "the goal of performances" is to create "fusion" — where audience, performer, society, and culture come together in a holistic way "creating ritual-like effects" (2006, p. 42). Bush's priestly persona shaped a performative cathexis of God and country molded shaman-like from the ashes of 9/11 and left no room for exploration of causes or self-examination. Furthermore, this persona would silence his critics. The "leftist Jeremiahs accusations that the government" should take some of the blame for 9/11 due to its aggressive foreign policy (especially in relationship to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict) fell on deaf ears, precisely because Bush formulated this sense of covenant renewal, Bostdorff claims, "which allowed him to place blame for September 11 on evil, external enemies, and to cast the U.S. and its citizens as a blameless, exceptional community that had been attacked because of its goodness" (2003, pp. 298-299). But if Kellner is right, and Bush utilized similar tropes bin Laden used to stir up his followers, then the covenant renewal argument is too simplistic an answer. Bush's persona revolved around several personalities that would mark his post-9/11 presidency.

Therefore, when Bush transitioned to how the country was called to "defend freedom" and talked about bringing justice to enemies — utilizing elements of what many would later refer as Bush's black and white moralistic cowboy persona — it was part of his reconstitutive discourse, a language game that would place Bush within a larger *dramapolitik* on the world stage — a world leader who would help rid the world of evil by creating a leadership persona who embodied a postmodern pastiche of three simultaneous roles: priest, cowboy-statesman, and soldier (see Figure 6). By utilizing "strips of behavior" (Schechner, 1985, p. 36) found in these roles — by projecting sensitivity, righteous leadership, and decisive military posturing after 9/11 — we can see evidence of Bush's presidential transformation from a vacation presidency to a wartime presidency.[12] Because of his tripartite role, he was able to induce his audience into accepting

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[12] What's ironic is that although there seemed to be less photo-ops of Bush as a cowboy on his Texan ranch compared to the professional presidential image after 9/11, he still maintained his cowboy image, but more so through speech referents to the mythic Wild West.

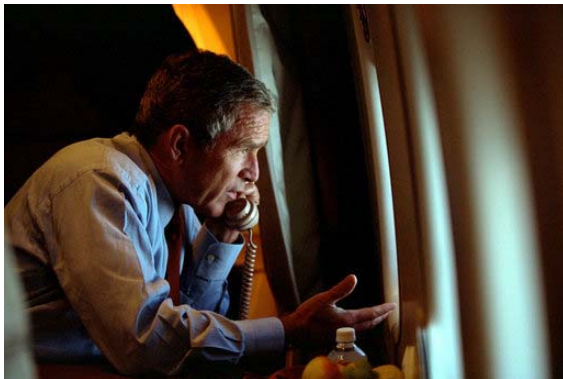policies that could only have occurred by placing the nation on a wartime footing**.**



**Figure 6.** Whereas Lincoln would embody one role — the intellectual statesman — Bush ended up creating a presidential triptych, a leader that embodies three simultaneous roles: he would console and preach to his audience, reveal work getting done, and lead the nation to a vision of military strategy against "enemies of freedom." Take note of the costume changes, a formal suit for consoling, jacket off when working hard, and a military flight suit. (Top photo by Paul Morse courtesy of the White House. Retrieved Nov. 14, 2006, from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/09/images/20050909-1_92f11medalofhonor3j-515h.html; bottom left photo by Eric Draper courtesy of the White House. Retrieved Nov 14, 2006, from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/images/20010911.html; bottom right photo by the Associated Press courtesy of *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved Oct. 25, 2006, from http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/05/02/1051382078205.html).

### Lincoln's Sledgehammer Logic

Southern secession was not an option for Lincoln, who felt that the Constitution — and thereby the United States — could not afford to split apart. Yet for Lincoln, reason, logic, and lucidity framed his character and shaped how he would react to and through the world. That was the character he defined and would perform within his *dramapolitik* after he was elected. Lincoln was a relative unknown outside his state who had to be seen as a statesman and overcome his rustic western roots.

