DISCOURSE IN A RELIGIOUS MODE:
THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S DISCOURSE IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM AND ITS CHALLENGES

Gordon C. Chang and Hugh B. Mehan

Abstract

This study of the politics of representation illustrates the Bush Administration's use of a religious mode of representation to make sense of the 9/11 events, to legitimize military actions against the Taliban, Afghanistan, and terrorism in general. The religious mode of representation is enabled by the construction and application of what we call the "War on Terrorism script," which is grounded in the institution of "American civil religion." We demonstrate the unique power of this mode of representation to create a coherent account at a time of national crisis, to establish connections between the 9/11 perpetrators, the Taliban, and the Afghanistan government. By comparing the Bush Administration's discourse with those voiced by dissenters and critics using intellectual, rational, and legal representations and modes of argumentation in the post-9/11 contexts, we demonstrate how the institutionalization of a particular mode of speaking influence a particular mode of thinking and a particular mode of acting. We also argue that the convention governing political discourse have significant implications in determining the legitimacy of definitions and interpretations of political situations as well as of political actions.

Keywords: Politics of representation, Discourse strategies, The discourse of war and peace

1. Theoretical foundations and research techniques

1.1. *The politics of representation in political discourse*

The politics of representation is the competition that takes place among individuals, institutional agents (those speaking on behalf of an organization or institution), or groups over the meaning of ambiguous events, objects, and situations in the world (Holquist 1983; Shapiro 1988; Nathanson 1988; Mehan and Willis 1988). There are often many possible ways to represent an event or a situation, but a particular representation gives ambiguous events, objects, and situations a particular meaning. Landing a punch on a person's face, for example, is a tangible act, but calling it an act of 'defense' or 'aggression' gives the act a particular meaning. The politics of representation typically produces a situation where many ambiguous meanings are sharpened into one in which a single stable meaning prevails (Mehan and Skelly 1988; Mehan, Nathanson, and Skelly 1990; Mehan [1993]2000; Mehan and Roberts 2001). Thus, after a process of discursive competition, "aggressive attack" (or "attempted

murder") may become the dominant definition for "landing a punch," inscribing in the institutional discourse at the moment, in people's collective memory, in history textbooks, or in legal records.

American mass media's institutionalization of various taken-for-granted labels on particular historical and political entities, events, and situations - such as 'national interest,' 'special interest,' 'defense,' 'democracy,' 'terrorism,' 'containment,' and 'peace process' - arguably constitute a form of propaganda (Chomsky 2002: 37-69) but can be effectively analyzed as instances of the politics of representation. That is, in order for alleged propagandas to be publicly legitimate, it is sometimes not enough to call everything its opposite: To call an attack a defense, to call a dictatorship democratic, to call terrorists freedom fighters, and so on. On issues which do not receive much public attention, simple Orwellian language games may suffice to manipulate the masses. However, concerning controversial political issues, participants in public political discourse - particularly those in democratic societies - inevitably engage in discourse competitions in order to make particular sets of meanings and representations dominating over others. And, if history is our guide, successful victors in the politics of representation build their claims upon a coherent body of knowledge that aligns with the background knowledge of the public.

History has shown that political officials often actively seek to convince the populace of a particular meaning concerning certain events to attain legitimacy and power. Through media interviews, political speeches, or parliamentary debates, elected political officials perform various *speech-acts of legitimation* and *delegitimation* (Chilton and Schäffner 1997: 213; Chilton 2004: 110-134) in order to maximize legitimacy and attain political power, including appealing to the presumed higher moral values behind their actions, reasoning with the public using empirical research and evidence, or, in some cases, appealing to the self-interests of the majority of the voters at the expense of the welfare of the minorities (van Dijk 1980; Mehan et al. 1990; Mehan 1997). In all instances, they strive to control representations and thereby limiting the expression of certain ways of knowing political events and situations.

Such systems of representation are often connected to coherent body of knowledge rather than isolated bits of information. While particular representations may not be very surprising sometimes, at other times they are highly original and creative. Part of the art of political discourse is the use of metaphor, models, scripts, and schemas to draw creative and strong coherence among events that would not be automatically generated otherwise (Lakoff 2004) - and yet still resonate with the background knowledge of a public audience. For example, scholars of the Cold War discourse (e.g., Van Belle and Claes 1985: 96; Chilton 1985; Mehan et al. 1990) have demonstrated that the rhetoric of nuclear 'disarmament by armament' during the Cold War was not illogical; it was based on an elaborate body of knowledge. The rationale proposed by the U.S. government from 1945-1980 equated stockpiles of nuclear weapons with the doctrine of "mutually assured destruction." In order to achieve stability, the U.S. needed to develop sufficient nuclear weapon capability so that the U.S.S.R. - the evil other - would not dare to launch either a conventional or a nuclear attack. Because if they did, the U.S. would retaliate with such force that the cost of attacking would not be worth the benefits. So, the relations between the United States and U.S.S.R. was maintained and constituted by a language/representation system, which simultaneously justified to the American public the need for nuclear development and yet to assure that such development would not jeopardize public safety or world

order. Overall, propaganda should be viewed as a coherent (and often well-elaborated) representation of a body of knowledge circulated via discourse, even though the strength of coherence and the degree of ethnocentrism could vary greatly.

There may not be one *true* way of representing any given event, as studies of the police beating of Rodney King (Goodwin 1994) or citizens of Mexico who cross into the U.S. show (Mehan 1997). In such examples, powerful political players attempt to create a situation in which one mode of representation gains primacy over others. In such a reality, meanings are transformed from an array on a horizontal plane to a ranking on a vertical hierarchy (Mehan 1997; Mehan [1993]2000). In this way, ideological knowledge and meanings are transformed into non-ideological, natural, and universal common sense (Fairclough 1995: 28-53). Following this line of theorizing, this paper will illustrate how the Bush Administration used discourse strategies to legitimate the wars on Afghanistan by promoting a religious way of knowing in the political contests over events on the ground there.

1.2. *Religious doctrine and the religious mode of representation*

Robert Bellah (1968, 1980a, 1980b) argues that citizens in the United States of America, a secular nation with a constitutional separation of church and state, is historically guided by a civil religion. The "American civil religion" (Bellah 1968: 6) is associated with the myths represented in the Declaration of Independence, especially with the notions of liberty, equality, justice, and human happiness. It is also based on the conception of a Supreme Being above the nation.[1]

American political leaders often invoke American civil religion in political speeches as a strategy to maximize political legitimacy. In addition to Bellah (1968, 1980b), Coles (2002a, 2002b), Craige (1996), and Pierard and Linder (1988) demonstrate how presidents have invoked civil religion to legitimatize military actions, from the American Revolution and the Civil War to President George H.W. Bush's war in the Persian Gulf and President Clinton's war on Kosovo.[2]

Since the events of September 11, we have witnessed yet another dramatic transformation of American political discourse, in which a civil religion discourse has increasingly been evoked by the Bush Administration as the way to legitimate its political and military actions (cf. AbuKhalil 2002; Juergensmeyer 2002; Lincoln 2002; Kellner 2003; Chilton 2004; Leudar, Marsland, and Nekvapil 2004). While we often think that religious discourse works powerfully because it resonates with the public's faith and therefore satisfies an essential aspect of human need, in our analysis we hope

---

[1] While the word 'God' is often contained in American legal documents and used in political settings, the concept is only loosely affiliated with Christianity and is associated with a broader conception of Supreme Being above the nation. Bellah (1968: 10) writes, "What we have…from the earliest years of the republic is a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity. This religion - there seems no other word for it - while not antithetical to and indeed sharing much in common with Christianity, was neither sectarian nor in any specific sense Christian."