In his essay, "Abraham Lincoln: Wordsmith," Michael Johnson (2001) notes two observations about Lincoln and one by Lincoln that supports why Lincoln would choose a logical, statesman-like persona in this speech:

- 'Reason,' [Lincoln] declared in a speech in 1838, 'cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason, must furnish all the materials for our future support and defence';

- As a lawyer friend observed, Lincoln 'confined himself to a dry bold statement of his point and then worked away with sledge hammer logic at making out his case';

- During his presidency, Lincoln commented, 'It is very common in this country to find great facility of expression and less common to find great lucidity of thought.' (p. 9)

Thus within his persona, Lincoln didn't directly call the South's position on slavery an "evil" or refer to them as "evildoers", but rather he would infer it through logic. For example, in the second part of his speech, Lincoln argued against the Southern charge that Republicans "stir up insurrections among your slaves." Lincoln flatly denied it, and then asked, "What is your proof?" (that the Republicans fermented the Harper's Ferry slavery insurrection?) (See Figure 7.) Lincoln's language game cracked with logical power (see Video 3):

> John Brown was no Republican; and you have failed to implicate a single Republican in his Harper's Ferry enterprise. If any member of our party is guilty in that matter, you know it or you do not know it. If you do know it, you are inexcusable for not designating the man and proving the fact. If you do not know it, you are inexcusable for asserting it, and especially for persisting in the assertion after you have tried and failed to make the proof. You need to be told that persisting in a charge which one does not know to be true, is simply malicious slander.
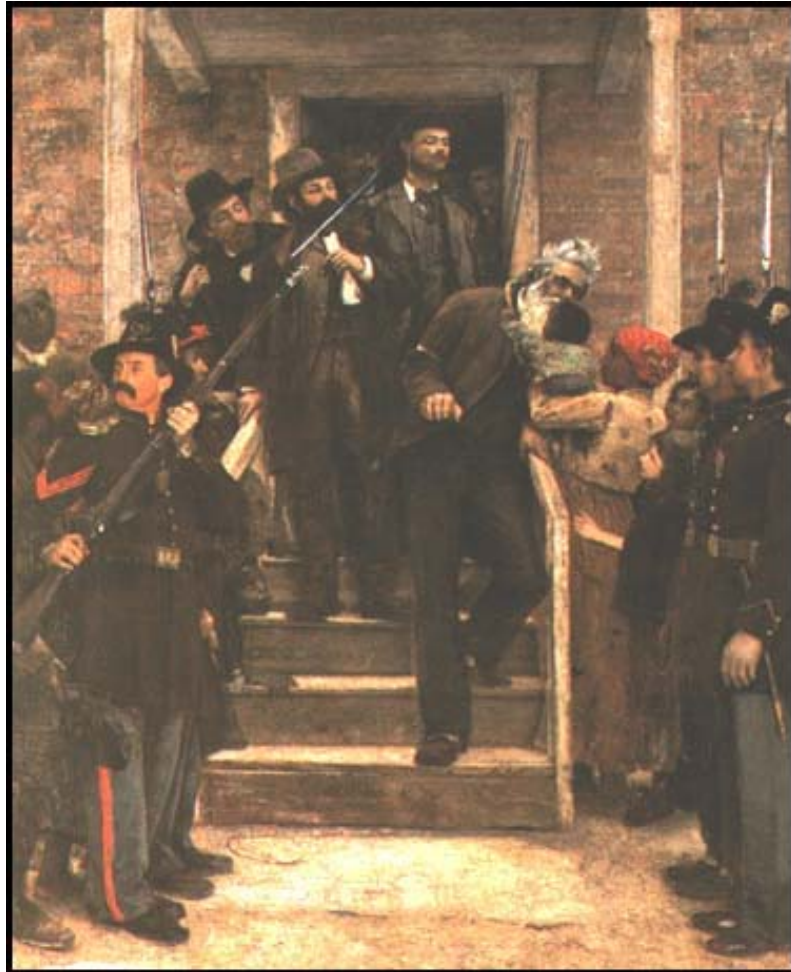
*Figure 7.* The South blamed the Republican Party for stirring up the John Brown slave insurrection and some leaders even stated that if you voted for a Republican, you would be voting for disunion. Lincoln would use logic to counter their claims. (Painting by Thomas Hovenden, Metropolitan Museum of Art; image courtesy of Swarthmore College. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://www.swarthmore.edu/Humanities/kjohnso1/pictures/brownstairs.jpg).

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*Video 3.* Sam Waterston performs Lincoln's speech, claiming that the South has proffered no proof that the Republican Party has stirred up insurrection among the slaves. (Excerpted and edited by the author from C-SPAN.)

Lincoln's irony and logic made the Southern claims seem so ludicrous he received two instances of laughter and three instances of applause during this one paragraph (Holzer, 2005, p. 270). He was winning over his audience, creating Black's second persona and engaging Hammerback's reconstitutive discourse, "the merging of personae and message" inducing the audience "to reorder their qualities of character and thereby alter their self-definition" (2001, p. 20). Lincoln placed the burden of proof on the South. Yet, this was only the beginning of his argument in disproving the Southern claim that the Republicans stirred up slaves. Lincoln returned to the use of the Constitution to shape his argument, and his conclusion to this line of logic would be prophetic:

> When you make these declarations, you have a specific and well-understood allusion to an assumed Constitutional right of yours, to take slaves into the federal territories, and to hold them there as property. But no such right is specifically written in the Constitution. That instrument is literally silent about any such right. We, on the contrary, deny that such a right has any existence in the Constitution, even by implication.
>
> Your purpose, then, plainly stated, is that you will destroy the Government, unless you be allowed to construe and enforce the Constitution as you please, on all points in dispute between you and us. You will rule or ruin in all events. (See Video 4.)

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*Video 4.* Sam Waterston performs Lincoln's speech, who ingeniously uses logic to show that the South has no Constitutional claim in owning slaves. (Excerpted and edited by the author from C-SPAN.)

If Lincoln were to agree with the South, he ingeniously argued, he would have to drop the founding fathers' position (which he lucidly established in the first third of this speech) and turn his back on the Constitution, insinuating that the South would split the Union if they get their way. At the same time, James Kimble argues that Lincoln engaged "*implicit* calls for violence" through "seemingly reasonable words and points of view" (2007, p. 66). Kimble explores how Lincoln's rhetoric before and during his inaugural speeches engaged in "polarized nature" — the Union over States — in a form of "victimage ritual" as a means for preparing a nation for war "by enacting a dramatic cycle that constructs an Other as scapegoat" (pp. 56-57). In Kimble's reading, the South becomes the scapegoat precisely because "Lincoln's overt campaign for *Union* . . . quickly garnered the covert marks of separation and disunity" (p. 60).

While Bush would engage rhetoric that Kimble could define as a process by which "the enemy is decivilized for the explicit purpose of justifying a cathartic war campaign against him," "Lincoln's rhetoric, in contrast, appears to lack the vitriolic language with which to demonize the enemy" (2007, p. 64). Thus, when Lincoln argues that "you will destroy the Government, unless you be allowed to construe and enforce the Constitution as you please," Kimble would say that such a "choice forms an either/or polarization" (p. 64), setting up a case for war, rather than engaging in language that "avoids constructing a scapegoat by focusing on the public confession of each side's inadequacies and faults" — a process that

helps create peace (p. 66). Perhaps Lincoln knew war was inevitable, and it was through this very persona that would allow him to later put the country on a wartime footing.

### *"Why do they hate us?"*

Bush's persona was more overt. After explaining how the United States had a world of support, Bush began a line of argument along ideologically indefensible and unarguable values — engaging his priestly, cowboy, and soldier persona and setting up part of Bostdorff's covenant renewal theme: "depict[ing] external evil that necessitate[s] a new national mission" (2003, p. 301), a mission that Domke (2004) claims encapsulates Bush's "fundamentalist politics" (p. 69): "On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country" (see Video 5). The United States was attacked by "enemies of freedom." But they didn't just attack, they "committed an act of war," not only against the United States, but against "a world where freedom itself is under attack." In his answer to the question, "Why do they hate us?" we can begin to see how Bush attempted to redefine his presidency and make the case for war:

> They hate what we see right here in this chamber — a democratically-elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms — our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.

By making the case that freedom is under attack, Bush claimed that the United States and those who side with its freedoms could potentially lose those freedoms in a war in which the very foundations of the country — indeed of Western Civilization — could be lost.