[2] In attempting to move the United States away from a neutral position during World War II, Franklin D. Roosevelt, for example, explained to the public about the danger of Nazi Germany by saying that if Hitler was to triumph, according to Pierard and Linder's (1988: 179) description of Roosevelt's rhetoric, "The Bible as Holy Writ would be replaced by *Mein Kampf*… 'The god of Blood and Iron' would take the place of 'the God of Love and Mercy.'"

to demonstrate how this mode of discourse works in a subtle manner to legitimate military action.

In this study we juxtapose the religious mode of discourse to a rational, an intellectual, and a legal mode of discourse. A mode of representation is intimately connected to a mode of generating knowledge, and deploying one mode of discourse rather than another entails shifting the very ways of reasoning. A situation that is extremely ambiguous in one mode of discourse may not be ambiguous in another, and information that might not be considered as legitimate evidence in one mode of discourse might be considered legitimate evidence in another.

The term "religious mode of representation (or reasoning, discourse, action)" may convey the perception that it is associated with superstition, irrationality, and blind faith - especially when we discuss them along with the "rational mode of representation (or reasoning, discourse, action)." These perceptions do not reflect our position, which aligns with the observation that specific ways of speaking, thinking, and acting within religious institutions differentiate them from other institutions (Keane 1997). The ways people speak and act (interact) in a family is generally different from the ways they speak and act in a courtroom, and what is accepted as legitimate knowledge (and evidence) in a courtroom is generally different from what is accepted as legitimate knowledge (and evidences) in casual, personal conversations among friends. These conventions of speaking, thinking, and acting are central in holding the order of these institutions together (cf. Mehan 1979; Pollner 1987; Maynard and Clayman 1991: 404-408; Drew and Heritage 1992).

Our overall argument is that the pragmatic use of language of the Bush Administration after 9/11 functioned to institute a convention of knowledge, and thereby justifying a convention of action (concerning military invasion, legal control, and budget spending). The discourse strategy that promoted the War on Terrorism went beyond the repeated uttering of certain ideological content - that is, the repeated invocation of a certain metaphoric and symbolic system associated with the American civil religion. Instead, it institutionalized a convention of speaking and thinking which sustained a particular ideological understanding.

1.3. *Research procedures and methodological approach*

Our methodological approach concerning the collection and analysis of discourse materials is similar to 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss 1967) or 'analytic induction' (Robinson 1951; Mehan 1979). Without a set agenda or hypothesis to test, we started our analysis by reviewing the collected data, identifying and discussing quotes and utterances along the following dimensions: The way in which the events of 9/11 were represented, the explanation of the motives of the perpetrators, the course of action recommended in response to 9/11, and the mode of argumentation.

This paper was part of a larger research project about the politics of representation during the course of the War on Afghanistan and the War on Iraq. (The project has now expanded to include the politics of representation of around the War on Iraq aftermaths, such as the scandals concerning the absence of weapons of mass destruction and the prisoner abuse occurred at Abu Ghraib). We started our effort in June 2003, a month after Bush declared mission accomplished in Iraq, to comprehend the rhetoric of the Bush Administration, which was deemed by critics as irrational,

dangerous, but also strangely effective. The main corpus of data that constitute the analysis *in this paper* consists of all the speeches by Bush after 9/11 after the War on Terrorism started until the War on Afghanistan happened, which also includes his interactions with reporters. We also collect and analyze statements, letters, speeches that reflect dissenting voices to the War on Terrorism script and secondary sources media reporting and U.S. public reactions after 9/11.

The quotes presented below are selected based on how they reveal a general pattern of discourse. In some cases, they may represent repeated patterns of utterances. In some cases, they may only be uttered in one or two occasions but those occasions may be of special symbolic importance and are widely broadcasted. In some cases, they may be utterances that reveal how speakers explicitly address or respond to particular modes of discourse, which takes a unique form. Therefore, even though they may occur once or twice, but they show creativity (agency) in representation that are useful for us to see meanings of discursive activities. Combining analysis of these kinds of quotes help us understand the general manners in which things are debated in different phases of the War on Terrorism. The texts in bold are phases, words, or passages that we want to emphasize in our discussion and they do not represent the speakers' emphasis in terms of prosodies or tones.

2. The politics of representing the War on Terrorism

2.1. *Resolving the ambiguity of the 9/11 events: The War on Terrorism script*

The events that transpired in New York City, Washington D.C. and rural Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001 were initially highly ambiguous. Having lived in a period of domestic peace, technological development, and illusory economic boom since the 1980s, and having drenched the nation in a sense of military invincibility following the end of the Cold War, the U.S. experienced a series of shocking "attacks" on some of its most significant buildings. The emotions of panic, horror, confusion, and anger have been documented and discussed by various scholars (see Calhoun, Price, and Timmer 2002). These events shattered the existing beliefs and normal patterns of American lives and generated a public crisis; in sociological terms, this could be called a "breach" of the normal order (Schutz 1962; Garfinkel 1967; Foucault 1972: 31-49).

What do people do when their normative, taken-for-granted pattern of everyday life is disrupted and how may the study of the politics of representation be relevant? Ethnomethodologists demonstrated that people strive to create new, coherent meanings after breaches that allow them to resume stable patterns of everyday life and they often do so by resorting to their existing knowledge base. Cognitive science and institutional studies of organizations show that people resort to "standard operating procedures" when confronted with new organizational demands (Weick 1995; Vaughan 1996), or unprecedented disaster, such as the leakage of nuclear fuel (Perrow 1996).

But searching for clear answers in such an uncertain and chaotic world and constructing coherent meanings about such ambiguous events was difficult after 9/11. In addition to the uncertain identities of the attackers, it was not clear whether the attacks were targeted against institutions of global capitalism, as the World Trade Center symbolizes, or were they primarily targeted against the United States as a military nation, since the Pentagon was hit as well, and whether more attacks were

forthcoming. At this time of extreme ambiguity and uncertainty, the Bush Administration presented a coherent representation of the events. We call this the War on Terrorism script.

A script, in its literal meaning, is written for a play that introduces its plot, stage/setting, characters, and so on. In its sociological meanings, a script - such as a sacred cultural script - is a cultural meaning system that provides people tools to interpret and understand events (Nathanson 1988). A complete script according to Kenneth Burke's theory of dramatism, explains the *act* (what was done), *scene* (when or where it was done), *agent* (who did it), *agency* (how is it done), and the *purpose* (why is it done) of humans' actions (Burke 1989: 139).

Discourse analysts have argued that social representation in the form of a cultural script, like a "restaurant script," helps people interact in unfamiliar situations such as going to a new restaurant and to quickly construct coherent meanings out of ambiguous events (Schank and Abelson 1977; Van Dijk 1980). Coinciding with these findings, studies in the sociology of culture and media inform us that for a cultural script to be powerful, it needs to be easily accessible to the public, to offer an internally coherent explanation, to resonate with existing opinions and structures, and to be highly resolved toward action (Schudson 1989). We now explore some aspects of the meanings of the War on Terrorism script and how it was constituted through discourse.

2.2. *An overview of the good vs. evil plot*

A plot with actors, notably heroes and enemies cast in either supernatural vs. natural or good vs. evil terms, was constructed within the War on Terrorism script. In supernatural versions, the enemies were described as "evil," and the conflict was "good vs. evil." In natural versions, the enemies were described as barbaric and animal-like, or they were depicted as possessing some essentialist personality characteristics - e.g., the enemies "like" to terrorize, "like darkness," "like" to hide in shadows, or they were "cold-blooded" killers. This naturalistic description casts "civilization vs. barbarism."

A synthesis of these two produced characterizations of terrorists as "man-made evil" and the conflict as "freedom vs. fear." When Bush said "freedom and fear are at war,"[3] he on the one hand personified freedom and fear, and on the other hand alluded to the human desire for freedom and the human fear of fear. Such a juxtaposition unambiguously asserts that some people (i.e., the Taliban, Saddam Hussein) do not "like" freedom while others (i.e., the citizens of the United States) do. Both of these characterizations are grounded in the American civil religion that valorizes freedom and asserts the inherent goodness of U.S. society. Regardless of whether the mode of discourse is composed of natural or supernatural characterizations, the Durkheimian conception of religion[4] remains in all of them, and the American civil religion formed

---

[3] The quoted texts are drawn from the list of primary documents in the appendix.

[4] Durkheim defines religion as follows. "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them… religion must be an eminently social thing" ([1912] 1995: 44). Other scholars (Leudar et al. 2004) have contrasted the Bush Administration's (also the Tony Blair Administration's) "moralistic" discourse with bin Laden's "religious" discourse. Such a characterization is legitimate, since bin Laden's speeches have more explicit and direct references to religious doctrines and supernatural entities in comparison. We

the core assumptions under both the good vs. evil and civilization vs. barbarian versions of the plot.

2.3. *Day 1 and 2: Grounding the War on Terrorism script in the American civil religion*

It is startling in retrospect to see that much of the War on Terrorism script was formed on the day of September 11th and how little the script has changed in subsequent months and years. Bush's statement to the nation on the evening of September 11 laid the basic groundwork for what would become the War on Terrorism script. In the speech, he explained the events as "a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts," perpetrated on "our biggest building," by terrorists who are "evil" and have "the very worst of human nature," through the means of "mass murder" (as opposed to suicide bombings), because "we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world." He contrasted the evil *acts* with another set of good *acts*: Rescuing victims, "caring for strangers and neighbors," and "giving blood," which transpired at the *scene* of "pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge structures collapsing." The *agents* of these good acts were "all Americans from every walk of life" and "the best of America," who had the *agency* to "unite in our resolve for justice and peace." Their *purpose* was to "defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world."

This explanation of motive casts good vs. evil, and invokes the American civil religion, because, it was not just *any* good in battle with just *any* evil. The good was specified as America that loved freedom and was "the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world." The evil was referred to the entity, terrorism, raging against it.

This rationale of 'good America' versus 'evil Terrorism' was a theme that U.S. citizens would hear repeatedly. The same speech opened up a new act, a new narrative: "America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the *war against terrorism*" (emphasis added). This characterization of "good vs. evil" was not a product of a political mode of discourse, as was "England vs. Germany" during World War I and II. An unusual aspect of this script is it promotes war not against *terrorists* which are tangibly humans and mortal, but wages war against *terrorism* which is an idea, a concept. The plot of the War on Terrorism script contains an eternal tension between good and evil; the *scene* of battle, therefore, is not circumscribed by time and place. The scene was transformed

---

characterize Bush's discourse as "religious" according to Durkheim's definition, on which the theory of American civil religion is based. According to this definition, religion does not have to involve supernatural entities; instead, the major criteria are sacred-profane relationships coupled with the existence of a moral community. In the case where both bin Laden and the Bush Administration asserted rivalry between moral camps where there are no neutral grounds (see Lincoln 2002), the distinction between religious and moral is therefore almost indistinguishable according to a Durkeimian definition. Yet, the commonsensical notion of institutional "religion" could still be legitimately applied for Bush's speeches, since the "good vs. evil" dichotomy in many of Bush's early speeches was mentioned alongside with supernatural references or Christian doctrine (e.g., quotes from the Bible, phrases of "God Bless America"). Overall, the different choices of labeling the mode of discourse as "religious" or "moral" are based on - depending on the needs of specific arguments - analysts' strategic emphases on the commonalities and distinction between different kinds of texts and actions.

from one of civil society to one of national security state in a condition of pure war (Virilio and Lotringer [1983]1997).

2.4. *30 Days following 9/11: Elaborating and solidifying the War on Terrorism script*

The good vs. evil explanation, the American civil religion invocation, and the declaration of war on an abstract concept (i.e., terrorism) summarize some main features of the War on Terrorism script - that is, the content of its meaning system. While the basic elements of the War on Terrorism script were formed before September 12th, throughout the rest of September 2001, the Bush Administration solidified this script by repeatedly elaborating it. Bush did so primarily by placing specific meanings derived from the War on Terrorism script on a wide range of ambiguous, or sometimes ordinary, events. This discourse strategy was repeated many times.

Let us consider one illustrative example. When celebrating rescue work in New York City on 18 September 2001, Bush claimed that "our compassion and generous citizens have led the first phase in the war on terrorism" and "have sustained and strengthened the home front":

> In the week since the attack, **our compassion and generous citizens have led the first phase in the war on terrorism**. They have **sustained and strengthened the home front**. Today, I'm joined by representatives of charities which have brought relief to citizens in New York City and Virginia, Pennsylvania. **We've got representatives of firefighters, police officers, entrepreneurs who have helped out all across America**…. The world watches **the great country called America**, and they say: What will they do? What will Americans do? And what **they've seen is the best of America**. They've seen leadership, they've seen courage, and as importantly, they've seen compassion. Citizens near Ground Zero in New York have **provided sandwiches**, drinks and clean clothes to the tired and hungry rescue workers. **And in one of America's greatest traditions**, a handful of entrepreneurs from Springfield, Virginia **collected $600 by selling lemonade**, and gave it to the Red Cross. These **acts of generosity and kindness** are spreading all across America.

A series of ordinary events and objects were thus given extraordinary meanings. Delivering sandwiches, drinks, and clothes, were connected to warlike activities - that is, "'leading' the first phase in the war on terrorism" and "'strengthening' the home front." The actors in charity and rescue work thus became actors in a war (i.e., soldiers) who were motivated by the characteristics of kindness, generosity, and compassion. In this "situation" linguistically defined by Bush as real, Americans were not confused, paralyzed, or exhausted; on the contrary, Americans were fighting in a war against a concept known as terrorism and they helped sustain the home front.[5]

---

[5] On 10 October 2001, when the FBI released the "Most Wanted Terrorist List," Bush stated:

> I'm pleased to be back at the FBI to **unveil a new line of attack on our war against terrorism**: the Most Wanted Terrorist list. **Terrorists try to operate in the shadows. They try to hide. But we're going to shine the light of justice on them.** We list their names, we publicize their pictures, **we rob them of their secrecy.** Terrorism has a face, and today we pose it for the world to see…**The men on the wall have put themselves on the list because of great acts of evil**. They plan, promote and commit murder. **They fill the minds of others with hate and lies**.

An event that could otherwise be bureaucratic and ordinary - making a list - was thus represented as supernatural and extraordinary. Publicizing a list of wanted terrorist names and pictures became

2.5. *Establishing evidence for the war on Afghanistan*

When military actions against the Taliban became tangible, the word "war" was no longer merely a metaphoric expression. Bush's War on Terrorism script translated a war against terrorism from an abstract concept into a war not only against a terrorist group, but also into a war against a state. Bush's rationale for an act of war was to enforce a doctrine that he promulgated immediately after 9/11: The U.S. Administration will not only hold the terrorists who committed the attacks accountable but any one who aids them. This doctrine was novel and radical for the U.S. in the field of international politics, since the definition of "terrorists" was broad and many nations could immediately qualify as candidates for U.S. retaliation.

In order to minimize opposition and maximize support, the Bush Administration attempted to link the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden, and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Establishing this link enabled the Administration to exploit the sympathy surging up within the U.S. public and the international community after the 9/11 events and justify invading Afghanistan.