Although previous presidents in wartime speeches utilized patterns of thoughtfulness, explored the origins of the war, and engaged the military as a last resort — all elements of what Campbell and Jamieson claim as characteristics of presidential wartime speeches (in Smith 2005, p. 33) — Smith contends that Bush couldn't engage such themes, "because he and the nation were angry rather than thoughtful, the origins of the immediate problem and the enemy were unknown, and military force seemed a necessary first resort; also, the national trauma demanded retribution" (p. 33). I respectively disagree. Bush could have sought justice by "invok[ing] criminal law in response," as Martin Montgomery (2005, p. 177) points out how previous terrorist attacks were dealt with. However, because of a "semantic vacuum" of no group claiming responsibility and no demands being made, Montgomery contends, the state shifted its focus "out of the domain of criminality into the domain of warfare" (p. 177). Thus Bush evoked crisis rhetoric as a means to create his *dramapolitik* character — one invigorated with a renewal of his presidential leadership — making a moral case by which evil had to be punished, reconstituting most of his audience into an unconditional acceptance of war.[13]

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[13] As further evidence that Bush was motivated by an agenda that strengthened the executive branch, we can see:

> At a minimum, political leaders might have suggested that any new anti-terrorism legislation be enacted only after careful deliberation, perhaps some distance removed

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*Video 5*. Bush describes how "justice will be done" against "our enemies" in the key speech of his Presidency. (Excerpted and edited by the author from C-SPAN, Sept. 20, 2001).

Bush proceeded to make another ultimatum to the world, an ultimatum that would further help cement Bush's war position by embodying a tripartite persona of good versus evil morality, cowboy diplomacy, and Commander-in-Chief soldier,

> Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.

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from Sept. 11, so as to ensure that a range of public and political voices were heard and considered. Government officials might also have drawn significantly upon the report issued a few months earlier, in February 2001, by the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century (2001), headed by former senators Warren G. Rudman and Gary Hart. This report had suggested the creation of a Department of Homeland Security (under a different name), but the president after Sept. 11 instead issued an executive order creating the Office of Homeland Security, reporting directly to the president. (Domke et al., 2006, p. 294)

It is the "civilized world [that] is rallying to America's side." The implication: if one doesn't take America's side in this war, then they will be considered uncivilized, because America is fighting for freedom.

Bush began the conclusion of his speech with a rally for his citizens:

But this country will define our times, not be defined by them. As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror; this will be an age of liberty, here and across the world. . . . Our nation — this generation — will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future.

This brings out the priestly role of Bush, creating the belief that America will be resolute in its superpower destiny to defend freedom around the world, "We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail." (See Video 6.) As Bostdorff makes clear, this fight against "evil" would become "a moral imperative" and "pre-emptive actions might have to be taken unilaterally if good were to triumph" (2003, p. 305).



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*Video 6*. Bush rallies his audience to stand strong in the face of evil. (Excerpted and edited by the author, from C-SPAN, Sept. 20, 2001).

When this role is tied to a moral imperative, and that imperative is used for political gain, we can begin to see why Bush's postmodern role was just the right choice to extend the United States' hegemonic power throughout the world as laid out in the neoconservative document, "Rebuilding America's Defenses," a key component of the think tank, The Project for the New American Century. Thomas

Donnelly, the principle author, was "concerned with the decline in the strength of America's defenses, and in the problems this would create for the exercise of American leadership around the globe and, ultimately, for the preservation of peace" (2000, p. i). Furthermore, since the United States is the remaining superpower, the authors argue that if defense spending declines and new defense policies are not put into place, then "the United States has been letting its ability to take full advantage of the remarkable strategic opportunity at hand slip away" (2000, p. ii).

Furthermore, the PNAC agenda also includes ". . . the essential elements of the Reagan Administration's success: a military that is strong and ready to meet both present and future challenges; a foreign policy that boldly and purposefully promotes American principles abroad; and national leadership that accepts the United States' global responsibilities" (PNAC, 1997). Members of PNAC include Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Elliot Abrams of the National Security Council, John Bolton (Bush's appointment to the United Nations), among two dozen others making up the Bush administration (SourceWatch).

Bush, by aligning his character with those of PNAC, would inherit the character traits — restoring the potential performance behavior (Schechner, 1985) — embedded in this document. And Bush's Sept. 20, 2001 speech — blending his three roles (priest, soldier, and cowboy) became the very persona that allowed for an embodiment of the neoconservative agenda found in his subsequent actions as president.

Further supporting his desire for war, Bush defined the enemy of freedom — the loosely networked international organization of al Qaeda, and the Taliban who supported them — and then proceeded to issue an ultimatum to the Taliban government of Afghanistan, "These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate." This behavior also conveyed Bush's cowboy diplomat persona. The bombing of Afghanistan — the first step in his war plans — would begin shortly after Bush's speech, a bombing campaign that killed more civilians than al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks (see Figure 8).[14]

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[14] What's interesting to note, if we are to believe a BBC report, that according to "Niaz Naik, a former Pakistani Foreign Secretary," the United States told the Pakistani government in "mid-July that military action against Afghanistan would go ahead by the middle of October [2001]" (Arney, 2001) — a plan laid out before the attacks of Sept. 11, a plan that fits within the neoconservative agenda.

*Figure 8.* Cowboy diplomacy would leave more than 3,800 civilians dead in Afghanistan in two months of bombing, including the death of those attending a wedding. (Top left photo by Reuters, courtesy of Cursor. Retrieved Oct. 25 2006, from http://www.cursor.org/stories/casualty_count.htm; top right photo courtesy of *BBC News*. Retrieved Oct. 25 2006, from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1740538.stm; bottom photo by Associated Press, courtesy of *The Guardian*. Retrieved Oct. 25 2006, from http://www.rawa.org/s-wedding.htm).

Furthermore, as part of his role of Commander-in-Chief, Bush pushed through the neoconservative agenda of what would become known later as the Bush Doctrine — the use of preemptive military force against other nations — ostensibly to fight terrorism, but ultimately designed to defend the

interests of the United States and its allies,[15] including the invasion of Iraq 18 months later, a war that remained largely unquestioned until well after members of Congress, the press, and a majority of Americans gave their stamp of approval.[16] In addition, Bush's support of the Patriot Act, the suppression of any view not supporting his war on terrorism, as well as knowingly allowing the transfer of al Qaeda prisoners to countries that condone torture would remain relatively unquestioned in the mainstream press of the United States, thus revealing just how far Bush's reconstitutive discourse reached and how much his audience substantiated Bush's neoconservative agenda by allowing themselves to be "induced" through Bush's speech. The pre-9/11 Bush could never have put forth such a vision for the world, but post-9/11 circumstances allowed Bush to choose a persona in which he finally became "inaugurat[ed] to the presidency" and overcome what Bostdorff claims as "questions about his electoral legitimacy, political leadership, and personal traits [that] had prevented Americans from fully investing him with the office" (2003, p. 301).

If Lincoln were in Bush's position, he may have decided to invade Afghanistan as well, but not necessarily so. Lincoln certainly would have stood on Constitutional principles before making such a decision. For example, in Lincoln's militia proclamation of April 15, 1861, he made it clear his reasons for calling up the militia against the South: U.S. law is being opposed and obstructed by seven Southern states "by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, or by the powers vested in the Marshals of law" (cited in Johnson, 2001, p. 122). The court and police system couldn't handle such a crisis as secession, so the final resort of the military had to be engaged. If the reason wasn't strong enough, Lincoln may indeed have avoided a direct conflict with Afghanistan — but it might have depended upon public expectation.

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[15] *The Washington Post* reported on March 11, 1992 that the initial conception of what would become known as the Bush Doctrine, was based on a document whose authorship was "supervised" by Paul Wolfowitz, one of the architects of the Iraq invasion. *The Post* described a Defense Department document that, "contemplates use of American military power to preempt or punish use of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, 'even in conflicts that otherwise do not directly engage U.S. interests.' The central strategy of the Pentagon framework is to 'establish and protect a new order' that accounts 'sufficiently for the interests of the advanced industrial nations to discourage them from challenging our leadership,' while at the same time maintaining a military dominance capable of 'deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role.' 'While the U.S. cannot become the world's policeman, by assuming responsibility for righting every wrong, we will retain the preeminent responsibility for addressing selectively those wrongs which threaten not only our interests, but those of our allies or friends, or which could seriously unsettle international relations,' the document states" (Gellman, 1992).

[16] According to notes written by aids to Bush's Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (a signatory to PNAC's "Statement of Principles") on 9/11, he ". . . wanted 'best info fast. Judge whether good enough [to] hit S.H.' — meaning Saddam Hussein — 'at same time. Not only UBL' — the initials used to identify Osama bin Laden. . . . 'Go massive,' the notes quote [Rumsfeld] as saying. 'Sweep it all up. Things related and not'" ("Plans for Iraq attack," 2002). This would become the strip of behavior that would get restored through Bush's speech, creating a performance by which Iraq became the scapegoat for 9/11 in an attempt to put forward the neoconservative agenda to implant democracy in the Middle East.