There was never specific empirical evidence to link Afghanistan (or the Taliban regime) to 9/11 events, however. The U.S. government did not *substantiate* the involvement of al Qaeda in the 9/11 events, relying only on uncertain intelligence information to assert that al Qaeda was the group that organized the 9/11 attacks. The link between bin Laden and the 9/11 events was also not proven; bin Laden was only then and still now been identified as a "prime suspect" of 9/11. The Taliban was identified as a regime that "harbors" bin Laden and al Qaeda members; the link was therefore even more circumspect.

Bush adopted a discourse strategy in the face of these empirical ambiguities. He shifted the debate from a legal or rational mode of discourse to a (civil) religious mode of discourse to legitimize his proposed military actions on Afghanistan. This move changed what would count as "evidence" of links between the Taliban and the terrorists or terrorism. Consider the following interaction between Bush and a reporter on 19 September 2001; the reporter asked Bush to respond to the countries that expressed uncertainty about waging war on terrorism and cited China's statement that "any strike must be preceded by irrefutable evidence."

> REPORTER: Can I follow on one point? Do you to your mind have **irrefutable evidence** that links al Qaeda, and specifically Osama bin Laden to these attacks?
>
> PRESIDENT BUSH: When we take action, we will take action because **we believe -** because **we know we'll be on the right**. And I want to remind people that there have been terrorist activities on America **in the past, as well**. And there has been - indictments have been handed down.

Notice that Bush did not answer the reporter's question directly. Instead of following the reporter's line of questioning that would require a presentation of empirical evidence connecting al Qaeda and bin Laden to 9/11, Bush claimed 'knowing one is on the right'

"unveil[ing] a new line of attack" in the War on Terrorism, because it "[shone] the light of justice on them." Through the pragmatic uses of language and its relation to a cultural meaning system, the United States was defined as "winning" at a time when none of the listed terrorists had been captured.

as a sufficient justification for a military action. While the reporter asked for evidence specifically linked to the coordination of the 9/11 attacks, Bush asserted the U.S. knew it was on the right and invoked al Qaeda's and bin Laden's involvement in terrorist attacks *from the past*. On the surface, this interaction seems strange because the information in Bush's answer seemed discontinuous from the information requested in the question. If Bush was to act within a rational mode of discourse, he would have either provided examples of such evidences or stated that he did not have such evidences. Instead, Bush responded by introducing a different convention governing modes of acting; he argued that it was legitimate to enact a strike if "we know we'll be on the right." By speaking outside the convention of a rational mode of discourse, Bush tried to make people think and act in accordance with different convention - one that focuses on moral righteousness.

This change in convention from empiricism to morality assisted Bush to legitimize a War in Afghanistan. Whereas Bush did not have the evidence to legitimize military actions in a rational mode of discourse, he had evidence to legitimize such actions in a religious mode of discourse. There is an obvious difference in difficulty between evidencing a specific, technical claim on the coordination of 9/11 versus evidencing a broad, moral claim on this issue. The evidence required for the coordination of 9/11 events was much more difficult to attain in the sense that only a narrow set of empirical evidence would qualify as supporting the claim. The evidence required for the moral claim that the U.S. is on the right was much easier to attain because a very wide range of objects or information could validly be invoked to support the claim. Readily available facts include the U.S. rescuing Europe, resisting fascism in World War II, and ending communism during the Cold War.

The President's address to a Joint Session of Congress on 20 September 2001 was the first time that the Bush Administration openly condemned the Afghanistan government, made official demands on the Taliban regime, and warned that if the Taliban did not "hand over the terrorists" then the Taliban would "share in their fate."[6] In that speech, Bush asserted that "The leadership of al Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of that country." Again, Bush did not provide empirical evidence for a connection between the Taliban and al Qaeda; instead, he linked these entities together by their association with the concept of terrorism—a concept containing principles that are in oppositional relation to those contained in the American civil religion.

> The leadership of al Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and **supports the Taliban regime** in controlling most of that country. In Afghanistan, we see **al Qaeda's vision for the world.** Afghanistan's people have been brutalized - many are starving and many have fled. Women are **not allowed to attend school**. You can be **jailed for owning a television**. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his **beard is not**

---

[6] Bush stated:

And tonight, the United States of America makes the following demands on the Taliban: **Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land.** (Applause.) Release all foreign nationals, including American citizens, you have unjustly imprisoned. Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist, and every person in their support structure, to appropriate authorities. (Applause.) **Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps**, so we can make sure they are no longer operating. These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. (Applause.) The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will **share in their fate**.

> **long enough**. The United States respects the people of Afghanistan - after all, we are currently its largest source of humanitarian aid - but we condemn the Taliban regime. (Applause.) It is not only repressing its own people, it is threatening people everywhere by sponsoring and sheltering and supplying terrorists. By aiding and abetting murder, the Taliban regime is committing murder.

A wide range of empirical phenomena are mentioned in the above quote; but with the exception of the move in the first sentence, most of them were irrelevant to the connection between al Qaeda, the Taliban, and the coordination of the 9/11 events. Instead, Bush mentioned this lenghty list of empirical phenomena because his strategy was to provide evidence of the similarities in the character of the enemies that were associated with terrorism. By labeling them all as evil, he both claimed a link between the Taliban, al Qaeda, and bin Laden and legitimized military actions against them.

2.6. *The reciprocal relationship between script and evidence*

Hence, the War on Terrorism script enabled the U.S. public to construct coherent meanings during and around many ambiguous situations. Reciprocally, empirical events viewed from the War on Terrorism script could be used as evidence to support the propositions contained in it - e.g., America was good, terrorism was evil, America was overcoming evil. This reciprocal relationship is demonstrated in a speech on 11 October 2001, which he delivered to the children of America after the combat in Afganistan started:

> Before we leave, I want to make a special request to the **children of America**. I ask you to join in a special effort to help the **children of Afghanistan**…This is an opportunity to help others, while teaching our own children a valuable lesson about service and **character**. I hope school classes or **Boys and Girl Scout troops**, other youth organizations will participate in any way to **raise the money to send to the children. Wash your car. Do a yard for a neighbor.** And I hope the adults will help them, as well. **Ultimately, one of the best weapons, one of the truest weapons that we have against terrorism is to show the world the true strength of character and kindness of the American people.**

This message, different versions of which Bush repeated from 9/11 through the build up to the War on Iraq, enabled people to organize their lives around a coherent meaning system and construct evidential support for the War on Terrorism script. On one hand, it related otherwise ordinary activities - i.e., raising funds for good causes - to the War on Terrorism and acts of "kindness" were portrayed as "one of the best weapons, one of the truest weapons that we have against terrorism." On the other hand, it affirmed the 'America is good' proposition contained in the War on Terrorism script by relating otherwise ordinary activities of goodness (i.e., charities) to "the true strength of character and kindness of the American people."

3. Contesting the War on Terrorism script

The War on Terrorism script proffered by the Bush Administration was not the only representation available after 9/11. Immediately after the series of events in New York City, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania, many community groups and individuals -

particularly those with established status in progressive, grassroots politics or long-standing involvement with peace, religious, and human rights issues - generated their own "scripts" and ways of representing the events. Their concern about the aftermath of the events and their institutional standing prompted them to react negatively to the Bush Administration's War on Terrorism script.

In this section, we analyze these alternative modes of discourse along the following dimensions: The way in which the events of 9/11 were represented, the explanation of the motives of the perpetrators, the course of action recommended in response to 9/11, the mode of argumentation, and the standing of the author or voice of the critical texts. We discern three major variants emerging during the latter days of September 2001, which we call 1) intellectual, 2) rational, and 3) legal modes of representation. At the end of this section, we compare these alternatives to the War on Terrorism script.