Most citizens in the United States were expecting retribution, and as noted earlier, Bush's speech stepped away from the criminal justice process of the 9/11 attacks to a wartime footing (Montgomery, 2005). However, it seems even more likely that that Lincoln would have opposed an invasion of Iraq, if his opposition to the Mexican War is any guide (see Figure 9). In an autobiographical essay, Lincoln noted that he voted against the war, finding it was "unnecessarily and *unConstitutionally* begun by the President [James Polk] of the United States." He argued briefly that "the act of sending an armed force among the Mexicans, was *unnecessary*, inasmuch as Mexico was in no way molesting, or menacing the U.S. or the people thereof; and that it was *unConstitutional*, because the power of levying war is vested in Congress, and not in the President" (cited in Johnson, 2001, pp. 20-21).
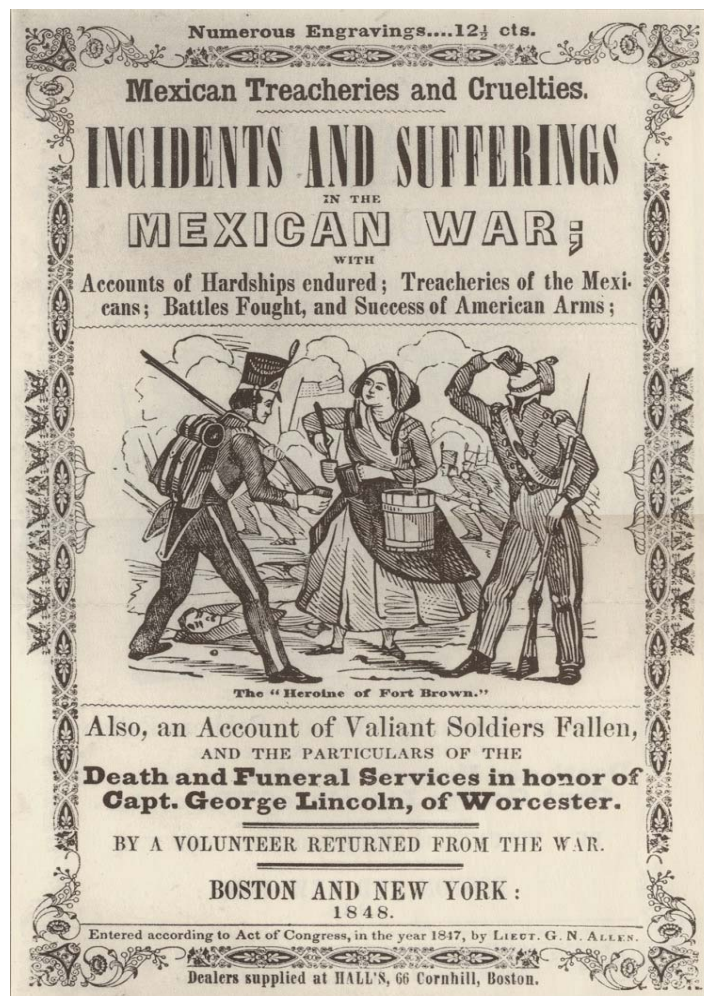


*Figure 9.* It seems likely the Lincoln would not have supported the war in Iraq, if we trust his reasons for opposing the war in Mexico. As this flyer indicates, the Mexican war was about patriotism. (Photo courtesy of The University of Texas at Arlington Library and PBS. Retrieved

Oct. 24, 2006, from
http://www.humanities-interactive.org/invasionyanqui/ex047_18c.html).

Thus, if Lincoln had written Bush's speech, he may have turned to the Koran and refuted Osama bin Laden's claim for a violent global jihad as being supported by that holy text. Lincoln may have analyzed the situation — to find a cause — a process Bush couldn't do, because it would have revealed too much information to his American audience: that the CIA helped support bin Laden in his operation against the Soviets in Afghanistan during the latter part of the Cold War in the 1980s; that the first Gulf War — promoted by Bush's father, President George H. Bush, Sr. — incensed bin Laden when Saudi leaders allowed the United States to build bases for American soldiers in Saudi Arabia (see Figure 10); in effect, designing a foreign policy that would breed (but not excuse) the hatred of al Qaeda — these elements Bush categorically ignored in his speech, a tactic I feel is antithetical to Abraham Lincoln, but served Bush's redefinition of himself and allowed for his audience — and much of the U.S. press — to uncritically accept most of his post-9/11 acts and policies.