3.1. *Representing the events of 9/11*

After examining several dozens of statements proffered by individuals and organizations, our first observation is that almost all alternative discourses represented the events in humanitarian terms. Using phrases such as 'tragic,' 'horrific,' 'horrendous,' 'sad,' 'cruel,' 'traumatic,' and 'major atrocities,' the acts were said to cause 'indescribable sufferings,' 'wounds,' 'injuries,' loss of 'families and loved ones,' 'genuine sorrow and affliction.' The people who lost their lives were described as 'innocent civilians' and 'victims.' Like the Bush Administration, these alternative voices went to great lengths to condemn the 9/11 attacks that led to the loss of life of many innocent civilians.'

In condemning the events in humanitarian terms, alternative modes of representation differed little from the Bush Administration's representation. The alternative scripts differed from Bush's War on Terrorism script in their *explanation* of the motives of the perpetrators, recommended courses of action, and the manner in which they legitimated their argument.

3.2. *Explaining the motives of the perpetrators and recommended courses of action*

The critics and dissenters using legal and rational modes of representation did not discuss or speculate on the possible motives of the perpetrators. They focused their attention on 'what to do' (how to act to prevent similar occurrences) rather than on 'why it happened.' These modes of representation were mainly used to stress the need for cautious and measured political responses - as opposed to initiating a war based on reckless and unrestrained emotions. Because the causes of the events were uncertain, they called for an "investigation" of the facts. They stressed the use of factual information and empirical evidence, rather than emotions and subjective values, to guide actions.

3.2.1. *Intellectual mode of argumentation.*

An intellectual mode of argumentation concerning public policy places events within a broad historical, political, and sociological context. Like the rational mode of argumentation described below, the intellectual mode of argumentation applies logical-empiricist principles governing correct or appropriate inferences and logical consistency to an analysis of existing documents, records, policy statements, speeches.

Critics who used an intellectual mode of representation placed the 9/11 events within the context of the history of U.S. foreign policy, including U.S. ties with terrorists. They related the *scene* and *act* of the 9/11 events to the *scenes* and *acts* of events in other parts of the world, particularly those events that were connected to U.S. foreign policies. Renowned critics Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, Susan Sontag, Arundhati Roy, and Edward Said, as well as some radical progressive groups such as the Black Radical Congress, the International Action Center, and the International Socialist Organization are typical of those who invoked this mode of representation.

Historical events that were repeatedly invoked included the 1998 U.S. bombing of a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan, the U.S. sanctions and bombings in Iraq, the U.S. military interventions in Libya and Nicaragua; some also cited the U.S. involvement in the Israel-Palestine conflict and its past involvement with bin Laden and al Qaeda. The following statement by Howard Zinn is a succinct example of a critic trying to understand and explain the motives and reasons for the events of 9/11 from an intellectual point of view:

> We need to think about the **resentment all over the world** felt by people who have been the victims of American military action. In **Vietnam**, where we carried out terrorizing bombing attacks, using napalm and cluster bombs, on peasant villages. In **Latin America**, where we supported dictators and death squads in **Chile and El Salvador and other countries**. In **Iraq**, where a million people have died as a result of our economic sanctions. And, perhaps most important for understanding the current situation, in the occupied territories of the **West Bank and Gaza**, where a million and more Palestinians live under a cruel military operation, while our government supplies Israel with high-tech weapons. We need to imagine that the awful scenes of death and suffering we are now witnessing on our television screens have been going on in **other parts of the world for a long time**, and only now can we begin to know what people have gone through, **often as a result of our policies**. We need to understand how some of those people will go beyond quiet anger to acts of terrorism.

Zinn reminded his readers that the U.S. has supported cruel military dictatorships that have ravaged their people and encouraged them to understand how victims would rise up against the U.S. government which they think terrorizes them.

Differences in semantic meanings aside, Zinn encouraged people to think like an intellectual. Under the convention of an intellectual mode of discourse, the modes of action would ideally be guided by such standards as rigorous sociopolitical analysis, a critical and reflexive attitude, a strong ethical conviction, open discussion and inquiry, mastery of facts, and a coherent worldview - standards that are claimed by both progressive and conservative intellectual establishments. Operating within this convention, the facts mentioned by Zinn are both global and historical, and they are interweaved into a coherent narrative that corresponds with his sociopolitical worldview as known within the progressive intellectual community. Zinn did not explicitly provide an explanation of the cause of the 9/11; but, he was against a mode of acting that did not subscribe to the standards mentioned above - such as one that only looked at 9/11 as the

sole context or one that is solely based on anger. This mode of argumentation would institute a convention in which argumentation would be based on legitimate global and historical knowledge, with the emphasis on the accuracy of technical facts accompanied by cogency of interpretations. It invited people to conduct intellectual analysis of the phenomenon before them, and thereby to learn more history and empirical facts and to develop an intellectual worldview.

3.2.2. *Rational mode of argumentation.*

A rational mode of argumentation (which could also be appropriately termed as "technocratic" mode) stresses the uses of reason, the weighing of evidence, and assessing costs vs. benefits as ways to explain events. These elements stand in stark contrast to reliance on unconstrained emotions or unsubstantiated assertion to justify goals and means to achieve goals. The rational mode of representation is much more ahistorical than the intellectual mode we just described.[7] Dissenters using this discourse are much less likely to refer to previous U.S. actions than those employing the intellectual mode of representation. They are more likely to assess the internal logic of a political or policy position. The following excerpt from a letter signed by over 1,800 academics and experts, published on the Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIP) website on 20 September 2001, presents a rational assessment of the internal logic of Bush's War on Terrorism script:

> We stand opposed to the massive, widespread, and prolonged military response, as foreshadowed by the military language of the Bush administration officials. **Such posturing will not end terrorism.** Rather, such a response is **likely to result in more civilian casualties, cause greater political violence, and engender new acts of terrorism** against innocent people… **Unleashing vengeance** through overwhelming U.S. firepower will prove an **ineffective** and **counterproductive** response to this new scourge of international terrorism. A 'crusade,' as President Bush terms it, of American bombers and battleships invading the Islamic world will demonstrate our military might, but it will **diminish the chances** of finding, dismantling, and punishing these terrorist networks.

This letter did not attack the entire War on Terrorism script. It tacitly accepted the endpoint proposed by Bush - confronting terrorism, but it criticized the effectiveness of the Bush Administration's policies to achieve the goal of ending terrorism.

This mode of argumentation and representation characteristically engages audiences to act like rational strategists and to think in terms of effective and efficient actions. It invited people to conduct careful, calculative assessment of the phenomenon before them and called for restraining personal emotions and embraced a cool-headed, impersonal form of reasoning, assessment, and calculation.

---

[7] This mode of representation often intersects with an intellectual mode and a legal mode of representation, but it is also different in some aspects. It neither calls for an intellectual worldview grounded in a global mastery of facts, nor does it call deferral of the mode of action to legal bodies and institutions.

3.2.3. *Legal mode of argumentation*

A legal mode of argumentation, like the rationalist and intellectual discussed above, employs logical-empiricist principles - but applies them to different texts. Instead of the speeches, government documents and the like - legal arguments are grounded in cases within national and international jurisprudence. Accordingly, a number of critics and dissenters sought to represent the 9/11 events as an act of 'crime' or 'crime against humanity' not as an act of war. Consistent with their call for a legal representation of these events, many advocated for having perpetrators prosecuted through legal means and legal procedures.