*Figure 10*. Saudi Arabia would allow the United States to station troops in their country during the first Gulf War in 1991. Here Dick Cheney, then Secretary of Defense for President George H. Bush, Sr. and General Colin Powell (before he would become the Secretary of State in George W. Bush's first administration) arrive at a U.S. base in Saudi Arabia. Osama bin Laden would never forgive the Saudis nor the United States for allowing this to happen. (Photo by Bob Daugherty, Associated Press, courtesy of *USA Today*. Retrieved Oct. 23, 2006, from http://www.usatoday.com/gallery/powell/contenttemplate1.htm).

In addition, Bush never referred to the United States' use of military power and support of nondemocratic governments and dictatorships in the past, or what some might refer to as terrorist attacks just as deadly as al Qaeda's (for example, more than 1,000 civilians were killed when President Bush, Sr.

ordered the capture of General Manuel Noriega in Panama in 1989) (see Figure 11). But a Lincoln-like logical answer or even a national confessional airing past sins would likely have failed to create the neoconservative make-over the Bush administration wanted after 9/11.



*Figure 11.* The United States' invasion of Panama to arrest one man resulted in more than 1,000 civilian casualties in 1989. According to the Independent Commission of Inquiry the death toll ranged from 1,000-4,000 (Craig, 1996, p. 187). (Left photo courtesy of "Airborne Civil Affairs." Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Base/1374/panamacombat.jpg; right photo by Julio Cesar Guerra D., courtesy of the Empowerment Project. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://www.empowermentproject.org/pages/panamaphotos.html).

### Dare To Do Our Duty as We Understand It

In wrapping up his speech, Bush would expect his audience to help in this war on terror by supporting law enforcement (even allowing for the loss of certain freedoms through the Patriot Act), hugging their children, and continuing to shop (participating in the economy), as Bush noted earlier.

Finally, Bush concluded by engaging his priestly role with an appeal to God, "Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them." Bush, by invoking God, engaged a language game of a final battle between good versus evil and it clearly evokes Bostdorff's theory of covenant renewal, a covenant that would not allow negotiations with bin Laden, for the "magnitude of the terrorist strikes and the vehemence of the president's discourse would prevent it" (2003, p. 303), and by consequence fit the neoconservative agenda well. Bush also attempted to soften his previous hard tone by showing the cowboy difference between the "good guys" and the "bad guys." "Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice — assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come."

Although Bush was successful in redefining his presidency — indeed, creating a reconstitutive discourse that would give him wartime powers — in the end, the performative language game resulted in the United States losing much of the world support received in the months following 9/11, especially as the failures in Iraq increased. Indeed, by July of 2006, *TIME Magazine* would announce "The End of

Cowboy Diplomacy" as their cover story (Allen, 2006) (see Figure 13). Furthermore, on the Afghanistan front of the war on terror, the Taliban government was toppled for protecting al Qaeda, but more than 3,000 civilians were killed and al Qaeda was not staunched. And recent reports indicate that the Taliban regime is taking back power in Afghanistan and that they have gained support in Pakistan — an ally in the United States's war on terrorism ("Return of the Taliban," 2006).



*Figure 12*. *TIME* announces an end to Bush's cowboy diplomacy. (Photo courtesy of Time, Inc. Retrieved Nov. 1, 2006, from http://www.time.com/time/magazine/0,9263,7601060717,00.html).

To make matters worse, the Bush administration, by detaining people without legal representation and by increasing police's sneak-and-peak laws and wiretapping — without warrant — would push the very boundaries of Constitutional interpretation. Domke believes an uncritical press, "not acting neutral," helped support Bush's "fundamentalist" policy decisions evoked through his priestly persona:

> Rarely did [the press] highlight in their reporting administration pushes for immediate action on policies in order to fulfill a divine mission, or about the 'God-decreed' universality of freedom and liberty, or the administration's emphasis on unity over dissent. Once these fundamentalist discourses became consistently amplified — but not

analyzed — in leading press outlets, the administration gained the rhetorical high ground, and that went far in determining policy decisions. (2004, p. 70)

The strength of Bush's reconstitutive discourse could be clearly seen in a press who were induced by Bush's persona as much as his citizen audience.