The statement below, signed by over 150 domestic and international organizations (including Amnesty International, World Alliance of YMCAs, and World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts), was issued on 21 September 2001, the day after Bush delivered his address to the Congress, which indicated a War with Afghanistan:

> At the global level, we want to raise our voices for peace, justice, human rights and the rule of law. Those who have planned, carried out or abetted these **appalling crimes** must be **brought to justice**. This tragedy makes plain the need for **a system of international justice, relying on rules of evidence, proof of guilt, respect for rights and due judicial process**…. While **emotions are running high**, we urge **restraint** on the part of political leaders. To react with wisdom and long-term effect, leaders must not act in haste, unilaterally, or indiscriminately. We call for a strong commitment to **human rights, international law and humanitarian concern** in any actions that are taken. We should be motivated by the demand for **justice**, not revenge, and by the pursuit of peace, exhausting all peaceful measures so that many more innocent victims do not suffer. We feel strongly that there is no purely military solution to the kinds of acts that we saw last week. Indeed**, the blunt instrument of war may further intensify a cycle of violence and attract new recruits to terror.** We do not underestimate the difficulty or the urgency of the task facing political leaders. But we are convinced that **a safer world for all can only be achieved by the extension of human rights and the rule of law**.

Parallel to an intellectual mode and a rational mode of discourse, this legal mode of argumentation emphasizes rationality over emotions. But instead of urging for individual reasoning, it sought to promote legal reasoning and legal procedures to deal with the phenomenon. The labeling of the 9/11 attacks as "appalling crimes" rejected Bush's characterization of such acts as "war." The quote explicitly laid out the a preferred convention governing ways of speaking, thinking, and acting - one that is based on "rules of evidence, proof of guilt, respect for rights and due judicial process." Thus, under such a legal conventaion, any legitimate military or policy actions would have to be legitimized by a legal authority, and any "evidence" or "proof" would also have to be recognized as legitimate by a legal authority according to a legal convention.[8]

---

[8] There are other examples of documents that contain a legal mode of argumentation, including Human Rights Watch's statement released on 12 September 2001, Amnesty International's statement released on 24 September 2001, and New York City Labor's statement published on 27 September 2001.

3.3. *Containing alternative modes of discourse*

These dissenting voices contesting Bush's War on Terrorism script were not well-represented in the American mainstream media immediately after 9/11. Nor have they ever seriously influenced U.S. foreign policy since then. The mainstream media in the month of September 2001 mostly amplified and circulated the speeches and analyses released by the Bush Administration, selectively broadcasting voices of the 9/11 victims and the images in New York City (Kellner 2003; Chouliaraki 2004; Dixon 2004; Edwards 2004). Members of the Democratic Party by and large reinforced the Bush Administration's depiction or chose to remain silent.

Based on an examination of Nexus database files for major papers and broadcast transcripts, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) reported that experts consulted by mainstream media after 9/11 were mostly affiliated with centrist and conservative think tanks; experts from progressive think tanks received 11% of citations after 9/11, while experts from centrist organizations received 49% and conservative think tanks received 40 % (Dolny 2002).[9] The representation of the events advanced by the Bush Administration dominated public political discourse so thoroughly that it did not need to respond to these alternative discourses. The lack of engagement by the media and the Democratic Party reinforced their absence.

On some rare occasions, alternative modes of representing the events of 9/11 were introduced into public political discourse. On those occasions, the Bush Administration tended to use discourse strategies that contained these other modes of representation. The following interaction between a reporter, Muslim leaders, and President Bush in the White House on 26 September 2001 exemplifies this containment strategy:

> REPORTER: Granted the extremism, do you - and I'd like to ask the Imam the same question - **do you consider bin Laden a religious leader or a political leader?**
>
> THE PRESIDENT: I consider bin Laden **an evil man**. And I don't think there's any religious justification for what he has in mind. Islam is a religion of love, not hate. **This is a man who hates.** This is a man who's declared war on innocent people. This is a man who doesn't mind destroying women and children. This is a man who **hates freedom**. **This is an evil man**.
>
> REPORTER: **But does he have political goals?**
>
> THE PRESIDENT: **He has got evil goals.** And **it's hard to think in conventional terms** about a man so **dominated by evil** that he's willing to do what he thinks he's going to get away with. But he's not going to get away with it.

In this interaction with the reporter, Bush quickly denied that terrorists had political goals and asserted instead that they had evil goals. Such an exchange demonstrates an interplay around the issue of contextualization (Gumperz 1982), as Bush did not simply criticize bin Laden as having negative, harmful goals. By insisting on the labels of "evil man" and "evil goals," Bush removed the analysis from the contextual realm of politics and pushed it into the contextual realm of morality. By attributing bin Laden's "goals" to an innate, psychological character flaw ("a man who hates" and "doesn't mind destroying women and children") with a supernatural pretext

---

[9] For a report on media bias on television networks, see Ackerman (2001).

("dominated by evil"), Bush strategically dismissed potential sociological, historical, or political interpretations of the 9/11 events. Because, according to the War on Terrorism script, the terrorists' preternaturally evil personalities motivated their actions, sociological and political analyses were rendered unnecessary.

Another example of containment occurred when the President was asked about his response toward the overwhelming concern from the Japanese public in Japan supporting U.S. military actions against Afghanistan. He stated to the media on 25 September 2001:

> REPORTER: Mr. President, according to an opinion poll, about **90 percent of the Japanese** are concerned that Japan support of the U.S. military action could trigger terrorist attacks on Japan, itself. Do you have anything to say to them to, to their concern?
>
> THE PRESIDENT**:** Well, I think this: **I think 100 percent of the Japanese people ought to** understand that we're dealing with **evil people who hate freedom and legitimate governments,** and that now is the time for **freedom-loving people** to come together to fight terrorist activity. We cannot be - we cannot fear terrorists. We can't let terrorism dictate our course of action. And we will not let a terrorist dictate the course of action in the United States; and I'm sure the Prime Minister feels the same way about Japan. **No threat, no threat will prevent freedom-loving people from defending freedom.** And make no mistake about it: **This is good versus evil.** These are evildoers. **They have no justification for their actions.** There's no **religious** justification**,** there's no **political** justification**. The only motivation is evil.** And the Prime Minister [Junichiro Koizumi of Japan] understands that, and the Japanese people, I think, understand that as well.

In this exchange with the reporter, Bush counteracted his mentioning of "90 percent of the Japanese" opinions by invoking a religious representation of the situation ("This is good versus evil"), the enemy ("evil people who hate freedom and legitimate governments") and the enemy's motivation ("They have no justification for their actions… The only motivation is evil"). Based on the context of the War on Terrorism script, Bush dismissed the public opinion which is normally central to the operation of a democracy and instead argued that "100 percent of the Japanese people ought to" support Japan's involvement in the campaign against Afghanistan. A central discourse strategy here is, again, the use of contextualization - Bush legitimized Japanese government's support by not considering and speaking in the contextual ream of democratic politics, but in the context realm of the War on Terrorism script.

4. Conclusion

Our study of the politics of representing the events of after 9/11 illustrates the Bush Administration's use of a religious mode of representation to mobilize the American public and to legitimize the war on Afghanistan and terrorism. The Bush Administration propagated a coherent account of these events through the establishment of the "War on Terrorism script" grounded in Bush's version of American civil religion. Even though there were multiple ways in which political players could speak about, think about, and act toward the 9/11 events, the representation and mode of representation proffered by Bush came to prevail over others in the public political discourse.

One distinguished effect of the religious mode of representation was that it enabled the Bush Administration to imbue the 9/11 events and their aftermath with coherent meanings at a time when the meanings were extremely ambiguous. This act is

accomplished by instituting a convention for political discourse, in which a mode of knowledge and evidential use become legitimate. Such a shift in the convention of evidential use in turn shifts the convention for legitimizing the policy actions to be undertaken, such as the scaling back of civil liberties, the increase in economic budgets, and the initiation of military actions.

Critics and dissenters using intellectual, rational, and legal modes of argumentation sought to institute different conventions speaking, perceiving, and responding to the 9/11 situations. None of these alternative discourses generated coherent explanations for the 9/11 events and the motives of the perpetrators. These dissenters and critics failed to construct explanations of 9/11 not because of their lack of wisdom, but because of the modes of discourses they deployed had a general commitment to the logical-empiricist mode of argumentation that required solid, specific, and technical forms of evidence - some of which were not available at the time (and may never be available). Ranging from progressive intellectuals and cautious policy experts to humanitarian groups and religious leaders, critics and dissenters did not claim that they *knew* the motivations of the perpetrators and the causes of the events due to the lack of credible information; many even avoided *speculating* on such issues.

By contrast, the Bush Administration was unambiguous in its definition of the 9/11 situations: The U.S. had been invaded by evil people who hate the American way of life. The War on Terrorism script, steeped in a religious mode of discourse enabled a much more malleable form of evidence that was made available starting on the same day of the attacks. For instance, "who caused the 9/11 attacks" is an empirical question in the intellectual, rational, and legal modes of discourse, the answer to which requires resource-consuming investigations. However, in a religious mode of discourse, one can answer such questions immediately with a statement such as "evil caused the attacks." And, when facing scarce empirical evidence specifically demonstrating the connections between the 9/11 perpetrators and Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, or the Taliban regime, the Bush Administration instead argued that the Taliban regime shared with bin Laden, al Qaeda members, and the 9/11 perpetrators in their evilness and their hatred toward freedom. By adopting a religious mode of representation, the Bush Administration made use of a series of easily available empirical events - e.g., the Taliban government's historical connections with al Qaeda and brutal treatment of women as evidence that supported the case for the invasion of Afghanistan.

The institutionalization of conventions of knowledge has implications for conventions of action. In the absence of coherent explanations of the 9/11 events, dissenters and critics deploying intellectual, rational, and legal modes of discourse recommended different courses of action: To develop a coherent intellectual worldview, to take cautious actions based on careful calculation, and to initiate legal investigations that would lead to legal actions and prosecutions. In all accounts, these dissenters urged the general public to stand by and wait for various kinds of information to be gathered. The courses of action recommended by critics and dissenters using rational and legal modes of discourse have an exclusionary characteristic: They recommended the public to defer actions (gathering of evidence and action upon those evidences) to political, bureaucratic, and legal machineries.

By contrast, the War on Terrorism script instituted a convention of action that is empowering for individual members of the American public. Instead of asking the American public to stand by and wait until information would be gathered by some external government agencies, by voicing the War on Terrorism script, the Bush

Administration galvanized the American people to believe that acting immediately was the correct course of action. According to Bush's, invocation of the American civil religion, washing a car for a neighbor and doing good deeds in everyday life was equivalent to fighting against terrorism. By engaging in such good deeds, the American people demonstrated that America was a great nation, which further sustained the War on Terrorism script.

In conclusion, the major changes in U.S. politics after 9/11 is the institutionalization of a new convention of speaking, thinking, and acting. We can foresee imminent danger, if not a morbid future, if the War on Terrorism script maintains its primacy in guiding U.S. foreign policy. This script essentializes enemies and justifies the need for extreme measures; it discourages sociopolitical analyses and voids the necessity to follow legal procedures. It allows the United States - the most militarily powerful nation in human history - to legitimately wage future wars without the need to justify actions with specific empirical evidence.

Appendix

Below is a list of all the primary documents cited in this paper.

Academics and Foreign Policy Experts (2001) Response to terrorism. Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIF), 20 September 2001. http://www.fpif.org/media/releases/2001/092001terrorstmt_body.html (accessed 14 July 2004).

Amnesty International (2001) Amnesty International urges Bush Administration to maintain human rights standards in response to 11 September attacks, and warns of looming humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. AI Index AMR 51/142/2001, 24 September 2001. http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGAMR511422001 (accessed 15 July 2004).

Black Radical Congress (2001) Terror attacks of September 11, 2001. *Z Net*, 11 September 2001. http://www.zmag.org/brccalam.htm (accessed 14 July 2004).

Bush, George W. (2001) Address to the nation on the terrorist attacks. Oval Office, The White House, 11 September 2001. *Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents* 37(37): 1301-1302.

Bush, George W. (2001) Remarks honoring charitable organizations. The Rose Garden, The White House, 18 September 2001. *Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents* 37(38): 1331-1333.

Bush, George W. (2001) Remarks prior to discussions with President Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia and an exchange with reporters. The Oval Office, The White House, 19 September 2001. *Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents* 37(38): 1337-1340.

Bush, George W. (2001) Address before a joint session of the Congress on the United States response to the terrorist attacks of September 11. House Camber, U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C., 20 September 2001. *Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents* 37(38): 1347-1351.

Bush, George W. (2001) Remarks following discussions with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan and an exchange with reporters. The Colonnade, The White House, 25 September 2001. *Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents* 37(39): 1372-1375.

Bush, George W. (2001) Remarks prior to discussions with Muslim community leaders and an exchange with reporters. The Roosevelt Room, The White House, 26 September 2001. *Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents* 37(39): 1380-1382.

Bush, George W. (2001) Remarks announcing the most wanted terrorists list. Bonaparte Auditorium, Federal Bureau of Investigation Headquarters, Washington, D.C., 10 October 2001. *Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents* 37(41): 1448-1449.

Bush, George W. (2001) The President's news conference. The East Room, The White House, 11 October 2001. *Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents* 37(41): 1454-1462.

Chomsky, Noam (2001) A quick reaction. *Counterpunch*, 12 September 2001. http://www.counterpunch.org/chomskybomb.html (accessed 14 July 2004).

Human Rights Watch (2001) Human Rights Watch response to attacks on the U.S.: Civilian life must be respected. Human Rights Watch, 12 September 2001. http://www.hrw.org/press/2001/09/ny-091201.htm (accessed 14 July 2004).

International Action Center (2001) International Action Center statement. Progressive Activism in Austin, TX, 11 September 2001. http://www.progressiveaustin.org/iac_wtc.htm (accessed 14 July 2004).

International Socialist Organization (2001) Statement on the air attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. Progressive Activism in Austin, TX, 12 September 2001. http://www.progressiveaustin.org/iso_wtc.htm (accessed 14 July 2004).

Lee, Barbara (2001) *Authorizing use of United States armed forces against those responsible for recent attacks against the United States*. H.J.Res. 64. 107th Congress, 1st Session (14 September 2001). *Congressional Record* 147(120): H5642-H5643.

New York City Labor (2001) New York City Labor statement on September 11. *Synthesis/Regeneration* 27(Winter 2002), 27 September 2001. http://www.greens.org/s-r/27/27-04.html (accessed 14 July 2004).

One Hundred and Fifty Five U.S. and International Organizations (2001) A joint civil society statement on the tragedy in the United States. Amnesty International, 21 September 2001. http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGACT300212001 (accessed 27 March 2005).

Roy, Arundhati (2001) The algebra of infinite justice. *Z Net* (Originally published in *The Guardian*, UK), 29 September 2001.http://www.zmag.org/roycalam.htm (accessed 14 July 2004).

Said, Edward (2001) The events and aftermath. *Z Net* (Originally published in *The Observer*), 16 September 2001. http://www.zmag.org/saidcalam.htm (accessed 14 July 2004).

Sontag, Susan (2001) Column: Talk of the town. The Highland Shepherd (Originally published in *The New Yorker*), 24 September 2001. http://www.msgr.ca/msgr-3/talk_of_the_town_susan_sontag.htm (accessed 9 November 2005).