Lincoln, on the other hand, stuck to his intellectual role and built the conclusion to his speech from the logic of his thesis question, "Does the proper division of local from federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbid our Federal Government to control as to slavery in our Federal Territories?" This revealed Lincoln's moral purpose — a character who chose the language game of intellectual prowess in an agon of Constitutional one-upmanship against the South (see Video 7).

Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored [. . .] such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to Disunionists, reversing the divine rule, and calling, not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance [. . . ].

Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government nor of dungeons to ourselves. *LET US HAVE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH, LET US, TO THE END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT.*



Click [flash icon] to view Flash movie.

Click **here** to download entire movie.

Click **here** to download Adobe Flash Player

*Video 7*. Sam Waterston performs Lincoln's speech in a rousing conclusion that caps his argument with logic and a certain humility. (Excerpted and edited by the author from C-SPAN.)

   For Lincoln, his was the time where rule of law — the basis for his Constitutional argument in preventing the expansion of slavery into the Northwest Territories — defined his times and would allow him later justify the use force to hold the Union together (see Figure 13). Yet, like Bush's controversial war powers, Thomas DiLorenzo (2002) argued how Lincoln would through force of war overturn the Jeffersonian ideals of a limited national government, free trade, and states' rights embodied in the South and push through Henry Clay's ideal of an "American System" — power centralized in a national government, including a national banking system, governmental subsidy, and protective tariffs. Furthermore, DiLorenzo contends that Lincoln engage in "total warfare" in the South, targeting civilians and destroying entire towns. He further makes a case that a lot of editorial opinion in the North favored voluntary secession over force of war to hold together the Union.
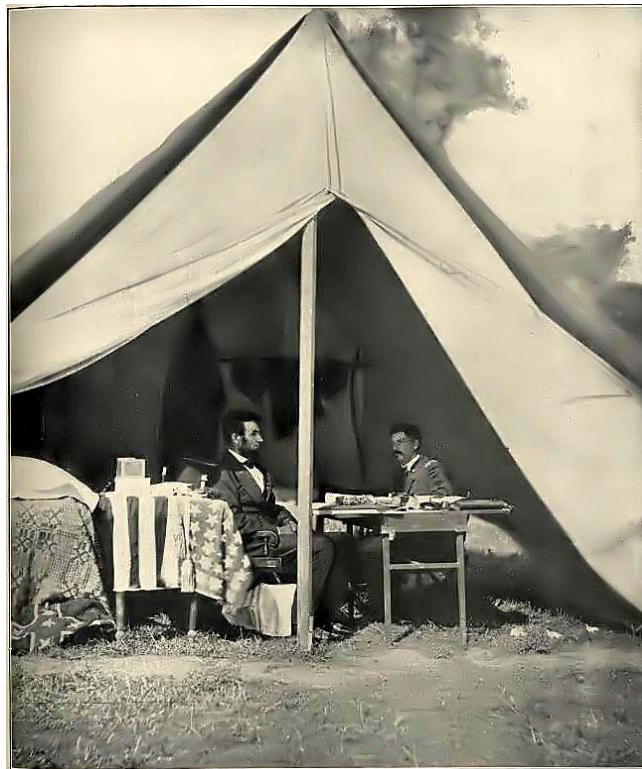


*Figure 13*. Lincoln serving as Commander-in-Chief in the American Civil War (sitting with General McClellan). Unlike Bush, who would don his flight suit and land in a military jet on an aircraft carrier (ironically named the *Abraham Lincoln*) to claim that major combat was over in the Iraq War, Lincoln would dress in civilian clothes. (Photo by Mathew Grady, courtesy of Son of the South. Retrieved Oct. 24, 2006, from http://www.sonofthesouth.net/civil-war-pictures/photography/abraham-lincoln-antietam.htm)

But Lincoln did make this choice to hold the country together in the bloodiest conflict on American soil. His performative language game of *dramapolitik* — the intellectual statesman — evoked deep consequences for the country and for himself — Lincoln died for his cause, but remained faithful to his duty to maintain the democracy of the United States as he believed the founding fathers created it in the Constitution.

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