Zinn, Howard (2001) Violence doesn't work. Common Dreams News Center (Originally published by *The Progressive*), 15 September 2001. http://www.commondreams.org/cgi bin/print/cgi?file=/views01/0915-02.htm (accessed 15 July 2004).

References

AbuKhalil, As'ad (2002) *Bin Laden, Islam, and America's new "War on Terrorism."* New York: Seven Stories Press.

Ackerman, Seth (2001) Network of insiders: TV news relied mainly on officials to discuss policy. *EXTRA!* November/December 2001, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR). http://www.fair.org/extra/0111/network-study.html (accessed 2 August 2004).

Bellah, Robert N. ([1966] 1968) Civil religion in America. In William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah (eds.), *Religion in America*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, pp. 3-23.

Bellah, Robert N. (1980a) Introduction. In Robert N. Bellah and Philip E. Hammond (eds.), *Varieties of Civil Religion*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, pp. vii-xv.

Bellah, Robert N. (1980b) Religion and the legitimation of the American republic. In Robert N. Bellah and Philip E. Hammond (eds.), *Varieties of Civil Religion*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, pp. 3-23.

Burke, Kenneth (1989) *On Symbols and Society*. Edited by Joseph R. Gusfield. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Calhoun, Craig, Paul Price, and Ashley Timmer (eds.) (2002) *Understanding September 11*. New York: The New Press.

Chilton, Paul (ed.) (1985) *Language and the nuclear arms debate: Nukespeak today*. London and Dover, New Hampshire: Frances Printer.

Chilton, Paul A. (2004) *Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice*. London and New York: Routledge.

Chilton, Paul, and Christina Schäffner (1997) Discourse and politics. In Teun A. van Dijk (ed.), *Discourse as social interaction: Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction volume 2*. London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 206-230.

Chomsky, Noam (2002) *Understanding power: The indispensable Chomsky*. Edited by Peter R. Mitchell and John Scholeffel. New York: New Press.

Chouliaraki, Lilie (2004) Watching September 11: The politics of pity. *Discourse and Society* 15.2-3: 185-198.

Coles, Roberta L. (2002a) Manifest destiny adapted for 1990s' war discourse: Mission and destiny intertwined. *Sociology of Religion* 63.4: 403-426.

Coles, Roberta L. (2002b) War and the contest over national identity. *The Sociological Review* 50.40: 586-609.

Craige, Betty Jean (1996) *American patriotism in a global society*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Dolny, Michael (2002) Think tanks in a time of crisis: FAIR's 2001 survey of the media's institutional experts. *EXTRA!* March/April 2002, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR). http://www.fair.org/extra/0203/think_tanks.html (accessed 2 August 2004).

Dixon, Wheeler Winston (ed.) (2004) *Film and television after 9/11*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Drew, Paul, and John Heritage (1992) *Talk at work: Interaction in institutional settings*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Durkheim, Emile ([1912] 1995) *The elementary forms of religious life*. Translated by Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press.

Edwards, John (2004) After the fall. *Discourse and Society* 15.2-3: 155-184.

Fairclough, Norman (1995) *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London, UK: Longman.

Foucault, Michel (1972) *The archeology of knowledge and the discourse on language.* New York: Pantheon.

Garfinkel, Harold (1967) *Studies in ethnomethodology.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Glaser, Barney G., and Anselm L. Strauss (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co.

Goodwin, Charles (1994) Professional vision. *American Anthropologist* 96.3: 606-633.

Gumperz, John J. (1982) *Discourse strategies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holquist, Michael (1983) The politics of representation. *The Quarterly Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition* 5.1: 2-9.

Juergensmeyer, Mark (2002) Religious terror and global war. In Craig Calhoun, Paul Price, and Ashley Timmer (eds.), *Understanding September 11.* New York: The New Press, pp. 27-40.

Keane, Webb (1997) Religious language. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26: 47-71.

Kellner, Douglas (2003) *From 9/11 to Terror War: The dangers of the Bush legacy.* Lanhan, Maryland and Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield.

Lakoff, George (2004) *Don't think of an elephant: Know your values and frame the debate.* White River Junction, VT: Chealsea Green Publishing.

Leudar, Ivan, Victoria Marsland, and Jiri Nekvapil (2004) On membership categorization: 'Us', 'them' and 'doing violence' in political discourse. *Discourse and Society* 15.2-3: 243-266.

Lincoln, Bruce (2002) *Holy terrors: Thinking about religion after September 11.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maynard, Douglas W., and Steven E. Clayman (1991) The diversity of ethnomethodology. *Annual Review of Sociology* 17: 385-418.

Mehan, Hugh (1979) *Learning lessons: Social organization in the classroom.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Mehan, Hugh (1997) The discourse of the illegal immigration debate: A case study in the politics of representation. *Discourse and Society* 8.2: 249-270.

Mehan, Hugh ([1993] 2000) Beneath the skin and between the ears: A case study in the politics of representation. In Bradley A.U. Levinson, Kathyrn M. Borman, Margaret Eisenhart, Michele Foster, Amy E. Fox, and Margaret Sutton (eds.), *Schooling the Symbolic Animal: Social and Cultural Dimensions of Education.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 259-279.

Mehan, Hugh, Charles E. Nathanson, and James M. Skelly (1990) Nuclear discourse in the 1980s: The unraveling conventions of the Cold War. *Discourse and Society* 1.2: 133-165.

Mehan, Hugh, and James Skelly (1988) Reykjavik: The breach and repair of the pure war script. *Multilingua* 7.1/2: 35-66.

Mehan, Hugh, and John Willis (1988) MEND: A nurturing voice in the nuclear arms debate. *Social Problems* 35.4: 363-383.

Mehan, Hugh B., and Sarah A. Roberts (2001) Thinking the nation: Representations of nations and the Pacific Rim in Latin American and Asian textbooks. *Narrative Inquiry* 11.1: 195-217.

Nathanson, Charles E. (1988) The social construction of the Soviet threat. *Alternatives* 13: 443-83.

Perrow, Charles (1999) *Normal accidents: Living with high-risk technologies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Pierard, Richard V., and Robert D. Linder (1988) *Civil religion and the presidency.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.

Pollner, Melvin (1987) *Mundane reason: Reality in everyday and sociological discourse.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Robinson, W.S. (1951) The logical structure of analytic induction. *American Sociological Review* 16: 812-818.

Schank, Roger C., and Robert P. Abelson (1977) *Scripts, plans, goals and understanding: An inquiry into human knowledge structures*. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum.

Schudson, Michael (1989) How culture works: Perspectives from media studies on the efficacy of symbols. *Theory and Society* 18: 153-180.

Schutz, Alfred (1962) *Collected papers, vol. I: The problem of social reality*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Shapiro, Michael (1988) *The politics of representation*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.

U.S. House (2001) *Authorizing use of United States armed forces against those responsible for recent attacks against the United States*. H.J.Res. 64. 107th Congress, 1st Session (14 September 2001). *Congressional Record* 147(120): H5638-H5681.

Van Belle, William, and Paul Claes (1985) The logic of deterrence: A semiotic and psychoanalytic approach. In Paul Chilton (ed.), *Language and the nuclear arms debate: Nukespeak today*. London, UK and Dover, New Hampshire: Frances Printer, pp. 91-102.

Van Dijk, Teun A. (1980) *Macrostructures: An interdisciplinary study of global structures in discourse, interaction, and cognition.* Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Vaughan, Diane (1996) *The Challenger launch decision: Risky technology, culture and deviance at NASA.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Virilio, Paul, and Sylvere Lotringer ([1983] 1997) *Pure war: Revised edition*. Translated by Mark Polizzotti. New York: Semiotext(e).

Weick, Karl E. (1995) *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.